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CARS

Your beloved old car may no longer get you from point A to B, but did you know it could help protect forests, waterways, and wildlife in the Cacapon watershed?

We are happy to announce that we now accept donated vehicles through careasy.org.

Go to careasy.org/nonprofit/cacapon or call 855-500-7433.



Meadow Making *Continued*

Beauty in the natural world invites a conversation between the perceiver and the perceived. And that's what we'll enjoy: a long conversation with our new meadow. I trust that others also will come to ponder important mysteries in its presence or, when needed, to heal. Many artists, poets, wanderers, and woodsmen know the power of the natural world to calm restless souls or fire up the imagination. Perhaps they will find in our meadow a muse.

I hope the meadow will be magnificent forever, but I won't be its guardian for long. Will my successors sow new seeds? Construct houses? Build a fracking station? These questions invite worry. They remind me also that we're not powerless to shape some answers.



Mighty Mussels *Continued*

- Next, try to think carefully about development. Protect intact stretches of land with robust riparian buffers. Trees help keep streams clean and temperate, providing optimal habitat for mussels.
- Then, think about getting rid of turf grass and replacing it with trees and native vegetation that don't need fertilizer or pesticides. "The more trees the better," Wood adds.

There is one more reason Wood loves mussels: "The great thing is that I can talk across the political spectrum with people about mussels. I have not come across anyone who doesn't care about them."

Ridge and River *Continued*

The Buzzerd family has passed much of the land down from one generation to the next and also passed along the desire to keep the land as always it has been – peaceful woodlands along the tranquil Cacapon River for family and friends to enjoy.

Between the hunt clubs, Todd's stepmother Linda, and Todd himself, the Buzzerd family and their friends protect 578 acres and almost four miles of the riverbank. The Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust helps hunt clubs permanently protect their lands, the wildlife, the river, and their legacy.

Species of Concern

There are scores of species that need our land stewardship to survive. Here's just a few:



Eastern Lampmussel



Yellow Lampmussel



Pink Mucket Mussel



Indiana Bat



Virginia Big-eared Bat

GUIDESTAR

The Trust is now on GuideStar and has earned a Gold Seal of Transparency! You can donate to us directly from their site:

www.guidestar.org/profile/55-0700086



**CACAPON & LOST RIVERS
LAND TRUST**

Protecting the forests, farms, rural heritage, and water quality of the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Watershed

News from the
Watershed
Summer 2022

SEE INSIDE:

1 Endangered Freshwater Mussels



2 West Virginia's Land of Hope



3 Meet Todd Buzzerd



2022 Highlights to Date:

- Protected 25 acres in Morgan County
- Promoted conservation funding with Senator Capito's staff.
- Hired Deputy Director Marika Suval. (She's terrific!)
- Welcomed back intern Ted Ryan, who did great work for us!
- Moved our office to the Old Capon Bridge School (195 Capon School St).

DIVING DEEP INTO SUMMER

Summer is upon us, and we're as busy as the bees. In April we welcomed Deputy Director Marika Suval, a conservation planning and communications pro, and in June we moved to Capon Bridge! Check out below for other 2022 highlights to date.

Also in this issue, we dive deep into the Cacapon's waters to view mussels, zip around a wildflower meadow, and walk across forested conservation lands with landowner Todd Buzzerd. In honor of West Virginia Day, we review our state's origins and the richness of our lands.

We wish you a happy summer of float trips, successful hay harvests, and family picnics, and we thank you for supporting the Trust and our efforts to protect this beautiful, vibrant place.

Emily Warner

Emily Warner, Executive Director



Meadow Making *By Henry Ireys*

Several years ago, my wife and I decided to support our pollinators – and bring more color to our land – by making a new meadow of wildflowers from an acre of clear-cut forest overgrown with thickets of non-native multiflora rose.

For two years I brush-hogged the multiflora, pushing residual debris into pyramids of leaves, roots, and thorny stalks. Much winter burning. Much raking. Much root-pulling. More raking. More burn-piles.

Last year, we twice spread several tons of lime to stymie the multiflora and enrich the soil. I mowed often, battling the onslaught of unwanted shoots and stalks. In October, I plowed the field – busting off one plow prong in the process – and then seeded for diversity and color: purple aster, blue lupine, yellow coreopsis, orange butterfly weed, and various poppies. Then, a long winter's wait.

In May, finally, the meadow's beauty came alive: First, goldish greens of early sprouts; later, a few violet button-tops of clover; then suddenly, spots of reds, yellows, and blues amid native grasses and (arggh!) more multiflora shoots. Late in the month, a few bees zipped around. Summer promises more buzz and color.

“Beauty in the natural world invites a conversation between the perceiver and the perceived.”

