

VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Winter 2011



From the Executive Director

FOOTPRINTS & FINGERPRINTS

"We need your eyes, ears, hands and feet", I always say when speaking to a crowd about a new local land conservation project that ALT is considering taking on in a community. My point is that the local community really has to embrace and support any land protection effort for it to be successful. Whether it's participating in the early stages of community outreach and awareness-building, making a gift, or supporting the long-term responsibility of stewarding and caring for the land, local land protection projects offer people of all ages and abilities the opportunity to positively impact their community by creating permanent green space.

I've seen it time and time again when a land protection project inspires a neighborhood or community to take action. These projects inspire people to organize benefits, lead hikes, clear trails, haul trash or make a contribution to help acquire the land. All of these activities represent ways one can leave a legacy of permanent green space.

The early footprints and fingerprints of those who worked eagerly to initially protect the land

See "From the Executive Director", page 3

Chartiers Creek Greenway Expanded

by Rhonda Madden, Director of Development

Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) has successfully conserved an additional 12 acres that extends the greenway along Chartiers Creek. The acquisition was made possible thanks to the efforts of the USC Citizens for Land Stewardship (CLS) and the strong response to ALT's board sponsored matching challenge, which in conjunction with a private donation raised the \$10,000 necessary for the long-term maintenance and stewardship of the property. Annette Shimer, President of USC Citizens for Land Stewardship, says "CLS is pleased that the community's fundraising efforts contributed to the successful acquisition of this valuable land in the Chartiers Creek Watershed. Our members understand that maintenance and stewardship are crucial to the long-term upkeep of this property."

The preserved area lies on both sides of Chartiers Creek and is of interest to the land trust primarily because of the stream frontage and forested floodplain habitat. This land serves as an overflow area

See "Chartiers Greenway", page 7



PHOTO BY RICK PALMER

Leaving a Legacy

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Do you know what this is? See "Sycamore Snippet: Mycologists Wanted" on page 3 to find out!

Welcome New Board Members!

by Jessica Stewart, Conservation Planner

At the July meeting, Allegheny Land Trust's Board of Directors unanimously appointed six additions to the Board: Suzanne Broughton, Fred Brown, Ken LaSota, Kathleen McKenzie, Jessica Mooney and Jeaneen Zappa.

SUZANNE BROUGHTON is currently involved with the Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network and has enjoyed a prolific history of volunteerism in Allegheny County. She says of Allegheny Land Trust, "Although I've known about ALT for a long time, I really got to see the organization at work when I became involved in raising funds for the Irwin Run purchase. That was a very positive experience, so when an ALT board member suggested to me that I would make a good board member I took it seriously. I hope I can help continue ALT's good work." Broughton was one of the founders of the North Area Environmental Council in 1969 and served on the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh and The Franklin Park Borough Environmental Advisory Council.

FRED BROWN is currently the Associate Director of Program Development at the Kingsley Association in Pittsburgh, PA and an Executive Coach and Training

National Honor Society and has been honored with a Distinguished Service Award from the PA State Association of Boroughs for his outstanding service to the Borough of Heidelberg. He serves on various boards including the Local Government Academy and ALCOOSAN's Customer Municipality Advisory Committee. Ken says, "I joined ALT because I have known for several years the good work it does in preserving the unique landscape we have in Allegheny County. I hope working with ALT allows me to help make a difference going forward in preserving the natural areas that remain."

KATHLEEN MCKENZIE says she was motivated to join the board because, "ALT understands that the preservation of important land knows no boundaries and equitably stewards the urban and suburban environmental agendas." McKenzie is currently Vice President of Community and Civic Affairs at West Penn Allegheny Health System. Previously, McKenzie served as Allegheny County Deputy Manager and was responsible for the supervision of the County's operations and major policy initiatives of Chief Executive Dan Onorato. McKenzie's community service record includes sitting on the



Suzanne Broughton



Fred Brown



Ken LaSota



Kathleen McKenzie



Jessica Mooney



Jeaneen Zappa

Manager Consultant for Access Consulting Services in Charlotte, North Carolina. Prior to joining ALT, he led community initiatives and reconciliation talks with gangs, founded S.M.A.R.T. (Strong Minded Active Responsible Teens), was a board member for the Roberto Clemente Foundation and served as a Field Instructor for the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh. Brown says, "I joined the ALT Board as a way to encourage ALT to develop some urban programs that address the issues of limited urban green space, beautification challenges, stormwater management issues, and environmental stewardship. I believe that there are some transferable learnings that ALT can provide to urban communities that can create bridges and expand partnerships that address systemic environmental issues within the urban communities."

