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CONTACT US

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MOUNT NITTANY NEWS

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Nittany
MOUNT
CONSERVANCY

www.mtnittany.org

An Urgent Appeal for a Special Mountain: Help Us Keep Mt. Nittany Green

By Ronald J. Woodhead, President

During 2007 the Board of Directors established a number of important initiatives to conserve Mt. Nittany, the dominant and popular icon of Happy Valley, including:

- updating the Forest Management Plan,
- moving forward on the Long Range Master Plan,
- establishing a part-time Volunteer Coordinator position,
- working to increase the visibility and efforts of the Conservancy, and
- implementing the "Leave No Trace" principles for Mountain visitors.

Most importantly, the Board voted to proceed with aerial spraying in Spring 2008 to combat gypsy moths and reduce the resulting defoliation. **As a result, this year the Mount Nittany Conservancy Annual Appeal for donations is of special importance.**

Based upon the Gypsy Moth Egg Mass Counts, in September the Board voted unanimously to participate in the Spring 2008 aerial spraying of the over 825 acres - all forested lands owned by the Mount Nittany Conservancy and by the Lion's Paw Alumni Association - in order to reduce or prevent the likely defoliation of our special Mountain. The Conservancy's share of the costs for this spraying will total from \$13,000 to as high

as \$50,000, depending on the amount of the woodlands accepted for the state-assisted spraying program. That decision by PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) will be announced in late-December.

We are all very fortunate that concerned alumni and community members have worked to acquire and protect Mt. Nittany over the past 60 plus years. The Conservancy now asks your assistance to continue those efforts. We are asking everyone who has enjoyed viewing or hiking Mt. Nittany to please support the future of Mt. Nittany by:

- o making a generous, tax-deductible donation,
- o joining each year as a "Friend of Mt. Nittany," and
- o purchasing one or more Life Estate Deeds to honor family and friends.

Thank you for helping the Conservancy to keep Mt. Nittany green forever.



Impact of Gypsy Moths on Mt. Nittany Could Cause Heavy Defoliation and Tree Mortality

Spraying for Gypsy Moths Planned in 2008

By Alan Cameron, MNC Board Member and Penn State Professor Emeritus of Entomology

The Board takes seriously its responsibility to conserve the Mountain and fulfill our mission. This is why, after much discussion and consultation, we have opted for gypsy moth spraying in 2008. This action is consistent with our goals to protect and conserve our magnificent natural resource, not only for next year but also for generations to come.

Can You Accept the Sight of a Bare Mt. Nittany?

Because we had such heavy defoliation over many acres on the top of the Mountain this year, we can reasonably expect tree mortality if we do nothing next year. A heavy defoliation on the

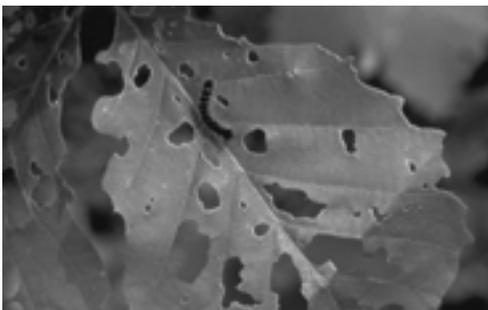
flanks of the Mountain could, especially if our drought continues, also cause noticeable tree mortality.

The stage is set for heavy defoliation not only on top but also on the highly visible sides of Mt. Nittany. The gypsy moth is a defoliator of many kinds of forest trees, but especially of oaks. Over 90% of the Mountain is comprised of oak trees. While there has been moderate to severe defoliation in 2007, especially on the top of the Mountain, counts in mid-summer revealed large numbers of egg masses. **Over 3,500-per-acre were found over much of the Mountain, and it takes only 250-500 egg masses-per-acre to provide enough larvae to cause at least moderate defoliation the following**

year. Very high counts on the top of the Mountain, over 35,000 egg masses-per-acre at one sample point, will provide countless millions of larvae, which is the feeding stage. These larvae will be blown around in the spring to land on the sides of the Mountain and start feeding.

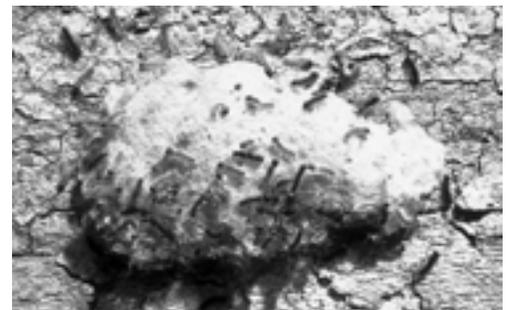
Below normal rainfall this year worked against us in two ways as well: First, conditions were too dry to permit extensive development of a naturally occurring fungus that normally kills large numbers of larvae; Second, trees are under increasing stress and are more likely to succumb to repeated defoliations. We can't predict the future, but drought conditions may not break any time soon.

