



VOLUME 28, ISSUE 3 JULY 2019

## UNIVERSAL PEDESTRIAN TRAIL AT THE MOROSINI RESERVE

The Universal Pedestrian Trail (UPT) has been designed to allow even those with mobility aids such as wheelchairs or walkers to enjoy a walk in the woods. The trees create a lovely canopy over much of the trail, which leads from the trailhead kiosk to an area above the 1-acre pond. This initial portion of the trail spans about 2000', and was made possible by virtue of a Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape Mini Grant; labor and materials donations by J.A. Rutter, Vermeer, Al's Construction, and Hydroblox®; and by you, our generous supporters.

The bulk of the trail construction was completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, giving members of the board the opportunity to have a small Fourth of July gathering and walk the span. It was wonderful to see this project come together! The ADA/van accessible parking area at the trailhead is still under construction.

The heavy downpours that moved in that weekend exposed some drainage issues which have been evaluated and are being corrected at this time.

We are planning a Grand Reveal for this Phase 1 of our UPT to be scheduled this Fall, once the temperatures have settled to a more reasonable range. In the meantime, you are invited to investigate on your own. Visualize the observation deck above the pond, switchback trail to the pond with perhaps another deck, and log benches along the trail.

Keep in mind that this is only the beginning! Our hope is to continue construction of this trail to encircle the pond area and create a loop trail that would connect to itself .... several thousand additional feet. This will require much more fundraising for this specific project and a few years to reach build-out.

Welcome to our journey!



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PROTECTING NATURE'S HOME, ENRICHING YOURS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last year was a busy one for Westmoreland Conservancy, what with being members of the host committee for **RALLY 2018**, the Land Trust Alliance's annual conference, held in Pittsburgh last October.

We hosted a field trip demonstrating our strong community ties by showing everyone that parties can work together to everyone's benefit. Jim Morrison, Chief Administrator of Murrys ville, met our group at the Townsend Park trailhead of the **Don Harrison Community Trail (DHCT)** and talked about the relationship between the entities and other projects that bring us together. The superintendent of Franklin Regional Schools also addressed our party as we entered Sloan School property, describing his vision for stronger environmental education in the district. Since then we have worked together to secure a permanent trail easement ensuring that the DHCT will be an integral fixture through the community.

You helped Westmoreland Conservancy match our Laurel Highlands Mini Landscape grant award for the **Universal Pedestrian Trail** planned for the **Morosini Reserve**. The weather was uncooperative, causing issues and delays, but we've finally got that under our belt!

You've supported our drive to purchase specialized seed mixes for pollinator fields and habitat at the **Morosini Reserve**. We want to ensure that the seeds used are NOT exposed to such chemicals as glyphosate or other unnatural agents that could potentially harm the very creatures we are trying to protect.

Westmoreland Conservancy has partnered with PAMapInvasives, a Heritage program through Western Pennsylvania Conservancy designed to help us effectively identify and implement management strategy into the stewardship of our reserves.

**Accreditation** looms large in our commitment to excellence, and WC was up for renewal with the 2018/19 class. We were awarded our renewal in February and will walk the stage with those organizations achieving accredited and renewed status at **RALLY 2019** in Raliegh, NC this October.

A very generous donor has enlarged our **Flinn Reserve** by 84 acres, and in the process has protected a lovely stretch of Lyons Run. Our most immediate plans include the installation of a parking lot on Boxcartown Road, fully marking the boundary perimeter, and evaluating both the flora and stream quality for baseline records.

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We have been working with Crowfoot Rod & Gun Club to deal with lead contamination on the **King Reserve** as a result of fallout from their trap range. An agreement was made to swap some acreage to allow them to continue using their trap range while allowing us to protect more of Pearson's Creek, the stream that runs along Crowfoot Road. We expect that project to be completed by the end of the summer.

**Thank you, to all of our supporters!** Without you, Westmoreland Conservancy would not be experiencing such wonderful growth or be able to offer so many interesting programs!

*~ Shelly Tichy, President*

## CHANGE OF MEETING VENUE

**W**estmoreland Conservancy meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday from 7-9pm. The meetings are open to ALL members, as well as to the general public. We maintain transparency in this manner, and we welcome fresh, new ideas.

Effective our August 28th meeting, we will be moving to the Franklin Regional High School Library in the Franklin School Complex off of Old William Penn and School Roads. Due to holiday schedules, the November meeting will be November 20th (3rd Wednesday) and there will be no December meeting. Information will be available on our website and our Facebook page.

## AUTUMN EXCURSION

**T**his year our annual Autumn Excursion will again be at Harrison Hills Park, since our 2018 outing was rained out. Meet at the Sardis Park lot (past the main lot by the second pavilion) at 9am Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup> to carpool or caravan to 5200 Freeport Road, Natrona Hts. For more information, watch our Facebook page.

