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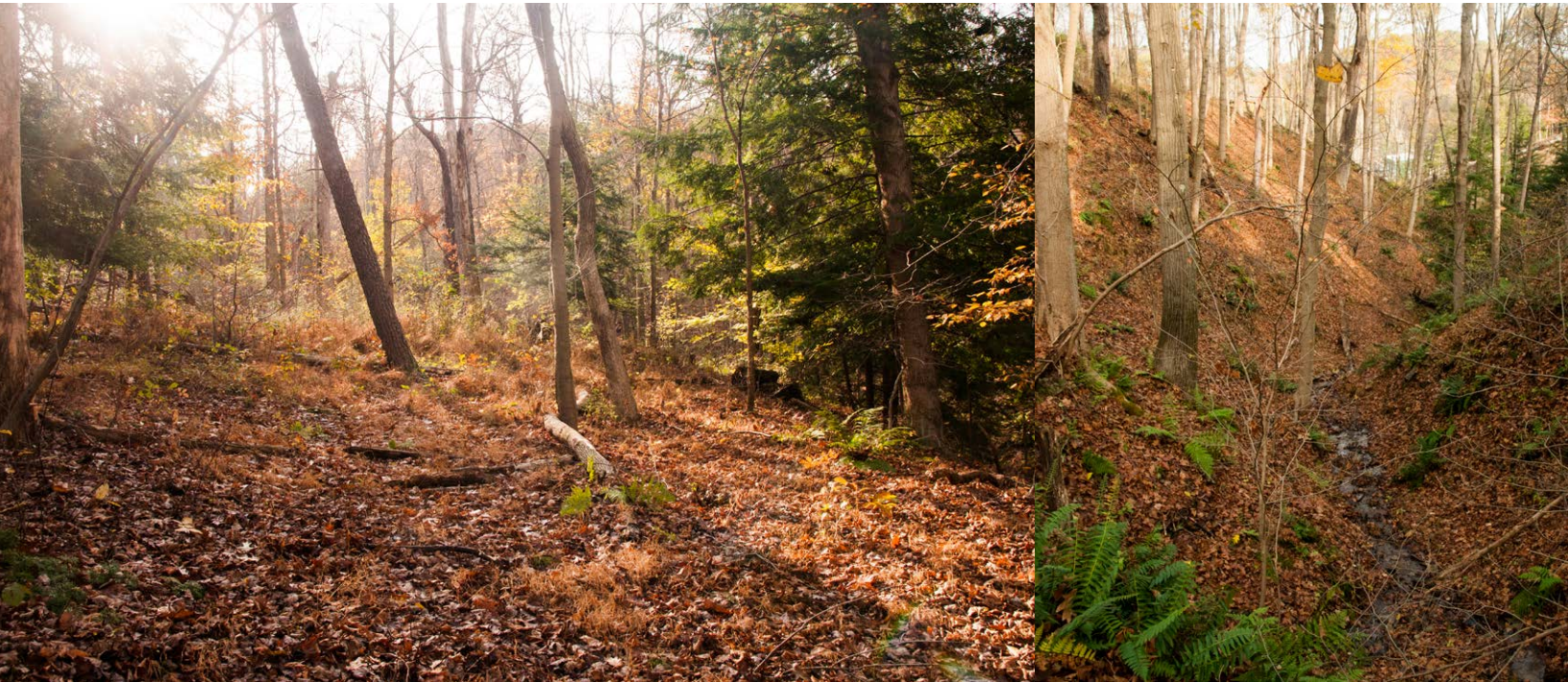
AN ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST PUBLICATION | 2016 Q4

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notes from the land:

Sustaining Momentum: Two Projects Need Your Support



Photos by Lindsay Dill. (LEFT) An afternoon sunset at Linbrook Woodlands in November 2016. (RIGHT) Ferns overlook a tributary of Big Sewickley Creek in November 2016.

by Roy Kraynyk | VP of Land Protection & Capital Projects

A narrow deer trail skirts along the edge of a sheer, 100-foot rock face down to Big Sewickley Creek, veering left to meander through a grove of hemlocks, and then up a narrow ravine with lush green ferns and golden yellow birch leaves glowing in the late afternoon sun.

