

VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Winter 2010



From the Executive Director

WHY DO THEY CALL IT "GREENING" ANYWAY?

GREEN buildings, businesses going GREEN... everywhere you turn something is being "GREENED". It shouldn't be long before you hear "I'm dreaming of a GREEN Christmas."

"Greening" is a trendy term that generally indicates practices that reduce energy consumption, waste and carbon inputs into the atmosphere. "Green Infrastructure" is another that refers to physical structures such as green roofs, rain gardens, pervious pavement and rain barrels that are now being used primarily in urban areas to help improve water quality and to reduce runoff. These strategies, commonly and I think more appropriately referred to as "urban retrofits", can help to reduce the need to engineer, construct and maintain expensive stormwater management facilities.

However, we need to be careful not to be seduced with manmade green innovations. We need to stay grounded...literally. Because, we can't forget or take for granted the most efficient example of green infrastructure –

See "From the Executive Director", page 2

Building a Park Acre by Acre

Allegheny Land Trust and the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation are collaborating to purchase a 19-acre tract of wooded slopes, springs and trails on the back (south) side of Mt. Washington to add to the Grandview Scenic Byway Park, formerly known as The Emerald Link. Conserving the land as permanent green space will expand the Park, protect the scenic landscape and wildlife habitat and help to control stormwater runoff. This tract connects other private and public green spaces and provides passive recreation in the form of hiking trails that provide distant views of the Saw Mill Run Valley. The dense woodlands help to buffer noise and air pollution from vehicle traffic on Saw Mill Run Boulevard.

As Pittsburgh grows its brand as a "green" city, you have the opportunity to make a significant contribution to helping the area stay truly green! Allegheny Land Trust and the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation are working together to raise the necessary funding from State and Foundation sources. The total project goal is \$224,000 and the funding plan includes a goal of 10% of the project cost (\$22,400) to be supported by the local

See "Mt. Washington", page 6



Spring on Mt. Washington property.

Thinking Green in Winter!

More Inside:

2...Board member honors and memorials

3...A review of Bounty in the BarN 2009!

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Remembering Bob Williams

by Rhonda Hagins, Director of Development

In December, we were all very saddened by the passing of ALT Board member Bob Williams. He was a wonderful person and well-respected leader, and it was our great privilege to work with him. Though his time with us was short, his legacy will be forever remembered at ALT in the conservation programs he helped to create.

Bob joined Allegheny Land Trust's Board in the fall of 2007 and in his short time with us made a tremendous impact in his special quiet way.

He served on ALT's Stewardship and Development Committees and through his service on both was committed not only to the long-term care of key local conservation areas but also in securing the financial resources necessary to secure their permanent protection.

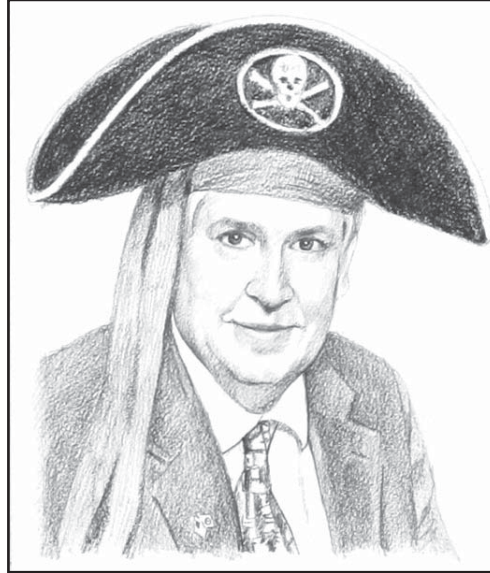
Bob was known for his love of funny hats and we're thankful to the

firm of Williams Coulson for sharing the photo below of him wearing something from his collection. The last time that Roy and I saw Bob, he invited us to give an ALT presentation to the Pittsburgh Rotary. After very dignified

opening remarks he reached under the podium and pulled out a cap with a stuffed penguin on top and led a victory song in honor of the Pittsburgh Penguins who were playing the Detroit Red Wings in the playoffs the next day. I leaned over and whispered to Roy that Bob would be a hard act to follow.

And it's true. Bob is a hard act to follow. But he would expect us to step up and continue the work he started with compassion, a serious focus to the task at hand and always, always with a lot of fun.

On behalf of the Board, staff, volunteers and all ALT supporters we send our sincerest condolences to Bob's family, colleagues and friends.



Sketch of Bob in one of his hats created by Your Art Now.

Excellence Award for Board Member Bill Bates



On November 19, 2009, ALT Board Member Bill Bates was honored by the *New Pittsburgh Courier* as one of their "50 Men of Excellence".

Bates is one of 50 African-American men chosen by the *Courier* for his contributions to the community and business world by "exemplifying strength by standing firm in the face of adversity,

leadership in periods of struggle, compassion in times of peril and integrity in the midst of opposition."

