

The ClearWater Compass

a strategic vision to connect communities and
landscapes throughout central Pennsylvania



CLEARWATER
conservancy



photo by Matt Fern State College Magazine

DEAR FRIENDS,

There are endless ways in which we all feel connected to central Pennsylvania. For me, it's every morning I step out onto my porch. I'm inspired by the forested ridgetops that define our region, helping purify the water and air we rely on for a healthy, vibrant life. Our streams provide world-famous kayaking and fishing opportunities. The mountains make for unforgettable hiking, climbing, and mountain-biking. Our farmlands provide local food and products to everyone who lives here – or who loves to visit.

The continuous, unfragmented forests support important wildlife habitats and provide ample opportunities for bird-watching and hunting. Meanwhile, the ground water below our feet connects all of these landscapes, providing an abundant supply of water to our homes and businesses. Tree by tree, stream by stream and person by person, countless connections come together to form the culture and character of this beautiful community.

It's these magnificent, inspiring places - and our connection to them - that is the heart and soul of ClearWater Conservancy. We've come a long way since our founding mothers and fathers created ClearWater 39 years ago. But the need for our work remains the same. Through two years of planning, surveys, interviews and scientific analysis we've developed the *ClearWater Compass*, a strategic vision to connect communities and landscapes throughout central Pennsylvania. You'll notice four main focus areas for our work together in the ClearWater Compass: **Connect, Protect, Restore, and Steward.**

As you explore, consider which areas resonate with you. We can't do this on our own. Starting right now, *The ClearWater Compass* is in your hands. What direction will the ClearWater Compass take you?

I love this place. I'm glad you do too. Thanks for all you do to help make this place great.

All the very best,
Deb Nardone, Executive Director,
ClearWater Conservancy



Illustration by Jim McClure

The ClearWater Compass: Setting Course for a Resilient Future

Central Pennsylvania is not just any region. We are privileged to live among diverse, unique habitats that work together to support a variety of plants and wildlife, some of which are incredibly rare.

These diverse and important systems include:

- Forested mountain ridges • Natural floodplains • Vernal pools • Cave systems
- Marshes and wetlands • Limestone cliffs and bluffs • Pitch pine and scrub oak barrens
- Water gaps and mountain saddles • High quality trout streams

All of these systems work together to support a diverse and resilient ecosystem in the heart of Pennsylvania. Yet, these amazing systems are at risk. We find ourselves – and our region – at a critical point for conservation.



Locally, as our community continues to grow, the demands for land and water increase. We must ask ourselves – How much water do we need to support our growing community? How do we keep it clean? What areas are most critical for conservation that shouldn't be developed? How do we set aside enough open space and farmland to support our local economy? How do we ensure that our "natural gems" of central Pennsylvania are protected and connected?

Regionally and globally, shifting temperatures and more intense precipitation patterns are altering habitats and disrupting the usual patterns of nature. Where will animals move to survive? Research from the Nature Conservancy identifies central Pennsylvania as a critical zone for conservation, with more than half of the United State relying on central Pennsylvania to maintain or rebuild connected, resilient habitats for species to migrate.

Changes to our landscape over the coming decades will define our community forever. **ClearWater sees opportunities to proactively connect, protect, restore and steward the important resources around us for a resilient, thriving community, economy and ecosystem.**

You can help. Looking toward 2050, the ClearWater Compass has set course on how to connect, protect, restore and steward our resources for the future. We cannot accomplish these priorities without you.

Resilience is the capacity of an ecosystem to respond and recover to change or disturbance.



Photo courtesy The Nature Conservancy – migration routes throughout central Pennsylvania



1978

Barbara Fisher and Jim McClure, concerned about local land use issues, invest their time and energy in a grassroots effort to raise awareness of and prevent impacts from storm water runoff. In 1980 a land trust was formed, and Jim McClure become ClearWater Conservancy's first president.

