

Conservation Update



WETLANDS AND WATERWAYS TOUR September 27, 2012



Muddy Paws



Kline Road



Seven Willows



Chicory Lane

Fifty-five people participated in the Wetlands and Waterways Tour in Penns Valley on Thursday, September 27. The Tour was the last in a series of summer environmental education events sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, the Centre County Conservation District and the Penns Valley Conservation Association.

The September 27 tour began at Muddy Paws Marsh along route 45 outside Spring Mills. Landowners Greg and Mary Kay Williams welcomed the visitors with a tour of the wetlands and provided a history of the property. USFWS biologist Mark Roberts spoke about the restoration project, undertaken in 2004 with funding from USFWS, Ducks Unlimited, and the Penns Valley Conservation Association Growing Greener grant. Other partners included the Centre County Conservation District and ClearWater Conservancy. On the tour Jim Julian, PSU professor at PSU-Altoona enlightened the group about the amphibian life at Muddy Paws, which he has been studying for several years.

PVCA Board member George Kelly unfolded the story of the next site, the Kline Road Stream Restoration, in a power point presentation. Slides recounted the step-by-step process of constructing a 600-foot mudsill and two log vanes in order to restore an eroded bank. The photos revealed the variety of partners who made this restoration possible. Pa Fish and Boat Commission and USFWS personnel completed the design and construction, assisted by a crew from the Quehanna Boot Camp, the Penns Valley soccer team, PVCA volunteers and Amish help. Former Penns Valley student Stephan Kelly designed and planted a riparian buffer as his senior project. North Central Pa Conservancy, PVCA, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and USFWS provided funding.

At the third site, Seven Willows, the group entered Lysle Sherwin's outdoor classroom, complete with displays about PVCA projects lining the driveway. They saw the structures that Lysle installed in 2009. The dual purposes of this project were to provide fish habitat improvement and to stabilize the stream bank, preventing sediment from entering Penns Creek. USFWS performed the work, utilizing funds from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a Conservation District NFWF grant and the landowner.

The last stop of the tour provided a glimpse of the Chicory Lane Farm, focusing on the vernal pools and wetland areas. USFWS biologist Adam Smith joined landowners John and Catherine Smith on a walk that included riparian buffer plantings from ten years ago. They educated the group about native and exotic (invasive) plants and the benefits of wetland areas. USFWS constructed the vernal pools in 2002 with funding from a PVCA Growing Greener Grant.

Feedback from the participants of this tour indicated a satisfied and appreciative audience. It was a great opportunity to learn about conservation efforts in Penns Valley.

