

VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Winter 2008



From the Executive Director

NATURE'S GRAND FINALE

As we cross the threshold from summer to fall we look forward to nature's final explosion of color. Like the bounty of food that nature provides during the harvest season, the annual autumn collage seems to offer a similar bounty...a bounty of color before the muted tones of winter set in.

While you are enjoying the aesthetic treat our region's diverse deciduous forest provides, keep in mind all the other functions and benefits woodlands contribute that are not so visible. The hidden functions of stormwater management, water filtering and landslide stabilization may not be apparent but are occurring and benefitting our communities 24/7/365 right before our eyes.

ALT is completing research to better understand the roles that woodlands play in our environment and economy, and is continuing to develop the economic metrics to quantify those roles and their benefits. With a combination of solid science and durable economic data we hope to convince our elected officials that adopting

See "From the Executive Director", page 3

ALT Ends Banner Year!

In 2008, ALT protected more than 80 acres accomplishing a scope of local conservation projects ranging from expanding parkland in Mt. Washington to linking a greenway in Upper St. Clair to protecting a hollow on Little Sewickley Creek to expanding a preserve in the Mon Valley. ALT's success is only possible because of the new and sustained financial and volunteer contributions from our supporters—some of you who have just joined our efforts and many of you who have been committed to our local conservation mission year in and year out. Thank You!

ALT's conservation projects in September and October include the addition of 40 acres to its Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area, bringing that property to a total of 440 acres of wooded slope right along the Youghiogheny River in Elizabeth Township and Lincoln and Liberty Boroughs. Other property acquisitions include a 10-acre easement in the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed and a 7-acre expansion to Wingfield Pines in Upper St. Clair and South Fayette Townships.

Read all about them on pages 4 and 5, and don't forget to get out on the land!

Protecting Hidden Treasures



**Three new properties,
three divergent communities,
three different reasons.
Pages 4 and 5**

Painting of Wingfield Pines by B.E. Kazmarski

Information you'll want to keep!

- 2...ALT's New Board President and Two New Board Members**
- 3...Farm Bill Benefits Easement Donations**
- 4 and 5...80 acres, Newly Protected**
- 6...A Cleaner Chartiers Creek**
- 7...The Importance of Scenic Character**

Kevin J. Garber Welcomed as Board Chair and CEO

LONGTIME BOARD MEMBER, FOCUSED ON THE ENVIRONMENT

"Allegheny Land Trust has a tremendous staff and board of directors who have accomplished so much to conserve and protect our local environment," says Kevin Garber, incoming ALT board Chair and President. "It is a special privilege to succeed Jack Ubinger as chairman and president of the ALT board."

As part of the Environmental Health and Safety Services Group of law firm Babst, Calland, Clements and Zomnir, P.C., Kevin was a natural choice as an ALT board member, serving since 2004.

Kevin has concentrated much of his practice in the areas of water pollution law, contaminated sites remediation and reuse, and natural resources law.

He leads the firm's municipal environmental services practice area, in which a substantial part of his current practice concentrates on sewerage facilities planning and permitting, storm water management and planning, and related development issues facing developers, municipalities and municipal authorities. He serves as special environmental counsel to



many municipalities, authorities and developers in western Pennsylvania.

Kevin also regularly conducts and reviews environmental audits of various types of industrial, commercial and mining properties for buyers, sellers, lenders and trustees, and negotiates environmental provisions of transactions, contracts and deeds.

His entire education and career have been focused on the environment. He graduated with Distinction from The Pennsylvania State University with a B.S. in Biology/Chemistry, took his M.S. in Oceanography and Limnology from

the University of Wisconsin, his Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of Pittsburgh and his law degree from the Duquesne University School of Law, where he was a member of the Duquesne University Law Review.

In legal circles, Kevin serves with his special interest in the environment on councils and as a representative at both the county and the state level. He has been ranked among top environmental lawyers in Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania and in the United States.

An adjunct professor of law at the Duquesne University School of Law, Kevin is also an adjunct faculty member in the Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences at Duquesne University and serves on the Advisory Committee to the Duquesne University Center for Environmental Research and Education.

