

WISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Fall 2010



**From the
Executive
Director**

**CONSERVING
LAND...
PRESERVING
COMMUNITY**

ALT's approach to accomplishing our mission involves education, legislation and acquisition.

Green space is as critical to the health and function of a community as libraries, roads, schools, commercial centers, housing and other amenities. ALT brings a conservation-centric perspective to community land planning, meaning that growth and development should respond to the landscape rather than the landscape being altered to accommodate growth.

Green space should not be a token afterthought in a municipality's future planning but the foundation of natural infrastructure that supports a community's distinctive character, helps manage stormwater and provides respite for humans and habitat for wildlife...just to list a few of the public benefits of green space.

Specifically, we educate people about conservation options and the bounty of public benefits green space provides; promoting and supporting local

See "From the Executive Director", page 7

Sycamore Island Recommendations Presented at Public Meeting

Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) held a meeting at the Sylvan Canoe Club on September 9 to share the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Sycamore Island Management Plan. Recommendations focus on providing safe, interesting and educational access for the public that does not harm the unique island habitat. Preliminary recommendations include:

- Enhance habitat to protect over 100 birds including 30 species of breeding birds including regionally rare Carolina chickadee and willow flycatcher (PA Wildlife Action Plan Species of Maintenance Concern), and promote greater diversity and abundance of migrant songbirds.
- Address lack of amphibians and reptiles by improving breeding habitat and protect island banks where the unique spiny softshell turtle has been found.
- Limit public access with one canoe/kayak landing and one low-impact public trail open during specific times of the year to protect habitats particularly for migratory birds, over 30 species of fish and vulnerable freshwater mussels

"Sycamore Island", continued on page 2

What is this?



More Inside:

2...Welcome new Board Members

3...Out in the Field

4 and 5...About ALT Conservation Areas

6...Tributes to John Hamm and David Pencoske

7...Mt. Washington update and Recent Activities

8...Upcoming Events

Do you know what these are and why they are white? See page 5 to find out!

Welcome New Board Members

At the July meeting, Allegheny Land Trust's Board unanimously appointed three wonderful Directors to the Board: **Ray Parker, Carl Prutting** and **Damon Weiss**.

Ray Parker is a founding partner of Williams Coulson Johnson Lloyd Parker & Tedesco, LLC. Ray is a fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* since 2006 and *Pennsylvania Super Lawyers* since 2005.

He is a graduate of West Virginia University College of Law, where he was an editor of *The Law Review* and a member of the Order of the Coif. He continues to be affiliated with his law school as an adjunct faculty member. He received his undergraduate degree from Allegheny College. Ray lives in Fox Chapel with his wife Elsa.



Ray Parker

Carl Prutting is a tenured communications executive working mostly in the television industry. He is currently with KDKA-TV & WPCW-TV. Originally starting as a reporter for a radio station, Carl switched to the marketing side of broadcasting having held positions in



Carl Prutting

New Orleans, New York and the New England area and joined KDKA in 1994. Carl has both his Bachelor and Master degrees from the University of Hartford in Hartford, Connecticut. He and his wife Kathleen have four children as well as two St. Bernard dogs and live in Allison Park. Carl says that Joni Mitchell best describes why he was

interested in coming on board with ALT, *"They paved paradise; they put up a parking lot... They took all the trees; they put 'em in a tree museum. They charged the people a dollar and a half just to see 'em."* He says, "Those words have always stuck with me, and I'm too cheap to pay \$1.50 to go see a tree. So maybe I can

I would like to welcome Ray Parker, Carl Prutting and Damon Weiss, to the Board who were elected to 2010-2013 terms. I believe they are each going to bring valuable contributions to ALT's Development, Communications and Project Committees, as well as providing strong input at the Board level. I appreciate the service of these Directors and what they will bring to ALT's future success.

Phil Brooks, ALT Board Chairman

help hold back the building of a tree museum, and even more, the paving of paradise."

