

# Conococheague Pioneer Times

*The Newsletter of the Conococheague Institute for the Study of Cultural Heritage*

3rd Quarter 2023



Volume 29 Issue 3

## **Good Day to you...From the Executive Director**

We hope everyone managed to enjoy their summer to the fullest. It was long, hot, and dry, and it certainly brought challenges (as most gardeners in the region can agree), but thanks to engaging programs and supporters, the Conococheague Institute saw its biggest harvest yet...and not just in apples!



A passion for American history is alive and well in Pennsylvania, with a monumental contribution of **\$1,000,000 to support the Conococheague Institute and Mercersburg Academy**. This generous donation made by philanthropist **Robert Kurtz Jr** will be equally split between these two remarkable institutions, each providing new experiences for students and stimulating a passion for early American history in the community.

As our endowment builds, we'll unlock new avenues of growth and become eligible for additional grant funding opportunities, further enhancing our mission. Planning for the future, we can now look at 5 and 10 year goals, and can't wait to share the journey with you and our members.

The students who engage in our programs are a huge reason for this donation, as they prove to our donors that history matters to the next generation!

**The future of the frontier is looking bright and we want your input.** You can contact us at 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA, 17236, phone 717 328 2800 or email [info@cimlg.org](mailto:info@cimlg.org) with your thoughts and suggestions for our future. Alternatively, stop by any Saturday from 10am to 5pm and chat with us.

If it's not already on your calendar, our **Annual Membership Meeting** is the second Saturday of October each year at 2pm, which means **Saturday October 14th** this year. We need you more than ever to come in person and share with us these triumphs and suggest to our Board Leadership where you would like to see the Conococheague Institute develop. New facilities? Programs? Events? Join us on the **14th at 2pm**, where light refreshments will be served during the meeting in the Welsh Barren's Visitor Center at CI.



We love your supportive words and memories of the past, and want to share our newest experiences with you. Don't miss some exciting new programs in October, including a **fresh interpretation of 19th century social structure on October 21st with "Changing Times"**. As America settled into its role as a leading nation topics of exploration will include social movements like temperance and abolition, and the militia system that was to be the primary defense of the young United States. This program will also include a firearms timeline running from 1803 to 1861.

Our next event is **'Bonfire Night' November 4th 12pm to 8pm** and thanks to a sponsorship from **Fast Ink** of Mercersburg, we'll be having a **falconry presentation by Miller's Wildlife** from 4pm to 5pm.



As always if you have questions contact us for more info.

*Cheers! Matthew Wedd*



## Summer Contributions

We'd like to thank the following people for their recent (June 14th to September 29th) donations and memberships. Despite being a long hard summer, you gave **\$9391.97** in donations and **\$1,855.00** in memberships

We also mentioned in the last newsletter that we were seeking substantial contributions for our endowment, and were astounded to receive **\$500,000** from **Bob Kurtz**, and then an additional **\$300,000** from an anonymous donor, **\$800,000** would have been unthinkable at the start of the year, and we can all appreciate the generosity and spirit of our community that has enriched the future of the frontier, and educational opportunities for years to come. With all contributions we are grateful for your help!



*Paul and Phillis Mummert, Miriam Huffman, Mercersburg Academy, Carolyn Ketchel, Sandra Turman, Burr Beard, Meagan McNulty, Allen and Angie Piper, John Mendyka, Jane Hershey, Citizens for a Responsible Government, John Hull, Calie Barton, Frank Walizer, Gail Reeder, Monique Helfrich, Ally Babay, Chuck Krepley, James Todd, Doris Demuth, Cynthia Fair, Ann Allen, Sue Gemeny, Deelana Kennedy, Doris Kenney, Kay Boward, Paula Dawson, Troy Cool, Shirley Shatzer, Sue Burkey, Allan and Mari Kaplan, Connie Strunk, Pat Morris, Gianna Anthony, Ben Barnhart, Justin Bedard, John David Bennett, Kitty Clark, Melanie Desmond, Kelly Dowling, Will Dupuis, Erin Emerick, Tom Finucane, Sarah Hoffeditz, Debby Cunningham, Betsey and Ric Lillard, Bailey Long, Denise Ordway, Emily Parsons, Mary Poscover, Sam Cathey, Will Sheppard, Larry B Smith, Allison Stephens, Keith Taber, Lynda Thomason, Gina Vitale, Brittany Wedd, Chris White, Sally Strickler, Bob Schwartz, Ellen Kinzer, John Stauffer, and Bob Kurtz.*

**Thank you!**



## Why do you Support CI?

With every donation we like to hear why you support our mission to preserve and educate about the cultural and natural resources of the frontier. Add a note to your next donation, or give us a call. We love to hear from you!

