

VISTAS

AN ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST PUBLICATION | 2015 Q2 ISSUE



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Land Protection in its Natural Habitat

by Roy Kraynyk | Land Protection Director

While enjoying waterfalls in Tyron, North Carolina recently, I was casually observing a young family whose mother was showing her 6-8 year-old son and daughter critters in the shallow pools at the base of the falls. It was late afternoon and the sun's golden rays were shimmering in the braided falls warming the cool misty air in the grotto formed at its base.

With the showering falls and gurgling brook providing the soundtrack, the children scurried curiously around exploring when I heard the little girl enthusiastically encouraging her brother, "Oooh! Open that one!" pointing to a rock that she wanted him to turn over for her because it was too heavy.

I thought the girl's choice of words -- "open that one" -- were pretty interesting. She didn't ask him to "lift the rock" or "turn it over". Did her choice of words reflect the curious mind-set of a child opening a door to another world?

As she ran to her dad later, I heard the little girl say, in a panic, "they're getting away!" referring to crayfish or something she and her brother had corralled in a little pool of water with small stones.

Before the parents could even react, her brother said, "Wait, I have an idea" and then proceeded to solve the problem of their collection of critters escaping.

What I had observed was two young children in nature exploring and identifying a problem, and solving it with very little intervention, or participation

from an adult whose only needed contribution was to create this opportunity to connect these curious minds to nature. Who knows what that experience may trigger in those young, growing minds?

I think this is what Richard Louv was talking about in his book, *Nature Deficit Disorder*. Louv suggests children have fewer opportunities for this kind of experience and how the lack thereof deprives them of mental stimulation, and exercising their imagination and creativity.

ALT just protected another 58 acres of opportunity for children and adults to have similar experiences.

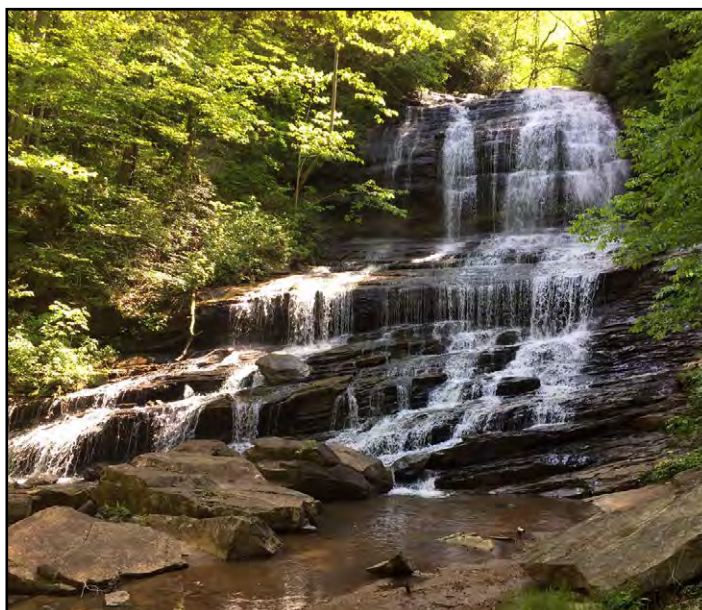
After 5 years, we finally closed on the tract of private land along Fern Hollow Road surrounded by Sewickley Heights Park, known locally as the "Hole in the Doughnut". ALT has gifted the land to Sewickley Heights Borough, who is the steward of more than 1,000 acres of some of the best remaining natural areas in Allegheny County.

The tract has popular trails, mature hardwoods, a plethora of wildflowers and spring seeps that support Little Sewickley Creek with cool fresh water. Little Sewickley Creek is the lifeblood of the Camp Meeting Woods Biological

Diversity Area (BDA) as identified by the Western PA Conservancy in 1993.

The BDA is considered an exemplary example of plant diversity in Allegheny County, including two Species of Special Concern that have state-wide significance.

A heartfelt **Thank You** to all of the donors listed here and others who humbly played a critical role in the success of this project.



