

WISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Summer 2007



From the Executive Director

Protecting a Regional Icon—The Ridge to River Continuum

When you see a satellite view of southwestern Pennsylvania it is quite easy to locate our region by the dominant visual feature of the confluence of the meandering Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. As you zoom in, the undulating hill and valley topography created by eons of water's erosive forces becomes more visible. The view of the city standing proudly at the Point embraced by wooded hillsides has become the iconic image of the built environment of the city of Pittsburgh.

Our rivers and topography influenced early settlement patterns as they presented constraints as well as opportunities. Early transportation routes followed the rivers and their tributaries as the grades were gentle and flat floodplains provided level ground for settlements, agriculture, and industry. However, over time the constraints that steep slopes presented early settlers were overcome by technology and engineering. Bridges crossed rivers and roads were carved into hillsides to access the flatter plateaus as Pittsburgh expanded outward.

Using data collected from Carnegie Mellon University, Allegheny County, Western PA Conservancy, various state departments and a public survey, ALT is developing a GIS (Geographical Information System) to evaluate the

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Marshall Citizens Organize for Conservation

Motivated by concerns over the loss of rural character in Marshall Township, a group of citizens led by Arleen Lipsman have organized to protect natural areas.

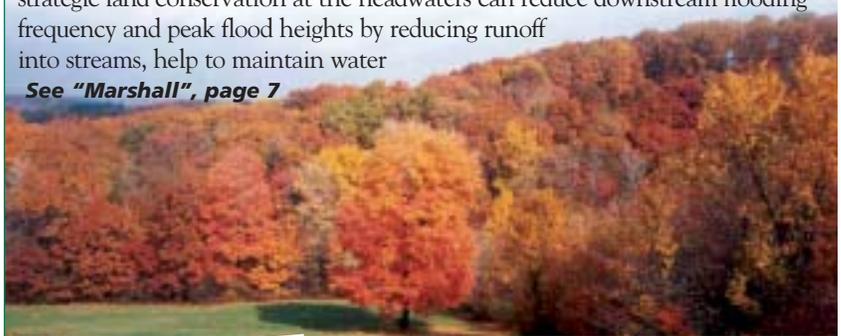
Marshall Township, located in the northwest corner of Allegheny County, is adjacent to Cranberry, I-79, SR 19 and the PA Turnpike. Home to the Heinz Innovation Center, Marconi, Thom Hill Industrial Park and sprawling residential development, Marshall is rapidly losing the rural character that makes the community attractive and enhances property values. Allegheny County planners predict continued growth in the northwest sector of the county over the next 10 to 20 years.

Partnering with ALT, the Marshall Land Conservancy (MLC) will leapfrog over the process of creating their own incorporated 501 (c) 3 land trust, which accelerates their efforts to protect land. In fact, a letter of interest has already been sent to a prospective land owner and MLC is organizing their first fundraiser.

"We seriously considered starting our own land trust, but in the end decided to partner with ALT because they bring more than a decade of experience to the table and the organizational infrastructure needed to acquire and protect land," states Ms. Lipsman. "The partnership jumpstarted the process for us."

Marshall is uniquely located at the headwaters of Big Sewickley and Brush Creek watersheds. In addition to protecting the rural aesthetic of Marshall, strategic land conservation at the headwaters can reduce downstream flooding frequency and peak flood heights by reducing runoff into streams, help to maintain water

See "Marshall", page 7



Extra! Extra!

Read all about Wingfield Pines! The report has hit the streets and now you can read the details of the master plan for

"Reinventing Wingfield Pines".

Read about it on pages 4 and 5.

Please recycle this newsletter—give it to a friend when you're done!



