

VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Spring 2004

Who is this man?

**Why is he wanted
by Allegheny
Land Trust?**

**And why is
he smiling?**

Vince Roelf has been a member and supporter of Allegheny Land Trust since the trust acquired land in the Barking Slopes Biological Diversity Area in Plum Borough in 1997.

Personal Profile:
Retired electrician

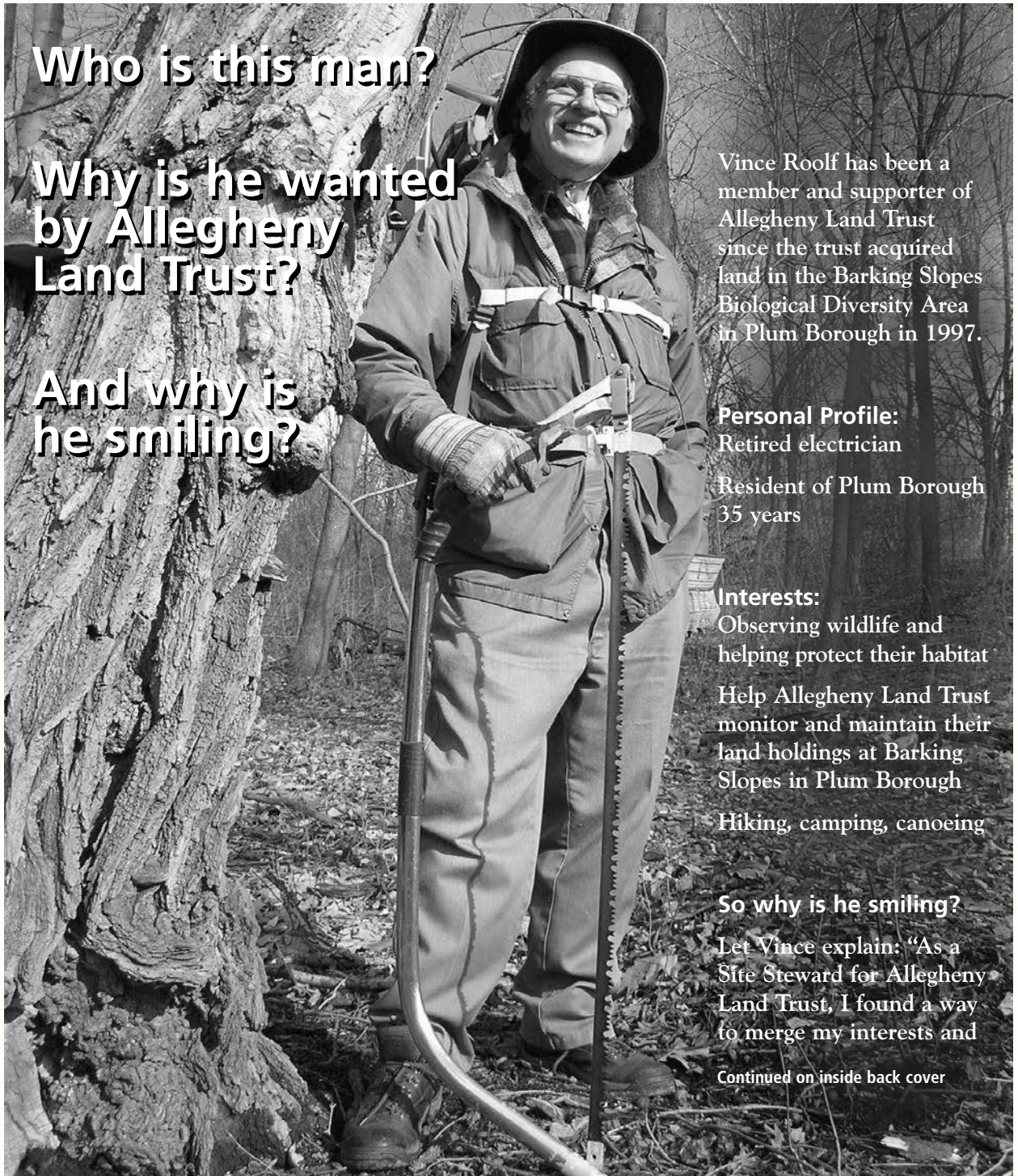
Resident of Plum Borough
35 years

Interests:
Observing wildlife and helping protect their habitat
Help Allegheny Land Trust monitor and maintain their land holdings at Barking Slopes in Plum Borough
Hiking, camping, canoeing

So why is he smiling?

