

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.

In Centre County, ClearWater Conservancy, the Centre County Farmland Trust, the Centre County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, and Mount Nittany Conservancy protect land with conservation easements.

About the Landowner Incentive Program

ClearWater Conservancy purchased the Striedieck conservation easement with the assistance of federal funds from a Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) grant. LIP is a US Fish and Wildlife Service program to protect and restore habitats on private lands to benefit species of Special Concern identified by a State's Wildlife Action Plan. The Pennsylvania Game Commission awarded a LIP grant to ClearWater Conservancy in October 2006. The Eagle Field conservation easement is the first LIP project to be completed in Pennsylvania.

About ClearWater Conservancy

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

ClearWater has conserved nearly 3,750 acres of land with conservation easements and through conservation partnerships.

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

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Special thanks to project partners: Karl and Iris Striedieck, Amos Goodall, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Brad Ross, Jim Finley, Blazosky Associates, and Bill Hilshey.

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ClearWater Conservancy

Stories of Land, Water, and People

On the Wings of Eagles

“ClearWater Conservancy is a unique group,” said Karl Striedieck, “They are interested in actually preserving the land.” On June 14, 2007, Mr. Striedieck signed the papers to secure his land through a permanent conservation easement to be protected by ClearWater.

The signing of this easement had been a long time in the making. Since October, 2006 ClearWater Conservancy and Mr. Striedieck have been working hard to seal the deal. It all began with an inquiry by Mr. Striedieck to ClearWater about the available options for securing his land as a natural resource for the future.

He knew that he wanted his land to remain as it was so that it could be valued and appreciated. “With the population increasing as it is,” said Mr. Striedieck, “I think this land will become even more valuable in the next hundred years.” He added that those involved in conservation are not interested in immediate rewards but instead focus on the legacy that we leave for future generations.



The Striedieck property on Bald Eagle Ridge. This ridge can be used for many activities, including falconry and gliding.



Karl Striedieck and ClearWater President Jeff Sturniolo make the conservation easement official on June 14, 2007.

An important resource that Mr. Striedieck hoped to conserve was the forested ridge top that allows him to practice falconry, a major hobby of his. Falconry or hawking is the sport of using trained raptors (birds of prey) to hunt or pursue game. In the easement, Mr. Striedieck placed provisions that allowed registered falconry groups to hunt on his property. He has a great love for this sport, which he says has attributed to the return of many endangered species. Organized falconry clubs work hard to return species of concern to high numbers so they will be strong enough for hunting.

This ridge is useful for more than one of Mr. Striedieck's hobbies. This retired fighter pilot is also a champion glider. Gliding (also known as soaring) is a recreational activity and competitive sport in which pilots fly un-powered aircraft known as gliders or sailplanes. Properly, the term gliding refers to descending flight of a

heavier-than-air craft, whereas soaring is the correct term to use when the craft gains altitude or speed from rising air.

After launching, glider pilots search for rising air to gain height. If conditions are good enough, experienced pilots can fly many hundreds of miles before returning to their home airfields, and occasionally flights over 1,000 miles are made. Ridges are very important for this sport because they cause the air drafts necessary for un-powered flight.

The Bald Eagle ridge is important for all types of flight, including avian migration. Patti Barber, a biologist of the Pennsylvania Game Commission explained that the Striedieck property, in particular, is important to birds of the state and the country.

"This land houses many important forest interior avian species," said Barber, "Since it is a ridge top, it is also very important in the migration of bird species, such as bald eagles." Mr. Striedieck's property is part of Bald Eagle Ridge - Important Bird Area #32 and contains a large forested tract providing habitat for bird species of great conservation concern, such as Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush, and Worm-eating Warbler.

All of the project partners present at the signing were just as excited as Mr. Striedieck about the doors this conservation easement will be able to open for conservation in the area. Jeff Sturniolo, ClearWater Conservancy President, is hoping that this land will lead to even greater

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~ Karl Striedieck

things in ClearWater's future. "This land will be able to serve as a springboard for creating bigger clusters of land and forming larger protected areas."

Mr. Sturniolo added that none of this would have been possible without the incredible effort of Bill Hilshey, ClearWater's Conservation Easement Manager, "He has such a big vision and his tenacious attitude will allow it to be accomplished," said Mr. Sturniolo. Mr. Striedieck added to the praise, "I don't know if we could have done it without him. We are very lucky to have him."

This conservation easement is actually the first in Pennsylvania to be completed with the assistance of a Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) grant. LIP is a US Fish and Wildlife Service, federally funded program, providing state agencies such as the Pennsylvania Game Commission with money to assist land trusts in the purchase of conservation easements on private lands to protect species of greatest concern.



The Scarlet Tanager, a bird of great conservation concern, that uses the Striedieck property as its home.

This conservation easement is the first successful one for Patti Barber of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, who has several LIP projects in the works. "You would think we would have done more," said Mrs. Barber, "But since there are usually so many people and organizations involved, there are a lot of hoops to jump through and lots of provisions to satisfy. It becomes very complicated." She too attributed the success of this easement to the determination of Bill Hilshey.

However, none of this would have been possible without the willpower and generosity of the Striediecks. Their dedication to conservation has made it possible to secure a piece of Bald Eagle Ridge permanently. The property's 245 acres include a wide variety of habitat types including forest, early successional habitat, grassy fields, wetlands, and riparian areas at the headwaters of both Buffalo Run and Halfmoon Creek.

"Karl's interest and willingness to work with ClearWater to make his land a conservancy is a really generous act," said Walt Ebaugh, past President of ClearWater Conservancy. "In my view there are three major land conservation targets of ClearWater's vision: forested ridges, stream corridors, and special natural places. I think that Karl Striedieck's conservation easement secures all three."