He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Local Government Academy and on an advisory committee to the Three Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Program, and is a frequent lecturer on environmental law.

Browand and Browne Join ALT Board

TOM BROWAND feels it is important to conserve land for future generations and to keep green space in our communities. Tom, who also serves on Upper St. Clair's Parks and Recreation Board, has been aware of ALT for a number of years. "I am really thrilled about the future of Wingfield Pines and Boyce Mayview Park. As the master plans for these two properties are completed, we will have an impressive recreation area in the South Hills. Wingfield and Boyce Mayview will be linked by a trail network, adding significantly to the quality of life for residents of the surrounding communities."

Tom works for Wachovia Securities as a Financial Advisor to individual investors.



JAMES J. BROWNE believes "it is important to conserve the natural biological state all over Western Pennsylvania." Jim is committed to ensuring that the area's beautiful landscapes are protected today and preserved for future generations to enjoy. Educated at St. Mary's University and the University of Pittsburgh, Jim is an active board member of the Manchester Youth Development Center, and has served on the boards of Sewickley Academy and Three Rivers Rowing. Jim is a Certified Financial Planner and is the President and founding partner of Allegheny Financial Group, Ltd. and Allegheny Investments, Ltd.

Having both of these men on ALT's board is a huge bonus to our success as a land conservation organization.

Farm Bill Extends the Benefits of Easement Donations

The 2008 Farm Bill includes a two-year, retroactive extension of the expanded tax incentive for conservation donations. These benefits apply to all donations since January 1, 2008. The new extension will expire December 31, 2009.

The new law allows an annual

deduction of 50% of the donor's adjusted gross income (AGI), up from 30% previously. For qualifying farmers and ranchers, the annual deduction is 100% of AGI. It also allows the deduction to be spread out over an additional 15 years, up from 5 previously. This enables lower

and middle-income farmers to also take full advantage of the tax benefit of donating a highly-valued easement.

A farmer or rancher is defined in this legislation as someone who receives more than 50% of their income from "the trade or business of farming". The law references Internal Revenue Code (IRC) 2032A(e)(5) to define activities that count as farming. For an easement to qualify, it must contain a restriction requiring that the land remain "available for agriculture".

The expanded incentive applies to all donations covered in IRC section 170(h)(2), which includes donations of the entire interest of the donor other than a qualified mineral interest; a remainder interest; or a permanent conservation or historic preservation easement.

Please call ALT at 412-741-2750 for more information.

***"From the Executive Director",
continued from page 1***

and enforcing conservation-centric ordinances is the right thing to do for the environment and economy of their community.

ALT has done its part to lead the way by conserving more than 80 acres of forested land in 2008 that meet our Greenprint criteria.

Two new board members will help ALT achieve its goals as well. ALT welcomes Tom Browand and Jim Browne, who come to the board with commitment and experience in land conservation issues.

ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST

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VISTAS is underwritten by an anonymous donor. Thank you.

Protecting Hidden Treasures

Every day these parcels of land manage stormwater, keep hillsides stable, filter the water we drink, clean the air we breathe, provide habitat for wildlife and a refuge for people, so it's about time they got some recognition and protection.

More Acreage for Dead Man's Hollow

OCTOBER 30, 2008—ALT announces the protection of 40 additional acres in Dead Man's Hollow along the Great Allegheny Passage.

In October, Allegheny Land Trust protected 40 acres along the Youghiogheny River and Great Allegheny Passage Trail between Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. that will be added to ALT's existing 400-acre Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area. The expanded ALT preserve is the largest privately protected conservation area in Allegheny County and encompasses 440 acres in Elizabeth Township, Lincoln and Liberty Boroughs.

