

CONSERVANCY BOARD MEMBERS

Officers & Executive Board

President

Vincent Verbeke

Vice President

Robert Andronici

Secretary

John Hook

Treasurer

Blake Gall

Immediate Past President

Ronald J. Woodhead

Directors

Robert Andronici

Jeff Deitrich

Bob Frick

Blake Gall

Gary Gentzler

John Hook

Dan Jones

Erich May

John R. Mentzell

Patrick Scholl

Dan Sieminski

Karl Shellenberger

Tom Smyth

Kim Steiner

J. Alan Stewart

Vincent Verbeke

Timothy White

Douglas Wion

Ronald J. Woodhead

Appointees

Jon D. Brooks

Alan Cameron

Luke Lipsky

Carter Satterfield

Active Directors Emeritus

Ben Bronstein

Pat Farrell

Bill Jaffe

Ralph O. Mumma

Ken Reeves

Anne Riley

Contact Us

Our address for donations, address updates and correspondence is:
Mount Nittany Conservancy
P.O. Box 296, State College, PA
16804-0296

You may also reach us via email at Info@MtNittany.org.

MOUNT NITTANY NEWS

November 2009

Vol. 3 Number 1

Nittany
MOUNT
CONSERVANCY

www.mtnittany.org

Trail Signs and Maps to Help Hikers

By Jeff Deitrich, Director

Visitors to the Mountain this fall began to see the fruits of a long-awaited project that will help them navigate for years to come. MNC began installing a wayfinding system of trail signs at critical intersections and points on the paths.

While this project has been in mind for many years, reports of people becoming lost on the Mountain have increased in recent years. MNC decided it was time to move forward after it found new models of metal signs that are extremely resistant to vandalism.

Several directors were instrumental in advancing the project, and, with the help of a grant from the Centre County Community Foundation, the signs were purchased this summer. Bob Andronici, chair of the Mountain Committee, led the charge, and Gary Gentzler

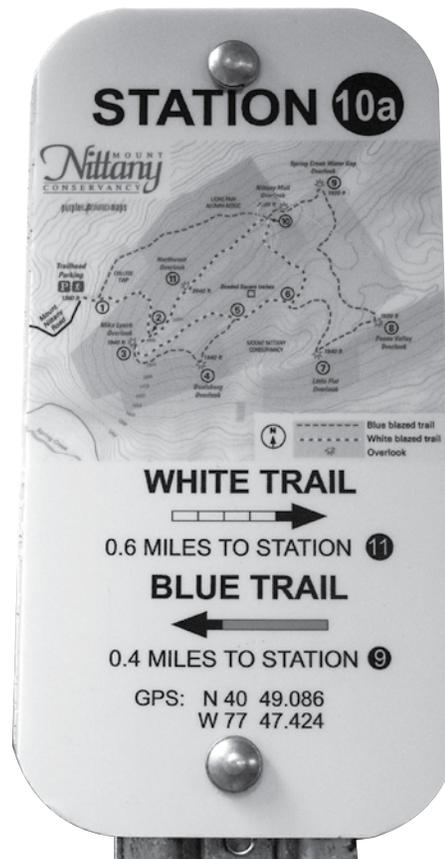
researched and recommended the type of signs to use. The project was completed with tremendous help from MNC directors Vince Verbeke, Tim White, Bob Frick, and Blake Gall, who also donated use of his new four-wheeler to haul cement and other materials up the mountain. MNC was granted access through the property of neighbor Wilhelm Kogelmann. Andronici said the project would have taken two years to complete without the ability to get heavy materials to the top and Mr. Kogelmann's granted access.

Likewise, the project would not have happened without the help of many Penn State groups who volunteered. Circle K, Phi Gamma Delta and Phi Mu Delta fraternities, and the Blue and White Society spent significant time digging holes through mountain rock and erecting the signs in deep cement footers. In addition, these groups helped clear the trails of a significant number of trees that came down during the freak Homecoming snow storm in mid October. Many thanks go to those organizations for hours upon hours of hard labor.

Concurrent with this project, MNC has developed a new map to be published soon on the Web site, in its newsletter, and in its brochures. The map includes distances between major points on the trails and numbered markers where the new trail signs are and will be erected, including GPS coordinates for those locations.

MNC would like to thank Michael Hermann of Purple Lizard Maps for completing the map project.

Newly-installed trail signs will help visitors navigate the Mountain.



Working Hard for the Mountain 2009 a Banner Year ... Moving Forward and Up

By Vince Verbeke, President

The Mount Nittany Conservancy (MNC) board, community volunteers, and our friends and supporters (YOU!) all contributed in some fashion toward an outstanding 2009. Together we continued to protect the Mountain and enhance our visitors experience on the Mountain. You will find more details on our activities later in the newsletter, but here are some HIGHLIGHTS!

