

## 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 through conservation easements and conservation partnerships resulting in public ownership of unique habitats and landscapes.

## About the Beatty Memorial Arbor Day Tree Planting

Held every year on or near Arbor Day, the fourth Friday of April, the Beatty Memorial Tree Planting is part of ClearWater's Riparian Conservation Program. Volunteers are given the opportunity to create a streamside buffer with a big impact, usually several hundred linear feet of stream planted with native trees and shrubs. Watch for details about the upcoming year's Arbor Day project at [www.clearwaterconservancy.org/arborday.htm](http://www.clearwaterconservancy.org/arborday.htm).

## About our Riparian Conservation Program

The goal of ClearWater's Riparian Conservation Program is to improve stream quality in the Spring Creek Watershed through the program's three areas of focus: stream stewardship, restoration, and protection. The program educates streamside landowners on the role of vegetated buffers, restores degraded streamside buffers in the watershed, and permanently protects good riparian areas.

ClearWater Conservancy holds periodic workshops on stream stewardship, completes buffer planting projects along Spring Creek and its tributaries, and works with willing landowners to protect their streamside properties through conservation easements. Some of the active restoration projects include the State College Elks Club golf course, Fasick Park, Blue Springs Park, the Rockenbeck Farm, the Potter Farm, the Wasson Farm, the Harding Farm, and the McCoy Dam removal and stream restoration.

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

Written by Kelly Federico  
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More details about Arbor Day can  
be found at [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).



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# Stories of Land, Water, and People

## Planting It Forward

### The Beatty's Arbor Day Gifts to the Future

**Arbor Day** is a chance to continue a tradition of conservation and leave something for posterity. On Arbor Day 2007, student volunteers from Bellefonte High School's Academic Decathlon Team joined other ClearWater volunteers to plant over 700 native trees, shrubs, and live dogwood stakes at Masullo Park in Bellefonte. The project created a much needed 25-foot wide riparian buffer along approximately 600 feet of stream at the confluence of Spring Creek and Logan Branch.

*The Bellefonte High School Academic Decathlon Team learned about the importance of riparian buffers while planting native trees and shrubs and serving their community at Arbor Day 2007.*

The 2007 event was just the latest in a long series of Arbor Day plantings, programs, and celebrations that ClearWater Conservancy hosts each year to commemorate the importance of trees in our environment and to honor George and Alice Beatty, past presidents of ClearWater and key figures in the organization's past.

The event was initially established by George to honor the memory of his wife Alice, and with the passing of



George in 2004, the day is now a memorial for both Beattys and a chance to remember their passionate work for ClearWater and the community.

“ClearWater’s Arbor Day plantings are an undoubtedly fitting memorial for the Beattys,” said Steve Scott, a former Board member and close friend of George and Alice. Besides being life-long conservationists, the Beattys also had a passion for dragonflies. Their first date was at Bear Meadows to collect specimens.

Thanks to George and Alice, the Frost Entomological Museum at Penn State has an extensive and impressive American and Mexican dragonfly collection, which they donated.

“The destruction of the wetlands and streamside vegetation was something that George and Alice had particular concern for; they could see its direct impact on the dragonfly population,” continued Scott.

“They had a lifelong love of plants and botanizing.” This love was evident with the Beatty’s many trips abroad to follow the botaniz-



*Before and after photos of the 900 linear foot stream buffer planted along Spring Creek at the State College Elks Country Club for Arbor Day 2006.*

ing path of Carolus Linnaeus, the inventor of binomial nomenclature.

The evolution of ClearWater’s Arbor Day event from a guest speaker and the planting of a handful of memorial trees into a serious annual restoration project along the banks of Spring Creek took some time. But it is a fitting way to honor these two life-long conservationists, because restoring and protecting vegetated streamside buffers is a powerful way to improve the quality of the stream ecosystem and habitat.

A riparian area is the zone of transition between the land and the water. A healthy riparian area is essential for the protection of water quality. Riparian areas should be well-vegetated, mainly with woody plants to filter water flowing into a stream, stabilize stream banks, and shade the stream bed.

According to ClearWater’s Conservation Biologist Katie Ombalski, “riparian buffers protect water quality by creating a filter for pollutants.” Tree roots hold the soil in place and prevent erosion, while shrubs, meadow grasses, and perennials slow down water runoff, allowing

*“He who plants trees loves others besides himself.”*

*~ English Proverb*

water to seep into the soil and recharge the groundwater. Tree canopies shade the stream and keep it cool for fish, frogs and salamanders.

Leaves and twigs from overhanging tree branches fall into the creek, and as they move downstream, these materials add important food sources and vital in-stream habitat structures for macroinvertebrate creatures that support fish. The unique habitat of riparian areas provides important food sources and refuges for many wildlife species, including amphibians, mammals, and songbirds that are adapted to life in this moist environment.

“The healthiest streams are those that are forested with multiple canopy layers of trees and shrubs”, Louise Comas remarks. As ClearWater’s Restoration Ecologist working on the Riparain Conservation Program, Louise has seen first-hand the ways that riparian buffer disturbance begins to unravel the delicate balance that once existed between soil, water, plants, and animals.

Stream banks quickly become destabilized once vegetation is removed. Then the water in the stream becomes silted and warm, invasive plant species begin to colonize the area, and riparian-dependent wildlife disappears.

ClearWater’s Riparian Conservation



*Volunteers at the 2004 Arbor Day planting create a buffer at Blue Springs Park near Boalsburg.*

Program educates streamside landowners about the many benefits of vegetated buffers, restores degraded or missing streamside buffers in the watershed, and permanently protects good riparian areas through conservation easements.

Arbor Day is the perfect time to kick off ClearWater’s planting season and teach the volunteers and landowners about the best ways to maintain and care for riparian buffers.

*With Congressional passage and presidential signing of a historic bill in 2004, America has an official National Tree—the oak. ClearWater is growing oak seedlings to plant in our riparian restorations through a “Growing Native” initiative.*

