



A Time of Transition



Holy cow! Did you know that the Centre County Farmland Trust is 25 years old this year?

With the support of our members and the partnership of some generous landowners who donated their development rights, we've preserved 16 farms! Thank you to all who helped in so many ways to make that possible.

It is now time for a strategic look at what the Farmland Trust wants to accomplish in its next 25 years. That includes considering the best staffing structure to make our vision a reality. In May 2019,

we wished a fond farewell to Sarah Walter, our part-time Executive Director, which was part of her full-time county position. She was a wonderful leader and honestly did way more in her few hours a week than any of us realized.

September brought us new energy with the hiring of Diana Griffith as Centre County's new Agricultural Land Preservation Coordinator. We look forward to working with her on the technical aspects of placing and stewarding conservation easements. The position will no longer be responsible for the day-to-day operation of running our small non-profit. We will now need to get creative.

This is an exciting time! If you would like to join us in this conversation, contact me at jennifershueyart@gmail.com.

All my best,

Jennifer Shuey, President

P.S. To sign-up for our newsletter and e-mail news, visit www.centrecountyfarmlandtrust.org

Agritourism

\$27 million

Pennsylvania agritourism sales in 2017 (up from \$24.7 million in 2012) ~ 2017 U.S. Census of Agriculture

\$38,261

Pa average agritourism income per operation ~ 2017 U.S. Census of Agriculture

4.3 million

Visitors to Centre County in 2018 (HVAB)



Happy Valley Agventures is a new digital hub of agriculture-driven businesses and operations — farms, farmer's markets, restaurants, wineries, breweries and distilleries — to both drive tourism revenue and provide a uniquely Centre County experience. It is a joint project of the (CBICC) Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County and the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (formerly Central Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau).





Trust Welcomes Diana Griffith

I know what this land means to hard-working farm families who've sustained their farms for generations—and to all of us.



I am honored to serve as Centre County's Agricultural Land Preservation Coordinator and as Ag Land Preservation Staff Liaison for the Centre County Farmland Trust. I know what this land means to hard-working families, and to those like myself who

have had the opportunity to live on a farm.

For three summers during my childhood, I lived on a small farm in York County, Pa. My father was pastor of a York inner-city church. His dream was to introduce disadvantaged kids to the country, with our family hosting summer day camps. We moved from a parsonage with a concrete backyard to a farmhouse on 14 acres of rolling hills, bordered by woods.

We cherished all the places we could play on the farm, and were crushed when my father was trans-

ferred to a church in State College. Years later, when the property went up for sale, a couple intent on preserving its beauty purchased it to host special events like weddings. I'm thankful that this beautiful farm — renowned in York for the natural benefits it brought to generations of children — remains out of the hands of developers.

Fortunately, our move instilled my lifelong love for central Pennsylvania.

As marketing manager of the Friends & Farmers Cooperative Online Market, I helped promote products for sale by participating farms, and later served five farmers I came to know well by delivering their products through an independent endeavor called Farm To You.

Guided by such a strong connection to Pennsylvania farmland, I am embracing this tremendous responsibility of coordinating Centre County's agricultural preservation program and assisting the Centre County Farmland Trust.

In the words of Woody Guthrie, "This land is your land, this land is my land . . . this land was made for you and me." I look forward to working with you to preserve and protect this land that sustains us.

Diana Griffith

Farmland Art On Display Until Nov. 26

Farmland Preservation Artists of Central Pennsylvania is showing artwork at Foxdale Village Retirement Community until Nov. 26. Foxdale is located at 500 Marylyn Ave. in State College.

The FPA is an affiliate of the Art Alliance of Central Pennsylvania, and joint enterprise of the Art Alliance and the Centre County Farmland Trust. Artists donate a portion of their sales to both groups. The FPA promotes the preservation and appreciation of farmland through the visual arts. Its members portray the beauty of the rural landscape, the local farms and the agricultural products they yield, highlight farm life, local food markets and economy, illustrate the issues facing farmers that affect our communities and increase preservation support through the exhibition and sale of art.



Denise Wagner, a member of Farmland Preservation Artists of Central PA, captured Autumn's magic in "Whitehall Barns."



Laura MacDonald leads a tour at Bee Tree Berry Farm (r). Below: A calf at Triangle Organics (top), and (middle) Olivia Brooks, National Miss Agriculture USA Ambassador (l) and Ellie Harrop, 2019 Pennsylvania Runner-Up Little Miss Agriculture USA (c), pose with a young visitor (r). Andrew Hughes with very smart pigs at Rhoneymeade (bottom).



Image by Jennifer Shuey

Farm Tour 2019

One beautiful day — 360+ visitors & 10 farms

Clear blue skies, sunshine, ripe fields of blooming flowers and herbs, pigs, horses, cows, delicious cheese and ice cream, gracious farmers and friendly visitors — all combined for a spectacular 14th Annual Centre County Farm Tour on July 27.

More than 360 people signed in at one of the 10 participating farms (so there were probably some more folks who attended, but did not sign in). Each had a unique experience of the bounty grown on Centre County’s farmland at high summer as they met hard-working farmers and their families.

The 10 participating farms offered a wide variety: Bee Tree Berry Farm, Goot Essa, Mt. Nittany Vineyard & Winery, Over The Moon Farm, PSU Student Farm, RE Farm Café, Rhoneymeade, Spring Bank Acres, Triangle Organics, and Way Fruit Farm. CCFT Board member Dan Guss, who chaired the Farm Tour in 2019 — no small feat! — will do so again for the 2020 Farm Tour.

“For me, the work was well worth it,” said Guss, “just for the experience of talking with the people and seeing the farm operations and dedicated people involved. Rhoneymeade had a lot of different interests, but I would have to say that the baby pigs were the biggest hit, and all the people there were positive and supportive. Spring Bank was special, with the whole family pitching in to help out in a really friendly and charming way.”