1986

ClearWater's first conservation easement is finalized on Rhoneymeade Farm

1989

ClearWater Conservancy joins the Land Trust Alliance

1995

The Donald W. Hamer Land Conservation Fund is established

1996

International Countryside Stewardship Exchange launches Spring Creek Watershed Commission and Association

1997

"Connections", supports student field trips to Millbrook Marsh Nature Center. Over 30,000 students will visit MMNC in the next 20+ years

1997

ClearWater Conservancy's 1st Annual Watershed CleanUp Day held in Spring Creek Watershed



1999

ClearWater Conservancy hosts 1st Annual Art & Chocolate fundraiser held in State College



2001

Millbrook Marsh conservation easement completed



2003

1st Annual Otto's Golf Fest held to support ClearWater's local conservation efforts



2004

Riparian Conservation Program is established



2006

ClearWater Conservancy purchases Musser Gap, a 423-acre tract of land in Rothrock State Forest



2012

ClearWater Conservancy achieves Land Trust Accreditation, accredited through 2022



2014

Musser Gap Greenway opens to the public

2017

20-year anniversary of Watershed CleanUp Day. Six million tons of trash cleared from Centre County's watersheds by thousands of volunteers



2017

Nittany Noll conservation easement finalized, conserving 452 acres of land owned by Graymont Inc. in Pleasant Gap, PA



2017

The Slab Cabin Run Initiative raises \$2.75 million to conserve 300 acres of farmland owned by the Meyer family



2017

Centred Outdoors launches with \$100,000 Centre Gives Grant awarded by Centre Foundation



2018

Participants log over 2,000 adventures during first two seasons of Centred Outdoors



2018

ClearWater Conservancy unveils The ClearWater Compass, a strategic vision for conservation



2019

ClearWater Conservancy installs its largest stream buffer to date on the Meyer Dairy farm conserved during the Slab Cabin Run Initiative



One acre and one friendship at a time... ClearWater Conservancy has been the leader in all-inclusive efforts to nurture a healthy environment in the heart of Pennsylvania **since 1980**. The organization's long-time role as a trusted neighbor is earned one acre and one friendship at a time in a continual effort to conserve ecologically rare and significant landscapes and waterways. Past successes, such as the first conservation easement at Rhoneymeade in 1986, the transfer of Musser Gap to Rothrock State Forest in 2007, and the Slab Cabin

Run Initiative in 2017 give ClearWater Conservancy strong reason to be optimistic about its positive impact in our community. To date, 3,171 acres of land have been conserved through ClearWater's Land Conservation Program and another 5,000 acres have been protected through facilitated partnerships involving private property owners, local/state governments and private companies. Since 2004, ClearWater Conservancy's Riparian Conservation Program has planted trees and shrubs to restore 183 acres of riparian forest ecosystem.



CONNECT

The ClearWater Compass begins with a focus on connecting our communities to achieve long-lasting protection of our region's vital natural resources.

Connecting people to people, one friendship and one partnership at a time: Individuals and organizations that work together are essential for strategic conservation efforts that last. ClearWater Conservancy strives to maximize partnerships that are positive and productive for all.

Residents, parents, students, retirees, farmers, business owners, and community leaders all play unique and important roles in the community. Our combined expertise allows for balanced solutions. That's why ClearWater Conservancy invites everyone to the 'table' to exchange ideas and find solutions.

Connecting people to place, one adventure and one classroom at a time: Spending time in nature is good for all of us. In 2009 a team of Dutch researchers found a lower incidence of 15 diseases—including depression, anxiety, heart

disease, diabetes, asthma, and migraines—in people who lived within about a half mile of green space (*National Geographic*, April 2017). The more we step outside to connect with nature, the better we feel and the more we value nature. That's why ClearWater leads programs that guide people of all ages and fitness levels on outdoors adventures.

Connecting place to place, one landscape and one stream at a time: Ensuring place is connected to place is the most widely cited strategy in scientific literature for building climate resilient communities (Heller & Zavaleta 2009). Linking landscapes and reducing fragmentation is essential to sustaining healthy ecosystems. That's why ClearWater Conservancy has identified and prioritized conservation efforts that will maintain and increase connectivity between our most treasured gems and important ecosystems.

Strategic Priorities for Our Future:

Inspire exploration, curiosity and love of place by connecting people to the outdoors.

Desired Outcomes:

- A healthier community where people spend more time outside.
- Increased participation in the protection and stewardship of our natural resources.
- ClearWater's conservation actions inspires the arts, technology and entrepreneurship.

Build the network of diverse people working together for permanent land and water protection.

Desired Outcomes:

- Decision makers work together at the local and regional level to protect and connect our natural resources.
- Nonprofit, business and public agency collaborations lead to new support for conservation.
- Cultivate new conservation leaders in our community, steering passion to impact.

Connect conserved lands, open spaces and water resources.