The sun's afternoon rays glitter off a small tributary's rippling water snaking its way to Big Sewickley Creek. The damp, musky scent of Pennsylvania woodlands in autumn is rich and unmistakable. Along the trail, remnants of a decaying sleeping bag and tarp are narrowly visible under brown oak leaves in a park-like grove of hardwoods with a commanding view of the Big Sewickley Creek Valley; was this a kids' camp site? Someone on the run? The mystery is intriguing.

Other reminders of the past remain such as an iron pipe from a gas well, or one of the oil pump jacks that

were prevalent in the valley. As told by a long-time resident, generations ago the rhythm of the pumping would lull inhabitants of the valley to sleep.

This one anecdote represents the character of many more stories told by four new properties totaling nearly 98 acres that ALT currently has under contract in the Big Sewickley Watershed. Two parcels are in Bell Acres Borough, and two others are in neighboring Franklin Park Borough.

The 12.57 acres in Franklin Park fills gaps in the 168-acre Linbrook Woodlands that ALT purchased last year for permanent green space. Linbrook Woodlands is adjacent to the borough's 80-acre Linbrook Park expanding the borough's greenspace and recreational opportunities such as hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, and fishing.

The two Bell Acres parcels totaling 85 acres help to make a connection between more than 200 acres of existing protected land in Bell Acres to Linbrook Woodlands. The 50-acre

parcel in Bell Acres includes a large floodplain that is a popular destination for fisherman.

Protecting these important lands is dependent on the community's support. The large public and private grants that ALT needs to purchase and care for green space hinge on acquiring local matching funds. The budget to protect these 4 parcels is \$700,000. So far, ALT has raised \$380,000 in matching funds, a grant for \$99,000 is pending and more funders are being approached.

Please join your friends and neighbors to keep the momentum of land protection moving by using the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible contribution. Your contribution will leverage matching dollars, and provide you with a great sense of satisfaction of knowing that you helped to make a lasting positive impact on the quality of air, water and life for your community forever.

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

2016: A Year to Remember

by Chris Beichner | President & CEO

Many will remember 2016 as a historic year; and it really was a year to remember.

The presidential election was stunning to watch and very polarizing for our country as two very different candidates battled it out to be the next President of the United States. In a thrilling Game 7, the Chicago Cubs won the World Series over the Cleveland Indians after a 108-year championship drought. Additionally, we're ending a year of record-breaking heat waves, wildfires, rainfall, and flooding across our country.

At ALT, 2016 is historic in what it meant for our organization and the communities we serve. With your support, we launched our first-ever outdoor and environmental education program in June, helped protect one of the nation's largest city parks, and lined up four properties under contract for protection.

We hired two full-time, certified teachers to lead our education program. The department will focus on providing various types of programming to public and private schools, non-profits focused on children, municipality-based groups, and the general public. We look forward to expanding our programs in 2017, but as we look back, the education program was a historic addition to ALT's service offerings.

What many conservation-minded Pittsburghers will remember about 2016 is that ALT, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, PennFuture, local foundations, Mayor Peduto's office, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) worked together to negotiate the donation of Hays Woods to the URA. This transaction was almost a decade in the making to transfer and protect the 660-acre parcel, which is where the bald eagles have nested for many years. Once officially protected as a City park, the land will be one of the

biggest newly-created parks in a major US city since the 1930s!

Finally, ALT worked hard with local community representatives to identify and put under contract four properties, which will be treated as two extension projects. The properties, two in Bell Acres Borough and two in Franklin Park Borough, contribute to the region's scenic character, biodiversity, and water quality, specifically that of Big Sewickley Creek. Learn more on page two in "Notes From the Land."

ALT's work directly addresses our region's healthy ecosystems by protecting it, improving it, and educating others about it. Together, our goal is to make a greater difference in our region's biodiversity, water quality, air quality, scenic views, and healthy living. With our work locally, we are doing our small part to positively affect global climate change.

Please consider contributing to ALT by December 31st to help us continue implementing our mission. Your donation is 100% tax deductible. During our year-end appeal, we ask you to consider these two specific ways to help us improve the Pittsburgh region:

1. Contribute to our **Unrestricted Fund** that helps us operate efficiently. *Our goal is to raise \$40,000 from our year-end campaign.*

2. Contribute an extra 25% to go towards one of our current **Capital Campaigns** underway, including two properties under contract in Bell Acres Borough, and one remaining property under contract in Franklin Park Borough. *Our goal is to raise \$50,000 for these projects.*

We hope you'll join in supporting us this holiday season. **Thank you!**

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



(LEFT) Photo by Lindsay Dill. Harrison Middle School students attend an ALT Education Department program at Wingfield Pines.
(MIDDLE) Photo by Roy Kraynyk. The Cathedral of Learning as pictured from the recently-protected Hays Woods.
(RIGHT) Photo by Lindsay Dill. A tributary flows through a ravine to Big Sewickley Creek from Linbrook Woodlands.

