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Farm & Natural Lands Trust is a private non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization recognized by the IRS as a qualified recipient of land conservation interests. Contributions to FNLT are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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The FARM & NATURAL LANDS TRUST has preserved more than 13,000 acres to date.

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WINTER 2021-2022
VOLUME 2

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Riding along the rail trail towards Seven Valleys, I see a beautiful burgundy barn with navy trim. A sturdy brickhouse stands close by along with a native plant garden surrounded by tall pine and cedar trees. I’m meeting Sean Kenny for a bike ride, where we plan to discuss barns, livestock, the flowering Codorus, and many other things country life.

As we ride, Sean tells stories of the land he and his team preserved over the 13 years he’s served as Executive Director. How sometimes, the pace of land preservation can seem “glacial.” However, when landowners finally sign the conservation easement, “almost all wish they did it sooner!” He explains the teamwork that went into the new logo and renovated office building. The pouring of support from County Commissioners and citizens through the York County Open Space Committee that provided reliable funding, advancing our mission.

Sean makes me laugh with his stories of memories along the Rail Trail, interesting landowners and the many mentors he’s had in life.

For many of us, Sean and Rochelle are the reason why we preserve our properties and support FNLT. We already know that safeguarding our land is the right thing, but their knowledgeable and confident demeanor assures us. How do they gain our trust? They educate us of our rights. They follow through, making
sure our paperwork is filled correctly. They are the reason landowners are informed, empowered, and, most importantly, proud of their decision. A simple skim through this newsletter testifies to the happy preservationists who are also our neighbors.

Sean and I arrive back at his burgundy barn and brick house. Pointing to it, Sean tells me that he owes his home for his position with the FNLT. “When I interviewed, they asked what I knew about their preserved properties,” Sean says. “Being an avid Rail Trail user, I told them how I always loved a house that was on a preserved property along my rides.” We gaze across the panoramic landscape. “Many moons later, I’m now married with a family and living on that same preserved property!”

At the commencement of our bike ride, I set out to simply chat with Sean about York County’s beautiful countryside. However, I gained much more than that. I witnessed a passionate visionary whose character and work ethic delivered a “mom and pop” land trust into one of the county’s most successful nonprofits, sealing my fate as a lifelong FNLT supporter.

As a member of the Board, I’m extremely grateful for Sean and Rochelle. I know the dozens of volunteers, our community partners, and my fellow Board members wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for your leadership. We thank you.

Your support is the greatest gift

Enclosed is an envelope should you want to make a year end (or anytime) gift of support towards the land preservation efforts of Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County. There is a form on the reverse side of this newsletter you can fill out and hand off to your local postal worker! FNLT is led by a small staff and volunteer leadership, so we make every amount of support go a long way.

Thank you! Another great way to support FNLT is to pass the newsletter along to someone who might not be aware of our efforts. For additional copies to help spread the word, call into the FNLT office or email skenny@farmtrust.org.
Back in Action with Sasquatch & Clay Shoot

By Sean Kenny

After suspending all events for well over a year, FNLT wrapped the Summer and started Fall of 2021 with picture perfect days outside, all in support of land preservation in York County.

First up, we gathered runners from the region to the preserved South Branch Farms in Seven Valleys for the 10th installment of the Sasquatch Preservation Trail Run. With two distance options of 5K and 10K – neither of them a walk in the park – runners were treated to a true representation of the types of landscapes FNLT preserves.

Over the hills, through the woods, into the creek, over some horse jumps and on top of the historic Howard Tunnel – the Sasquatch runners age ranged from 5 to 82 and everyone had a great time. Big thanks to the Kinsley family for having us back at South Branch Farms, and to Rob Kinsley, course architect and all-around great friend of FNLT.
<table>
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<th>10K- FEMALE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st Place</td>
<td>Jill Krebs</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52:10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Place</td>
<td>Julie Kerchner</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>56:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Place</td>
<td>Tanya Navarro</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>56:37</td>
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<td>Leah Navarro</td>
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<td>23:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Place</td>
<td>Julie Kerchner</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>56:30</td>
</tr>
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<td>3rd Place</td>
<td>Sabreena Fahringer</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Place</td>
<td>Eric Ferree</td>
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<td>48:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Place</td>
<td>Adam Murak</td>
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<td>48:34</td>
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<th>AGE</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Place</td>
<td>Matt Guiden</td>
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<td>24:54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Place</td>
<td>Neal Barnaba</td>
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<td>24:56</td>
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Kicking off the Fall was the FNLT Clay Shoot, this our 12th year at Central Penn Sporting Clays in Wellsville, which is also an area where the FNLT preserved lands holdings are continually growing (and hopefully some of the CPSC property soon, too).

