

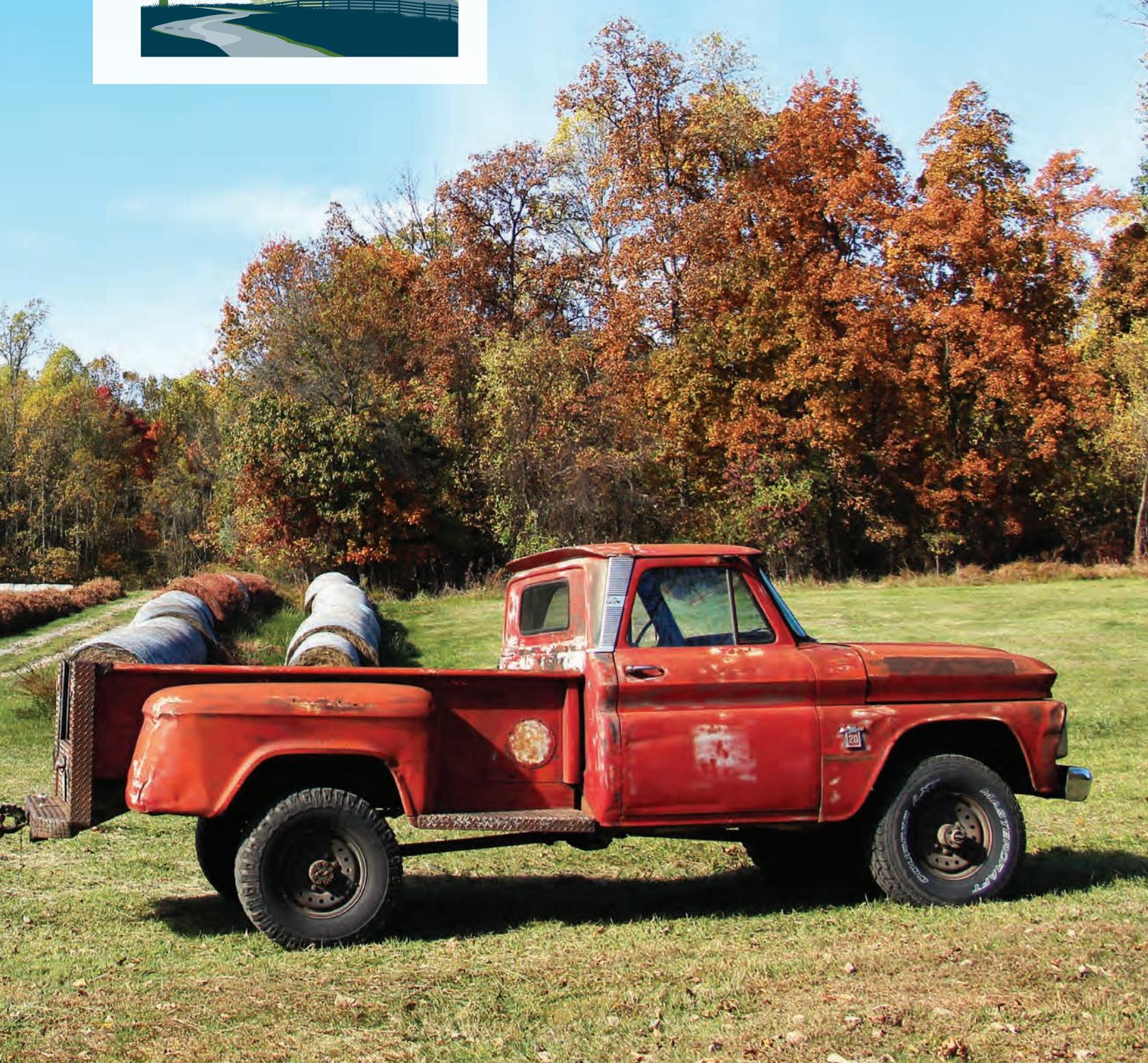
P R E S E R V A T I O N

FARM & NATURAL  
LANDS TRUST  
OF YORK COUNTY

VOLUME 8

Views

WINTER 2025





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**FARM & NATURAL LANDS TRUST has  
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### TO CONTACT US:

717.843.4411

[skenny@farmtrust.org](mailto:skenny@farmtrust.org)

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WINTER 2025

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From all of us at FNLT—volunteers, staff, landowners, and supporters like you—we wish everyone great health and happiness in wrapping up 2025 and into a GREAT NEW YEAR! Please consider making a **new, reoccurring, or additional year-end (or new year!) contribution** to help FNLT continue our great preservation work all across York County! Keep stories like the ones in this newsletter coming—we owe our success in saving landscapes to YOU!





Hallie, Wade, Jessie,  
and Taryn Gobrecht

## FNLT Welcomes New *Land Stewardship Manager*

In the early 2000s, I sent the only letter to the editor I have ever written after reading an article about the **Farm & Natural Lands Trust (FNLT)**. The organization had stepped up to help purchase the Rummel Farm, adding 117 acres to Codorus State Park. At a time when development was moving rapidly near my parents' house, I was so grateful for the role the FNLT played in preserving that critical open space.

Fast forward nearly 25 years. Who would have thought I would be starting a new career as the **FNLT's Land Stewardship Manager**?

Though this is a new role, I am very familiar with the organization. I spent much of my career with the York County Planning Commission (YCP), working closely with Sean and Rochelle to assist with GIS projects. I joined **FNLT's Land Preservation Committee** in 2012 and got to see firsthand the impactful work of FNLT throughout York County, protecting our mature forests, pristine streams, and other natural lands. I've also enjoyed volunteering at the famous Sasquatch Run for many years.

While at YCP, I was fortunate to become the Assistant Director and then the Director, but what I enjoyed most was focusing on open space and land preservation. With support from the County Commissioners, I am extremely proud to be part of the effort to boost land preservation in York County.

My colleagues and I helped to establish the **York County Open Space and Land Preservation Program**, setting the foundation to preserve **over 3,200 acres of open space** each year since 2020.

When I'm not working, and when I'm not watching youth sports, I love hiking with my wife and two daughters to explore the amazing landscapes in and around York County. We also enjoy traveling the country and introducing our daughters to memorable outdoor adventures. Some of our favorite memories include horseback riding through the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho, hiking up a snow covered trail to see majestic views of Mount Ranier, whitewater rafting (and flipping) on the Merced River near Yosemite, hiking in the Virgin River (chest deep at times) through the Narrows and Canyoneering with 110' rappels, both in Zion National Park. My love of the outdoors runs deep, and preserving open space for our future generations is very important to me.

To say I am excited to be part of the FNLT family is an understatement. I am looking forward to working closely with everyone to further the mission, preserving our natural resources for future generations to enjoy!

*With gratitude,*  
**WADE GOBRECHT**, Land Stewardship Manager

# Protecting Prime Farmland *in North Codorus*

Story & Photos By: Sean P. Kenny



Some outstanding York Countians have placed a conservation easement on a **62.28-acre** property in **North Codorus Township**. Thank you to the landowners—who wish to stay anonymous—for protecting this agricultural and natural resource for the benefit of the entire community.

An impressive 98% of the soils on this property are classified as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, productive ground that supports a long-established health food operation on an adjacent parcel.