He is the Senior Vice President of Real Estate & Facilities for Eat 'N Park Hospitality Group, Inc. and is involved with many other local nonprofit organizations.

Bill has been an ALT Board Member since 2001 and serves as the Vice Chair of the Communications and Outreach Committee.

"From the Executive Director", continued from page 1

the ecology...where there is no waste.

If you think about it, the manmade green infrastructure innovations are actually attempts to replicate what nature does ...well... naturally. We don't even have to pay for the design and construction – Mother Nature did that for us a long time ago. We just need to care for it.

It's encouraging to see the trend toward sustainable natural alternatives that studies show are also cost effective. Public officials and private developers deserve recognition for policies and projects that challenge design and advance technologies resulting in sustainable green solutions.

ALT's mission is to protect the *truly* green infrastructure that is providing the greatest public benefit. For example, a mature forest can intercept up to 76% of the annual precipitation that falls on it. When forests are urbanized, up to 300% more runoff can result, causing flooding and water pollution.

Protecting the *truly* green infrastructure that our region is endowed with is a wise investment that guarantees dividends for the public today and for the generations of tomorrow.

For more information on "Green Infrastructure" see pages 5 and 6.



2nd annual Bounty in THE BARN

2007 2008

SEWICKLEY HEIGHTS



OCTOBER 3, 2009

Allegheny Land Trust held the 2nd Annual Bounty in the BarN fundraiser on October 3 in the historic BarN in Sewickley Heights owned by Jodie and Bill Welge. More than 125 guests attended this Spanish countryside themed event where they were entertained by local folk musicians, The NewLanders, on a perfect fall evening. This year's event raised over \$23,000 to benefit ALT's local conservation efforts! Thank you to the event hosts, sponsors, donors and guests for making Bounty in the BarN an overwhelming success.



Our Hosts, Jodie and Bill Welge



Talking at the bonfire.



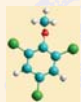
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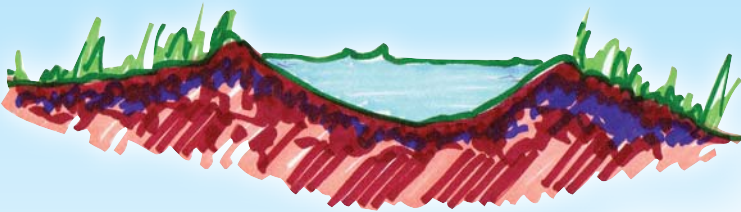
What is Green I

There is a growing trend to use "green infrastructure" to address stormwater runoff problems created by urbanization. Features such as green roofs, bio-swales and rain gardens are manmade attempts to duplicate the valuable functions of woodlands and wetlands.



WHAT HAS A GREENER ROOF THAN A TREE?

Growing plants on a roof helps absorb rainfall, reduces runoff and helps to maintain water quality. It also reduces the heat created by typical roofs, reducing the heat island effect that urban areas have on the climate. Green roofs replicate the functions of a tree.



COST-EFFECTIVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT.

Detention pits are engineered to capture runoff and detain it for a specific period of time before it is released into nearby waterways. Theoretically, they prevent overburdening streams with the additional runoff created by roads, buildings and other impervious surfaces, but frequently these pits are not maintained and lose their storage capacity as they fill with silt. In Hampton Township a \$10 million (not including long term maintenance) flood control project is underway that is estimated to store between 17 – 25 million gallons of stormwater. However, if as little as 100 acres of woodlands upstream are removed, the loss will generate enough additional runoff to negate the storage capacity of the facility. By contrast, \$10 million could protect approximately 1,000 acres that can store up to 825 million gallons of precipitation annually.

Infrastructure?



A NATURAL WATER FILTER.

Trees, understory vegetation, groundcover and the soil help to filter water as it makes its way to aquifers and streams.

WHAT'S A "BIO-SWALE"?

Designing parking lots and streets with vegetated depressions that catch runoff before it enters local streams helps to maintain water quality and reduces siltation. These manmade wetlands mimic the functions of natural wetlands and swales.



Allegheny Land Trust is focused on protecting the truly green natural infrastructure — natural areas that provide a host of public benefits beyond stormwater management such as scenic beauty, recreation and wildlife habitat. We believe that protecting natural areas is the most cost effective and sustainable approach.

Sycamore Island Management Plan Update

Julie Hendrickson, Ecological Designer, Applied Ecological Services, Inc.

Applied Ecological Services has been contracted by ALT to develop a management plan for Sycamore island. In November, AES Wildlife Ecologist, Michael McGraw, conducted a migratory waterfowl survey of the island. Habitat was observed (by boat) within the river system for waterfowl stopover foraging and refuge. The date selected for the survey coincided with regional waterfowl migration trends.

The survey is supplemented by reviewing daily reports of bird posts on the PA Birding List Serve. Large groups of waterfowl seem low in initial observations. However, in the back channel of Sycamore Island, bufflehead and mallard ducks were observed in small groups. Highlights include two hen black scoters, a rare but regular seasonal visitor to the region, and a second year (immature) bald eagle observed just north of Sycamore Island. Further details, bird diversity lists (including migrant waterfowl)



Species of Sycamore Island. Above, from top: Great Blue Heron; Sensitive Fern; Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle

and habitat analysis will be included in the avian section of the final report.