Thank You to Donors & Supporters Who Helped Expand Sewickley Heights Park

Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Abell
Susan Anderson
Ms. Jennie Bartlett
Frank Bennett
Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Brooks
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Notes From the Land

Community Greening Through the Transfer of Development Rights

by Roy Kraynyk | Land Protection Director

Transfer Development Rights or TDR is a tool that local governments can use to transfer the development rights from land designated as a Sending Area to land designated as a Receiving Area. The Sending Area may be land that is better left undisturbed by development, such as quality farm land, scenic or historic sites, riverfronts or other greenspace. The Receiving Area may be where development is wanted or needed, and where water, sewers and roads already exist.

The TDR tool has been available for use by Pennsylvania municipalities for over two decades. Provisions for a TDR program are authorized in Sections 603 (c) (2.2) and 619.1 of the PA Municipalities Planning Code.

Approximately 33 municipalities in the Commonwealth had the TDR tool incorporated into their zoning ordinances as of 2008. Warwick Township, Lancaster County, has the most active TDR program that has helped to protect over 1,500 acres of prime farmland.

There are two types of TDR Programs. The most common allows the landowner to sell the development rights from his property located in the Sending Area to a developer who then uses those development rights to increase the density of houses or commercial square footage in the Receiving Area. The ability to develop at a greater density or more square footage is the incentive for developers to buy development rights.

A second method allows a local government to establish a TDR Bank to buy and sell transfer development rights. In this method, developers would purchase development rights from the local government, which could then use those funds to purchase more development rights from properties in the Sending Area.

The City of Pittsburgh Comprehensive Plan calls for 22,000 acres of Publically-owned land to be transformed into green infrastructure, community gardens, urban farms, greenways, parklets, etc. A host of public benefits are derived from transforming tax delinquent and derelict parcels into assets for the local neighborhood. Green space and gardens beautify and promote a sense of community, help to improve air and water quality, provide

fresh food and healthy recreation, and enhance surrounding property values. A downside is that the city, county and school district may not receive real estate tax revenue if these parcels become exempt from real estate taxes once they are owned by a non-profit organization (NPO) that is creating the park, for example.

If these parcels remain taxable, the NPO community may be reluctant to acquire them due to the additional financial burden of paying property taxes. A Transfer Development Rights program may be a powerful tool to address these issues and generate a new source of private revenue to care for the parks, gardens and green infrastructure.

Allowing development rights to be severed from a parcel dedicated to a public use also serves to keep the development rights in the marketplace. As such, the taxing bodies don't have to be so concerned about taking land off the tax rolls each time another parcel is proposed for a public purpose.

In summary, the primary benefits of a TDR program include:

- 1) Development is directed to where infrastructure exists and where municipalities prefer it to be.
- 2) Development rights currently tied to property that is not generating any tax revenue are transferred to another parcel and effectively put back into the marketplace, where they can generate property tax revenue.
- 3) A new source of private funding is generated for the NPO's working to revitalize communities, addressing storm water and CSO issues, creating urban gardens, etc. This capital can be used to improve and steward vacant parcels, increase capacity for the NPO's and thereby accelerate community revitalization.
- 4) Land used for public purposes such as green space and community gardens is protected from being developed for a so called "higher and better use".



For more information,
e-mail Roy at rkraynyk@alleghenylandtrust.org.

Stewardship Season in Full-Swing



by Caitlin Seiler | Stewardship Coordinator

Spring has certainly sprung for ALT's Stewardship staff and volunteers. This year, volunteers have already invested over 1,500 hours at ALT conservation areas working to ensure the properties are protected, healthy and enjoyable for recreational visitors. A few of the things we've been doing include:

- Tree planting, invasive removal, trash clean-up, and trail building prep work at Dead Man's Hollow
- Allegheny River cleanup with Allegheny Cleanways and TreeVitalize tree planting at Sycamore Island
- Wingfield Pines canoe launch restoration with Boy Scout Troops and Paddle Without Pollution cleanup of Chartiers Creek
- Trail analysis and construction plan completed for Barking Slopes

Our dedicated team of volunteer Stewards who work independently have been busy with spring maintenance and monitoring on properties. We've also had several new Urban EcoStewards join our team at Audubon Greenway, Wingfield Pines and Dead Man's Hollow.

We've had a great response to our request for special project volunteers at the beginning of the season. Several volunteers have stepped forward to help out with projects such as installing boundary markers, leading nature hikes and developing baseline species lists for properties. If you've got a special skill or want to help out on a property or project, let us know and we'll be happy to add you to our team.

