



PRISTINE MOUNTAINWOOD SPRING PROTECTED

The Ridge and Valley Conservancy (RVC) has achieved a major victory toward protecting the water quality of the Paulins Kill watershed with the purchase of a permanent conservation easement on the Mountainwood Springwater Company property. The spring flows at rates measured in million gallons per day from a cavity in the limestone bedrock. The spring flow goes directly into Shuster Pond, a large sinkhole pond that is crystal clear. The pond overflows into two large swallow holes that allow the water to flow directly into the limestone, where it travels 4,000 feet underground to the northeast, emerging at Bonnie Brook Spring, a well-know spring on Stillwater Road (County Route 521) in Stillwater. There the flow is augmented by other underground flow. Bonnie Brook spring has been recorded at flows as high as 13 million gallons per day. The property lies at the very heart of RVC's Limestone Forest Project, an area characteristic of the Great Limestone Valley where caves, springs, sinking streams, sinkholes ponds, and mossy limestone pinnacles give the landscape its character.

RVC acquired an easement on 68.5 acres of the 77-acre property in Hardwick for \$500,000 in February by agreement with the owners William and Carolyn Eagan. The Eagans have a commercial spring-water business on part of the property, but their extraction rate is limited to less than 100,000 gallons per day through a deed restriction imposed by Hardwick Township. The Eagans shared a common desire with RVC see the forest that supplies recharge to the spring permanently protected. The property is extremely valuable and several interested parties sought aggressively to obtain it. RVC and the Eagans, including their sons John and Alexander who are also involved in the spring-water business, arrived at a way to preserve most of the property and allow public access via a hiking trail that allows users sweeping views of the spring pond and access to the fascinating terrain of the surrounding limestone forest.



Sixty area pond receives millions of gallons each day from Mountainwood Spring (in background).

Funds for the project came from a variety of sources. The Garden State Preservation Trust through the New Jersey Green Acres Program provided \$280,000. Hardwick Township made a firm commitment to seeing the property protected by providing an open space grant of \$120,000. The Warren County Open Space Trust provided \$105,000. Private Foundations contributed as well, including the Beneficia Foundation (\$5,000) and the Dodge Foundation (\$7,500), through both the New Jersey Conservation Foundation of Far Hills and Conservation Resources of Chester. To demonstrate their commitment to seeing the project succeed the Eagans accepted less than fair market value, providing a charitable contribution to the project. RVC is extremely grateful to all of these partners for realizing the importance of this unique property and stepping up to the plate to provide financial support.

CONTENTS

President's Message	Page 2
Glenview & Dunne Farms	Page 3
The Ridge & Valley Life	Page 4
PPWA Message	Page 4
Tribute to Tim Hourihan	Page 5
Tax Incentive	Page 5

RVC MISSION STATEMENT

The Ridge and Valley Conservancy was formed to protect and preserve natural areas, including woodlands, meadows, farmlands, wetlands, marshes, ponds, watercourses, and historic sites that constitute the rural character of the Kittatinny Valley and Ridge Region of New Jersey. We are dedicated to promoting the public interest in conserving open space for aesthetic, recreational, cultural, ecological, agricultural, and development uses in harmony with the natural environment. The Conservancy may acquire important lands by purchase or donation, manage land uses for the benefit of the public, assist in stewardship for public lands and easements, and advise in environmentally sound land development for public or private use. Ridge and Valley Conservancy, Inc. is a non-profit corporation established exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purpose.

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CONSERVANCY**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE NATURAL ORDER



One of the claims we make at RVC is that our mission is to protect **the natural order** of the lands we protect. What does that mean? This means those systems defined by the flow of energy from the sun, the water cycle, plant and animal evolution, the

movement of the Earth's great tectonic plates, erosion, and other forces that are not human in origin.

For example, the locking away of petroleum in the rocks is nature's way of dealing with excess carbon. Our use of fossil fuels liberates this excess carbon, which has led to a build up in our atmosphere, contributing to global warming. One of the advertised solutions to global warming is reforestation. Forests use carbon dioxide and trap carbon. Much of the land RVC has preserved is forested and serves to cleanse our atmosphere by trapping carbon in biomass and soil.

