

# VISTAS

A publication of Allegheny Land Trust

Winter 2012

## Free Winter Fun Brought to You by Allegheny Land Trust

by Emilie Cooper Rzotkiewicz, Stewardship Director

Do you have the winter blues? Allegheny Land Trust has just the thing for you! Get outside and enjoy Western Pennsylvania in the winter on one of ALT's conservation properties—the trails are in excellent condition in winter and full of sunshine to warm your face as there are no leaves on the trees.

If you have never been to an ALT property in the dead of winter, here are just a few things you've been missing. Did you know that Witch Hazel, a native Pennsylvania tree, blooms delicate yellow flowers throughout the winter? Or that the grey squirrel is extra busy in late January chasing a potential mate from tree to tree? The woods and trails are full of sights and scenes to enjoy on a walk, or bring your camera to catch a few stunning shots.

You now ask yourself, "What do I do if we have lots of white stuff... SNOW?" Use this to your recreational advantage. Many ALT properties are perfect for winter adventures. Try snow shoeing at Barking Slopes while searching for the elusive red fox. Irwin Run has been used for cross country skiing for decades with an abandoned roadway providing a perfect winter wonderland trail. If the temperature is cold enough and you have thermal underwear and skates, ice skate on the southern ponds at Wingfield Pines. BE SURE TO CHECK THE ICE FIRST!

All winter long, ALT properties are waiting for visitors. Consider a January



hike to kick start your New Year's resolution to "exercise more and lose weight" or spend Valentine's Day with your sweetheart outside so that you may warm up in front of a fire that evening. The opportunities are endless for outdoor winter fun; get out and enjoy the snow!

Find your nearest ALT conservation property by visiting [www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org) and clicking on "Properties".



### Winter Fun!

### More Inside:

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Where is this structure and what is it for? See page 7 to find out!

PHOTO BY EMILIE COOPER

## Outreach. It Sounds Easy, But Is It?

by Chris Beichner, Executive Director



For the last four years, I worked for the Mount Washington Community Development Corporation representing the Mount Washington and Duquesne Heights neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh. These neighborhoods are 2 of 90 in the City with about 11,200

people residing there. The population is extremely diverse with a great mix of college students who live there for the convenience of getting downtown. There is also a large populace of folks who have lived in the neighborhood all their lives and don't plan to leave.

As a CDC, we needed to communicate with the neighborhood about upcoming projects, seek suggestions to improve the neighborhood and let the residents know about upcoming events or volunteer opportunities. Challenge #1: There were 11,200 people as our target audience. Challenge #2: The age diversity meant one size did not fit all when it came to outreach methods. Challenge #3: Not a lot of people knew who the Mount Washington CDC was or what we did.

So, how does that relate to ALT? Our target audience of Allegheny County has a population of 1.2 million people. Age diversity is all over the board, and the thought is many people do not know about ALT or our mission. How does ALT effectively outreach and communicate who we are?

First, we need to have a focus on our priorities. A new, multi-year strategic plan is being created which will help us refine our priorities related to land conservation focus areas and goals to achieve success. This focus should narrow our target audience to something less than 1.2 million people.

Second, we need to develop and sustain multiple modes of outreach. This VISTAS newsletter, while an awesome communications tool enjoyed by thousands of readers, doesn't necessarily reach our diverse audience. We need to expand the reach of this newsletter and offer a variation of it for those who don't have the time



**Word of mouth and seeing results are great outreach tools.**

or desire to read it. This means developing our email database for more email outreach. We need to expand our friends on Facebook and Twitter. We need to ensure our website is the best it can be for information sharing. Our printed brochures and publications need to be refreshed and distributed. Our face-to-face outreach to other conservation groups, municipalities, community groups and elected officials needs to double. Positive print, radio and television exposure needs to be pursued and embraced.

Finally, it begins and ends with you. Word of mouth is our most powerful ally to communicate the positive experiences of conserving land. With so many long-standing ALT supporters, sharing positive and personal connections to our mission is the best way to reach out to new audiences.

In my first sixty days with ALT, I have had 65 meetings connecting with over 200 people—many who were new to ALT. What if each VISTAS reader took 15 minutes next week and spoke to two people who knew nothing about ALT or land conservation? Do the same

thing the following week and the same for a month. Within 30 days, word of mouth would have spread to 16,000 new people learning about ALT and land conservation. Realistically, not everyone reading VISTAS will talk to someone new about land conservation, but you can see what the impact of word-of-mouth outreach could be if there was a collective effort.