ALT's stewardship efforts are supported not only by individual volunteers and attendees at public volunteer workdays, but also by volunteers at private corporate workdays. Corporate workdays are a great opportunity for employees and employers to get out as a team and do good for the Pittsburgh community while exploring the outdoors. Some employers also provide a donation matching the in-kind investment value of volunteer time. Ask your employer about setting up a workday. We have projects appropriate for groups of all sizes throughout the county.

We are in the heart of the busy season for Stewardship, and things aren't slowing down yet! If you haven't made it to one of our public volunteer days, mark your calendar for upcoming events including a Wingfield Pines Invasive Sweep, an exploration of Dead Man's Hollow, or a celebration of the season with fellow Urban EcoStewards at the Summer Gathering on July 18 from 10am-2pm at Catfish Pond.



For more information,
e-mail Caitlin at cseiler@alleghenylandtrust.org.

Work Begins on the Dead Man's Hollow Cool Spirit Trail



by Keri Rouse | DMH Community Coordinator

The ghosts of Dead Man's Hollow have had a lot of company this spring as volunteers work to improve the conservation area's growing trail system. University students, corporate groups, and individual volunteers have collectively contributed more than 380 hours this spring improving the property.

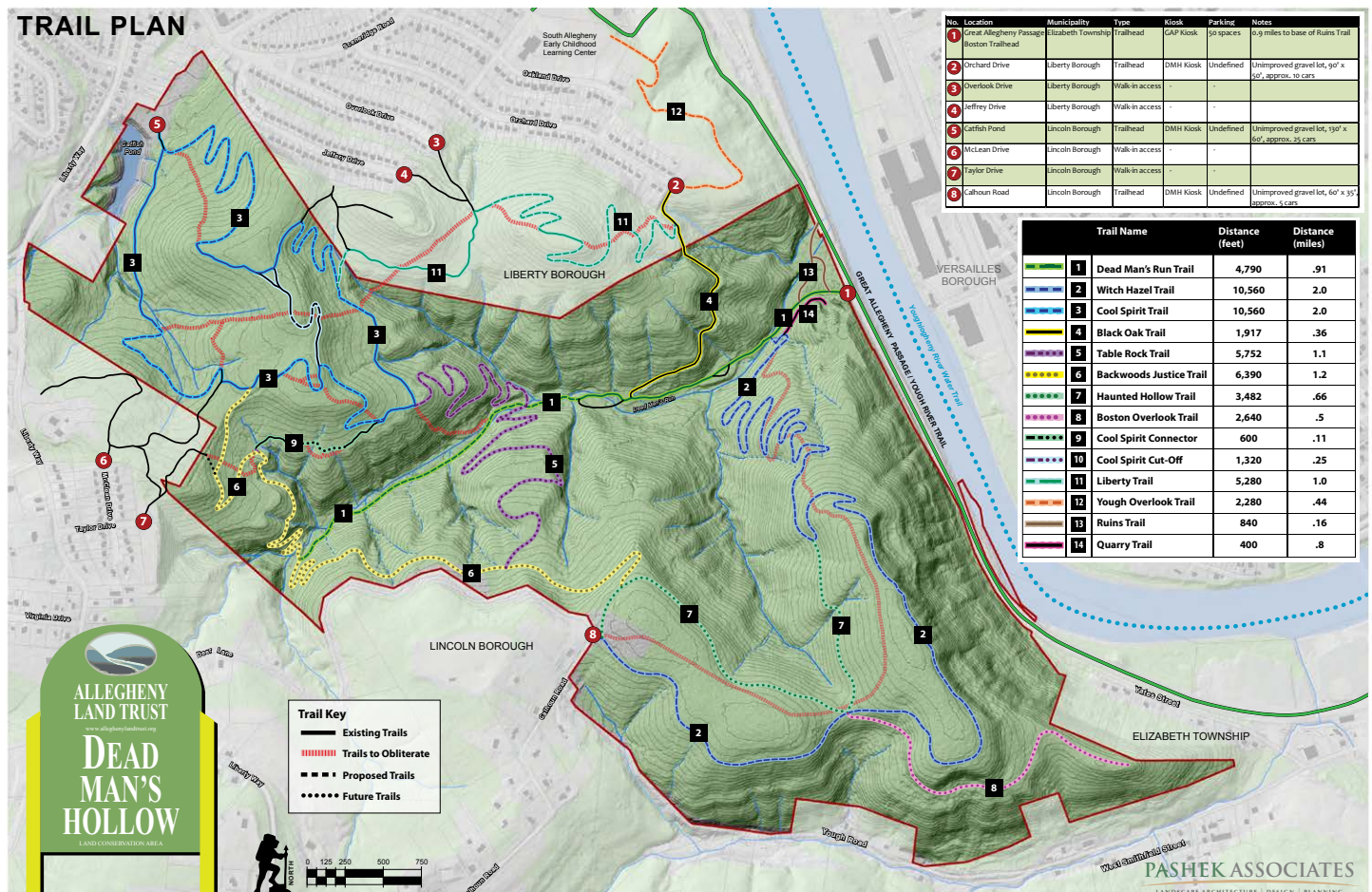
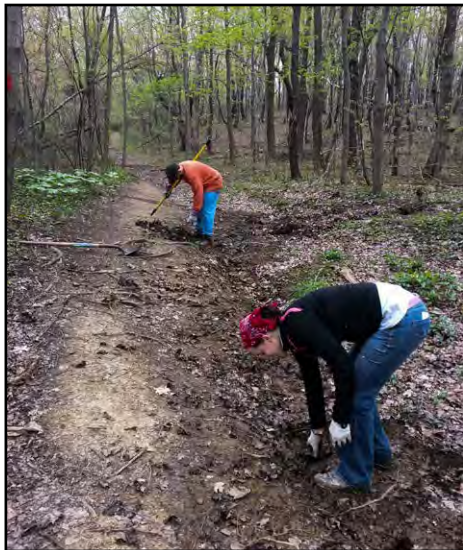
Following the guidance of the recently completed management plan, a sustainable trail plan is being implemented, which will ultimately expand the trail system from 6 to 10 miles and make the property more accessible to neighbors and visitors. The first leg of the multi-year plan focuses on the Cool Spirit Trail, and through the combined efforts of volunteers and a hired trail crew that will be on-site in July, over half of what will ultimately be a 2-mile trail will be completed by summer's end.

