

For Immediate Release

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**WILDLANDS CONSERVANCY ANNOUNCES  
2007 FRIEND OF THE LEHIGH RIVER AWARD RECIPIENTS**

(Emmaus, PA, June 25, 2007) – The Wildlands Conservancy (WC) is proud to announce Dennis Demara, Dean Druckenmiller, the Northampton Borough Municipal Authority and the United States Army Corps of Engineers as this year’s ‘Friend of the Lehigh River’ Award recipients, to be presented during the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Lehigh River Sojourn.

The Friend of the Lehigh River Award is the Wildlands Conservancy’s annual acknowledgement of individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, institutions, governmental bodies, and others who deserve to be recognized for their commitment to the Lehigh River. “For the past eleven years, we have bestowed this honor to those who cultivate appreciation, advance knowledge, and demonstrate responsible stewardship and use of the Lehigh River and Lehigh River Valley,” says Christopher Kocher, Wildlands Conservancy president.

The recipients were honored on Monday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. at the Tri-Boro Sportman's Club in Northampton, Pa. The award ceremony took place preceding a benefit concert performed by Air Products' band The Difference, as part of the Wildlands Conservancy's 11th annual Lehigh River Sojourn. Each recipient receives a Lehigh River stone with hand engraved lettering.

### **2007 Award Recipients**

For the past seven years, **Dennis Demara** has served as the Regional Supervisor for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) Northeast Region Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. As supervisor of the northeast region, he has been an advocate of the Lehigh River, and has facilitated many land protection, environmental restoration and environmental stewardship projects. These projects have helped preserve, protect and enhance the Lehigh River and its watershed. One of his most significant contributions to the health of the Lehigh River was his assistance with the completion of the Lehigh River Watershed Conservation Management Plan. His tireless dedication to the preservation of the unique natural resources of the Lehigh River watershed and the preservation of significant open space is impressive. In addition, Dennis also served 24 years as Carbon County Parks Director where he managed the park system and helped improve the recreational resources of the region.

**Dean Druckenmiller** was the driving force that organized concerned fishermen and the fishing community to form the Lehigh Coldwater Fisheries Alliance (LCFA). With Dean at the helm, the LCFA has advocated for changes in the management of the Francis E. Walter Reservoir that have helped improve the quality of the river. At his personal expense, Dean organized and guided drift boat fishing trips for agencies managing the river to allow them to

experience the thriving trout fishing now available on the Lehigh River. Because of his efforts, the Lehigh River is a healthier waterway.

**The Northampton Borough Municipal Authority (NBMA)** has worked jointly for many years with the Wildlands Conservancy and its mission to preserve the Lehigh River natural environment. The NBMA has worked with many partners to allow access to the river for sampling purposes and has provided water quality data about the river to agencies and the community. In addition, the NBMA has worked to educate the community about water treatment by providing tours and participating in the Lehigh Valley Water Suppliers educational activities. The Northampton Borough Municipal Authority is a great partner and friend to the Lehigh River.

**US Army Corps of Engineers** designed and today operates the Francis E. Walter Reservoir and Dam. The USACE has worked closely with state agencies and community groups, to develop a new short-term flow management plan to increase water releases from the reservoir through the dam this year, improving recreation opportunities and improving coldwater conditions for trout. The USACE engaged the public through multiple workshops and public meetings to garner public opinion on how to modify the management of the reservoir. The USACE has worked closely with state agencies and concerned user groups to development of recreation opportunities and environmental improvement on the Lehigh River. In addition, the Corps, the PA Fish and Boating Commission and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources have secured funds to develop a water quality and flow computer model for the Lehigh River. The USACE has played a significant role in helping to improve the environmental quality and recreational opportunities in the Lehigh River.

“All four of these awards recipients are truly ‘Friends of the Lehigh River’, whether it’s for improvement of the quality of the Lehigh River itself or for the recreation benefits of those communities that surround the river,” says Kocher. “They are our partners and the Wildlands Conservancy salutes them.”

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 eastern Pennsylvania. For more information, please visit [www.wildlandspa.org](http://www.wildlandspa.org).

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