

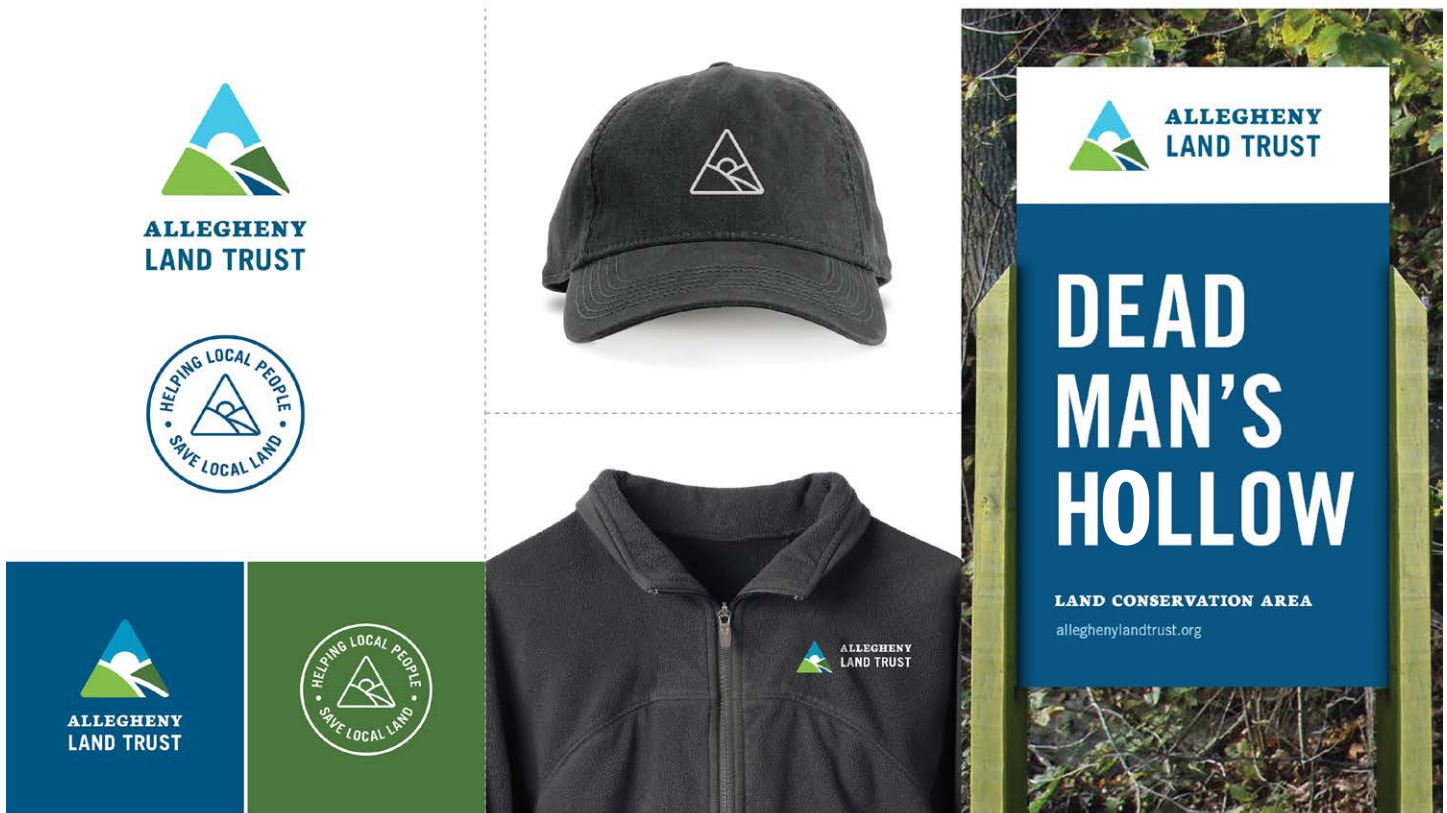
VISTAS

AN ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST PUBLICATION | 2015-2016 Q4-Q1 Issue

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The New Face of Allegheny Land Trust



Samples courtesy of Wall-to-Wall Studios. These are examples of how we may use the logo and don't necessarily represent the actual swag and signage that we will transition to.

by **Lindsay Dill** | **Marketing Communication Director**

Land; beautiful, green, healthy land full of flora and fauna—both aesthetically pleasing and ecologically essential. Scattered ecosystems throughout the county translated on paper simply as “2,000 acres of ‘green space.’” These ‘green spaces’ have foot prints, hoof prints, horse shoe prints, tree roots, wildflower fields, bird nests, bee hives, sunrises, and sunsets. They have history; some of gun fights, some of social clubs, some of swimming pools, others of movie theaters.

