

WISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Winter 2004/2005

Emerald Link on Mt. Washington

From the President

This annual review issue is dedicated to the foundations, corporations, agencies, and individuals who supported Allegheny Land Trust's programs in 2004 to conserve local land in our communities.

Due in large part to your support, Allegheny Land Trust now holds 1,258 acres in conservation. Another 51 acres are under contract and three other projects totaling 125 acres are under negotiation. We are quite proud of these accomplishments and hope that all of you get the same sense of satisfaction knowing that you have helped empower Allegheny Land Trust to achieve the goals we share as conservationists.

Allegheny Land Trust also empowers you. Through Allegheny Land Trust, you are making a significant and lasting impact in your community. How else could you protect almost 1,400 acres with streams, wildlife habitat, and places where children can run, play, and explore nature?

Allegheny Land Trust shares your values and your beliefs that our neighborhoods should have plentiful green space. We agree that the water in our streams should be litter-free, and that wildlife deserves a place in our world. Like you, we care about natural landscapes that enrich our neighborhoods with beauty and restore our spirits. We know that these things are good for our communities and deserve our efforts to protect them. These are the values that we share with you, and guide and motivate our work.

When you support Allegheny Land Trust's programs, you are supporting a cause where results are permanent and measurable in acres of land protected. Acres of land where you, your children, and even their children will be able to witness nature's beauty and mysteries for generations to come.

What better legacy can you leave to future generations than a community with plentiful natural areas, abundant green space, clean water, and scenic beauty?

Nancy Newhall, a well regarded conservationist once said, "Conservation is humanity caring for the future."

You can help care for the future by making a generous year-end contribution to Allegheny Land Trust. Every dollar of your contribution is used to protect land right here in Western Pennsylvania. We have enclosed a form that enables you to specify where and how your contribution is used.

My sincere thanks for your support in 2004.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with you as we achieve our mutual goal of conserving more land in 2005.

Thank you.
Steve Schott, President



An archeologist recently confirmed that this rock outcropping in the Emerald Link that surrounds Mt. Washington was used by Native Americans as a hunting camp and lookout. It offered commanding views of the Mon and Ohio River Valleys and a large overhanging stone for shelter.

Allegheny Land Trust, the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy are collaborating to protect approximately 260 acres on the front- and back-side of Mt. Washington. The mission of the Emerald Link is to unify, improve, and preserve the remaining natural areas and the links between them around Mount Washington and Duquesne Heights. Planning will continue and negotiations with landowners will begin in 2005.



View of flooded Point State Park on Sept 16, 2004 taken from a parcel in the Emerald Link that Allegheny Land Trust is negotiating to purchase.

Land conservation reduces Ivan's impact



Wingfield Pines under water. This 80-acre flood plain would probably be paved and developed by now had it not been for the Allegheny Land Trust's purchase of the property. Because it remained undeveloped, the grassy floodplain meadow stored 180 million cubic feet of floodwater on Saturday, September 17. Nearly 15 feet of water covered the entire property. This amount of water is like a 550-foot high column the size of a football field.

The devastating flood of Chartiers Creek on September 17, 2004 could have been even worse, if not for successful efforts to conserve undeveloped floodplains in the valley over the past few years. "Flood plains and their associated wetlands such as exist at Wingfield Pines act like giant sponges that absorb water during a flood and release it slowly as the water levels recede," noted Roy Kraynyk, Executive Director of the Allegheny Land Trust. The Wingfield Pines property is a good example of how land protection pays dividends.

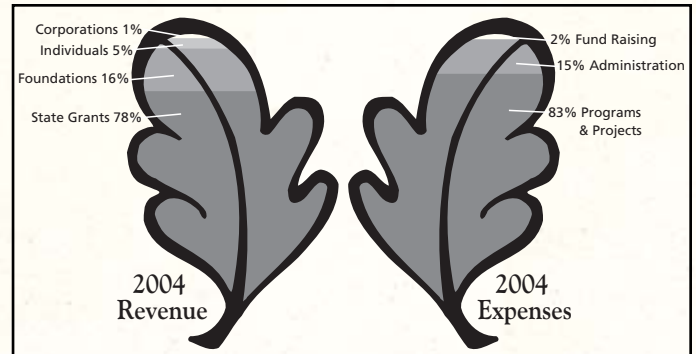
Leaving flood plains undeveloped and steep slopes wooded can help reduce the frequency and intensity of flood events. Encouraging development away from these areas can also prevent the substantial loss of property. It can be more cost effective to protect these natural systems than it is to rebuild homes and businesses each time property is damaged.

Bob Hedin of Hedin Environmental, who is working with the Trust to design a system of ponds to treat abandon mine drainage, said, "At the peak of the flood on Saturday morning, Wingfield Pines provided a second primary flow channel for Chartiers Creek. This slowed the velocity of the Creek's flow and potentially lessened the elevation of the flood crest downstream. I don't know yet how much lower the crest was, but for property owners downstream inches mattered."