KEN LASOTA has served as Mayor of Heidelberg, PA since 1997. He is an Associate Professor of Geology and Earth Sciences at Robert Morris University, holds six university degrees, and has held numerous positions at Robert Morris in the Department of Natural Sciences. LaSota has served as Regional Vice President and President of the Alpha Chi

boards of various organizations including Riverlife, the International Women's Forum, the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and the Local Government Academy.

JESSICA MOONEY is the Assistant to the Dean at the School of Sustainability and the Environment at Chatham University. She says, "I think ALT plays a critical role in preserving one of our region's most valuable assets—our land." Mooney has previously held positions within Allegheny County's Economic Development Department and has valuable experience with public policy and community organizing gained from working with the Green Government Task Force and Central Northside Neighborhood Council.

JEANEEN ZAPPA is the Sustainability Manager for Allegheny County, the County's first formal sustainability position and program. She says of why she joined the board, "Allegheny Land Trust is a proven leader in land conservation best practices and Roy and the team constantly champion the need for smart land use and the importance of

See "Board Members", page 3

GreenTalk With Patty Renwick

Patty is an ALT supporter and one of the newest members of the Legacy Society (see "The Promise of Forever", page 6).

1. How did you get involved with Allegheny Land Trust?

My initial contact with ALT was through a land acquisition project for the Irwin Run project. It was very exciting to help ALT secure the 73-acre parcel, knowing it would be set aside for future generations to enjoy.

2. Do you have a favorite ALT Conservation Area?

Probably the Audubon & Fern Hollow Greenways, since they are contiguous to the Sewickley Heights Borough Park, and provide a large amount of open space for our local equestrians to ride. It would be great to add more land to these areas in the future!



3. Why is local land conservation important to you?

Land conservation and growth planning ensures that there will be adequate open green space for future generations. Green space provides recreational opportunities, important habitat for wildlife, and, as an avid equestrian, areas for horseback riding activities. Development is happening at

a rapid pace in Pennsylvania, with thousands of acres gobbled up every year. We need to ensure that future growth and development does not change the landscape of our natural areas in Western PA.

4. You have decided to include ALT as part of your legacy. What does your "legacy" mean to you and why did you choose Allegheny Land Trust?

I feel very strongly about land preservation and green space planning, which provides recreational, ecological and aesthetic character to our local communities. ALT's mission is effective land conservation and planning, which is one of the legacies I hope to leave for future generations. My support of ALT is a reflection of my passion and vision for land preservation. I named ALT as a beneficiary to one of my IRAs, and as the years pass, this gift will continue to grow.

GREENTALK

From "Board Members", page 2

land resources in the County. I'm excited to help in any way that I can." Jeanen previously worked for the Green Building Alliance as the Green Building Products Initiative Director and has over fifteen years of experience with non-profits as well as public and private firms.

Phil Brooks, ALT Board Chairman, says, "I welcome all six new members to the Board. Their diverse experiences will permit ALT to broaden its reach into the community it serves."

Executive Director Roy Kraynyk adds, "ALT thanks our outgoing Director Lynn Heckman for her service. Her outstanding leadership has shaped Allegheny Land Trust in ways too great to measure. Thank you Lynn for your commitment to ALT."

"From the Executive Director", page 1

will fade away, but their imprint on the landscape and community will last forever as undeveloped land. Land that future generations can visit, enjoy and reminisce about the time when friends and family members rallied together to protect it. Thanks to all of our supporters who are contributing to a legacy of green space.

Sycamore Snippet: Mycologists Wanted

by Mike Good, Public Allies Associate

In each future newsletter we will bring you information on the happenings on Sycamore Island.

Sycamore Island is a complex ecosystem, and the more we explore the island, the more we find. On our last trip to the island we found fascinating fungi, shown on page 1. Here you can see the lemallas, or gills, of the *armillaria mellea*, also known as the honey mushroom. The size of these populations, apparently thriving on fallen silver maples and forest detritus caught our eye; we're sure they will catch yours too. Some areas on the island are perpetually dark and moist, giving the magnificent mildew an ample environment. However, we have an identification quandary, maybe you can help—do you know a thing or two about mushrooms, or know someone who does? If you, or someone you know might be interested in scoping out our sporific specimens, and/or leading a walk around the island to talk about these organisms' important niche in the ecosystem, please contact Mike Good at stewardship@alleghenylandtrust.org.

Please enjoy the photographs, for which we are indebted to Richard Palmer for taking impromptu. Access these photographs (and more) online, in addition to Richard Palmer's GigaPan from Sycamore Island's northeastern tip via the Allegheny Land Trust website/Facebook page.

4th annual **Bounty in**

The 4th Annual Bounty in the BarN was hosted on October 1, 2011 at Bill and Jodie Welge's historic barn in Sewickley Heights. More than 100 guests joined ALT to enjoy dinner and music from the NewLanders in a harvest celebration to benefit the land.



