

VISTAS

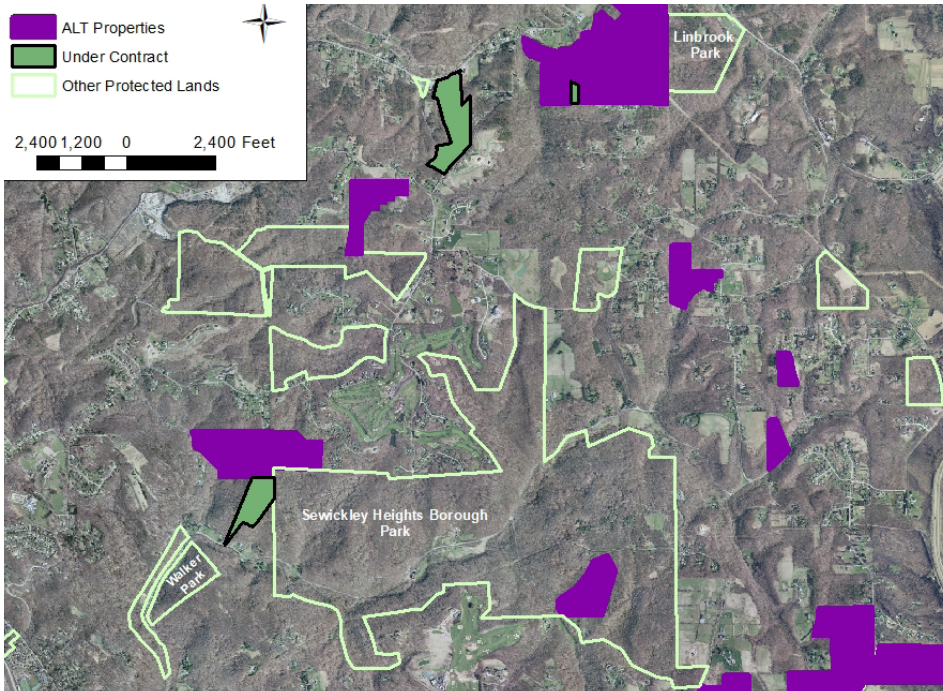
AN ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST PUBLICATION | 2017 Q3

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notes from the land:

Donate Now to Protect 70 Acres



Map highlighting land under contract.

by Roy Kraynyk | VP of Land Protection & Capital Projects

With generous support of individuals, foundations, and state agencies, ALT has protected more than 530 acres in the Big and Little Sewickley Creek Watersheds since 2001. Now, we have the opportunity to protect 3 more tracts of land totaling 70 acres.

With your help, we can make it happen. We currently have pending grants totaling \$250,000

with PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to support acquiring these three important tracts of green space. To date, we've raised \$223,000 toward the match required by DCNR, and now we need your support to raise the last \$27,000.

By protecting this green space, we'll protect public access to Big Sewickley Creek where visitors enjoy hiking, bird-watching, fishing, wading, and other forms of recreation. We'd

also expand the possibilities of running environmental education programs for all ages on Big Sewickley Creek.

Strategically, these parcels will help make a connection from Linbrook Park in Franklin Park to other protected lands in Bell Acres, Sewickley Heights, Leetsdale, and Edgeworth totaling more than 2,000 acres.

This vast amount of protected green space will have significant positive and long-lasting benefits for the community in the form of access to trails and nature, good air and water quality, and a positive influence on surrounding property values. And perhaps most of all, as natural lands they help to maintain the beautiful rural character that makes the area such a desirable place to live. Even if you are not a hiker, biker, or equestrian, you can enjoy the beauty of this protected landscape from your car on your way home from work or during an autumn Sunday drive on the meandering country roads such as Big Sewickley Creek, Camp Meeting, Fern Hollow, Little Sewickley Creek, and many others.

If the critical local match of \$27,000 is not raised, we risk losing these grants and the opportunity to protect these 70 acres. Please use the enclosed envelope and make your tax-deductible contribution today and know that you are protecting land forever.