Harrison Hills Park encompasses 500 acres, boasting a full trail system including the Rachel Carson Trail.

trail map:

[https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny\\_Home/Dept-Content/Parks/resources/maps/map-harrison-hills-blazed.pdf](https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny_Home/Dept-Content/Parks/resources/maps/map-harrison-hills-blazed.pdf)

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## KING RESERVE/CROWFOOT LAND SWAP

As noted on our website for quite some time, the yellow trail on the King Reserve has been closed due to lead contamination. This as a result of contaminants from fallout from the Crowfoot Rod & Gun Club trap range.

We have been negotiating with the principals of the gun club and came to an agreement that would give them possession of the impacted area, thus preventing the closure of the trap range. In return, Crowfoot would grant to us adjacent acreage on the south end of the reserve that would allow more protection of Pearson's Creek.

This agreement had to receive approval of DCNR, Scott Conservancy, and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, in addition to meeting municipal requirements. We are very happy to say that we are very close to finalizing this transaction.

Upon completion of the land swap, we will reconfigure the yellow trail. In addition, the boundaries of the acquired property will be marked and a new trail will eventually showcase the area.

## NEW WEBSITE

Westmoreland Conservancy proudly presents our new website!

Our new look was designed by a team from the Franklin Regional Social Entrepreneurship class: Danny Sisk, Matt Mazak, and Nick Rose. Together they took drone and video footage at the reserves, created a website through WIX that is relatively uncomplicated, and have volunteered to help us maintain the site. We're grateful for their efforts! Check it out at [www.westmorelandconservancy.org](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org).

## JUNE 22 GEOCACHING FLASH MOB

A beautiful day for a fun outing!

Folks came together at the Morosini Reserve for a "Capture the Wall with Your Flag" Flash Mob. Later that evening we enjoyed a nice, quiet campfire.





UNIVERSAL PEDESTRIAN TRAIL IN PROGRESS



Bestok 42°C 107°F 2019/06/27 11:18:31 183C



C 96°F 2019/06/27 12:35:13 183C



Bestok 41°C 105°F 2019/06/27 11:30:29 183C





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## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**\*\*Watch our Facebook page or sign up for email reminders for Morosini work days!\*\***

PLEASE WEAR STURDY SHOES, LEG PROTECTION AND WEATHER-APPROPRIATE ATTIRE  
SCHEDULED EVENTS MAY BE CANCELLED IN CASE OF EXTREME WEATHER.

**Aug 10: 8:30pm. Star Party - Perseids (Pre-peak; pre-full-moon).** Morosini Reserve.

**Aug 15: 6:30pm. Third Thursday Hike w/Lindsey Praksti.** Caywood Reserve.

**Aug 28: 7pm. Monthly Meeting.** Franklin Regional High School Library. NEW LOCATION!

**Sep 19: 6:30pm. Third Thursday Hike w/Lindsey Praksti.** Walter Reserve.

**Sep 25: 7pm. Monthly Meeting.** Franklin Regional High School Library.

**Oct 17: 6:30pm. Third Thursday Hike w/Lindsey Praksti.** McGinnis Reserve-Witch Hazel.

**Oct 17-19. RALLY 2019 in Raleigh, NC.**

**Oct 19: Autumn Excursion.** Harrison Hills.

**Oct 23: 7pm. Monthly Meeting.** Franklin Regional High School Library.

**Nov 20: 7pm. \*Holiday Schedule\* Monthly Meeting.** Franklin Regional High School Library.

**Nov 29: TBD. Opt Outside Hike.**

**Dec: No Monthly Meeting**

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### 2018-19 Officers

Shelly Tichy - President

James Zimmerman - VP; Steward Coordinator

Eloise Milligan - Secretary

Howard Weigold - Treasurer

Nicole Smith - Recording Treasurer

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### 2018-19 Board of Governors

Alan Halperin - Board

Rich Berardinelli - Board

Lindsay Praksti - Board; Steward Coordinator

Howard Weigold - Board

Steve Shotts - Board

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## WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY ONLINE

**Webstore:** <http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/Membership.htm>

**Website:** <http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WestmorelandConservancy>

**Flickr:** <http://www.flickr.com/groups/westmorelandconservancy/>

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### OUR VISION

To preserve natural, rural, and historic landscapes for Nature's benefit and the enrichment of future generations.

### OUR MISSION

Westmoreland Conservancy will act to preserve, enhance, and connect land, habitat, and green space through acquisition, stewardship, and cooperation with local communities and other organizations.