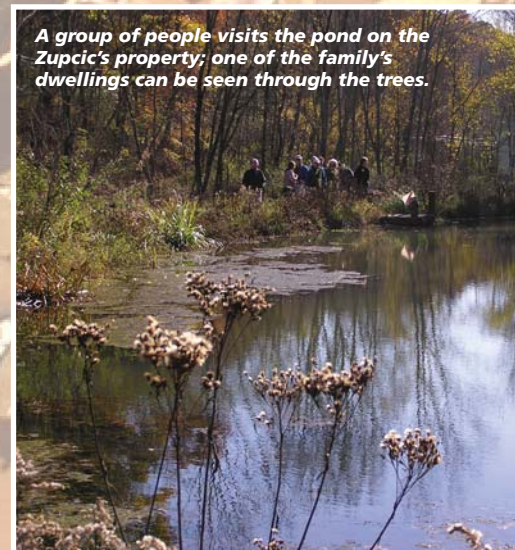
With major support from Colcom Foundation, Allegheny Land Trust raised \$60,000 to acquire this important new parcel of highly significant wildlife habitat, highly visible from the Boston Bridge with a vertical drop over 400 feet to the Youghiogheny River. The Allegheny County Natural Heritage Inventory identified the Dead Man's Hollow watershed as one of the county's most significant Biological Diversity Areas.

In 2006, ALT's Board of Directors adopted a new strategic plan that calls for the implementation of the ALT Greenprint—a regional land conservation agenda and map of conservation priorities that provide the greatest public benefit. Acquired in March 1996 as ALT's first land acquisition, the Dead Man's Hollow property exemplifies a Greenprint property with all three criteria: recorded biological diversity, water management capacity, and highly visible lands that define scenic character. "The protection of 40 more acres adjacent to Dead Man's Hollow squarely meets all of our Greenprint criteria and demonstrates how ALT is focused on implementing priority conservation work on the ground," remarked ALT's Board Project Committee Chair Tim Stanny.

For more information about visiting an ALT Conservation Area, please go to our website at www.alleghenylandtrust.org or call us at 412-741-2750.



The picture is an example of perspective where objects closer to the viewer seem larger than objects further away.



A group of people visits the pond on the Zupcic's property; one of the family's dwellings can be seen through the trees.

es

Greenway Link in Upper St. Clair

SEPTEMBER 23, 2008—ALT and Upper St. Clair Citizens for Land Stewardship celebrate conservation of 7-acre property to expand Wingfield Pines

Partnering once again with ALT, Citizens for Land Stewardship (CLS) raised over \$6,800 to help complete the acquisition of the 7-acre property added to Allegheny Land Trust's 80-acre Wingfield Pines Conservation Area. In 2001, CLS raised \$17,000 to support the successful acquisition of Wingfield Pines.

This creek-side property links Boyce-Mayview Park and Wingfield Pines extending a protected greenway for almost four miles along Chartiers Creek.

"We are grateful for the wonderful long-standing support we have received from the Upper St. Clair community to protect and care for local green space," said Roy Kraynyk.

With matching funds from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and private support from members of CLS and a generous anonymous donor, Allegheny Land Trust secured the funding of \$57,000 needed for the project.



Adults and children explore the new section of property adjacent to Wingfield Pines. Photo courtesy the USC Citizens for Land Stewardship.

10 Acres on Little Sewickley Creek

SEPTEMBER 29, 2008—Land Trust reaches milestone by protecting Sewickley Hills Hollow

ALT announced the protection of a 10-acre property in the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed with a conservation easement, bringing the total protected by the land trust in Sewickley to 150 acres.

The easement will protect the property located in Sewickley Hills Borough as permanent green space, except for the existing dwellings occupied by Barbara Zupcic and her husband John Chojnacki, and Barbara's father Steven. The family will remain owners of the property but have gifted away to Allegheny Land Trust the future right to develop it.

"I'm so pleased that we were able to protect this little hollow," comments Barbara, who grew up on the property. The hollow includes a tributary to Little Sewickley Creek, one of the cleanest streams in Allegheny County. The woodlands, pond and wetlands provide habitat, and help to maintain water quality and regulate stormwater runoff by intercepting and absorbing rainfall before it becomes floodwater. "I hope that more people decide to protect their land to help maintain the beautiful landscape we live in. It is such a wonderful and rewarding feeling knowing this land will be protected forever," adds Barbara.



Conservation easements are a tool used by land trusts and land owners to protect green space without having to transfer ownership or subdivide the land.

