

**For Immediate Release**

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**Wildlands Conservancy Introduces One of Nature's Greatest Classrooms to Over  
400 People During This Year's Lehigh River Sojourn**

(Emmaus, Pa., July 18, 2008) – Bald eagles, ospreys, snapping turtles, and great blue herons demonstrated firsthand lessons to students, ranging in ages 8-70 years old, about the importance of preserving natural habitats during this year's Lehigh River Sojourn. From the fast moving water of the Lehigh Gorge to the meandering river in the metro-wilderness of the Lehigh Valley, this five-day journey brought Sojourners closer to nature through whitewater rafting, canoeing, and kayaking. The event raised over \$24,000 for the programs and services of Wildlands Conservancy.

During the Sojourn, numerous lessons were learned through education presentations provided by local organizations, musical entertainment, and self-discovery. Presentations varied from information on the importance of conservation, to a tour of the new America on Wheels Transportation Museum, to the presentation of the Friends of the Lehigh River awards at Tri Boro Sportsman Club, to a classic rock concert featuring Air Product's corporate band *The Difference*. Local government officials join the Sojourners

on the river along with employees from local business including C.F. Martin & Co., Conectiv Energy, Lafarge North America, and Lehigh Valley Hospital.

“I brought my teenage son and two other teenage boys - they all had a great time. The accommodations and archeological/historical lessons were beyond our expectations. We saw a bald eagle, a sight we will always remember. A fun and great learning experience for all. It kept the kids away from X-Box and gave them appreciation for the Lehigh River,” comments Julie Salinas, Environmental Coordinator at Conectiv Energy.

Over the course of the five days, Sojourners were guided down the river by experienced safety guides provided by Northeast PA Kayaking School and the Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, meals were provided by local restaurants and caterers, and accommodations were organized through local municipalities and associations. “The collaboration of over 50 organizations is what makes the Sojourn such a success,” exclaims Christopher Kocher, president of Wildlands Conservancy, “The strong partnerships that Wildlands Conservancy has with these enthusiastic groups allows us to organize an enjoyable and educational trip for each participant.”

The 2008 Lehigh River Sojourn sponsors are: C.F. Martin & Co., Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Conectiv Energy, Lafarge North America, Northeast PA Kayaking School, Jim Thorpe River Adventures, Cramp 911, Panther Creek Partners, Pocono Whitewater Adventures, PPL Corporation, Valley Preferred, America on Wheels Transportation Museum, Bennett Automotive Group, Eastern Industries, Inc., Nestle Waters North America, Inc., Nestor’s Sporting Goods, Northampton Borough Municipal Authority, Pretreatment Information Exchange and Witt’s Tree Service.

For information on the 2008 Lehigh River Sojourn, please contact Elizabeth McKinney, development manager, at 610-965-4397, ext. 26.

## **About Wildlands Conservancy**

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 46,000 acres of critical farmland and wildlands in 18 counties of eastern Pennsylvania. For more information, please visit [www.wildlandspa.org](http://www.wildlandspa.org).

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