

# VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Spring 2010



## From the Executive Director

**SOME PEOPLE WONDER WHAT WILL BE, OTHERS SEE WHAT ALREADY IS**

What do you see in the landscape while driving the region's highways? Do you see "open space" just lying fallow waiting to be "filled in" by buildings, more highways or parking lots? Or, do you see diverse wildlife habitat, beautiful wildflower meadows and the most efficient living machine?

The fact that you're reading this issue of VISTAS suggests that it might be the latter. However, I'm afraid that we might be the minority and most people just see "open space" and take it for granted that one day it will be "improved" or "developed". Raising the awareness about the public benefits and functions of green space is part of our mission.

I was recently interviewed by my former college professor, Kelleann Foster, who was writing a book on careers in landscape architecture. When asked to summarize what advice I'd give students I said "to think

See "From the Executive Director", page 2

## ALT Seeks National Accreditation

In April ALT submitted its application for accreditation to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance established in 2006. The Accreditation Program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet high national standards for practices that protect important natural areas forever.

Accreditation will put ALT in a more favorable position to compete for funding from foundations and government agencies. Because of this, ALT has made a serious commitment of time and effort to obtain accreditation, and has engaged a professional to shepherd us through this 18-month process.

Submitting this application was a major step required for ALT to receive accreditation. This process began with ALT doing an assessment that identified organizational strengths and weaknesses. Once this assessment was completed, ALT then modified existing policies and implemented new ones that will help streamline

See "Accreditation", page 3



Helping local people save local land.



Skunk cabbage flower blooming on the Irwin Run Conservation Area.

**Thank you, donors!**

### More Inside:

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**A SPECIAL Thanks! TO OUR 2009 DONORS**

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

generationally and act urgently." What I meant by this is to think about the long term impact and consequences of your decisions, but don't hesitate to respond quickly to opportunities. And, any minor adjustments that you make to your trajectory today can put you in a very different place tomorrow.

For a number of reasons, this advice is also very applicable to land use and the work we do at Allegheny Land Trust. The land use decisions we make have long lasting impacts on the economy and environment of our communities. Sometimes shortsightedness results in decisions that come back to haunt communities with expenses or other negative consequences that the public is burdened with reconciling. This is sometimes long after the profit has been made and the responsible party is long gone.

Concerning our work at ALT, thinking generationally is something we must do as we plan and commit to permanently protecting green space. In this

issue, we thank you, our donors, partners, volunteers and supporters for your decision to think generationally and act urgently. With your support, ALT is able to act urgently and seize opportunities to protect the best remaining land because once it is gone...it's gone.

We hope you are as excited as we are about what's happening here at Allegheny Land Trust—we've launched a new campaign to preserve land on Mt. Washington (p.

**The land use decisions we make have long lasting impacts on the economy and environment of our communities.**

7); we're thanking our largest group of donors ever (pp. 4-6); and we're on our way to becoming an accredited land trust (p. 1). We'd also like to welcome our new Stewardship Coordinator, Emilie Cooper,

who you can read about below, and just in case you're wondering who "Rhonda Madden" is on page 4, congratulations go out to our Development Director, Rhonda on her recent marriage. Thank you all once again for everything that you are doing to support local land conservation! **RK**

## Introducing Emilie Cooper, ALT Stewardship Coordinator

Happy Spring! We can all agree that this year Punxsutawney Phil was correct and we sure got our 6 weeks of winter weather. A new season brings ALT a new employee—we want to welcome Emilie Cooper as the new stewardship coordinator to ALT.

Emilie grew up in Western PA with her parents, two brothers and a number of pets. She has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Denison University and a Masters of Forest Resources from Penn State University. She has worked both in the public and non-profit sector of land conservation since her graduation, providing a unique learning experience. She is thrilled to be in Allegheny County because many close family members and friends live in and around the Pittsburgh area. Emilie has a passion for travel and would fly to Australia anytime you gave her the opportunity (she has been twice, but would go back in a second).

Emilie is happy to join the ALT team and to help further the excellent stewardship history ALT has cultivated. "I foresee a very exciting year and I look forward to meeting and working with all of you. Please feel free to contact me at any time for a specific stewardship question or just to chat, and I am always game for a nature walk!"



**Are you interested in volunteering for stewardship activities? Please contact us at [admin@alleghenylantrust.org](mailto:admin@alleghenylantrust.org) or call us at 412-741-2750.**

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**VISTAS is underwritten by an anonymous donor.  
Thank you!**

# OUT IN THE FIELD...



## Sycamore Island

*Sycamore Island Public Meeting, April 17, 2010  
Hoboken Presbyterian Church, Blawnox*

Julie Hendrickson (right) of Applied Ecological Services (AES) talks with Pittsburgh resident, Kathy Hrabovsky, about the environmental education potential activities on Sycamore Island.

