



# Conservation News

## Youth Conservation Education Across the State

by Michele Kittell

**In an effort to highlight all the amazing programs that we have for youth across Pennsylvania, I will be spotlighting different programs. If you would like to share your youth conservation education program in OnTarget, please email me at [mkittell@picweb.org](mailto:mkittell@picweb.org).**

**Remember – what we do matters – it's our job to be mentors to the next generation of conservationists. Let's celebrate our efforts and continue to get kids outdoors!**

Over the past several years of attending the Federation's annual meetings, I had the pleasure of meeting Paul Lilja. Paul and I would discuss youth education and he told me all about the Potter County Conservation School and the involvement of his daughter Jackie and granddaughter Cecilia. Of course, I encouraged him to have his granddaughter apply to the Wildlife Leadership

Academy when she was old enough.

Sure enough, this summer, I had a full circle moment and the pleasure of meeting his granddaughter when she attended our PA Drummers, Ruffed Grouse focused field school.

Cecilia is a confident young woman who I am sure will carry on the legacy of her family as a conservation leader. I asked Cecilia if she would share the story and history of the Potter County Conservation field school and she was happy to oblige.

### **More about the Potter County Conservation School in Cecilia's words:**

The Potter County Conservation School is an outdoor education camp held each summer during the first week of August in Coudersport, PA. Sponsored by the Black Forest Conservation Association, 2015 marks the 34th year that the camp has been in operation.

Started in 1981 by the Potter County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs (of which there were 6 individual sportsmen's groups involved), the camp was spearheaded by Ron and Dori Brenneman and supported by many other key members of the sportsmen groups. At the time, Ron was a wildlife biologist for Hamermill Paper Company.

Ron and Dori were the on-ground directors for the camp from 1981-1986. When Ron transferred jobs and a new director was needed, DCNR Forester Paul Lilja stepped

in as a one-year interim director. He has held that position now for 29 years. This is how I became connected to the camp.

You see, Paul is my grandfather. My brothers and sisters and I call him "Poppy." My mom attended the camp when she was a kid, and started helping Poppy every summer as a counselor after she finished college. The first year I attended camp was when I was 9 months old. My mom carried me in a backpack through the woods, streams, farms and even landfills. I have attended every year since (this will be my 15th year). Last year I was old enough to finally be an official student, and this year I have graduated to become a junior counselor.

The camp's focus is on understanding the importance of promoting conservation efforts in today's world. Conservation is defined as "the wise and careful use of our natural resources."

Every morning we begin the day by saying our Conservation Pledge before we set out for the day's activities. Throughout the week, we learn about forestry practices, wildlife biology and management (white-tailed deer, elk, black bear, American eel, etc.), soils and farming, watershed habitat and management, macroinvertebrate studies, invasive plants, reptiles and amphibians, acid mine drainage, landfills, raptors, hunting and trapping, beekeeping, water and sewage treatment, and outdoor photography – just to name a few.

*Continued*



*Cecilia Manno (left) at the Wildlife Leadership Academy's Ruffed Grouse focused field school this summer. Here, Cecilia and her teammate, Kyla, are learning how to sex and age grouse.*



We also get to practice our shooting skills. We learn about rifles and handguns, muzzleloaders, archery and trap shooting and get lots of time to practice (well-supervised by responsible instructors, of course!)

For me, personally, I look forward to spending a week at camp every year. Even though I have participated for so many years, I still learn something new every day. The experiences that I have had learning from all of the instructors that volunteer their time and expertise have helped me to decide that I would like to pursue a career in a conservation-based field of study.

The camp is open to middle school

students, ages 13-15 from the North Central Pennsylvania region and students must be sponsored by an outside organization. Each year we have approximately 20 new students attend the camp.

If your group is interested in sponsoring a student, or if you know a student who would like to attend the camp, you can contact Paul. Also, you can "like" us on Facebook at Potter County Conservation School to check out all of the cool things that we do!

You can learn more about the Black Forest Conservation Association at <http://www.pottercountybfca.org/>.

### **Clean Water Efforts** **Continued from Page 9**

could require additional upgrades to sewage treatment plants, at great expense to ratepayers. They could also require even more pollution reduction from urban/suburban areas, again at great expense to taxpayers.

In more basic terms, consider the effects of Pennsylvania pollution on the blue crabs that we love so much north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Total numbers of Chesapeake blue

crabs are up slightly this year. But the nitrogen and phosphorus pollution feed algae blooms that create huge dead zones, reducing food supply that crabs need, and driving them into shallower water where they are more likely to be caught.

Both the algae blooms and sediment pollution reduce sunlight penetration necessary for Bay grasses to grow. Those grasses provide shelter for juvenile crabs to escape from predators.

Clean water counts in Pennsylvania and the Chesapeake Bay. Reduc-



**THANK YOU**

**To All Those Who  
Continue to Support PFSC  
Through Donations, Fund-  
Raisers & Memberships!**

*Life Member*

**Richard Boyer**

*Contributing Members*

*Jeffrey Jones*

*Don Bickford*

*Donations*

**Jonathan Goldstein**

ing pollution here will provide human health and economic benefits for Pennsylvanians, as well as helping restore the Chesapeake Bay.

*(Reprinted from the PA Environmental Council Blog <http://pecpa.org>)*

**Check out PFSC's Web Site:**  
**[www.pfsc.org](http://www.pfsc.org)**

**Face Book Page:**  
**[www.facebook.com/pfsc.org](http://www.facebook.com/pfsc.org)**

**Message Board:**  
**<http://pennsylvaniasportsmanforum.com>**

We don't tweet, but we do post updates on the message board under the "Legislative Issues" forum regularly, so stop by, check it out and stay informed!

### **AMERICANS SUPPORT HUNTING, DESPITE SPIN ON NEW POLL**

Extremist animal rights advocates will point to a recent Gallup poll to show the public supports giving animals the same rights as people. In the same poll, however, nearly two-thirds of respondents agree that while animals deserve some protection, it is "still appropriate to use them for the benefit of humans." In an NSSF Blog post that was also picked up by the Daily Caller, NSSF Senior Vice President and General Counsel Larry Keane offers the reminder that other polls have found consistent support among Americans for hunting.

### **PWF Turtzo Trust Conservation Grant Program**

**Accepting Applications for Conservation Projects in Monroe & Northampton Counties**

**For details and application: [www.pawildlife.org/](http://www.pawildlife.org/)**

**Click on "Projects" tab.**