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An Allegheny Land Trust Publication

Summer 2024





by Alyson Fearon | Project Manager

ur success in fostering more regional resiliency through conserved land thrives when we have a strong network

of supporters. Earlier this year, we were grateful to have the support of members like you to help us close on several major land conservation projects (totaling 213 acres) and build upon various community conservation projects.

First, our Panhandle Greenway Conservation Project aims to protect land in the Panhandle Trail corridor and form connections to other protected lands like Settler's Cabin Park, Collier Park, and Preservation Park. Earlier this spring, we completed our first acquisition in this landscapescale effort by conserving a parcel in Collier Township totaling approximately 90 acres. This wooded parcel is adjacent to and connected to trails within Collier

Township Park, protects the viewshed on the trail just after the Gregg Road parking area, and helps control flooding in that section of Robinson Run.

Our second major spring closing was the 97-acre Gateway Woods Conservation Project in Monroeville. The conservation of this land creates a 398-acre contiguous greenway by connecting Monroeville Community Park West, Monroeville Community Park East, Sugar Camp Park, and Mosside Slopes Conservation Area. Our stewardship team is already reviewing potential trail connections between these important community assets. The land also contributes to the community's quality of life by absorbing critical stormwater flows to reduce flooding risks for the surrounding and downstream communities, like Pitcairn.

The third major land conservation project that closed in the spring was the expansion of our Lowries Run Slopes Conservation Area

in Ross Township by approximately 24 acres. The land also connects with Ross Township's Marion Doulton Green Space, thus creating a 67-acre greenway for the community. This property protects a wooded slope containing many water seeps above a clean section of the Lowries Run stream.

The efforts on our Hemlocks Community Conservation Project adjacent to North Park continue. We have completed the acquisition of 25 more parcels and will be transferring them to Allegheny County Parks this year. Our partnership on this project with Hampton Township and Allegheny County Parks department brought additional resources to the project, allowing us to continue work to complete the full acquisition of the site, which contains over 200 parcels.



Toadside Trillium growing at Deer Creek Watershed.

Finally, in major Community Conservation news, we are pleased to report that after many years of working with community partners, finalizing a design, and securing grants, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh approved us to close on the former St. John's Hospital site, now "St. John's Green," in the Brighton Heights neighborhood of Pittsburgh. This approval to close means that we can begin the 3.7 acre site rehabilitation into a natural area with a large rain garden, formalized trail system, cyclist rest area, and rehabilitated parking areas.

We are excited to continue our momentum this year and protect our next set of land and community conservation projects!



LAND CONSERVATION

New Land Conservation Projects

by Casey Markle, Conservation Easement Director

This year, ALT has three new exciting land conservation projects under contract.



DEER CREEK CONSERVATION PROJECT

Deer Creek Conservation Project aims to protect 280 acres of green space in the Deer Creek Watershed, hosting a 1-mile portion of the Rachel Carson Trail. The property contains several cold-water fisheries which feed into Deer Creek, and an expanse of lush woodlands which absorb 231.12 million gallons of rainwater annually.

The land also sequesters 1.13 million pounds of carbon and removes 20,000 pounds of other pollutants each year, which is an impressive feat! Protecting this green space will preserve the character of the community, build resiliency, manage water resources, and provide expanded public recreational opportunities in Indiana Township.

With your help, we aim to close on the property at the end of December 2024.

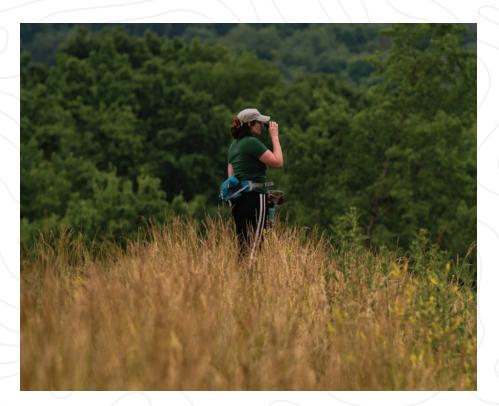


ROSS TOWNSHIP CONSERVATION PROJECT

Ross Township Conservation Project is our next initiative in Ross Township which includes a 30-acre woodland right in the heart of a commercial development. The land forms a direct connection to Ross Township's 31-acre Municipal Park which would provide expanded public recreational opportunities.