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Mighty Mussels: In Praise of the Unsung Bivalves



A year ago, the federal government made a sobering announcement: 23 species would be removed from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) list because they were extinct. People mourned the loss of beautiful animals like the ivory-billed woodpecker. Scientist Joe Wood took note for a different reason: almost half of the lost species were mussels. With their demise, he worried we could lose the blueprint of what a stream should look like in the Mid-Atlantic.

Wood, a senior scientist with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, cares a lot about mussels. He thinks they're among the coolest species around. For one, a single mussel can purify 15 gallons of water a day! These incredibly valuable filter feeders keep our rivers clean, removing

What makes mussels especially cool is that they have one of the most complex life cycles of any aquatic animal.

nitrogen that spurs algal blooms and helping revive dead zones where a lack of oxygen suffocates oysters, crabs, and fish. Mussels also create microhabitats for aquatic insects that form an integral part of the food web.

What makes mussels especially cool is that they have one of the most complex life cycles of any aquatic animal. To reproduce, a mussel extends a lure from its shell, which fish mistake for a minnow. When a fish snaps it up, baby mussels are released and cling to the fish's gills. "Now this species that can [ordinarily] move maybe five feet a day, can hitch a ride upstream," says Wood. "They are linked to fisheries in this very intimate way."

Scientists like Wood simulate this complex reproduction process in a lab to help restore mussel populations. "If you think about it, that piece of it makes it really challenging to make baby mussels," he says.

Freshwater mussels are part of our natural heritage; an important food source for many things that live in our streams and rivers. In

the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which the Cacapon River helps feed, there are 28 species of freshwater mussels of which seven are listed as endangered or threatened; the West Virginia part of the watershed contains 12 species with iconic names such as Brook Floater, Eastern Elliptio, Northern Lance, and Yellow Lampmussel.

Mussels face both historic and present-day pressures. In the early 1900s the shirt button industry almost extirpated mussel populations. Men's shirt buttons were punched out of mussel shells, leaving giant mounds of pock-marked shells in their wake.

In the present day, dams are a major threat to mussels because they cut off their populations from oceangoing fish that they need to hitch rides with to reproduce. Some dams have made mussel populations so functionally extinct that there are no mussels younger than the age of the dam.

Development threatens mussel populations because it subdivides land, cuts down trees, and increases pollution. Even though mussels contribute to water quality, they are very sensitive to pollutants like ammonia from wastewater treatment plants and nitrogen from agricultural runoff.

What can the average person do to help?

- Tell folks about them. "No one is going to protect something that no one knows about," Wood says.

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"Up the mountain is 130 and some acres with six owners," he explains. "There is another 230-acre tract with seven owners which were put into conservation with the Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust. The 100 acres that surround the road up to the house are also in conservation."

Todd is happy being in the woods along with his energetic dog, Storm, keeping up with the hundreds of acres teeming with wildlife, and having it ready for the hunt club members. Every deer

hunting season the gang gathers at Todd and Beverly's. "We work out a schedule for folks to take turns cooking and I have nine beds I can set up in the basement."

"We are all of the same minds, we want it for hunting and nothing else."

The idea for the unofficially named "Across the River Hunt Club," was pretty clear when a local landowner advertised his land for sale in the *Washington Post*. It didn't take long for ten friends to agree to buy the land to keep the woods as they were, with the deer, bear, and turkey.

"If it was sold to a developer, we would have all those houses looking down on us. The ridge was the only place to build on that land," Todd reflected.

He added, "We are all of the same minds, we want it for hunting and nothing else." Putting their land into conservation keeps the land for hunting for future generations too.

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WEST VIRGINIA'S LAND OF HOPE

June 20 is West Virginia Day, marking the date in 1863 when the U.S. officially admitted her as the thirty-fifth state. The region previously formed part of Virginia but after that state seceded and joined the Confederacy, West Virginians broke away and secured their place in the Union.

On June 24, 1863, Governor Arthur I. Boreman addressed the legislature in Wheeling. The nation was in the throes of a civil war that had killed hundreds of thousands, and would kill hundreds of thousands more. The Battle of Gettysburg would commence the following week.

Yet Boreman saw grounds for hope in the new state.

"Here," he proclaimed, "are all the elements necessary to make a great and prosperous State. The salubrity of the climate is unsurpassed; the fertility of the soil is equal to that of almost any State in the Union." The governor spoke of the extensive lands, mineral wealth, dense forests, and

"The bountiful land has thus been a bedrock of West Virginia's promise from the start."

rushing waterways, noting that it was a "rich inheritance" of which West Virginians "may well be proud."

The bountiful land has thus been a bedrock of West Virginia's promise from the start. The Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust and our

partners honor that heritage, working to safeguard forests and farms, rivers, and the distinct character of our "wild and wonderful" home.

Boreman concluded his address on that June day by recognizing the great trust that the people of West Virginia had bestowed upon him and fellow public servants. "The future of the New State, for weal or woe, may be in our hands," he said. These are words we can all take to heart as we work to secure our rich inheritance for future generations.