Gypsy Moth - The gypsy moth outbreak of the past two years reached its zenith and is now in steep decline. The cool, wet 2009 spring was a welcome change from the warm, dry springs we've had for several years during which gypsy moth exploded in numbers. The wet weather allowed the gypsy moth fungus to dramatically reduce populations before they reached the stage of causing serious defoliation. There has been some tree mortality, not unexpected based on the condition of trees at the end of last summer. From a safety standpoint, there is a need to remove some trees along both the Blue and White trails. Removal of safety hazards posed by dead trees close to trails will be a high priority for the near future.

Respect our Neighbors - We've kicked off a renewed effort to connect with adjacent property owners of Lions Paw and Conservancy lands. The Conservancy hosted a meeting of property owners this fall called *Keeping the Mountain Green: A Meeting of Neighbors*. At the event we shared our plans with them. In return, we learned that our neighbors have all too often had to help wayward hikers who have descended Mt. Nittany on the Oak Hall side. Our neighbors have even driven them back to the Lemont side on many occasions. We'd like to extend a huge thanks to them for helping our visitors.

Wayfinder Project - On Labor Day 2008, a State College woman and her three children were reported lost on Mt. Nittany. Fortunately, a search team found them uninjured - off the marked trails on the backside of the Mountain. **To stop a repeat of this incident**, your MNC board has spearheaded an effort to plot the GPS coordinates for 11 key points on the Blue and White trails. New signage, made up of galvanized metal posts with plans to surround this with wood cladding to resemble a 4" x 4" wooden post, have been put in place this fall. In addition, a new trail map is being created

with these accurate locations and distances. This map will also be used on new brochures and to update the trail head sign.

"Your MNC board has spearheaded an effort to plot the GPS coordinates for 11 key points on the Blue and White trails. New signage, made up of galvanized metal posts with plans to surround this with wood cladding to resemble a 4" x 4" wooden post, have been put in place..."

On the Web - Last year MNC hired a photographer to document the Mountain through all four seasons. We plan to have the pictures up on the web site, <http://mtnittany.org>, soon. We've also been adding a number of community pictures on the web site as well. Check out our *Mountain Pics* link. We're also using Twitter and Facebook. You can follow us from the web site. Finally, this ESPN article, <http://snipurl.com/espn-hike>, listed us as one of the five must see's of State College.

We've accomplished a great deal this year but we have more plans for the future. To reach these goals, we need your renewed support. Please support the future of Mt. Nittany by:

- purchasing one or more Life Estate Deeds to honor family and friends
- join as a "Friend of Mt. Nittany" each year by making a generous, tax-deductible donation

Find more information on how to support the Mountain on page 4.

If you haven't made the trip to the Mountain lately, please come and visit in 2010. Come, climb the Mountain. Explore the Mountain. See the new signage. Gaze out over the newly cleared overlooks. Be inspired all over again. **Let's keep Mt. Nittany the symbol of Happy Valley.** Thank you for your continued support!



Check out this great fall photo in full color, as well as others from throughout the seasons, by following the "Mountain Pics" link at www.mtnittany.org.

Keeping the Mountain Green: A Meeting of Neighbors

By Erich May, MNC Board Member

The Development Committee hosted *Keeping the Mountain Green: A Meeting of Neighbors* on the evening of October 14 at Medlar Field at Lubrano Park (home of the State College Spikes) in a suite that afforded a nice view of Mt. Nittany.

Every adjacent property owner was invited, as were representatives of College and Harris Townships. In attendance were nine neighbors, ten board members, and Bill Hilshey, conservation easement manager for ClearWater Conservancy.

Bill came to talk about the benefits of conservation easements—to both the land and to landowners. Conservation easements have grown in popularity and importance in the last twenty years, partly because of federal tax laws.

Currently, those who donate conservation easements can deduct as much as 50 percent of their adjusted gross income in their federal tax return, and if the deduction is not used up, they can carry it over for up to 15 years. The gift, in this case, would be the value of the development rights ceded in the conservation easement.

Bill said conservation easements can allow additions to homes on the land or any

“One of the community context goals is to ‘participate and advocate in community dialogue related to strategic connections affecting the Mountain values and opportunities.’”



A view of Mt. Nittany from Medlar Field at Lubrano Park.

number of modifications to the property, and conservation easements can be given on a portion of a property, rather than the entire parcel, he added.

Bill ended the evening by saying that he would be happy to work with any Mt. Nittany landowners who were considering donating a conservation easement to the Mount Nittany Conservancy.

Following introductions at the start of the meeting, president Vince Verbeke talked about his youth on a farm and its lasting impact in his love for the land. He noted that the recent gypsy moth threat had reinvigorated the Mount Nittany Conservancy. “We can’t just stand still,” said Vince.

Committee chairs Bob Andronici (Mountain Committee), Jeff Deitrich (Program Committee) and Dan Jones (Master Plan Committee) gave updates on a wide variety of projects that MNC is pursuing for the Mountain (see pg. 4). In the master plan, one of the community context goals is to “participate and advocate in community dialogue related to strategic connections affecting the Mountain values and opportunities.” Dan noted that this meeting was just such an effort.

