

VISTAS

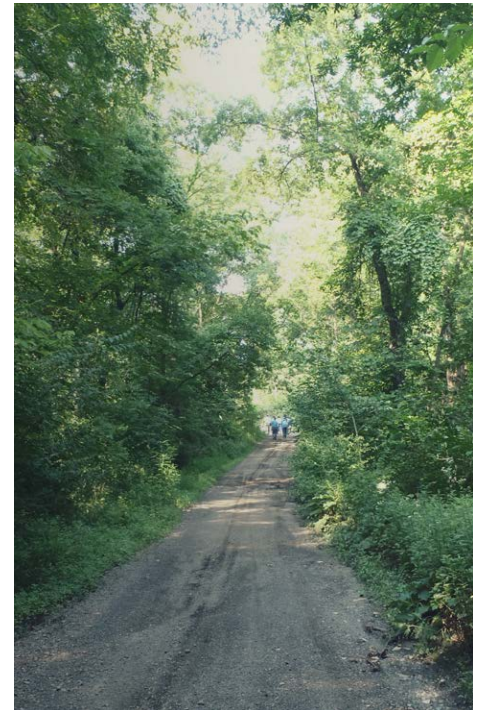
AN ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST PUBLICATION | 2016 Q3

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notes from the land:

The largest addition to PGH's park system in almost a century



Photos by Roy Kraynyk. (Left) Cathedral of Learning as seen from the vantage point of Hays Woods. (Right) Trail at Hays Woods.

by Roy Kraynyk | VP of Land Protection & Capital Projects

Hays Woods is 660 acres located in the southeastern corner of Pittsburgh's City limits adjacent to Baldwin Borough on the Mon River, 2 ½ miles south of the Point. Eighteen acres are in Baldwin.

The property has been in the news for more than a decade when a race track and casino were proposed there in 2003, and more recently when a pair of bald eagles first decided to raise their young there in 2012. It has been more than a century and a half since eagles nested within the city limits according to ornithologists.

Hays Woods is rugged. In some places, the land is "standing on edge" according to the civil engineers, whose task it was this spring and summer to survey the boundary. There are sheer slopes, deep ravines, intermittent waterfalls, and dynamic views up and down the Mon River Valley. Due to the sheer size of the property, interior forest patches exist that provide protection and habitat for species especially vulnerable to raiding raccoons, feral cats, and other predators that prefer

the edges, and tend not to venture very deep into the forest. Interior forests are defined as a patch of forest that has an uninterrupted, 300-foot buffer of woods surrounding it.

For the past 5 to 6 years, ALT has been working with partners including Penn Future, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), and the Mayor's office to acquire the property from the owner, Pittsburgh Development Group, who was interested in gifting it for dedication as a park.

The negotiations ebbed and flowed for years, and finally a deal was struck in the spring. On June 23, the City acquired the land and all the mineral rights through the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) for a percentage of the land's actual value. Before the URA transfers the land to the City, a conservation easement held by WPC will be placed on it to ensure its protection as green space and park; ALT will be named a beneficiary.

Naming ALT as a beneficiary in the easement acts like a back-up easement, so the result is two conservation groups will be in place to ensure that the easement terms are not violated by a future

City Council or whomever may own the property in the future.

ALT is very happy that this treasured piece of urban green space has finally been protected. We look forward to continuing to work closely with our conservation and funding partners, as well as the Urban Redevelopment Authority and Mayor's Office as plans for the park begin to take shape over the coming months and years.

Finally, we want to give "shout outs" to George Jugovic of Penn Future for his tireless efforts over the years navigating the fragile negotiations with the landowner; to the URA for its bold decision to seize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and spend the money to protect a green space for the use of an urban park east of the Mississippi since the 1930s; and to Mayor Peduto for the commitment to keep the land "untouched urban forest for generations."