I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many new people passionate about land protection. The board and staff are a delight to work with and the volunteers are determined and dedicated. I am fortunate to be with ALT and fortunate to have the support of my wife, family and friends to take on this challenge. While I might have ideas for outreach and other aspects to improve the organization, I know you have ideas too. Don't keep them to yourself. Talk to your neighbors, friends and family about land conservation. Share your ideas with our board and staff, and please feel free to contact me at any time to talk about ideas to increase land conservation. I can be reached at 412-741-2750 x202 or via email at cbeichner@alleghenylandtrust.org. I look forward to hearing from you.



# NOTES FROM THE LAND

## Pittsburgh Cut Flower Project Encounters More Red Tape

In the case of the Pittsburgh Cut Flower project Red Tape is a good thing. For most of 2012, we've been working hard to raise the funds to purchase the 180-acre property that was the former location of the flower gardens and greenhouses of Pittsburgh Cut Flower. The community's response to this challenge has been very enthusiastic. Several groups, more than 100 individuals, and businesses like Erie Insurance Group, Tall Timbers Tree Experts, and Jewarts Gymnastics who have organized fundraisers have raised more than \$30,000 towards the local goal of \$140,000 needed to help match and leverage the large public and private grants ALT is applying for. Local support is critical because it demonstrates to larger funders the community's desire to see the undisturbed 150 acres of the property remain as permanent green space available to the public for passive recreation.

The local support, commitment and enthusiasm for this project are very inspiring for us at ALT. Folks like John Pasquinelli, Dean Bastianini and Annette Robinson have demonstrated key leadership that elevates the profile and sustains the grassroots campaign while ALT worked to submit 11 grant applications that have raised more than \$600,000 with another \$1.1 million pending.

Following are events and fundraisers that we encourage you to support:

- Luminaria sales by the Orchard Park Neighborhood Association: Goal is to sell 500 kits to raise \$8,000.
- Door-to-door canvassing in Treesdale by Pine Richland high school students.
- Northern Tier Library: Display of historic pictures and "artifacts" of Pittsburgh Cut Flower starting in January.
- February 9, 2013 at Northern Tier Library: Celebration of the History of PCF – a presentation of the history of PCF including an "open mic" session for folks to tell stories about PCF.
- Benefit dinner: Date and location to be determined.
- Community Visioning: Led by Chatham University Grad student, James Snow, an open public meeting to collect ideas and information about the property that will help to guide ALT's planning for the property.

Fortunately, all of these efforts are resulting in more Red Tape. So, why is Red Tape a good thing? Because "Red" is the color of the "Tape" we use to illustrate the level of funds raised on the sign that appears on the property.

Join your friends, neighbors and local businesses to help us add Red Tape by making a contribution at [www.allegenylandtrust.org](http://www.allegenylandtrust.org) to help purchase the acres of meadows, woodlands, streams, ponds and trails at the former cut flower property!~RK



**Roy Kraynyk, ALT's Land Protection Director, is pictured here with Debbie Nute of the Village Garden Club at the annual national meeting of the Garden Club of America held in Pittsburgh this past October. Mr. Kraynyk was nominated by Ms. Nute for the Garden Club of America Zone Conservation Commendation for his "...tremendous passion, dedication and leadership in helping local people save local land in Western Pennsylvania..." Prior to the awards luncheon, Mr. Kraynyk presented a case study on "Identifying and Protecting Cultural Landscapes".**