Let Vince explain: "As a Site Steward for Allegheny Land Trust, I found a way to merge my interests and

Continued on inside back cover



Vince Roelf, Allegheny Land Trust's Site Steward, at Barking Slopes.

Citizens support Growing Greener act

Results of a recent survey conducted for the Pennsylvania Alliance for Restoration and Conservation (PARC) indicate that the public will support Governor Rendell's proposed Growing Greener Bond Act. The bond act would provide \$800 million in funds to protect forests, farmland, and open space, clean up abandoned mines and polluted streams, reinvest in state parks, and rebuild and revitalize Pennsylvania's older communities.

If the election were held today, would you vote YES for or NO against this bond measure?

There is strong public support for Governor Rendell's proposal:

Definitely for 52.7%
Definitely against 15.9%

Probably for 18.5%
Probably against 6.7%

Total for 71.2%
Total against 22.6%

Support for the bond proposal is bi-partisan:

Republicans for 59%

Democrats for 76%

Support for the bond proposal is strong in all areas of Pennsylvania:

Philadelphia 77%

Northeast 67%

Allegheny 74%

Southwest 68%

Northwest 67%

Central 70%

Southeast 77%

For a more complete report on this survey, see our website.

www.alleghenylandtrust.org

New funding opportunity from Pennsylvania

Governor Rendell's proposed 2004-05 budget includes \$800 million for environmental initiatives of which \$100 million will be targeted to support community open space projects. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) provides matching grants for land acquisition. Over the years, Allegheny Land Trust has received over \$1 million from DCNR. You can help us get a share of this new funding by showing your support for local conservation and joining or renewing your membership today.

For more information, log on to DCNR's website at

www.dcnr.state.pa.us

and click on the **Quality of Life Initiative**.

Ice skating at Wingfield Pines



"Wingfield Pines offers the South Hills community a host of outdoor experiences such as ice skating, dog walking, wildlife observation, hiking, and fishing in Chartiers Creek. The Trust is exploring ways to make the property more enjoyable and accessible to the public. Look forward to some improvements in 2004. If you would like to help out with small projects, contact Bill Torbet at 412-519-3657 or pbjtorbet@msn.com.

 **Do you fit in this picture?**

From the President

Our goal is exemplary stewardship

Like the double-faced mythological figure, Janus, who could look back as well as forward, Allegheny Land Trust is looking back so we can move forward with a stronger organization and with confidence that the land that we have protected is being properly managed and cared for.

With generous support from the Heinz Endowments and Laurel Foundation, we are developing a Stewardship Training Program for volunteers. The training is the first step toward our goal of practicing exemplary stewardship. Volunteer Site Stewards will be the backbone of our Land Stewardship Program.

Volunteers will learn how to create and update baseline reports for each property and use equipment such as digital cameras and global positioning units. They can use these skills for Allegheny Land Trust properties as well as for other land trusts and greenway groups.

We currently own more than 1,200 acres, which may place us in a class with the largest private landowners in Allegheny County. This is a substantial resource to watch over and care for, but with the help of our friends, neighbors, and members like you, we can ensure that the natural beauty of these local treasured lands is protected, restored, maintained, or enhanced for generations to come. If you have some spare time and enjoy the outdoors consider becoming an Allegheny Land Trust Site Steward like Vince Roelf who we have featured in this issue.

We are also planning more activities for you to enjoy the land that you helped us protect, so keep an eye out for our notices or visit our website for listings and updates.

Once again, THANK YOU for your support of Allegheny Land Trust and local land conservation.

