

# VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Fall 2002

## Bluegrass for Green Space a Hit

*Celebrating the Beauty of Nature Through the Harmony of Music*

July 20, 2002, the Allegheny Land Trust and Fern Hollow Nature Center co-hosted the first annual Bluegrass for Green Space Music Festival. As the sun set and the bonfire crackled, the event far exceeded expectations.

The Nature Center offered a country-style setting, and the talented musicians — John and Wendy Mackin, Amarillis, Nine Mile Run, Rick Malis, and Francine and the Mountain Top Band — offered a rousing show.

### From the President

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Aren't we lucky! We are enjoying one of the most beautiful seasons here in Western Pennsylvania. There are not many places on Earth where the end of the growing season is such a grand finale of color, exhilarating scents and cool, comfortable breezes. It is a time in which many expatriates long for home.

The gentle hills and many old-growth deciduous trees that make this show possible are the very features that Allegheny Land Trust seeks to protect. Without them, our area's uniqueness would be lost. We would be a flat, treeless, cookie-cutter town like any other. There would be no scenic vistas or natural recreation areas that bring nature closer to people. There would be no autumn as we have known it.

As I wrote in our last issue of VISTAS, a solid base of steady supporters will ensure that the Trust's work continues. We set a goal, "2006 Members by 2006," and I am pleased to report that we are well on our way toward meeting it. Since the beginning of the year, over 100 new members have joined.

If you have not already, won't you join us, too? If you already have pledged membership, please encourage others in your community to do so as well. Together our vigilance will help to protect those irreplaceable things that make our region unique.

Tom Schmidt



More than 300 guests savored the perfect summer day.

Support from Duquesne Light Company, Citizens Bank, Ambridge Bike Shop, Victor Wetzel Associates, Graham Realty Company, Edson Tree Service, Ron Heuring's Upholstering, Starbucks, T-Bones, Richard and Kathy Brandt, Mary and Henry Ewalt, Chip and Courtney Muse, Tom and Susan Schmidt, Linda and Jack Ubinger, along with ticket sales helped the two groups raise over \$10,000. The money will advance land conservation to complement the Trust's recent purchase of 36 acres adjacent to Sewickley Heights Park and will help cover operating expenses for the Nature Center.

*Continued on page 3*

## Trust Offers Exclusive French and Indian War Prints

Order by Oct. 31

Allegheny Land Trust is selling a very limited edition of prints of the Nat Youngblood series representing the French and Indian War. Each giclée process print will be numbered and signed by the artist. This is a unique opportunity to commemorate Western Pennsylvania's role in world history and, at the same time, support conservation of Western Pennsylvania land. Each 18" x 20" full-sized print is \$135; multiple-print discounts are available. To view descriptions, full-color images, and a printable order form, visit [www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org). Prints also are available to view and order at Lee Heckman Gallery, 301 Beverly Road, Mt. Lebanon, ph. 412-563-7474.

Order before October 31, 2002, and receive in time for holiday gift-giving. Prints will be available for pickup at the Heckman Gallery on

or after **December 1, 2002**, or at the Allegheny Land Trust Offices during our Members Holiday Open House, **December**

**13.** For further information about the artwork, to make other delivery arrangements, or to inquire about multi-print discounts, please call Rob MacLachlan at 412-835-5464.



*The land conservation described in VISTAS is made possible through your generous support. The enclosed envelope can be used to make a special contribution or, better still, as an invitation to a friend or family member to join our preservation efforts.*



## Growing Greener Grant for Wingfield Pines Experiment

In August, Governor Mark Schweiker and Pennsylvania DEP Secretary David Hess announced a \$45,000 Growing Greener grant to Allegheny Land Trust to design a system to purify mine drainage at Wingfield Pines and improve the quality of the bordering Chartiers Creek.

When the Trust bought the former golf and swim club in Upper St. Clair and South Fayette townships, the mine was spewing 2,000 gallons per minute of mineral-laden, rust-orange water. "Unlike a lot of potential owners," explains Executive Director Roy Kraynyk, "we actually saw the mine drainage as an opportunity, not just a problem."