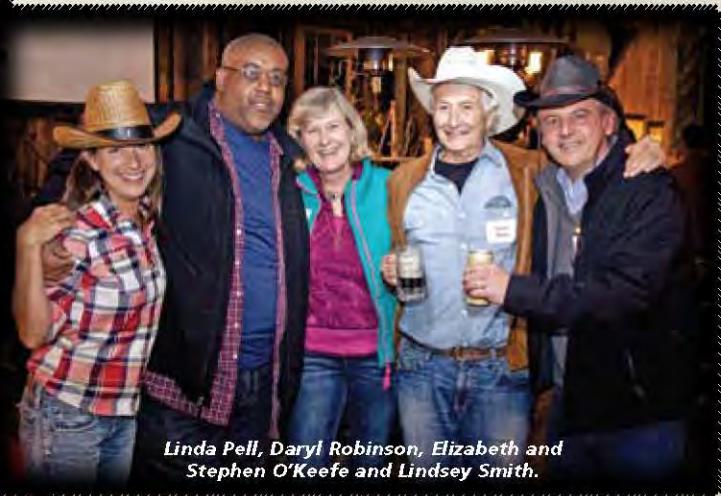
# HOW WE WON THE WEST

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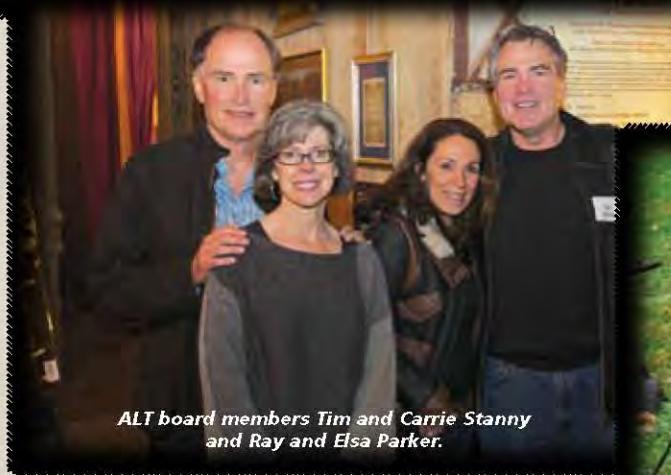
## in Western Pennsylvania



*A view from above.*



*Linda Pell, Daryl Robinson, Elizabeth and Stephen O'Keefe and Lindsey Smith.*



*ALT board members Tim and Carrie Stanny and Ray and Elsa Parker.*



*The cowboy cook.*

### BOUNTY HOSTS

**John Oliver & Sylvia Dallas**

**Rick & Laurie Johnson**

**Tim & Carrie Stanny**

**Bill & Jodie Welge**

### EVENT COMMITTEE

**Willie and Tracey Earhart**

**Michael and Madelynne Karafa**

**Rick and Shanan Jackson**

**Alisa Lenhardt**

**Paul and Kathleen McMillan**

**Lindsey Smith and Linda Pell**

**Teddy Pynos**

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**Susan Craig**



Raising \$30,000 for land conservation, the 5th Annual Bounty in the BarN was hosted on October 27, 2012 at Bill and Jodie Welge's historic and fabulous BarN in Sewickley Heights.

Approximately 150 guests joined ALT to enjoy dinner by various vendors, music by the Betsy

Lawrence Band and square dancing in a celebration supporting land conservation. Thank

you to all the sponsors who made this year's Bounty the best yet. Thank you to Bill and Jodie Welge for offering their BarN for another great event as well as a big THANK YOU to the event committee who planned all the details for the evening.

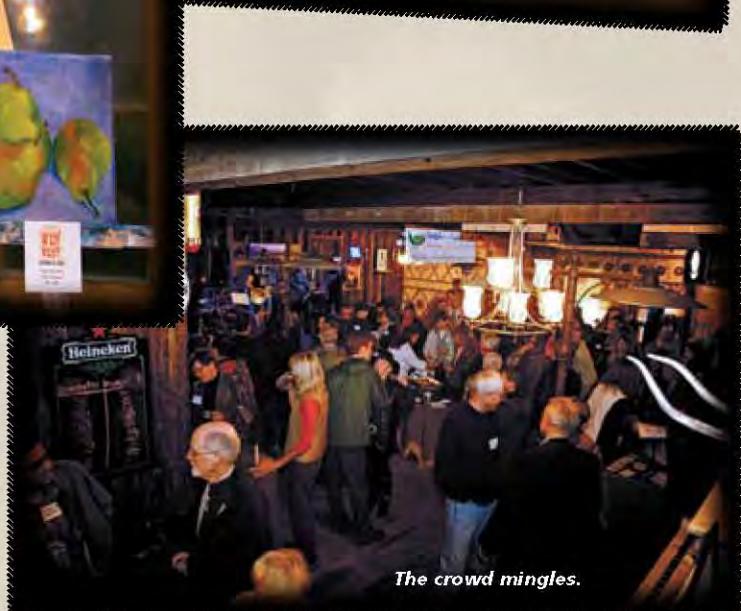


*BarN hosts Jodie, Bill and Liam Welge.*

*Artwork for sale by local artists.*



*Guests enjoy the refreshments.*



*The crowd mingles.*

#### SILENT AUCTION SPONSORS

*Robin Hummel-Johnson  
Levin Furniture  
Simon & Hazel Merrills  
Ken & Elyse Wright of Wright  
Automotive*

#### ARTISTS ON EXHIBIT

*(25% of sales donated to ALT)  
Cindy Engler  
Claire Hardy  
Christine Hutson  
Eryn Jackson  
Duncan MacDiarmid  
David Noble  
Carol Saunders  
Robert Strovers*

#### CUISINE SPONSORS

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Darryl Robinson  
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Mediterra Bakehouse  
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Sewickley Confectionery  
The Wine Boss  
Tom Friday's Market  
Vivo*

## Support Land Conservation in 2012

Hopefully many VISTAS readers have received a direct appeal letter to your homes or places of business asking for one more show of support for ALT's mission to be the lead land trust conserving and stewarding lands. If we are going to continue to acquire land for wildlife habitat, passive recreation, water quality and reducing storm water runoff, then we need YOU to help!



