

New director at Whitesbog tackles obstacles

By Ina Z. Cabañas

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Stephan Thompson, executive director of the Whitesbog Preservation Trust, is hard at work overcoming funding obstacles.

Since he began his volunteer position in July, his focus has been to bring the trust operating revenue.

"There were projects being planned and there just wasn't anybody to see them through," said Thompson.

Whitesbog's board of directors recruited Thompson to fill the position held tem-

porarily by Sue Goldstein, the Volunteer Program Coordinator. Thompson is working on strategic planning, including the research and construction for projects at the historic village. Rebuilding, restoring, and funding are issues that Whitesbog volunteers are faced with on a daily basis.

"I'm here to keep the details from falling through the cracks and get things rolling," continued Thompson.

Thompson, a professional photographer by trade, has deep roots in Pemberton.

Born in Mt. Holly Thompson moved to Pemberton Borough at the age of four. He is a graduate of Pemberton Township High School.

Thompson received a bachelor degree in Business Administration from Chapman University and another bachelor degree in photography from Brooks Institute. Both are in California.

After living in California, Colorado, and Washington, DC, Thompson moved his

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Thompson sees life's mission

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family back to Pemberton. He has resided on his farm in New Lisbon for the past eighteen years.

On the farm he raises alpacas, rents fields to other farmers, and runs a stable that boards horses. A member of the Pemberton Township Zoning Board of Adjustment, Pemberton Rotary Club (was the secretary for four years and currently the rotary's treasurer), Thompson is also a farmer, photographer, and now an executive director.

Whitesbog has received two grants from the NJ Historic Trust this past summer. One grant will help out with mapping, an overall village survey, and restoration work. The other grant (\$30,000) will be used for general operating assistance providing office staff with much needed equipment.

Within the year, the trust is hoping to have Whitesbog declared a

National Historic Site. Currently the village, part of Lebanon State Forest, is classified an historic site.

On a national level there is no recognition. Once the trust receives national status they are eligible for federal grants. At present, the trust receives money from private and state grants.

Thompson said, "I can see this as my mission for the rest of my life 'cause there is so much history here and there's great people. We have a whole lot of raw material and when it's put together right it will make for an exceptional destination for both environmentalists and history buffs."

Whitesbog Village is both an educational and historical site. Over 10,000 school children a year visit the village through the Pines Program from Rowan College.

For information on Whitesbog, to volunteer or donate old farm machinery and tools call 893-1765.

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