2007 THE BARN 2008

SEWICKLEY  HEIGHTS



GARY YON OF GARY YON PHOTOGRAPHY

The Promise of Forever

by Rhonda Madden, Director of Development

When we established the Allegheny Land Trust Legacy Society in the fall of 2009, it didn't take long before we were welcoming members. Patty Renwick was one of the first to respond (see "GreenTalk" on page 3). I met Patty during the campaign to protect the Irwin Run Conservation Area as she was helping us with a funding proposal in partnership with the PA Department of Environmental Protection and later, I saw her participating in the Hunter Pace. Patty knows first-hand from her work in environmental clean up to her enjoyment as an equestrian the importance of protecting our remaining natural spaces. She loves being "out on the land" and through her legacy of simply naming ALT a beneficiary of her IRA, future young equestrians will too!

Dave Clark is another supporter using his IRA to help his giving go further. With Congress reinstating legislation through December 31, 2011, Dave is eligible to make a tax-free gift from his IRA without incurring federal income taxes (see box at right). "The charitable IRA rollover makes sense for me," says Dave. "With only one letter, I instruct the financial institution to send checks directly to each organization to which I contribute including ALT. This eliminates taxes on the withdrawal, but it still counts toward the required minimum distribution." Dave is a long-time volunteer of Allegheny Land Trust and donates many hours supporting stewardship efforts. He's dedicated and has a great sense of humor that reminds us all that this important conservation work is supposed to be fun.

Please visit alleghenylandtrust.org under "How to Help", contact Rhonda Madden at rmadden@alleghenylandtrust.org or 412-741-2750 or return the enclosed envelope and check the box for "please send me more information about including ALT in my will or estate plans."

As always, please consult with your attorney concerning the best way for you to provide for Allegheny Land Trust in your estate and giving plans.

IRA Gifts Extended Through 2011

YOU CAN STILL MAKE A TAX-FREE GIFT TO ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST FROM YOUR IRA!

Congress has reinstated through 2011 the legislation that allows donors to make tax-free gifts from their IRA accounts. The legislation allows you to make charitable gifts directly ("rolled over") from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) without incurring federal income taxes before December 31, 2011.

- Individuals 70-1/2 and older may transfer up to \$100,000 directly from an IRA to ALT.
- Charitable distribution counts toward IRA minimum distribution requirements.
- Because the distribution generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, even non-itemizers can benefit.

Please contact your financial advisor to learn if making a charitable gift to Allegheny Land Trust from your IRA is appropriate for you.

Site Stewards gather at Wingfield Pines for Annual Picnic

by Mike Good, Public Allies Associate

ALT staff and site stewards assembled at Wingfield Pines for our annual Site Steward Picnic Sunday, September 25. After enjoying a hearty meal, we walked across much of the vast Upper St. Clair property, and listened to Bob Hedin of Hedin Environmental, the consulting engineer for the AMD system, detail the fully functioning Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) filtration system.

Some beautiful summer-like weather accompanied us for the majority of our trek. A team of Duquesne biology students led by Professor Ed Schroth was also present on-site and the students happily shared that their research had uncovered an increase in aquatic species that call Wingfield Pines home. We hope this picnic represents some fraction of our gratitude for all the hard work that our site stewards do, and would like to extend a verbal thank-you to those site stewards who could not attend. Fulfilling our stewardship commitment would not be possible without the great work of our site stewards. Interested in becoming an ALT Site Steward? Email stewardship@alleghenylandtrust.org.



PHOTO BY BRINACETTE KAZMARSKI



by Jessica Stewart, Conservation Planner

Preserved farm in Forward Township

In keeping with ALT's conservation mission, Allegheny Land Trust entered into a cooperative agreement with Allegheny County and the Allegheny County Agricultural Land Preservation Board in 2010 to administer the program. For more information about the Allegheny County Agricultural Land Preservation Program please contact Jessica Stewart, Program Administrator.

Roy Kraynyk, Executive Director of Allegheny Land Trust says, "We have been able to work with CLS to accomplish great things together in the Chartiers Creek Watershed. Strong partnerships like this enable ALT to leverage support for land conservation. We look forward to collaborating with CLS in the future as we continue our efforts to conserve high-quality land along Chartiers Creek."



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VISTAS

WALK OFF THAT TURKEY!

Visit your favorite
ALT Conservation Area.

*Happy Holidays from all of us
at Allegheny Land Trust.*

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What's on, Stay on, Avoid it, too!



ENVIRONMENTAL FUND
FOR PENNSYLVANIA



Donate to Allegheny
Land Trust!

What will be your legacy?

You can make sure that future generations will be able to enjoy the same views and conservation benefits 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.



PHOTO BY BERNADETTE KAZMARSKI