Desired Outcomes:

- Priority conservation areas are identified based on urgent need for action.
- Conserved lands, open spaces and riparian corridors are connected, from our forested ridgetops to our town centers.
- Our community and economy thrives with an accelerated pace of conservation that matches growth.

Examples of Our Work:



- **Connections** has supported over 30,000 student field trips to the Millbrook Marsh.
- **Centred Outdoors** invites people of all ages and fitness levels to explore the wonders of the outside world through free, guided adventures.
- **Adventures in Conservation** introduces fun and new ways to explore the outdoors through monthly events such as kayaking, bird-watching, fly-tying and cave exploration.



Connecting forest ridge to forest ridge.

The Scotia Barrens is an ecological gem in Halfmoon Valley.

Our long-term goal is to connect this unique and important habitat with the surrounding forested ridges of Bald Eagle and Tussey Mountain to ensure this special area is preserved for future generations.



PROTECT

When we're all connected, we can better protect the places we love. Protecting priority landscapes and water resources is one of the most effective, economic and long lasting tools to ensure our region's resilience.

Property easements and ownership:

Since 1980, ClearWater Conservancy has conserved over 3,171 acres of land through conservation easements and property ownership, while helping facilitate property transfer for conservation of an additional 5,000 acres. Combined, this is an area over eight times the size of New York City's Central Park.

Conservation easements are the most common method ClearWater Conservancy and landowners use to conserve property that possesses great ecological value. A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement that protects a property's natural resources, even when ownership changes. Much like a fingerprint, all easements are different and include different elements depending on the ecological value of the land and the goals of the landowner(s). ClearWater Conservancy will occasionally purchase land in order to permanently protect it from future development and other activity that would affect the resiliency of that property.

Source water protection: When we as a community understand where our water comes from and how our water supplies are managed, we can better understand how our land use choices affect both

water quantity and water quality. Looking ahead, we will place an even greater focus on source water protection to ensure clean and plentiful supplies of drinking water, now and forever.

Landowner stewardship: ClearWater Conservancy works hand-in-hand with landowners who are interested in managing their property for optimal outcomes, such as healthier crops and livestock, reduction of invasive species, stream restoration and wildlife habitat protection to name a few.

Strategic partnerships: ClearWater Conservancy also advances conservation efforts by facilitating easements, assisting with the transfer of property, or simply introducing neighbors to neighbors. The organization works with allies in all sectors, including business and industry that share our values. We must work together to build a strong economy while protecting our valuable natural resources. Meaningful partnerships have always been, and continue to be, one of ClearWater's most valued resources.

Strategic Priorities for Our Future:

Protect and grow important conservation lands.

Desired Outcomes:

- All "conservation gems" of Central Pennsylvania are protected and expanded.
- Central Pennsylvania retains and effectively manages high-quality habitat supporting the full diversity of plants and animals native to the region.
- Regional partnerships accelerate the pace of open space efforts and habitat improvements.

Protect streams and ground water.

Desired Outcomes:

- Proactive source water protection strategies ensure healthy drinking water, forever.
- Forested ridge lines and mountain saddles are protected.
- Headwater streams and sinkholes remain protected and buffered from development.
- Riparian corridors are expanded and connected, improving water quality and providing critical fish and wildlife habitat.

Protection at Work: Slab Cabin Run Initiative

The Slab Cabin Run Initiative is an ongoing source water protection effort aimed to conserve the most critical lands to protect our drinking water.

In 2017, thanks to generous community support, ClearWater Conservancy raised funds to place a permanent conservation easement on the Meyer Dairy Farm, permanently conserving 300 acres adjacent to the largest drinking water wells for the State College region. This positive, proactive approach to source water protection will benefit the region for generations in three significant ways:

1. The land lies immediately adjacent to the region's most reliable drinking water source, the Harter-Thomas wells. The easement protects a major supply of drinking water for the State College area.
2. Slab Cabin Run is an impaired stream that flows into Spring Creek, known for its world-class trout fishing waters. The easement allows for restoration efforts on the stream, improving water quality.
3. The scenic view of the farmland is cherished by residents and visitors who live near or travel past the property. The easement preserves the agricultural history and character of Centre County by ensuring the property will always look this way.