**James Todd** gives because we preserve his old home. He used to live in the cabin as a teenager and hunt muskrats in the Welsh Run! Education and heritage are important to **Allen and Angie Piper**, and they support us for our efforts in teaching local history. **Calie Barton** and **Carolyn Ketchel** donated thanks to our genealogy assets. **Frank Walizer** supports the engaging way we bring history to life for young students.

**As we near our 30th Anniversary next year**, we especially want to know your feelings about the Conococheague Institute. We are here for our members, so reach out to us!

## Help us take the next step

Our endowment may have grown exponentially this Summer, but our annual budget ensures we continue in our mission.

**Your contributions to our annual fund ensure we can operate the essentials:** staffing, utilities and upkeep are important for allowing our educational programs and preservation to continue.

Remember **all contributors whose total lifetime donations exceed \$5000 will be part of a new permanent plaque** during our 30th Anniversary celebrations next year.

**All donations are tax deductible, and should be made payable to "The Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA, 17236**



## In-Kind Donations

There are always more ways to give. After seeing our new **Firelocks on the Frontier** exhibit, longtime supporter **Dennis Kubicki** kindly donated a full set of accoutrements for a 17th century militia, including a matchlock musket, breastplate and helmet! These are wonderful additions that allow us to talk about how technology changed as societies evolved. Armor wasn't worn by musketeers in European wars (instead being reserved for pikemen), but in North America was employed by settlers as protection against indigenous archery.

Finally the following businesses and individuals donated items for raffles for our Fall Frolic Fundraiser. We're incredibly grateful for these items and the raffle was a huge success.

**Cold Spring Hollow Distillery, Black Jacket Munitions, GearHouse Brewing Co, B-Sides Pints and Pies, Mercersburg Inn, Bradford Portraits, Viking Bags, Betsey Lillard, Gina Vitale, David Ditto, Matt Baer, Mary Poscover, Terri Scott, Alexander Hamilton Memorial Free Library, and Michaux Brewing Co.**

You can donate items, artifacts, or even supplies that help us in our day to day operations (from vacuums to chainsaws). **If you are a business, services are also tax-deductible!**

### **You can even donate billboards!**

Have you driven along Route 81 recently? **The Franklin County Visitors Bureau** recently sponsored 2 highway signs featuring our own Negley Cabin, Welsh Barrens Visitor Center, and Molly Willis picking grapes.

**Check it out below!**



We accept sponsors year round, not just for major events! Consider aligning your business with our education programs, exhibits, or other activities.



# STEP INTO COLONIAL HISTORY Conococheague Institute

Nature • Free Saturday Fun • Pet friendly  
[ExploreFranklinCountyPA.com](http://ExploreFranklinCountyPA.com)

**EXIT 5  
MERCERSBURG**



# Summer Activities: A Snapshot

## Summer Saturday Programs

Thanks to your support we offer free programming every Saturday year round from 10am to 5pm, and the heat of Summer was no exception. No RSVPs are required and all are welcome so stop by any Saturday to see what's happening. Recent Saturday programs have included **Stonehouse History** presenting on weaving and carpentry. **Keith Taber of Oakgrove Farm** brewing, **Melanie Desmond** leading a Flax day, grape stomping at the cabin, bake oven days, and archaeology lectures.



## Historic Preservation...and presentation...and pest control.

Work is now finished to stabilize the interior of the **Rock Hill Farm House** following the removal of the modern toilet. The upstairs floorboards were restored, the plaster ceiling was fixed, and the walls smoothed and painted. With increased lighting the hallway gives a wonderful glimpse into the house's 19th century past, and the exhibits are shaping up nicely! Preservation work was also undertaken on the **Negley and Piper Cabins**, and lots of pest removal and paint jobs have been completed.