(Continued on Page 3)



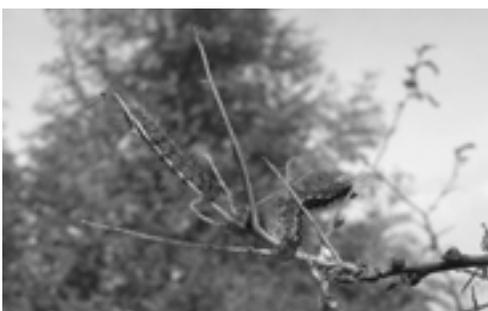
Above: Number One Pest Gypsy moth caterpillars are the number one forest and shade tree pest in the northeast. (File photo/USDA APHIS PPQ Archive and courtesy of www.forestryimages.org)

Right: Gypsy Moth Egg Masses Can Predict Next Year's Damage Gypsy moth egg masses can be found on tree trunks and other stable surfaces, and are frequently found on camping equipment and firewood. (File photo/U.S. Forest Service and courtesy of www.forestryimages.org)



Below: Extensive Summer Defoliation Caused by Gypsy Moths Don't let this happen to Mt. Nittany! (File photo/USDA Forest Service Archive and courtesy of www.forestryimages.org)

Images of Gypsy Moths and Their Damage



Left: Gypsy Moth Damage Leads to Complete Defoliation Over 90% of Mt. Nittany is comprised of oak trees, like this one being defoliated by a gypsy moth caterpillar. (File photo/Haruta Ovidiu, University of Oradea and courtesy of www.forestryimages.org)



Centre County Incurred Heaviest Gypsy Moth Infestation in Pennsylvania During 2007

State Subsidy Unlikely to Cover Expenses of Spraying Mt. Nittany

Karl Mierzejewski, the Centre County Gypsy Moth Coordinator, told the Conservancy Board at its November 4th meeting that Pennsylvania had the worst 2007 gypsy moth infestation of any state in the nation, and that Centre County had the heaviest infestation of any county in Pennsylvania.

As noted elsewhere in the newsletter, the Conservancy has applied to be included in a state subsidized spraying program. While the Mountain technically qualifies for the program, Mierzejewski said its primary focus is on residential areas. **The criteria they use place Mt. Nittany in the two lowest of five classifications,**

and it appears the state may not have the resources to cover all qualifying areas.

Mierzejewski informed the Board that Mt. Nittany probably will not be included in the state program. At his recommendation, the Board voted to contact area legislators and

congressmen to request increased funding for the program. The Board also urges community members to do the same.

For more information on the Centre County Gypsy Moth Program, you can visit the website www.co.centre.pa.us/gypsymoth/default.asp. Their site includes a link to Health Facts. There, they explain that a biological insecticide called *B.t.* or *B.t.k* for *Bacillus thuringiensis var kurstaki* will be used in the spraying program. They also have a link to a comprehensive data sheet on *B.t.*, available as a .pdf file from the National Pesticide Telecommunications Network.



Impact of Gypsy Moths...(Continued from Page 2)

We Earnestly Hope that You Will Help Us Combat the Gypsy Moth

The Conservancy officially has requested that our lands be included in the 2008 PA Bureau of Forestry spraying program. If all of our property is included, we expect our cost to be a little more than \$13,000. However, if we are not included in their program, we can expect to spend as much as \$50,000 to protect the Mountain.

The immediate impact of the spray program will be to maintain Mt. Nittany as a green and welcoming forested area where people can continue to enjoy hikes and picnics throughout the season when so many surrounding areas will have been heavily defoliated. The longer-term benefit will be to have broken a string of defoliations in successive years which should greatly decrease tree mortality. Help us keep Mt. Nittany green, donate today!

We Need Your Email Address!

Help Us Move Funds from Communicating to Conserving

Please help us to effectively communicate the latest Conservancy news with you! Verify your email address on the back of the enclosed form. If you have updates to this or any of your contact information, please indicate the changes on the form and send it in with your gift.

By increasing our email database, we're able to send more frequent communications at little or no cost. Please verify your email address on the back of the enclosed form, so we can begin to communicate with you electronically. This will allow us to reallocate additional funds to preserve Mt. Nittany.

"Leave No Trace" Principles Encouraged for Mt. Nittany Visitors

We are proud to belong to the "Leave No Trace" organization (www.LNT.org) that advocates outdoor ethics for visitors. We encourage Mountain visitors to follow the seven Leave No Trace principles listed below whenever they enjoy the outdoors. Be aware, however, that campfires and camping are not permitted on Mt. Nittany:

1. Plan ahead and prepare.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly.
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize campfire impacts.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate of other visitors.