Allegheny Land Trust has dedicated Wingfield Pines as forever-open space. Home or business owners, who may have occupied the property by now were it not for the Trust's purchase, would have been devastated and likely be seeking public funds or making insurance claims to restore flood-damaged properties.

Incoming and outgoing

Allegheny Land Trust is proud to report that 83 percent of our total budget for 2004 went directly to programs and projects.



How can land trusts work together?

Allegheny Land Trust is participating in a study to identify areas where local land trusts could work together to increase their conservation goals. The study will help determine the feasibility, risks, and benefits of deeper collaboration among local land trusts, as well as the possibility of expanding Allegheny Land Trust's role in the land trust community.

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www.alleghenylantrust.org

Editor: Janis Ramey • Designer: Tony Condello

VISTAS is underwritten by an anonymous donor. Thank you.

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What's a memory worth?

Roy Kraynyk, Executive Director

Last summer in Seattle I visited my cousin John whom I had never met before. We took a late afternoon walk through his old neighborhood where his folks still live. We had our daughters in tow and as we walked, he pointed out the woods, meadows, and a lake where he played as a kid, each described in the context of a wonderful memory. He proudly shared stories about swimming across the lake, catching fish, picking berries, and other boyhood adventures as our daughters kept asking questions and pleaded for more. I shared similar stories of my boyhood years here in southwestern Pennsylvania.

About then, we rounded a bend in the road when his daughter Lilly spied a patch of perfectly ripe blackberries the size of an adult's thumb. We all dove right in and ate berries until we were almost sick and stained with blackberry juice up to our elbows. Then we got a bucket to fill up with more berries for a pie.

As I was picking it occurred to me ... here we are at the same spot doing exactly the same thing with our kids that John was doing 30 or 40 years ago. Land conservation made this possible, because the land was protected.

If that trail or field you played on as a kid is protected and remains protected throughout your life, each time you see or visit it you'll be reminded of the events that occurred there. Isn't it wonderful to share these memories with your children and know that they will be able to visit this special place and enjoy those same experiences. And isn't it powerful to know that you can protect these places so that your children can share the memories and experiences with their children? That's the power of land conservation.

I hope that we can count on your continued support as we protect more land and the memories that it holds of the past and new ones to come. Thank you for a great year.

Trust wins national award to fund aerial photography of greenways

Allegheny Land Trust received a national honor with a grant from the Kodak American Greenway Awards Program in Arlington, VA. The \$1,000 grant will enhance the aerial photography and mapping component of Allegheny Land Trust's Greenway Stewardship Program.

In addition to the grant award, Allegheny Land Trust will be showcased as a national model for its innovative efforts to develop a greenway in Pittsburgh. Allegheny Land Trust is one of only 40 groups nationwide awarded for innovative local efforts to support a suburban and urban greenway stewardship program. This program will consist of classroom and field training for volunteers who will provide long-term stewardship services in greenways.

The photography is underway, so be sure to visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org regularly to view the photos.

Scouts earn Eagle Badge

Allegheny Land Trust is pleased to congratulate Eagle Scouts JP Spanbauer and David Rosner on earning their Eagle Badge. JP constructed and installed bluebird houses at our Dead Man's Hollow property and David installed bat houses at our Wingfield Pines property. David also created a full color brochure describing his project. We encourage our members to visit the properties to view the wonderful results of these young men's hard work!



From an environmental perspective, protecting the hillsides in a natural condition maintains their capacity to absorb rainwater, stabilize steep slopes, buffer noise, and act as a carbon sink purifying our air.

Pittsburgh Hillside Study

Allegheny Land Trust was awarded a grant from the Heinz Endowments to engage Carnegie Mellon University's Studio for Creative Inquiry and Perkins Eastman Architects to conduct a physical analysis and urban form analysis of Pittsburgh's hillsides. Several specialists joined the team, Environmental Economist Steven Farber PhD, Environmental Attorney Cy Fox, Biologist, Ecologist and Allegheny Land Trust Board member Susan Kalisz, Geologist Henry Prellwitz, and a crew of CMU grad students.

The report will be presented to the City of Pittsburgh Hillside Committee. The Hillside Committee, created by the City's Planning Department, includes representatives from the Heinz Endowments, LaQuatra Bonci Landscape Architects, Riverlife Task Force, Sierra Club, Ti Lee Architects, Urban Redevelopment Authority, and Western PA Conservancy. Allegheny Land Trust Executive Director Roy Kraynyk also serves on the committee.

The Hillside Study is available online.



Site Stewards learn GPS, digital photography



Site Stewards Class of 2004. Left to right. Front row– Jan Fleckenstein, Thelma Redick, Marcia Brissett*, Lisa Smith*, Mark Bowers, Lee Fairbanks (standing). Second row – Mary Wilson, Arlene Lipsman, Eleanor Fairbanks, Jeff White, Dave Pencoske. Third row – Diane Meister, Ann Jenkins, Tara Alexander. Fourth row – Ed Costello, Vince Roof, Beth Weber, Al Nelson. (*trainers)

Allegheny Land Trust recently held a two-day Stewardship Training for local volunteers. This training was funded through grants from the Heinz Endowments and the Laurel Foundation.