## Fall Frolic Fundraiser

Our September 23rd Fall Frolic Fundraiser was all set to be a fun evening of entertainment outside...until a tropical storm blew in! Rather than cancel the event, with typical frontier fortitude we moved the entire event inside our Visitor Center. With the band, food, drink and entertainment it was certainly cramped but an incredible experience was had by our community.

Thanks to raffle ticket sales, generous gifts, and sponsorships from **Mercersburg Academy, Liberty Auto and Tire, and Visit Hagerstown CVB** we raised \$7000 to support our educational programs. We were pleased to have a ribbon cutting ceremony with donors Kermit and Clariss Hicks on their sponsored project to update our interpretive panels!

Thanks to **Cormorant's Fancy, Hicksville BBQ, and Michaux Brewing Co** for their flexibility in serving at the event!





## Colonial Summer Camp Summary

This year we launched new summer camps, focused on colonial life, but brought to a younger audience. Spread across 2 weeks, the first camp was 10-14 year olds, and the second 6-9 year olds. We were able to adapt a lot of our programming successes into this camp, such as simple facets of hearth and home life with chores, crafts and cooking. For the older camp, challenging themselves with new skills such as weaving or archery was a huge hit, and for the younger, our puppet show designed by our interns was a riotous time. As well as serving as a fun way to introduce historic concepts, the camp attendees themselves ended up using the puppets to put on their own rendition of history.

We'll certainly be repeating camps in the future, as well as open signup homeschool days. As we completed these camps, we received lots of requests for adult camps and workshops. **What area of our historic story would you like to participate in?**



*Funding for the Colonial Summer Camps and Puppet Show was provided by M&T Bank. Thank you!*



### New Program Collaboration: Colonial Life Outreach at James Buchanan Birthplace

We were thrilled to be able to bring early American life to a larger student population as part of our partnership with **Mercersburg Academy**. Emily Parsons of Mercersburg asked if we'd be willing to teach every class there our 'Colonial Life' program in their classroom over the course of two days (something we also do for **Greencastle Antrim Middle School**). It saves time and scheduling to bus out students consecutively to CI. However this was the perfect opportunity to engage our student volunteers in preservation, and so we suggested that for 2 days we would clean, and interpret the **James Buchanan birthplace cabin** that sits on the Academy campus, and use that as an immersive classroom.

It worked wonderfully, with our community engagement students whipping the cabin to life. During the program, students learnt about the construction of log buildings, how living spaces would be used in a home, the ever popular clothing try-ons, about various trades and societal norms of the time. The Buchanan log home was moved from Stony Batter to Fayette street in the 1850's to serve as a weavers shop, moved to Chambersburg in the 1920's to be a gift shop and Democratic Headquarters, and to Mercersburg Academy in the 1950's for preservation. Quite the journey!





### **Meet the next generation: Summer Interns at CI**

At the beginning of Summer we welcomed **Nathalie Maurer** and **Selena Feng** as our newest paid interns, and they both did impeccable work. Nathalie has departed now for University in California, but local student Selena will continue to work shifts here and there as her studies allow: She's become indispensable! At the end of Summer, we asked them both to provide an intern reflection essay for their permanent record, and they were remarkably well written, thoughtful and quite emotional renderings of their time at CI. Here are just a few sections quoted. **If you'd like to read their full essays, request a copy from us and we'll be happy to oblige.**

#### **Selena Feng**

*"Just asking questions has led to me picking up a new hobby. I have learned how to weave tapes, and it is something that I deeply enjoy. What was most surprising about my new hobby was just how supportive the Conococheague community was. When I showed Amelia my first tape, I got cheers and claps and compliments, not just from Amelia, but from the entire sewing group that was meeting that week. Every time I weave, I get compliments from little kids and adults on how pretty my tapes are and how cool it is. It makes me feel proud of my weaving. I baked for the first time at CI. My coworkers, the volunteers, and the visitors complimented my pie-making. In this caring environment, I'm eager to learn and I'm inspired to try. Even if I fail, even if I added too much syrup to the pie, I still have people who are here to cheer on my successes. The Conococheague visitors are not only supportive of our crafts and baking, but of our entire institution. One Saturday, a woman described her surprise that people would dedicate their time to our cause. She was so glad that an organization like ours existed because she was so supportive of our mission to educate. It's during times like these when I feel the gratitude of the community and I feel so proud of where I work and what I'm able to contribute to.*