Volunteers from BNY Mellon and Consolidated Power Supply made a lot of progress during two workdays as they tore through walls of thorny plants and a formidable tangle of poison ivy vines to clear the way for the new trail route, while others covered old, unsustainable trails with logs and brush to discourage use.

We'd also like to thank the Local 1919 IBEW for donating lunches on both workdays!

Volunteer with us to have a hand in repairing trails and revitalizing Dead Man's Hollow!

For more information, e-mail Keri at krouse@alleghenylandtrust.org.



Making Regional Initiatives to Meet Local Goals

by Chris Beichner | President & CEO

Many of our supporters are familiar with our organizational slogan: Helping Local People Save Local Land. Likewise, most of you are familiar with how we accomplish this by working with local community leaders to acquire and steward conservation lands within our communities.

Some may not be familiar with our broader initiatives in land protection and green space stewardship. Since 2014, ALT has been involved in four broad-based initiatives that have the potential to make our organization, as well as Allegheny County, a national model improving communities' quality of life by creating opportunities for affordable housing, commercial opportunity, urban agriculture, community gardening and, of course, green space.

Each of these initiatives has the opportunity to save future green space, balance conservation with development opportunities and adequately steward Allegheny County's vacant lots and green space.

The four regional initiatives are as follows:

LAND BANKS

A land bank is an organization that takes blighted, tax delinquent land, clears the property of liens and turns the land back over to organizations who can put the land back into productive use. ALT was part of a coalition to support the creation of a land bank in the City of Pittsburgh. ALT also advocated for reusing land for green space. As a result, a land bank was created in April 2014 and the land bank authority issued nine priorities for land reuse, which included green space protection as a priority.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR)

Recently, ALT was awarded a small grant to educate municipal officials, developers and non-profit leaders on the value and opportunities that exist in protecting future green space and provide funding for green infrastructure projects by using TDRs. Transferable Development Rights work by transferring the development rights from one location (a location that should remain green) to another location where development is already occurring or should occur.

There are many benefits to using TDR's to both enhance community development and green space such as keeping development in areas where water, sewer, road and utility infrastructure already exists. Developers pay for the transfer of the development rights, and those payments are often able to be allocated to a maintenance fund for the green space while the municipality is still able to collect taxes on additional development in a more contained region. There are thousands of acres of woodlands and farm land protected annually in the United States by effectively using TDR-type programs.