"This community had the foresight to proactively conserve an important gem in the heart of this growing region, protecting our drinking water, while stepping up for a wild trout stream and this gorgeous landscape we enjoy every day." – Andy Warner, ClearWater's board president



RESTORE

ClearWater Conservancy works hand in hand with willing landowners who desire to improve the quality of their land and water – for themselves, their family and for all those who live downstream.

Much of our restoration work takes place in riparian areas, the zone between land and water along streams, lakes, and ponds that are ideally vegetated with a variety of native trees, plants and shrubs. Riparian forest ecosystems are important because they:

- Supply food, habitat and migratory routes for a wide variety of animals.
- Remove excess nutrients and sediment from surface runoff before it enters waterways.
- Maintain cool water temperatures for trout and other aquatic species.
- Reduce the impacts from flooding and stormwater.

While protection is the best and most proactive strategy for land and water conservation, the ability to strategically restore and then connect degraded streams and habitat may be the only option to help a degraded system rebound.



Since 2004, ClearWater's Riparian Conservation Program has improved stream quality throughout central Pennsylvania by restoring streamside buffers with native trees and shrubs and permanently protecting riparian areas through conservation easements.

Strategic Priorities for Our Future:

Restore and maintain high priority water resources and riparian habitats.

Desired Outcomes:

- Headwater and high quality streams are removed from the impaired list.
- Riparian corridors are prioritized for restoration and are connected.
- Riparian restoration and long-term stewardship are funded.
- All regionally threatened terrestrial habitats are restored in collaboration with public and private partners.

Restoration at Work: The Radzwich Farm

The Radzwich Family recently completed a streamside restoration project on their farm along the Beaver Branch of Spruce Creek, a high-quality headwater stream that supports wild trout. Work took place in four main stages:

1. The Radzwich Family made a commitment to the health of the stream and agricultural operation and chose to work with ClearWater staff and the farmer to restore their stream.
2. The streambanks were rebuilt and stabilized using toewood, rock, soil, willow cuttings and coconut fiber mats. Native trees were then planted along the new streambanks to prevent erosion and add shade to the stream.
3. Streambank fencing and livestock crossings were installed to keep the animals out of the stream. Removing livestock from streams is good for both the stream and herd health and prevents sediment and nutrients from flowing downstream.
4. The stream buffer was naturalized by planting native trees and shrubs which will shade the stream and maintain cool water temperatures needed for aquatic life to thrive. As the native plants mature, they create habitat for a host of species that live in the streamside riparian zone and benefit from a healthy stream.



"We are just so happy to see the property in a healthy state, as if it's come back to life! It's wonderful to see how many groups of people can come together to improve our environment, community and for us...our sanctuary."

– Bob and Maddi Radzwich



STEWARD

Steward: *verb*; to manage or look after.

noun; a person whose responsibility it is to take care of something.

The ClearWater Compass outlines how together we can connect, protect and restore the region's most vital water resources and natural habitats. Yet there is still so much work to do after a conservation easement is finalized or the native seedlings have been planted. That is why stewardship is the key component tying all of our work, and all of us, together.

Today, The ClearWater Compass is in your hands. In order for conservation to keep pace with changing weather and fast-moving development, we need an ever-growing community of stewards with a variety of backgrounds and experiences committed to seeing our work move ahead without pause.

You can make a positive impact on your community by getting involved. Some individuals choose to conserve their own land as their gift and legacy for the future. Others volunteer to plant trees and clean up trash from our waterways.



For many, donating an annual or monthly gift is their generous way of contributing. Stewards often find themselves deeply connected to the mission of ClearWater and move on to become members of the board or other all-volunteer committees that guide the organization.

When we work together, we all benefit. The natural places we LOVE become healthier and more resilient and as a result, we do too.

Strategic Priorities for Our Future:

Steward the natural resources we've helped protect and restore.

Desired Outcomes:

- Conserved lands and restored buffers have active stewards caring for them.
- ClearWater's stewardship programs are characterized by excellence, technological innovation and community involvement.

Enhance awareness and understanding of the role land and water conservation plays in a high quality life.

Desired Outcomes:

- Community is engaged in active land and water protection and restoration efforts through volunteering, fundraising or other opportunities that provide hands-on experiences.
- Increase in landowners actions to benefit conservation and connectivity.

Build financial capacity and technical expertise for conservation and community involvement.