Our Newest Supporters

One Summer, Three Babies: Meet the Next Generation

The Kester Family

The Seiler Family

The Rzotkiewicz Family



by **Lindsay Dill** | Marketing Communications Director

"Helping Local People Save Local Land"; "Protecting land with significant benefit to our region's scenic quality, biodiversity, and water quality"; "Working to protect land, steward its quality, and educate people on its benefits for generations to come"; "Forever". These are the words and phrases used in the land trust world, and ALT is no exception.

In meeting potential volunteers, potential donors, foundations, landowners, neighbors, etc. we always use this language to most efficiently communicate our "WHY" - the reason that we do what we do. However, it can be easy to get lost in these rehearsed slogans and elevator pitches. It's not until you're out on the land taking a hike, learning about species identification, or maintaining a trail that it hits you - the "why" is the land; it's

the people who use the land; it's the possibility that decades from now, your children's children will be able to benefit from the land and say, "My family helped protect this land years ago."

At ALT, we had a whirlwind of a summer as we started a new department, acquired new conservation areas, implemented existing plans, and brought on new staff all while having three of our staff on maternity leave. It may have been challenging at the time, but we now have new, tangible "reasons" -- named Malcom, Scarlet, and Odin -- to remind us of why we do what we do, and to remind us who on Earth cares. They do; and if they don't yet, they will.

So, meet our next generation of supporters, and remember as the year comes to an end, that it is them for whom we work.

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

HUNTERS WEAR ORANGE, SO SHOULD YOU

ALT Given Award, Grant for Projects



Photo courtesy of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). ALT President & CEO Chris Beichner accepts 2016 ULI "Healthy Place" Place-making Award for ALT's Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area. ALT also won this award in 2014 for Wingfield Pines.



Photo by Lindsay Dill. The Sprout Fund awarded ALT & local artist Jim West with a Grand Ideas grant to unveil a sculpture by West on Sycamore Island. The June event will aim to connect neighbors with the sculpture, conceived above, and with the island.

For more information about these projects and awards, please visit our website at www.alleghenylandtrust.org

Education Team Hits Ground Running

by Jessica Kester | VP of Education

After coming aboard in June, the education team jumped feet first into getting the department up and running - or hiking, as it were. In six short months, the education department hosted 3 community programs at Wingfield Pines, visited 17 educational settings (schools, daycares, etc.), met at 1 assisted living location, and participated in 9 community events. Throughout these programs, the education team has managed to introduce more than 4,600 individuals to ALT's mission and conservation areas.

Julie Travaglini, Education Director, made presentations about early childhood education and nature at local and state

conferences, and Jessie, VP of Education, made presentations for Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) workshops across the state. Together, the team reached many educators communicating the importance of outdoor environmental education and conservation.

The department has already received grants from RiverWorks Discovery, the EQT Foundation, and PNC Foundation's Grow Up Great program. Education has received additional contracts with the Homeless Children's Education Fund (HCEF) and the Baldwin-Whitehall School District, which continues the strong relationships that The Outdoor Classroom, Jessie & Julie's previous project, had created.



Photos by Lindsay Dill. (LEFT) Harrison Middle School students get information from a geocache exercise at Wingfield Pines. (RIGHT) Harrison Middle School students test pH levels of Abandoned Mine Drainage water at Wingfield Pines.

So, what makes ALT's education program stand out from the others?

- We utilize local lands saved by local people to bring topics such as habitat restoration, water conservation, and green space to students of all abilities and incomes.
- We have creative, interactive, and hands-on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programs that meet both Early Childhood and K-12 educational standards of Pennsylvania.
- We have department leaders who are developing our mission and conservation area-specific curricula; they are licensed and certified experts in their field of environmental education by both state and international programs.
- We offer the highest consistency in quality programming provided by paid, trained educators. All education staff are rigorously selected to have a strong teaching ability and an environmental knowledge base, and, of course, they hold the same criminal and child abuse clearances required by PA state teachers.
- We nurture collaborations with local non-profits, community organizations, and institutions of higher education to enhance our programming. These partnerships allow ALT educators to bring additional content, locations, and real-time data for well-rounded, up to date, and relevant programs to the public.

