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PACOLET AREA CONSERVANCY NEWS

saving the places you love

828-859-5060

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www.pacolet.org

Winter 2012

“When we are born onto this earth we inherit three elements.
We inherit the Air, and the Water, and the Land.
We should be good stewards of our inheritance.”

Printed on recycled paper

*– Skip Morse at the dedication of Warrior Mountain Nature Preserve
in memory of Willis Haythorn and David Wells, October 23, 1996.*

From the PAC Board President

Greetings! This newsletter is meant, first of all, to thank all of you who are friends and supporters of the Pacolet Area Conservancy. We have seen some significant changes in our organization during the past year, and are beginning 2012 with strength, energy and spirit, thanks to you. It takes all of us who care about protecting our beloved foothills area, working together, to achieve the PAC goal: “To provide a legacy that will endure and be valued by generations to come.”

Second, I would like to look back on 2011 and forward to exciting plans for this year, already well underway! In February, 2011, PAC presented a Horse Farm Conservation Forum at the newly renovated Old Tryon Depot in Tryon. The well-attended Forum was enjoyable and informative, providing valuable information about protecting horse farms through conservation easements. In May our annual PACWalk was a pleasure for all who came! For the first time, a trail race was added, which generated much enthusiasm! The September Spectacular Horse Show gave PAC another opportunity to participate in community events and make people aware of our organization. A significant beginning in 2011 was the first program at the Anne Elizabeth Suratt Nature Center at Walnut Creek. (Please see Walnut Creek articles on page 7.) We ended the year with our traditional Holiday Party, always a welcome celebration.

In preparing to write this letter, I have been reading old newsletters, going back as far as 1991. One thing that impressed me was the number of PAC friends who have continued their support over the years. It is a wonderful feeling, and more than a little humbling, to be part of an organization that inspires such loyalty and confidence. Through the years, the old friends have been joined by many new friends. This is what the word “sustainability” means to me! Once again, thank you!

In a 1996 newsletter I found the quote printed above, spoken by Skip Morse. He is not with us now, but is fondly remembered by many of us. His statement represents what PAC was all about then, and remains so today. We will be good stewards.

Carol Fort

PACWalk and PACRun

Since 2005, PACWalk has been our spring fling! Walkers gather on the first Saturday in May to enjoy a route that is planned and well-marked, with water stations at intervals along the way. Afterwards, they gather for refreshments and awards, which can be very creative! In 2010, Tryon Estates invited PAC to hold PACWalk on its grounds. It was a huge success! Tryon Estates residents adopted the event, helping to organize and raise funds to ensure its success. Participants may choose a short walk along a paved path next to the lake, or a longer trail through the woods on the property. An added treat that year was a complimentary lunch in the lovely Tryon Estates dining room, where door prizes and awards could be presented in comfort! In 2011, PACRun was added to the events of the day. A professional timer was on hand to record the runners’ time, and medals were presented at the end of the run. Afterwards, PACWalk went on as usual, and runners and walkers were invited back to Tryon Estates for celebration, prizes, fun and lunch!



*The date is May 5th
so please put it on your calendar!*



This newsletter is generously underwritten by



Millard & Company



Meet Our Staff

Pam Torlina, Land Protection Specialist



Pam Torlina joined PAC in 2006 as Land Protection Specialist (LPS). Experienced as a field biologist, naturalist and interpreter, and outdoor educator, Pam is skilled in fish and wildlife management and is versed in general biology, botany, geology, chemistry, ecology, cell biology, genetics, and human anatomy. Her photos have been published in the journals, "Bird Studies Canada," and "Ontario Field Ornithologists." Her work experience includes the SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Biology Laboratory at USC Upstate, and Greenville SC Parks and Recreation – Youth Bureau. "Pam is the professional on staff," says PAC board president Carole Bartol. "She provides us with superior field assessments and top rate baseline documentation, just for starters." In addition to her LPS duties, she has instructed Master Naturalist classes conducted at FENCE through Clemson University extension for several years. She has presented programs to school classes, 4-H groups, service clubs and other groups, conducts a very successful hiking series, and works with the PAC Kudzu Warriors to battle that invasive threat. PAC is very fortunate to have a person with her expertise, energy, and dedication to the organization on staff. Thanks, Pam!