At the meeting, AES presented a “virtual tour” of the island and offered recommendations for its sustainable use.

ALT was thrilled with the response and enthusiasm from the local community at the meeting and is excited to execute the management plan recommendations with their assistance and support.

Visit our Facebook page to see more photos from the meeting and of the Island.

## Irwin Run Stewardship Meeting

Spring has sprung on Irwin Run...the first meeting of the Irwin Valley Stewardship Team met in March to discuss opportunities and activities for 2010. This team of local volunteers will promote and protect the conservation area as well as organize garbage clean-ups, tree plantings and trail maintenance activities. If you are interested in joining the effort, contact Gary Rigdon at [grigdon@consolidated.net](mailto:grigdon@consolidated.net).



## Earth Day

*Earth Day at Frick Environmental Center  
Garlic Mustard Pull*



Amit Mulay of Pittsburgh removes garlic mustard from Frick Environmental Center on Saturday, April 17 in celebration of Earth Day, 2010. Garlic mustard, native to Europe, is an invasive plant that provides no food for wildlife and crowds out desired species. ALT joined forces with other Pittsburgh volunteers to clear the invasive plant from several sections of the park.

# A SPECIAL *Thanks!* TO OUR 2009 DONORS

## A Special Thank You

by Rhonda Madden, Director of Development

It's the time again when we have the privilege of saying thank you to our supporters. Last year over 575 donors contributed more than \$1 million to Allegheny Land Trust to support local land conservation. This was the largest group of donors in the organization's 17-year history! So much has been made possible in saving our local landscape and the benefits it provides because of these generous supporters and their gifts.

Who are they?

- They are a group of senior high school students who decided it was important that their generation contribute to protecting a woodland that they wanted to be able to still see standing in twenty years.
- They are a group of ALT Board Directors and staff who decided that the example of supporting local land conservation started with them – all of them.
- They are more than 175 new supporters in the North Hills who decided that YES!, they would make a contribution now before it was too late. Six months later, 73 acres of woodlands were permanently protected.
- They are over 30 small business owners who decided that supporting local conservation efforts to prevent flooding, landslides and loss of biodiversity and scenic character was good for business.
- He is the anonymous donor who decided to leave a local conservation legacy by including Allegheny Land Trust in his will. Gifts like his will ensure the long-term care of ALT properties so that when those high school seniors return in 20 years, their efforts will still be making a difference.

So, thank you. And keep up the great work!

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### **Legacy Society**

The Allegheny Land Trust Legacy Society recognizes ALT supporters who have chosen to help ensure that our beautiful local landscapes are forever protected for future generations to enjoy. These first Legacy Society members have included Allegheny Land Trust in their estate plans.

Anonymous  
 Roy Kraynyk

### **What will be your legacy?**

You can make sure that generations after you 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:

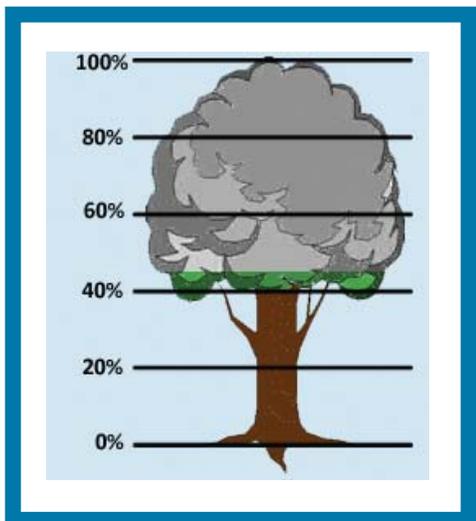
- Adding Allegheny Land Trust as a beneficiary in your will;
- Making Allegheny Land Trust a beneficiary of your IRA or retirement fund;
- Naming Allegheny Land Trust as a beneficiary of an insurance policy.

Please visit [www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org) and click How to Help/Gift Planning or call us at 412-741-2750.



Every attempt has been made to accurately list contributors to Allegheny Land Trust for the period January 1 – December 31, 2009. If there are any errors or omissions, please accept our apologies and please call 412-741-2750 or email us at [admin@alleghenylandtrust.org](mailto:admin@alleghenylandtrust.org) so that we may correct our records. Thank you.

## Mt. Washington – Campaign to Expand Grand View Scenic Byway Park



In cooperation with the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation, ALT has raised \$102,000 toward the campaign goal of \$224,000 toward the purchase of a critical 19-acre property on the south side of Mt. Washington to expand Grand View Scenic Byway Park. ALT has received an \$81,000 Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grant Award from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and a \$20,000 grant from the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation.