With Easements, ALT Goes to Bat

by Roy Kraynyk | VP of Land Protection & Capital Projects

We do everything within our rights to ensure that our conservation areas and easements maintain their environmental and ecological values.

Easements are beneficial to landowners to permanently protect their land while retaining ownership; however, there is an additional benefit to the landowner: as the easement holder, ALT will help the landowner defend the land from an encroachment on the eased portion of their land. While conservation easements are not immune to eminent domain, an easement status offers a strong argument for the land against encroachment.

Richard & Tingle Barnes recently received a letter from Duquesne Light Company's West Deer Transmission Reliability Project identifying a transmission line route through the Barnes' Barnswallow Farm in Indiana Township —on which ALT holds an easement— that would impact the conservation values that we're committed to protect.

ALT sent a letter to persuade DLC to use an alternative route by making the following points:

- The property meets IRS Section 170 (h)(4)(A) (iii) (I) requirements to qualify for a conservation easement. Specifically, "the preservation of open space (including farmland and forest land) where such preservation is — for the scenic enjoyment of the general public."
- The Barnes' made a substantial and generous commitment to protect their farm from any subdivision or land development by forever.
- ALT is concerned about the impacts of erosion and herbicides from the right-of-way on Cedar Run.
- The proposed 138 KW power line through any part of the property would have significant irreversible negative impact on its scenic qualities.

The outcome remains to be seen, but we remain committed to maintaining the conservation values of our conservation areas and the easements we hold on others' land.

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

Boys, Girls, & Cubs; Oh My! Education Team Offers Scout Programming

by Jessica Kester | VP of Education

With over 2,100 acres of ALT-protected green space and a conservation area within 12 miles of every Allegheny County resident, we're sure that your group will find nearby land to love. We now offer multiple ways for your Boy, Cub, or Girl Scouts to learn with ALT. Not a scout? Not a problem; these programs are fun for everyone, regardless of group affiliation.



Photos by Lindsay Dill. All photos of students at Wingfield Pines Conservation Area for an educational program.

BADGE WORKSHOPS



(2 – 5 hours) These workshops can be held at a variety of ALT conservation areas around Allegheny County where scouts will earn their badges, journey awards, belt loops, pins, etc. Scouts will complete the activity during the workshop. Both full-time environmental education team staff are Boy Scout Merit Badge Counselors.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS



Science Sprouts



Investigation Nature

(45 minutes – 2 hours) Our Science Sprouts & Investigation Nature workshops can be run during your group's normal meeting times. We offer over 3 dozen programs based on the age range of your group, and can travel to your preferred indoor or outdoor location. These programs are designed to be fun and educational, but not to meet specific requirements.

DAY CAMP PROGRAMS



Day Camp Programs are designed to fit into your camp theme, and to act as a rotation station during one or more days of your camp. The programs are adjusted to ensure the environmental education lessons benefit a variety of learners at their age-appropriate level.

Looking for something a little less structured? We can do a variety of natural history and conservation hikes on a green space near you. Don't want to be in charge of planning an event? Scouts and other community groups are welcome to join us for one of our regularly scheduled community programs like a Starlight Stroll under the full moon or a Fungus Among Us hike with identifiers from the Western PA Mushroom Club. The opportunities to get your group out, moving, and learning are endless; check our website for more program info.

For more information & to sign up, e-mail Jessie at jkester@alleghenylandtrust.org.

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Find a full list of our business sponsors on our website at alleghenylandtrust.org/our-sponsors

Why Allow Hunting?

by **Lindsay Dill**

Marketing Communications Director

We help local people save local land by protecting green spaces that contribute to our region's scenic value, biodiversity, and water quality. Our conservation areas sequester rainwater, improve air quality, provide outdoor recreation opportunities, increase property values, provide environmental education spaces, and create an ecologically diverse space for flora and fauna to thrive.

Why, then, do we allow hunting of some of the fauna? In short, to balance the ecological diversity by controlling the deer population.