During the months of October and November, AES staff facilitated discussions with members of various stakeholder organizations including RiverQuest, Venture Outdoors, PA Fish and Boat Commission, Urban Ecology Collaborative, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Army Corp of Engineers, representatives from the Borough of Blawnox, Sylvan Canoe Club and Friends of the Riverfront. These discussions generated ideas, enthusiasm and interest in potential long-term partnerships with Allegheny Land Trust in the on-going stewardship and management efforts of Sycamore Island.

Some preliminary ideas that came out of these discussions were ways in which the island could be used as a “living laboratory” for environmental education, in addition to suggestions for balancing public use and enjoyment of the island with protection of sensitive habitats.

Sycamore Island Cleanup

On Wednesday, October 14 a group of volunteers including employees from NRG Energy participated in a clean-up event on ALT's Sycamore Island Conservation Area. The twelve NRG volunteers joined volunteers from Allegheny CleanWays and Friends of the Riverfront in this “tireless event,” cleaning up debris and trash from the island. Thank you to all who volunteered to help Allegheny Land Trust meet the stewardship needs of our properties!



“Mt. Washington”, continued from page 1

community. Local support is critical to meet state matching requirements and to demonstrate to major foundation funders that the local neighborhood – the primary beneficiary – is willing to support efforts to ensure that the land is protected.

A committed group of Chatham Village residents are already helping by organizing a fundraiser for the protection of this critical land. Over the course of the next 10 to 12 months similar fundraising efforts will be

taking place across Mt. Washington and Duquesne Heights neighborhoods. Please stay tuned for upcoming details about how you can participate in protecting the City's green space and to keep neighborhoods lush, green, and healthy. For more information on volunteering or to make a donation restricted to the project, please call Allegheny Land Trust at 412-741-2750, email admin@alleghenylandtrust.org or visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org.

From Plan to Reality, Wingfield Pines AMD System is Working

Below is a picture of the Abandoned Mine Drainage System at ALT's Wingfield Pines Conservation Area located in Upper St. Clair. You can see the color change in each of the ponds and how clean the water is at the end of the wetland in the left-hand section of the photo. The system is collecting 538 pounds of iron per day. Minnows, ducks, geese, dragonflies and, of course, beavers have already moved in.

The adjacent Regional Environmental Education Center (REEC) is developing programming involving the property for local school districts with Montour, Bethel Park, Mt. Lebanon and Upper St. Clair already participating. ALT and REEC are in discussions about some ideas that will make Wingfield Pines even more enjoyable. Stay tuned!



Photo courtesy PennDOT

"Wingfield Pines is 'My Place in Pittsburgh' "

ALT Board Member John Inserra recorded his heartfelt loyalty to Wingfield Pines Conservation Area for this series on public radio station WDUQ-FM. Go to www.wduq.org/index.php/my-place-in-pittsburgh and click on the red push pin near "Mt. Lebanon" or go to <http://www.wduq.org/images/audio/MyPlace/Wingfield%20Pines/wingfieldbounce.mp3>, which will open your media player and start immediately.

Irwin Run Dedication



Over 40 people turned out for the Irwin Run Conservation Area Dedication on October 31st. The new 73-acre Irwin Run Conservation Area is adjacent to North Park in Pine Township. A celebration was held immediately after the dedication as part of the North Park Community Day Picnic, which was cosponsored by ALT, Friends of North Park and

North Area Environmental Council. This project would not have been possible without the support and dedication of many individuals, organizations and partners. Shown participating in the dedication ceremony are (l-r) Roy Kraynyk, ALT Executive Director; Phil Brooks, ALT Board Member and Andy Baechle, Allegheny County Parks Director.

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Thank you!



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VISTAS

UPCOMING EVENTS

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

June 5, 2010

Pittsburgh has been selected by the United Nations Environment Program as the 2010 host. The theme for WED 2010 is *Biodiversity – Reconnecting With Nature*.

WINGFIELD PINES DEDICATION

Wingfield Pines Conservation Area

Spring 2010

As part of World Environment Day activities, ALT will be officially dedicating the Abandoned Mine Drainage natural passive treatment system at its Wingfield Pines Conservation Area in Upper St. Clair.

For information on upcoming events, go to www.alleghenylandtrust.org.

What will be your legacy?

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

Learn more about ALT's Legacy Society and making a gift that costs nothing during your lifetime, with possible tax benefits:

- Adding Allegheny Land Trust as a beneficiary in your will;
- Making Allegheny Land Trust a beneficiary of your IRA or retirement fund;
- Naming Allegheny Land Trust as a beneficiary of an insurance policy.

Please visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org and click How to Help/Gift Planning or call us at 412-741-2750.



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