

About ClearWater Conservancy

The mission of ClearWater Conservancy is to promote conservation and restoration of natural resources in central Pennsylvania through land protection, water resources protection, and environmental outreach to the community.

ClearWater has conserved over 600 acres of land with easements, and an additional 2,400 acres have been protected so far through conservation partnerships. Conservation easements include Millbrook Marsh, Thompson Woods Preserve, Rhoneymeade, and several private farms. Riparian easements along the streams are ClearWater's newest conservation focus as part of our long-term vision of a "Ribbon of Green" connecting the headwaters of Spring Creek to Bald Eagle Creek and beyond.

About Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or governmental body. The agreement limits certain uses on all or a portion of a property for conservation purposes while keeping the property in the landowner's ownership. The easement is nearly always perpetual—applying to all present and future owners of the land—and is recorded at the County Recorder of Deeds office.

The restrictions contained in an easement are tailored to the particular property and to the goals of the landowner and conservation organization. An easement might state, for example, that no building or road may be placed within 200 feet of a stream passing through a property; however the easement might allow for a house to be built elsewhere on the land. Another easement might support farming but forbid development. Yet another easement might prohibit all activities except for sustainable forestry and recreation. The flexibility of the easement tool is endless.

Most conservation easements held by land trusts are donated by landowners who wish to protect a beloved place. In rare cases, they are sold at a bargain price or fair market value. Federal tax benefits are available to easement donors whose donations meet IRS requirements.

*Everyone working together to conserve natural beauty
and the environment in the heart of Pennsylvania*

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Photos by Roger Pennock,
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Special thanks to all who shared
their memories for this story!



ClearWater Conservancy

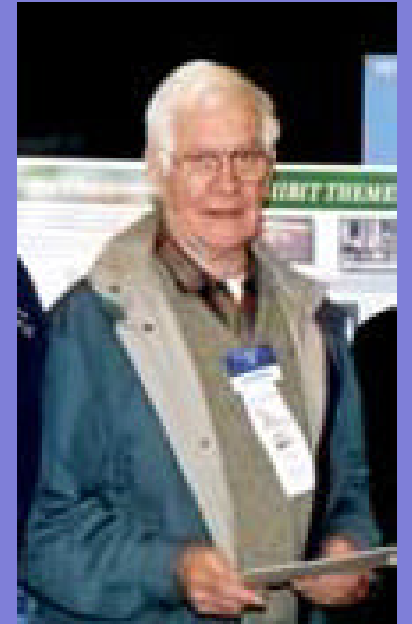
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ClearWater Conservancy

Stories of Land, Water, and People

John Ziegler

A True Community Citizen



“Jack Ziegler is absolutely the most enthusiastic and dedicated public servant I have ever met in my life,” says Jack McMillan. After a moment's pause, he continues, “and I'll stand by that.”

McMillan, an old classmate, and, more recently, fellow member of the Penn State Alumni Society with Dr. John Ziegler, echoes a sentiment felt community-wide here in State College.

Dr. John Ziegler, or Jack, as he is widely known among friends, is the focus of the July 2005 25th anniversary celebration of ClearWater Conservancy. While the day takes a special look at Dr. Ziegler's involvement in this particular organization, it is important to acknowledge that his service to the community extends far past this small corner of State College.

Since moving to the area nearly 56 years ago in 1950, Dr. Ziegler has been involved in what seems to be a nearly countless number of community organizations. The story of John Ziegler, though, starts before his arrival in State College.

Born on November 10, 1924, in neighboring Altoona, Dr. Ziegler entered the United States Navy in 1942, where he was assigned to malaria control and sanitation with tours of duty in France, Italy and Morocco and served until 1945. He later earned his associate degree in agriculture from the Potomac State School of West Virginia and, soon after, in 1949 married Dorothy Jane Shockey. The pair has three sons.

In 1950, upon moving to State College with his wife, Dr. Ziegler received his Bachelor of Science in Animal Husbandry from Penn State, where he met classmates John McMillan and Richard Kustin. Though these men knew each other in school, today they are community colleagues, involved in various organizations.

Kustin, who is involved in Penn State's International Hospitality Council (IHC) with Ziegler, says when he thinks of John, he imagines him going door-to-door

gathering door prizes for incoming foreign students. In fact, Ziegler does this every year in time for the international student orientation day in August, which insures that nearly every student receives a welcome gift to their new home, whether it is a gift certificate to the Corner Room or a Penn State baseball cap.