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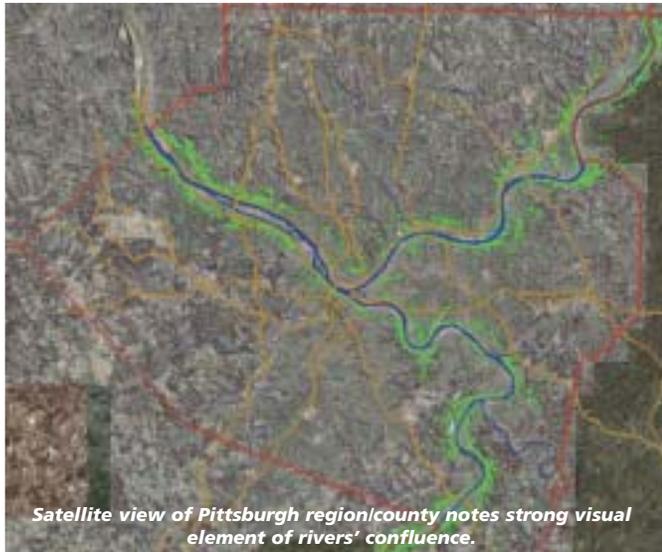
Allegheny Regional Asset District



Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania

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landscape for the best remaining land to conserve based on three key criteria, one of which is scenic character. We analyzed data and survey responses to determine what is considered to be the prototypical landscape of Allegheny County. Our conclusion is that the uninterrupted wooded hillside from the ridgeline to the riverfront is the landscape feature that is unique and visually dominant to our region. As a complement to the image of the Point, ALT has determined that our wooded riverside slopes are the iconic natural image of the Pittsburgh region. We call this



Satellite view of Pittsburgh region/county notes strong visual element of rivers' confluence.

landscape prototype the **Ridge to River Continuum** and believe that it is important to protect it for many reasons including maintaining any vestige of our historic landscape.

Over the past 18 months Allegheny Land Trust has been working on the ALT GREENPRINT—A regional conservation agenda prioritizing land conservation for public good™. See October 2006 VISTAS at www.alleghenylandtrust.org to learn more for more on the ALT GREENPRINT. Through our GREENPRINT process we will identify and map the location of the remaining woodlands that meet the criteria and build a scientific and economic case for their protection as it affects water quality and management, biodiversity and landscape aesthetics. Protecting the Ridge to River Continuum provides public benefits in the form of scenic character, which enhances property values, flood control and stormwater management—because wooded landscapes capture rainfall and promote its infiltration into the underground aquifers. Water quality is protected, since for every 10% a watershed is left tree-covered the cost of water purification

decreases by 20%. Forests sequester carbon, which is especially important for a region struggling to meet air quality standards.

Using data sets from Three Rivers Second Nature (3R2N), a project of the CMU Studio for Creative Inquiry, we have learned that there is a nearly equal amount of wooded hillsides (37%) and developed land (42%) visible from the highways following the three rivers. So today we find ourselves at a balance. To maintain this balance, a coordinated effort involving the county, riverfront municipalities, local land trusts and others is needed to protect and maintain this landscape.

As a native Pittsburgher, some would call a “Yinzer”, which I would take as a compliment, I understand how we can become complacent and take our scenic landscape for granted. However, local and county government can't afford to continue to ignore the negative impacts of the current pattern of our local version of mountain top mining where steeply wooded hills and valleys are totally transformed into plateaus surrounded by engineered eroding slopes of weeds. Interested citizens and constituents should become informed, note what is planned for their municipality, attend public meetings and state their opinions.