Many thanks to all sponsors, including Peoples-Bank who has been the presenting sponsor of the FNLT Clay Shoot for all 12 years. PeoplesBank President Larry Miller was honored with a custom made clay shoot trophy to honor all he has done for York County, specifically his many years of supporting FNLT. Not that he’s going anywhere, but he’s retiring after a 50 year career with the bank. We actually hope we see him more often now!

Stay tuned for more events in 2022, starting with our Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 5th. Details will be coming early next year, but mark your calendar as you won’t want to miss this one.

The year’s Top Shooter was David Deferneilmont, who also happens to make the sweet awards with his company Signal Machine Co.! The top team score went to York Ag Products. Thanks to all our sponsors, volunteers, shooters and hosts!
Larry and Loretta ‘Peach’ Redding are likely the most familiar names in FNLT land preservation news over the last several years. You might recall a few years back we hosted our Annual Meeting at the beautifully renovated Lake Club in Spring Grove, which they had purchased and preserved. In total they have five properties preserved with FNLT, over 350 acres. This includes the recently purchased 17.46 acres adjacent to the already preserved Beefeater Farm. The Reddings worked with FNLT on amending the original Beefeater Farm conservation easement, adding the new acres to that property.

This new conservation easement with the added land further protects a viewshed along one of the most frequently traveled areas in Spring Grove, located at the intersection of Jefferson Road and York Road (Rt 116). This mostly wooded parcel connects to an area of the Beefeater Farm on which the Reddings have done a significant planting of new trees - as you drive by you can’t miss their hard work!
Longtime FNLT supporter and former board member, Mitzi Bensinger, has added a new conservation easement on 26.55 acres, adjacent to her already preserved home property in Springettsbury Township. This new property is almost entirely agricultural in nature with a few wooded acres supporting important wildlife habitat.

Mitzi says, “One of my main drivers in placing this additional land into conservation easement is not only preserving the scenic views but also supporting the crucial farming industry using sustainable practices, and to curtail development pressure in my corner of the planet.” This amazing scenic viewshed includes Rocky Ridge County Park, which is located along an elevated ridge line to the south of the parcel. Recreationists on the north-facing slopes enjoy the viewshed while traversing this area of the park.

In addition, the Bensinger property is adjacent to a second preserved FNLT farm (which we’ll add – we know Mitzi helped with that!) and in close proximity to other preserved lands held by both FNLT and York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. We expect this new property will encourage others to join with their lands to protect the resources in this beautiful area of York County.
The Bupp family has a long history in Chaceford Township and this newly preserved 32.8 property is situated between two farms, also owned by Bupps, which have already been preserved for decades with York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board easements. This completes preservation of this valley, connecting the properties along the entire western and northern boundaries of this parcel for a preserved area nearing 300 acres.

This land is almost entirely wooded with steep slopes and significant frontage on both sides of Otter Creek, a priority stream, which travels over 4,000 feet through the land. In addition, small tributaries on the property flow into Otter Creek, which eventually feeds into the nearby Susquehanna River. The junctions of North and South Forks of South Fork Otter Creek join on the property, creating a popular fishing stream and scenic view for residents and visitors in the Chaceford Township area.

You can see the environmental importance of this area! Historically the property contained a non-paved roadway, traveled by residents in the 1800s that accessed a mill located on the creek. There are portions of the foundation of the mill and the roadway visible today. Many thanks to the many Bupp family members who have cared and preserved this area for future generations.
Farming Living

Not always safe, always an adventure

By Jamie C. Kinsley

Large farms mean plenty of room for large parties. It’s July 10th, and Edward Potts wants to cut his grass so his birthday bash would look beautiful. His six-foot tall frame and brown hair bounce as the lawnmower traverses the hillsides. Edward pictures guests arriving with smiles, bearing gifts and ready to celebrate. He wants his 98+ acre farm to look perfect. Like every other time, the mowing is going great, until he turns the corner at his mailbox.

Edward hears a sharp “bang!” Glancing down, he sees blood pouring out of both sides of the front of his ankle, right in front of the bone. He had been shot. “I looked down,” Edward remembers, “and I realized the lawnmower shot me!”

Unbeknownst to Edward, a .22 shell laid in wait, hidden in the grass (he permits hunting on his farm). The mower blades scooped it up, hurling it toward Edward’s ankle like a projectile. So great was the force that the shell went clean through his skin, leaving a small entry wound and larger exit wound. Doctors at the hospital clean him up, but scars remain to this day.

“Living on the farm is always an adventure,” Edward says. He’s been living in Wellsville since 1962 when his parents first purchased the land. Along with his five siblings, he grew up playing in the barn, running through the fields, and taking care of the animals.

