**Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative**

Allegheny Land Trust and Grow Pittsburgh are partnering to offer long-term land protection for community gardens and urban farms in the urbanized areas of Allegheny County. Protecting these projects as long-term assets will enable them to continue to play an important role in the cultural and social life of their communities, provide environmental services, and contribute to our regional food system.

The Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative is part of a larger movement across our region to protect equitable access to housing and greenspace and include community voices in land-use decisions. Grow Pittsburgh and Allegheny Land Trust both hold seats on the board of Common Ground: the Greater Pittsburgh Community Land Trust, an organization working to support the development of community land trusts for greenspace and affordable housing.

The Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative will be governed by a Steering Committee that will include 3 members selected by Grow Pittsburgh, 3 members selected by Allegheny Land Trust, and 3 members selected from among the individuals participating in gardens protected by the land trust. Since there are no gardens currently in the land trust, initially the 6 ALT and GP Steering Committee members will select the remaining three members. To ensure a balance of power decisions will be made by consensus or, if consensus cannot be reached, by a 75% majority.

Initially, the Steering Committee will:

* Develop the criteria for determining which gardens to protect
* Identify and outreach to prospective land trust gardens
* Create guidelines for the use of the land protected in the land trust

Once a project has elected to join the Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative, Allegheny Land Trust will negotiate to purchase the land from the current owner and place it under permanent protection from development. The gardeners will then lease the land for the period of time that best matches their goals (ex: 5 years, 30 years, 99 years). Grow Pittsburgh will be available to support the growers with organizational development and infrastructure improvements. The gardens will be continue operating autonomously while benefiting from the security of long-term land access.

Until a formal application process is in place, interested projects are invited to get in touch immediately to discuss the opportunity in more detail. Contact: Rayden Sorock, Community Garden Program Manager, Rayden@growpittsburgh.org