For over 35 years, Central PA Conservancy has served the region through consistent and strategic land protection projects while fostering a broad community of conservationists.
Dear CPC Members and Friends,

Thank you for all you have done to support your local land trust in 2019! This year has been one of transition for CPC as we look forward to a new decade of organizational growth to acquire, preserve, and protect more local land and natural resources in South-Central PA. We spent much of this year with a board-level, strategic planning initiative to help guide this growth.

As CPC approaches the end of our 10-year lease to operate the Ironmaster’s Mansion at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, we are very proud to report that this treasured resource will be in good hands as the Appalachian Trail Museum assumes operations in 2020. We are working in partnership to ensure a smooth transition there as CPC turns to invest resources on our core land protection mission. Establishing the Letort Spring Garden Preserve in Carlisle close to CPC offices is a lead priority, along with increasing the pace and strategies behind new easements and acquisitions in our service region. Our partnerships with other land trusts, regional collaboratives, and municipalities continue to be a critical means to advance conservation in our region.

Regular support from members is so important to maintaining our current growth and allowing CPC to be responsive to opportunities. Annual membership supports our core operations while we pursue grants and sponsorships for designated projects and events. Staffed by a small group of dedicated professionals, CPC has little overhead yet accomplishes a great deal each year to advance our mission. I urge you to please consider supporting CPC, and if you’ve already made a contribution this year, please consider a year-end gift. I share your commitment to preserving our unique landscapes, local watersheds, scenic ridges, agricultural lands and soils, and I thank you for entrusting CPC to carry out this mission.

In Conservation,

Kenneth R. Waidelich, CPC President

Photo by Fritz Geller-Grimm
After 10 years of CPC renovations, upgrades, overnight stays by the hiking community, special events, history tours, 6 youth conservation camps, and other programming, CPC will be handing off operations of the Ironmaster’s Mansion at Pine Grove Furnace State Park to the Appalachian Trail Museum. Since 1983, this facility served as a popular overnight rest stop for Appalachian Trail thru-hikers traversing the 2,190 mile Appalachian Trail.

CPC’s President, Ken Waidelich, expressed that, “we entered our tenure at the Ironmaster’s Mansion in the spirit of partnership, and we are thrilled to pass along operations to a very capable partner organization with an on-site presence at Pine Grove Furnace State Park and who is committed to the facility’s stewardship and use as a hiker’s hostel.” CPC completely renovated the dilapidated mansion in 2010 with the help of local trail clubs, volunteers, local funders, and CPC membership contributions. It hosted a youth conservation leadership camp there for 6 years (Goddard Leadership Legacy Institute), the annual Ironmaster’s Challenge trail running event, and opened it up to outside groups for events such as school, scout and church youth retreats, family reunions, weddings, showers, and environmental and community programming. A private guest suite was added in 2017, supported with a grant from Cumberland Valley Visitor’s Bureau, and other improvements and necessary maintenance was made along the way.

We thank our hard-working, on-site innkeepers over the years, who cared for the historic building and ran the day-to-day operations of the hostel. While CPC is turning to focus on its growing land conservation projects in the region, it’s proud of the many improvements made that continue its viability as one of the few remaining hiker’s hostels on the A.T. in Pennsylvania. The partnership with the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace, DCNR, Cumberland Valley Visitor’s Bureau, and other local groups is critical to its continued success. The A.T. Museum already has strong ties with these entities and has a good strategy in place to achieve its organizational goals while continuing similar uses.

In the future, the Museum will install exhibits at the facility as well as utilize it for storing items from the Museum collection and housing Museum volunteers. The hostel will remain open to the public for overnight stays as well as for groups and events. While many of the visitors are hiking the Appalachian Trail, the hostel welcomes any visitor.

Located 20 miles from Gettysburg, the hostel is in the beautiful South Mountain area of Cumberland County in the midst of many tourist attractions. Surrounded by the Michaux State Forest and also near Caledonia State Park, the area has abundant outdoor recreation opportunities as well as historic sites, festivals and other attractions.
In just one year after acquiring the Letort Spring Garden Preserve, the site has revealed remarkable connections to not only exceptional freshwater and limestone wetland systems, but also to many community partners, local history, recreational opportunities, and land-use legacy. It has become a core nature preserve for the Central PA Conservancy, through which we aim to engage members, landowners, trail users, sportsmen, fly anglers, historians, students, and the general public. In March 2019, CPC was the proud recipient of Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited’s highest honor, the Limestoner Award, presented by CVTU President John Leonard at the Chapter’s annual banquet. The award recognizes CPC’s dedication to preserving and restoring our area’s natural resources, protecting them for future generations and, CPC’s leadership and volunteers that made the acquisition possible through public education and tireless fundraising.