*I am immensely grateful for my opportunity to work at the Conococheague Institute. I am beyond proud of being a part of this supportive community dedicated to learning and kindness. I've found a wonderful place that I look forward to going to every week."*

#### **Nathalie Maurer**

*"Matthew often talked and asked us, as interns, about what kinds of programs we wanted to lead at CI. I wasn't confident enough to do a heavy historical program, but because of my skills as a baker, I knew I could do a baking program, with no problem. He steered me towards essential books that proved to be helpful during my process of finding a historical recipe. I already knew I wanted to make a pie, so I read books such as Mrs. McLintock's Receipts For Cookery And Pastry-Work, Mrs. Mary Eales's Receipts, and American Cookery by Amelia Simmons. Every day was something different. Sometimes Matthew would teach us how to greet and help customers in the visitor center. He showed us how to use heightened language to persuade customers, a necessary skill when working in customer service. Another day, Amelia and I were tasked with restoring (cleaning and reorganizing) the tavern. The number of spiders that were hiding in plain sight would scare most if not all adults. To me, it is no longer just "The Tavern", it is now known as "Spider Tavern" because now, every time I hear the word "tavern" I get a cold chill up my spine and goosebumps. But I love the tavern regardless. It was where I taught the kids who came for programming and who were a part of the summer camps how to play historical games.*

*Those were some of my favorite moments working at CI, but there are so many more I wish I could share. I was given an incredible opportunity that I'll never take for granted. I was taught so many invaluable skills that I'll use at college and beyond. I made great connections and friendships. I'm sitting here, looking out the window of the visitor center. I'm looking and listening to how the wind rustles the trees, the birds happily chirping, and the sun shining, creating wonderful shadows below the trees; a perfect reading spot. All I can think about is how I'm going to miss it all. I consider CI a home and the people there family. So though I will leave with a saddened heart, I am also excited about what the future holds for CI, the new interns that will get the worthwhile experience I did, and coming back to see what they've added to the Saturday Programs."*

**Donate to the Lucas Lapole Memorial Fund to Support Interns**

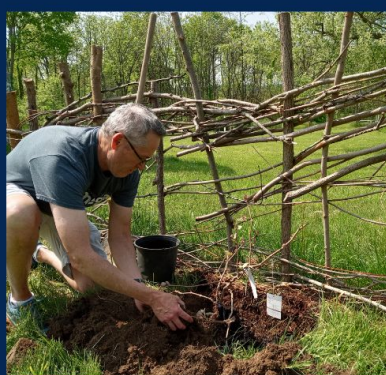
**Make a donation today to the Lucas Lapole Memorial Fund, and directly support the new careers of these young talents. Simply include the note "intern" on any donation or scan this QR code.**







# Saturdays at the Conococheague Institute Free Programs every Week from 10am to 5pm Join us in October!



October 7th: Hearth and Home

Come see what it takes to make a meal over a hearth cooking fire! We will be making a hearty stew and sides to warm up as the seasons change. Help prepare the food, and follow the recipes from the 18th century so you can try it yourself at home..

October 14th: Volunteer Conservation Day 10am to 2pm

Help staff with a fall clean up of the site. & help with our ongoing efforts to remove invasive species from the site.

October 14th: Annual Members Meeting 2pm to 4pm. Come and share the successes of this year and help plan our future!



October 21st: Changing Times - A 19th Century Tavern

Learn how American life changed due to a modernizing world and being an independent nation. Sit down with experts on the 19th century and learn about the industrial revolution, society norms, race, politics and technology. Featuring a firearms display from 1803 to 1861



October 28th: Trekking with Stonefield Accoutrements

Join Tyler from Stonefield Accoutrements and Keith from Oakgrove Farm as they show what one would need for a trek in the 18th century.

Explore our 30 acre site while learning from the past. Be sure to stop by the Tavern to hear 18th century tavern music!