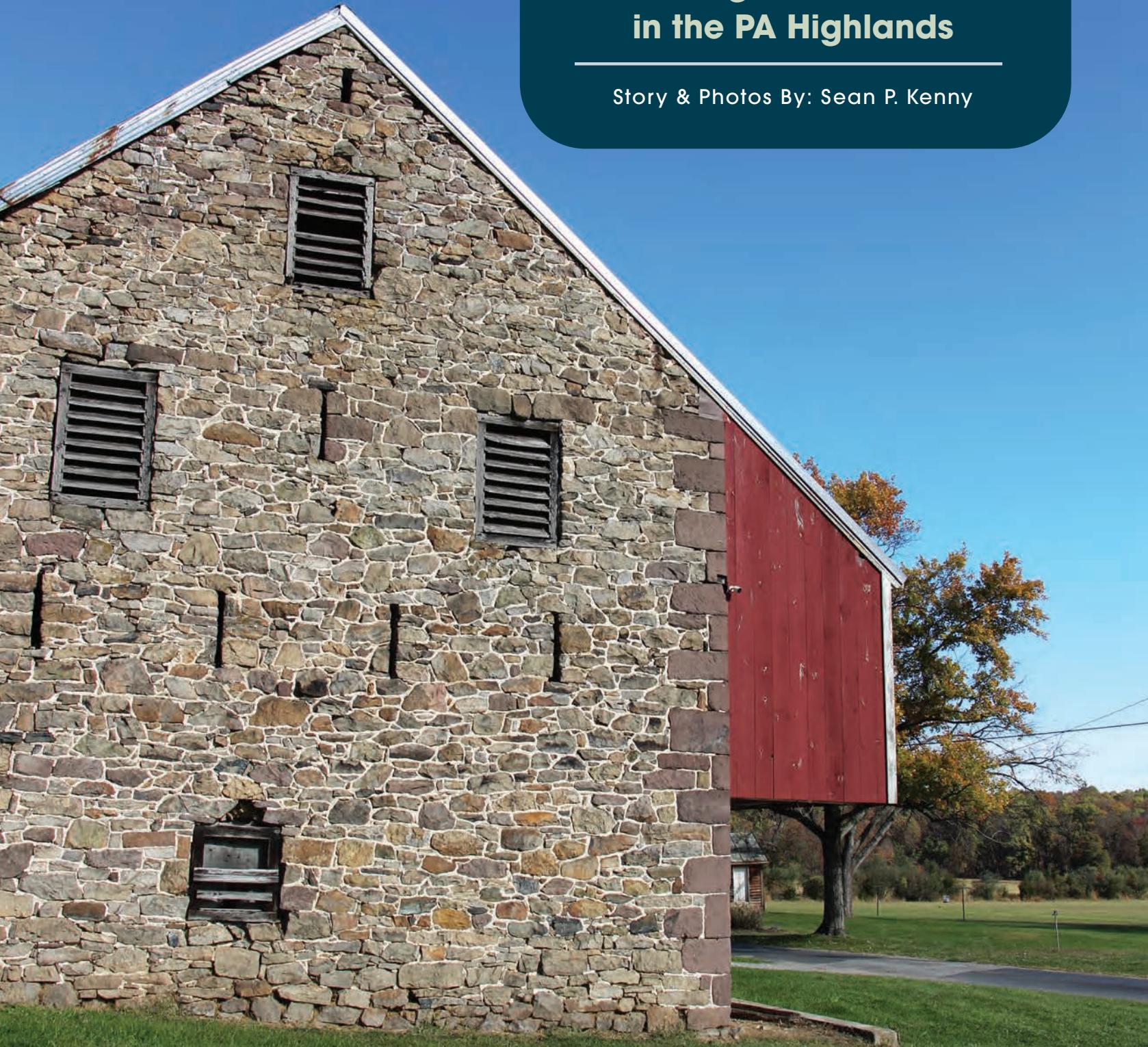
Roughly half of the land is woodland and wetland areas, providing a natural buffer to the active agricultural uses. These buffers protect the **Stoverstown Branch**, a stream designated as a Warm Water Fishery (WWF) that flows for nearly **700 feet** across the land.

Visible from **Lehman and Stoverstown Roads**, this scenic property forms a crucial link in the area's conservation network, adjacent to an almost **300-acre** block of farmland under easement with the **York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board**. The addition of this landscape under preservation with FNLT guarantees that the area's scenic beauty and natural resources are safeguarded for generations to come.

