

VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Winter 2003

From the President

This is our Annual Report issue of VISTAS where we summarize the year's accomplishments and share our goals for 2004. Although Allegheny Land Trust has grown in many ways, we are still a grassroots organization that relies on the support of the people we are helping to protect and manage local green space.

Thanks to the generous support of our members, volunteers, and major funders we have achieved several milestones in 2003 including hiring our second full-time employee and surpassing the benchmark of 1,000 acres protected. We are well on our way to our goal of 2006 acres by the year 2006.

Our success has increased our visibility, which has lead to more land protection opportunities. But our ability to respond to these opportunities is limited by our capacity to do so. Your support will help increase our capacity to respond, accelerate our pace of conserving local green space, and curb sprawl.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers, a sincere THANKS to everyone who had a role in making 2003 another successful year. Please help empower Allegheny Land Trust with your year-end contribution.

Thanks again, Sigo Falk, President

It's a deal! Tom McCargo (left) and Executive Director Roy Kraynyk "shake on it" over the closing of the Audubon Greenway (Phase 1) acquisition. The McCargo family donated one half of the property's appraised value to make the acquisition possible. Significant financial support also came from a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant and several other local contributors.



Finalist for Environmental Award

As this issue of VISTAS goes to print, Allegheny Land Trust is being considered for a 2003 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award sponsored by Dominion Delivery and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

As one of the five finalists in the "communities" category, Allegheny Land Trust will be recognized at an awards dinner at the Westin Convention Center Hotel in Pittsburgh. Winners from each of the five categories will be presented with a check for \$1,000.

For results of the awards ceremony please check the Allegheny Land Trust website at www.alleghenylantrust.org.



Trust helps county trail groups

By Brad Tiche, Chair of the Trails Committee for Allegheny Land Trust

As a boy growing up in northern Butler County, I have many fond memories of the adventures that I had with my two younger brothers as we explored the fields and woods of our parent's farm. Even today I enjoy walks on the property, still finding things new and wondrous. Here in Allegheny County it's also important that our citizens can get away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Acting as an umbrella group for public and private trail sponsors, Allegheny Land Trust has helped to raise and administer over \$1 million of ARAD (Allegheny Regional Asset District) funds for the construction of rail trails in Allegheny County. These funds have been used to match federal and state grants totaling \$16 million for the Allegheny County Regional Trail System.

Trails provide safe and convenient recreation for people of all ages and abilities and provide access to some of the most beautiful natural areas of our region. Your support of Allegheny Land Trust enables us to continue this successful partnership. *Happy Trails!*



Board member and Trails Committee Chairman Brad Tiche shown here on recent hike in the Fern Hollow Greenway.

Allegheny Land Trust purchased seven miles of Montour Trail in 2001 to protect it from being lost to other interests. The land was later donated to the Montour Trail Council. This photo was taken at the sign unveiling in September 2003. Left to right: Dennis Pfeiffer of Montour Trail Council, Janet Thorne of Hollow Oak Land Trust, David Donahoe, Executive Director of ARAD, and Roy Kraynyk, Allegheny Land Trust.



Youghtoberfest

Although Mother Nature did not cooperate, she couldn't dampen the spirits of those who braved the steady rain and cool temperatures that greeted those who made it to Youghtoberfest 2003.

Youghtoberfest is an annual event sponsored by the Regional Trail Corporation to draw attention to the Youghogheny Trail and the organizations that work to support and promote the trail system. The event is held in Boston, PA right along the Yough trail and very close to Allegheny Land Trust's Dead Man's Hollow property.

Allegheny Land Trust Director of Membership and Outreach John Bixler operated the Allegheny Land Trust booth and had the opportunity to visit with many neighbors and volunteers of Dead Man's Hollow. "Almost everyone who stopped by had a story to tell of wonderful childhood memories from the Hollow or how they still enjoy a weekend hike through the property," said Bixler. "It's great to see all this enthusiasm for the property. We want to tap in to that enthusiasm and pull the Friends of Dead Man's Hollow back together. We are planning community meetings to get the local folks involved again."

Thanks to the Regional Trail Corporation for all their work in planning and hosting this event.