Debra Hansborough, Office Assistant

Debra joined PAC in February of 2008, thanks to a generous grant from the Polk County Community Foundation. Her task was to begin background work to enable PAC to apply for accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance. After the grant was completed, she agreed to stay as office assistant. Her knowledge and skills make her a very valuable addition to the PAC staff. Thanks, Debra!



Susan Kelley, Office Volunteer

Susan is every organization's dream! She volunteers faithfully two mornings each week in the office and is indispensable to day-to-day operations. She generates the thank-you letters to all of you PAC supporters, manages the mailing lists, coordinates volunteers for special projects, and countless other tasks. Working with Pam, Debra, volunteers and board members, she is a very important member of the PAC team. Thanks, Susan!

PAC 2011 Volunteers

We at PAC want to express our most sincere thanks to the dedicated volunteers who helped us during 2011! Our volunteers cleared trails, destroyed kudzu, baked cookies, prepared mailings, helped monitor properties, helped with events, served on committees, took pictures, and helped in countless ways. Their willingness to help, their enthusiasm for PAC, and their belief in its mission are greatly appreciated.

Anderson, Phil	Hughes, Wally	Pack, Gerald
Anderson, Tim	Jackson, Bill	Pegg, Debbie
Bartlett, Nathan	Johann, Susan	Penfold, Susan
Bartol, Carole & Chris	Kelley, Susan	Poe, Alex & Larry
Boals, Joe	Kemp, Rebecca	Rice, Dave & Isabel
Boyd, Gretchen & Larry	King, Marie & Steve	Roberta Ratterree
Bright, Hal	Kinney, Craig	Salley, Alex
Burke, Peggy	Lamb, Dibbit	Savard, Mary
Carter, Sherry	Laughridge, Beth	Smith, Mara & Ford
Cartwright, Mari	Lee, Tim	Sprague, Linda
Catlin, Jeff	Leonard, Alan	Stockdale, Gail
Dittmar, Ray	Lindabury, Tryon	Strickland, Babs & Bob
Dougherty, Maggie	Lubin, Cindy	Taylor, Cathy
Eller, Caroline	Lytte, Tommy & Missy	Tobey, Bob
Ewing, Annie	Macaulay, Catherine	Torlina, Lois
Gargiulo, Ann & John	McKinstry, Nancy & Bob	Veh, Wanda
Geddings, Jay	Meeske, Carol	Walter, Christel & Manfred
Gosser, Judith	Meyers, Scott	Wassong, Larry
Greaves, Rainey	Miner, Betsy & Dee	Weitzen, Ken
Grobe, Randy	Miner, Greg	White, Stephanie
Hall, Barbara & Rob	Mullen, Sue	Wright, Kathy
Hearon, Chuck	Naujoks, Nadine	



Linda Sprague, Barbara Hall & Susan Kelley prepare a mailing.



Nancy McKinstry & Sherry Carter welcome PACWalk participants.

Would you like to join our volunteers?

We can put you to work!

Give us a call at 859-5060 and we can talk about it!

Walker Accepts New Position

Sally Walker, former Executive Director of PAC, has accepted the position of Executive Director of the Genesee Valley Conservancy in New York. We wish her every happiness and success in her new position, which she assumed in January of this year.

Officers and Board of Directors

Carole Bartol, *President* - Lorraine (Rainey) Greaves, *Vice President*

Roberta Ratterree, *Treasurer* - Elizabeth (Dibbit) Lamb, *Secretary*

Larry Boyd - Sherry Carter - John Gargiulo - Jay Geddings - Thomas Lytle

Catherine Macaulay - Nancy McKinstry - Sue Mullen - Gerald Pack - Cathy Taylor

Staff

Pam Torlina, *Land Protection Specialist* - Debra Hansborough, *Office Assistant* - Susan Kelley, *Office Volunteer*

Hope Slater Giving Society Established



A significant PAC event in July of 2011 was the establishment of the Hope Slater Giving Society, in honor of Hope, a steadfast PAC supporter and wife of founder Bud Slater. In the words of her son Dave, "My mother... remained committed, even after losing her husband, to continue to be a core volunteer for every fundraising event, stuffing envelopes, addressing newsletters, taking tickets at events, and serving as cashier at the silent auctions. She loved everything about PAC and so enjoyed remaining a part of the broad community that the Pacolet Area Conservancy has become to the many, many people who have joined our community to enjoy what she and Bud loved from the time they moved here in 1953." Dave and his wife Patty became the first members of the new Society.