Mt. Nittany named #1 “Wonder of Centre County”

This fall the Centre Daily Times conducted a poll of readers asking them to identify the 7 Wonders of Centre County. Re-printed with permission, to the right is the article titled “Standing guard over Happy Valley” by Chris Rosenblum.

You, who receive this newsletter and have supported the Conservancy in the past, please take these words to heart yet again. You may have inked your name on the deed to a square inch of the Mountain. You have supported either the Lion’s Paw Alumni Association or the Mount Nittany Conservancy so that 865 acres have been acquired and conserved for future generations.

Please remember once again that the Mountain is YOUR Mountain. Without your support, the Conservancy would not be able to keep Mt. Nittany the First Wonder of Happy Valley!

Standing Guard Over Happy Valley

By Chris Rosenblum of the Centre Daily Times

Without it, the Nittany Lions would be plain old pumas. Dozens of businesses and the area’s hospital would have to look elsewhere for inspiration.

Geologically speaking, Mount Nittany is nothing more than an ancient ridge of quartzite, shale and sandstone. But in Centre County, it’s more treasured than gold. As the Statue of Liberty does for New York and the Eiffel Tower for Paris, the mountain represents a land and its people.

“From just about any angle, the mountain holds a prominent position as it seemingly stands guard over Happy Valley though all of the seasons of the year,” State College resident David Lehning wrote in nominating the landmark as a wonder. Its name supposedly comes from the Algonquian-speaking Indians’ “nit-a-nee,” meaning “single mountain” or “barrier against the wind.” Then there’s the legend of Princess Nitane, whose epic grief magically transformed her brave’s burial mound into a mighty summit.

What’s fact is that Nittany could have become Bald Mountain, if not for the efforts of the Lion’s Paw Alumni Association. In 1945, the association bought 525 acres for \$2,000, saving

them from lumbering. Thirty-six years later, it created the Mount Nittany Conservancy, which acquired 300 more acres and now protects the forests that provide stunning fall displays and birds-eye views of State College, Bellefonte and rolling countryside.

Quick Facts:

- Mount Nittany rises 2,077 feet above sea level.
- The Mount Nittany Conservancy has secured all the land above the 1,400 foot mark.
- Nine miles of trails offer several scenic views, including the popular Mike Lynch Overlook for gazing at Beaver Stadium and the rest of Penn State’s campus.
- Nestled in a valley on top lies a nature reserve. Until about 1880, mountain lions roamed the woods.
- Penn State athletic teams and clubs climb the mountain for conditioning. Tradition has it that every student must make the hike before graduating.
- Donors who give \$100,000 or more to the university become members of the Mount Nittany Society.

Conservancy and Community Come Together to Promote Teamwork and Responsible Use of Mountain

MNC Appreciates Everyone Who Helped With or Attended Any of These Events—Thank You!

The Mount Nittany Conservancy and Centre Region Parks & Recreation hosted the first ever “Happy Trails Day” on Sunday, August 26th at the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center and Mt. Nittany. This event helped to educate the public and explore the “Leave No Trace” principles that focus on responsible trail ethics and hiking practices while enjoying our local outdoor venues (see article on page 3).

Displays and information were presented by local environmental and outdoor sporting organizations, including Mount Nittany Conservancy, ClearWater Conservancy, DCNR, and the Ridge and Valley Outing Club. Guided hikes up Mt. Nittany led by the Penn State Outing Club were offered that day as well.

In addition, on Saturday, October 13th, we were at the Centre County/Penn State Visitor Center for Penn State Homecoming Weekend. Conservancy Board of Director members answered questions about the Mountain to the many Penn State alumni and friends that came through the doors.

On Saturday, September 15th, the Conservancy hosted its second Walk Up/Clean Up day of the year as we prepped for fall. Then, on Sunday, September 23rd, the Penn State student-run Homecoming Day of Service Committee sent us 15 volunteers from five student organizations to help the Conservancy maintain, protect and conserve this Penn State and Centre region icon. Volunteers participated from the Phi Gamma Delta, Phi Delta Theta, and Alpha Kappa Lambda fraternities; the Off-Campus Student Union, and the Lion’s Paw Senior Leadership Honor Society. Teams of volunteers, led by Conservancy Board of Director members, worked for four hours repairing trails, enhancing safety and building log seating for hikers.

On Sunday, November 4th, Phi Gamma Delta again came to the Mountain. They continued trail and overlook maintenance under the

guidance of the Board’s Mountain committee. Finally, the Alpha Kappa Psi professional coded business fraternity was on the Mountain Saturday, November 10th for our final working day of 2007.

We want to thank everyone that attended any of these events. You are the rocks that hold up the Mountain.



An amazing group of volunteers helped maintain and repair trails on Mt. Nittany this September