Damon Weiss is a Professional Engineer with Pennoni Associates, specializing in water resources, site/civil design, GIS and advanced infrastructure management. He became familiar with Allegheny Land Trust over the past several years through his involvement in Three Rivers Wet Weather (3RWW) and the



Damon Weiss

Pennsylvania Environmental Council, where he is an active participant in the Storm Water Advisory Panel and the Green Infrastructure Network. "As I became more involved in green infrastructure design and came to better understand our region's water resources issues and policies," says Damon, "I came to realize that land conservation may be the ultimate form of green infrastructure. What impressed me about ALT was the fact they seemed to realize this too, incorporating the theme of water directly into their Strategic Plan." Damon lives in Churchill with his wife, Jeanine, and two children, Jett and Zaden.

Special thanks to our four outgoing Directors Bill Bates, Jerry DeRosa, Ann Morrison and Ron Schipani for their service. Their outstanding leadership shaped Allegheny Land Trust in ways too great to measure. Thank you, Bill, Jerry, Ann and Ron for your commitment to ALT. Roy Kraynyk, ALT Executive Director

"Sycamore Island", continued from page 1

including the three horn wartyback that was not known to exist in the Allegheny River prior to the recent survey.

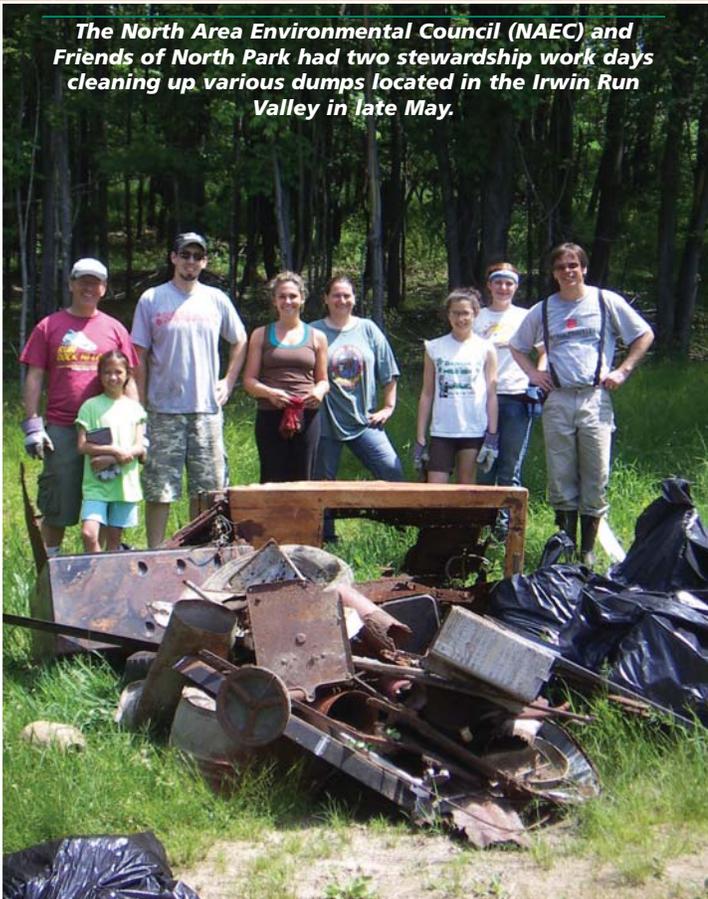
- Enhance rare hardwood riparian/floodplain forest (Sycamore and Cottonwood trees) to encourage nesting of Bald Eagle and Osprey and other raptors and remove competing non-native plants impeding native tree growth.

- Do not remove larger man-made structures (swimming pool, sunken barge) that have become wildlife habitat. Reuse existing structures to educate visitors and perhaps create habitat.

Execution of these recommendations will require time and volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a site steward for Sycamore Island, contact Emilie Cooper at ecooper@alleghenylandtrust.org.

OUT IN THE FIELD...

The North Area Environmental Council (NAEC) and Friends of North Park had two stewardship work days cleaning up various dumps located in the Irwin Run Valley in late May.



Let's Venture Outdoors



Allegheny Land Trust partnered with outdoor excursion company Venture Outdoors (VO) to explore in detail some of the ALT conservation areas. At our first outing, a number of willing learners took to Lowries Run Slopes for a Tree Identification Lesson—learning unique

characteristics of Western PA trees. Participants learned to identify the “burnt cornflakes looking” bark of the black cherry tree to the fragrant scent of the understory spicebush. In coming months, ALT and VO will paddle to Sycamore Island and venture to Wingfield Pines for more outdoor learning. If you would like to join us, go to www.alleghenylandtrust.org.