ALT would like to thank Neighborhood Allies for the opportunity to promote TDRs as a green space protection tool.

COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS (CLTs)

There are about 400 CLTs in the United States. CLTs are land trusts formed to create permanent, affordable housing options, create perpetual, low-cost commercial space access and to create opportunities for urban agriculture, community gardening and passive green space protection. The primary purpose of most CLTs is to use the land trust model to create affordable housing opportunities.

ALT is leading the exploration of forming a CLT in the Greater Pittsburgh region, which would ideally partner with the new land banks in Allegheny County, to best reuse land for all the reasons mentioned above. While ALT's primary purpose is to protect green space, something a CLT could help do, we are also interested in sharing the land trust model for other quality of life opportunities such as home ownership, access to fresh produce and reuse of vacant, blighted lots.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ALT is part of a planning coalition looking at the creation of a "green workforce" that will maintain vacant lots, remove invasive species, remove downed or dangerous trees, build sustainable trails and taken on green space stewardship activities throughout Allegheny County.

ALT's goal is to create a proactive plan to address ongoing stewardship responsibilities as our organization is approached to protect more green space in Allegheny and Washington counties, as well as many smaller lots in the City of Pittsburgh. The work our volunteers produce is admirable, and we will always have a need to maximize their time and efficiency. A workforce development program will help ALT augment our outstanding volunteers, and allow us to create a maintenance schedule for ongoing items such as grass mowing, litter pick-up, sidewalk repairs, sign installation and more.

These regional initiatives have an ultimate goal of providing more resources and a greater capacity to protect more green space and best manage land in the future for our communities. ALT is honored and excited to be a part of these regional initiatives as they directly impact our ability to help local people save local land.

For more information, e-mail Chris at cbeichner@alleghenylandtrust.org.

On the Move ALT Hosts Day of Giving



by Chris Beichner | President & CEO

As it is turning out, 2015 is on track to outpace our 2014 performance of protecting 5 new properties and managing over 530 volunteers. Our board, staff and volunteers have been on the move at the local, regional and statewide levels making significant headway in meeting our organizational mission.

ALT is also on the move in a different, more literal way. In July 2015, ALT will have a new place we call home. After several years at the Car Barn Shops in Sewickley, we will be moving across the street into our new office at 416 Thorn Street.

Our new space will include an entire house, over 2,000 square feet, a basement, garage and enough parking for our staff and seasonal intern team. While only 400 square feet larger than our current space, the parking, storage capacity and physical layout will expand our capacity to operate comfortably and efficiently while remaining a Sewickley neighbor.

With a new space comes the need to fill it. Our team is currently evaluating our furniture, appliance and accessory needs, and we are hoping ALT supporters will help us in filling our needs.

ALT needs YOU to help make our new office space as functional and comfortable as possible. If you have any of the following items and they are in good condition, please consider donating to ALT. If you don't currently have any of the items below, but would like to purchase it for our use, please let us know. We have always appreciated the generous support and contributions from our donors.

ALT needs the following items for our new office:

Vacuum Cleaner | Desk & Standing Lamps
Planters | Tool Set
Bathroom Towels & Amenities | Blender

If you're able to give,
e-mail us at info@alleghenylandtrust.org.



by Lindsay Dill | Marketing & Outreach Coordinator

ALT will be hosting our own Day of Giving in lieu of Pittsburgh's Day of Giving, which will not be run this year. ALT's Board of Directors has generously supplied a match pool for June 24, 2015 so that all contributions will be matched dollar-to-dollar during this day of giving.

We were founded due to a public outcry for more protected green space. Now, we not only protect over 1,700 acres of green space, but we seek it out strategically, manage it efficiently and promote it widely so the Pittsburgh region's communities have the opportunity to appreciate our natural resources. We envision a green future for the Pittsburgh region to enjoy the quintessentially scenic landscape, biological diversity and pure drinking water.

Last year we set many new records within our organization, and we aim to continue that growth this year. To continue strategically planning, stewarding and promoting our green space, we need the financial support from our existing and new passionate supporters and volunteers. We hope you'll support us during our first self-hosted Day of Giving on June 24!

