

VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Spring 2012



Notes From the Land

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSERVATION

Each Spring issue of VISTAS is dedicated to thanking those who have helped to support local land protection over the past year. These are individuals, businesses, foundations and governmental agencies that are investing in permanent green space because of the environmental, aesthetic and quality of life benefits it provides our communities.

2011 was a banner year for private non-foundation gifts dedicated to protecting land. Almost \$600,000 in cash and land value was received by ALT last year, pretty strong evidence that local land protection is important.

There are very few things one can do to have such a long-lasting impact on a community as helping to protect land. As long as society exists as we know it today, land protected by ALT will remain forever green, which I think inspires many to give to this cause.

Each one of you is an important link in the chain that helps to secure land protection for generations to come. ALT may be the immediate beneficiary of your generosity, but it is the future that truly benefits from your giving that helps to sustain a quality of life. Your support is clear evidence of humanity caring for the future. On behalf of the Board and staff at ALT, and the host of people and wildlife that benefits from our work, I want to once again say **Thank You.** ~RK

The Gift That's Right for You

by Philip L. Brooks, Interim President

Giving is not just writing a check to Allegheny Land Trust (ALT), but may take many different forms. All ultimately result in a greener community for all of us in which to live.

Annual Giving for Operations: The most common option for individuals (and corporations) to consider when contemplating a gift to ALT is the dollar amount they might provide to help cover expenses for operations. Each year ALT needs between \$500,000 and \$750,000 to pay for staff, rent, the costs of stewarding its 1,500 acres, and legal and accounting fees. In the current fiscal year that ends June 30, 2012, ALT anticipates receiving approximately 55% of its operating budget from local foundations. The next largest source at 24%, are gifts from ALT board members, staff, and individuals (like you!). Earned income, 8%, is generated by ALT staff who provide consulting services to municipalities and other government organizations. Giving by corporations, 5%, and a few other smaller sources make up the rest.

So what are some of the other options for giving? ALT is in the business of preserving land and, therefore, a critical element for satisfying its mission is the acquisition of additional green space. This is accomplished through "real estate donations" or "funds to support a property acquisition". We clearly have many future opportunities for this type of giving. You will read later in this issue

See "Right for You", page 2



PHOTO BY EMILIE COOPER

Thank you, donors!

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Annual Boat Tour

Do you know on which ALT property this unique rock formation is found? See page 7 to find out!

A SPECIAL Thanks! TO OUR 2011 DONORS

In the Works

Land protection projects totaling more than 300 acres are currently under contract or in final negotiations as of this writing. Two properties totaling more than 100 acres are poised to be gifted, and three more totaling 230 acres will require ALT to raise more than \$2 million—a scary endeavor these days. However, ALT has not failed yet in our efforts to raise sufficient funds to close on a property we've had under contract. Following are details of some of the projects.

PITTSBURGH CUT FLOWER: 180 ACRES, RICHLAND TWP.

Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Colcom Foundation, ALT has the property under contract and is seeking funding for due diligence, acquisition and mitigation. ALT's vision for this 180-acre property in the Pine Creek Watershed is to transform approximately 10 blighted acres where Pittsburgh Cut Flower operated for 80 years into a solar farm or other form of economic development for the community. Another 20 acres that have a number of abandoned residential structures could be resold with restrictions that protect the important natural areas and covenants that promote sustainable land use. The remaining 150 acres of meadows, woodlands and ponds will be permanent green space available to the public for passive recreation. The green space will provide the critical function of rainwater sequestration in the headwaters of a flood-prone watershed where downstream communities such as Shaler and Etna are investing millions-of-dollars to reduce flood damage to homes and businesses.



Pittsburgh Cut Flower, Richland Twp.

PHOTO BY ROY KRANK

CATHOLIC DIOCESE: 50 ACRES, SEWICKLEY HILLS

This 50-acre woodland, that has recently been posted “for sale”, has been on ALT's prospect list for several years. It will extend ALT's 100-acre Audubon Greenway project that is designed to connect Sewickley Heights Park to Sewickley Hills Park, providing abundant green space, fresh water sources, varied wildlife habitat and migration corridors, as well as hiking, biking and equestrian trails. The property buffers encroaching urban sprawl from the Little Sewickley Creek Landscape Conservation Area, a scientific designation given to lands that meet certain criteria for plant and animal diversity by the Allegheny County Natural Heritage Inventory. The budget for this project is \$700,000 with funding anticipated from PA DCNR and private funders.

