



**Contact:**

Matthew Opdyke, Associate Professor  
Point Park University  
[mopdyke@pointpark.edu](mailto:mopdyke@pointpark.edu)

Emilie Rzotkiewicz, Vice President of Land Resources  
Allegheny Land Trust  
[erzotkiewicz@alleghenylandtrust.org](mailto:erzotkiewicz@alleghenylandtrust.org)  
412-741-2750

April 10, 2018  
For Immediate Release

**New Citizen-Scientist Program Generates Buzz**

Sewickley, Pennsylvania—Allegheny Land Trust and Point Park University have formed a partnership to promote citizen-scientists in the Pittsburgh region who will have an opportunity to learn about native bees and other pollinators.

“Project Bee Watch” will involve regular volunteer visits for surveying the Audubon Greenway Conservation area and a pollinator festival.

“Bees, among many other pollinators, provide an important function in maintaining the ecosystems that many animals and humans rely on for food,” said Matthew Opdyke, an associate professor of environmental science at Point Park University.

North America has about 4,000 species of native bees, and more than 300 species occur in Pennsylvania. Opdyke said that some of the bee volunteers might see could include bumble bees, sweat bees and mason bees.

“We hope this initial study sparks other organizations to work with us gathering similar data from citizen-scientists at other locations,” Opdyke said. The data that will be collected will help in determining the status of native bees in the region and help to encourage their conservation.

“Bees go way beyond the European honey bee, which most people think about,” Opdyke said. “And we hope the community members will come away from the program with a greater appreciation for native bees and other pollinators.”

Volunteers will work with Opdyke to attend trainings and conduct studies at Audubon Greenway, Allegheny Land Trust’s (ALT) 161-acre green space in Sewickley. They aim to learn about the different pollinators using the green space. The project’s Pollinator Festival is being planned for Saturday, July

28 at Audubon Greenway, which will include displays, walks and presentations about the pollinators being studied.

Emilie Rzotkiewicz, vice president of land resources for Allegheny Land Trust, said that the partnership will advance ALT's efforts to recover native grasses that were mowed in previous years, which impacted wildlife like native songbirds, and suppressed the native wildflowers that support pollinator species like bees and butterflies. Using this partnership, ALT can plant warm season grasses and native wildflowers will enhance the meadow to attract more diverse species.

"Not only will the work be informative about local pollinators, but it will further engage and empower people to become citizen scientists and learn about the world around them," Rzotkiewicz said.

The project is being funded through Point Park's Social Impact Grant sponsored by the Center for Inclusive Excellence and the Department of Community Engagement. This project also will allow ALT to advance an existing project at the green space, which is supported by Bayer's Feed a Bee initiative. The initiative focuses on supporting organizations with projects to establish or restore pollinator forage in every state by the end of 2018; ALT is one of 112 funded projects in 39 states and Washington, D.C.

*Volunteers will need to attend a training session at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 19, at Audubon Greenway, 160 Magee Road. Interested in becoming a volunteer? Contact Professor Matthew Opdyke at Point Park University [mopdyke@pointpark.edu](mailto:mopdyke@pointpark.edu).*

### **About Allegheny Land Trust**

Now, for 25 years, Allegheny Land Trust has helped local people save local land. ALT's mission is to serve as the lead land trust conserving and stewarding lands that support the scenic, recreational and environmental well-being of communities in Allegheny County and its environs. Since 1993, ALT has protected more than 2,200 acres in 27 municipalities.

### **About Point Park University**

Point Park is a dynamic, urban university with a strong liberal arts tradition. Located in the heart of Downtown Pittsburgh, Point Park enrolls more than 4,000 full- and part-time students in 79 undergraduate programs, 18 master's programs and two doctoral programs offered through its School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, School of Communication and Conservatory of Performing Arts. Its students represent 46 states and 41 countries.