The loss of topsoil is another violation of the natural order. Nature builds topsoil through the plant cycle and the action of billions of microbes in each cubic inch of soil. Our land use practices have led to a rapid erosion of topsoil, which can take thousands of years to form. RVC is working with farmers to encourage sustainable agriculture that recognizes the importance of retaining fertile topsoil and preventing its loss into our waterways.

The premature extinction of species is an egregious violation of the natural order. Scientists warn that we are in the midst of another great extinction, brought on largely by the pressure humans have put on natural habitats. We at RVC emphasize the need to delineate important habitats, target them as priority areas for protection, and set them aside so that the natural order may prevail and encourage the greatest variety of life.

We want our members to recognize that open space protection is not just a battle against encroachment of development, but a concerted effort to recognize the need to preserve the natural order, of which we are a part and by which we benefit in terms of clean air, fertile topsoil and a rich community of co-habitants of this special area.

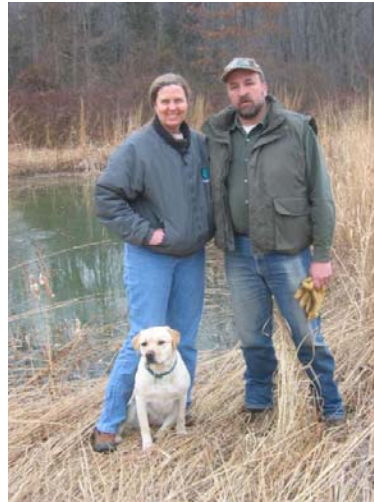


WORTH THE WAIT . . .

DUNNE AND GLENVIEW FARMS FINALLY PRESERVED

It is with great relief and excitement that we once again announce the preservation of two family farms in our region under the State Farmland Preservation Non-Profit Program. In our autumn 2005 newsletter we prematurely announced the preservation of the Dunne Farm in White Township, and George and Helen Black's Glenview Christmas Tree Farm in Blairstown Township. These projects were scheduled to close in December of 2005 and we announced their protection in anticipation of the closing. Unfortunately, the State Attorney General's office reinterpreted the Garden State Preservation Act and questioned the amount of a grant the state could make to non-profit organizations for farmland preservation. To make a long, frustrating story short, the State Agricultural Development Committee was able to re-instate the original grants and the closing happened more than a year later. The RVC was able to salvage these projects thanks to the endless patience of the owners, Tim and Mimi Dunne, and George and Helen Black.

The Dunne Farm project preserves 40 acres of diverse farmland made up of open fields, woodland and wooded wetland along a former millpond. The farm is on the edge of the New Jersey Highlands and has great views of surrounding Jenny Jump Mountain. Tim and Mimi produce field crops, vegetables, pumpkins, evergreens, and firewood. They have planted buffer strips of native American warm season prairie grasses along the stream corridor and within several fields. The native grasses protect the stream corridor and provide habitat for ground-nesting birds and beneficial insects. The farm lies atop limestone and sinkholes that recharge the aquifer that occasionally pops up in some fields.



Farm owners Tim and Mimi Dunne along with their yellow Lab Peaches, stand next to a vernal pool in a field of native grasses on their farm.

Preservation of the Dunne Farm cost RVC \$155,755. Funds for the project came from the Garden State Preservation Trust and the Warren County Open Space Trust. The Dunne's made a significant contribution by selling their devel-

opment rights at less than market value. RVC is grateful to the Dunne's for seeing the project through to completion and their generous gesture of accepting less than the value of the easement.

Glenview Christmas Tree Farm is a small, diverse farm at the base of Kittatinny Mountain. It is adjacent to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and is visible at from the Appalachian Trail, which is located on the cliffs right above the farm. Glenview Farm is owned by George and Helen Black. The farm is part of the former Gaisler Farm, which was subdivided over the years, but several small farm tracts remain. The couple is retired, but works actively to grow and cultivate Christmas trees and pumpkins. The farm is an extremely popular source of Christmas trees and is well known in the Blairstown area.

Preservation of Glenview Farm cost RVC \$169,528. Funds for the project came from the Garden State Preservation Trust, the Warren County Open Space Trust, the Blairstown Open Space Trust, and a generous bargain sale of the easement by George and Helen Black. RVC is extremely grateful to the Blacks for staying with their original commitment to preserve the farm and having the patience to endure a lengthy delay in completing the project. The farm will be protected against future development and will remain in farmland.