Concise words can seldom describe Allegheny Land Trust’s “why” factor when it comes to the importance of permanently protecting ‘green space’. It’s easy to become removed from the beauty of dirt, moss, roots, leaves, and bugs while typing a description from behind a computer, which is where much of our staff does our work to protect green space. However, it is you—our volunteers, donors, supporters, and explorers—that see, feel, smell, and touch the beauty of what we often describe simply as ‘green space’. It is you, supporters, for whom we work. It is your stories of hiking, biking, birding, discovering, bonding, running, laughing, playing, examining, and relaxing on ‘green space’ that allows us to continue helping local people save local land.

This year, we moved beyond our 20th Anniversary and asked, “What’s next?” ALT had a banner year in 2014, and we didn’t want to lose our momentum as we were gaining more supporters. We realized that the face of our organization, and that of our supporters, was changing. So, with Wall-to-Wall Studios and a diverse committee, we began to redesign our

look to evolve along with our supporters and ALT’s growing identity.

The new branding is the result of that process. It is our hills, water, air, ecology, and community that we work to protect, which are reflected in our logo. The designers took the descriptors of a neighborly conservation group working transparently, trustworthily and with much passion and gave those descriptors shape and color.

Our next step for our updated brand is a website redesign. Many of you know we’ve been working for more than a year on this process. We hope you’ll forgive the timeline; we promise the designers are working magic on our behalf to make your user experience much better by cleaning up the user interface, putting more emphasis on some great interactive features and better organizing the vast amount of information that’s been made available via our staff, volunteer and educational partner research and reporting. We’d like to give a special thanks to Bob Purdy, our volunteer who has managed content updates on our current website for years. Thanks for your patience and dedication, Bob!

As we continue to grow both in staff, capacity, and acres protected, we’ll still remain the same ALT. We just hope that the updated logo and the future website will leave you feeling even more invigorated by what we do! We know we’re excited to present it to you.

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

Fundraiser proves to be a Wild Time



Photos courtesy of Pierce Events. Images of aquarium wildlife, INTO THE WILD attendees, INTO THE WILD Volunteers, Emcee Dave Crawley, ALT Staff and John Garrick Jazz Trio.

by Lindsay Dill
Marketing Communication Director

More than 110 Allegheny Land Trust supporters attended our 2015 Fundraiser INTO THE WILD at the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium.

We had quite a few things to celebrate this year, and we were so happy to share it with you—our supporters!

From acres protected for biodiversity, scenic quality and water quality maintenance, to acres maintained via invasive removal, trail-building and monitoring, it is your efforts that make the ALT green spaces flourish!

We host the fundraiser not only to raise funds, but also to raise friends and thank those who help us meet and exceed our mission goals.



This year's friendraiser-fundraiser boasted interactions with a bearded dragon, a tenrec, a ball python and a chinchilla; delicious specialty food and drink; wild tarot card readings; tunes from the John Garrick Jazz Trio; conservation awards and more.

Thanks to our sponsors for support-

ing this event: EQT, Mitsubishi Electric Power Products, Inc., Wall to Wall Studios, Allegheny Financial Group, First American Title Insurance, First National Bank, Independent Controllers, Manning & Napier, Williams Coulson Johnson Lloyd Parker & Tedesco, LLC, Attorneys at Law, Sisterson, Clifton-LarsonAllen, Sota Construction Services, Direct Mail Service and Benefits Network.

Thank you to those who attended, and for those who couldn't make it—we hope to show our appreciation of your support at future events!

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



Meet A Steward - Or Three!

by Caitlin Seiler | Director of Volunteer & Land Resources

Allegheny Land Trust staff feels fortunate to have such a strong team of dedicated volunteers. As we continue this "Meet a Steward" column, we hope to recognize all of you who do outstanding work with us. It is your hours of volunteering that allow our conservation areas to thrive.

In this issue, we're taking the opportunity to profile three stewards who were nominated for this year's Community Conservationist Award during our 2015 fundraiser, "INTO THE WILD".



Photo by Dominique Hildebrand. (Listed Left to Right) ALT volunteers Dan Klein, Jim Lohman and Brian Shakespeare pictured November 21, 2015 during ALT's INTO THE WILD fundraiser.

Dan Klein

Google Team Volunteer

For the past four years, Dan has lead a Google volunteer group work-day at Sycamore Island for their employee week of service. Not only does he organize the day, but he also provides travel on his personal boat.