Thanks again, Sigo Falk Chairman and President



The statistics are startling

Help save this wonderful property by joining Allegheny Land Trust.



When you gaze out your window or drive your local roads, what do you see? Is it scenic, rolling meadows or perhaps that favorite place you are looking forward to hiking this spring?

Now think ahead 10, 20, or even 50 years and imagine what that scene might look like. Will your children or their children be able to enjoy that same beautiful view or hike in those woods? If it is land protected by Allegheny Land Trust, the answer is a definite YES. If not, chances are it won't be the same.

A two-year study called *Pennsylvania: Back to Prosperity* by the Brookings Institution, a Washington, DC, -based nonpartisan group, analyzed our region's governmental structure and economic, population, and land use trends.

A statistic concerning land struck home with us at Allegheny Land Trust. Between 1982 and 1997, 40 acres of

open space were lost... every day. Although we have always been keenly aware of the loss of green space, which is the reason Allegheny Land Trust was founded in 1993, we were not aware of this rapid rate of loss.

What is so alarming about these trends is that while suburban open space and productive farmland are being lost to sprawl, our region's population is not growing, and more and more buildings are being abandoned. As our scenic landscapes, important natural areas, and neighborhood open spaces are replaced, our cities and surrounding towns are being left behind with empty storefronts.

Another startling fact is that in some cases the taxpayer is subsidizing new projects on undeveloped land. And believe it or not, to get these subsidies, perfectly beautiful land is being deemed "blighted"!

The abuse of these subsidies has gained the attention of some elected officials who are exploring ways to reform the programs so scenic wooded hillsides, meandering stream valleys, and flowering meadows can no longer be certified as blighted land.

We acknowledge that some green space will be used as new development occurs. But we deeply believe that the current land-consuming trend is wasteful and not economically sustainable, and the statistics support our concern.

This trend not only consumes valuable open space, but stresses municipal services and budgets. As development spreads farther out into green undeveloped areas, more roads, sewers, and waterlines must be built and maintained, in addition to the infrastructure left behind that continues to need maintenance.

So, how do you and Allegheny Land Trust fit into this picture?

Simply, Allegheny Land Trust is acquiring land to protect as green space ...forever. Owning land is the best possible way to protect it, and we have acquired over 1,200 acres in 17 municipalities and continue to protect more. We also accept land that is donated to us by landowners and families that care so much about the land that conserving it is more important to them than the money they could get by selling it for development.

Conserving green space can help direct development to locations where infrastructure and vacant buildings already exist. There are plenty of empty and abandoned retail sites where redevelopment can reinvigorate a struggling town. And there are plenty of former industrial sites that can be redeveloped without impacting suburban waterways, scenic landscapes, and the natural beauty that enhances our communities and quality of life.

How can you help to roll back this trend? Again the answer is simple.

Your tax-deductible contribution to Allegheny Land Trust provides the operating funds that enable us to raise the foundation dollars and matching grants to acquire and save land. It is extremely important that grant funders know that the community supports our work. Your membership indicates that you support land conservation.

We are working hard now to raise the funds necessary to purchase another 51 beautiful acres in our Audubon Greenway Project area, located at the headwaters of Little Sewickley Creek, a trout-bearing stream. Conserving this magnificent property will help to maintain the high water quality of the stream, protect wildlife habitat and preserve a picturesque landscape. Once we acquire the property, its hiking trails, stunning views, and open meadows will be available for you to visit and enjoy.

So please say YES, and use the enclosed envelope to join a growing team that supports the protection of local open space in your community. Our recommended membership is \$50.00.

However, any contribution that is comfortable for you now can help save land forever.

If you are already a member, please use this opportunity to renew your membership for 2004.

Feel free to call me directly at 412-749-4882 if you have any questions regarding Allegheny Land Trust programs or projects.

*Roy Kraynyk,
Executive Director*



Our Executive Director, Roy Kraynyk, did a fine job explaining the Trust's activities and mission during a Comcast interview in February. Many of the points he made during the interview are included in the "Startling Statistics" article on this page.