**For more on Hays woods:
bit.ly/pghhays
- or -
alleghenylandtrust.org**

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

How Your Gift Improved Our Work

by Lindsay Dill | Marketing Communications Director

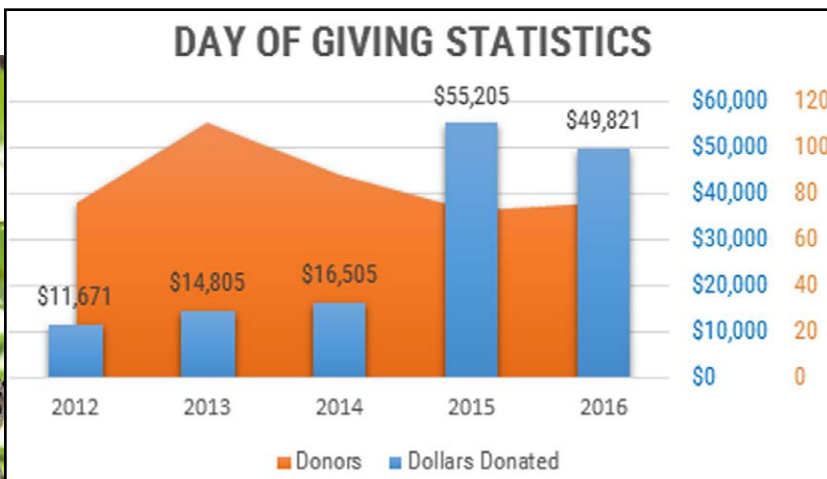


Photo by Lindsay Dill. (Left) A white-breasted nut hatch surveys a crowd at Sycamore Island with its signature upside-down move.

A big Thank You to the more than 75 supporters who gave gifts of time, money, and word-of-mouth during our second self-hosted Day of Giving.

We were amazed by the enthusiasm and funds raised by our Board of Directors for the second year in a row. Their gifts created a dollar-for-dollar match pool. This resulted in ALT raising \$50,000 from more donors than donated in 2015.

As a non-profit organization, and accredited land trust, it's a best practice to have sustainable funds for each conservation area's acquisition and maintenance as well as sustainable funds for


the operations of our organization. Each year, Days of Giving allow for us to build upon our operational budget to keep operations funding in check, which then allows us to focus more staff time and efforts on fundraising for acquiring and stewarding new and existing conservation areas.

Your gifts helped us to increase our operational budget as we form our brand new outdoor and environmental education program for kids and adults to better appreciate the world around them. Additionally, your gifts supported our staff in having more time and resources to dedicate to finding new green spaces.

When the Pittsburgh Foundation decided to skip a year in 2015, our Board of Directors stepped up to raise a match pool for ALT to host its own dollar-for-dollar matched Day of Giving campaign. We're happy to continue this tradition due to our Board and supporters' enthusiasm, even as the Pittsburgh Foundation's Day of Giving continued in 2016.

Thank you so much for your support, and we hope you enjoy seeing the work that we do; after all, it's your gifts that allow it all to happen!

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



Washington County's Official
Day of Giving for Local Charities

September 13, 2016

During this one day event, all gifts made
online or by check will be increased by
part of a \$100,000 bonus pool!

www.wccfgives.org

WCCF Gives Sponsors	
Chapman Corporation	Washington Financial Bank
Alex Paris Contracting	Washington Auto Mall
ANSYS	Washington County Community Foundation Acorn Fund
Observer-Reporter	

In Washington County, we protect land that contributes to the quality of the Chartiers Creek Watershed.

We hope you'll support ALT during this Day of Giving to support green space and water quality protection.

Our New Sponsors

We welcome Manning & Napier and First National Bank to our new Annual Sponsorship Program! Manning & Napier and First National Bank both entered the program as Maple Sponsors.

For many years, we organized a one-night event as our annual fundraiser with the goal to increase our revenue as well as our connection with new and existing supporters. While those events were always successful, we wanted to expand the reach of our efforts. So, we created a new, unique program to extend the reach of benefits for both our supporters and our sponsors via a plan for the entire year of ALT's outreach activities.

If you or your company are interested in learning more, contact us or visit our website. Upon request, we can send you an informational packet detailing benefits of our various sponsor levels. Again, a big THANK YOU to our new sponsors!