# *A Family Affair*

**Preserving Over 240 Acres  
in the PA Highlands**

Story & Photos By: Sean P. Kenny



This is a story of a multi-generational commitment to land conservation. Multiple members of the **Knaub, Simmers and Stoops families** worked with FNLT to place three separate, adjacent properties—totaling over **240 acres**—under conservation easement in **Warrington Township**. This collective effort creates a large block of conserved land, safeguarding prime soils, water resources feeding **Pinchot Lake**, and features a massive forested ridgeline that provides a natural backdrop to the region.

The first parcel, totaling **59.15 acres**, boasts a classic Germanic house believed to date back to 1766 (log portion) and the early 1800s (stone portion). A prominent bank barn and other historic farmstead features showcase a classic farming way of life. The surrounding fields are maintained in hay and pasture, with 61% of the soils classified as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, ensuring the perpetual value of this productive land.

The second parcel, spanning **84 acres**, is vital for regional water quality and wildlife habitat. Both Tributary 08529 and Tributary 08532 to **Beaver Creek** flow across the property, and both are designated as Warm Water Fisheries (WWF). The mixed agricultural land and forest canopy create excellent habitat, evidenced by a Bald Eagle sighting during the FNLT site visit. These tributaries flow to the **Conewago Creek** and the **Susquehanna River**, making this easement a crucial piece of **Chesapeake Bay** protection.

The largest tract, at **97 acres**, is predominantly steep, mature woodland. This natural landscape protects the ridgeline and controls runoff to the streams below. The highest points offer sweeping landscape views stretching into Perry and Lancaster Counties. The preservation of this steep, wooded tract ensures a permanent natural background for the entire area.

The entire **240+ acre** block is adjacent to **Gifford Pinchot State Park** and is part of the state-designated **PA Highlands Mega Greenway**, creating an essential, continuous habitat corridor. This commitment reflects a deep, multi-generational understanding that the best way to secure the future is to ensure the long-term health of the land.

**FNLT Operations Director Rochelle Black** says it well: “**Sitting around a packed kitchen table with all the family members, a phrase my extended family would use to describe someone they liked came to mind: ‘they are good York County folks.’** I felt right at home as we talked, laughed a little about life, and then got down to business to discuss the easement. Preservation is a great fit for them, their land, and their priorities. Their passion for the land and ‘doing right’ by the land quickly became evident!”