Site Stewards are an invaluable resource for Allegheny Land Trust and provide a critical role in our conservation work as we strive toward our goal of exemplary stewardship. They increase our capacity to manage the land resources we have and enable us to focus staff time and energy on raising the funds to acquire and protect more natural areas.

The next Stewardship Training will be held in the spring. Call Michelle to reserve a space – 412.604.0422



Lisa Smith (shown here) is a consulting ecologist and Allegheny Land Trust Board member. She, along with Marcia Brissett, developed the program and taught the class. New Site Stewards learned a variety of skills, including GPS, map interpretation, and digital photography.

Award-winning brochure

Executive Director Roy Kraynyk's beautiful photographs are the highlight of the Trust's new brochure "Helping Local People Save Local Land", which has won an award in the publications competition sponsored by the Society for Technical Communication. Congratulations to Roy and to writer Janis Ramey and designer Tony Condello.



Professionalism aim of new Standards and Practices

Allegheny Land Trust strives to operate at a high level of professionalism and integrity. To that end, we will be soon consider adopting the new Standards and Practices being recommended by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), the national umbrella organization for land trusts. Allegheny Land Trust adopted LTA's original Standards and Practices back in 1995.

Presently there are over 1,300 land trusts in the United States. These land trusts protect more than 6.2 million acres of open space, an area about twice the size of Connecticut. This success is due to public demand for and overwhelming financial support of land protection.

As land trusts grow in popularity, so does the awareness of the tools and methods that we use to conserve land. For example, the tax benefits that can be derived from donating land or easements are attractive incentives for people to donate land. However, these tax incentives can be abused by inflated appraisals on land or easements. Land trusts need to be keenly aware of this potential abuse and be willing to walk away from a deal if it looks questionable.

The Standards and Practices also address the responsibility that land trusts have to provide proper stewardship of the property and easements that they are in the business to protect. We take the responsibility of caring for our protected land very seriously.

We appreciate the confidence that you have in Allegheny Land Trust to use your contributions prudently.

Attorney and research manager among six new board members

Tim Stanny

Attorney, formerly Vice Chairman of the Hampton Twp. Environmental Advisory Council

"As a long-time resident, I've seen so much open space irretrievably lost to sprawl. Fortunately, Allegheny Land Trust has come onto the scene as a leader in local land preservation, and does it on a low budget and with no bureaucracy. I'm excited about joining the Board. I strongly believe that if we can conserve our land, we will enhance the lives of future generations."

Bob Bolding

Senior Research Manager for GlaxoSmithKline

"I've lived in Georgia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania over the years. In each of these places, I came to enjoy and benefit from beautiful outdoor spaces preserved by previous generations of land conservationists. Over the last two or three years, however, I've become increasingly concerned at the pace we are losing our natural land legacies. I felt the need to roll up my sleeves and do something about it myself. Leadership to preserve green spaces in our community isn't really going to come from Washington or Harrisburg -- it must come from people like us."

Thank you, donors

Thanks to the following donors during 2004, Allegheny Land Trust has been able to move forward with plans to conserve even more green space for the future.

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Family Land Heritage Preservation proposal

Allegheny Land Trust's Family Land Heritage Preservation project has been selected by Leadership Pittsburgh to develop a two-pronged approach to help local families preserve family lands for green space. Funding to implement the project has been provided by the Heinz Endowments.



Audubon Greenway in winter

Almost enough

Allegheny Land Trust recently hosted a Property Preview of 51 acres in the Little Sewickley Creek Landscape Conservation Area in the Audubon Greenway project. This beautiful property is located at the headwaters of trout-bearing Little Sewickley Creek.

Thanks to the landowner's contribution of \$1.4 million and the \$700,000 DCNR (Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources) grant, \$2.1 of the \$2.8 million needed to acquire the property has been raised. Allegheny Land Trust staff has submitted several additional grant proposals for this property.

Protecting this wonderful natural area preserves water quality, wildlife habitat, and hiking and equestrian trails. Your unrestricted contributions empower Allegheny Land Trust to raise the large state, foundation, and corporate grants needed for this project.




Allegheny Land Trust has moved

We outgrew our old office space and have moved to this beautiful new location in Moon Township. Our new address is

Robin Hill
949 Thorn Run Road, Moon Township, PA 15108-2828
Phone 412-604-0422, Fax: 412-604-0424

Open house at our new offices on May 12, 2005, 5:00 to 8:00 PM. Meet board members and staff and learn about our exciting projects. Call the office to RSVP by May 9



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

VISTAS

Helping local people save local land



Robin Hill
949 Thorn Run Road
Moon Township, PA 15108-2828
www.alleghenylandtrust.org

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May 12, 2005, 5:00 to 8:00 PM
• **Open house:**

for details.
ited. Call the office or visit our website
Plum Borough on May __. Parking is lim-
Biological Diversity Area property in
trillium walk on our Barking Slopes
Trust Director Pat McShea will lead a
May __ [date to come]

• **Trillium Walk:**

Upcoming events