Pennsylvania has a deer population of nearly 30 deer per square mile, according to a DCNR guide prepared by the Penn State College of Agricultural Science Cooperative Extension. The guide also states that deer prefer native plant species, thus putting a specific strain on restoration areas where conservationists are trying to replace invasive species growth and with native species.

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

Deer "primarily eat the leaves, twigs, and shoots of young trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. In many areas, deer have overeaten the forest, and the diverse layers are gone. In some forests, the diversity of plant species that grew in Penn's Woods for centuries has been replaced by a few species that deer do not prefer to eat." Hunting prevents this overgrazing and habitat loss for deer and other species. It also reduces the herd since there are few predators challenging deer population growth.

If you're a licensed hunter interested in hunting one of our conservation areas, we require that you sign up for a free permit on our website, and we strongly encourage you to become an ALT member so that we can improve and maintain existing conservation areas, and acquire new ones.

Visit our website to register for your permit, join ALT, and find new places to hunt: alleghenylandtrust.org/hunting

HUNTERS WEAR ORANGE,
SO SHOULD YOU

Meet A Steward: Dick Myers



Photo courtesy of Dick Meyers.

by **Caitlin Seiler** | **Director of Volunteer & Land Resources**

The Barking Slopes Conservation Area has been a little more active than normal this year. Among the 140 bird species spotted soaring in the steep ridges and vibrant tributary valley, nearly 50 volunteers ventured out this Spring

to construct the new Riverside Trail on Barking Road. Dick Myers was among those volunteers, and soon after decided he wanted to be a part of making a difference at Barking Slopes. Now, Dick is ALT's Land Steward at Barking Slopes, acting as our eyes and ears on the land helping to identify maintenance needs and happenings. He also lends a helping hand using his chainsaw skills to clear fallen trees.

Dick learned of Barking Slopes during his time as the Treasurer of a neighborhood association, which organized several fundraising projects for ALT to acquire portions of what is now the Barking Slopes Conservation Area. As a volunteer for two orchestras, North Hills UU church, and for Girl's Hope in Coraopolis, Dick is always looking for ways to give back, and ALT caught his eye. He went to check out Barking Slopes himself, and saw both the challenge and the opportunity the landscape presented for restoration and trail-building. This challenging landscape of steep, rocky

slopes, and overgrown riverside valley drew him to the land, as did his values.

"In an age when 'privatization' is being touted for everything from national parks to air traffic control, I have always been an advocate of "the commons" — the notion that there are some things that need to be preserved for the common good," Dick said. "We need to push back against runaway commercial development — don't we already have enough places to shop? And, finally, we would be an emotionally healthier society if more people spent more time in nature and less in their electronics."

The 151 acres of Barking Slopes has now become Dick's place to reconnect with nature and better the trail "commons" to increase quality access for his community. Join Dick and others in supporting this unique green space by attending our Trail Cleanup on Sunday, November 12 9am-12pm at the Barking Road trailhead where we will be removing trash and improving the new trail.

For more information or to become a site steward, e-mail Caitlin at cseiler@alleghenylandtrust.org.

LOVE YOUR LAND

Mark Your Calendar: Sept. 14 Day of Giving

For the third consecutive year, your gift can go twice as far during our self-hosted Day of Giving **September 14, 2017**. ALT's Board of Directors has again generously agreed to match Day of Giving donations dollar-for-dollar.

Your support during last year's Day of Giving, our Membership Initiative, and year-long giving has continued and expanded our programming.

Over the past year, our new Environmental Education Team has bolstered its efforts by developing unique curriculum based upon your interests, expanding programs for all ages, and hiring more trained teaching staff.

ALT's Stewardship Team has added more miles

of trail to two conservation areas with the help of Landforce, volunteers, and your dollars; developed and begun implementing a management plan at Barking Slopes; and continued to make habitat improvements at two conservation areas to promote understory forest growth.

The Land Protection Team has continued traditional land trust conservation efforts, seeking and adding new easement, farm, and conservation area projects, and has expanded to working on protecting urban lots through an innovative Transfer of Development Rights initiative.