First National Bank



The Ugly Duckling:

Stewardship's Upcoming Habitat Management Work

by **Emilie Rzotkiewicz**
VP of Land Resources

The great outdoors are just that—great. But not all species in a given environment are valued equally. Just as you have a preference when it comes to your favorite hiking trails, snacks, views, etc., so too do flora and fauna have preferences for habitat.

At ALT, we protect green space that contributes to our region's scenic quality, biodiversity, and water quality. We also track and measure species behavior; we notice when knotweed is retaking a recently-cleared hillside, when a rare bird species is visiting a green space for the first time, or when butterfly eggs are mistakenly laid on Dame's Rocket.

During the next few months ALT is part-

nering with the Pennsylvania Game Commission to create better wildlife habitat at Audubon Greenway and Dead Man's Hollow. Visitors will notice spray paint markings on the trees, contractors coming and going and some noise when the work is underway. We will do our best to keep you updated, but the timing is weather and contract dependent. We will be treating non-native, invasive plants, restoring native grasslands and wildflower meadows, and creating a healthier, younger forest.

In general, our state has very little early successional or young forest habitat, which are critical habitats to a number of wildlife species, including black-billed cuckoo, yellow-breasted chat, red-winged blackbird, eastern cottontail, American

goldfinch, and endless numbers of bees, butterflies, and more. To accomplish this, we must remove the overstory - larger, taller trees shading young trees, hardwoods, brush, etc - to create canopy gaps. You will see some significant tree cutting in some areas as we rid the woods of the unwanted invasive, Norway maple, buckthorn thickets, and oriental bittersweet vines.

The coming months may not look as pretty to the eye with downed trees and dead invasives, but please remember this is just short term. The wildlife will scurry about the down tree tops and the soil will get a boost of nutrients as the debris decomposes into the ground. In no time at all the forest will begin to regenerate and a healthier one at that!

AUDUBON GREENWAY



Photo by Lindsay Dill. An Audubon Greenway hillside pictured in the fall of 2015.

We'll be focusing on two different habitats— the woods and meadows. We will create young forest habitat, control nonnative, invasive plants, restore native grasses and wildflowers, and thin the forest. This will leave desirable trees, like oaks and hickories, while controlling unwanted plants in the understory, resulting in a far healthier future forest.

We will treat the fields this fall to prepare for a spring seed planting. Years of frequent mowing have removed cover for wildlife, such as native songbirds, and suppressed the native wildflowers that support pollinator species like bees and butterflies. We will plant warm season grasses and native wildflowers. The woods lack diversity with a shift to tree species like red maple, black birch and sassafras – these species have less value to wildlife. The cutting will promote the growth of oaks and hickories which provide an important food source.

DEAD MAN'S HOLLOW



Photo by Lindsay Dill. A volunteer hacks away Japanese Knotweed during a July Trail Tuesday at Dead Man's Hollow.

At Dead Man's Hollow we will be focusing on invasive removal and woodlands habitat improvement. The invasive work will primarily be focused around the newly developed trail system with a target of buckthorn, Japanese knotweed and Tree-of-Heaven. Significant tree removal will occur at the Calhoun entrance to the property as we cut Tree of Heaven and other non-wildlife-supporting species. Large acorn producing oaks and cherries will be left as food for wildlife.

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

We've Launched an Education Program

by **Lindsay Dill**
Marketing Communications Director

Allegheny Land Trust has launched a new outdoor and environmental education initiative, and hired two staff members to manage the new education programs.

We welcome Jessica Kester and Julie Travaglini, both formerly of The Outdoor Classroom, to create additional educational opportunities, especially for school-aged children, at our conserva-

tion areas. The Outdoor Classroom, a 501c3 based in Upper St. Clair, decided to wind down their operations effective June 1st, opening an opportunity for ALT.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to attract two experienced, well-respected teachers as part of the land trust team," said ALT President & CEO Chris Beichner. "For over two years, we have been exploring ways to increase outdoor and environmental education opportunities

on our conservation areas. We are very pleased to have Jessica and Julie on our team as we look to educate current and future generations."

