

# VISTAS

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE



**Harvest**

Autumn 2014

Eastern BlueBird house designed  
by Conner Mills of the Art Institute  
of Pittsburgh glazed with iron  
oxide from Wingfield Pines, read  
about the project and see more  
on page 3.

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**Welcome Keri Rouse**

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# Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area Plan Completion

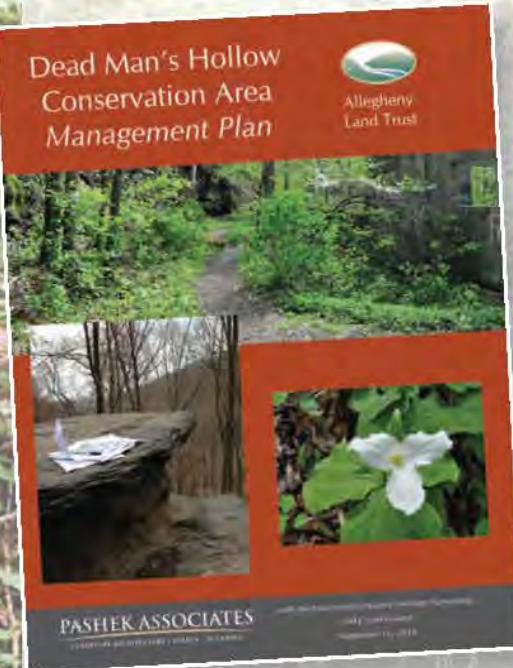
by Caitlin Seiler, Stewardship Coordinator

It may be called Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area (DMH), but it will certainly not be "dead" for long. After months of development and invaluable input from neighboring communities, the DMH

Conservation Area Management Plan has been finalized and an Executive Summary will be available on the ALT website. The comprehensive plan will assist ALT in enhancing the recreational and educational opportunities at DMH and identify public opportunities to promote the use of the property without impairing the hollow's unique spaces and habitats.

The plan features repairs, designs and additions of new sustainable trails. The trails will include designated areas open to biking and hiking. The plan also provides recommendations for the protection of ecologically sensitive areas; provisions for public safety; and interpretation of the ecology, rich history and lore associated with the property.

Coinciding with the release of the plan, ALT has welcomed a Public Ally Apprentice, Keri Rouse, who has joined the team to jumpstart the implementation of the plan. If you're interested in helping Keri and ALT revitalize Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area, consider joining our stewardship team, and read below to learn about what Keri will be doing.



## ALT Adds a Public Ally to the Team

Keri Rouse is joining Allegheny Land Trust as a Public Allies AmeriCorps Apprentice. Keri is charged with implementing the Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area Trail & Management Plan, which will include improving and building trails, installing new signage, keeping invasive species in check, and getting more people out to discover the charm of the site for themselves. She looks forward to connecting with the hollow, local community leaders, and volunteers to get the improvements underway. Meet Keri at the Fall Spruce Up at the ruins on November 1. Find details on the back of the newsletter. If you'd like to get involved or find more information, email Keri at [krouse@alleghenylandtrust.org](mailto:krouse@alleghenylandtrust.org).

*Keri Rouse, Public Allies AmeriCorps Apprentice*



## From the Bike Fest 'Haul To The Hollow' Ride August 17

**South Side Riverfront Trail 36-mile bike to & from Dead Man's Hollow**



## Art Institute Students Upcycle Unique Birdhouses

by Dan Dougherty, Hamm Intern

This past April, students from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh visited Wingfield Pines to collect samples of iron oxide from the abandoned mine drainage (AMD) system ponds. Upon returning from their school break, the institute students were tasked with constructing unique ceramic birdhouses using the settled iron oxide as pigment. In early September, the students completed the upcycled houses and returned to Wingfield to install a few of them on site. One of the homes, a bluebird box featured on Vista's cover, can



be found on a pole just behind the informational kiosk. Its variable orange coloring is derived almost entirely from the iron oxide which accumulates at the bottom of the settling ponds. Another, pictured at bottom left, was installed hanging freely in a tree toward the end of the AMD system, and is designed for woodpeckers.