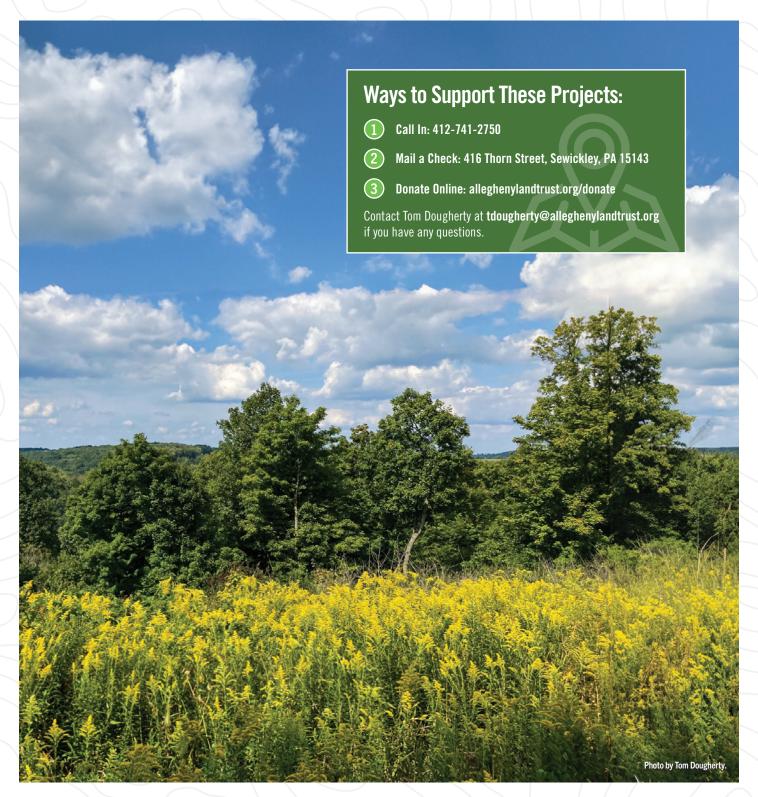
Sitting at the highest point in the Girty's Run Watershed, protection of this land will manage water resources before moving further through the watershed. This green space can absorb 31.6 million gallons of rainwater annually, which is critical for flood management in this vulnerable watershed. The land also sequesters an impressive 202,000 pounds of carbon and removes 3,600 pounds of other pollutants each year.

With your help, we aim to close on the property at the end of September 2024.



The goal of these projects is to protect and enhance the quality of life in our surrounding communities forever. We strive to do this by preserving scenic beauty, expanding healthy recreational opportunities, and protecting important wildlife habitat and natural resources. We see the passion and resiliency of the communities we work with which makes our efforts in conserving land so fulfilling. We hope you will join us in helping to protect more land this year!

ALT staff using binoculars to enjoy scenic vistas at the Deer Creek Conservation Project.



PANHANDLE GREEENWAY CONSERVATION PROJECT

Panhandle Greenway Conservation Project continues the momentum of ALT's work to protect land in the rapidly developing, flood-vulnerable Robinson Run Watershed. With ALT conserving 90 acres of green space earlier this year, the second phase of the Panhandle Greenway Conservation Project is now full steam ahead!

Conservation of this second phase would add 140 acres of protected woodlands to this landscape-scale conservation effort, safeguarding land along the scenic corridor of the popular Panhandle Trail and forming the bridge between Settler's Cabin Park, Pittsburgh Botanic Garden, Collier Township Park, South Fayette's Preservation Park, other public and privately conserved lands, and the Panhandle and Montour Trails.

