

WISTIAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Spring 2011



From the Executive Director

A CONFLUENCE OF GOOD

It has been 10 years since I was hired as ALT's first full-time Executive Director and I'm excited as ever about where ALT stands as we begin 2011. There are so many positive things happening in terms of prospective land conservation projects, new partnerships that expand our influence and capacity, volunteer involvement in our stewardship work and recent accreditation.

In December, we received word that Allegheny Land Trust had met the difficult standards and practices required for accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Accreditation means that ALT is operating at a high level of ethical and professional standards, and gives the staff and Board confidence that we are doing things right, and also gives supporters confidence that their investment in ALT is a sound one.

The Stewardship Program, led by Emilie Cooper, is growing exponentially with new

See "From the Executive Director", page 7

ALT Awarded National Accreditation

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, announced that Allegheny Land Trust has been awarded accredited status. ALT is one of 14 accredited land trusts in Pennsylvania to receive this status.

Allegheny Land Trust was awarded accreditation on December 15, and is one of 130 land trusts out of a national membership of 1,700 that has been awarded accreditation since the fall of 2008. Accredited land trusts are able to display a seal (as shown to the right) indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

"Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever," said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. "The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone



Look for this seal!

See "Accreditation", page 2



PHOTO BY EMILIE COOPER

Thank you, donors!

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Do you know what this is? See page 7 to find out!

A SPECIAL *Thanks!* TO OUR 2010 DONORS

GreenTalk with Stephen Bosnyak

Stephen Bosnyak is the founder of the DMH Fellowship, a volunteer network that helps ALT with the maintenance and monitoring of the Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area in Elizabeth Twp. You can learn more about the DMH Fellowship by visiting www.dead-mans-hollow.com.

How did you become involved with Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area?

I guess you could say that my connection to Dead Man's Hollow started in 1920 with my great grandparents, Michael and Magdalena Bendzuch. When my great grandfather found employment with the Union Sewer Pipe Company, he moved his wife and children to a small house in Dead Man's Hollow. It became a tradition at family gatherings to reminisce about the 'good old days' in the hollow. I suppose that my interest in Dead Man's Hollow was somehow inevitable since I enjoyed listening to all of those wonderful stories when I was younger.

What makes Dead Man's Hollow an asset to our area?

I've always felt that the hollow provides a great setting for both educational and recreational purposes. A 440-acre nature preserve makes for one very interesting classroom and a refreshing alternative to that boring treadmill in the basement.

What can others do to get involved with a preservation area near them?

The first thing that came to mind was... "Call Emilie Cooper!" From a volunteer's perspective, I believe that the best place to begin is through research. Allegheny Land Trust has a website that provides a lot of information on their mission and their properties. Another way to get started would be to attend an ALT sponsored event. By

doing so, one will be able to interact with the ALT staff and their volunteers while getting a better idea of what stewardship is all about.

How can the community help your efforts in Dead Man's Hollow?

I've found that people feel that their schedules won't allow time for volunteering. Others have expressed that they aren't physically able to help. I remember a comment that one older gentleman made. He said, "My mind would like to help, but my body is saying different." The truth is, these individuals are actually helping our efforts in Dead Man's Hollow without even knowing it. Most people do not realize that just their presence in and around the Hollow is helping to curb vandalism and other destructive behavior. With that being said, anyone can act as our eyes and ears whenever they are visiting Dead Man's Hollow. It may not seem like



much, but simply reporting anything that is out of place to ALT ultimately helps to get the issue resolved faster.

Another easy way that people can help is to 'carry out what is carried in' and to properly dispose of any litter. A little bit of effort can go a long way!

Is Dead Man's Hollow really haunted?

I've actually lost count of the number of people who have asked me this question. I've listened to fascinating stories of strange sounds, unexplained movement in the undergrowth, and even one about a mysterious 'silhouette' that was moving very quickly along the ridge above the Ruins Trail. I will say that Dead Man's Hollow is certainly the type of place where the imagination can run wild. Now, do I believe that there is a ghost lurking in the shadows of Dead Man's Hollow? I hope so... Because the DMH Fellowship can always use another volunteer!

GREENTALK

From "Accreditation", page 1

an extensive, external review of the governance and management of its organization and the systems and policies it uses to protect land."

"ALT's accredited status demonstrates our commitment to the highest standards of professional practice," says Roy Kraynyk, Executive Director of ALT. "Our land trust is a stronger organization today by participating in the rigorous accreditation program."