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VISTAS is underwritten by an anonymous donor. Thank you!

Stewardship Notes and Upcoming Events

CALL FOR SITE STEWARDS (OLD AND NEW)

- Have you been an ALT Site Steward? Please contact Emilie to update your profile and receive special information.
- We are looking for MORE dedicated volunteers to steward ALT Conservation Areas.

DEAD MAN'S HOLLOW DAY OF STEWARDSHIP

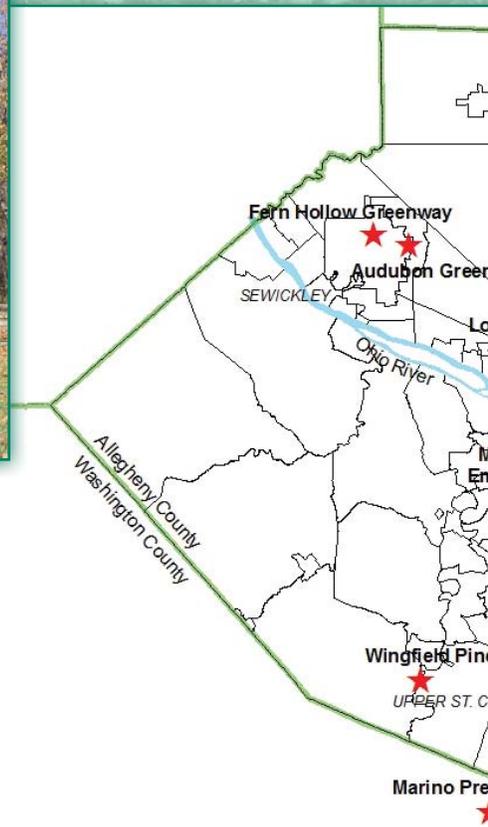
- Join ALT and the DMH Fellowship for a work day at Dead Man's Hollow
- Saturday October 16, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Meet at the Boston Trail Head of the Great Allegheny Passage
- Trail clearing, trash pick-up and general maintenance
- Contact Emilie for more information at ecooper@alleghenylandtrust.org or 412.741.2750

When was the last time you visited your favorite ALT Property? To date, Allegheny Land Trust has protected 1,500 acres in 21 municipalities. Our conservation areas provide benefits such as stormwater management to reduce flooding and the protection of our region's scenic character and unique plant and animal habitats. But you're also invited to enjoy these lands for hiking, wildlife observation and other similar activities. Take a look at the map and information below for ideas about how you can enjoy an ALT Conservation Area close to your home!

Audubon and Fern Hollow Greenways

SIZE: 130 ACRES

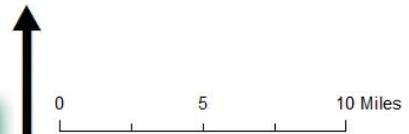
Nestled in the head waters of Little Sewickley Creek, these two ALT gems are often used by local equestrian clubs for riding. Contiguous to **Sewickley Heights Borough Park**, there is more than 1,000 acres of green space and miles of trails to explore.



Wingfield Pines

SIZE: 80 ACRES

ALT's Abandoned Mine Drainage Passive Treatment System at Wingfield Pines in **Upper St. Clair** is a great place to do some bird watching—cedar waxwings are abundant! During the warm months Wingfield Pines is a beautiful place to hike and in the winter you can explore the property with snowshoes. If you head out to snowshoe, don't forget your ice skates—the ponds freeze over for a perfect outdoor skating rink.



Conservation Areas

Irwin Run Conservation Area

SIZE: 73 ACRES

ALT's most recent land acquisition, Irwin Run Conservation Area, is adjacent to North Park in **Pine Township**. It is a wonderful place to hike with the family and in the winter a great place to cross country ski.