We are proud to honor Hope by giving PAC supporters the opportunity to contribute to the organization she so loved. Gifts can be in cash, as pledges, or as part of a planned giving program for the future.

Torlina Interviewed for Land for Tomorrow



PAC's own Land Protection Specialist, Pam Torlina, was chosen to be interviewed for a social media campaign for Land for Tomorrow, which will include short videos of experts on various topics. Land for Tomorrow is a non-profit partnership of concerned citizens, businesses, interest groups, and local governments urging the General Assembly to fully fund North Carolina's four conservation trust funds. Valerie True, Coalition Coordinator for Blue Ridge Forever, conducted the interview on the chilly morning of January 20 at a PAC-protected property near Saluda. The topic was water quality, and Pam responded to questions regarding the ecological impact of a clean and protected source, how it affects people in the community, how PAC educates regarding the importance of protecting our water resources, and what projects she is proud of. A portion of the interview is posted on the Land for Tomorrow Facebook page, as well as PAC's Facebook page. You can also find it on YouTube!



Pam Torlina shows birds and related items to attentive audience following the Doug Elliott presentation at Walnut Creek nature center.

Programs at Walnut Creek



Tim Lee

In 2011 an exciting new collaboration was begun with Babs and Bob Strickland, who wanted to make their beautiful Anne Elizabeth Suratt Nature Center available to the public through classes and presentations. PAC was a natural partner, since the Stricklands already had an easement on 1,400 acres and were very familiar with PAC and its mission. The partnership was born! PAC LPS Pam Torlina arranged for the first presentation by naturalist Tim Lee on the American Black Bear, which attracted an enthusiastic audience on Saturday, October 22, at 10:30 a.m.

The next presentation followed on Saturday, January 28. Approximately 80 people filled the room as noted naturalist, storyteller and musician Doug Elliott treated them to his "Woodlore and Wildwoods Wisdom." They listened, laughed and sang on cue, learning about nature in the most enjoyable way! Afterwards, thanks to a very pleasant day for January, Doug led a short nature walk on a nearby trail. If you would like more information on Doug, please visit his website at www.dougelliott.com.



Babs Strickland, Doug Elliott & Pam Torlina

Another program is planned for Saturday, March 24, at 10:00, when botanist David Campbell will present a digital slide show on flora and landscapes of the Southern Mountain region. David will throw in a few shots of snakes and insects, to keep things lively! You will have an opportunity to ask questions and, weather permitting, take a woodland walk. David has spent more than 25 years working as a field botanist, and has conducted studies in the United States, Canada, Costa Rica, and the United Kingdom. Several of his publications have appeared in peer-review journals. He currently lives in Hickory and is affiliated with the UNCC Herbarium housed at the Dr. James Matthews Center for Biodiversity Studies in Charlotte.

Visit the PAC website
www.pacolet.org
and friend us on Facebook!

2011 Holiday Party

PHOTOS BY CHRIS BARTOL



Hostess Babs Strickland, Mary Ann & Olin Sansbury

The traditional PAC Holiday Party was held on December 4, 2011, at the home of Babs and Bob Strickland. The party, always held the first Sunday in December, has become the start of the season for PAC supporters – a time to get together in celebration and fellowship. For the first time, the event was planned as a brunch instead of later in the day, so that guests could enjoy the spectacular view of the mountains and countryside from the Strickland's lovely home. Taking advantage of a very pleasant December day, guests enjoyed being outside on the porches as well as inside, where food and beverages were served. Catering was provided by J. P. DeBeuf, and the dedicated corps of PAC Dessert Makers came through