## *Bonfire Night at the Conococheague Institute* *Saturday November 4th 12pm to 8pm: Falconry, Forestry, Fires and Fun!*



Millers Wildlife Falcon program sponsored by Fast Ink of Mercersburg

Special Free Community Event Includes:

- 4pm to 5pm Live Falconry Presentation
- 18th Century Games
- Archery Range
- Tavern Life Recreated
- Forestry conservation talks
- History of Guy Fawkes
- Open Hearth Cooking Demos
- Unique Bonfire Program 7pm





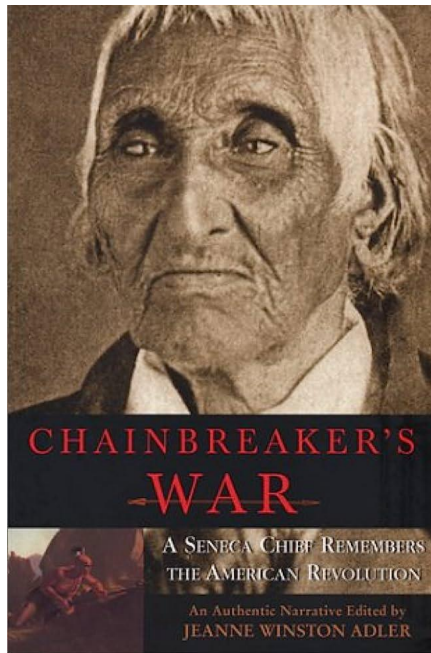
## The Conococheague Book Club

3rd Thursday of every  
Month at 1pm at the  
Welsh Barrens Visitor  
Center

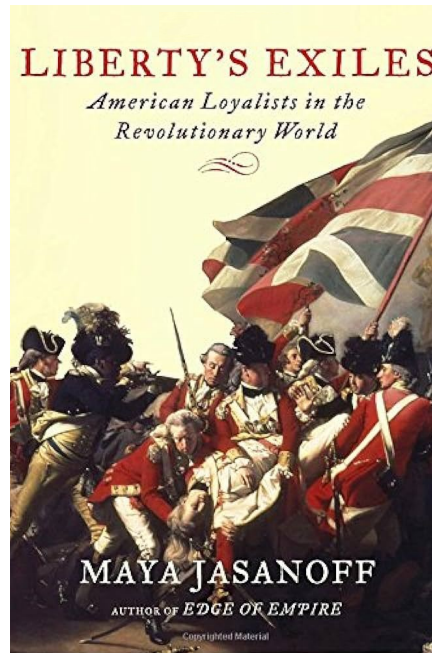
Our book club  
members always enjoy  
a lively discussion on  
books about our history  
and heritage in the  
visitor center.

Bring a snack too and  
lunch beforehand!

All are welcome, no  
RSVP required.



**October 19th 1 PM**  
Chainbreaker's War: A Seneca  
Chief Remembers the American  
Revolution" (2002)  
*edited by Jeanne Winston Adler*



**November 16th 1 PM**  
Liberty's Exiles: American  
Loyalists in the Revolutionary  
World (2011)  
*By Maya Jasanoff*

Bring your own  
history based non  
fiction book for  
December 21st and  
celebrate literacy  
and reading with  
our book club. This  
open session is the  
perfect opportunity  
to get involved with  
this community of  
avid history buffs.  
Contact  
[info@cimlg.org](mailto:info@cimlg.org) for  
more details.

**December 21st 1 PM**  
Book Report: Book  
Club members will  
bring in a non-fiction  
history book to share  
with the group

### Archives and Artifacts: Looking into our Collection

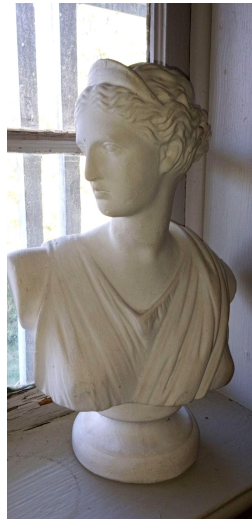
These are our most recent additions to the collections, and at first glance may stand out if you imagine our Frontier programs. However, it's important to remember that people lived at Rock Hill Farm (where the Conococheague Institute is located) until the modern era, and the museum portion of Rock Hill Farm was lived in by Sue Brewer Craig Stauffer from 1958 until her passing. As renovations continue in the Rock Hill house we are using these spaces to represent a timeline of the area. While the downstairs parlor will show life for the 1830's Negleys, the upstairs rooms will highlight the later 19th century and finally Sue's residence.

These items were all personally owned by Sue when she lived at Rock Hill, so they are as authentic as they come, but what are they?