ALT has both field and classroom-based opportunities for children between 2nd - 12th grades. Additionally, the education team will introduce our new community-based programming that will utilize more of our conservation areas in the coming year. ALT educators look forward to reaching even more individuals with these and more projects in 2017.

For more information, e-mail Jessica at jkester@alleghenylandtrust.org.

Offsetting Your Forest Footprint

by Caitlin Seiler | Director of Volunteer & Land Resources

Imagine a beautiful sunny morning perfect for a visit to your favorite conservation area. You lace up your boots, and head out with your dog, horse, or bike. Thoughts about beautiful sites you'll see and feelings of fresh air that you'll feel on your face are running through your mind. What you may not be thinking of is what you will be leaving behind at the green space - your forest footprint.

All human activity on ALT conservation areas has an impact on the health of the lands. Some effects are easy to see, such as heavy trail use and unmanaged dog waste, and others are less obvious. In some areas, even walking through can spread the seeds of invasive species, like Japanese stiltgrass. In others, trails can be degraded allowing water to erode the surface.

Allegheny Land Trust's mission is to

protect lands that have an environmental, scenic, and recreational benefit to communities. We keep our lands open to the public for passive recreation, unless there is a safety concern or a



Photo by Lindsay Dill. Linbrook Woodlands fall trees in November 2016.

threat to sensitive habitat. We find it important to encourage our supporters to continue using and building a relationship with the outdoors.

Many of our dedicated volunteers also represent land user groups. At

Dead Man's Hollow, for example, a mountain biking club helps to build and maintain trails; at Wingfield Pines our land stewards are avid dog walkers and birders; and, on various additional properties, some of our hunters are the most helpful property monitors.

However, every visitor leaves a footprint which over time adds up to a large footprint and we ask that you do your part to help offset your impact on the land, no matter how small.

Ways you can help give back:

- Follow seven "Leave No Trace" principles: <https://Int.org/learn/7-principles>
- Volunteer your time at a workday or become a land steward at your favorite ALT green space.
- Donate to ALT to help our stewardship team.
- Let us know if you see illegal activity such as ATV use, fires, or dumping.

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

First Annual Sponsor Plan Goals Reached

by Lindsay Dill | Marketing Communications Director

We welcome Allegheny Financial Group; Ernie Sota Construction; and Williams, Coulson, Johnson, Lloyd, Parker & Tedesco, LLC. to our new Annual Sponsorship Program!

Allegheny Financial Group entered the program as a Hemlock Sponsor, and Ernie Sota Construction and Williams, Coulson, Johnson, Lloyd, Parker & Tedesco, LLC. entered the program as Maple Sponsors.

Thanks to these and other recent sponsors, we've met our 2016-2017 goal for sponsorships. This is the first year we've replaced our annual fundraiser with an annual sponsorship plan to expand the impact for both sponsors and existing supporters. Instead of gathering sponsorships for a one-time event benefiting ALT's operations, we're redistributing funds to support operations and expand year-long mission-driven events.

This year, that has translated to funding for more than 7 community day outreach events; mushroom/bat/ghost/dog hikes, and more. Next year, we will be expanding on-site education events for the public, including more hikes exploring mushroom identification, plant identification, bird identification, watershed comprehension, full moon-watching, and more.

If you or your company are interested in learning more, contact us or visit our website www.alleghenylandtrust.org. 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!