Kustin is not the only acquaintance of John to imagine him in a special way. Kristen Saacke-Blunk, the first full-time executive director of ClearWater Conservancy in 1994, says she has a fixed mental image of John in an apron, barbecuing a whole pig, head and all.

“Before any ClearWater event, my kids used to ask me, ‘Will the pig with the head be there?’” remembers Saacke-Blunk.

Long-time friend Jim McClure—ClearWater's very first president—has a similar image of Ziegler barbecuing an entire pig, but has a specific memory of

“John is one of the few people I know who I can characterize as absolutely first rate: as a practitioner of his profession; as a devotee of the best interests of his students, his colleagues, and his university; as a citizen, both in public service and in non-public organizations; as the head of an estimable family; and as an unselfish gentleman—he fulfills every requirement, and I am proud to have him as a friend.”

~ George Beatty, February 1987
in a nomination of John Ziegler for the Barash Award



ClearWater has a whole series of photos of John cooking pigs for Spring Creek Day and other special events. John always made stressed bringing people together in fun and fellowship while learning about the environment.

Spring Creek Day 2001. The evening before the festival, McClure and Ziegler were setting up barbeque equipment but having some trouble getting it to work.

“I have an image in my mind of Jack asleep in his car, finally, around 4 a.m.,” says McClure.

It is images like these that lead McClure to call Ziegler “the most public-spirited man” that he has ever known.

“This is Jack Ziegler,” says McClure. “He is always willing to dig in and work, absolutely reliable, and he will always meet you more than halfway. He is a damn good companion.”

McClure isn't the only one to notice Dr. Ziegler's reliability. To give one example of many, he is the only remaining charter member of the DEP Roundtable since its founding in 1984. The DEP

Roundtable is an advisory committee on environmental issues that are of interest to the group as a whole, usually on a state-wide level. Each member represents an organization's interests and views—Dr. Ziegler represented the ClearWater Conservancy from 1984 until 2003. Dan Spadoni, Director of Community Relations for the DEP, says Dr. Ziegler maintains one of the best attendance records in the history of the organization.

“Aside from nearly perfect attendance, John always came prepared to initiate and talk through issues,” says Spadoni and cites Ziegler as an instrumental force in recruiting new members. “I appreciate every minute of the past 21 years he has spent with the DEP Roundtable,” he said, and adds “I hope to see him stick around for another 21 years.”

Long-term commitment seems to be something Dr. Ziegler thrives on, as is evidenced in his work with ClearWater Conservancy alone. He served as a board member from 1985 until 1988, when he was named president, and helped to usher ClearWater through a particularly challenging time in its development.

“John was instrumental in helping the fledgling group focus its mission and develop its organizational capacity,” according to ClearWater executive director, Jennifer Shuey. “ClearWater Conservancy began to focus its efforts and bring community attention to Spring Creek and its watershed



Auctioneer John with ClearWater Executive Director, Darlene Weener, at ClearWater's first Chocolate Party in 1999.

during John's tenure as president. He also saw that ClearWater found the resources to hire its first part-time coordinator,” Julie Lalo, in 1989.

The hiring of ClearWater's first paid employee allowed the organization to expand the scope of its actions. Lalo, who now works with a non-profit organization called 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, said she attributes ClearWater's early success to the dedication of individuals like Dr. Ziegler. “It was my honor to work with such passionate and committed people,” she said. “It was truly a rare and wonderful thing.”

Dr. Ziegler's presidency at ClearWater couldn't have come at a better time, according to board director Barbara Fisher, who herself has served on the ClearWater board since its inception in 1980.

“John has a special sense of values. He is ethically and morally conscious and just so caring about people, and this community,” she says. “He really helped to expand our breadth of networking. He just has a knack for understanding the needs of an organization to make it tick.”

She offers a recent example of this knack, citing a ClearWater Conservancy benefit now known as “For the Love of Art & Chocolate”, where Dr. Ziegler acted as the auctioneer. After the event, another organization approached John and asked if their organization could adopt the idea of a Chocolate Party. He was reluctant to say yes immediately, and instead researched the organization and its needs. A few days later, he met with that individual in person and discussed a whole list of options that would better suit the organization's networking and financial needs.