with an array of tempting sweets

to complete the meal. The silent auction was a big attraction, and attendees browsed among the interesting and varied assortment of items donated by generous supporters. A special treat was the opportunity to visit the Strickland's Anne Elizabeth Suratt Nature Center. Transportation, graciously provided by Tryon Estates, was available to take those who wished to go to the center, a short distance from the home. Land Protection Specialist Pam Torlina was there to welcome guests and explain the special features of the beautiful building, which will be used for educational programs. More desserts and eggnog awaited those who might still be hungry! Many thanks to PAC's Development Committee, who planned the event, and to Babs and Bob Strickland for graciously opening their lovely home for the occasion. In the spirit of holiday sharing, guests at the Holiday Party had the opportunity to contribute to a gift for Outreach, which does so much to help people in our community. Outreach Executive Director Carol Newton accepted the gift and expressed thanks on behalf of her organization.

Kudzu Warriors Battle On

War was declared on February 7, 2011. The battlefield was the 185-acre PAC-protected Wilder Forest. PAC's intrepid KUDZU WARRIORS took on that tenacious non-native invasive, which has established a stronghold in the lower part of the preserve and crowded out beautiful native plants such as trillium, Jack in the pulpit and Solomon's seal. On Mondays thereafter, weather permitting, the dedicated corps of volunteers has met to remove the kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*) as well as other non-native invasives. (Hikers will be pleased to learn that one of those being removed is poison ivy growing beside the trails!)

The Norman Wilder Forest was opened to the public in September, 2001, named for conservationist and former PAC board president Norman Wilder. Trails wind through the beautiful mixed hardwood forest on the slopes of Little Warrior Mountain, rewarding hikers with beautiful vistas, stunning rock walls, and a waterfall. Brochures are available at the PAC office, and the last hike of the spring series is at Wilder Forest.

Thanks to the Kudzu Warriors, Wilder Forest is being freed of kudzu and native plants are coming back. There is much more information on PAC's website, www.pacolet.org, including before and after pictures. But the battle is not over yet! PAC could use more warriors, or funds to purchase new tools. If you would like to help, please call the PAC office at 859-5060.



Team leader Greg Miner with Bill Jackson, Alex Salley and Pam Torlina.

February 17	Peter's Creek Heritage Preserve
March 2	Paris Mountain State Park
March 16	Chestnut Ridge Heritage Preserve
March 30	Rainbow Falls, accessed from Jones Gap State Park
April 13	Green River Game Lands
April 21	Norman Wilder Forest SATURDAY

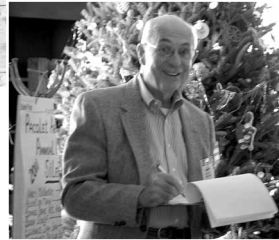
For more detail on hike arrangements, please see www.pacolet.org, visit PAC's Facebook page, or call the PAC office at 859-5060.

PAC's "Wise Up About Watersheds" Program Still Going Strong

Educating about the importance of watersheds has long been a priority at PAC. Since 2003, when PAC was able to purchase a watershed model through the generosity of Tryon Rotary, Thermal Belt Rotary and a private donor, members of PAC's Education Committee have been presenting the "Wise Up About Watersheds" program to 4-H Club members and other students. Adults also find it fun and fascinating! Interested in learning more? Give us a call at the PAC office at 859-5060.



Jeff & Sherry Carter, Melinda Holland, Dibbit Lamb, Helen Byrd, Roberta Ratterree, Wyllys Taylor, Jeff Byrd, & Renee McDermott enjoy brunch.



John Gargiulo, Silent Auction Maestro

Let's Go Hiking!

Join LPS Pam Torlina on Fridays this spring on a new series of hikes through the hills and forests we love. Hikers will meet at various locations and leave promptly at 8:30, returning no later than 3:00. Car-pooling will be organized at meeting locations. Note: last hike is on Saturday.



PHOTO: CHRIS BARTOL

Meet Tommy Lytle, PAC Board Member

by Ford and Mara Smith

Would you like to take a nature hike with a PAC board member who is practically a botanist? If so, be careful what might happen! Conservation writer Janisse Ray gives this guidance:

"I'm going to give you some advice right away about botanists. Never go out in the woods with them. Never go anywhere. If you do, you'll never get to where you're going. They want to stop every few feet to bend down and look at something. They carry little magnifying glasses with them so they can count parts of flowers so small they'd get lost in a thimble. The botanists are shamelessly looking to see if leaves are hairy or smooth, if they have glands, how their veins run. You have to keep your body covered when you're with botanists."

