

For Immediate Release

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**WILDLANDS CONSERVANCY & FRIENDS
PAY TRIBUTE TO THOMAS J. KERR**

(Emmaus, Pa, June 16, 2007)– On June 13 at Lehigh Country Club, Wildlands Conservancy (WC) hosted a reception with over 135 guests to pay tribute to Thomas J. Kerr, the past president of Wildlands Conservancy. Kerr led the Conservancy for almost 20 years, dedicating his efforts to the preservation and conservation of the Lehigh River Valley Region while building education and recreation programs for thousands of residents to experience what the region has to offer in the way of beautiful natural resources. Wildlands Conservancy received a total of \$10,000 in gifts given in honor of Tom Kerr. These donations will be used toward educational and conservation activities related to the enjoyment and continued improvement of the Lehigh River.

“Tom has been a great asset to our community,” says David Shaffer, co-chairman of Just Born, Inc. and chairman of the board for Wildlands Conservancy. “He has been the father of the conservation movement here in the region and the catalyst for many initiatives.”



Wildlands Conservancy President Christopher M. Kocher (left) announces a gift from staff as outgoing president, Tom Kerr, reviews kind words written in a book they gave him entitled "Wild Pennsylvania."

Christopher Kocher, current Wildlands president paid tribute in his remarks, "Tom knew that in order to accomplish the organization's mission he had to present a balance between growth and preservation. He knew that a Lehigh Valley that contained protected natural areas, clean-water resources, working farms, and vibrant downtowns all connected with a network of greenways and trails will be a Lehigh Valley where people and businesses want to come and stay. And that the key to economic viability of the region is the protection of the region's natural resources and the community's engagement in smart growth. Tom inspired others to accomplish great things. He never basked in the glory but passed along the accolades to fellow partners."

In attendance were Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Secretary, Michael DiBerardinis; Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Executive Director, Dr. Douglas J. Austen; Lehigh County Executive Don Cunningham; Executive Director Delaware River Basin Commission, Carol Collier; Secretary Dept. of General Services, James Creedon and many other local, regional, and state officials as well as corporate leaders.

The public event was held from 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. at Lehigh Country Club. The master of ceremonies for the evening was William McDonnell, former northeast regional director of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

About Wildlands Conservancy

Wildlands Conservancy is dedicated to saving the natural treasures of the Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh River valley for current residents and future generations. Its mission is to preserve, protect, restore and enhance the land, water, ecological and recreational resources of the Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh River valley. Established in 1973, the Conservancy collaborates with

partnerships throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to achieve its goals. As a non-profit, member-supported organization, the Conservancy has protected more than 45,000 acres of critical farmland and wildlands in 18 counties of eastern Pennsylvania. For more information, please visit www.wildlandspa.org.

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