"Being awarded accreditation required a huge effort by the staff and Board of ALT and we are very proud of this achievement," says Kraynyk. "I would like to thank everyone who helped to make this achievement possible, including our accreditation consultant, Gary Rigdon and The Heinz Endowments for their generous support."



Roy Kraynyk and Gary Rigdon with accreditation award

Responding to the Call

by Rhonda Madden, Director of Development

It was another great year for local land conservation in 2010! Allegheny Land Trust is so grateful for all of the support that we received that makes our conservation work possible. More and more, local groups are turning to Allegheny Land Trust for help in protecting the natural areas that are important in their communities. And more and more, we can respond to their call for help because of the strong investment of our generous supporters who year in and year out respond to our calls for help.

Within this group are over 115 new individual supporters from Mt. Washington who contributed to expand Emerald View Park. Showing that small groups can also make a big impact, five neighbors joined together to protect five critical acres in Sewickley Heights, and The Bradford Woods Conservancy funded a conservation easement on the Bradford Woods Reserve. We welcomed another member to our Legacy Society and were honored to receive generous contributions in memory of John Hamm and David Pencoske. Contributors who made their first donation to a land campaign fifteen, ten, five and two years ago continued to support us and for that and for every gift small and large we are very thankful.

Allegheny Land Trust gratefully recognizes the generous gifts of its donors. Below are the contributors who provided valuable support in 2010 for our conservation efforts.

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ALT's work in the Pittsburgh area is an important reminder of the value of open space and a key contributor to preserving natural areas. Natural recreation areas are important on so many levels, including human health and enjoyment and the providing of wildlife

habitat in an increasingly crowded world. I have been impressed not only with the purpose of the group but also with their successful work with land owners and their ability to raise the necessary funds. ALT is GOOD at what it does and is a real contributor to quality of life in the Pittsburgh area.

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Emerald View Park Expansion (Mt. Washington)

With the protection of this property, Emerald View Park will expand to encompass 257 acres in Mt. Washington and link southern facing trails to Grandview Avenue.

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For me ALT demonstrates the impact that a concerned Board of Directors and a dedicated and extremely well informed staff can have on land conservation and environmental stewardship efforts. Supporting ALT is something that both

my heart and brain tell me that I have to do.

Bill Moul, Bradford Woods

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Hall's Field (Sewickley Heights)

This property known to local residents as Hall's Field is located on Barbary Road adjacent to Sewickley Heights Park. It helps to link Sewickley Heights Park with ALT's Audubon Greenway.

Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh L. Brown
Craig and Frances Kinney
Mr. Thomas W. McCargo
Melinda O'Rourke
Edward M. and Kirsten Stripay

Bradford Woods Conservation Easement

The conservation easement agreement between ALT and Bradford Woods Borough permanently protects the Bradford Woods Reserve.

Bradford Woods Conservancy Fund
Pennsylvania Land Trust Association

In-Kind

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In Memory

John Hamm Internship Endowment

This memorial endowment will support a paid internship focused on conservation efforts in the Chartiers Watershed.

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 Karen and Steve Wirth *in memory of Jim Wirth*



We first learned about Allegheny Land Trust during the campaign to purchase the Wingfield Pines Conservation Area in 2001. The work ALT is doing to preserve local land that otherwise might be developed irresponsibly is very important to us. We're especially pleased with the terrific AMD treatment system that ALT has constructed at Wingfield Pines. Not only does it enhance the property with beautiful wetlands, but it provides continuing benefits all the way downstream on Chartiers Creek. We're proud to support ALT's outstanding achievements.

Maryanne and Robert Purdy

In Honor

Sally Ann and Joseph Cortese *in honor of Lynne M. Taiclet*
 Margaret L. Hunter *in honor of William Lawrence III*
 Darla M. Kaczmarek *in honor of Dorothy Senher*
 Robert Levin *in honor of Carl and Kathy Prutting*
 Edward McDonnell *in honor of Heather H. Semple*

Legacy Society

The Allegheny Land Trust 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.

Roy Kraynyk
 Patricia Renwick
 Carrie and Tim Stanny

Every attempt has been made to accurately list contributors to Allegheny Land Trust for the period January 1 – December 31, 2010.

If there are any errors or omissions, please accept our apologies and please call 412-741-2750 or email us at admin@alleghenylandtrust.org so that we may correct our records. Thank you.

What will be your legacy?

You can make sure that generations after us will be able to enjoy the same scenery 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 by:

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

CALL FOR EXPERTS...