This green space can retain 116 million gallons of stormwater annually, which is crucial in this region's flood management effort. A true "keystone" project, Panhandle Greenway will create an ecological, recreational, and place-making greenway.

With your help, we aim to close on the property at the end of October 2024.

Where are We Now

Featuring our recent closings, current projects, and existing conservation areas.







280 Acres | Indiana Township

This project is located within the Deer Creek Watershed and hosts a 1-mile portion of the Rachel Carson Trail.

Conserving this green space will preserve the character of this community, build resiliency, and provide expanded public recreational opportunities enhancing the quality of life for generations to come.



ROSS CONSERVATION PROJECT

30 Acres | Ross Township

These woodlands have adjacency to Ross Township's 31-acre Municipal Park and sit at the highest point in the Girty's Run Watershed. The conservation of this land will help absorb stormwater in the flood-vulnerable watershed, expand the municipal park, and provide expanded public recreational opportunities.



PANHANDLE GREENWAY CONSERVATION PROJECT

140 Acres | South Fayette Township

Serving as a second phase of a landscapescale effort, this conservation project would add 140 acres of conserved woodlands to a growing network of green space. The land is in the rapidly developing and flood-vulnerable Robinson Run Watershed and along the scenic corridor of the popular Panhandle Trail. Its conservation will create an ecological, recreational, and place-making greenway unlike any other in the region.







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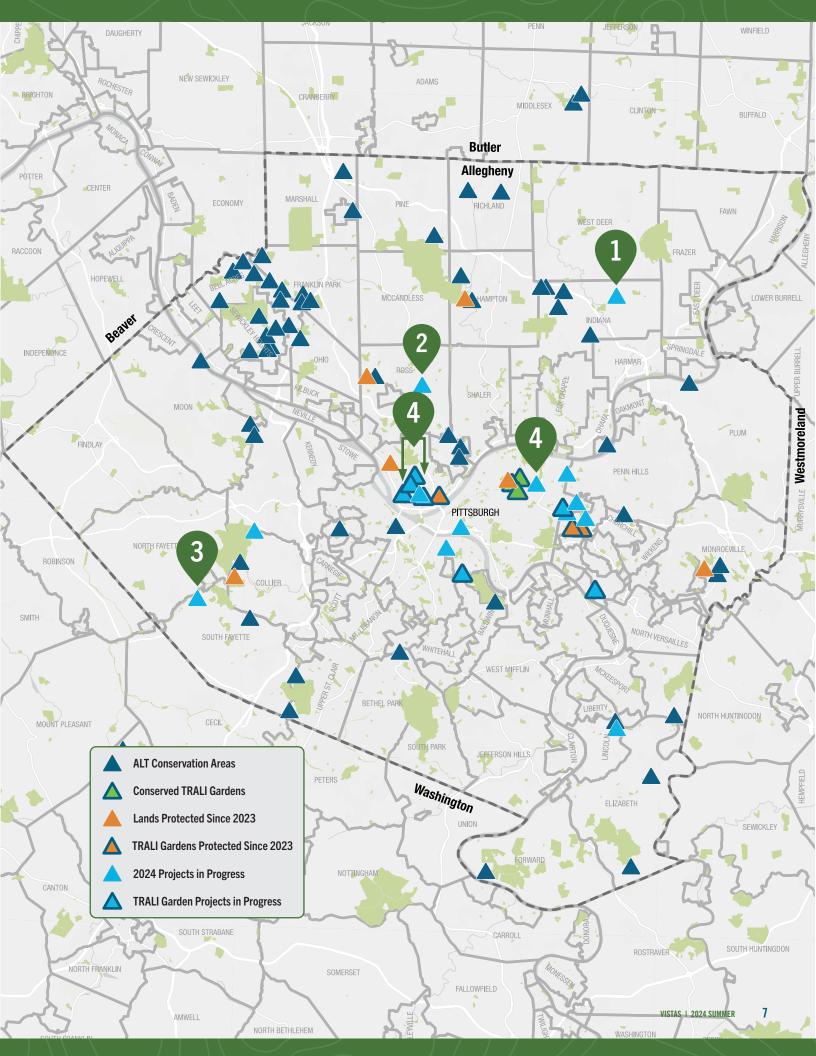
COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Varying Acreage | City of Pittsburgh