By baking the iron oxide into the glaze on the ceramic portions of the birdhouses, the students were able to showcase yet another way to reuse the collected mineral, which in this case found its way back to Wingfield Pines. AMD system design and construction mastermind Bob Hedin, of Hedin Environmental, has been working for years to reuse the settled iron oxide as dyes and pigments. We can now add ceramic glazes to that list.

While you will find only two of the ceramic birdhouses at Wingfield Pines, you may be able to find some in your own home! The remaining ceramic AMD-glazed birdhouses will be put up for auction at ALT's upcoming fundraising event "Come Fly With Me" on November 22. Be sure to save the date, and join us to celebrate 20 Years of ALT's land conservation excellence and enter to win your one-of-a-kind, locally crafted, locally sourced, upcycled birdhouse.

*Note: Dan has ended his internship with us and we are sad to see him go. We thank him for his contributions, hard work, good ideas and great pictures during the summer months.*



Tree Swallow Bird House  
Designed by Nate Fleissner



White-Breasted Nuthatch  
Designed by Shawn Erdely



Red-Bellied Woodpecker Bird House  
Designed by Waverly Shivers



Carolina Chickadee Bird House  
Designed by Arianne Rauluk

## ALT and Sewickley Heights Borough Partner to Fill Gap in Park

by Roy Kraynyk, Land Protection Director

For generations people have used the trails and woodlands of the 58 acres surrounded by Sewickley Heights Park, Fern Hollow Road and Borough Park Road as if it were park land. Now, a partnership between ALT and Sewickley Heights to purchase the property from a private owner can ensure that future generations can enjoy the trails and woodlands forever.

This project has been on our radar screen for several years, and finally a contract was inked between ALT and the owners in August to acquire the land for \$1 million. About 30% of that amount has been raised, and several grants are pending that total \$750,000. The local goal for the community is \$500,000 depending on how successful we are with the pending state grants that require a local match.

The land will ultimately be owned by the borough to expand Sewickley Heights Park. It is located near the confluence of two major tributaries of Little Sewickley Creek; thanks to the decades of work by Ed Schroth, Up the Creek Gang and the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association. The creek is a candidate for Exception Value (EV) status which is the highest ranking for a stream in PA. The entire Little Sewickley Creek Watershed was designated in 1993 as biologically significant, hosting several Species of Special Concern.

It is in the interest of ALT to protect this land as development of the parcel for housing would disturb the steep unstable slopes, impact the water quality, compromise the integrity of the plant community and drastically change the wilderness character of Fern Hollow and quiet solitude of the park.

Roy Kraynyk, ALT's Land Protection Director, is leading a hike of the property on Friday, November 28 for those interested in learning more. Please contact us at 412-741-2750 x203 or [rkraynyk@alleghenylandtrust.org](mailto:rkraynyk@alleghenylandtrust.org) so we have an idea of how many are coming.

Please consider making a contribution that will help match pending grants by using the enclosed envelope. Write "SHP Expansion" on the memo line of your check. You can also make a gift by visiting [www.alleghenylandtrust.org](http://www.alleghenylandtrust.org), or by calling the office at 412-741-2750 for instructions for making gifts of stock. As always, no contribution is too small as it is always important to show a large number of people supporting this project.



Chris Beichner and John Oliver at Sewickley Heights Park Expansion Property.



## Sycamore Island: A Year in Review

by Rick Duncan, Urban EcoSteward, Sycamore Island Site Steward

The year 2014 has been a beautiful one on Sycamore Island. If you haven't visited yet, please do, because fall is one of the best times to take in the beauty. The view of the river from the bench atop Mt. Sycamore is wonderful, particularly when the leaves have fallen and the view expands.