Allegheny Land Trust needs YOUR expertise! We are looking for volunteers to share their passion with us and our members. We want to plan field visits to ALT Conservation Areas led by YOU. Are you an avid birder? Take a group out for some bird watching at Wingfield Pines for the day. An ecologist by profession? Lead a hike along the trails on Sycamore Island spotting invasive species. Do your friends call you "Pennsylvania's Biggest History Buff"? Share the history of Dead Man's Hollow with our members. If you're interested in using your expertise to educate your friends and neighbors about the benefits of land conservation, email Emilie Cooper, Stewardship Coordinator, at ecooper@alleghenylandtrust.org.

A special thank you to Christine Davis and Bob Hedin who have already volunteered to lead events for our members. Check future e-alerts and the website for the dates of these upcoming programs.

Sycamore Island has a fascinating history beginning with Native American archaeology and continuing through the 20th century. Historian and archaeologist, Christine Davis, will interpret the artifacts and features found on the Island. We'll also briefly look at other sites in this unique part of the Allegheny River including the riverside Cider Mill where Chris works with a team of archaeologists and cultural resource managers. She has been President of Christine Davis Consultants, Inc. for the past 26 years and is an avid supporter of riverlife.



Each year, approximately 1 billion gallons of water carrying 43 tons of iron oxide are discharged from the abandoned mine at Wingfield Pines. Prior to the construction of the AMD system, this polluted discharge was deposited directly into Chartiers Creek. Robert Hedin of Hedin Environmental developed the plans and designed the AMD system, managed construction activities, monitored the system's treatment effectiveness and prepared the Operation and Maintenance Plan. Join Dr. Hedin on a tour of the AMD system and see how the natural forces of gravity and oxidation direct the AMD through a series of settling ponds that capture the iron sediment.

"From the Executive Director", continued from page 1

partnerships that she is developing with the Urban Eco-Stewards, AmeriCorps, Bidwell Training Center and a host of dedicated students, groups and individuals volunteering at Sycamore Island, Dead Man's Hollow or in the office. Volunteers like archeologist Christine Davis and ecologist Bob Hedin have agreed to lead interpretative hikes so we can offer you more opportunities to visit and learn about conservation areas that you helped to protect. If you are interested in leading a hike see the article above.

In January, we closed on a 14-acre property on Mt. Washington to help expand the Emerald View Park. This

ongoing collaboration with the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation will continue in 2011 as we work to acquire more critical lands to add to the Park. We also hope to expand Dead Man's Hollow in Elizabeth Township, protect more land along Chartiers and Pine Creek, the Mon River and in Sewickley Heights.

Finally I want to express a heart-felt THANK YOU to everyone who supported Allegheny Land Trust last year. I hope that you feel a sense of accomplishment and pride as you read VISTAS, because it is your support that has fueled our growth and success.

The fruit of the staghorn sumac (Rhus typhina) is a valuable, native food source for birds in winter. Did you know that the Native Americans used to make a drink similar to lemonade from this fruit? (Photo taken at Dead Man's Hollow.)



Helping local people save local land.

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VISTAS

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 9 AFTERNOON

Sycamore Island Trail Craze Work Day
email: sycamoreisland@alleghenylandtrust.org
for reservations

APRIL 14, 6:30 TO 9:00 P.M.

Marcellus Shale Information Night
Big Sewickley Creek Volunteer Fire Hall
1850 Big Sewickley Creek Road, 15143

MAY 12, 6:30 P.M.

Spring Boat Tour, look for invitations in
your mailbox.

JUNE 4, 9:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M.

Dead Man's Hollow Trail Clean-Up
and Dedication
Catfish Pond

Don't miss a thing! Sign up for our occasional e-alerts—
send your e-mail to lbloor@alleghenylandtrust.org.



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EFP's Combined
Federal
Code is 62348.



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Land Trust!

Reader Poem

I can't wait to see Sycamore Island,
Barking Slopes, Dead Man's Hollow ever since
the mail slot spit out an invitation
to come into the woods and discover:

The threehorn wartback, a mere mussel.
At home in a river's sand or gravel,
it lives in a terraced bumpy brown shell.
Thin emerald rays slice through its mud.

The buffleheads, black and white diving ducks.
All their drama resides in a stunning head
accented with purple and green-blue tints.
They fly at forty-eight miles per hour,
even in a twenty-five mile-per-hour zone.

The fragrant understory spicebush.
It thrives beside tall trees and attracts birds.
Crush a leaf for aromatherapy.
You'll want a body wrap in its glossy leaves.
Who knew words could whisk me into the woods?

Ann Curran, Member, Mt. Washington

PHOTO BY BERNADETTE E. KAZMARSKI