Through Community Conservation, we aim to empower communities through education, innovative programs, and resources to create equity. At the time of publishing, we have either closed on or are near to closing on three great conservation projects. St. Johns Green, in Brighton Heights, will be transformed from a former hospital into a neighborhood green space and stormwater capture amenity for all to enjoy and benefit from. Ballfield Farm, in Perry South, is an all volunteer, small communal farm on a long-abandoned baseball field. It will be conserved through the Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative (TRALI) to benefit current and future gardeners as well as the surrounding community. Finally, Healcrest Green, in Garfield, is a former farm that is reverting to a natural green space. In partnership with neighborhood leadership, ALT has conserved many of the parcels making up this land and has implemented a small trail system through the former urban farm. Now, ALT is raising funds to help conserve the rest of the green space by this year's end.



For more information or to support these projects, visit: alleghenylandtrust.org/currentprojects





Meet Our Summer Interns

Each year, we share our summer season with two conservation interns at Wingfield Pines Conservation Area and Churchill Valley Greenway. If you see them at the green spaces, greet them and ask about the latest on the land!



2024 INTERNS



LUKE HAURY 2024 John Hamm Conservation Intern

Luke Haury is this summer's John Hamm Conservation Intern at Wingfield Pines Conservation Area. He has just finished his sophomore year of college at Penn State Main Campus where he is pursuing a Wildlife and Fisheries major and a Forestry minor.

Originally from Franklin Park, PA, Luke has always loved the outdoors. From a young age, he was often hiking, birding, camping, and fishing with his family.

Luke learned about ALT through his time in Boy Scouts where he volunteered at Devil's Hollow removing invasive plants and Linbrook Woodlands cleaning up litter and installing a bridge and fence for his Eagle Project. He is excited to work with ALT not only because it will give him great experience in his field of study, but also because it will allow him to give back to the community he grew up in. He hopes to build a nice foundation of experience in both park management and environmental studies through his time at ALT. After college Luke plans to find a research position focusing on fisheries and their importance.

During this summer's internship, Luke is assisting ALT with critical stewardship, fieldwork, land management, volunteer recruitment, and restoration work at Wingfield Pines.



PHOEBE BROWN 2024 Mark A. MacKay Conservation Intern

Phoebe Brown is this summer's Mark A. MacKay Conservation Intern at Churchill Valley Greenway. They have just graduated from Oberlin College with a degree in Environmental Studies.

Raised in Pittsburgh, PA, Phoebe always felt an appreciation for the natural world – its salamanders and cicadas, and its opportunities to play in the dirt. It was this appreciation

coupled with anxiety over the climate crisis that motivated their college major and led them to explore sustainable agriculture, food systems, food justice, and community-based agriculture.

During their time with ALT, they hope to expand their knowledge of ALT, green space in the region, and native and invasive plant species. After this summer, they are interested in pursuing a career in sustainable and/or urban agriculture.

This summer, Phoebe is assisting ALT in improving the ecological health and amenities of the greenway.



The internships create an opportunity for passionate, knowledgeable students of the environment to work with ALT at special green spaces to maintain and enhance the land, improve plant and wildlife habitat, conduct programming, and interact with many visitors during the busy summer season.

NEW & RENEWING BUSINESS SPONSORS

Many thanks to the sponsors who have joined us or renewed their support with us since our last edition of Vistas. To view a full list of our current sponsors, visit: alleghenylandtrust.org/our-sponsors.