We're also making strides in using our expertise to protect urban agriculture and reduce food insecurity throughout our region.

Supporters like you have helped make all of this happen through donations, volunteer activities, advocacy, community awareness efforts, and membership. Help us continue to improve the quality of life for all in the Pittsburgh region by donating during our Day of Giving.

4 Ways to Give

CALL 412-741-2750

CLICK alleghenylandtrust.org

MAIL 416 Thorn Street

Sewickley, PA, 15143

Volunteers Help Identify 500+ Species



Photos by Lindsay Dill and ALT Education Team. Attendees of the Bioblitz series make observations.

by Lindsay Dill | Marketing Communications Director

Thanks to attendee experts and nearly 200 volunteers of our Bioblitz series, more than 525 new species have been logged at Wingfield Pines.

Using iNaturalist, a crowd-sourced diversity tracking app, Bioblitz attendees began the process of tracking change over time for existing species, and created a framework for continuing to log new species. Their more than 1,000 observations allow us to paint a more complete picture of Wingfield Pines' ecological health and behavioral effects on it.

This day was possible thanks to a partnership with Upper St. Clair Citizens

for Land Stewardship, who attracted our experts, volunteers, and food/refreshment donors. We're also very thankful to our experts from Blue Heron Nature Skills, Civil & Environmental Consultants Inc., Duquesne University, Point Park University, Powdermill Avian Research Center, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club. Finally, a belly-rubbing thank you to our food and refreshment donors: Baskin Robbins, Chipotle, Chick-Fil-A and Eat-n-Park of Upper St. Clair, and Dunkin Donuts and Panera Bread of Mt. Lebanon.

Missed out on the first three? We'll have one final Bioblitz on September 30. Details on the events pages, and info about hike topics online soon.

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

Upcoming Events

Education Events

Volunteer Events

SEPT 16 | 8a - 12p
Stream Monitoring Workshop
@ Dead Man's Hollow



All Ages | Free to Attend

Learn how to measure, monitor, and report on water health with our trained education staff and master naturalist partners. We'll measure DMH's stream health, discuss tracking change over time, and explore how participants can become involved with other monitoring and conservation efforts.

SEPT 24 | 9a - 12p
Tire Haulin' @ Dead Man's Hollow



All Ages | Free to Attend

Ditch your normal workout routine and join fellow volunteers for "Work Out to Clean Up: Tire Haulin' Volunteer Day". We'll tackle a tire dump to work your muscles while cleaning an otherwise beautiful, historic conservation area. Help us as we try to complete our goal of removing 100 tires from the stream bank!

SEPT 17 | 1p - 3p
Air Quality Hike with GASP
@ Dead Man's Hollow



All Ages | Free to Attend

Join us and the Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP) for a moderate 2.5-mile hike to learn about DMH's natural and haunted histories, and search for lichens and ozone sensitive plant species. We'll use findings to determine the area's air quality as well as the region's air quality with friends from Athletes United for Healthy Air. We'll also learn how to reduce our exposure to air pollution, and how to be champions for healthy air.

SEPT 30 | 9a - 10p
Chartiers Creek Bioblitz
@ Wingfield Pines



All Ages | Free to Attend

Join ALT staff, experts, and fellow volunteers for this hybrid education/volunteer event as we identify varying plant, animal, and fungi species, and use citizen science platforms to record our findings-- we've logged 500+ new species so far! This is part of a four-part bioblitz series to take place in 2017.

SEPT 19 | 5p - 7p
#TrailTuesday @ Dead Man's Hollow



All Ages | Free to Attend

Lace up your boots, get outside, and lend a hand in helping improve local land! Join us for the last Trail Tuesday of 2017; we'll improve and expand the Hollow's trail system.