# *Greetings from* the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board!

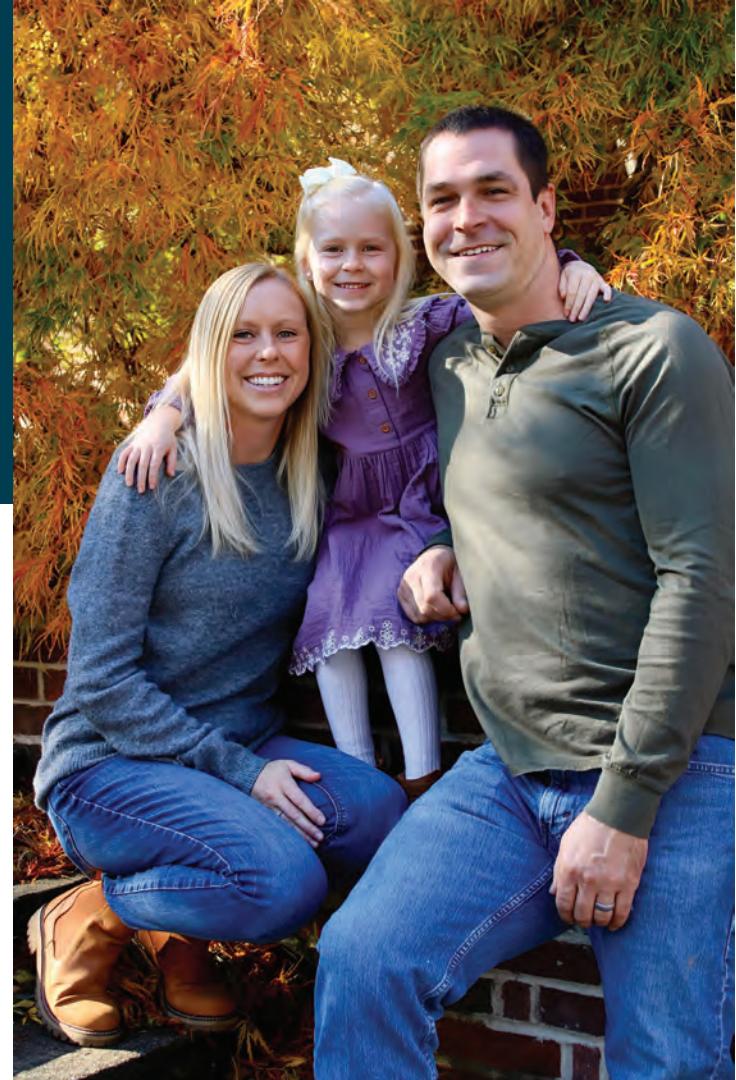
by Eric Naylor, YCALPB Director

Hello fellow York Countians! I'm honored to serve as the Director of the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (YCALPB). As a lifelong York Countian, my goal after graduating from **Shippensburg University** was to make a positive impact on my community and environment, and I can't think of a better way to do that than by preserving our county's agricultural land.

2025 was an exciting, busy, and very successful year for **YCALPB**. Our massive milestone: **50,000 acres preserved!** We formally preserved our **50,000<sup>th</sup>** acre on August 15<sup>th</sup> with the **Flinchbaugh family** and held a celebration at a farm owned by the **Barley family** in **Chanceford Township**. Several great speakers highlighted the significance of this milestone with about **75 attendees**, and the highlight was a **Preserved Farm Tour** that spanned **11 miles** and wound through over **5,000 acres** of permanently preserved farmland.

Another accomplishment this year was the recertification of our program with the **Department of Agriculture**, which is required every seven years to continue receiving state matching funds. The board also implemented key program changes, including formally allowing for the donation of additional lands and adding language to allow for the annexation of land (allowing smaller preserved tracts to be transferred between preserved farm owners). I appreciate that the board is always willing to discuss new ideas.

One last item I want to shed light on is the difference between various methods of land protection in our county. While terms like **Zoning, Clean & Green, and Ag Security** are often used interchangeably in 'protecting land', it is important to note that they are temporary forms of protection because they can be changed or removed, or involve paying penalties to be released from.



Farmland Preservation, through the **YCALPB** program, is different. Like with **FNLT** conservation easements, our work is a perpetual restriction—meaning "forever and a day"—that ensures a property remains an economically viable farm.

I bring these programs up to highlight that there are temporary ways to protect land and permanent ways to preserve it in York County. The **YCALPB** and **FNLT** have both existed for 37 years and remain separate entities, but the collaboration between our two offices is as great as ever. This relationship allows our programs to succeed, with our farmers, landowners and the community benefiting.

Several large preservation projects are in the works because of this strong partnership. We work together to preserve as much of this county as possible, ensuring that York County remains a great place to live, work, and play.

# Pull... Bang!

## The Clay Shoot Hits a Record Target

By D. Hunter Mink, FNLT Vice President

The 16<sup>th</sup> FNLT Clay Shoot was a fantastic event! We welcomed a record crowd of over 100 FNLT supporters—20 teams of shooters, plus volunteers—for a beautiful afternoon at **Central Penn Sporting Clays**. The high spirits and competitive energy made for a truly great day supporting land preservation in York County.

Thanks to presenting sponsor, **YorkAg**, and the many sponsors who return year after year for this event. A big shout-out to **Rockfish Hospitality Group** for providing a delicious Octoberfest lunch to start the day, and to **Brewery Products** for the post-shoot beverages.

**Who was on top?** Competition was fierce and our presenting sponsor, **YorkAg**, had their two teams taking 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Team **M&T Bank** secured a hard-fought 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. **Alex Sawicki** (Team **Ream Roofing**) earned **Top Female Shooter** and **Matthew Bozart** (Team **Royal Square**) was **Top Individual Shooter** (not on a top team).