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- Dollar Bank Gold
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- BHE GT&S Bronze

If you're interested in becoming an ALT sponsor, please contact Tyler Chilcott at tyler@alleghenylandtrust.org.



Members of the ALT planning committee hiking at Churchill Valley Greenway.

Allegheny Land Trust

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Leaving a Legacy Through Planned Giving

by Tom Dougherty | VP of Development & External Affairs

LT and our supporters share in the belief that permanently conserved and sustainably stewarded land is one of the greatest gifts we can leave to future generations. Many supporters have chosen to continue their commitment to local conservation beyond their lifetimes by making a planned gift to ALT.

These special supporters have designated a monetary gift or gift of land to ALT in their will or have named ALT as a beneficiary on their life insurance policy, retirement plan, or other investments.

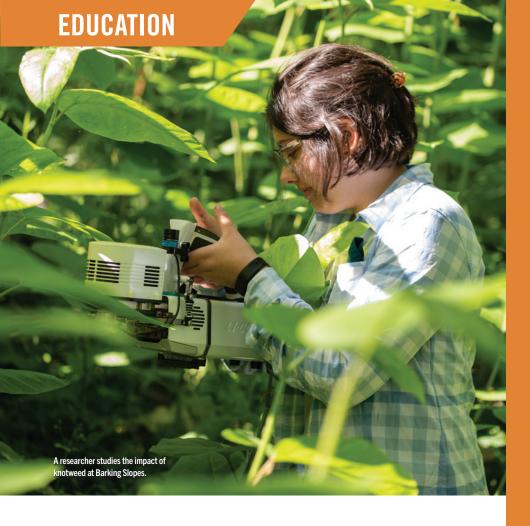
If you are considering making a planned gift to ALT, you can learn more by visiting our website or by sending me a note at **tdougherty@alleghenylandtrust. org.** I'd be more than happy to discuss ideas with you.

If ALT is already included in your estate plans, please let us know. We have created The Conservationist Society to express our appreciation to the special supporters who have chosen to include us in their estate plans and have made us aware of their intentions to do so. If we're already in your plans, please complete and return the simple form found at the link in the bottom of this article so that we can include you in The Conservationist Society.

For more information, visit alleghenylandtrust.org/conservationistsociety or scan the QR code to the right. To discuss, contact Tom Dougherty at tdougherty@alleghenylandtrust.org.



Please note that the above suggestions are not intended to be financial planning, legal, or tax advice. Please consult your planner, lawyer, or accountant to determine if these forms of giving would be appropriate for your circumstances.



A Summer of Outdoor and In-Classroom Learning

by Julie Travaglini \mid Senior Director of Education & Curriculum

his is our favorite time of year, and it is also one of our busiest! From summer camps and school outreaches to Science Strolls and library visits, we are out teaching in the community almost every day! Some programs have become staples in the Education Team's programming, like mushroom walks and webinars, but we're looking forward to bringing you new partnerships and new programs throughout the year.

You can look forward to attending more programs at Meyer Farm. We're working hard to make this space into the educational hub for agriculture that we know it can be. Sign up for a farm tour and apple- or blueberry-picking session, and you'll receive a free recipe book for attending. Looking even farther ahead, we will be offering agriculture camps for kids coming in the summer of 2025 at Meyer Farm.

You may notice some new signage and plant markers next time you're at Barking Slopes. That's because we're establishing a phenology trail, which will help scientists monitor the emergence and development of wildflowers as our climate shifts and changes. Keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities to get involved and monitor our Barking Slopes phenology trail.