Today, the property is recognized on the National Register of Historic Places for its agricultural history and architecture as the Henry and Elizabeth Berkheimer Farm. As a collector of antiques and preserver of history, Edward maintains the 1817 stone house, hay trolley, a 1847 Sweltzer barn, smoke house in the attic, the summer house used for butchering complete with iron kettles. “It’s like living history,” Edward says. “It’s nice to go to a place that hasn’t been altered.”

His father passed away last year at 95 years old. “My father would have loved to have this land preserved,” Edward says. “I want to keep the heritage alive.” That’s why he preserved his farm with the Farm and Natural Lands Trust — gunshots included. Even though the farm and all its adventures interrupted his birthday bash, Edward wouldn’t trade farming-living for the world.
Stambaugh's Give New Life to 200+ Acres in North Codorus

By Sean Kenny

Doug and Sherry Stambaugh returned to FNLT to preserve a second property, and if you remember the first one, you'll know they love a project and getting their hands dirty!

Located adjacent to the P. Joseph Raab York County Park, this property was once similarly mined for iron ore in the 1800s – high quality Codorus Ore as it was known. Also like Raab Park, a portion was part of the Sunny Farm municipal landfill. During the late 1970s there was an attempt to expand the landfill and due to community opposition, the Township denied the request.

The existing landfill was exhumed and the waste was taken to Modern Landfill in 1989 and 1990, soon after the ground water and soils were tested and monitored on the site. It was determined the ground water was not affected by the former waste disposal. The site was still owned by Waste Management, and in 2003 the Stambaugh's and two other partners bought the property that consisted of 455 acres. At the time of purchase a CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation) existed on the western end of the property, which the Stambaugh's and partners quickly ceased.

The Stambaugh's kept 206 acres after the other partners sold their portions, and since that time have been restoring the former landfill and CAFO sites on the property. This included removing a 1,000-foot-long concrete feed trough, fences and runoff berms. A bulldozer worked an entire week removing invasive autumn olive, ailanthus and multiflora rose that consumed the property. In its place 10 acres of native warm season grasses and over 5,000 Norway Spruce were planted.

You would never know the rough history of this property after the Stambaugh's efforts. Currently the property consists of 50 tillable acres, 138 acres of managed woodland and 18 acres of dedicated wildlife habitat – a beautiful property thanks to the Stambaugh's stewardship, which FNLT is proud to now help continue preservation for generations to come.
Building the dream
one generation at a time

By Jamie Kinsley
Harold and Sharon Stoneberger tied the knot at age 20, beginning their married life together in rural Fairview Township on the family farm, living in a mobile home. Even though they’re happily together, living conditions are rough. With no running water, they carry water from the barn in a milk can — a trying task for newlyweds just starting out. “We had no money,” Harold tells me. For years, they didn’t own a phone, and had to shower at Sharon’s parents’ house.

Nevertheless, the young Stonebersers ambitiously pursue a plan many of us only dream of: building their own log cabin on the family farm. Sharon’s grandparents and parents lived on the land for decades, truck farming. Sharon grew up “always interested in being outside because my grandparents, my grandmothers especially, were outside women.” The family planted, picked, and butchered together, transporting their produce and meat to markets in Dauphin and York Counties. “It was a family affair,” Sharon says. “I saw my grandma in the butchershop cutting up meat. I used to skin out the deer.”

Harold credits Sharon’s outdoor upbringing as one of the many reasons why they fell in love so easily. “We both hunt the land, both fly fish, both work on the goats,” he says. “In a half hour we’ll be turkey hunting.”

For five years, the young Stonebersers built their dream home. “Yeah, it was stressful,” Harold remembers. “But we have a lot of the same likes so it was easy to make decisions.” However, a farmer’s nightmare threatened to cloud their log-cabin dream. A neighbor sold an adjacent lot that surrounded their farm to a land developer. For years, the couple fretted over McMansions ruining their views. “I didn’t want it developed,” Harold says, lamenting the memory. “Properties all up against my farm, all along the back of it, on my ridge.”

Harold and Sharon talked it over. They didn’t want encroaching houses, so they approached the developer. Fortunately for them, unplanned increases in paved road expenses forced the developer to rethink the project. He sold the land to the Stonebersers who have currently preserved 124 acres of it with Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County.

It’s been over forty years since they got married. Today, they grow soybeans, corn, and hay. They also raise Boer goats. Their daughter sells fruit, vegetables, and flowers at a nearby roadside stand. “Farming runs in the family,” Harold says. “We lived here and farmed ever since.” With the land properly preserved, the family will go on farming for generations to come.
Love what you’ve read in this newsletter?

All support of FNLT goes directly to our important agricultural and environmental preservation work. We make your support of any amount go a long way, as preservation is important now, and for generations to come.

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Contributions can also be made online via credit card at www.farmtrust.org.