The real problem is that the drainage has gone unattended for many years, pouring 43 tons of iron oxide into the Chartiers annually. The opportunity, as the Trust sees it, is not only to improve a valuable stream but to raise the bar on abandoned mine drainage (AMD) treatment. The potential method would use a series of ponds to naturally cleanse the water, and the Trust hopes to work with consultants to create an effective solution that also improves the aesthetics, habitat and educational value of the property.

Says Kraynyk, "The treatment system will be a metaphor for our community's renewed appreciation of its waterways: from a place to dump our industrial waste to a recreational resource."

For example, the energy of the flowing water might be harnessed to accelerate treatment, or run fountains and lighting. Interpretative trails, artifacts or sculpture could teach visitors about a century of our industrial heritage and the ways we are healing one of that era's scars. The location, accessible to I-79, could make this a regional showcase of AMD technology. The grant brings the Trust significantly closer to making these ideas real. ALT



Under the Trust's ownership, the Wingfield Pines property now has the potential to improve local water quality.

## Celebrating *Continued from page 1*



Several talented amateurs entertained during the open stage hour, including 8-year-old Trinity Kronk who sang, clogged and played the banjo.



Many generous in-kind donations, including T-Bones Market's focaccia and Portobello mushrooms (masterfully grilled by Sue Gold, in apron) helped raise over \$10,000.

## Commitment Recognized

Allegheny Land Trust depends on volunteers, and we are blessed with some of the most active and talented. At this summer's funding-raising event, several were recognized for their outstanding contributions. (L to R) Rep. **David Levdansky**, outgoing director, for his three-term service to the board; **Sue Gold**, outgoing president, for her leadership during the organization's transition from under the county's wing; and **Bob Purdy**, member, for building the organization's first web site. Member and new Director **Rob MacLachlan** received the Community Conservationist Award for his generous and creative donation to saving the Wingfield Pines project. ALT



Visit  
***www.alleghenylandtrust.org***  
today!

Information ■ Photographs ■ Eco-Links

Click the "**Help Us Save Land**" button for a printable membership form, and join us in helping local people save local land.



## Hold the Date

*Members Holiday Open House*

**Friday, December 13, 2002**

Allegheny Land Trust Offices  
at Fern Hollow Nature Center

5 to 7 p.m.

Join the Board and fellow members for  
cocktails and light hors d'oeuvres.

*Watch for your invitation in the mail.*

## Dave Pencoske

### *Volunteer Land Steward Dead Man's Hollow*

"I have been a volunteer steward of the Dead Man's Hollow property since 1994. My love of nature probably started with my first close-up glimpse of wildlife."

In his youth, Dave Pencoske hunted, but now he spends his outdoor time hiking and just enjoying the solitude. "White Oak, where I live, is a rapidly developing area. The more the forest has disappeared, the less time I spend there and the more time I spend in the Hollow."

The Hollow is 99 percent wooded, although in the past it suffered some abuse. There was gas drilling, a tile manufacturing facility, and a poorly managed farm. The land was timbered and used for a dump.

"In fact," reminds Dave, "when Allegheny Land Trust took over Dead Man's Hollow, I know one of the impending plans was to make it a commercial dump. As a native of this area, it shocks me how willing Pennsylvania is to give up its natural areas for waste from New York, New Jersey, and Delaware."

"I became a local volunteer to help preserve the Hollow and keep it in its natural state. The Trust's priorities are removing the non-native species; maintaining the trails; and removing garbage."

The latter work makes the property more pleasant for recreation, but the control of the non-natives such as Japanese knotweed, multiflora rose and tree of heaven is most important to the integrity of the local ecology.

"The non-natives tend to be aggressive and crowd out many native plants, including young trees. Without the trees, the land can't support the wildlife that belongs there. Birds and squirrels need the aboveground cover and the nuts and seeds. There are sections on the property where the land was left barren. What has come back is grapevine so thick that nothing else grows there. It's a habitat that attracts some residents, but not what you typically find in a wooded area."

Says Dave, hopefully, "If the Hollow continues to be protected, I think in 50 to 70 years the healing will be complete. There should be more protected areas like this all over Pennsylvania but especially near urban areas where people can easily enjoy them. Natural land seems to be getting scarce." ALT

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