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



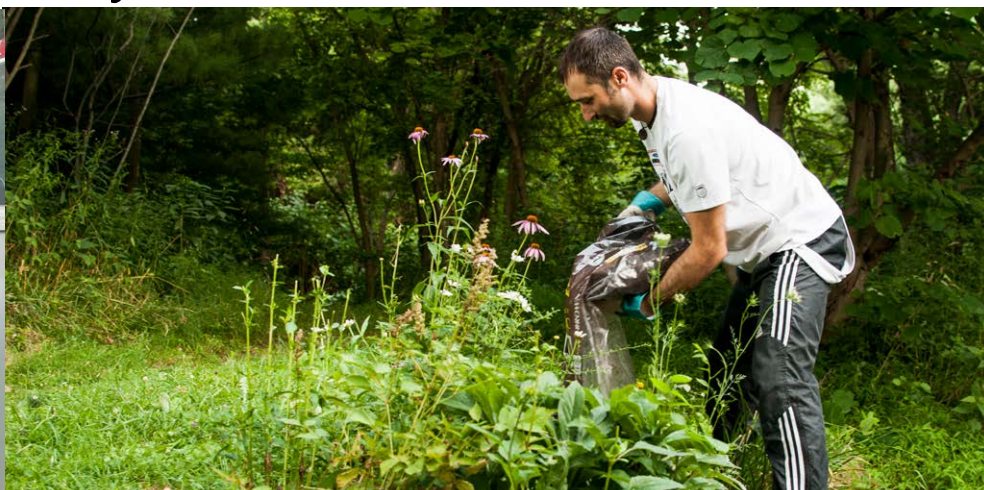
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Meet A Steward: Lenny Lucas, Dead Man's Hollow



(LEFT) Photo by Keri Rouse. Lenny proudly models his earned ALT Volunteer shirt.

(RIGHT) Photo by Lindsay Dill. Lenny tends a trailhead planter at Dead Man's Hollow.

by Keri Rouse Community Coordinator

Growing up, Lenny Lucas loved to explore the interweaving tangle of trails in Grandview Park, which was near his childhood home. Today, he's an avid runner, biker, and outdoor adventurer who acts as user, appreciator, and builder of trails in the Pittsburgh region.

Be it a small, neighborhood park or a sprawling, wooded conservation area, Pittsburgh's treasured community spaces and trails require stewards; Lenny has proven to be an enthusiastic, energetic steward of the Dead Man's Hollow Conservation Area. Did we mention energetic? On volunteer days you'll likely find Lenny running or biking miles of trail before or after hauling gear and swinging tools for a couple of hours to improve those very same trails.

Spring 2015 found ALT beginning its trail improvement and expansion at Dead Man's Hollow, and found Lenny training on a trail in South Park where he met Keri, our current Community Coordinator. Lenny was surprised to learn that a system of hiking and biking trails was tucked within the Mon/Yough Valley -- a short distance from his workplace. He wanted to be involved, so he helped plan and promote a volunteer trail day for his company's mountain biking club to visit the conservation area.

One volunteer day turned into two, then into three, which finally turned into a series of 6 monthly "Trail Tuesday" events this year open to Lenny's coworkers and local community members alike. These volunteer days have accelerated trail development progress as volunteers closed off old sections of

trail, hacked away at acres of Japanese Knotweed, and improved more than 1 mile of the Cool Spirit and Witch Hazel Trails. Lenny has a knack for spreading his enthusiasm to those around him; he always shares news of the trails' progress via word of mouth, articles in his company's newsletters, or email invitations to join him on a post-event run.

Lenny says his favorite part about the trail work is that it "will help new patrons appreciate and enjoy the natural wonders and history of the park like I do, a gift that is free, available to all and rewarding to give."

We are thrilled to see how these volunteer days continue to grow, connecting more volunteers and property visitors to DMH in the process. **Thank you, Lenny!**

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

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UPCOMING EVENTS

DEC 17 | 8A-4P | CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT @ WINGFIELD PINES

Free, no birding experience needed. Contact Nancy Page of the Pittsburgh South Hills Bird Circle at nanpaul@verizon.net.

JAN 11 | 6P-7P | STARLIGHT STROLL @ WINGFIELD PINES

Hike with our education team under the stars. More programming info and cost details TBD; details expected to be finalized by the last week of December. Check back to RSVP here: <http://bit.ly/wpstarstroll>

JAN 26 | 6P-9P | UES WINTER GATHERING @ WIGLE

Meet others who are passionate about their parks and green spaces at the annual Urban EcoStewards' Winter Gathering. Learn about this great volunteer collective, celebrate 2016 accomplishments, learn what's happening in 2017, and support the program. Wigle Whiskey will donate 12% of sales to support UES! More info and RSVP here: <https://www.showclix.com/event/ues-winter-gathering-2017>

FIND FUTURE EVENTS ON OUR EVENTBRITE PAGE:
[BIT.LY/ALTOUTSIDE](http://bit.ly/ALTOUTSIDE)

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