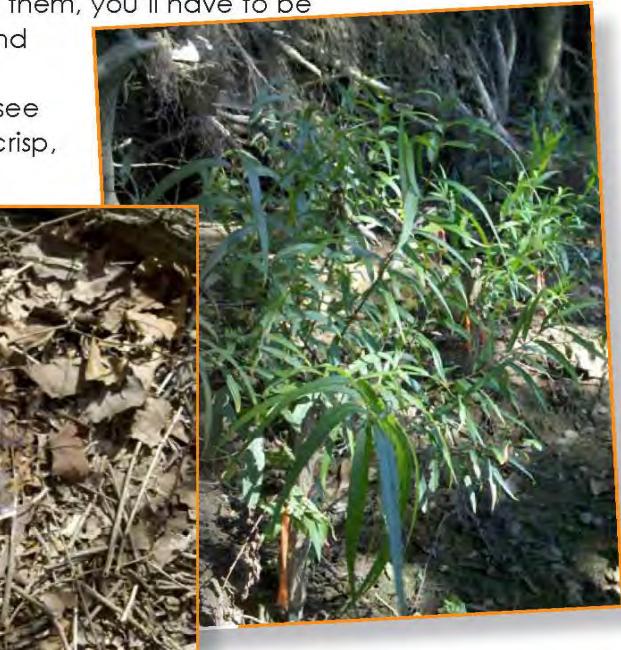
This season started with a cool spring, and the geese were a-laying eggs everywhere, quite crankily I might add. The cardinal flowers were in bloom this summer and they appear to be spreading, popping up all over the island in isolated places. The cardinal flowers by the pool were especially beautiful last month.

Also, there are huge tadpoles in the pond, which are likely Northern Green Frogs. They move quickly, so be quiet and patient while looking for them; they rise to the surface to feed and then dart back down. It looks like they're just about to sprout legs.

About 60% of the willow stakes we planted last fall have rooted and are sending up branches. Check out the ones with flagging tape around the boat landing, and keep an eye out for more willow stake planting events this fall.

Unfortunately, the knot weed has been thriving and in full bloom. It's upsetting to us, but at least there are many bees who are happy about it. The poison ivy should be turning red soon, and is still trying to sneak its way back onto the trail. Thus far the trail is clear of the pesky plant, but wear good shoes for off-trail trekking anyway. The jewel weed forest is at full height and the seeds are popping. And there's a bale of turtles, likely red-eared sliders, that have been hanging out along the mud shoreline of the northwest corner of the island just past the upstream end. To see them, you'll have to be quiet; the minute they see you coming they slide off the shore and dive into the river.

Look for upcoming events at the island or drop on by just to see what's new, have a walk on the trail, and enjoy the island on a crisp, clear day.



## Wingfield Pines Given Healthy Place Award



Wingfield Pines was awarded the "Healthy Place Award" during the Urban Land Institute Pittsburgh Placemaking Awards for Excellence ceremony.

## Lacawac Partnership

Research, Research, Research...

ALT is now opening its conservation areas to colleges and universities across the nation. We are partnering with the Lacawac Sanctuary, an ecological field research station and public environmental education facility located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania, to be a part of the Lacawac Environmental Research and Education Consortium. This group of land conservancies makes their green spaces available for students to harness higher education's intellectual and physical resources to advance the teaching and learning of regional, ecosystem-based environmental research. ALT is excited to be a part of this new endeavor, and looks forward to the advances it will make in regional environmental research.

## ALT Second Annual Food Drive

We are once again collecting food for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Last year, with the help of several of our friends, we collected and delivered 362 pounds of food! We would like to exceed that amount this year and could use your help. Please consider bringing food donations to any of our upcoming events or if you are in the Sewickley area you can drop them off at our office. We'd love to see you stop in!