Mt. Nebo Point in Ohio Township. Is more mega retail needed in Allegheny County and should it be subsidized? Email your thoughts to mail@alleghenylandtrust.org.

Here's the link to the full Brookings Report cited in Roy Kraynyk's article: www.brook.edu/es/urban/publications/pa.html

Mother wants greenspace for her children



Barb Pugh and her family are avid outdoor walkers. They feel lucky to live in Sewickly near some preserved land where they can enjoy nature while they walk.

Barb Pugh says she imagines being 100 years old looking back at the choices she and society has made. She says she hopes that we are all smart enough to see the obligation to our kids we have to preserve open spaces. She would hope to be 100 years old watching her kids and their kids' kids, enjoying the same great walks in life that she and her family have. Mother Nature can be a great teacher of what is really important in love.

While she lived in California in a beachside town, she saw it change overnight from a sleepy little place with surfboard rentals and hot dog stands to a cinderblock Mecca. If it can happen so fast to a place she's known for a short time, it can happen anywhere. Once the trees are gone, you can't get them back.

There are two sides to everything, including land development, but she hopes for open spaces and natural environment to be available for her children, now and when they're grown. She applauds Allegheny Land Trust for their foresight and efforts.



Eagle Scout JP Span Bauer is building and installing bird houses at Dead Man's Hollow. Here he is presenting his ideas to the Friends of Dead Man's Hollow. Allegheny Land Trust provides opportunities for scout projects that develop leadership and team building skills and the importance of stewardship.

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www.alleghenylandtrust.org

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Who is this man? Continued from front cover

love of the land. I spend some of my spare time out at Barking Slopes helping to keep the property in tiptop shape. I've removed some invasive plants or debris left behind prior to Allegheny Land Trust acquiring the land. I get a great sense of satisfaction knowing that this land will be forever green and that my contribution of time, labor, and money are making a permanent difference in my neighborhood."

And why is he WANTED?

Allegheny Land Trust is seeking more people like Vince whose love of the land can be applied to caring for our natural conservation areas. You don't need specific skills, just a desire to be outdoors and to make a meaningful contribution of your time to help Allegheny Land Trust provide the exemplary stewardship that we strive for.

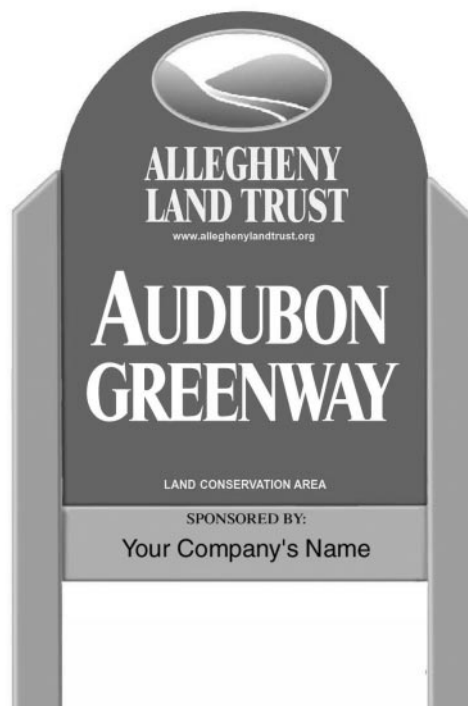
Call or visit our website if you are interested in learning more about how you can join our team of volunteer Site Stewards for which we are developing a Stewardship Training Program. The training will include map interpretation, global positioning, digital photography, and other basic skills that will enable volunteers to conduct important site monitoring visits.



Wintry sky at Barking Slopes.



Board member Pat McShea and Vince Roof clearing a trail at Barking Slopes in Plum Borough along the Allegheny River.



