

Heritage Circle Member Anita Buckeye

If you ever meet Anita Buckeye, you'll remember her genuine smile and engaging sense of humor, and perhaps her distinctive last name. I recall these fondly from my first time meeting with her over lunch several years ago. We talked about her and her late husband's memories of attending the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Members' Day, their favorite places in the area and her reasons for becoming a Heritage Circle and Leadership Circle member.



Anita and her beloved late husband, Butch.

Anita and Joe ("Butch") grew up in Rostraver Township and lived their entire married life of 51 years not far from their childhood homes. After graduating from high school,

Anita worked for an engineering firm and Butch was a steelworker. In their downtime, they took trips to Colonial Williamsburg and a few other spots, but mostly enjoyed staying in Western Pennsylvania. One of their favorite places for overnight trips was at a camp near Cook Forest State Park that was owned by Anita's brothers. "My brothers would stay on the weekends, so Butch and I went up during the week. He enjoyed fishing on the nearby Clarion River, and I enjoyed being with him. I also enjoyed reading beside the river," Anita says. Butch was aware of the Conservancy's work because of his love of the outdoors, long before they became members in 1979.

Anita and Butch also spent many days at the Conservancy's Bear Run Nature Reserve in the Laurel Highlands. They enjoyed hiking through the Reserve, even if they



Anita funded a bench along a trail in Bear Run Nature Reserve. The plaque reads "In memory of Joseph 'Butch' Buckeye, a gentle man who loved the outdoors."

sometimes lost their way. In fact, Anita recently funded a bench in memory of her husband that sits on an overlapping section of the Red and Black loops overlooking Bear Run stream and the surrounding native rhododendron and mountain laurel. The bench will provide a nice spot to rest for others who may find themselves farther away from the parking lot than planned.

Anita and Butch attended our Members' Day and Annual Meeting regularly, often with friends who were also WPC members. She has great memories of seeing people that she only sees at Members' Day as well as enjoying the guided bird walks. She's attended in recent years and is happy to see how popular the event has become.

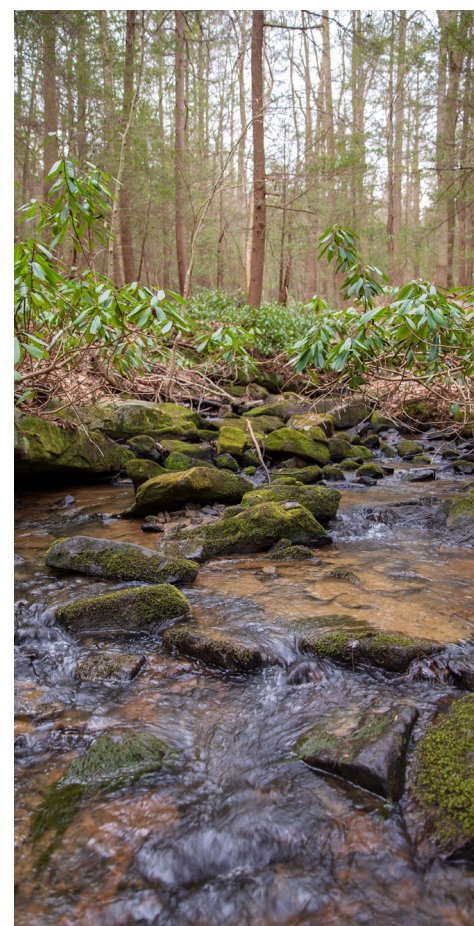
Several years ago, Anita took the thoughtful step of including the Conservancy in her estate plans, ensuring her commitment to conservation will continue for generations to come. Her legacy gift, in addition to her annual gifts during her lifetime, will support our conservation work in the Clarion River watershed as well as at Bear Run Nature Reserve.

Anita is happy to make this impactful gift and shared, "Butch and I both grew up poor. We worked hard, lived frugally and

invested (and perhaps got a little lucky with investments). I'm happy I can support the work that was so meaningful to Butch and still is to me."

In doing so, she honors her husband, celebrates the life they built together, and creates a lasting legacy that will protect the region's natural beauty and outdoor spaces well into the future. 🌿

— Julie Holmes, Senior Director of Development



Anita's bequest will support conservation work at Bear Run Nature Reserve and in the Clarion River watershed.



Recovering after decades of being polluted from abandoned coal mine drainage, the Bennett Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek flows through WPC's Blakeslee Recreation Area and into the West Branch Susquehanna River.

Conserving Pennsylvania Saves the Chesapeake Bay

Healthy landscapes and high-quality water sources benefit everyone, and the ways that we protect our region's resources have a substantial impact downstream. Essentially, what happens in Pennsylvania, doesn't stay in Pennsylvania.

Our state's connection to the Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the United States, is direct and significant. Three key Pennsylvania watersheds, the Juniata, Potomac and West Branch Susquehanna, are located within the Bay's headwaters. The Susquehanna River watershed, comprising nearly half the land in Pennsylvania, collects water from more than 37,000 miles of stream in our state before it empties into the Bay in Maryland – supplying about half of the freshwater of the Chesapeake Bay!