VENANGO TRAILS: 80 ACRES, MARSHALL TWP.

A developer has generously offered to gift this undisturbed property to ALT. It is next to one of the fastest growing communities in Pennsylvania—Cranberry Township. The gently rolling, picturesque landscape includes mature hardwoods, several spring seeps, a variety of wildlife habitats, and a section of Venango Trail, a historic Native America Indian trail that linked the “Forks of the Ohio” with Presque Isle in

Erie, PA. Although the property is a gift, ALT is seeking funding to cover expenses associated with the transaction estimated to be \$30,000.

MORTON CONSERVATION AREA: 33 ACRES, ELIZABETH TWP.

This property is being generously gifted with all expenses covered by the donor including contribution to Stewardship Fund. It consists of sloping woodlands with several mature oak and poplar trees that were likely large “Lone Wolf” trees in a former pasture.

From “Right for You”, page 1

about one such recent gift.

Other vitally important, alternative giving options include “volunteering your time and/or sharing your skills”. ALT needs volunteers to help our staff steward each property by periodically visiting sites and sharing their observations about changes. You may also have a personal skill that ALT may apply to a project, such as photography, graphic design or event planning. These are frequently posted on ALT's website, but we welcome calls or emails when you have some time or a skill you would like to share.

The giving that has perhaps the most long term impact is called “Planned Giving”. By donating (either today or through your estate) to ALT's operating or stewardship endowments you are able to ensure that the principal of your gift is preserved forever. Planned Giving strategies include: making a gift that costs nothing during your lifetime; giving stock and realizing tax savings; getting a monthly paycheck for life in return for your gift; or donating your house, continuing to live there, and getting a tax break all at the same time. ALT benefits because the interest earned on these assets is now available forever and helps reduce the money it needs to raise each year and better ensures the organization's long term existence.

As you read more in this issue you will find examples of how others have picked the type of giving that was right for them. We encourage you to consider what might be right for you.

Family Farm to be Left to ALT

by Bernadette E. Kazmarski

Harry Meyer has sweet memories of the sun setting over cropland and the world going to bed, of harvest time and walking through a field of ripened grain and feeling the ripened seed heads brushing his outstretched arms.

He wants his family's farmland to hold those memories for others, so he has left the 45-acre plot in South Fayette in his will to Allegheny Land Trust.

"I want to see it put in the hands of competent people," Harry said. "I want to protect this land of mine, and someday maybe it can be established as a learning center for students and young people to learn about the science of agriculture."



PHOTO BY ROY KRAYNYK

Harry explains how to trim apple branches to ALT's Emilie Cooper.

Though his family purchased the farm in 1946 at 220 acres, the farm was established in 1795 as 500-acre Federal Springs Farm and was used as agricultural land from then until today, raising many sheep and dairy cows as well as vegetables, flowers, shrubs and trees.

"We also grew tomatoes for H.J. Heinz in the late 40s and 50s," Harry remembered, "including a variety called Stokesdale that would ripen all in one day. We'd pick them in September and haul them into Pittsburgh in hampers and I think they were used mostly for chili sauce."

While on the Land Preservation Board in South Fayette, Harry found ALT's Roy Kraynyk to be very dedicated and liked what he saw of the organization. When the time came to determine what would happen to his land when he's gone, Harry decided entrusting the land to ALT was the best decision.

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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.

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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!**

TALENTS AND SKILLS

by Emilie Cooper, Stewardship Director

ALT has many talented and skilled volunteers who use their abilities to help further our mission. I'd like to introduce you to three active volunteers who have made a significant impact on ALT.

Joan Miles: For many years Joan sits smiling a few hours each week at one of our volunteer desks doing research and often helps prepare grant applications. When I asked Joan about her experience she said, "[I] wanted to continue making a difference by using the writing and advocacy skills I developed as an environmental lawyer and community activist. As a member and donor, I'm delighted to be supporting ALT's conservation mission in new ways." In 2012 alone, Joan has submitted proposal requests for more than \$35,000 to help support ALT's mission.

Robert Purdy: "Bob" as we know him is a man of many talents, often our photographer at events or tour guide of his favorite property, Bob is most gracious with his online talents. For more than 10 years Bob has been the internet master for ALT. We are grateful for his patience, creativity and speedy work! "I know very little about 'central stonerollers' or 'scaldweed,' but I do know something about HTML and CSS, so working as a volunteer to help keep Allegheny Land Trust's website up-to-date is a perfect fit for me. It is rewarding to know that I play a part in keeping the community informed about Allegheny Land Trust's projects, events and protected properties."