Winter at Glenview Farm. The Appalachian Trails in on the Kittatinny Ridge in the background.

OUR FARMLANDS, OUR FUTURE

The New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program

Visit the link below for more

information on farmland preservation.

<http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve.htm>

RIDGE & VALLEY LIFE . . .

The Bobcat In New Jersey

Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) are an endangered species in New Jersey. These 15-35 pound cats can be recognized by their long legs and short tails. They have distinctive ruff looking side-whiskers on their face and tufts on the points of their ears. In winter the bobcat's coat is grayish and in the summer it is rufous. In all seasons it has black spots. The bobcat prefers rabbits and squirrels but will eat porcupines, chipmunks, songbirds, insects and small deer. They will eat fresh carrion when available. Bobcats can only eat about 3 pounds of meat at a time, so if they get a big animal like a deer, they will drag it to a safe spot and cover it up. Later they will come back, eating again and again, until the meat spoils.



Bobcats are mostly found in the Ridge & Valley region and the Highlands of northern New Jersey. They were considered to be extinct in New Jersey in the late 1970's. Between 1978 and 1982 24 bobcats were re-introduced to New Jersey from Massachusetts

and Maine. Bobcats prefer large areas of contiguous forest and fragmented forest of early succession. They usually live alone on a territory that is from 5 - 10 miles long. They are nocturnal. Bobcats have excellent sight and hearing and can run as fast as 30 miles



per hour. When bobcats walk they put their back feet in the same spots where their front feet stepped. That way, they don't make so much noise by snapping extra twigs under their feet. Bobcats are also good climbers. The female bobcat will have one litter of kittens per year usually in the spring. Rock outcrops, caves and ledges provide shelter and cover for rearing young. Sometimes their snarling, hissing, growling and high pitched squeals can be heard in the night. Bobcats sound similar to a domestic cat with the volume turned way up.

By preserving land in the Ridge & Valley area we will leave the bobcat enough wild remote areas to hunt and rear their young. This will ensure their survival in New Jersey.

A MESSAGE FROM ONE OF OUR PARTNERS: PAULINSKILL - PEQUEST WATERSHED

Paulinskill-Pequest Watershed Association (PPWA) is a member-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to the environmental integrity of the region. Water is a big subject and takes up a lot of space on the shelves in the supermarket. Having to buy water tells a lot about the supply, quality and need for good quality water. When a rural community can't drink the water coming from their own springs and aquifers, then something is wrong. PPWA has existed for 18 years to try to raise awareness about the need to protect the water in our watersheds. A watershed is the area of land that drains into a stream, lake, river or even ultimately an ocean. When rain or snow falls, water not held by the soil will travel underground or across the land surface until it reaches a stream or other body of water. All the land that collects this rain or snowfall and directs it to a body of water makes up the watershed. All of us in this region drink the local water.

What PPWA has accomplished with a few volunteers is keep the community alert to the problems that exist or the dangers that are present to the ground water or surface water in the area. We participate in the decision making that can impact on water quality and available supply by attending township and regional meetings relating to water issues as well as coordinate action to solve problems affecting the Pequest and Paulins Kill watersheds.

One of the most important activities of PPWA is to have the Paulinskill River reclassified to Category 1 (C1). The C1 classification means that there will be strict standards for discharges into the river to regulate the oxygen, temperature, ammonia and suspended solids now flowing into the Paulinskill River. It is an effective means of protecting this important body of water.

PPWA and the RVC are both dedicated to protecting the pristine water resources of our region. RVC does this through direct action, buying and preserving land and easements that leave land in its natural state. PPWA supports RVC in its land preservation efforts and addresses those lands that will never be dedicated to open space. Without the vigilance of both organizations our water resources are at risk of gradual degradation. Both PPWA and RVC need your support to insure that our water, our most precious resource, stays clean and healthy.