Spanning 200 miles from Maryland to Virginia, and ranging from three to 35 miles wide, the Chesapeake Bay is home to 3,600 species of plant and animal life. The Bay is also one of the most valuable economic regions in the country, supporting commercial fishing, agriculture, shipping, tourism and recreation industries. It's

a densely populated region, and its watershed provides drinking water for millions of people.

The Conservancy has been doing conservation work in Pennsylvania that benefits the Chesapeake Bay watershed since the 1970s, protecting more than 90,500 acres of land in 21 counties within the watershed, and counting. Additionally, WPC has restored and enhanced more than 3,287 miles of streambank in Pennsylvania since 2001. But as you will see, there is far more work to be done.

All of the Bay's uses take their toll on the environmental health and water quality in one way or another, but one of its biggest challenges is pollution. Starting from the headwaters, streams and rivers collect runoff from cities, farms, golf courses, industry and development all along the Bay's coastline. The water amasses high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, nutrients from fertilizer, and sediment like sand, soil and clay. These nutrients feed algae in the Bay, which grows quickly in warmer months, forming blooms that block sunlight and absorb oxygen as they

decompose. Sediment clouds the water, further impacting plant and animal life. The cumulative result is that aquatic life like fish, mussels and crabs are deprived of oxygen and suffocated, creating large "dead zones" that fluctuate in size and location from year to year.



A Google Earth view of the Susquehanna River (from top left corner) meeting the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland.

Addressing the Root Causes

In response to these deadly impacts, The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was created in 2014. This major multi-state plan spans governmental jurisdictions and geographic boundaries to set goals and outcomes to reduce pollution and improve the health of the Bay.

As the most heavily farmed state in the watershed, Pennsylvania is required to reduce a large percentage of its pollution from entering the Bay, including 69% of the nitrogen load. To achieve this, every county in the Bay watershed was required to develop a county-wide action plan (CAP) outlining how they would meet their share of the pollution reduction goals to restore upstream health.



Volunteers helped to plant native trees and shrubs along Emma's Creek on a farm in Huntingdon County, part of the Juniata River watershed.

Breaking this large problem into smaller geographical pieces allows for focused efforts, county by county, stream by stream. The Conservancy works with many partners in these regions including the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, county conservation districts and municipalities to help meet these CAP goals using a multifaceted approach. Staff works with farmers to install best management practices to keep waste and fertilizer out of streams, a major source of nitrogen and phosphorus. Additionally, staff focuses on securing eroding streambanks using natural methods like planting trees and other plants, and sinking roots and logs into streambanks to slow stormwater and hold shoreline in place. Large-scale projects include abandoned mine discharge remediation in the form of constructing large retention and filtration pond systems.

Healthy riparian buffers, trees and other plants along streams, address a multitude of problems. Trees shade the streams, keeping water cooler for fish, while their roots stabilize streambanks and



Staff and volunteers planted 380 native trees and shrubs on 1.9 acres along an unnamed tributary to Canoe Creek in Blair County, which flows into the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River.

help keep sediment from entering the water. Excess nitrogen is filtered slowly through these areas as plants and microbes in the soil absorb and store the nitrogen, transforming it into harmless gases before it can even reach the stream.

The Conservancy is currently working with landowners and municipalities on a large-scale riparian buffer and community planting initiative, "The Central Pennsylvania Riparian and Community Forestry Project." According to Jennifer Farabaugh, WPC's Chesapeake Bay regional watershed manager, "we are excited to accelerate the scale of our riparian buffer work in the Chesapeake Bay Region. Riparian buffers are a cost-effective practice that improves water quality, reduces pollutant runoff and creates wildlife habitat."

The results will be tangible: the goal is to plant 75 acres of trees in the Juniata, Potomac and West Branch Susquehanna watersheds and an additional 300 large street and park trees in the Altoona and Hollidaysburg area. Along with working with landowners to decrease stormwater runoff in the region, these efforts are estimated to reduce nearly 380,000 pounds of sediment, 131 pounds of phosphorus and nearly 5,000 pounds of nitrogen from reaching our streams.

These tree plantings are volunteer-based, which helps increase community engagement. The Conservancy has also committed to assist these partners with caring for the trees and has a goal of training a crew of voluntary "riparian stewards" to assist with caring for newly planted trees and established buffers.

Since November, WPC has planted 9.5 acres of trees in this region, towards a goal of nearly 17 acres of new riparian forest buffer to be planted this fall in Blair and Huntingdon counties. Community tree plantings kick off this fall, with 87 trees to be planted with volunteers in Hollidaysburg, Altoona and Bellwood to restore tree canopy along residential and commercial streets and public parks.

This phase of impactful work complements WPC's long history of conservation efforts within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, helping our state be a better 'upstream' neighbor to this beautiful, biodiverse and important region. 🌱

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healthy forests and streams,
and vibrant communities in
our region!

Every gift has a significant impact on Pennsylvania.

Thanks to bequests, generations will experience scenes like these.



What legacy do you want to leave for the future?

Contact Julie Holmes at jholmes@paconserve.org or 412-586-2312
to learn about planned giving options.

Mission Statement: The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.