Adam Fuller: You can ask almost any young boy about their "talents and skills" and something about the outdoors or nature will show up on that list. This is no different for Adam. In December 2011, Adam completed his Eagle Scout Project at Dead Man's Hollow by constructing a trail that connects the Cool Spirit Trail in Liberty Borough to the Dead Man's Loop along the Youghiogheny River. Adam and his volunteer crew gave more than 200 hours. I am sure they suffered tired hands and sore backs, but their skills paid off. Hollow visitors are now able to hike to the ruins and the Great Allegheny Passage on a well-built trail. We are grateful for their work and thrilled to have another ALT Eagle Scout.



Adam Fuller and volunteer at Dead Man's Hollow

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Sycamore Snippet

by Mike Good, Sycamore Island Project Manager

Sycamore Island has been a focal point of ALT's activity since last November; the results should delight spring-time visitors. From November to December, Joel Perkovich and Tsuga Studios repurposed the old swimming pool structure on Sycamore Island. The deep end was filled with soil and pool filters were made into benches. Wildlife can access the newly gradated shallow end via an earthen ramp, only the beginning of improvements to this water feature. Tsuga Studios will return during late spring to plant a native garden. By summer, a network of interpretive signs will enrich visitors' experience to the island.

In the past few months, Sycamore Island's volunteers have joined an online community called Base Camp to better coordinate their efforts and learn when others will be conducting activities on the island. Island visitors can also join Sycamore Island's brand new iNaturalist project (<http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/sycamore-island>), which provides an online database of every species of plant and animal observed on the island.

Would you like to play a greater role in the restoration of Sycamore Island? E-mail Mike Good at stewardship@alleghenylandtrust.org to join the Base Camp page, and join us on iNaturalist today! Supporters like you can give back by helping to maintain this project.

Answer: Dead Mans' Hollow - Table Rock can be found at the intersection of the Cool Spirit Trail and Table Rock Trail, a new trail constructed at DMH. For more info, read above about Adam Fuller.

Allegheny Land Trust is currently seeking candidates for the position of Executive Director. Complete details about this position can be found on our website on the Job Opportunities page.



Helping local people save local land.

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Celebrate **SPRING** with Allegheny Land Trust!



Our 3rd Annual Spring Boat Tour of our rivers on Pittsburgh Luxury Cruises' *Fantasy*.

While aboard, enjoy a light catered dinner, drinks and music.

In addition to supporting ALT's land conservation work, the boat tour will be a great time for us to enjoy views of our fabulous city and mingle with friends.

Thursday, May 17, 2012, 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

COST: \$100/person **BOARDING LOCATION:** Lock Wall One Marina, end of 23rd Street in the Strip District

PARKING: Free parking is available in the marina lot and in the garage located at 24th Street in the Strip.

To make reservations, please visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org and click on the "BOAT TOUR" icon or call the office at 412-741-2750. **Please RSVP by May 3, 2012**

UPCOMING EVENTS

4/21/2012 – CHARTIERS CREEK CLEAN-UP
Join ALT and Paddle Without Pollution!

4/28/2012 – SYCAMORE ISLAND RIVERSIDE REDD-UP

Join ALT, Friends of the Riverfront and Allegheny CleanWays to Redd Up the Riverside

5/05/2012 – MUSHROOM WALK ON SYCAMORE ISLAND

See website for information.

5/17/2012 – ANNUAL BOAT TOUR

See above for information.

6/03/2012 – VENTURE OUTDOORS PADDLE ON SYCAMORE ISLAND

Sign up on the VO website, www.ventureoutdoors.org.

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

WishList

When you wish upon a star, what do you wish for? Well, ALT creates a wish list every year in hoping that someone will step forward and grant their wishes. Most of these wishes are small items that would make a big impact on the work ALT does each year. Whether it is a tool for the volunteers to use or a notebook to take to presentations they all would make an impact. Please e-mail admin@alleghenylandtrust.org if you can donate a wish.

- Outdoor Supply Backpack for fieldwork (\$50)
- Wheel barrow for Wingfield Pines and Sycamore Island volunteers (\$100 each)
- Weed wrenches for invasive removal (\$250 each)
- Olympus Stylus Tough Digital Camera shockproof/waterproof/freezeproof (\$450)
- Notebook (\$1,000)



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