The Education Department will develop new programs for children and adults to be offered at various locations across the region. ALT intends to partner with municipalities, school districts, counties, non-profits and others to provide far-reaching access to the programming.

Jessica Kester VP of Education

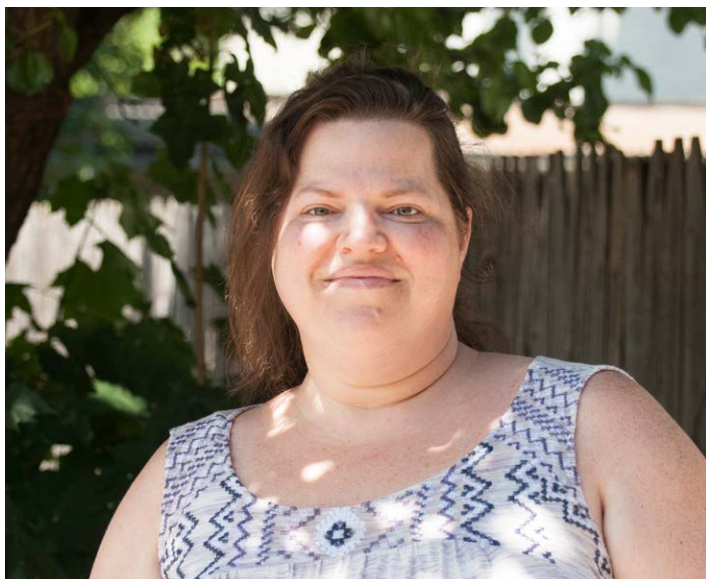


Photo by Lindsay Dill. Portrait of ALT's Vice President of Education Jessica Kester.

With more than 16 years of experience in education, Jessica is tasked with starting ALT's new education department.

Jessica holds degrees in Biology/Marine Science and Secondary Education/Biology from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, and is the PAEE State Coordinator for Project WET. She began her career as a field instructor in coastal marine sciences at the Chincoteague Bay Field Station in Wallops Island, VA. She moved westward to teach students from Chicago at the Lorado-Taft Field Campus of Northern Illinois University. Prior to her time at ALT, she ran The Outdoor Classroom in Pittsburgh's South Hills for 10 years, which focused on educating youth about Southwestern PA's variety of ecosystems and wondrous treasures.

Though she grew up in Blue Knob, PA, calming sounds of ocean waves and wind rustling through tree canopies were commonplace throughout her childhood. She carries memories of those sounds with her still as she educates green space visitors who are soaking up the sounds in their own natural surroundings.

Julie Travaglini Education Program Director



Photo by Lindsay Dill. Portrait of ALT's Education Program Director Julie Travaglini.

Joining ALT as the new Education Program Director, Julie graduated from Muskingham University with a Bachelor's degree in Biology and a Master's degree in teaching.

Julie's 10-year professional career has been in environmental education. During her college years, Julie completed internships at Living Treasures Animal Park, The Dawes Arboretum, and the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. She served as the Senior Program Facilitator at The Outdoor Classroom for almost seven years where she taught more than 5,000 pre-school children the joys of nature, planned community events, and wrote curriculum-- lots and lots of curriculum. She is also a Specialty Discipline Instructor for the state.

When not writing curriculum and playing with toys meant for her preschool students, Julie can be found horseback riding, kayaking, watching reality TV, reading, or collecting exotic pets such as reptiles.

Ongoing Trail Work at the Hollow



Photo by Lindsay Dill. Volunteers work on trails at Dead Man's Hollow during July's Trail Tuesday.

by Keri Rouse | Community Coordinator

For years, Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area has quietly attracted attention in the Youghiogheny River Valley with its diverse and striking natural character, rich industrial history, and spooky tales that bolster the Hollow's ominous name.

Though a select few were able to expertly navigate the tangle of trails found on the property - many of which were carved at the whim of industry long before ALT's 1996 acquisition of the property - plans are in motion to improve the trail system. The goal of improving trails? To make the conservation area more accessible and inviting, and to minimize negative impact on ecologically sensitive areas. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers, staff, and a hired trail crew, two new trails in what will be a 10-mile trail system will be complete by late fall.