The funding plan includes a goal of 10% of the project cost (\$22,400)

to be supported by the local community. Contributions for the project are starting to come in from individuals and a committed group of Chatham

Village residents are already helping by organizing a fundraiser of their own. “We know that local support is critical to meet state matching requirements and to demonstrate to other major funders that the local neighborhood is behind this effort,” Mt. Washington resident Paul Tellers remarked. “We’re committed to helping ALT and the Mt. Washington CDC protect the remaining green spaces in this community that make it so unique.”

**“We know that local support is critical to meet state matching requirements and to demonstrate to other major funders that the local neighborhood is behind this effort,” Mt. Washington resident Paul Tellers remarked.**

### How You Can Help

#### Volunteer as a Site Steward

*Site stewards are an invaluable resource for ALT. Stewards help to monitor and manage conservation lands by walking trails and boundaries and providing the important local connection we need to care for protected lands. For more information on becoming an ALT Site Steward, contact us at 412-741-2750 or visit our website at [www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org).*

#### Make a Donation

*Allegheny Land Trust is an independent Pennsylvania nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. With over 1,415 acres already under our care and the growing need to protect the area’s unique landscape before it is changed forever, ALT relies on contributions from local individuals, businesses and foundations to make our conservation work possible. If you would like to make a donation today, please contact us at 412-741-2750 or donate online through our secure server by visiting the “How to Help” section of our website: [www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org). Thank you!*

**For information on ways to help ALT conserve local land, visit the “How to Help” section of our website at [www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org).**

#### “Accreditation”, continued from page 1

operations and lead to more effective land conservation.

Now that ALT’s application has been submitted, the accreditation process will continue with ALT providing follow-up information requested by the Accreditation Commission, who will then conduct an extensive review of ALT’s policies and programs. A public comment period has also been opened.

The Accreditation Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how ALT complies with the national quality standards that address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of these standards see [www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/indicator-practices](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/indicator-practices).

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, please visit [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org). Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 112 Spring Street, Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Comments will be most useful if received by June 1, 2010.



Helping local people save local land.

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[www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org)

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# VISTAS

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SEWICKLEY MAY MART

Saturday, May 8, 2010  
May Mart presented by the Sewickley Civic Garden Council in the Village. Celebrate the beginning of spring and visit the ALT booth.

### VENTURE OUTDOORS FESTIVAL

Saturday, May 22 at Point State Park and the Mon Wharf. Bring the whole family for fun activities like kayaking, fishing, hiking, yoga, biking and climbing. Stop by the ALT table while you're there!

### WINGFIELD PINES DEDICATION

June 3, 2010, 10:00 a.m.  
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](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org).



**ALT is on Facebook!**  
Become a fan and show your support!

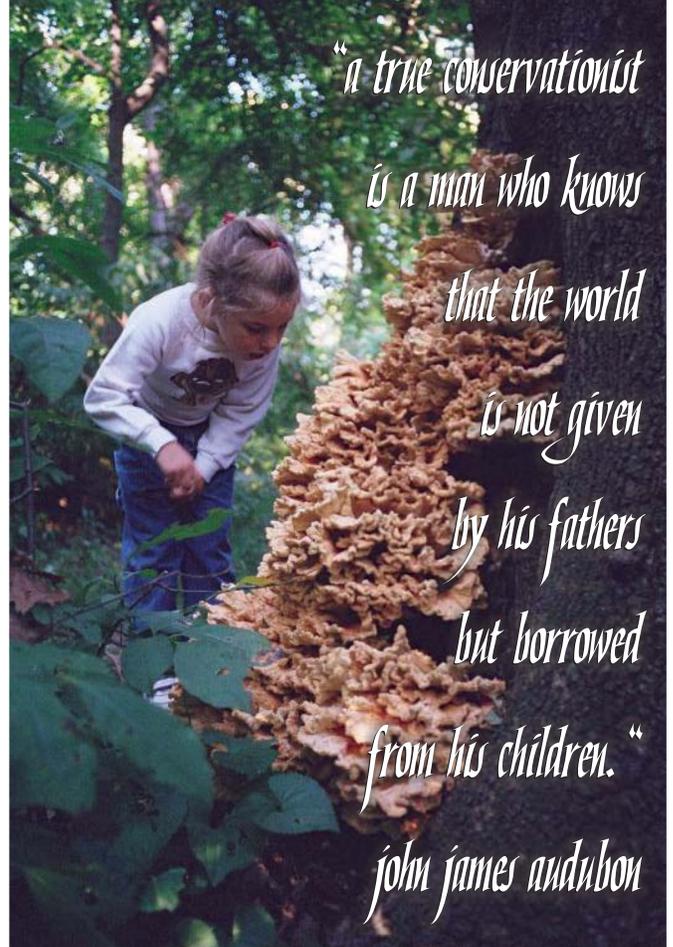
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*"a true conservationist  
is a man who knows  
that the world  
is not given  
by his fathers  
but borrowed  
from his children."  
John James Audubon*