Introducing Co-Sign for Conservation

In our effort to diversify revenue sources and to help ALT become a self-sustaining organization, we recently launched a new campaign called Co-Sign for Conservation that partners businesses with our conserved properties. The signs inform the public of our conserved lands and the sponsorship revenue supports the Trust's ongoing operations and land stewardship. Eat'nPark and Duquesne Light Company have already "signed on", however, a few more sponsorship opportunities are available in communities throughout the county. It's a great way to show the public your support of land conservation. If you are interested in learning more contact Roy at 412-749-4882.

www.alleghenylandtrust.org

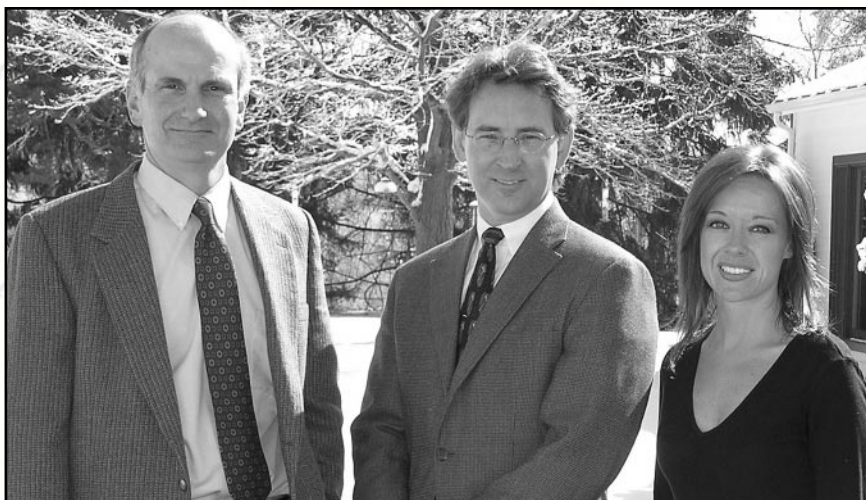
Two new staff members

Executive Director Roy Kraynyk now has the help of two new employees, Bill Torbet and Kathryn Kluk.

Bill Torbet

Bill Torbet has had a variety of experiences involving people and the environment that they care about. Most recently, Bill worked at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy planning and implementing urban gardening projects throughout Western Pennsylvania. He also worked as a landscape supervisor at Dow Gardens, a botanical garden in Midland, Michigan. He also worked in various positions for the Davey Tree Expert Company. Bill joined Allegheny Land Trust to continue working to help preserve the local environment.

Bill will advance our capacity to achieve our goal of exemplary stewardship of the land we have acquired to protect. He will work closely with the community and volunteers. Look forward to more small projects and events on our 1,250 acres. Give him a call if you have ideas or would like to help.



Bill Torbet

Roy Kraynyk

Kathryn Kluk

Kathryn Kluk

Kathryn Kluk joins us from the St. Clair Hospital Foundation, where she worked on the hospital's 5 year, 10 million dollar capital campaign, as well as helped coordinate their successful annual Golf Classic. Previously, she worked with CNG Governmental Affairs and the CNG/Dominion Foundation, where she helped to

found the National First Ladies Library and fund various projects with the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Kathryn has joined Allegheny Land Trust to manage the daily operations including the membership database and accounting with a goal of advancing into fundraising.

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Audubon Greenway Activity Day May 15
Visit one of our most recent acquisitions in the Audubon Greenway. Call 412-749-4882 or visit our website for directions.
Trail Maintenance 9:00 - 12:00 noon. Meet at Fern Hollow Nature Center parking lot to clear trails of winter deadfalls and collect firewood for evening bonfire. Wear shoes with tread, long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and gloves.
Twilight Bird Walk 6:30 - 8:30. Meet at Fern Hollow Nature Center parking lot. Lead by Naturalist Chris Knoll. Bring binoculars.
Bonfire and Stargazing 9:00 - 11:00. In old corral. Park at trailhead on Audubon Road and follow signs. Please carpool.
Bluegrass for Green Space Music Festival July 17
Celebrate the beauty of nature through the harmony of music. Save the date for our most popular event. 3:00 - 10:00 PM.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

VISTAS

Helping local people save local land



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Check our website for upcoming events such as...

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