If you are interested in attending the upcoming Dead Man's Hollow Community Meeting, contact John Bixler at jbixler@alleghenylandtrust.org or call 412-741-0930

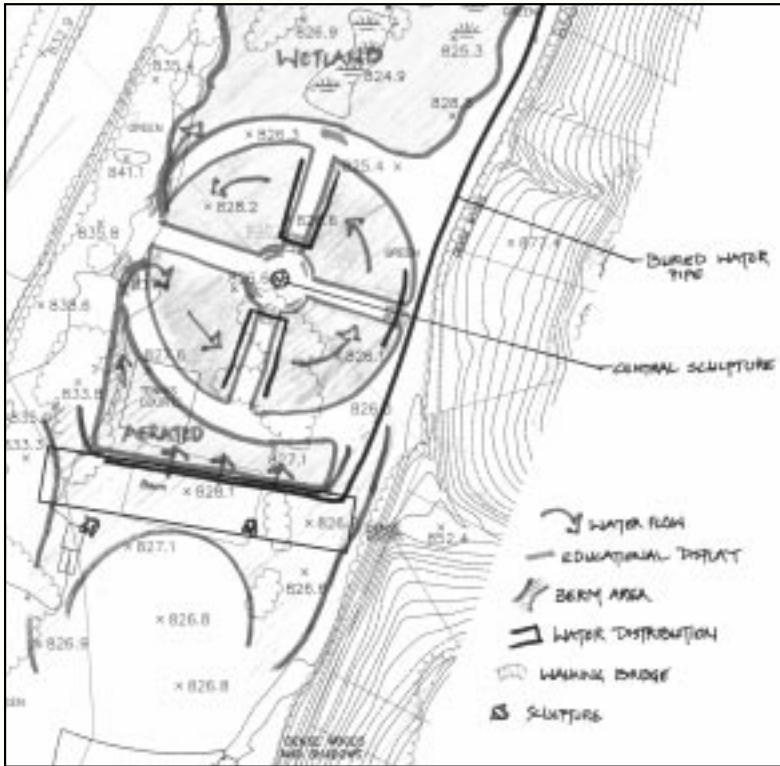
Board tackles membership issues

As Allegheny Land Trust develops a comprehensive membership program, the Board of Directors has numerous issues to address. Many of these issues were explored at the recent Strategic Planning meeting.

The discussion revolved around four primary issues: New member acquisition, membership levels and premiums, special events, and volunteer/outreach activities. Board members Sue Gold, Lindsey Smith, Lynn Heckman, and Pat McShea led small group discussions on these topics.

Allegheny Land Trust Membership Committee Chairman Steve Bland facilitated a lively discussion as each of the small groups reported their conclusions and recommendations to the full group. The decisions and recommendations will be forwarded to the appropriate Allegheny Land Trust committee for further development.

While the separate groups had a wide range of issues to address, each of the groups commented on the importance of volunteers to the organization



Wingfield Pines remediation concept

Approximately 2,000 gallons per minute of iron-laden water pour on to our Wingfield Pines site. We are analyzing the feasibility of installing a system of ponds to filter out the iron.

Mon Valley Slopes named for Whetzel

The Allegheny Land Trust recently acquired a 212-acre property in Forward Township, commonly known as "Mon Valley Slopes". At the 2003 Bluegrass for Greenspace festival, the Trust held a short ceremony to dedicate and rename the property "Whetzel Preserve" in honor of Joshua C. Whetzel III — the recipient of the 2003 Allegheny Land Trust Conservationist of the Year Award. Whetzel's lifetime of accomplishments span western Pennsylvania including protecting over 30,000 acres while serving as President of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy from 1969 thru 1978. At right is a letter from Mr. Whetzel to Mr. Thomas M. Schmidt (immediate past President and Chairman of Allegheny Land Trust).

Dear Tom:

As you know well because we worked together for many years, saving natural lands from despoliation is my highest personal priority. Therefore, I consider it a very special pleasure to have that wild and wooded riverside tract named in my honor.

I only wish I could have been present to accept that lovely photograph but I am pleased my daughter Rachel Casselman was there in my place.

To you and the directors of the Allegheny Land Trust I send my warmest thanks and best wishes.