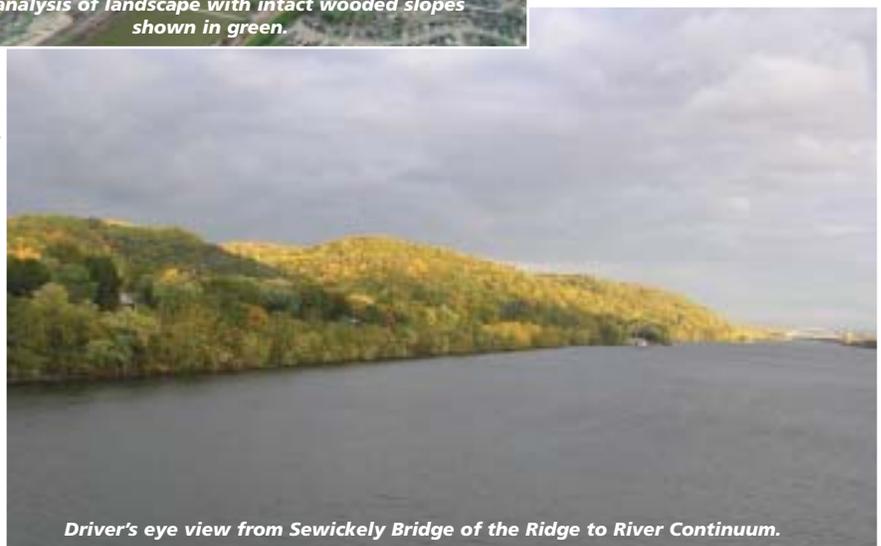
Investing in protecting highly functional natural infrastructure such as wooded slopes is a wise and frugal decision because the cost to design, engineer, construct and maintain their inherent functions can be exponentially higher. Local zoning, transfer development rights, county incentives to encourage redevelopment of former commercial and industrial sites, strategic sanitary and highway infrastructure investments

can all play a role in protecting one of our most visible and valuable natural assets.

The Allegheny Land Trust is here to provide information and guidance to individuals, municipalities and organizations for land conservation issues. Visit our website for the wealth of information you'll find, and if not already, consider becoming a member so that we can continue conserving land in the Greater Pittsburgh region.



GIS analysis of landscape with intact wooded slopes shown in green.



Driver's eye view from Sewickely Bridge of the Ridge to River Continuum.

Kraynyk Tours Kilbuck Landslide

After a landslide closed Route 65 for two weeks and the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks for two days in September 2006, the Joint State Government Commission created the Advisory Committee on the Kilbuck Township Landslide to “conduct an in-depth investigation into the landslide and review applicable state and local permit and approval processes” (HR #897). The Committee includes geologists, planners, land use lawyers, legislators and others from around the Commonwealth. Kraynyk was invited to serve on the Advisory Committee by State Representatives Tom Petrone and Mark Mustio.



Kraynyk tours the Kilbuck landslide area's plateau with other members of the Committee.

In July the Committee visited the site so members from out of town could see the scope and magnitude of the problem, and the regional context of the project. After the site visit WalMart representatives presented a Stabilization Plan that they have submitted to DEP. The Stabilization Plan calls for constructing two walls of 100' and 70' in height on-site, as well as hauling off 500,000 cubic yards of unstable soil to an adjacent 6-acre valley. Another wall of 90' in height would be constructed in the valley to hold back the unstable soil.

“Although visiting the site and learning about the stabilization plan was interesting, I wasn't pleased with the plan for two primary reasons: another 6 acres will be disturbed

increasing the area of impact this project has had on our community, and the Stabilization Plan looks more like site preparation for future development which DEP has said is not permitted. The Stabilization Plan should not include the walls nor hauling off material,” Kraynyk states.

The Committee will move on to the larger issues it is charged with when it meets again in September, including suggesting changes to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), which gives local municipalities the power to regulate land use.

At the Committee's May meeting Kraynyk presented an idea which is getting some traction. A subcommittee is looking into legislation that would require further review and approval from the county or state when development is proposed on slide-prone and steep slopes.

Other triggers for further review could be the total amount of earthwork proposed, increase in traffic above a certain



The six-acre valley that would be filled with material from landslide site.

threshold, and the proposed area of impervious surface (parking lots and buildings). “It would be a substantial accomplishment to have the MPC amended to provide better stewardship of our natural resources,” Kraynyk remarked.

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VISTAS is underwritten by an anonymous donor. Thank you.

Please click on link below for center spread on pages 4 and 5 —

[*Reinventing Wingfield Pines: Creating a Regional Showcase for Floodplain Rehabilitation in a Post-mined Landscape*](#)

Where and Why? ALT's Other Properties

How does ALT choose land for conservation? And where is the land that ALT has conserved? Here's a list of the properties with a few brief details for each. There's plenty more information on each of these properties at www.alleghenylandtrust.org. Consider a visit to one or more that are near you. Your donation supports this effort, so enjoy your investment!

