



Tioga County Countryside Council
Tioga County, Pennsylvania

A working-group of the Tioga County Partnership for Community Health

*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

For more information, contact

Brian Kennedy or Stacy Kelly 570-724-0520; Caleb Williams, 570-724-3071

First Walking Forum Creates Opportunity to Discuss Water Resources

In light of the recent controversy and press coverage surrounding a proposed county-wide zoning ordinance, the four Walking Forums scheduled for 2009 will provide a chance for citizens to explore and ponder, in an open and engaging conversation, the underlying issues facing the county as we end the first decade of the 21st Century. The first of these four Walking Forums, Conversations Through the Seasons, will be held on Friday, May 15th, from 9:30 to 3:00 at Hills Creek State Park. Lunch will be provided.

Do you feel blessed to be living in Tioga County? Many people do, and probably just as many don't. Increasingly, more are wondering about it. Have you ever thought about what you would like to see this area look like in twenty-five years? Have you ever wondered what your neighbors think about these questions? The recent controversy over a proposed county-wide zoning ordinance brings into focus the practical consequences of asking such questions. The Walking Forums seek to address questions more fundamental than questions of zoning. The first Walking Forum will explore our relationship to water in our environment. As 2009 progresses, the subsequent Forums will contemplate forests, farms, and towns. By focusing on fundamental ecosystem processes, the conversations will stimulate participants' thinking around the ways we use our Common Wealth. In particular, on May 15th, we will discuss water, how it works in our ecosystem, and how we as humans make use of it. By getting back to basics, the organizers seek to offer the community a chance to lay a groundwork for consensus on contentious issues looming just over the horizon.

The program on May 15th, 2009 will begin at 9:30 AM at the Sugar Bush Pavilion at Hills Creek State Park, where participants will introduce themselves, and the protocols for the conversations will be established. Then small groups will form, and set off with a specific topic to discuss for about 15 minutes walking time till they reach the first station. With another question to ponder, the groups will walk to the next station. At noon, all the groups will meet for a common lunch, before making their way back to the beginning to share the insights of the day. These insights will become a part of the body of public input for the 2010 Tioga County Comprehensive Plan.

The event is being sponsored by the Tioga County Countryside Council, a working group of the Tioga County Partnership for Community Health, in conjunction with the Step Outdoors Program. The Tioga County Countryside Council meets at 9:00 AM on the third Tuesday of every month in the Tioga County Development Corporation (TCDC) Conference Room located in the old Sheriff's house, behind the historic elm tree, and next to the Tioga County Court House in Wellsboro. Volunteers are needed and the public is welcome at the meetings.

Invest a day taking a walk in an important local environment, together with a group of people engaged in a conversation about local issues, and then share a meal. This will invigorate social dialogue and awareness of our county. In such a context, together with other people interested in increasing their health and local knowledge, the Walking Forum will be a real boon to the county's attractiveness and sense of community cohesiveness.