With kind regards,

Josh Whetzel

Expenses remain low... less than 10% of total budget

As the Treasurer of the Allegheny Land Trust Board of Directors, I'm pleased to report that a dollar still goes a long way in this organization. Our annual financial audit shows that administration and fundraising expenses continue to remain low- less than 10% of our total budget.

In the 2003 fiscal year ending June 30, total expenditures were just shy of one-half million dollars (\$499,795.59). This figure includes all expenses: land purchases and associated costs, professional services, rent, salaries - everything.

Of this number only \$41,947 (8%) was spent on administration and \$7,324 (1.4%) on fundraising.

Administration and fundraising expenses combined total less than 10% of our total budget. As you can see, we continue to work hard to keep expenses low and stretch your generous contributions.

Supporters of ALT can take comfort in the fact that more than 90% of their contribution is being used for conservation of local land.

Thanks for another great year, and with your support we look forward to achieving more success in 2004.

by William C. Kirk Jr.

VISTAS mailers

Among the numerous projects that The Sewickley Senior Men's Club tackles is helping with large mailings by the Allegheny Land Trust, including the VISTAS mailings. These members of the Club made quick work of the Fall 2003 VISTAS mailing. Other Club members have pitched in with other mailings.

Allegheny Land Trust thanks the Sewickley Senior Men's Club for their hard work and good humor. All they ask in return is that we keep the coffee flowing (and it doesn't hurt to have a dozen bear claws handy to keep the energy level high).

Thanks guys - we appreciate all the help!!



Volunteer wears many hats

Allegheny Land Trust Board member Sue Gold shown here from "Sue's Sunset Grill" at the 2003 Bluegrass for Greenspace Festival. In addition to concocting some of the most delicious morsels for the attendees of the festival, Sue volunteers her time in a number of other ways. Sue can be found almost weekly at the Allegheny Land Trust office paying bills, attending Allegheny Land Trust meetings, or consulting with staff. Sue serves on the Membership Committee and pitches in wherever help is needed. From everyone at Allegheny Land Trust, "Hats off to Sue Gold."



A man connected to his work

Volunteer Bob Purdy works on our website from an inspirational spot in Wingfield Pines. Bob is continually working to improve and update the Allegheny Land Trust site. When contacted with new ideas for the site, Bob usually makes changes about as fast as it takes to log on. Bob has been known to take photos or video clips to post on the site while riding his bike along local trails (so watch out if you see him coming!) The Board of Directors and staff send a big "Thank You" to Web Guru and Webmaster Bob Purdy.

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Strategic planning meeting



The Allegheny Land Trust Board of Directors took a quick break from the 2003 Strategic Planning meeting for this photo. Left to right: Robert T. MacLachlan, Lisa L. Smith, Patrick V. McShea, Davitt B. Woodwell, Joan Blaustein, William C. Kirk, Jr., Lynn Heckman, Steve Bland, William J. Bates, Kevin J. Garber, Stevan R. Schott, Jerry V. DeRosa, Henry W. Ewalt, Bradley D. Tiche, Lindsey Smith, Cherry White, Susan M. Gold, Ron Schipani. Missing from photo: Sigo Falk and Thomas M. Schmidt



Board members (left to right) Davitt Woodwell, Sue Gold, Jerry DeRosa, Cherry White, and Bill Bates tackled a host of issues in the "New Member Acquisition" break-out session at the strategic planning meeting held in October.

How do we choose properties?

As Allegheny Land Trust becomes better known, the demand increases for our services to help local people save local land. We receive numerous inquiries from landowners interested in donating or selling land. Communities call us for help in protecting quality lands that provide scenic, recreational, or environmental benefits. We have always targeted land that has superior biological diversity. In fact, 769 acres of the 1,258 we own are Biological Diversity Areas.

At the annual strategic planning meeting in October the Board decided to revisit and refine our criteria for land so we can focus our limited resources on the right projects.

Board members Kevin Garber, Ron Schipani, and Lisa Smith, and Executive Director Roy Kraynyk led the Board through a discussion of criteria, the four-stage acquisition process (Identification, Evaluation, Acquisition, and Stewardship), and how Allegheny Land Trust's criteria and process compare to our peers. Lisa also reported on a third-party evaluation of our process and files.