Emerald Trails Corps began rerouting the Cool Spirit Trail last year, and returned this year to continue improvements

under a new name: Landforce. A Pittsburgh nonprofit organization, Landforce hires traditionally difficult to employ adults and trains members to provide stewardship services in the Pittsburgh region. We are thrilled to have had both 6-member crews at Dead Man's Hollow this summer clearing brush, moving earth, and colliding with countless spider webs in the name of completing the Cool Spirit and Witch Hazel Trail.

Work on Cool Spirit wrapped up in July; the new trail snakes up hillsides and meanders through stands of oak and black cherry trees, replacing sections of steep climbing slopes with a penchant for becoming small streams during heavy rainfall. The Witch Hazel Trail is slated for completion in September and offers a new scenic overlook of the Youghiogheny River and Boston Bridge, as well as a gentler trek to the Great Allegheny Passage from the Calhoun Road trail access. Expect to see Landforce in the Hollow again next year, building trails to connect the upper and lower halves of the property.

We ask that visitors avoid closed sections of trail as volunteers work to block them off and plant seeds. Efforts to develop and install wayfinding and mile marker signs throughout the property are in the works, but there's no need to fear getting lost in the meantime; you can follow the blue diamond trail markers placed along the new Cool Spirit Trail, and find our updated trail map online at www.alleghenylandtrust.org.

Attend our Trail Open House on October 1 to hear about what's been accomplished, learn where the project is headed next, and voice questions or concerns about trail improvement in the Hollow. After a brief forum, hit the trails with us on a 2-mile hike of the new Cool Spirit Trail! Find additional details and register online at bit.ly/altoutside.

HUNTERS WEAR ORANGE, SO SHOULD YOU

Get Your Free ALT Hunting Permit Today

by Keri Rouse | Community Coordinator

For hunters and non-hunters alike, it's important to know when and where hunting is occurring. We allow hunting and restricted hunting on some of our conservation areas. We also have free hunting permits that we require hunters to acquire prior to using our lands.

We follow the Game Commission's Fall Hunting Season: **September 1 through January 31**. Our conservation areas fall into one of three hunting categories:

Open Hunting Conservation Areas – Hunters are permitted to take any legal game by any legal weapon during the hunting season. This includes trapping.

Restricted Hunting Conservation Areas – Hunters are permitted to hunt only white tail deer and only with a bow and arrow during the hunting season. This excludes hunting of any other game species and trapping.

No Hunting Conservation Areas –

ALT owns property that is not open for any hunting season.

These areas are usually small in size, located in residential neighborhoods, or too ecologically sensitive for off-trail foot traffic. This also includes all Conservation Easements as they are not owned by the Allegheny Land Trust.

Learn the category your favorite conservation area falls into, and find hunting permits here:

bit.ly/althunt

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

Meet A Steward: Ciarán Ceallaigh, Venango Trail

Intro by Lindsay Dill | Marketing Communications Director

Each issue we aim to feature passionate volunteers and the work that they do. This time, our feature will be written by the volunteer himself, who is using his pseudonym for privacy; he volunteers at the portion of Venango Trail known as “The Indian Trail”, which ALT

helped to protect. We’re constantly inspired by others’ enjoyment of green space to better and more widely do our work. This volunteer wrote about that inspiration, and how it moved him to give back to the very land that he loves.

by Ciarán Ceallaigh | Volunteer

There is a place along The Indian Trail where vine entangles vine as they ascend a tree; it is a work of art by the hand of Nature. This makes one wonder what other treats are just off this path, or along that creek, or across this island, or up that hollow. Flip the loose bark in the leaf litter, and set loose the Pill Bugs; run a fine net through the water, and discover the Caddisfly larvae; inhale the heady perfume of all this Skunk Cabbage. Block out the noise and absorb the sounds, delight like a schoolboy at the dance of sunlight through the canopy.