The large vessel is a Samovar (literally "self-brewer"); a metal container traditionally used to heat and boil water. Popular in Russia, and also the Middle East as souvenirs, both John (Sue's son) and David (Grandson) remember it being used to distribute great quantities of tea when guests arrived.

The religious candlestick of brass, marble and crystal have been in the family for centuries and show the deep religious connection held by them. These ornate items are often referred to as 'Girandole Candelabra'.

Finally a bust of Artemis/Diana of Versailles needs no introduction, but its origins at Rock Hill are fascinating. The tenant side of Rock Hill has been home to many over the years, and Sue had several art students lodge there one Summer and they made her this bust as a gift of their stay!





## Friends of the Conococheague Institute by Kori Taber

While people know CI as a wonderful museum, they often forget that we are an outdoor museum! This means that we have some unique situations to deal with that other museums may not. As many people know or have learned, I am a lover of the creepy, crawly, weird, and wonderful friends of our outside world. Many times work projects start with safely moving these bugs, reptiles, and arachnids, out of our work space. I wanted to share a couple of the friends I have made throughout the summer, not only to let you know what is all around us, but to shed some light that they do not have to be scary!

First up is the newest find! This little one is a juvenile black rat snake who sheltered in the tavern during a recent rain storm. Based on size it was probably only about a year old, and looked like it had recently had a meal!

Next was a very rare find, and we were lucky enough to share this with volunteers who were on site at the time. After finding a spotted orbweaver making a web on the well, we continued on our task. Later when we went back to mark its progress, it had been snatched by none other than a praying mantis. This praying mantis had found a meal, and quickly finished. Oddly enough, the praying mantis stayed roughly in the same spot for the next couple of days.

Lastly is a find that is probably a bit more common. This tan jumping spider was found by the door of the cabin. While this photo is an up close shot, it is actually very small (smaller than a penny)! These are one of the most common jumping spiders in the area. These spiders live roughly 1-2 years and can be kept as pets as they can be kept at room temperature and can be fed insects smaller than their body size.



## 2023 ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING



*You're invited! Saturday October 14th 2pm*



### **Board of Directors**

Elizabeth Lillard (*President*), Ellen Kinzer (*Vice-President*), Bob Schwartz (*Secretary*), Sam Cathey (*Treasurer*), Will Sheppard, Kitty Clark, Melanie Desmond, JD Bennett, Matt Baer, Bailey Roberts Long, Gina Vitale

### **Advisory Board**

Dr. John C. Stauffer (*Founder and President Emeritus*), Avery Cook, Tom Finucane, Dr. Doris Armstrong-Goldman, Gay Buchanan, Martha E. Stauffer, MD, Roger Swartz, David Stauffer, Chuck Holland, Carol Zehosky

### **Staff**

Matthew Wedd, *Executive Director*, [mwedd@cimlg.org](mailto:mwedd@cimlg.org) Kori Taber, *Visitor Experience Facilitator*, [visit@cimlg.org](mailto:visit@cimlg.org)  
Amelia Craven, Selena Feng and Nathalie Maurer *Visitor Experience Team Members*, [team@cimlg.org](mailto:team@cimlg.org)

### **Contact us**

The Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA, 17236

**Phone:** 717 328 2800 **Email:** [info@cimlg.org](mailto:info@cimlg.org) **Website:** [www.cimlg.org](http://www.cimlg.org)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/conococheagueinstitute/> **Instagram:** [@conococheague\\_institute](https://www.instagram.com/conococheague_institute)

**Youtube:** [@coloniallivingattheconococheagueinstitute](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqj8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K)



**Help to Harvest our Heritage: Your Membership support allows us to continue in our mission!**  
**CI Membership runs on a 'Valid through 12 month cycle', so whenever you renew you will receive a full year of benefits**

### **Annual Membership and Additional Donation Form**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone No:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Newsletter Format Preference, Email or Printed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \$10

Individual: \$25

Family: \$35

Patron: \$125

Corporate: \$200

Sustaining: \$300

Life: \$1000

Membership Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks Payable to The Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Road,  
Mercersburg, PA, 17236

Thank you!

**I support the Conococheague Institute because:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I have included CI in my Estate Plans** ☐

**I would like more information about Funded Projects** ☐