His efforts along with those of the Google volunteers have contributed over 200 hours of volunteer time worth \$4,600 of in-kind investment to aid ALT's progress in Japanese knotweed eradication. Their work has helped ALT to reduce the knotweed infestation by over half.

Dan has also assisted ALT with applying for Google technology grants and is already starting to plan the 2016 Googleserve visit which has been coined Machetes Part V!

Jim Lohman

Wingfield Pines Steward

You've likely seen Jim's name before, as he was featured in our last VISTAS. A steward for several years and a daily visitor with his dog Hunter for many more, Jim knows the ins and outs of Wingfield Pines.

Whether it's mowing the trails, picking up trash, opening the gate for visiting groups, or addressing odd maintenance needs – Jim is our guy.

Jim has also been the driving force behind Wingzilla – a fundraising pig roast and pot luck that benefits the Wingfield Pines Maintenance Fund.

Jim is a valued, irreplaceable volunteer who is dedicated to Wingfield Pines and its community. That's why he's named our 2015 Community Conservationist. Congratulations, Jim!

Brian Shakespeare

Dead Man's Hollow Steward

Brian became a DMH steward just last spring and has since recorded more than 50 hours volunteering and maintaining the Ruins area at DMH.

A secluded location along the Great Allegheny Passage, the Ruins are often a target for vandalism and dumping. Brian has effectively helped us keep tabs on what's happening in the Hollow. He often delivers news of a fallen tree, damaged bridge, or issue of vandalism along with a note of how he fixed the problem or ideas for addressing the issue.

Brian is an eager and skilled volunteer, whether he's improving the Hollow or coming to aid when a neighbor had an issue with a fallen branch.

We are happy to have Brian as a part of our team!

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

A Year in Stewardship: Green Space Maintained, Trails Built

article and photos by
Caitlin Seiler | Director of Volunteer & Land Resources

It has been another fun filled and productive year for the Stewardship team here at ALT. This is our favorite season, when we get to look back on all the great work being done and give thanks to the many hands that have helped along the way. Together with ALT supporters and

partners 584 individuals have volunteered more than 5,000 hours, which is worth over \$116,000.00 of in-kind investment this year. Trail building, tree planting, and trash cleanups are just a few of the accomplishments our volunteers have achieved. ALT volunteers come to us from many different backgrounds and most of our volunteer work is done by the following types of groups:



GROUP WORKDAYS

Many of our on-the-ground projects are achieved by several volunteers coming together for a few hours of work. These workdays often have the biggest impact on stewardship goals. A group workday may be an open invitation workday scheduled by ALT or with an existing group of volunteers. Church groups, boy scouts, mountain biking clubs, garden clubs, school clubs, and community friends-of groups are just some examples of volunteers that have helped ALT. Any group of individuals can help with a project, just contact us to get started!

CORPORATE PARTNERS

Whether it's an entire organization opting out of the office to spend the day doing service in the community, a company affiliated club, or an individual volunteer, many companies provide incentives for their staff to do volunteer work on company time. Other companies provide a donation to a charitable organization matching their staff's volunteer time. This year we had the of pleasure of working with volunteers from BNY Mellon, Bet-tis Laboratories, Bayer, Highmark, Consolidated Power, Google, American Eagle Outfitters, and PPG. We encourage anyone interested in helping ALT to reach out to their employer about volunteer support.



INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

More than half of the volunteer hours contributed to ALT are from individual volunteers. These are neighbors, explorers, and other supporters who dedicate time throughout the year helping to monitor and manage our Conservation Areas, or work on special projects with ALT staff. Some volunteers are able to spend hundreds of hours helping, while others are only able to spare a few; to us, every hour counts! Speaking of hours, we want to recognize volunteers who have helped ALT, so if you have been doing work on our lands, please let us know. Your hours are not only great for bragging rights, but they also help out ALT as an in-kind investment that we can use as a match when applying for funding.

As we are getting the final totals in for annual contributions to stewardship for 2015, we are also getting ready for ALT volunteer work in 2016! We have several open workdays planned to kick off the Spring stewardship season and are scheduling corporate and other group days throughout the year.

For more information on group and individual volunteering,
e-mail Caitlin at cseiler@alleghenylandtrust.org or 412-741-2750 x 207.

notes from the land:

National Trends in Conservation

photos and article by Roy Kraynyk | VP of Land Protection & Capital Projects

I had the fortunate opportunity to attend the Land Trust Alliance national conference in Sacramento this fall. Approximately 1,900 people were in attendance representing land trusts from across the country. I've attended this conference 5 times over the past 20 years and find that it is not only educational and inspiring but a good way to benchmark the work of ALT against national trends.