Audubon Greenway Phase I & II and Fern Hollow

Disturbing the natural structure of either property would have irreparably damaged the Little Sewickley Creek and the Biological Diversity Area (BDA) that surrounds it.



Audubon Greenway

Location: Sewickley Heights
Size: 98 acres
Year: 2006



Fern Hollow

Location: Sewickley Heights
Size: 33.6 acres
Year: 2005



Barking Slopes

Location: on the left descending bank of the Allegheny River
Size: 230 acres
Year: 2000

The Barking Slopes BDA is characterized by a relatively steep walled, forested valley and stream known as Blacks Run. The overall ecosystem of the site is enhanced by the wide range of exposed bedrock, soils, and moisture conditions resulting in a unique forest community.



Montour Trail

Location: from Groveton to the Enlow Tunnel
Size: 7 miles
Year: 2002

ALT acquired this property from Montour Railroad Company on behalf of the Montour Trail Council and granted it to the Montour Trail Council in 2002.



Dead Man's Hollow

Location: Yough River Trail
1/2 mile from Boston Bridge
Size: 400 acres
Year: 1994

The Wildlife Preserve at Dead Man's Hollow encompasses 400 acres of highly significant wildlife habitat in Lincoln and Liberty Boroughs. The Preserve is the largest privately protected conservation area in Allegheny County.



Linder Farm Conservation Easement

Location: Washington County
Size: 104 acres
Year: 1994

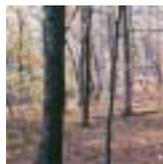
The land is privately owned and not open to the public. Formerly owned by hockey great, Mario Lemieux, ALT holds a conservation easement that effectively protects it as a farm, maintaining the rural character of the community.



Lowries Run Slopes

Location: Ross Township
Size: 16 acres
Year: 2000

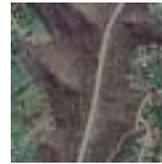
While commercial uses dominate the floodplains and there is residential development on the uplands, the Lowries Run BDA is significant in that it holds a small population of a state classified rare-plant species.



Marino Preserve

Location: Chartiers Township, Washington County
Size: 62 acres
Year: 2000

This property was donated by Mrs. Santana S. Marino in memory of her late husband, Judge P. Vincent Marino who served with distinction on the bench in Washington County from 1960 to 1973.



Moss Side Slopes

Location: along Moss Side Blvd.
Size: 14 acres
Year: 2000

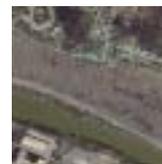
Moss Side Slopes is mainly a protected wooded highway corridor along Moss Side Blvd. ALT holds a conservation easement on this property, which is owned by Monroeville. The easement ensures that the wooded character of the property will not be disturbed by preventing development or logging.



Joshua C. Whetzel Preserve

Location: Forward Township
Size: 212 acres
Year: 2000

The linear tract buffers farms that have been preserved through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program administered by Allegheny County and provides habitat for a range of wildlife, especially bird species such as hawks and other raptors that prefer high locations with commanding views. In a preview of ALT's current Ridge to River Continuum: "We selected this parcel to represent Josh's work because the wooded slopes are a universal part of our region's signature landscape. The substantial contribution this landform makes to our region's identity and image is being recognized now more than ever since the veil of our industrial past has been lifted to reveal the meandering beauty of our river valleys," states Roy Kraynyk, ALT's Executive Director.



Yough Slopes

Location: Youghiogheny River
Size: 16 acres
Year: 2000

This donated property runs along the right descending bank of the Yough River. It contains steep rocky slopes and nesting habitat for turkey, deer and hawks that perch high in the trees to survey the valley corridor.

Donations can be directed to the acquisition or maintenance of a specific property. Write the name of the property on your check and use the enclosed envelope or visit our secure website at www.alleghenylandtrust.org.

Next Generation of Conservationists in Training

I have had a summer full of valuable experiences here at the Allegheny Land Trust. My internship here is just about at an end and I have worked hard and learned a lot.