Federal tax laws favor conservation easements by enabling landowners to deduct the market value of any qualifying development rights that are gifted as a federal tax deduction (see "Farm Bill Extends the Benefits of Easement Donations" on page 3).

Coming Soon—A Cleaner Chartiers Creek

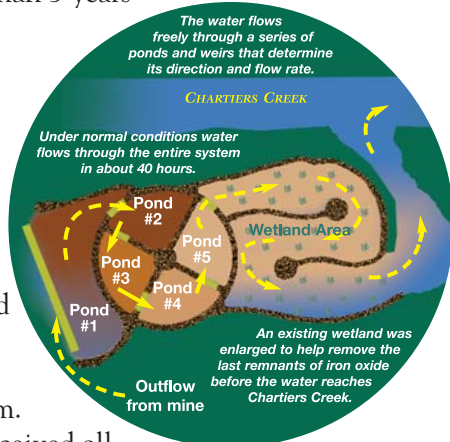
After more than 5 years of fundraising, planning, design and permitting work, ALT is ready to move forward with constructing the Wingfield Pines Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) Passive Treatment System. Recently ALT received all the necessary permits to construct the system, and the project was put out to bid. A contractor will be selected soon to create the series of ponds and wetlands that will remove the iron oxide from the mine water before it reaches Chartiers Creek.

For newer readers, this is a unique project that will prevent about 43 tons of iron oxide from entering Chartiers Creek each year from an abandoned mine outflow on ALT's Wingfield Pines Conservation Area in Upper St. Clair and South Fayette Townships. Surface water has seeped into the mine tunnels under the area which leaches minerals from the exposed rocks and carries it to the surface. As the water exits the mine the dissolved minerals, iron oxide in this case, create a sludge that coats the bottom of Chartiers Creek, impairing the water quality and aquatic ecology. AMD is the largest source of water pollution in Pennsylvania and in the Chartiers Watershed.

Project partners include Edward Schroth of Duquesne University, Matthew Opdyke of Point Park and their respective students who are assisting in the water quality monitoring as required by the permits.



Above, contractors meet at Wingfield Pines to review and discuss the remediation plan. At right, the weir of the mine outflow, emitting mine drainage at the rate of 1,500 – 2,000 gallons per minute.



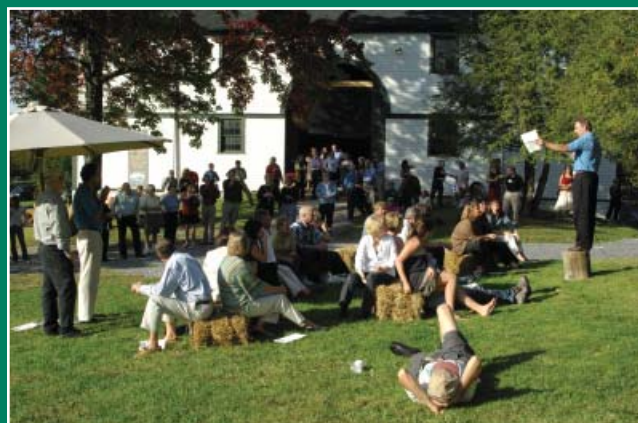
ALT Hosts Field Trip to Sycamore Island

During the weekend of September 18-21, ALT joined other Pittsburgh area conservation organizations to welcome over 1,500 conservationists from around the country participating in the Land Trust Alliance's annual **National Land Trust Rally**. As part of the Rally, ALT hosted a sold-out canoe and kayaking field trip for 50 attendees to **Sycamore Island**. ALT extends very special thanks to ALT Board Member **Pat McShea**, **Dennis Tubbs** and his staff from the Southwest Region of the PA Fish & Boat Commission, the great staff from **Venture Outdoors**, and members from the **Sylvan Canoe Club** who helped make the field trip a huge success.