Community Conservation Metrics

Land trusts are broadening their measures of success beyond acres and dollars to include what I consider sociological metrics. Creating gathering places for people, protecting cultural heritage, crime prevention and strengthening the sense of community are some of the metrics that land trusts are now considering as they plan for land conservation projects. ALT is involved with several community groups within the City of Pittsburgh to protect small urban lands that provide space for people to meet their neighbors, and to gather for events or volunteer work days that promote new relationships and neighborhood cohesion. Studies show how these types of activities help to enrich the sense of community and reduce crime.

Urban Agriculture



Examples of urban agriculture.

Cities across the country are transforming vacant blighted lots into productive gardens providing fresh produce in neighborhoods that are considered "food deserts" because they lack a local grocery store. The corner gas station or news stand is the only local place to get food and that is usually limited to snacks, soft drinks and other processed junk food. ALT is working with Grow Pittsburgh, The Hilltop Alliance, Neu Kirche and other community groups to secure and protect urban lots that host existing gardens, and larger tracts of land that have the potential to become urban agricultural centers.

Restoration & Green Infrastructure



The former Rave Cinemas parking lot in the Town of McCandless. Currently a vast, impervious surface, ALT is working with the town to transform this site back into green space.

Land trusts are getting more involved in restoring previously developed land, and acquiring land for the management of storm water in a more natural way. Partnerships between land trusts, municipalities and water and sewer authorities are protecting land that can absorb rain fall and stormwater runoff before it floods homes and businesses; in the case of Allegheny County, overflow floods into the sanitary sewers causing overflow polluting our streams and rivers creating a health hazard. Developed parcels that were once sources of runoff are being stripped of the asphalt and other impervious surfaces and transformed into thirsty landscapes that absorb and purify the runoff. ALT is working in partnership with the Town of McCandless to acquire the 26-acre Rave Cinema property located in the floodplain of Pine Creek. ALT has the property under contract to purchase and are currently involved with site inspections and other due diligence. If we move forward with the closing, ALT will gift the land to McCandless then work together to create a Floodplain Restoration Plan that would include removing and recycling the 13 acres of parking and the 11-theater building, and replacing it with wetlands and other natural features designed to hold back and filter stormwater.

Native American Collaboration

There is a growing trend among western land trusts to collaborate with Native American Tribes to acquire and protect ancestral lands that were the hunting grounds and villages of their families thousands of years ago. Native Americans bring generations of knowledge of the ecology, the medicinal and therapeutic attributes of various plants, and other aspects of the sensitive western landscapes, all

of which are exceedingly helpful when stewarding lands. The sense of deep gratification that the land trusts working in this area expressed when talking about the success they had protecting Native American lands was palpable. ALT is reaching out to the local Native American community to see if there are any possibilities to identify and protect ancestral lands in our area.

In summary, ALT is in sync with the national trends, and thanks everyone for their support that empowers ALT to keep pace with these trends and the demands we face to help local people save local land.

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

ALT Fall & Winter Photo Highlights



Photo courtesy of Washington County Community Foundation. Allegheny Land Trust Board members Ken LaSota and Tom Browand pose with a WCCF Day of Giving graphic as they accept donations from the day of giving. Total ALT donors of WCCF Gives doubled this year. Thank you, donors!



Photo by Holly Muir. The Sewickley Hunt gallops through and explores Audubon Greenway on a warm December Day.



Photos by Lindsay Dill. Ohio State University students volunteer at Audubon Greenway on a cool October day. Their exchange student group volunteers with ALT annually.



Photo by John Rouse; ALT DMH Community Coordinator Keri Rouse poses with ALT's volunteer-crafted tree at the 30th Annual McKeesport Festival of Trees.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN 23 OR 24 | TBD | UES WINTER GATHERING

Attend the Urban EcoStewards winter gathering to discuss stewardship with UES. Check back on PPC's UES web page for the updated date, time, location, and description details.

MARCH 5 | 10A-1P | STEWARDSHIP ROUNDTABLE @ TBD

Join ALT staff and other stewards to have questions answered, discuss upcoming projects and enjoy a light lunch. Please RSVP here: bit.ly/stewardroundtable

APRIL 9 | 10A-1 | CLEAN-UP @ LOWRIES RUN

Get your hands dirty, meet other volunteers, and have a blast at Lowries Run for a Spring clean-up.

For more information, visit www.alleghenylandtrust.org.

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