

WISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Spring 2003

From the President

Dear Allegheny Land Trust Supporters,
Our Executive Director, Roy Kraynyk, wrote a letter to the editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that I think summarizes very well our participation in the greening of Pittsburgh. Roy was responding to an article about current efforts to create "brands" for our region.

The writer of the article, Patrick McShea, says that we should lead with one of our strengths – our abundant foliage. As one of his examples, McShea points to the green hillsides in Plum Borough. That particular tract has been preserved because it belongs to Allegheny Land Trust. It's a coincidence, I'm sure, that he mentioned the tract but his reference demonstrates how valuable our efforts have become.

We've reprinted part of Roy's letter here in case you missed it.

Tom Schmidt

Letter to the editor

Post-Gazette, Sunday, January 12, 2003

Citizens can enrich our area by supporting land conservation Patrick McShea of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History makes an outstanding point when recognizing the aesthetic impact that wooded hillsides have on our region's image in his piece "Green-burgh, Pennsylvania" (Dec. 29 Forum). Wooded hillsides provide many other beneficial functions that complement the scenic beauty that they impart year-round.



Allegheny Land Trust is currently negotiating to buy Elkhorn Slopes - 208 acres in Forward Township with three miles of riverfront.

These lush hillsides in Plum Borough have been preserved because Allegheny Land Trust owns them. They are part of a tract called "Barking Slopes".

Undisturbed wooded slopes are part of our natural infrastructure that absorbs rainwater, reduces flooding, and promotes the recharge of aquifers. The dense vegetation stabilizes slide-prone soils, helps to mitigate air pollution, and buffers noise from highways, railroads, airports, and industrial facilities. Diverse wildlife habitat, perennial and ephemeral springs, and unique plants exist throughout, our region's forested hillsides and valleys.

Continued on back cover



Grants get New Year off to Great Start

Allegheny Land Trust celebrates the new year by announcing receipt of \$745,000 in grants for land acquisition.

Grant to buy 100 acres in Little Sewickley Creek Watershed

A \$600,000 matching grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will be used to buy 100 acres of biologically significant land in the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed. The property borders the Sewickley Hills municipal park and includes trails used by the Sewickley Hunt and others.

Purchase of the property by Allegheny Land Trust will ensure that it remains open space to be enjoyed for generations. "This property is an extraordinary example of the scenic and biologically rich western Pennsylvania landscape," states Trust President, Thomas M. Schmidt.

The McCargo family has donated one-half of the land's appraised market value as their contribution to the project. This is equal to \$2 million. Allegheny Land Trust must raise another \$1.4 million to match the grant from Pennsylvania. "We are excited to be working towards the mutual goal of conserving the land with Allegheny Land Trust," states Tom McCargo.

The Little Sewickley Creek Watershed is one of several areas within Allegheny County that have been identified as a Biological Diversity Area (BDA), one of the highest designations a natural area can receive. A BDA can contain numerous, and occasionally rare, plants or animals that depend on unique, fragile and vanishing habitats.



Some of the 100 acres on the McCargo family property



Revolving conservation fund

A \$145,000 grant from The Pittsburgh Foundation will establish the Trust's first Regional Revolving Conservation Fund. The Fund will provide necessary liquidity and enable the Trust to accelerate our land acquisition efforts.

For projects to be eligible, the land will need to meet certain natural criteria and a plan to restore the Fund will need to be in place.

Thanks to DCNR and The Pittsburgh Foundation for their vision and support of local land conservation.

The Regional Revolving Conservation Fund will help conserve land such as this

Watch for survey in the mail

We simply want to be the most effective organization that we possibly can and would like to hear your comments and suggestions. Keep an eye out for our survey coming soon in the mail and online.

Membership Signup on Website

By the time you read this newsletter, you should be able to apply for Allegheny Land Trust membership using an on-line form on our website. Go to –

www.alleghenylantrust.org

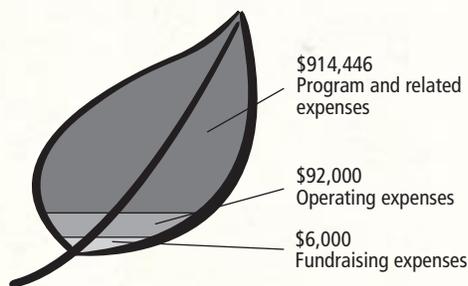
Membership Grows by 25% in 2002

Last year our membership increased by 25% and members contributed over \$30,000 that enabled us to raise the larger grants you've been reading about in VISTAS. However, these funds are not eligible for operating expenses such as printing, postage, salaries, or rent, which remain very low.

Only 9.6% of our total annual budget is for operating expenses. Please use the enclosed envelope to join or renew your membership. Be a part of the legacy! THANKS!

Cost for Fundraising Less Than 1% of Total Budget

Allegheny Land Trust raised \$1,012,446 during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2002. Our operating expenses are about 9.6% of the total budget. Fundraising is 6% of the operating budget and less than 1% of the total budget.



A copy of official registration and financial information for the Allegheny Land Trust may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Check Allegheny Land Trust's Website for ...

- Activities and programs
- Announcements
- Schedules
- Cancellations
- News articles
- Contact information and board of directors
- Photos of conservation areas
- Past issues of VISTAS
- Membership application form

www.alleghenylandtrust.org

THANKS
to
Bob Purdy
for managing
the website.

Save the Date

2nd Annual

Bluegrass for Green Space Music Festival

Here are some of the 300 people who attended last year's festival, which raised \$10,000. Audio clips from the festival are on our website.