Sycamore Island

SIZE: 14 ACRES

Sycamore Island, located in the Allegheny River near **Blawnox**, is one of the last remaining undeveloped islands in Allegheny County. Boaters around the island are often treated to wildlife



sightings including wood ducks, spiny soft shell turtles and buffleheads. See the article on the front page for more information about ALT's future plans for the island.

Dead Man's Hollow

SIZE: 440 ACRES

The Wildlife Preserve at Dead Man's Hollow in the **Mon Valley** encompasses 440 acres of highly significant wildlife habitat. The Preserve is a wonderful place to hike, has a large fishing pond and is adjacent to the Great Allegheny Passage, the bike trail linking Pittsburgh to Washington, DC.



Aerial photo by Ace Aerial Photography

What is it? from page 1.
 Indian Pipes or *Monarda uniflora* are blooming, these found on Lowries Run Slopes. This unique find does not contain any chlorophyll (what gives plants their green color) and is a parasite often found in the dense understory of PA forests.

Lasting Legacies

by Rhonda Madden, Development Director

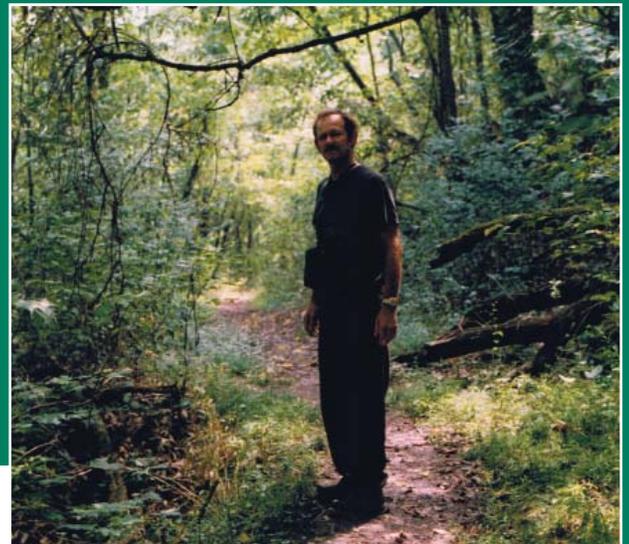
We often talk about the special connections people have with land. Through memorial tributes for John Hamm and David Pencoske, ALT remembers two men who made lasting connections with the lands that they loved most.

Both John and David remind us that everyday citizens can have an incredible impact on protecting the places that mean the most to them. Their contributions to conservation—in John’s case Wingfield Pines and the Chartiers Watershed and in David’s case Dead Man’s Hollow—will forever benefit future generations who will find a cleaner creek to paddle a canoe and a protected forest to take a walk in the woods.

JOHN HAMM loved the outdoors and paddling on Chartiers Creek. In June, Allegheny Land Trust learned that it was awarded a \$103,478 grant from the PA Environmental Defense Foundation to establish the **John Hamm Internship Endowment** for work in the Chartiers Watershed. The endowment will be held by ALT in perpetuity with proceeds from the interest generated by the principle grant award used to support an annual internship. John supported ALT’s efforts to preserve the 80-acre Wingfield Pines site and subsequent construction of the Abandoned Mine Drainage system that is now preventing 538 tons of iron oxide pollution from entering Chartiers Creek.

“John worked with many organizations on issues related to conservation and educating people about respecting the environment. Our family is so pleased that his efforts to protect the Chartiers Watershed and his beloved Chartiers Creek will continue through the work of young student interns and grateful for ALT’s oversight of the internship.”

TERRI GOULD AND THE HAMM FAMILY



DAVID PENCOSKE loved to hike the trails of Dead Man’s Hollow. “I spend so much time in the Hollow,” Pencoske said. “The mountains in White Oak where I live were all lumbered off and roads and buildings were put up. Everything is developed.” Since protection of the 440-acre Preserve in 1998, David served as a devoted volunteer site steward and no one cared more for its long-term care. In recognition of his service, ALT will use his family’s generous tribute gift to support projects in Dead Man’s Hollow including installation of a new entrance sign in David’s memory.

“My brother David loved Dead Man’s Hollow. Even as a little boy, my brother loved to walk and spend time in the woods. Dead Man’s Hollow was the perfect place for Dave to escape from today’s world.”