Below is a brief report of progress made during year one of this 38.5-acre nature preserve, consisting of trails, historic structures, native habitat, springs and headwaters of the Letort Spring Run:

**RESTORATION**

- inventoried over 245 native plant species and created a guide to, *Native Wetland Wildflowers of the Letort Spring Garden Preserve.*
- installed a new bridge and a stream access to improve the visitor experience.
- collected and compiled data from 10 water monitoring stations to aid in a wetland restoration design.
- drone missions flown monthly to map seasonal changes and overall changes in conditions.
- collected and recycled over 50 tires and contractor bags of trash.
- 1000 hours of volunteer service in tree plantings, invasive removal and other work to improve the site’s ecological health and user experience.
- 550 trees and bushes planted in identified zones for planting.
- hosted 3 volunteer service days for community groups.
- raised grant funds for and initiated a comprehensive site management plan process with lead partner, Natural Lands.
- partnered with PA State Historic Preservation Office to submit a nomination for a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. National Register status will enable CPC to pursue additional grant funds to stabilize, secure, and improve the historic bank barn.

**EDUCATION**

Chesapeake Bay Foundation hosted a spring and fall series of its Student Action and Restoration Program (StAR), bringing in educators, students, and volunteers to study the stream, native plants and animals, and conduct student-led action projects like pulling up garlic mustard, or collecting data on macroinvertebrates in the stream.

CPC offered several community tours and programs throughout the summer and early fall, including for the Craighead House Walks series, an Appalachian Audubon tour, a special ‘Night of Flight’ program to study moths, owls, and bats, a mobile workshop for the PA Trails and Greenways conference, and tours for local schools. This fall, CPC installed 13 interpretive panels that will remain on site for the season and become part of a permanent installation (see images on next page).

**RECREATION**

CPC is partnering with South Middleton Township to extend the Letort Nature Trail 1 mile south from South Spring Garden Street to Heiser’s Lane. We are working with neighbors and volunteers to assist in the planning and execution of this project, funded by Cumberland County’s Land Partnerships Program. Additionally, as noted, Natural Lands is partnering with CPC to help prepare a comprehensive management plan that will incorporate goals, guidelines, and a work plan for accommodating recreational uses on the Letort Spring Garden Preserve.

CPC’s first fundraising event, held in October 2019—Bonnybrook Biergarten—was very successful in bringing in new members and introducing them to CPC’s mission and efforts to create a local wetland preserve. The event raised $10,000 to support our efforts. We extend a big thank you to all current and new members for your participation in the event, the silent auction, and event sponsorships!
Partners in Conservation:

Securing Blue Mountain in Dauphin County for Public Use

A broad partnership is enabling the strategic acquisition by CPC on Blue Mountain, between the Boyd Big Tree Conservation Area and Hocker Park. After several months completing title, legal work, and a survey, CPC is nearing settlement on several mountain tracts owned by father and son, Mr. Jim and Tim Spangler. Himsself an outdoorsman and conservationist, Mr. Spangler Sr. explains that these tracts have been in the family for at least four generations and that his grandfather was a sawmill operator in the 1920s. He purchased the land with earnings made laboring at the mill and knows the exact locations of the mountain tract boundaries, in terms of stone piles and trees. Mr. Spangler understood that CPC purchased the Shreckengaust tract from his neighbors in 2002 as an extension of the Boyd Big Tree Conservation Area, and hoped to follow suit with a partial donation of land, or bargain sale, as a way of leaving a conservation legacy on Blue Mountain.

The adjacent 1,025-acre Conservation Area, established by gift of Mr. Alexander Boyd in 1999, is the only state park near the city of Harrisburg. Under the Spanglers’ ownership, the public has been welcome to cross 700 yards from a township park to that preserve. If not for that tenuous connection across private land, public access is restricted to the foot of the mountain on the northern side (Fishing Creek Valley Rd.). CPC and its partners are committed to completing this last acquisition connecting two natural areas and allowing for a convenient new access to Boyd Big Tree Conservation Area closer to Harrisburg.

In addition to Jim and Tim Spangler donating a portion of the value of land, CPC received generous grant awards from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (a grant awarded from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund for land trusts); the Alexander Boyd and Jane Starke Boyd Charitable Foundation; and, The Nature Conservancy—PA Chapter, as it falls within a top tier priority area for protection of the Kittatinny Ridge corridor. The grant agreement ensures that CPC will work in partnership with Lower Paxton Township and other partners to install sufficient signage at the trailhead and maintain the 2-mile “Janie Trail” or East Shore Darlington Trail on the ridge connecting to the state conservation area. We look forward to working with our partner, Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club (SATC), on volunteer trail maintenance.

CPC Conservation Easement News

CPC completed and recorded 3 conservation easements in 2019. These include a restatement of an existing, outdated easement for the 152-acre property owned by Lida Hail near Middletown in Dauphin County; a 50-acre easement within the Kittatinny Ridge priority landscape in Perry County; and, a 120-acre agricultural, woodland, and riparian easement in the shadow of the Kittatinny Ridge in Mercersburg, Franklin County. The latter is the first of two easements to be donated by landowner Timothy Strickler, who operates an organic dairy farm, some orchards, and practices sustainable agriculture and agroforestry. The family is committed to conservation and open space in Franklin County and generously donated this first easement to CPC to permanently protect the farm and its unique conservation values.