"I know I can speak for everyone attending that the day was wonderful and we all appreciated the time and effort that went into making this a memorable experience." *Peg Niland, Executive Director, Harford Land Trust, MD.*



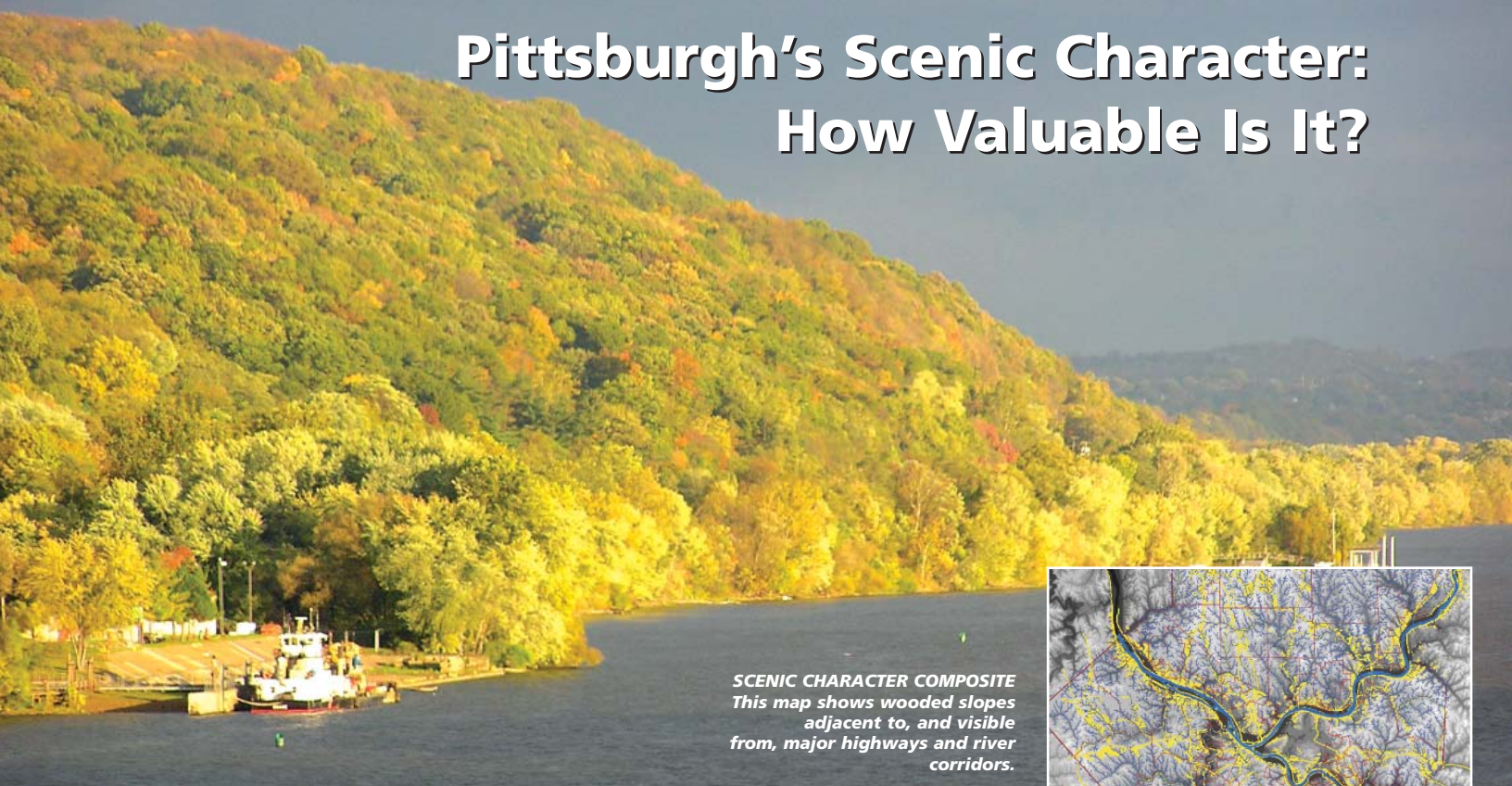
Over 110 attend ALT's first Bounty in the Barn Event on October 12!