For more information, e-mail Lindsay at ldill@alleghenylandtrust.org.

Four Ways to Give June 24

1. CALL ... (412) 741-2750

2. CLICK ... www.alleghenylandtrust.org

3. MAIL ... Checks to Allegheny Land Trust

4. STOP IN ... 409 Broad Street
Suite 206 B
Sewickley, Pa 15143

ALT's Regional Happenings

MAP LEGEND

 ALT CONSERVATION AREAS



MAY 27, 2015

ALT & Sewickley Heights Borough unveil 58-Acre expansion to Sewickley Heights Park. The green space was protected via a public-private partnership between the borough & ALT.

ALT is in the process of closing on a 30-acre parcel along Waterworks Road.



APRIL 2015

In partnership with Paddle Without Pollution, ALT hosted a creek clean-up day in Chartiers Creek at Wingfield Pines. Volunteers removed many tires and trash inhibiting surrounding wildlife health.

178 acres under contract.

30 acres under contract.

In partnership with Laurel Landscapes, ALT released a trail plan for Barking Slopes. Funded by the PPG Springdale plant, the plan will remove muddy, repetitive trails, and improve scenic trails featuring cliffs.

Investigating 33-acre parcel



MAY 2015

Groups from Google Serv dock with Allegheny CleanWays' pontoon at Sycamore Island to plant trees provided by TreeVitalize on Sycamore Island. It was quite a beautiful day with quite a few partnerships.

In partnership with other local organizations, ALT is conducting a Community Land Trust feasibility study in Larimer. CLT's work in a similar fashion to land trusts while allowing for additional unique urban projects.

In partnership with Hilltop Alliance, Grow Pittsburgh, and others, ALT is working to create an urban farm at St. Clair Village.



MAY 2015

Two groups from BNY Mellon removed invasive species, swept trails of litter and debris, and contributed to the revitalizing beauty of Dead Man's Hollow.

Investigating 107-acre parcel.

8.5 acres under contract.

Each property seen here needs volunteers to help tackle trash removal, invasives removal, and, in many cases, trail building and maintenance. E-mail Caitlin at cseiler@alleghenylandtrust.org to get involved.

ALT Seeks National Re-accreditation

by Chris Beichner | President & CEO

It has been five years since ALT sought and earned national accreditation through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission (LTAC), an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance established in 2006. The Accreditation Program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet high national standards for practices that protect important natural areas forever.

There are approximately 300 land trust accredited out of 1,700 land trusts nationwide. This year, our accreditation is due to expire. The ALT Board of Directors has recently passed a resolution authorizing staff to apply for re-accreditation, a process that will take more than a year to complete.



Becoming re-accredited will put ALT in a favorable position to compete for funding from foundations and government agencies. Accreditation also tells property owners, partners and donors we work with that ALT is a trusted organization that meets the highest standards for conservation excellence.

The Commission awards accreditation to land trusts that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

As part of the 80 plus Standards and Practices we must meet as an accredited organization, LTAC also recognizes that public accountability and feedback are important.

This is why LTAC seeks public comments about any land trust going through their initial accreditation or renewal process.

Principles Guiding LTAC's Public Comment Process:

1. Only written comments are accepted.

2. You may submit your comments via mail to

36 Phila Street

Suite 2

Saratoga Springs, NY

12866

by e-mail to info@landtrustaccreditation.org,

or by visiting their website at

www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

For the full list of the Standards and Practices, please visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/indicator-practices

3. All comments must be attributed.

If the comment is shared with the land trust, the name of the commenter is kept confidential.

4. Comments must relate to the land trust's implementation of Land Trust Standards and Practices and accreditation requirements. The Commission does not intervene in internal disputes within accredited land trusts, disputes between land trusts, and disputes between land trusts and other individuals or agencies.

To learn more about the accreditation program or to submit a comment, please visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org

ALT Begins Franklin Park Borough Project

by Lindsay Dill | Marketing & Outreach Coordinator

As of this spring, ALT has a 178-acre green space on the border of Franklin Park and Bell Acres boroughs under contract.

The green space encapsulates rolling hills, an ex-logging site and an abandoned cemetery of the former Hopkins Chapel circa 1850.

Neighboring Linbrook Park, the green space could expand an existing green space, allowing for additional passive recreation for local residents if protected.