This stretch of land paralleling Achweek Run was probably safe from “development” thanks to mandated green space in the township, but we know other areas in the county lost where the future is in doubt, and we can’t wait for government to make the save, or do the maintenance – as alone these can be overwhelming. What a joy to find like-minded folks with whom to share the load of picking litter, attacking invasives, securing watersheds, ... and just sitting. And – if like Emilie, ALT’s VP of Land Resources – they know a

whole lot more about local plants than do we, then my family has had a gratis 3-cred-it course in our own backyard.

We believe an unused trail can be-

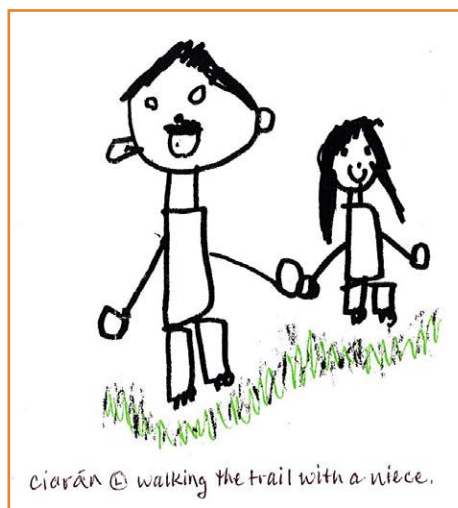


Photo courtesy of Ciarán Ceallaigh. A niece’s drawing of herself and Ciarán.

come an abused trail, and with a growing number of trail networks in the Western Pennsylvania area, we also see the need for more users to become stewards, and donors, in some capacity to preserve the quality of these treasures. We can’t wait

for “the others” to make the move. That, then, was a motivation for us to become more involved about four years ago with the present and future use of The Indian Trail, beyond our occasional use of it as a very neat place to walk in four seasons. While we have also made use of Dead Man’s Hollow as a byway to points South, we realize we need to know more about the unique flavor of this stretch along the Youghiogheny River as well to properly appreciate and promote it and other ALT holdings, held for us all as sanctuary from suffocating sprawl.

Theodore Roosevelt said one does the best one can with what one has at the time and our family tries to follow that dictum, but always hoping to see more and offer more as models to our children and others. The visual delights can be fleeting, like the blossoms of Summer Phlox or a Grey Fox bursting across the trail, but the memories imprinted are for a lifetime, to share and compare with family, friends and strangers-soon-to-be-friends as we swing the weed whip or guzzle cool water. How could you not return? Pack a lunch, because the next adventure starts ... now!

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

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15143

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPT 17 | 10A-1P | MUSHROOM WALK @ SYCAMORE ISLAND

Join us & the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club as we journey in search of Fall seasonal fungi aboard the Allegheny Cleanways Tireless Project pontoon boat, The Rachel Carson.

SEPT 20 | 5P-7P | #ALTtrailtues @ DMH

Lace up your boots, get outside, and lend a hand for our final #TrailTuesday to make a difference at Dead Man's Hollow! We'll work to improve and expand the Hollow's trail system from 6 to 10 miles via trail work, planting trees and native seeds, and removing trash and invasive plants.

OCT 1 | 9:30A-12P | Trail Open House @ DMH

Some trails open while others close. Attend our trail open house to hear about what's new on the Dead Man's Hollow trails, learn where the project is headed next, and hit the trails with us for a 2-mile hike.

OCT 15 | TBD | Hike & Ghost Hunt @ DMH

A place doesn't earn a name like "Dead Man's Hollow" without a turbulent history and spooky tales to go along with it. Join ALT & experts from the Steel City Ghost Hunters on a hike where you'll hear the tales and take part in a paranormal investigation.

NOV 12 | TBD | Tree Planting @ Audubon Greenway

Help ALT & Tree Pittsburgh implement a hillside restoration project at the greenway! More than 2,000 trees are set to be planted, but not without help from volunteers like you!

**RSVP & FIND MORE EVENTS ON OUR EVENTBRITE PAGE:
BIT.LY/ALTOUSIDE**

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summer, etc.

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