I am a Geography major at Shippensburg University with a concentration in land use, but since I have lived in Penn Hills my whole life I chose an internship in Allegheny County.

My work here has primarily focused on the ALT GREENPRINT™, specifically researching ways to quantify the value of conserved land to a community. My efforts have centered on stormwater controls and contributions to water quality made by conserved land.

I have been working with runoff coefficients to calculate peak stormwater discharge for different land use scenarios, which supports the cause of conservation for the sake of stormwater control. I have also done calculations on pollution created by development, based on local data and national averages, which shows the negative effects development can have on our streams, drinking water, and the cost of treatment. These factors specifically, along with other general research on the economic value of conserved land, all point to conservation as economically beneficial and crucial to the overall health of our communities.

I have used this data along with other tools to analyze the Audubon Greenway. By calculating its economic impact on the community had it been developed and comparing its economic contributions as a conserved piece of land, an undeniable

statement can be made of its benefit to the public in the hands of the Allegheny Land Trust.

Carbon sequestration is another subject I have been researching. According to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania forests hold anywhere from 40 to 120 tons of carbon per acre. The exact economic impact of a particular forest depends on the location of the land, the value of the land, and the value of the sequestration provided by the forest in terms of improving air quality, but nonetheless the carbon storage provided by lands protected by the Allegheny Land Trust is valuable to the public.

For my hard work for ALT I have been granted a valuable educational experience. While I have learned a great deal through my research alone, far beyond that I have learned some operational knowledge of what it takes to keep an organization like this running. Also, through working on a variety of projects, participating in and observing the work done around the office, I have gained a better understanding of my strengths, weaknesses, and interests.

My time here has benefited me greatly and I have done my best to give back as much to the Allegheny Land Trust as I have been given. I have gained valuable knowledge and experience that will serve me well in my next two years of undergraduate study and beyond. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity I have been given to work here and be a part of the Allegheny Land Trust.

~Michael Drane, intern

ALT Welcomes Nine New Board Members

Nine new members will begin three-year board terms with ALT in July, 2007:

- Ondrea L. Burton, Communications Specialist, Allegheny County Dept. of Human Services
- Lynn R. DeLorenzo, Principal, DeLorenzo & Company, LLC
- Kevin L. Jenkins, Senior Program Office, The Pittsburgh Foundation
- Stephen Quick, AIA, Principal, Perkins Eastman
- Madelyn A Reilly, Executive Director, IPEP, Duquesne University

- Amy Skolan, Founder, Unbridled Performance
 - Mary Beth Steisslinger, Biologist, Urban Ecology Collaborative
 - Sally K. Wade, Vice President, Human Resources, Mitsubishi Electric Power Products, Inc.
 - Robert B. Williams, Esq., Managing Partner, Williams Coulson
- ALT also welcomes back James A. Wilkinson, Executive Director, Society for Contemporary Craft.

Thanks to all of the board members and officers who donate their time and expertise to the cause of land conservation.

Chartiers Creek Day 2 Fun and Successful



About 100 people visited Wingfield Pines on Sunday, June 24, 2007 to tour the site and visit displays from exhibitors such as the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium, the PA Wildlife Center and Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Also exhibiting were local environmental organizations such as the South Fayette Conservation Group, Scott Conservancy, Upper St. Clair Citizens for Land Stewardship and Mt. Lebanon Conservancy. "It almost looked as if no one was here, but the parking lot was full," remarked Sue Gold, ALT Operations Manager and the main planner of the event. "It really gives you an idea of how big this site is that all those people could seem to disappear out along the trails!" Read about the plans for Wingfield Pines detailed that weekend on pages 5 and 6.



Marshall, continued from page 1

quality by naturally filtering surface water before it enters streams and aquifers and protects from disturbance the small springs and seeps that feed streams.

"ALT is excited to be working with MLC. There is land out there that we believe needs to be conserved and working with community groups like MLC can result in land conserved that ALT alone may not be able to get to for years," comments ALT's Director Roy Kraynyk. Kudos to Arleen and her group for taking the initiative! For more information on MLC call 724-316-2818.