We also have some big plans under way for major new initiatives. We can't spill the beans just yet, but we're so excited for the future of educational events at ALT! Make sure you sign up to receive our e-newsletter so you can stay up to date on all of our plans and programs!



more to learn

5 Things to Look Forward to From Our Education Team

by Julie Travaglini
Senior Director of Education & Curriculum

- 1. New Webinar Topics

 More than 100 of you engage with each of our webinars, so we'll keep them coming and introduce some new topics like nature's vampires and zombies, raccoons and birds of the night sky!
- 2. More Sustainability at
 Home Workshops
 We're continuing to host more
 workshops with new topics
 like seed saving and small
 space gardening! Keep an eye
 on our social media for ticket
 announcements.
- 3. Professional Development in New Settings
 Continue honing your environmental educator skills
 we'll be partnering with the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium this fall to provide new offerings.
- 4. New Partners
 We're always branching out
 and looking for new ways to
 bring you innovative programs
 and workshops.
- 5. A Brand New Initiative!
 It's still a secret, but we hope this major program will be rolling into town soon!



Churchill Valley Greenway Gets Major Grant

Earlier this spring, we got great news: the state Department of Environmental Protection awarded ALT a grant of \$2.7 million to remedy environmental impacts to Chalfant Run caused by acid mine drainage (AMD) at Churchill Valley Greenway! Utilizing this major award, ALT will build a passive AMD treatment system to naturally remove AMD from Chalfant Run and one if its tributaries.

This effort supports the health and vitality of the watershed, the critters who inhabit the waterway, human visitors of the greenway, and communities downstream of the site. Visitors can expect to see construction begin later this year and continue through next year.

This effort will only build upon the success of bridge repairs, habitat restoration, and community management planning that we've worked on since acquiring the land in 2021. We're thrilled to be able to maintain our momentum in improving and planning for the improvement of this green space's resiliency and amenities.

Supporters can follow the progress of the project as well as the outcome of our community planning sessions on our website. We hope you will bear with the short-term aesthetic sacrifice for long-term community and ecological benefit of this wonderful Greenway.

A student from the Gateway Area School District planting a tree at Churchill Valley Greenway.

Reflecting on Spring, Growing into Summer

by Dani Kramer | Field Coordinator

LT's new Field Coordinator, Dani Kramer, joined the stewardship team in February and has been eagerly familiarizing themselves with the thousands of acres of conserved land. Having worked previously in dumpsite remediation with Allegheny CleanWays, they have a keen interest in helping land heal and doing the work alongside neighbors who know and care about these green spaces. Dani's mission is to connect with every person interested in having a hand in stewardship to ensure they're supported and celebrated. So far, they've enjoyed getting out on several ALT lands with supporters for various workdays.

Stewards and volunteers spent this spring with ALT making great progress on reforestation efforts at Churchill Valley Greenway, Girty's Woods, Bethel Green, Beadnell Slopes, Irwin Run, and Sycamore Island. Each of these properties has a story to tell about the way the land has been treated in the past, and much of the story is told through the plants that live there. Opportunistic, invasive plant species crowd out native trees and shrubs, minimizing biodiversity and the overall health of the ecosystem.

Our volunteers understand that reforesting takes patience and persistence. They have been investing their time and effort toward the process of removing invasive species and replacing them with plants native to the region. The next time you take a hike or paddle a canoe to ALT land, take note of what's growing behind a deer fence, inside a tree tube, or adorned with flagging tape. Those are the forests we can look forward to in the future!

Now that the spring planting season has come to a close, we're focusing our efforts on trail-building and maintenance. Many natural systems are at odds with keeping a hiking trail in good working order; autumn leaves litter the ground and degrade trail tread, heavy rain brings floods and fells trees, and the new growth in spring sends vines reaching toward the open sunlight on trails. We've been working with individual volunteers, corporate groups, and experienced pros like Landforce to ensure that visitors can safely enjoy ALT's trail systems and will continue to do so throughout the summer and into autumn.



Carrie Lane

by Lindsay Dill | Senior Director Of Marketing & Community Engagement

arrie Lane was a "stereotypical librarian" from an early age. She always had at least one book with her, and it usually followed her outdoors to dive into words under the cover of trees. As she began attending summer camps, she took her gaze beyond the page to experience creek walking and sleeping outdoors. She developed a love for nature's serene reading environment and for its blank canvas for playful exploration.