## WCCF Gives Wrap Up

ALT President & CEO Chris Beichner accepts WCCF \$4,515 from the Washington County Community Foundation check for the 2014 Day of Giving. The WCCF Day of Giving attracted a total of 1,465 donors who gave \$635,281 and ALT was gifted \$3,785 with \$730 in matching funds.

# Come Fly with Me

November 22, 2014 | 6-7PM VIP Hour | 7-11PM Main Event | National Aviary | 700 Arch St. Pittsburgh, 15212  
Allegheny Land Trust's 20th Anniversary Celebration & Fundraiser | Tickets Available At: [bit.ly/alandtrust](http://bit.ly/alandtrust)

## ALT's Fundraiser: Come Fly with Me

We're excited to announce this year's fundraiser, entitled "Come Fly with Me". The event, celebrating 20 years of land conservation excellence, will be held at the National Aviary on November 22, 2014.

The VIP cocktail hour is from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and will boast bird interactions, a specialty cocktail, awards recognition and a live performance from featured artist Jessica Lee. Both VIP and main event tickets come with two complimentary drink tickets, and there will be heavy hors d'oeuvres from Atria's during the whole event. The main event continues from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. and will feature a disc jockey, interactive exhibits featuring ALT conservation areas, an auction and much more. This will be the first year ALT is crafting artistic representations of their properties as interactive exhibits for the fundraiser.

For those who find city parking to be daunting, fear not. The Aviary has a parking lot, and on-street parking surrounding the Aviary is free during our celebration.

VIP tickets are \$150. For those interested in only attending the main event, tickets are \$100, and for early birds who RSVP by November 8, the main event tickets are \$65. The Aviary will be decorated in a fall garden party theme, and the suggested dress is cocktail attire. To attend, RSVP on Eventbrite at the following link: [bit.ly/alandtrust](http://bit.ly/alandtrust)

Get your tickets today for Come Fly with Me and you'll be supporting the great cause of land conservation in our region. Please join us to celebrate and network with other community members and our volunteers, donors, board members, and staff. We thank you for your support over these 20 years and hope to see you at the celebration!

Sponsorship opportunities are still available, and those who are interested or who have questions should contact Lindsay Dill at [ldill@alleghenylandtrust.org](mailto:ldill@alleghenylandtrust.org).

## New Website Launching Soon

Keep your eye out for ALT's new website as it will be launching soon. The ALT staff has been working hard to revitalize the website to better reflect the brand, ideas, goals and accomplishments of the land trust.

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Helping local people save local land.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### VENTURE OUTDOORS HIKE AT DEAD MAN'S HOLLOW

October 25, 1:00 PM

Dead Man's Hollow Trail Head

### FALL SPRUCE UP EVENT AT DEAD MAN'S HOLLOW

November 1, 9 a.m. to noon, Dead Man's Hollow  
Clean and mend Dead Man's Hollow.

Supplies and snacks provided.

### COME FLY WITH ME AT NATIONAL AVIARY

November 22, 6 to 7 p.m. VIP cocktail hour,  
7 to 11 p.m. main event

Celebrate our 20 years of land conservation and  
help fundraise for many more years of hard work.

### HIKE THE SEWICKLEY HEIGHTS PARK EXPANSION

November 28, 9:00 AM

Hike away those mashed potatoes at SHPE. Meet at  
first parking lot on Borough Park Road. Call Roy for  
details 412-741-2750 x203.

Visit [www.allegenylandtrust.org](http://www.allegenylandtrust.org) for details.

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**VIP Hour**  
*Conservation Awards*  
Live Performance with Jessica Lee  
**BIRD INTERACTIONS**  
*Specialty Cocktail*  
HEAVY HORS D'OEUVRES  
2 Drink Tickets Included

**Main Event**  
*Interactive Conservation Area Exhibits*  
**HEAVY HORS D'OEUVRES**  
2 Drink Tickets Included  
*Live Disc Jockey*

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