



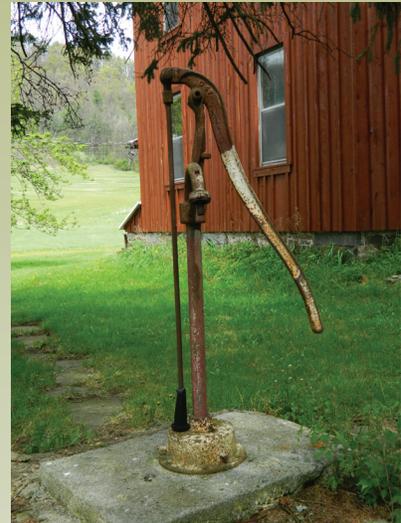
Faces of Farmland Preservation

**Roland & Sharyn
LEACH**

CURTIN TOWNSHIP



Roland Leach is an intriguing man. As a Professor Emeritus of Avian Biology at Penn State, he is highly educated, having obtained his undergraduate degree at the University of Maine, his Masters at Purdue and finally, his Ph.D. at Cornell. At first glance however, he comes off tough, rugged and ready to work. A self described logger and woodcutter, his hands are worn from years of farming in Centre County. But respect for the land didn't begin there. Roland and his wife, Sharyn were both raised in the farming tradition and that is what led them to preserve their land with the Centre County Farmland Trust in 2008.



Roland's family hails from the state of Maine where his grandfather was forced to sell his beautiful waterfront farmland during the Great Depression in order to pay his taxes. This had profound impact on Roland's perspective of land ownership at a very young age. Years later, he experienced his own anguish when circumstances forced him to sell his 100-acre farm in Haines Township. Before he knew it, his best alfalfa field sprouted five houses. Just talking about land development can bring a tear to the eye of this tenacious, experienced landowner.



"We don't own the land, we are just borrowing it."

Roland & Sharyn Leach, CURTIN TOWNSHIP



The land is beautiful and rich in natural resources. Tillable fields produce hay and corn. Wooded acreage consists of mixed hardwoods and some hemlock that create a majestic home for wildlife including white-tailed deer, bear, red fox, turkeys, and variety of birds.

Later in life, Roland met Sharyn, a lifelong learner and educator. Together they purchased 152 acres in Curtin Township in the early 90's. The land is beautiful and rich in natural resources. Tillable fields produce hay and corn. Wooded acreage consists of mixed hardwoods and some hemlock that create a majestic home for wildlife including white-tailed deer, bear, red fox, turkeys, and variety of birds. A pristine section of Marsh Creek crosses through the property and is a tributary of Bald Eagle Creek which flows into the Susquehanna River, providing drinking water to Lock Haven and Williamsport. It also provides the quintessential swimming hole that



evokes memories of refreshing swims and family barbecues. This stream is protected by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection as a Cold Water Fishery essential to sustaining trout and other plants and animals indigenous to the region.

Over the years, Roland and Sharyn have shared a philosophy handed down by Sharyn's father. As Roland tells it, "We don't own the land, we are just borrowing it. It is our responsibility to care for it and then pass it along to younger generations." The couple exemplifies this philosophy and maintains a time-honored tradition begun

by Sharyn's Pennsylvania Dutch grandfather. Each year, they plant 20 new trees on the property, just as he did on his farms in Zion. This ongoing effort demonstrates their desire to constantly improve their "borrowed land".

The quiet satisfaction this couple exudes comes from the peace and security they have in knowing what will happen to their "borrowed land". Because of their benevolence, their gift of land and rich resources will live on for future generations. Our community is continually blessed that Roland and Sharyn Leach are the stewards of this land.