This extraordinary, passionate concern for the good of the community as a whole is what sets Dr. Ziegler apart as a “real community resource,” as Centre County Historical Society president Jackie Melander says. Ziegler's membership at the CCHS for over 20 years serves as yet another testament to his unwavering dedication to the area.

Melander tells a story of a CCHS fundraiser held the Hampton Inn, in which dinner was to be served for 36 people. When the guests arrived, it became clear that there were 38—not 36—guests, much to everyone's surprise. Dr. Ziegler, who sits on the organization's executive board, quickly set up



John lines up for a drink of recycled water from UAJA's Beneficial Reuse project. Wastewater is treated to drinking water standards to be reused by the community and eventually recharged into the groundwater aquifer in the Slab Cabin Run watershed.

John's Many Organizations

American Meat Science Association
American Registry of Certified Animal Scientists
American Society of Animal Science
Centre County Historical Society
(current vice president)
Civil War Roundtable
ClearWater Conservancy
(ex officio director and former president)
College Township Council
DEP Roundtable (charter member)
Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement,
Centre County PA Senior Environmental Corps
(founding member)
Friends of the Palmer Museum
Fraternity Purchasing Association
Gamma Sigma Delta (secretary/president)
Institute of Food Technologists
International Hospitality Council
(Volunteer of the Year, 2003)
Keystone International Livestock Exposition
Meat Packers Association (PMPA)
PA Native Plant Society
Pasto Agricultural Museum
Penn State Alumni Society
Penn State Retired Faculty-Staff Club
(former president)
Penn State Stockman's Club (founder)
PennAg Industries (Education Committee)
Pennsylvania Farmers Association (PFA)
Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council
Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers
Association
Phi Tau Sigma
Retired Senior Volunteer Program
Sigma Xi
St. Paul's Methodist Church (Precinct Chair)
Trout Unlimited
University Faculty Senate—Student Life
Committee

extra places and served the two extra guests, who it was later revealed believed that the fundraiser was actually a public restaurant.

Dr. Ziegler tells this story with what Melander calls “great embellishment,” but the lesson stays the same: this is a man committed to bringing people—strangers, old friends, or organizations as a whole— together, undeterred by obstacles.

Long-time friend Bob Gruver agrees and says he has fond memories of making ice cream for CCHS socials with Dr. Ziegler. “I’m not good at this personal stuff, but John really makes a difference,” he says.

“He just jumps in and gets the job done,” says Bonnie Wick, Centre County Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) director. “And it’s the community who benefits.”



John teaches other County Senior Environmental Corps volunteers how to use the water testing kits to monitor the quality of streams.

The benefits of Dr. Ziegler’s actions come in all shapes and sizes, to which any community member who knows him will attest. Ilene Glenn, 94, who somewhat mischievously refers to Dr. Ziegler as her “special friend,” gives an example.

“John worked so hard when our post office in Lemont was about to be shut down,” says Glenn. “He wants the community to be just that—a community of people who care about each other.”

Ann Donovan, Centre County’s Watershed Specialist and coordinator for the Pennsylvania Senior Environmental Corps, of which Dr. Ziegler is a founding member, remembers this past year’s Acid Rock Symposium in December.

“It was bitter, bitter cold and John was still there. He wouldn’t give up. He just extends himself and gives that extra effort for what he believes in,” she says. “The community.”

She also cites Dr. Ziegler’s gatherings at his cabin on Spruce Creek as “special events,” and notes that he often brought foreign students with him, as part of his involvement in the IHC. This bringing together of cultures and people is



Discussions about a conservation easement on Nittany Farms began with Galen Driebelbis in 1988 during John Ziegler’s presidency. The easement was finalized in 1990.

what most characterizes Dr. Ziegler within the community.

Joanne Green, IHC Assistant Director, says Dr. Ziegler regularly acts as a host for foreign students and puts forth “incredible hospitality” towards new community members.

“He just has the best interests of all at heart,” she says. “He is so incredibly talented at bringing people together.”

She sums up what the IHC, ClearWater Conservancy, and countless other organizations, friends, and family members would like to say in this tribute to Dr. John Ziegler. And that is “we just can’t say enough in thanks.”