Next year, CPC will develop a conservation easement on the 200-acre farm across the street, also owned by Mr. Strickler. This farm consists of wetlands, valuable open space, agricultural fields, and over a mile along Johnston Run, a headwater stream and water supply for the town of Mercersburg. These projects are CPC’s first easements in Franklin County, and our board and staff are anxious to pursue additional protection opportunities in this county, where no other local land trust operates.

Photos courtesy of Anna Beekman
CPC DONORS ARE WISE to Invest!

CPC thanks all of our individual supporters, who together make our success happen by supporting the protection and stewardship of key properties in our region for conservation purposes. Because of limited space, we have listed supporters who gave $100 or more. Thank you to ALL of our donors—we are truly appreciative of gifts of any size!

MAJOR GRANTS, SPONSORSHIPS, & STEWARDSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS:
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC)
- PA Land Trust Association (PALTA)
- The Nature Conservancy-PA Chapter
- Timothy Strickler stewardship contribution
- Wanda Pines stewardship contribution
- Partnership for Better Health
- The Donald B. & Dorothy L. Stabler Foundation
- F&M Trust
- The McCormick Family Foundation
- The Chris Thoreau Foundation
- Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park
- M&T Charitable Foundation
- Pepper Hamilton, LLP
- Boles, Metzger, Brosius & Walboum PC
- Boyer & Ritter, LLC
- Mid Penn Bank
- Select Medical Corporation
- Sun Motor Cars Auto Group
- West Shore Family Dentistry
- Molly Pitcher Brewing Company
- Millworks
- Blue Mountain Chapter of Safari Club
- International Bronnbrook Vineyards
- Martin’s Famous Pastry Shoppe
- Neato Bunto

BENEFCTOR ($500-$999)
- Katherine Bigler
- Joseph Layman
- Harry Nelson
- Tracy & Stephen Achille
- Walt & Lin Pomery
- Craig & Cindy Dunn
- David & Lauren Imgrund
- Blue Mountain Conservation Fund
- Steven Genser
- Kevin & Kristie Leibold
- Mechanicsburg Sportsmen Association
- Northern Lancaster Game & Fish Protective Association
- Larry Williamson
- Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club
- Mary Soderberg

PATRON ($250-$499)
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- William & Dorothy Foney
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- John Daley
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- Joe Heffron
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- Robert Frey

SUSTAINING ($100-$249)
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- Beverly J. Steinsiek
- John P. Stewart
- Brian Staub
- Nancy Summers
- Susquehanna Valley Chorale
- TE Connectivty Matching Gift Program
- Carol & Bill Turner
- Jean Vargas
- Mary Ann Ward
- William & Jane Webster
- Andre Weltman
- Andrew Vyncha & Heather Couch

MAJOR REVENUE & EXPENSES

CPC REVENUE & EXPENSES

We are pleased to report the following allocation of revenue and expense for Fiscal Year 2019. (10/1/18—9/30/19)

2019 REVENUES $286,453
(Includes restricted, deferred revenue for FY2020)

- Fundraising Events 16%
- Grant Income 13%
- Memberships 10%
- Donation Income 46%
- IM Mansion Income 14%

2019 EXPENSES $218,176
(Includes restricted, deferred revenue for FY2020)

- Land Protection 34%
- Ironmaster’s Mansion 22%
- Fundraising 11%
- Administration 5%
- Stewardship 28%
In 2019, CPC completed a strategic plan, adopted by the Board in September, to guide our work from 2020-2022. Highlights of the plan are presented below.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY & GOVERNANCE**
- Create and hire a Stewardship & Outreach Coordinator to strengthen these organizational functions
- Develop and diversify board membership with multisector expertise to further organizational goals
- Evaluate and improve board committee structure to increase engagement and follow governance best practices

**FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**
- Conduct long-term financial planning to increase annual revenue 25% by 2023
- Create a Fundraising Committee of the Board to create a comprehensive and long-term Funding Plan
- Establish specific goals for major donor support, grants, and membership
- Evaluate and improve CPC’s membership program for better outreach and retention
- Update CPC’s Financial Policy

**LAND PROTECTION & STEWARDSHIP**
- Articulate CPC’s long-term restoration and management goals for the Letort Spring Garden Preserve through a comprehensive planning process and execute that work plan
- Create a new Land Stewardship Committee to effectively steward protected land and develop a strategy for stewarding CPC’s fee preserves in Juniata County
- Secure new members for CPC’s Land Protection Committee, especially from Perry and Franklin Counties and build a corps of stewardship volunteers

**SCOPE, RELEVANCY, COMMUNICATIONS**
- Identify CPC’s user communities and geographic reach through proactive planning
- In key landscapes and watersheds, create strategies to protect high priority parcels
- Consistently communicate our priority landscapes-the Kittatinny Ridge, the South Mountain, and the Chesapeake Bay watershed
- Upgrade CPC website, social media presence, and signage at protected properties
- Conduct targeted outreach to user groups