Now, would you like to take a walk with a botanist who can sing and who can play piano, saxophone, and guitar (though not all at the same time)? Consider that this same person has conducted classes and seminars for students and for doctors. All of these qualities and more are present in Tommy Lytle, former board president of the Spartanburg Area Conservancy, and, now, board member of PAC.

Tommy majored in biology at Wofford, earned his teacher certification at Converse, started doctoral studies in plant physiology at Clemson. After teaching biology in DeKalb County Schools, GA, he moved into a career in pharmaceutical sales. Finally, he focused on educational seminars for physicians. With his background in biology, he found himself able to move between the little pictures and big pictures of the world.

In 2003, Tommy and his wife, Missy, moved from Spartanburg to Polk County. Both sets of parents had lived in the area; frequent visits convinced them this was the place to live. The chosen Hunting Country property was special. It featured a house designed by Carter Brown and forty-five remarkably undisturbed acres.

The couple considered a conservation easement on their land as a way to maintain its low-density and to ensure its natural setting. An important bonus was the ability to take advantage of a significant tax benefit.

In the process, the Lytles met PAC Land Protection Specialist, Pam Torlina. Tommy helped with all the necessary environmental surveys and found it to be a great experience. They discovered the property contained two of PAC's "Treasured Trees," a Burford holly and a tea olive. Tommy advises, "Don't be afraid of a conservation easement. You can still cut in trails, remove invasive species, even, gather firewood."

The easement success opened up the opportunity for him to join the PAC board in 2009. He reports the work has been rewarding though challenging. He is helping guide a structural reorganization that will allow PAC to become fiscally stronger. Another priority is to encourage cooperative efforts with various government agencies and other organizations. One large need is to facilitate the reclamation of damaged areas.

While Tommy has been assisting with monitoring stream quality, trail maintenance, and property appraisals (particularly plants), a long-term goal is to gain higher youth participation through educational programs. To pursue that path, he now serves as chairman of PAC's Education Committee. In that position, he wants to develop joint offerings with the county extension service and county schools. Also, he would like to expand activities such as birding opportunities, watershed studies, guided walks, and seminars.

His dream for PAC's future includes more people giving land easements; attending hikes, programs, and fundraisers (such as PAC Walk); donating time and money. He would like all to work to keep Polk rural and natural!

So, the next time there's an opportunity take a walk in the woods with Tommy Lytle, do it. You'll be amazed at the breadth of Tommy's observations on the world.



Bob McKinstry, Ford & Mara Smith & Cooper enjoy the Strickland's porch at the Holiday Party.

"We will be known forever
by the tracks we leave."

– Native American proverb



Missy & Tommy Lytle

This newsletter is all about saying “Thank you!” PAC is able to work for conservation of land and protection of clean water because of the loyal support of our donors and volunteers! It is our privilege to recognize the following businesses and individuals for their contributions.

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 Zelinskie, Bonita
 Zimmerman, Dave

In Memoriam

In 2011 PAC lost a good friend in Dr. Bob Shuford. Because of him, the 88.58 acre Weaverbarton Shuford Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary will forever be protected through a PAC conservation easement. The public is invited to enjoy the nature trails there, established by PAC. As Dr. Shuford said, “Wander along this woodland path to commune with nature and the inner self.” More information and trail maps are available at the PAC office.

We at PAC are grateful to the family of Joe Hamlin, who passed away on January 20 of this year, for requesting that memorial gifts be made to PAC. At press time, contributions had been made in his memory by

Carole and Chris Bartol - Donald Bell - Jeri and Warren Board - Liz Malloy
 Gwen Suesse - Helen and Chuck Trevathan - Jean Winslett - Elizabeth Landrum
 Susan Kelley - Diana Rankin - Susan Hettinger

We extend our sincere sympathy to the Hamlin family.

**“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs,
 but not every man’s greed.”**
 – Mahatma Gandhi, submitted by PAC board member Gerald Pack

Our Mission: To protect and conserve our area’s natural resources

Our Goal: To provide a legacy that will endure and be valued by generations to come