My class in **Leadership York's Leadership Training Program** helped pull together the inaugural shoot in 2009, which turned into many more years as one of FNLT's signature events. The **Clay Shoot** not only supports **FNLT's** mission but also provided me with the opportunity to join **FNLT's Board** in 2010. Serving on the Finance Committee, Executive Committee, and now as **Vice President**, it is a privilege and an honor to be part of an organization that so deeply cares about the beauty and future of York County.

Any skillset is welcome – plan to join us for the 17<sup>th</sup> FNLT Clay Shoot on **Friday, October 16, 2026** – visit [farmtrust.org](http://farmtrust.org) or reach out to the FNLT staff to become a sponsor.



# Kiser Property Secures Its Scenic Legacy

Story & Photos By: Sean P. Kenny

The **51.2-acre Kiser farm** in Springfield Township is a story of dedication and stewardship, embodying true York County rural charm. Preservation of this property adds a vital piece to our growing network of protected land.

The **Kiser farm** contains approximately **30 acres** in active agriculture, with **65%** of total soils classified as **Prime Farmland** or **Farmland of Statewide Importance**. This is some of the most productive agricultural ground we have in the county—and the country—safeguarding a vital piece of our natural resources.

*"I'm so glad that something like Farm & Natural Lands Trust exists. My goal has always been to keep the property in farming beyond my lifetime – it wasn't about the money for us, more about the tradition. I hope to see more of this activity around us and throughout the County, before it's too late."*

**~JOE KISER**



Joseph Kiser has farmed this land for decades and is a committed steward, using proven practices like contour farming to protect rich soils. By rotating hay strips with row crops such as rye, wheat, corn, and soybeans, they successfully minimize soil loss, demonstrating agricultural viability alongside environmental responsibility. Additionally, the family maintains a small farm operation, raising beef cattle, chickens, and goats.

The farm also boasts a wetland and forested area, which, when combined with the Kiser family's careful farming practices, protects water quality that flows into the larger South Branch Codorus Creek Watershed and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. A man-made pond and spring house fed by seasonal springs are classic farmstead features adding charm to this beautiful landscape.

From scenic Seitzville, Granary, and South Roads, the entirety of this beautiful property is visible to the public, showcasing the homestead, cultivated fields, pasture, and wooded slopes. This area is known for strong

preservation efforts and the Kisers are in close proximity to similar landscapes under easement with FNLT and the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board—including an adjacent 197-acre farm protected as a joint project by the two organizations. FNLT is currently in talks with nearby landowners to further protect this area.

Through this easement, the property is protected in perpetuity, ensuring the view remains for all to enjoy and securing the land's scenic and open space values for future generations.

Joe Kiser summed it up, "I'm so glad that something like FNLT exists. My goal has always been to keep the property in farming beyond my lifetime – it wasn't about the money for us, more about the tradition. I hope to see more of this activity around us and throughout the County, before it's too late."

# Ag Heritage Carries On with Steamorama

Story & Photos By: Sean P. Kenny



My first visit to **Steam-O-Rama** in **Lower Windsor Township** was over 15 years ago in my early days with **FNLT**, and I now try to make it an annual tradition with my kids. It's about as genuine a slice of York County as you can get! Or should I say, a slice of scrapple – which they're known for... or better, panhaus, as **FNLT Board President Felicia Dell** has corrected me several times on the proper name.

While working with the **Knaub family** on their property, I soon learned they were involved with the **Early American Steam Engine and Old Equipment Society (EASES)**, the non-profit organization behind **Steam-O-Rama**. That connection ultimately led to the preservation of this **55.102**-acre property.

**EASES** views the farm as a living museum, hosting **Steam-O-Rama** and other community events where antique farming equipment, live historic equipment demonstrations, and collections are housed in restored barns, bringing York County's agricultural history to life.



**EASES** wanted to ensure that regardless of the non-profit organization's future, the land itself "stays a farm, as it should."

