



THE EDWARD L. ROSE CONSERVANCY

Conservancy Currents



Winter 2016

Things are Happening at elrose.org!!

Take the nature challenge!
Watch the live feed of the peregrine falcons nesting atop a building in Harrisburg
Learn how a walk in the woods can help body and soul
See fun and interesting pictures of animals and nature
Find opportunities to participate in Citizen Science projects like the Great Backyard Bird Count

Our web site had been updated and our Facebook page is more active than ever. Not on Facebook? No problem - all of our postings can also be seen just by visiting the web site!

Table of Contents

[Things are Happening at elrose.org](http://elrose.org)
[Remembering Jean Neiley](#)
[New Conservation Easement for Woods Property](#)
[Conservation Easement Tax Incentive Made Permanent](#)
[Wild Things in Your Woodlands - American Mink](#)
[Upcoming Events](#)

Quick Links

[Our Website](#)
[Like us on Facebook!](#)
[Donate](#)
[Contact Us](#)



In Memoriam - Beloved Founding Member of the Edward L. Rose Conservancy

Jean Thompson Neiley 1925-2015

Jean Thompson Neiley, an instrumental, founding member of the Edward L. Rose Conservancy, passed away peacefully at her home in Kennebunk, Maine on November 21, 2015, at the age of 90. Jean and her husband, Chick, were long-time supporters of the Conservancy and were instrumental in the purchase of the High Point Preserve from the Rose family. Jean never wavered in her efforts to conserve the environment of Silver Lake.



To read more about Jean, visit

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/journaltribune/obituary.aspx?n=jean-thompson-neiley&pid=176722206&fhid=20907>

Waldo and Dana Woods Donate Conservation Easement on 35-acre Property in Bridgewater Township



Seated L-R Waldo Woods, Dana Woods – Standing Nancy Wottrich, Keith Oberg, Patty Bloomer, James Haley

The Edward L. Rose Conservancy is proud to announce that Mr. Waldo Woods and Mr. Dana Woods have placed a conservation easement on their 35 acres in Bridgewater Township and

donated “stewardship of that easement in perpetuity” to the Conservancy. This easement will permanently protect a critical forested headwater of Meshoppen Creek and a mature hardwood forest for many generations to come.

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that permanently restricts certain aspects of development to protect the conservation values of the property. When a landowner places a conservation easement on his/her land, he/she maintains ownership and use of the property and can sell it or pass it on to heirs. The land is subject to certain restrictions agreed upon by the landowner and the land trust. For example, a landowner might agree to limit development on his/her property to one residence. Future landowners are bound by these restrictions as well, and the land trust is responsible for upholding the terms of the easement. In addition to the satisfaction landowners get from knowing their land is protected in perpetuity, there are also three potential tax advantages to granting an easement: an income tax deduction; an estate tax benefit; and, possibly, a reduction in property taxes. Last but not least, landowners can place conservation easements on land with sub-surface gas leases and enjoy the benefits of both. Contact the E.L. Rose Conservancy at 570-278-9500 or visit our website at www.elrose.org for more information.



Good News for Conservation and for Landowners!

The Federal Enhanced Tax Incentive for Conservation Easement Donations has been Made Permanent

In a great victory for landowners interested in conservation the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations has been made permanent. In strong bipartisan action, the House voted 318-109 and the Senate voted 65-33 to pass the bills that included the incentive, and, the president signed it into law on December 18, 2015, and it applies retroactively to January 1, 2015. An earlier version of the incentive expired December 31, 2014. The incentive, considered by many to be the most important conservation legislation in 20 years, encourages landowners to place conservation easement on their land to protect important natural, scenic and historic resources.

What does this Mean for Landowners?

If you own land with important natural or historic resources, donating a voluntary conservation easement (also called conservation agreement) can be one of the smartest ways to conserve the land you love, while maintaining your private property rights and possibly realizing significant federal tax benefits.

The conservation easement tax incentive:

Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of his or her income in any year to 50 percent;
Allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100 percent of their income; and
Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years.

