



Remembering Herb Cole, Jr.

Conservationist

The farmland conservation community lost an influential champion when Herbert Cole, Jr., 88, died August 19. Herb and April Cole in 2006 donated a conservation easement on their 100 acres of field, woodland and mountain in Haines township and influenced two nearby landowners

to conserve another 200 acres.

“He had a sense that land is something irreplaceable,” said Larry Hutchinson, a trustee of the Centre County Farmland Trust who knew Cole well. “Let’s do the best thing by this land, and for him the best thing was bringing it into agricultural easement.”

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CCFT President Dan Guss gave this Summary at the 2021 Annual Meeting

Challenge and progress marked 2021 for the Centre County Farmland Trust.

The loss of the services of our executive director, provided part-time by Centre County since our founding in 1994, has been a challenge.

The County Commissioners offered to help us with five person-hours per month, which is helpful to access County

information.

Still, there has been a loss of that continuous guidance, organization and expertise that only a dedicated and paid manager can provide. We will keep working through this issue in 2022, as the board takes

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Thank you for supporting the Gift of Good Land! You are helping to conserve valuable farmland in Centre County.

The Board of Trustees is preparing to hire staff for the Centre County Farmland Trust in 2022, a major step forward for the organization.

Your financial support becomes even more important as we strengthen our capacity to steward our 16 conservation easements and protect even more irreplaceable farmland in the future.

You can help by giving today! Thank you for your generous support. We wish you a wonderful, joyous holiday season!



Guided Trail Walk

Shari Edelson and Scott Dennison (right) hosted a guided trail walk of their 27 acres of preserved woodland for Farmland Trust guests in Aaronsburg. They explained their long-term management strategy for the land, rich with wildflowers, walnut trees, and an 1841 German Bank barn. Nancy Parks and Bill van den Berg donated the conservation easement in 2011.



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If you would like to share memories for this tribute to Herb Cole, please email centrecountyfarmlandtrust@gmail.com. We'll include your comments in the website version of this story at centrecountyfarmlandtrust.org

The conserved Cole farm in Haines Township (right).

April Cole (below) with a collection of wildlife photographs she has taken on the land.



Remembering Herb Cole, Jr. *(continued)*

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Cole grew up in Brooklyn and on a family farm in Stone Church, Pa. "That's, I think, where he got the idea of farming and love of land and wildlife," said April Cole, who was married to Herb Cole for 28 years.

Cole attended Penn State University, earning his bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees, then worked and served for 50 years as a researcher, educator, consultant and administrator in the College of Agricultural Sciences. He authored more than 250 publications and received numerous awards.

"He devoted his spare time to hunting, fishing, biking and doing anything that let him be out on the land," according to his obituary.

Land Protection

The Coles did not want their land to be developed, nor for it to fall to people who would not take care of it. They wanted to ensure farming that feeds people and protects wildlife.

They purchased their farm in 2005, built a house and corrected erosion problems, cleaned up old equipment and trash from a dump, and began crop rotation.

The land is now rich in wildlife. April Cole is a wildlife photographer who has captured images of a mama black bear and her cubs, bobcats, deer, a turtle, and many species of birds including a bald eagle and hawk.

Protecting 200 more acres

Cole was a helpful and productive board member who persuaded land owners to donate conservation easements, said Hutchinson.

One is a neighboring property of 21.79 acres, owned by Melvin and Sara King. Another is 189 acres conserved by April's uncle, Dale Stover in 2016.

"He changed the mindset for some folks in the eastern end of the county," said Hutchinson. "He was willing to stand around and talk to them, and eventually some of them changed their perspective."

Cole would visit with people and ask: What do you see happening to this farm in 25 years? Or 50 years? "That was the foot in the door he used in talking with his neighbors about what needed to happen,"

said Hutchinson. Cole connected with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

He liked to describe himself as a "gentle bulldozer," said April Cole. "He was kind and patient and he knew how to keep working with people persistently until they grasped the idea that he was trying to help them understand. He would meet people and talk about the organization and what it did, then if they were interested he would follow up with contacts."





Denise Wagner's "Winter Stream." Used with permission.

2021 in review (cont.)

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steps to hire staff.

Nonetheless, the Trust made progress in 2021.

New Board Expertise

We have been blessed by an infusion of new, dedicated and knowledgeable board members. Mary Kennett, Nancy VanLandingham and Catherine Smith were appointed in May. (At the annual meeting, they were each elected to terms ending Dec. 31 of 2022, 2023 and 2024, respectively.)

Their presence is bringing us new energy and expertise. This cannot be overstated. For instance, our new trustees helped us prevent the sale and dismantling of a historic barn, protection of which was included in our first conservation easement in 2004.

Easement Expertise

We also are grateful for the cooperation offered by ClearWater Conservancy, allowing us to work with their preservation expert, Ryan Hamilton. This has given us renewed capacity to navigate the process of writing easements. A new easement is in the works.

Outreach

Every year we get wonderful support from the Farmland Preservation Artists, who capture the beauty of our local farmland and share the proceeds from some of their painting sales with the Trust.

We have benefited from our public communications program, led by Lisa Duchene at Polished Oak Communications.

"Winter Stream," by Denise Wagner, a member of the Farmland Preservation Artists of Central PA.

To learn more about Denise and her work, please visit:

<https://fineartamerica.com/profiles/1-denise-wagner>

A percentage of each sale of art sold through FPA galleries and shows goes to the Centre County Farmland Trust to support farmland preservation.

You'll find FPA galleries at The Federal Taphouse (130 South Fraser St.) and The Field Burger & Tap (in Toftrees Golf Resort) in State College, and the Bull Run Taphouse (605 Market St.) in Lewisburg.

Keep in Touch!

On Instagram & Facebook:

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One excellent event this year was a trail walk on the beautiful and unique preserved land owned by Shari Edelson and Scott Dennison. (See photos on page 2.)

With help from the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau, we've transformed our annual in-person Farm Tour into our "Farm Routes" self-guided tours. We see increased interest from those who would preserve their land and those of you who have supported that effort.

Thank you all for your membership and your support of the work we do together in the Centre County Farmland Trust.

