

Open Space director links people and parks

by Emily Nehme

A frisbee flies over your head. Children splash water at each other. Rows of picnic tables filled with families at lunchtime bustle with laughter. All of these things can be seen and heard at the many parks provided by Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission (SROSRC).

Preserving the open space and parks and providing the people of the Stroud Region with a variety of recreational opportunities is the purpose of SROSRC. The commission that has implemented the parks consists of eight members, including Tim Herd, Executive Director. Herd has been with the SROSRC for three years and plans to continue his career as Executive Director.

Herd is in charge of the Open Space program, a series of projects designed to promote outdoor enjoyment through an extensive local park system. Twenty-six parks are included in the Open Space program, each of them giving community members a new outlet for recreation.

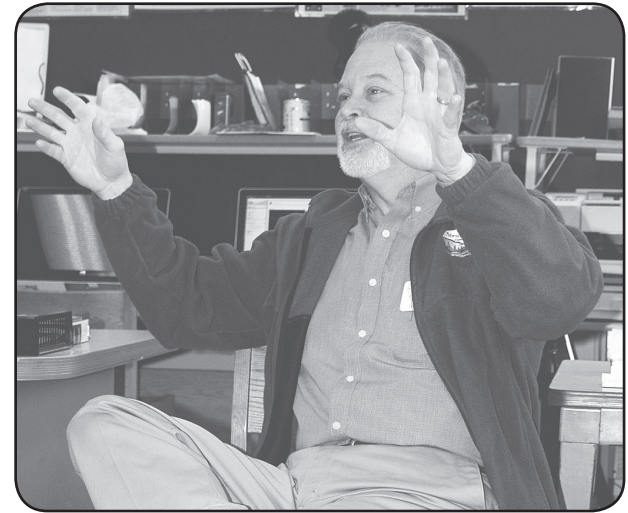
Herd's main goal is to get people involved in the community.

"People are not apart from the environment," he said. "Rather, they are a part of it."

To promote Open Space, Herd and other members of SROSRC work together to produce Stroud Region Connections, a booklet informing the public about the parks and recreational programs the Community Center provides. Herd has found another way to promote Open Space: *It Starts in Parks*, a brochure he created that also promotes SROSRC. In the brochure, Herd makes sure to include information on tourism and leisure services, healthier lifestyles, as well as land and water quality. *It Starts in Parks* won an award for its unique form of publication.

Herd also deals with the financial aspect of SROSRC, including approving grants for programs, as well as advertising. ESSA Bank has donated a large sum of money to help create the Community Center, located next to Dansbury Park in East Stroudsburg.

"We have to balance what is ideal with what is feasible financially," Herd stated.



Mr. Tim Herd discusses his vision for the Stroud Region Open Space with the *Mountaineer* staff.

photos by Emily Duda

Zacharias Pond boasts a path, pavilion, and playground

by Jenn Davidson

A chorus of ducks sing a happy tune from their make-shift stage by the pond. The joyous sound of yelling children provides back-up vocals, and the pitter patter of feet walking down the trail sets the tempo.

It's a cold and slightly rainy spring day, but that doesn't stop anyone from coming to Zacharias Pond Park. The pavilion is filled with families and couples, picnic baskets and sweatshirts. Some sit at the metal tables while others stand, keeping an eye on their children, to make sure they don't get too close to the ducks by the water. With over thirty acres of land enclosed by the park, there is plenty of room for kids to play.

Two young girls take turns spinning each other around on the merry-go-round, then stumble, dizzy and disoriented, along the wood-chip covered ground.

On the other side of the pavilion, an older girl has climbed high into the branches of a recently bloomed tree. She yells down for her friend to get a photo of her. At the same time, a startled bird flies out of the top and to another nearby tree.

For the athletically inclined, a well-kept baseball field lies just to the side of the pond. Although empty on this rainy day, come any summer afternoon and the field will be filled with kids of all ages and levels.

"I used to play soccer and softball here when I was younger," said junior Kelsey Starner. "I loved how green and open [Zacharias Pond Park] is. It's a great environment for sports."

Fishermen are welcome to bring their rods and tackle boxes to

cast out a few lines. Although not very large, the pond provides a good place for recreational fishing with the entire family.

A middle-aged couple walks hand-in-hand down the paved and gravel path, which snakes into the woods, forming a mile long figure-eight shaped loop. The path crosses over a picturesque stream, leading to the large pond. Signs denote that the area is pet-friendly.

The closing section of the figure-eight trail was completed

this past summer by SHS junior Eric Dwyer. Gravel-covered, it provides a great loop for anyone, whether running, walking or biking.

"Zacharias Park is one of the busiest parks; there are always cars in the parking lot and people exercising," said Dwyer. "Now Zacharias has two loop trails that connect, covering just over a mile of the park, allowing exercisers to change around their workout and see areas of the park that were previously inaccessible."

A fallen tree lies off to the side, slowly becoming overgrown with vibrant mosses.

Scattered patches of ferns and flowers compli-

ment it. The serenity of the forest lies in stark contrast to the busy neighborhoods of East Stroudsburg. The further one goes along the path, the easier it is to forget that North Courtland Street is just a few hundred yards away.

No matter what their interest, whether it is baseball, jogging, nature watching or picnicking, just about everyone can find something of interest at Zacharias Pond Park. With plenty of green grass for sunbathing or playing Frisbee and a spacious pavilion to grab some lunch in afterwards, a trip to Zacharias Pond Park is sure to make a great day.



photos by Jennifer Davidson



"A flower is an educated weed," --Luther Burbank, American botanist, horticulturist and a pioneer in agricultural science