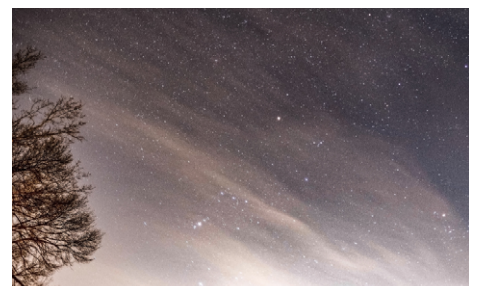
OCT 2 | 4:30p - 6:30p
Macro Mayhem Monday
@ Venango Trail



All Ages | Cost: \$5

Join us for the last Macro Mayhem Monday of the year as we wade into Venango Trail's waters in search of the macroinvertebrates that help determine the water's health. Great for families and community groups.

OCT 5 | 7p - 8p
Starlight Stroll
@ Audubon Greenway



All Ages | Cost: \$5

Join our experts to learn about nature after dark for this monthly hike. Topics vary depending on the evening's leader and can include nocturnal and crepuscular creatures, astronomy, lore, and much more!

To register, find more info, & see other events, visit our events calendar: alleghenylandtrust.org/events/

Upcoming Events

Education Events

Volunteer Events

OCT 7 | 12p - 5p
Forestry Merit Badge
@ Dead Man's Hollow



Scouts | Cost: \$40

Enjoy a day of exploration. With the completion of pre-assigned homework, Boy Scouts can earn their Forestry Merit Badge. ALT's registered Merit Badge Counselor will sign blue cards & grant a special ALT patch!

NOV 4 | 10a - 12p
Bountiful Botany
@ Audubon Greenway



*All Ages | Cost: FREE**

Hike with an ALT expert and identify a portion of the botanical diversity that can be found growing at Audubon Greenway. We'll focus on the fall meadow and forest life. Wear good hiking shoes, and (if you'd like) bring your field guide!

** Program offered free to all courtesy of Pheasants Forever **

OCT 14 | 8a - 10a
Twitter in the Trees
@ Audubon Greenway



*All Ages | Cost: FREE**

Listen to the sounds of the forests, meadows and streams as we venture into our green spaces to count the wide variety of birds that call our green spaces home. Become a citizen scientist; no experience or equipment needed.

NOV 12 | 9a - 12p
Trail Cleanup @ Barking Slopes



All Ages | Free to Attend

Help make our new trail plan a reality at this gorgeous, rocky green space. Join fellow volunteers in clearing new trails by cleaning up invasives, natural barriers, and waste.

OCT 21 | 10a - 12p
Fungus Among Us
@ Dead Man's Hollow



*All Ages | Cost: FREE**

Hike the hollow with experts from ALT & the Western PA Mushroom Club as we seek & identify the myriad of fungus species that can be found. We'll be collecting for educational purposes, but will not be harvesting for food.

DEC 5 | 6p - 7p
Starlight Stroll @ Dead Man's Hollow



*All Ages | Cost: FREE**

Stroll under the light of each month's full moon with trained education staff. Topics vary depending on the evening's expert, and can include nocturnal and crepuscular creatures, astronomy, lore, and more!

As fall approaches, our events begin to wind down. However, we can still use in-office volunteer help, and it's never too early to begin planning your 2018 group or workplace volunteer outing. Contact Caitlin Seiler for more information at cseiler@allegHENYlandtrust.org

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ABOUT ALLEGHENY LAND TRUST

Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) is an independent, non-profit organization that has been helping local people save local land in the Pittsburgh region for nearly a quarter of a century.

Founded in 1993, ALT has protected more than 2,100 acres of green space preserving our region's unique natural beauty, providing enhanced outdoor recreational opportunities, improving water quality, fostering biodiversity, and enhancing the overall quality of life for our communities. ALT's areas of strategic priority include Land Conservation, Stewardship, Education, and Urban Greening.

ALT's mission has expanded in recent years to include innovative methods of land conservation in support of community needs for urban green space as well the addition of a professional environmental education team teaching children of all ages to understand and appreciate the natural world.

With conservation areas in 27 municipalities, there is now an ALT conservation project within 12 miles of every Allegheny County resident. The benefits of ALT's efforts can be experienced across the region from McKeesport to Franklin Park, Upper St. Clair to Blawnox, Mt. Washington to Plum, and many places in between.

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