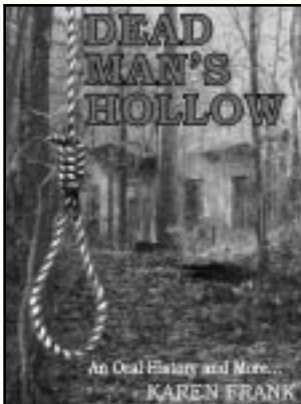
After this review and a presentation of the Trust's land portfolio, the Board agreed that we are on the right track although there are opportunities for improvement, such as providing more opportunities for members to enjoy and help steward the protected properties.

Following is a sampling of Board members' input:

- Although restoring abused properties is good, there are many groups already doing that, and we should focus on conserving the best remaining land.
- Conserving properties that create linkages between parks, trails, other conserved land, and land that has expansion potential is desirable.
- Conserving riparian properties (strips of land along streams and rivers) is important.
- Properties should be judged on a case-by-case basis regardless of size and location.

Dead Man's Hollow book

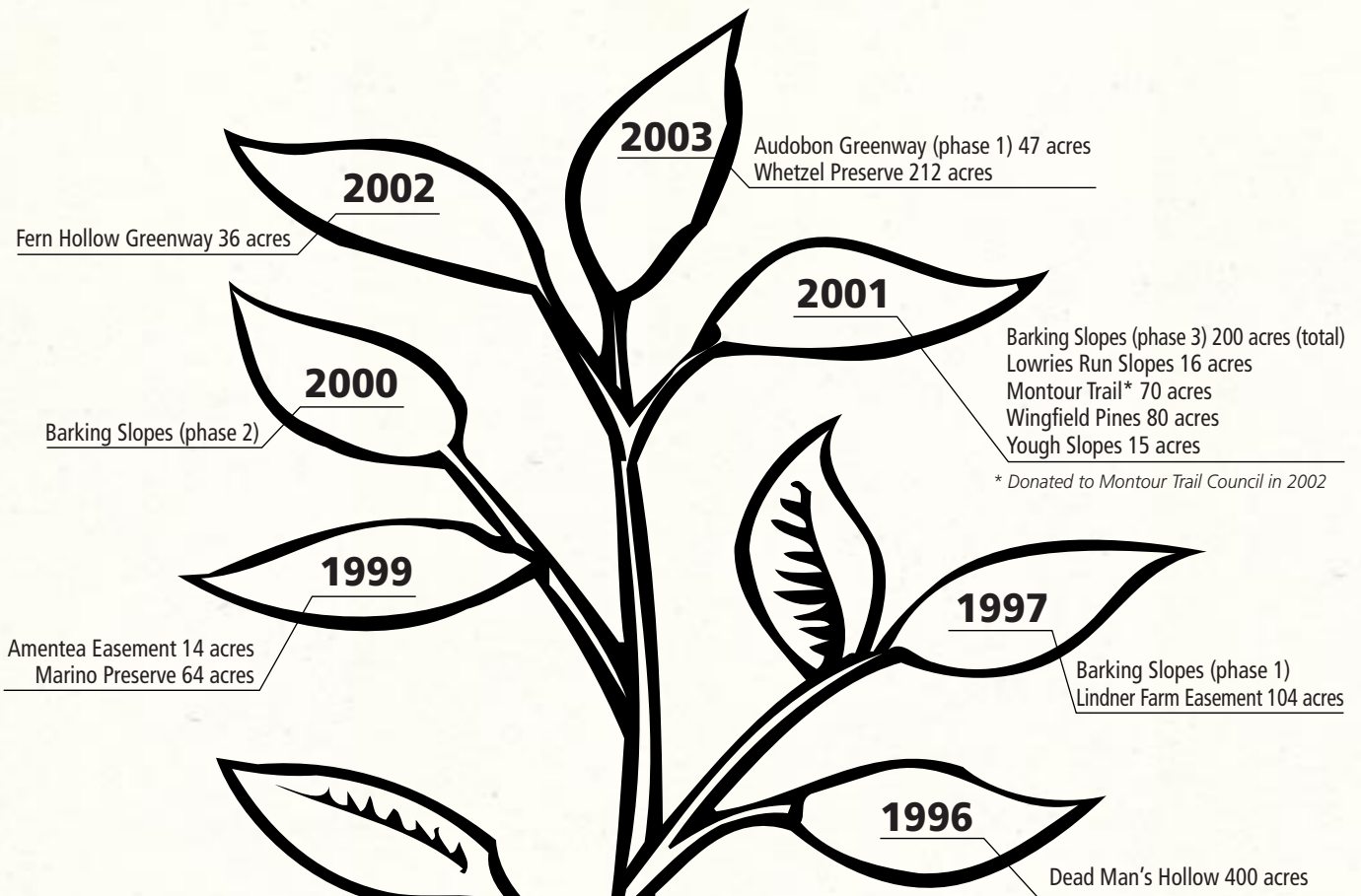
Dead Man's Hollow was Allegheny Land Trust's first and most extensive land purchase, after a natural heritage study identified it as the largest unbroken wooded green space in Allegheny County. For decades, locals have debated the origins of its eerie name; rumors and ghostly tales abound. The mysterious ruins, half-hidden in the underbrush at the mouth of the Hollow, intrigue visitors and add to the speculation. In her self-published book, **Dead Man's Hollow: An Oral History and More**, author Karen Frank explores the Hollow's ominous past in the late 1800's, bridging it with the wildlife preserve it is today.