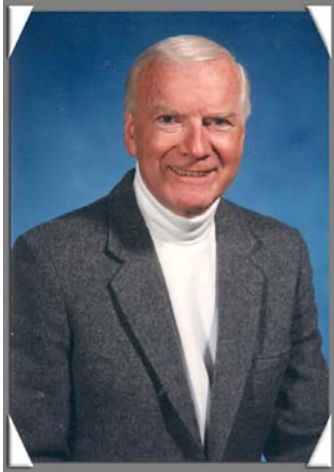
For more information contact:

Jeffrey Butz, President PPWA
Paulinskill - Pequest Watershed Assoc.
P.O. 740, Blairstown, NJ 07825



IN TRIBUTE TO RVC TRUSTEE TIMOTHY HOURIHAN

The trustees and friends of RVC note with deep regret the passing of Timothy Hourihan, 78, this past July. Tim had been a trustee for more than 10 years, and was passionately devoted to supporting our goals of preserving open space and the natural environment. His sound counsel was always welcomed. We will miss his easy, friendly manner and ready ability to get to the heart of matters.



Tim had a long record of public service. In 1994, Tim retired from the Catholic priesthood, and married noted artist Dorothy Dierks Harris. They had many happy years in Warren County. Dorothy also served as a RVC Trustee.

As the expression goes, they threw away the mold after they made Tim. He is sorely missed by all who knew him. His spiritual dedication to the RVC continues to inspire us to do great things.

THERE IS STILL TIME TO CAPTURE CONSERVATION TAX DEDUCTION

In 2006, Congress changed the tax incentive for voluntary conservation donations - donations by private landowners that retire development rights to protect wildlife, scenic and historic resources. But the 2006 law may expire at the end of 2007, so now is the time to act.

The tax incentive enables landowners to get a significant tax benefit for donations of conservation easements to qualified non-profit groups, such as RVC. The donations must dedicate the land as open space or a protected historic resource.

The 2006 Law:

- ◆ Raises the maximum deduction for donating a conservation easement from 30% of the adjusted gross income (AGI) in any year to 50%
- ◆ Allows qualified farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their AGI; and increases the number of years over which a donor can take the deductions from 6 years to 16 years.

For more information, visit:
www.lta.org/publicpolicy/taxbenefits.htm

Some of the highlights of Tim's career include:

- ◆ Served in the United States Army
- ◆ Graduated from Seton Hall University
- ◆ Ordained a priest after completing studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington, NJ
- ◆ Was director of St. Aloysius High School in Jersey City, where he coached basketball and baseball and led Boy Scouts
- ◆ Served in a group to study methods of improving housing for minorities in Hudson County and was a member of the Hudson County Planning Board
- ◆ Was appointed chairman of the Board of Arts and Cultural Commission in Hudson County
- ◆ Was named Hudson County "Irishman of the Year" in 1976 and co-led the St. Patrick's parade with Governor Brendan Byrne
- ◆ In 1977 appointed pastor of the Lady of the Lake Church in Verona, NJ
- ◆ Retired as Director of Goodwill Industries of New Jersey in Kearny after serving the board for 25 years
- ◆ In 1988 was presented the keys to the city by Mayor Samuel Spina of West Orange
- ◆ Served as vice-chairman of the Essex County Board of Health
- ◆ Served as trustee on the Monsignor John Hourihan Foundation for the handicapped and poor
- ◆ Served as chaplain to various police departments, fire departments, VFW's, and convalescent homes.

Thank you to Dorothy Hourihan and the following donors for their generous donation in memory of Tim Hourihan:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| ◆ Lynne Atlas-Wittkin | ◆ Florence Jacobson |
| ◆ Dorothy Bosi | ◆ Robert A. Kaslander |
| ◆ Karen Brobeck | ◆ John & Carol Kernoschak |
| ◆ Estella Burke | ◆ Eileen Kmec |
| ◆ Ingrid Burke | ◆ John & Marion Lynch |
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| ◆ John & Betty Critchley | ◆ Roman & Debra Osadka |
| ◆ Frank & Betty Ferrari | ◆ Maria Rost |
| ◆ Elaine Foster | |

Looking for a unique and meaningful gift?

- ◆ Introduce your friends and family to the Ridge and Valley Conservancy through with a **Gift Membership**. Show them that you believe in conserving open space.
- ◆ Make a donation **In Honor** of someone special to celebrate a milestone or accomplishment or just let them know that you are thinking of them.
- ◆ Gifts **In Memory** are a wonderful way to celebrate a loved one.