EDWARD PENCOSKE



"From the Executive Director", continued from page 1

land use ordinances that work to protect the lands providing those public benefits; and direct acquisition of land or conservation agreements through purchase or gift.

Recently our legislative efforts have resulted in a fee for service contract with a municipality to help develop a future vision or goal for how the community will be physically developed and its overall appearance in the future. This vision, which will identify the land, is integral and critical to maintaining the community's distinctive character.

The project involves evaluating existing ordinances, researching and compiling biological and cultural data and conducting a public survey to learn about landowners' opinions. Results from a 15-question survey were used to determine, among other things, attitudes toward woodland and stream protection, what landscapes and vistas are special and considered iconic of the community and the degree of support for a land protection fund.

Gifts to Mt. Washington Doubled with Neighborhood Match!

Inspired by the initial success of efforts by Chatham Village residents who raised over \$7,000 in May towards ALT's campaign to protect 19 acres of woodlands in Mt. Washington, a group of generous neighbors has pledged a total of \$6,000 as part of a Matching Funds Challenge. **Community gifts received now will be doubled up to the \$6,000 Match!** To date, ALT has raised \$156,000 from foundations, individuals and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The total project cost is \$224,000 **that must be raised by December 15, 2010.** ALT's funding plan includes a goal of 10% of the project cost

to be supported by the local community (\$22,400). Meeting the community goal is important to demonstrate to state and local foundation funders that there is community support.

ALT is working with the Mt. Washington

Community Development Corporation (MWCDC) and the City of Pittsburgh to expand Emerald View Park. ALT acquired an important 11-acre tract in 2008 for the park.

If you would like to make a gift, please send your contribution payable to Allegheny Land Trust and write **Mt. Washington** on the memo line. If you would like to make a gift using ALT's secure website, please visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org.

Aerial photo by Ace Aerial Photography



Community support for land conservation is essential and there will be an opportunity on October 13 to show that support when The Pittsburgh Foundation once again holds its Pittsburgh Gives Match Day.

We hope you will consider joining us that day to show that Pittsburgh cares about conservation and preserving our communities. **RK**

Match Day 2010—October 13

The Pittsburgh Foundation through their *Pittsburgh Gives* program will once again hold Match Day. This unique opportunity to have your gift to ALT matched will take place October 13, 2010 from 12:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. (24 hours to give!) Every dollar you contribute will be matched with 50 cents by the foundation. This is a special chance to stretch your support for local land conservation this year.

Wingfield Pines AMD Dedication

The Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) Passive Treatment System at ALT's Wingfield Pines Conservation Area in Upper St. Clair was officially unveiled on June 3, 2010. Nearly 100 people attended the unveiling that began with a welcoming breakfast provided by the USC Citizens for Land Stewardship.

Congressman Tim Murphy had the honor of turning the valve that started water flowing through the aeration pipe into the first of five settling ponds.



Attendees then had the opportunity to walk through the system on the new boardwalk that meanders through the wetlands and stop at ecology stations set up by Duquesne University students which highlighted the wildlife that is now returning to Wingfield Pines.

The day was capped off by a wonderful picnic lunch.



Helping local people save local land.

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VISTAS

SAVE THE DATE

3rd annual
Bounty in



OCTOBER 9, 2010

(It's a Steelers' Bye Week)

6:30–10:30 p.m.

Music by the
NEWLANDERS

and catering by

Andora RESTAURANT
& CATERING

Enjoy good food, good wine, good music and watch local artists create "art in the moment". Proceeds from reservations and a portion of art sales to benefit Allegheny Land Trust.

Last year's event sold out so make your reservations early online at alleghenylandtrust.org or call 412-741-2750.

What will be your legacy?

You can make sure that future generations will be able to enjoy the same views and conservation benefits by helping to protect the land we cherish.

Learn more about ALT's Legacy Society and making a gift that costs nothing during your lifetime, with possible tax benefits:

- Adding Allegheny Land Trust as a beneficiary in your will;
- Making Allegheny Land Trust a beneficiary of your IRA or retirement fund;
- Naming Allegheny Land Trust as a beneficiary of an insurance policy.

Please visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org and click How to Help/Gift Planning or call us at 412-741-2750.



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