The neighbors, in turn, provided feedback on these recent developments, and they touched on several topics ranging from parking in the shale hole to litter on the trails to plans for the Mike Lynch Overlook.

EMAIL

We Need Your Email Address

Having a high percentage of email addresses is a critical advantage to the Mount Nittany Conservancy. Why? It saves us money on paper and printing, it enables us to communicate with you more frequently, and it allows us to keep you informed of the latest news,

events and activities regarding the Mountain.

We will never sell, trade or give away your email address – ever. Your email address will be stored in our secure database and used solely for MNC communications.

So please update your email address today to stay informed on the latest news and activities. **You can send your email address directly to us at relations firm at info@MtNittany.org or update it on the back of the enclosed form.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

On Mt. Nittany...

News and Notes from various committee members...

- Mountain Committee chair Bob Andronici notes that, in addition to the trail sign and map projects mentioned on pg. 1, recent trail and vista maintenance was conducted by several campus groups, including Gamma Sigma Sigma National Service Sorority and the **Pennsylvania Conservation Corps**. The Corps, in particular, spent considerable hours doing very heavy labor opening vistas and clearing trails of dangerous trees. New director Karl Shellenberger will be spearheading an effort to upgrade several overlooks with environmentally sound, hiker friendly erosion protection methods.
- Program Committee chair Jeff Deitrich says the committee is working on redesigning brochures to make further use of the new maps, which include GPS locations of the new signs on the Blue and White Trails. To help pay for these new brochures, which will be distributed locally and at sites to

be determined across Pennsylvania, MNC was awarded a **grant of \$4,825 from the Central Pennsylvania Convention & Visitors Bureau**. The fruits of another project completed this fall are already available online and will be used in the brochure and other materials. Thanks to student **Doug Bauman** for his excellent photography skills.

- Master Plan chairman Dan Jones has nearly wrapped up the strategic planning process. His committee has been working to “clarify the priorities and goals” of MNC. The committee has categorized Conservancy goals according to environment, scenery, history, recreation and community context.
- The board of directors unanimously agreed to amend all language regarding fires on the mountain. Henceforth, **no fires are permitted** on Conservancy land.
- Finally, MNC said farewell to **Director Emeritus William L. Welch, Jr.**, mayor of State College, who passed away on September 4, 2009. His commitment to our community will be greatly missed.

Donors to Date

This listing represents those donors since July 1, 2009 to October 31, 2009.

Alice R. Deihl, Mill Hall PA
 Rick M. Hammond, Lemont PA (Life Time Deed)
 Joseph B. Humphreys, Boalsburg PA
 Shaun and Julie Mason, Pittsburgh PA (Life Time Deed)
 Kirsten McGrath, Venetia PA (Life Time Deed)
 Dwain & Susan Smith, Hanover PA (Life Time Deed)
 Jeffrey A. Terosky, New York NY

Add your name to the list! Read the article below for more information.

On the Web

Be sure to check out our web site, <http://mtnittany.org>.

We also have expanded our online presence! You can now:

- ✓ Become a fan of our Facebook page
- ✓ Join our Facebook group
- ✓ Follow us on Twitter

Find more information on the home page at <http://mtnittany.org>.

FUNDRAISING

Top Reasons to Donate to MNC!

Contributions support important efforts like these every year...

1. More than 200,000 people hike Mt. Nittany, Centre County's #1 attraction, each year.
2. The 2008 and 2009 Gypsy Moth spraying program protected our beautiful Mountain.
3. New wayfinding signs and maps on the trails are enhancing safety and enjoyment on Mt. Nittany. Similarly, new maps and brochures are being printed.
4. Work projects continue to clear scenic overlooks for much better views of Happy Valley.
5. We partner with numerous Penn State, school, and community groups to groom

and clean trails, clear fallen trees, and work on dangerous erosion problems at key locations.

You can allocate your gift in one of two ways:

Deeds:

Every square inch counts when it comes to saving Mount Nittany! And you can help us do just that by purchasing a genuine life-estate deed to one square inch of Mount Nittany Conservancy land. The location of these deeds can be seen by clicking on Trail Map. This deed makes a truly elegant gift and is a terrific way to show your love of the Mountain. The 15½ X 13 inch deed is a work of art and is available framed, ready to hang on your wall, for only \$150.00, shipping included. Unframed deeds are also available; same great deed, but at half the price. Find more

information at www.mtnittany.org.

Friend of Mt. Nittany:

When you support the Conservancy by becoming a member of Friends of the Conservancy, you will receive our newsletter and the satisfaction of knowing that the Mountain remains preserved today, thanks to your efforts. You can become a Friend by making a tax-deductible donation. There are three ways to become a Friend:

- ✓ Online at www.mtnittany.org.
- ✓ By calling 800-975-6699.
- ✓ By completing and mailing the enclosed form to:

Mt. Nittany Conservancy
 P.O. Box 296
 State College, PA 16804-0296