ALT needs your help to acquire this green space to be maintained as such forever. Call,

visit our website, or stop in to find out how you can help protect this greenspace.

Keep an eye out on our website for upcoming outreach events from on-site yoga to informative hikes.

For more information, e-mail Roy at rkraykyk@alleghenylantrust.org

A Belated "Thank You"

Thank you to all of the
Bradford Woods Conservancy donors.
We'd like to extend a belated "Thank You!"
to the following donors:

Ray & Ginger Morris

Ward Allebach & Lisa Steagall

Thank you to all of our supporters!

Meet ALT's Summer Intern Team

Kevin Fernando | Development Intern



Kevin Fernando arrived in southwestern Pennsylvania by means of Pittston Township, a small valley town eclipsed by the Lackawanna State Forest. While a student of the University of Pittsburgh, Kevin undertook a variety of roles in a number of nonprofit organizations including the University of Pittsburgh Art Gallery, where he discovered a deep love for practical statistics and historical research. Upon graduating, Kevin co-founded Dear Pittsburgh, a nonprofit research organization working to promote unity between Pittsburgh's many arts institutions. During his stay with Allegheny Land Trust, he will be using his skills and experience to find creative solutions in development. Kevin looks forward to doing what he loves most: learning about the world, and helping to procure funding for projects that make a difference.

kfernando@alleghenylandtrust.org

Rachael Letscher | Hamm Intern



Rachael Letscher is joining Allegheny Land Trust as this summer's John Hamm Intern. Rachael will be responsible for promoting the unique attributes of the Chartiers Creek Watershed through site walks and other mediums. She will be helping out at the Wingfield Pines Conservation Area where she will lead volunteer workdays and help with special events. Rachael will also be designing visual elements such as posters and signs to help visitors stay aware of what events are happening in the watershed. Rachael looks forward to working with the volunteers and visitors at Wingfield Pines, and learning many new things this summer while working at Allegheny Land Trust.

rletscher@alleghenylandtrust.org

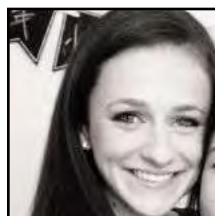
Katelyn Rendulic | Event Coordinator Intern



Katelyn is the Event Coordinator intern this summer. She will be working with our marketing department to plan and facilitate ALT community events. This summer, she will promote ALT greenspace as a place to play. Katelyn is a Mt. Lebanon native, and a May 2015 graduate from the University of Dayton with majors in History and English. She is looking forward to learning how land conservation affects the health and vitality of local communities. In her free time, Katelyn enjoys hiking, backpacking, and reading about adventure.

krendulic@alleghenylandtrust.org

Rachel Richman | Outreach Intern



Rachel Richman will be working as the Outreach Intern for ALT this summer. Originally from the suburbs of Chicago, Rachel is now studying in the Program in the Environment with a minor in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Michigan. This summer, she will be researching community events near existing and potential green space, running tabling events, bringing awareness to communities, and reaching out to local organizations to partner with ALT. Rachel is looking forward to spreading awareness and increasing ALT's involvement in different communities.

rrichman@alleghenylandtrust.org

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Helping local people save local land.

Allegheny Land Trust

409 Broad Street

Suite 206 B

Sewickley, PA 15143

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 20 | WINGZILLA FUNDRAISER @ WINGFIELD PINES

Community-organized event, \$20.

JUNE 24 | ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST DAY OF GIVING

Give online, in-person, over-the-phone, or by mailed check.

JULY 10 | 7-9PM | WINGFIELD PINES BAT WALK

Visit VentureOutdoors.org to register.

JULY 18 | 9-11:30PM | SUMMER TREE ID WALK

Visit VentureOutdoors.org to register.

July 22 | TBD | ALT New Office Open House Party

416 Thorn Street, Sewickley, PA 15143

Details TBD. Check our website for updates.

July 25 | 9:30-11AM | ALT YOGA @ WINGFIELD PINES

AUGUST 7 | 7:30-10PM | IRWIN RUN BLUE MYST HIKE

Led by Roy Kraynyk & local ghost-hunter Michael Pellas.

Visit VentureOutdoors.org to register.

Visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org for more information, or e-mail
info@alleghenylandtrust.org.

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