**These 10 acres protected in Sewickley Heights were made possible by 100% private, individual donations. What property will you help protect?**

hope to bring a new outlook to the organization while I complete and implement a new strategic plan, ramp up fundraising and marketing efforts and provide renewed leadership to ALT.

Land protection activities over the past 12 months (see sidebar) could not have happened without YOU!

Collectively, we have the opportunity and responsibility to protect land in our communities for the benefit and use of our children and grandchildren for generations. By sending your final 2012 contribution to ALT today, you will qualify for a 2012 tax deduction and know that 100% of your contribution will go towards serving the mission of ALT.

Please consider supporting ALT today.

With 1,000 acres currently under contract or negotiation—in addition to over 1,500 acres already protected—it has been a big year for ALT. After eleven years as Executive Director, Roy Kraynyk is now putting all his talents and energy to work as ALT's new Land Protection Director focusing solely on ways to protect land. And as the new Executive Director, I

## 2012 LAND PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

- Our campaign to purchase 180 acres of the former Pittsburgh Cut Flower property in Richland Township is the most ambitious project in our history. The parcel has 150 acres of pristine grasslands, meadows, ponds, streams and woodlands located at the headwaters of the Pine Creek Watershed and absorbs 120 million gallons of rainwater annually. While this magnificent land would become available for public use, the remaining 30 acres of abandoned and blighted greenhouses and other buildings would be demolished making them safe and available for economic development. Enthusiasm to acquire the former Pittsburgh Cut Flower property has been fabulous with over 100 people and institutions to date contributing more than \$650,000 towards the goal of purchasing the property for \$1.4 million. As you can see, we still need your help to keep the momentum going!
- ALT received a gift of 28 acres in Elizabeth Township known as Pineview Heights.
- ALT received a gift of 80 acres of mature woodlands and springs in Marshall Township known as Venango Trails.
- We are working with a couple in Indiana Township—a new community for ALT—to place a conservation easement on their 27 acre farm which will protect the land forever.
- ALT created Management Plans for the Chartiers Greenway in Upper St. Clair and South Fayette Townships, Meadowview in Sewickley Heights and Pineview Heights in Elizabeth Township.
- We held 23 different volunteer events last fiscal year totaling 4,266 volunteer hours.

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VISTAS is underwritten by an anonymous donor. Thank you!

## Program Spotlights Urban EcoStewards

In 2010, Allegheny Land Trust became the sixth organization in the Urban EcoStewards program. We saw the partnership as an opportunity to expand stewardship programming throughout the 1,500 acres that ALT, and supporters like you, help to conserve. The idea behind the Urban EcoSteward program is simple: volunteers agree to adopt a specific parcel of land to maintain and then tend to their adopted plot throughout the year. ALT and partner organizations coordinate various free trainings throughout the year, with the goal of building a dedicated and knowledgeable volunteer base to care for Allegheny County's green space. ALT is now able to dedicate more time than ever before to make this program the best it can be.

Thirteen active Urban EcoStewards currently

volunteer throughout ALT's conservation areas, helping to manage or perform tasks related to the upkeep of the land. ALT extends a heartfelt thank you to both our site stewards and ALT Urban EcoStewards who perform the invaluable work that keeps ALT conservation areas worth conserving. In addition to the fifty Urban EcoStewards



*Urban EcoSteward Joyce Chilton tends a red oak tree on Sycamore Island—we're looking for one more tree tender for SI!*

who have dedicated just under a thousand hours of service to stewardship in Allegheny County, ALT hopes to double its number of active Urban EcoStewards by next June. Call Mike to sign up now!

We invite ALT supporters to attend our yearly recap and thank-you to learn more about the program, and to socialize with other stewards. The annual Winter Gathering will take place on Saturday January 26, 2013 at the Schenley Visitor Center, hosted by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. We invite you to join us and to meet some of the volunteers who are working to keep our green space pristine. For an entire list of UES trainings check ALT's online event calendar, accessible via our home page at [alleghenylandtrust.org](http://alleghenylandtrust.org).