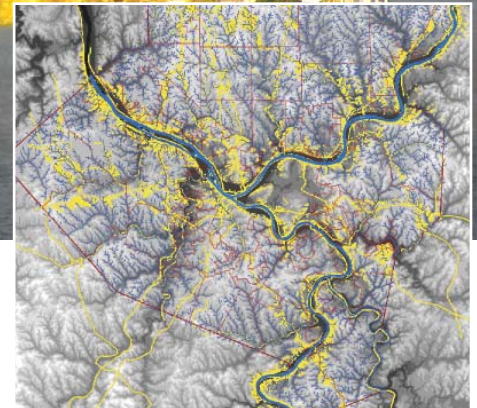
Sunday, October 12 was a beautiful fall afternoon as over 110 guests attended Allegheny Land Trust's first annual Bounty in the Barn event. Graciously hosted by **Jodie and Bill Welge** at their landmark barn in Sewickley Heights, the event raised over \$17,000 to support ALT's local land conservation work. The main event sponsor, **Elements Catering**, prepared a Tuscan Harvest Dinner served with donated wines from **The Wine Boss**. Other sponsors included **Allegheny Financial Group**, **Williams Coulson**, **Smith Brothers**, **Babst, Calland, Clements & Zomnir** and **Dozens Bake Shop**. Music was provided by Corned Beef and Curry.

To view a slideshow of pictures from the event, visit our website at www.alleghenylantrust.org.

Pittsburgh's Scenic Character: How Valuable Is It?



SCENIC CHARACTER COMPOSITE
This map shows wooded slopes adjacent to, and visible from, major highways and river corridors.



Roy Kraynyk, ALT Executive Director

The colors of autumn literally highlight the tree-covered hills of our region as if to point out to us the valuable resource we have available just for the taking—or the leaving, since these woodlands and forested hillsides provide us benefits without any effort from us if we simply let them be.

ALT did some public opinion polling as part of its strategic plan and learned that people felt the wooded riverfront slopes were the most attractive landscape feature in Allegheny County. This landscape is visually dominant because many of our major highways follow the rivers, and the steep slopes, perpendicular to our line of sight, make them hard to miss.

As a result of this polling, ALT included Scenic Character as a benefit of conserved land in its Greenprint, a map of the county where three criteria, biodiversity, water management and scenic character, can be found in the landscape.

The Scenic Character Composite above shows in yellow what we call the river viewshed. This is the landscape you see when driving along the rivers or in a boat on the river. It also shows woodland masses that you see when driving other major highways with traffic counts of more than 20,000 vehicles per day. Finally, woodland masses along the Regional Trail System are also shown.

THE TIPPING POINT

The river viewshed comprises water (19%), buildings (44%) and natural lands (37%). The

difference between the percent area of buildings and percent area of natural lands is only 7%. It's hard to

say whether one can visually notice that much of a difference, so for all intents and purposes in 2008 the area of buildings and natural lands one sees while commuting the major highways along our rivers is about equal. Our region is at a visual tipping point.

The woodlands that shape our region's image are as vulnerable as they are visible. The question is what will the ratio be in 2018, 2028 or 2108 if nothing is done now to maintain this fragile balance? What would the viewshed look like and what impact will a significant loss of natural lands have on our region's character and image? What if it were 60% buildings and 21% natural lands? How could the Pittsburgh region still call itself "green" without abundant green space?

BEAUTY IS NOT ONLY SKIN DEEP

Our region can't afford to lose its most visually captivating and colorful natural beauty, or the ecological services and natural functions and values those woodlands provide. The stormwater management and filtering, landslide stabilization and biodiversity functions that ALT promotes as the primary reasons land conservation needs to happen, must become part of a comprehensive regional effort. In the case of woodlands...beauty is not only skin deep.



Helping local people save local land.

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VISTAS

UPCOMING EVENTS

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

November 27, 2008

Walk off that turkey dinner with a visit to one of ALT's Conservation Areas.

Visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org to find the conservation area closest to you!

ALT OPEN HOUSE, SEWICKLEY

December 5, 2008

6:00 to 9:00 P.M.

Stop by ALT's table on Broad Street during Light-up Night in Sewickley

For information on volunteering, please contact Rhonda Hagins at rhagins@alleghenylandtrust.org.

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 412-741-2750 or visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org

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"Wingfield the Frog," resident of Pond No. 1 at Wingfield Pines