Desired Outcomes:

- Financial strategies and policy development at the local and state level supports long term conservation investments, including open space referendums, trail development initiatives and riparian buffers establishment.
- Informed landowners and local governments are connected to technical assistance providers to improve sharing and coordination of limited resources.
- Landowners receive technical assistance to participate in conservation programs.

Stewards at Work: Watershed CleanUp Day



Every April, ClearWater Conservancy celebrates Earth Day with Watershed CleanUp Day, a fun and positive way to combat littering and illegal dumping. Each year, over 500 volunteers work together for hours to clear and properly dispose of trash from roadsides, parks, streams, and sinkholes. 13,720 pounds of trash were cleared in 2019, and over 6.2 million pounds of trash have been cleared since 1997! This event is made possible every year thanks to a partnership between and ClearWater Conservancy, Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority and the main funders of the event, the MS4 Partners (State College Borough, College, Ferguson, Harris, and Patton Townships; and Penn State).



"Why do I volunteer for ClearWater? Water is all about life. I believe we are called on to care for each other and the world we live in, and one critical facet of that is protecting our water supply." – Jay Aubuchon, April 2017



**The ClearWater Compass is in all of our hands.
Get involved today.**

OUR MISSION

The mission of ClearWater Conservancy is to conserve and restore our natural resources through land conservation, water resources stewardship, and environmental outreach across central Pennsylvania.

OUR VISION

Working together for people and place to nurture a healthy environment and thriving communities in the heart of Pennsylvania.

OUR VALUES

Focus on the Future: We are optimistic about the future of central Pennsylvania and the ability of our communities to conserve their ample beauty and bounty, now and for future generations.

Lead through Engagement: We lead by engaging all who wish to collaborate in effective and lasting conservation.

Inspire Exploration and Curiosity: We value education and foster a strong sense of place to encourage lasting citizen stewardship.

Apply Sound Science: We make strategic choices guided by objectivity, current science, and innovation.

Strive for Impact: We guide the community in setting and achieving aspirational goals for environmental health and justice across the region.

Act with Integrity: We practice transparency and always act with integrity and honesty.



Thank you for your generous gift of time and support!

Your continued generosity is vital to continuing our conservation efforts. Here's a list of ways to make tax-deductible gifts.

- Making a recurring, monthly gift is a convenient way to keep our work at ClearWater Conservancy moving forward.
- Planned gifts can help you meet both long and short-term charitable and financial goals. Planned gifts include, but are not limited to, bequest intentions (such as our LISLE Circle), charitable gift annuities, IRA payments, retirement plan assets, insurance policies, donation of property, and other various trusts to fit your needs.
- Gifts of appreciated securities are just one way to avoid the capital gains tax. Please have your broker contact us before transferring assets so we may properly catalog your donation.
- Of course we'd love an opportunity to speak with you about your giving goals. To schedule a time to meet with Deb Nardone, ClearWater Conservancy's Executive Director, contact us today: **814-237-0400**
deb@clearwaterconservancy.org



You can conveniently make your donation online at clearwaterconservancy.org or by returning this form to the address on back.

☐ Yes! I'd like to give the gift of time and volunteer with ClearWater Conservancy. Please contact me via (circle one) phone / email / mail to learn more about my areas of interest.

☐ Yes, I'd like to make a recurring monthly donation to ClearWater Conservancy!

Amount: ☐ \$15/month ☐ \$25/month ☐ \$50/month ☐ Other amount per month: _____

• Name _____

• Address _____

• Email address _____

• Phone number _____

• Method of payment: ☐ check ☐ credit card

Credit card info: _____
number exp. ccv code

☐ Make a one-time donation.

Amounts to give: ☐ \$5,000 ☐ \$2,500 ☐ \$1,500 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$125 ☐ \$75

☐ \$50 (membership level) ☐ \$20 (senior/student membership level) ☐ Other: _____

☐ Please contact us with information on event sponsorships or business contributions.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



CLEARWATER
conservancy

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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

"There's a growing acknowledgement that for all of our civilization's technological advancements, we're all still human. Clean air, clean water, and exposure to the natural environment makes us more creative, more productive, less stressed, and measurably happier.

Our employees and clients can go from an important business meeting downtown to a true sense of peace and unspoiled wilderness in ten minutes. How many other places in the country exist where you can do that?

Actively protecting our natural resources is not just about providing an excellent quality of life. In the long run, it's a massive competitive economic advantage for our region."

– Scot Woods, West Arete, 2016 CBICC Visionary Company of the Year

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