87% of the property's soils are classified as **Farmland of Statewide Importance** or **Prime Farmland**, currently mostly in hay crop. A wooded area with steep slopes contains headwaters for an unnamed tributary flowing north to **Cabin Creek**.

No matter which way your GPS takes you there, you'll know you've arrived due to the sweeping views of the farm from **Manor** and **Taylor Roads**. By preserving their land, the **EASES** knows future generations of York Countians will continue farming this ground, with the hope that antique steam engines will be whistling across the rural landscape.





# Return of the Sasquatch: A Record-Breaking Run!

Story by: Sean P. Kenny Photos by: Karen Mitchell and Gretchen Nevin



FNLT's 14<sup>th</sup> Sasquatch 5 & 10 K Trail Run on September 6<sup>th</sup> was a success, hosting the most runners we've had in many years! The weather was perfect and the challenging course on the FNLT preserved **South Branch Farms** was almost as much fun as the post-race awards party.

**Thank you** to the sponsors who made the day possible, notably: **Rockfish Hospitality Group** for the delicious barbecue lunch, **Flinchbaugh Orchards & Farm Market** for the refreshing spread of fruits, **York Water Company** for the hydration (and for sponsoring Veterans!), and **Brewery Products** for the well-deserved adult beverages.

The 10K course at **South Branch Farms** offers some really beautiful views, but you have to watch your steps! **Andrew Simpson** (pictured lower left) of Wrightsville finished 1<sup>st</sup> overall and noted:

"I always underestimate the difficulty of this course. Sure, the first and last miles are fast, but once you hit the middle section of the course, your quads will be screaming in protest, particularly on the last climb that appears to end several times, but actually doesn't. At least you get to wash away your pain with a nice stream crossing with under a mile to go!"

**Rebecca Doner** of Mount Wolf (pictured right) was the first overall female in the 10K with a time of 56:20. She states, "I ran my first Sasquatch race in 2016 not knowing it was a trail race. I consider this event the start of my running journey! I loved the competition and the community. Road running has my heart but trail running has a way of drawing you in with the energy and the people. The Sasquatch Run is a fun, challenging event with some beautiful views and a great after party. Save the date for 2026!"

The preservation of agricultural and natural landscapes is the FNLT mission, and hosting this event at **South Branch Farms** lets our community experience the beauty and value of protected land firsthand!

**Start training - the 15<sup>th</sup> Sasquatch Run takes place Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup> 2026!**

10K Winners	Time
-------------	------

#### Overall Male

1st: Andrew Simpson (Age 37)	41:44
2nd: Jonathan Wyrick (Age 24)	46:18
3rd: David Levy (Age 29)	47:03

#### Overall Female

1st: Rebecca Doner (Age 36)	56:20
2nd: Ashley Baechtle (Age 35)	59:27
3rd: Katie Wyrick (Age 23)	1:02:43

5K Winners	Time
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#### Overall Male

1st: William Edwards (Age 31)	20:29
2nd: Matthew McKinney (Age 17)	21:06
3rd: Alex Dougherty (Age 15)	21:25

#### Overall Female

1st: Sherry Stick (Age 47)	22:36
2nd: Hayley Green (Age 19)	23:00
3rd: June Rebert (Age 13)	23:08





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Every dollar of support goes a long way in helping FNLT protect vital agricultural land, forests, and waterways across York County, ensuring our natural resources, wildlife habitat, and beautiful views are there for generations to come. **Just like every acre counts, so does every bit of support!** Act Before December 31<sup>st</sup>! Use this form and the included envelope by year end to ensure your gift counts for 2025 tax purposes, or return it any time! Secure gifts can also be made quickly online at [farmtrust.org](http://farmtrust.org).

## YEAR END SUPPORT OF FNLT'S LAND PRESERVATION WORK DONATION FORM

All support of FNLT goes directly to our important agricultural and environmental preservation work. We make your support of any amount go a long way, as preservation is important now, and for generations to come.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  Check  Credit Card:  Visa  MC

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOTE: Contributions can also be made online [farmtrust.org](http://farmtrust.org)!**



A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll-free within PA: 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.