If you would like to make a contribution to support the start-up costs of MLC use the enclosed reply envelope to mail your check made out to "Allegheny Land Trust" and write "MLC" on the memo line. Or visit ALT's secure website.



Helping local people save local land.

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Allegheny Land Trust will be moving soon!

Check www.alleghenylandtrust.org for updates.
The new address and phone will be in the next newsletter.

VISTAS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tax Cut for Conservation on Private Land

Congress passed a new tax law that helps to protect clean water, natural areas and family farms by enhancing the federal tax benefits for landowners who donate voluntary conservation agreements, protecting land while keeping it in productive private ownership.

Now a conservation donor can deduct up to 50 percent of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%), and, if most of their income is from farming, ranching or forestry, they can deduct all of their income. Even more important—if the value of their donation is larger than their income, they can continue to use the deduction for up to 16 years (up from six).

These agreements, often referred to as conservation easements, are donations of a landowner's development rights to land to protect specific natural, scenic or historic resources. The landowner continues to own and manage their land, and continues to pay local property taxes, possibly reducing the assessment.

The Allegheny Land Trust has been accepting donations like this for years, and has protected by way of easements and other means over 1,340 acres in Allegheny and Washington Counties. The window for taking advantage of these changes is short—the law only applies to easements completed in the years 2006 and 2007. To learn more about these new incentives to protect your land with a conservation easement contact the office at 412-604-0422.

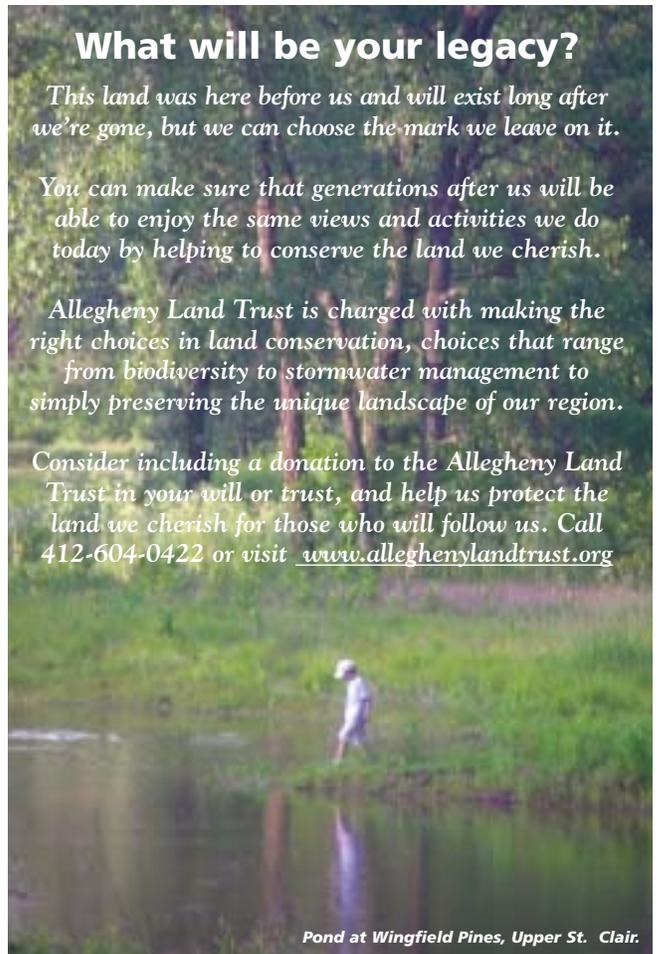
What will be your legacy?

This land was here before us and will exist long after we're gone, but we can choose the mark we leave on it.

You can make sure that generations after us will be able to enjoy the same views and activities we do today by helping to conserve the land we cherish.

Allegheny Land Trust is charged with making the right choices in land conservation, choices that range from biodiversity to stormwater management to simply preserving the unique landscape of our region.

Consider including a donation to the Allegheny Land Trust in your will or trust, and help us protect the land we cherish for those who will follow us. Call 412-604-0422 or visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org



Pond at Wingfield Pines, Upper St. Clair.