ALT needs you now, so do not hesitate to call Mike Good, Project Manager, at 412-741-2750 or email at [stewardship@alleghenylandtrust.org](mailto:stewardship@alleghenylandtrust.org) for information about enrolling in the Urban EcoSteward program on a Land Trust property.

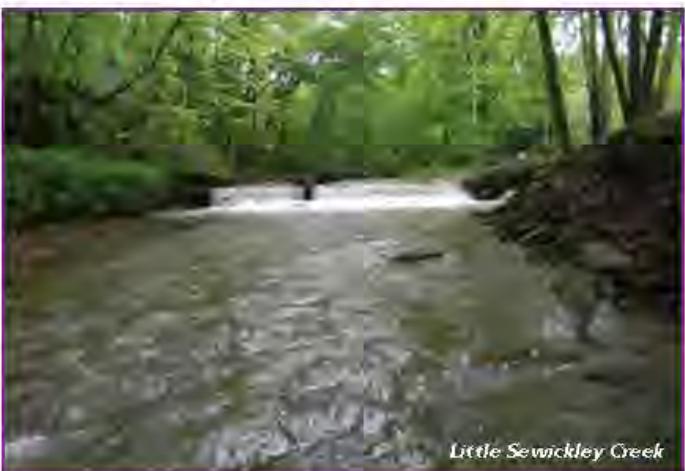
## Little Sewickley Creek Study

Over the last year and a half, graduate student Nathan Reinhart and professor Ed Schroth of Duquesne University have been on a mission. They believe that the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed located just 15 miles outside of Pittsburgh, deserves the highest category of protection, Exceptional Value (EV). The stream is currently designated as a High Quality Trout-Stocking Fishery (HQ-TSF).

Nathan Reinhart, enrolled in the Environmental Science and Management Program, took on the process of completing a formal petition to submit to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The DEP requires the petitioner to collect historical and current data on the stream to defend their petition. The petition includes data on: the overall land use of the watershed; physical, chemical, and both biological indicators—benthic macroinvertebrates and fish populations; point- and non-point sources of pollution; and the EV qualifiers that the stream meets.

The stream displays a high biological biodiversity in both parameters. There have been 30 documented families of benthic macroinvertebrates, over half of those families are intolerant of pollution and require cold clean water to survive. The population of fish is also diverse with 33 species living in the stream, including naturally reproducing brown trout and the state-threatened blue-breasted darter! On November 20, 2012, the DEP and the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) accepted the petition for further study, a huge step in the right direction. This will require the DEP to visit the stream in the spring to sample and collect data for the redesignation process.

The petition is readily available to the public on the DEP website [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental\\_quality\\_board/14005/eqb\\_meeting\\_schedule\\_2012/1055511](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental_quality_board/14005/eqb_meeting_schedule_2012/1055511) (please see November 20, 2012, meeting).



*Little Sewickley Creek*

*out your bluebird box at Dead Man's Hollow. As winter settles in and the Eastern Bluebirds head south for winter, remember to get out there and clean*



Helping local people save local land.

Suite 206B  
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Sewickley, PA 15143

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

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## WALK OFF THAT HOLIDAY FOOD!

Visit your favorite ALT Conservation Area—find locations and directions on our website.

Happy Holidays from all of us at Allegheny Land Trust.

Don't miss a thing! Sign up for our E-News—send your e-mail to [info@allegenylandtrust.org](mailto:info@allegenylandtrust.org).



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Donate to Allegheny Land Trust!

## THANK YOU Day of Giving Supporters!

With 76 donors and \$11,671 raised in a 24-hour period, ALT would like to thank all our contributors who gave to support our mission. The Pittsburgh Foundation's Day of Giving took place on October 3, 2012 and raised over \$8.5 million for non-profits in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties. This is a 31% increase in contributions from 2011. All 665 organizations participating in the Day of Giving received at least one contribution from the 17,719 individuals which was also up from 13,643 in 2011.

ALT is very grateful to have so many long-time supporters, friends and fans of our organization with a passion to protect and conserve land. You are the lifeblood that enables the continued success in reaching our goals. It was also nice to see the many new contributors to ALT on Day of Giving too. We deeply appreciate new financial supporters and hope you become a lasting partner in land conservation.

Thank you again to all our supporters!

Please recycle this newsletter—give it to a friend when you're done!