These changes apply to donations made at any time in 2015 and to all donations made after that. This is a powerful tool for allowing modest-income donors to receive greater credit for donating a very valuable conservation easement on property they own.

For more information, visit our web site at elrose.org and click on "Land Protection"

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

American Mink (*Mustela vison*)

The mink is a semi-aquatic member of the Mustelidae family. Its relatives include weasels, martens, fishers, wolverines, badgers and otters. The mink occurs throughout New York and Pennsylvania in areas with suitable habitat.

Adult male mink average two feet in length, including an 8-inch tail. They weigh 1.5 to 2 pounds. Female mink are slightly smaller than males and weigh up to half a pound less. Like weasels, the mink has short legs, a long neck and body, short head and a pointed muzzle. A mink's coat is thick, full and soft. The fur is dark chocolate brown on the back, blending into a slightly lighter shade on the belly. A distinguishing characteristic of mink is a small, white patch of fur on the chin.

Mink are very active and inquisitive animals, with a keen sense of smell and sight. They are most active at night and in early morning. On land, they move with a quick, bounding lope, which they can continue for miles. This characteristic lope leaves paired tracks, which stand out in the winter snow along stream banks and beaver ponds. Mink are at home in the water as well, and they swim and dive with ease.

Mink occupy a wide variety of wetland habitats but most commonly are found along streams and beaver dams in undeveloped rural areas. Here, they can be seen traveling from one stream bank to the other, investigating nearly every hole, crack, crevice and overhang that may hide a potential meal. Mink are best suited for areas with very good water quality, because these waters will hold the greatest concentrations and varieties of prey. Like most mustelids, they are agile and fierce fighters, killing prey with a hard bite to the back of the skull. Prey includes muskrats, mice, rabbits, shrews, fish, frogs, crayfish, insects, snakes, waterfowl, and other land birds. Mink are opportunists, feeding on whatever is most abundant or most easily caught. They occasionally kill more than they can eat and will cache carcasses in the winter and revisit them to feed. In turn, mink are prey for foxes, bobcats and great horned owls. In the wild, mink typically live to be 2 or 3 years old.

To find enough prey, males require a home range up to 3 square miles, while a females use a much smaller range. Individual territories overlap, and several animals in succession may use the same den. One mink will have several dens along its hunting route. They den in abandoned woodchuck tunnels, hollow logs, vacant muskrat lodges, holes in stone piles and beneath large tree roots. Dens are usually near water and may have more than one entrance. Mink line their nests with dried grass, leaves and feathers.

Overall habitat requirements for mink include an abundant food supply, permanent water, and undeveloped shores. Woodland owners who would like to enhance habitat for mink can focus on protecting water quality, and limiting the use of pesticides on lands adjacent to water. High quality, pesticide-free water improves insect populations, which in turn provide food for animals that mink prey upon, like frogs. Woodland owners can also create riparian and wetland buffers, and protect existing buffers from development. Brush piles can be created to serve as denning sites, if naturally occurring dens are not available. A few large trees felled and left on the ground can provide future logs for feeding and denning. Logs or fallen trees protruding into the water will provide cover for prey items as well.

by Kristi Sullivan

Upcoming Events

Greenwood Sanctuary Frog and Salamander Excursion

Save the date - register today!

When: Saturday, June 4, 1-3 pm

Where: Greenwood Sanctuary, Dimock, PA



Registration is required through the Montrose Adult School. A registration form can be found at <http://www.montroseadultschool.org/Registration-Form.pdf>. Please mail the form with your payment (\$5) to: Montrose Area Adult School, PO Box 433, Montrose, PA 18801

Join us for a fun and rewarding hike at the Conservancy's beautiful Greenwood Sanctuary where we will discover a variety of amphibian species common to the region. Learn how and where to search for salamanders, frogs and toads and find out about the unique biological characteristics and unusual life cycles of these animals. Explore their habit, habitat needs and steps you can take to benefit these animals. Find out how you can get involved in a newly launched effort to find and document the presence of amphibians and reptiles in Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Amphibian and Reptile Survey).