SATURDAY
JULY 12



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

Trust to Increase Staff

Board member Sigo Falk and Executive Director Roy Kraynyk spent the month of February meeting with several foundations to seek funding to increase staff.

Our goal is to become a self-sustaining organization by 2006 that doesn't rely on annual foundation support for operations. But we need additional staff to increase our capacity to implement new programs and projects.

"We have a great track record of success. We just needed to take our show on the road and tell people our story," comments Mr. Falk. "The initial feedback from several of the foundations is promising."

We are seeking a Membership/Development Director whose primary responsibility will be to grow our membership, create and implement special events such as the Bluegrass for Green Space music festival, and increase the Trust's profile. The job description is posted on our website alleghenylandtrust.org. Or call the office for more information.



Wingfield's old clubhouse is being used for fire department training before being demolished.

USC VFD using Wingfield Pines buildings for training

After more than a year exploring ways to reuse the bathhouse and clubhouse at Wingfield Pines, the Board has decided to demolish them and fill the pool. The buildings have rapidly deteriorated and distract from the otherwise beautiful scenery.

Before being demolished, the buildings are being used by the Upper St. Clair Volunteer Fire Department for search and rescue drills and other training.

Fire Chief Ray Tomnay expressed appreciation: "We rarely get the chance to practice in a real building and these drills can help make the difference in saving someone's life. Our sincere thanks to Allegheny Land Trust for permitting us to use the buildings."

Jack Ubinger, Allegheny Land Trust Director and chair of the committee working on Wingfield Pines said, "Demolition was our last option. Once we decided to exercise this option we made the offer to the fire department in an effort to help the community in any way we could."

Funding for the demolition is made possible by a grant from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

Remediation Consultant Chosen for Wingfield Pines

Hedin Environmental, a leading consultant in AMD (abandoned mine drainage) remediation, was selected to design a passive treatment system for the mine drainage at Wingfield Pines.

Allegheny Land Trust has a \$45,000 Growing Greener grant from DEP (Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection) to fund the design, which will recover up to 43 tons per year of iron oxide now impairing the water quality of Chartiers Creek.

To implement the design, Allegheny Land Trust plans to seek funding from state and possibly federal sources.

First Wingfield Pines Ice Skating Party a Great Success

By Bob Purdy

As a full moon rose over the trees and a warm, crackling fire blazed, more than two dozen hearty skaters took to the frozen ponds at Winfield Pines on one of the coldest nights this winter. The skating party, sponsored by Allegheny Land Trust at the Trust's Wingfield Pines property, drew skaters, young and not-so-young, from all over Allegheny County.



The youngsters took to the ice like penguins. Some adults who hadn't skated in decades found they still had the knack and were soon doing circles and figure eights, while others were just happy to remain upright. When not skating, everyone gathered by the fire to toast marshmallows, drink hot mulled cider, and enjoy great conversation.

What a magical evening!

Reflections of a Non-Iceskater

... what a great idea and wonderful time I had, even if I didn't skate. I will remember that evening for a long long time. It took me back years to times long gone, when I did skate. I grew up in the country and that was the kind of thing we did when I was a child. I KNOW you made many fond memories for those kids that were there.

The property has such great potential and we will be glad to be a part of what goes on there. It is a great place to visit and walk and observe the quietness that can surround you there.

Thanks again for a great evening under the winter moon.

Nancy Page



Heinz Pledge Helps Goal to be Self-Sustaining

The Board members and Executive Director have been working hard to put the Trust into a self-sustaining state within three years. Because of their efforts, our membership increased dramatically last year and if we can sustain that growth we should become self-sustaining in three years. To continue the push, we need, among other things, to hire a development person who can focus on increasing membership. Currently we must rely on grants to cover operating expenses.

Since January, Trust members have been visiting key foundations trying to raise \$300,000 in grants for this push. They already have a \$60,000 pledge from the Heinz Foundation and several other foundations have responded favorably.

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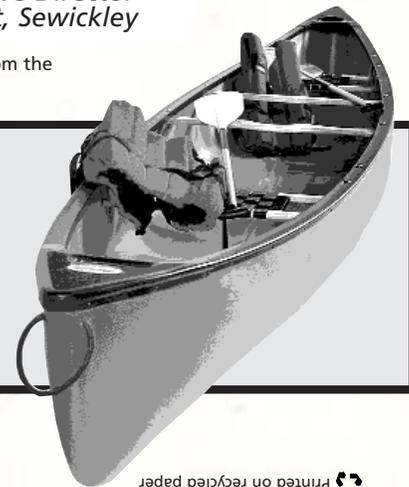
Allegheny Land Trust owns 1000 acres of land, including scenic wooded slopes in 12 municipalities in Allegheny and Washington counties. In fact, Allegheny Land Trust owns the hillside that Mr. McShea refers to along the Allegheny River in Plum.

Allegheny County is on the threshold of establishing its first comprehensive plan. This presents an opportunity to formalize a plan for a regional greenway system linking parks and other conserved land.

This opportunity to protect the region's green image is a fleeting one. The next decade is critical in maintaining the "green" so that Pittsburgh can rightfully claim the green brand.

Roy Kraynyk, Executive Director Allegheny Land Trust, Sewickley

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Canoe Cruise

Check the website for details about an upcoming canoe outing around Memorial Day.

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VISTAS

Helping local people save local land



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www.alleghenylandtrust.org

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