"Facts and fables about the Hollow intertwine like the strands of a hangman's noose," says Frank. "In my book, I unravel the history from the legends." Frank lives on the ridge above Dead Man's Hollow and was involved with some of the first conservation efforts there. She was curious about its haunting name and began researching its history when volunteers began asking her questions about its origins. [Note: Dead Man's Hollow and Karen Frank were the subject of a Halloween evening David Crawley feature on KDKA. Way to go Karen!!!]

The book is available in the Boston section of Elizabeth Township at **Trailside Treasures in The Boston Shoppes (412-751-6695)** and at **Twice Sold Tales (412-754-1617 or twicesoldtales@cs.com)**. Additionally, it is on sale at the **Regional Trail Corporation Trail Store in West Newton (724-872-5586 or www.youghrivertrail.com)**. The author can be reached at KFrank006@aol.com with Dead Man's Hollow in the subject line.

Growth of Trust's properties



2003 accomplishments

- The following are in addition to our land acquisition (252 acres) accomplishments:
- Raised \$100,000 through Allegheny Regional Asset District for local trails.
- Removed unusable and unsightly buildings on our Wingfield Pines site and filled in the pool.
- Added second full-time staff person.
- Submitted \$1.4 million grant application to DCNR for Audubon Greenway Phase 2.

2004 goals

- Acquire Phase 2 of the Audubon Greenway. The McCargo family is offering another 51 acres to Allegheny Land Trust for half market value.
- Expand the Bluegrass for Green Space festival.
- Add more special events to the annual calendar.
- Convene property stewards to further develop stewardship activities at Allegheny Land Trust properties.
- Convene local land trusts to foster collaboration opportunities.
- Officially open Wingfield Pines to the public and develop stewardship plan.
- Protect an additional 200 acres.
- Increase membership by 400 new members.

Special thanks to our 2003 donors



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 Allegheny Regional Asset District
 The Pittsburgh Foundation

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Limited Edition Nat Youngblood Prints




Allegheny Land Trust is selling a very limited edition of prints of the Nat Youngblood paintings depicting events of 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. All proceeds from the sale of prints support Allegheny Land Trust's land conservation programs.



These are some of the beautiful prints available for sale from Allegheny Land Trust. The prints are very reasonably priced and may be purchased individually or as a set. Prints are full color. To see the collection or to purchase prints, visit Allegheny Land Trust's secure website at www.alleghenylandtrust.org or call the Trust at 412-749-4882.



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VISTAS

Gift idea...

We have learned that many of our members joined because they heard of us through a friend. Why not consider giving a gift membership to a friend this holiday season so they too can share in the satisfaction of knowing they are making a lasting difference by protecting local land. Just for the friend's name on the enclosed reply envelope with your check or visit our web site www.alleghenylandtrust.org and we'll do the rest.

Happy Holidays

www.alleghenylandtrust.org

- Hikes on Allegheny Land Trust properties
- Dead Man's Hollow Community Meeting

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Check our website for upcoming



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