Strategically speaking, through the Farm Tour the Farmland Trust grew its base of people interested in engaging with our county’s farms and the trust: We added 210 people to our e-mail list, and 100 people to our Facebook following.

The 2020 Farm Tour will be August 1 or August 8, 2020. Save the date!



Images by Richard Hoebel



RE Farm Café Owners Work to Re-invent the Model Restaurant

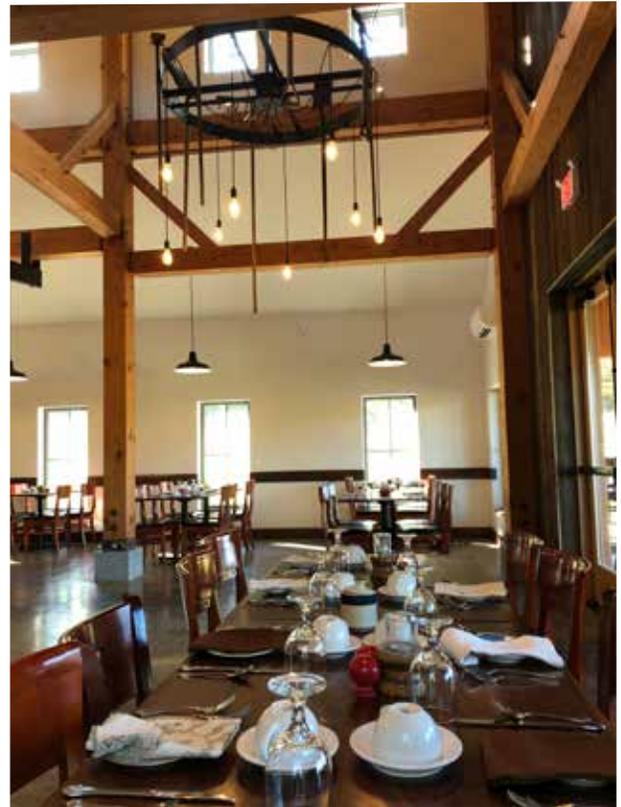


Image courtesy of RE Farm Cafe at Windswept Farm

RE Farm Cafe features re-purposed materials.

The “RE” in RE Farm Café’s name becomes crystal clear after learning even a little bit of Duke and Monica Gastiger’s grand vision for their farm-to-table operation on their 57-acre Windswept Farm in Patton Township.

As the Gastigers revive the preparation and serving of food grown and raised on land just beyond the restaurant’s doorstep — and that of local farmers — they see their work as regenerative and restorative.

They hope, in fact, to re-invent how a

restaurant operates and demonstrate a new restaurant standard that economically benefits farmers and their community.

The Gastigers will tell their story and host the **Centre County Farmland Trust Annual Meeting at RE Farm Café, on Monday, Nov. 18 at 6:30 p.m.**

Net positive energy

The café, for example, doesn’t have an ice machine because the machines consume a lot of energy, and all of its

restaurant operations are as low-energy as possible — all of the cooking equipment is high-efficiency induction. The goal, said Monica Gastiger, is “net-positive” energy, meaning to supply energy back to the power grid with an energy-efficient operation in an energy-efficient building, all powered with enough solar panels to produce more than the café needs. The solar panels will be installed in late November.

Beyond sustainability

The café is a no-tip

restaurant, too, because all of the waitstaff and the farm workers make a living wage, said the Gastigers.

“All of our thinking is regenerative,” said Duke Gastiger, which is a goal beyond sustainability. “Not only do you have to be creative in your sustainable methods, but you have to repair. You have to make better.”

Their venture began more than eight years ago with an idea of having a restaurant on a farm.

The pair are co-owners and the former owners of Spats and the Rath-



Image (1 and below) courtesy of RE Farm Café at Windswept Farm

keller in downtown State College. In an effort to use more locally sourced ingredients on those menus, the Gastigers started to get to know local farmers.

“We came to know pretty quickly first of all how hard they work and second of all how nobody’s making a lot of money and agritourism is one of the fastest, least-expensive ways for a farmer to augment incomes,” said Duke Gastiger.

Vision to reality

Small family farms in Centre County are slipping away, he said.

When Windswept Farm

became available, they jumped at the chance and bought it.

One of the first things they did to make their vision a reality was to hire an experienced organic farmer to start managing the farm organically.

Now, their café, CSA, prepared meals, and workshops are all up and running.

“A small restaurant on a farm is just an extension of the local food system,” said Duke Gastiger.

“That’s the regenerative part of it,” he said.

“Let’s change the way 300 years of restaurant operations seem to be the standard.”



Learn Monica and Duke Gastiger’s story and vision of creating RE Farm Café at a reception and annual meeting of the **Centre County Farmland Trust, Nov. 18, 6:30 p.m.**

Visit the unique property, see sustainability in action and enjoy light hors d’oeuvres. Learn how the Centre County Farmland Trust works to conserve farmland through conservation easements.

The Trust will hold a brief, annual meeting and elect a Board of Directors for 2020. Free, but limited to 60 people. For reservations, e-mail CentreCountyFarmlandTrust@gmail.com. Join us!



CENTRE COUNTY
FARMLAND TRUST

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CENTRE COUNTY



FARMLAND TRUST

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING FARMLAND PRESERVATION!

Your tax-deductible gift makes it possible for us to work with local families to protect their farmlands now and forever.

Give online at www.CentreCountyFarmlandTrust.org

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- ___ Student (\$25)

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a check made payable to:**

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Trust

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Centre Hall, PA 16828

CCFT is a 501C(3) non-profit
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