In early 2019, Lane began working on a project on her to-do list as the Allegheny County Library Association (ACLA) Youth Services Coordinator: forge partnerships to launch a backpack program for kids to learn about nature. At first, it felt to her like another task to be crossed off the list. After diving in, however, she realized it embodied the crossroads of her interests and meant so much more to her personally.

"The packs could present an opportunity for a whole family or group to engage together in learning about nearby nature – as nearby as your own backyard or vacant lot down the street," Lane said.



Carrie hiking with her children.

Lane officially launched ACLA's The Nature Backpack Program in partnership with ALT and other environmental organizations in 2019. There are now more than 40 packs available at libraries throughout the county with themes like wetlands, bugs and birds, and more. The packs include guides, activities, and tools that make exploring nature easy and fun, regardless of one's background or experience level.

ahead of a media feature on the program.

"The success has been eye-opening," Lane said. "Even as an adult, I wasn't thinking about what kids could be learning right in front of them."

Attributing much of the program's success to the collaboration between the partners, Lane notes that the program has inspired her to think more about unifying great organizations with different activities but similar goals to ensure sustainability in our collective regional efforts.

To this end, ACLA and ALT are continuing their collaboration by hosting professional development programs to better equip librarians with the knowledge and confidence to lead nature education initiatives for all ages of library patrons.

The backpack program's reach has extended beyond Allegheny County, inspiring similar initiatives in other counties like Greene and Washington, across Pennsylvania, and even in Florida.

"It's a great program and it's replicable, and we're glad to see it grow," Lane said.





Head to your local Allegheny County Library to check out a nature backpack for yourself. Learn more: aclavirtuallearningprograms.org/nature-backpack-program

UPCOMING EVENTS

E Education Events





ADULT SUMMER CAMP SERIES

August 12 | 6:00 - 8:00 pm | Outdoor Meals Fern Hollow Nature Center

Missing your youth, your summer camps, or the idea of outdoor learning and play? Now, adults can join educators from Fern Hollow Nature Center, Allegheny Land Trust, and PA Master Naturalist for our adult summer camp series! In July, we'll learn about archery before going outside to target shoot bows and arrows; in August, we'll learn how to cook great meals over a campfire outdoors — we'll even include foraged items and a cocktail!

Adults Only | Cost: \$25/Person per Session



TRAIL TUESDAY SERIES

July 23 | 5:30 - 7:30 pm | Girty's Woods August 20 | 5:30 - 7:30 pm | Girty's Woods

You can help improve the health, vitality, and trail systems of our most visited green spaces! Join us to clear trails with rakes, smooth tread with grub hoes, and use loppers and handsaws to remove vegetation.

All Ages | Cost: Free



FUNGI SERIES

July 20 | Sycamore Island Mushroom Hunt August 28 | Beginner's Mushroom ID Hike September 16 | Fungi 101 Talk and Walk September 27 | Beginner's Mushroom ID Hike October 29 | Slightly Spooky Mushroom Walk

You can learn more about the wonderful beings that are beneath our feet wherever we go: Fungi! Join us at our varying levels of fungi hikes to learn how to spot, identify, log, and compare found species with experts from ALT and the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club.

All Ages | Location, Time, and Cost: Varies



VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS: INVASIVES

July 27 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Wingfield Pines July 28 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Bethel Green July 30 | 5:30 - 7:30 PM | Churchill Valley Greenway August 10 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Dead Man's Hollow

Love the land? Lend a hand! Our green spaces support the health and well-being of our communities today and for generations to come simply by their permanent conservation. However, there are several sites where we're focusing on improving the ecology's health and vitality, and we need your help! Join us and fellow volunteers to make a difference. We'll start the July 27 workday with an invasive removal training!

All Ages | Cost: Free



SCIENCE STROLL: SIGNS OF WILDLIFE

August 16 | 6:00 - 8:00 pm | Audubon Greenway

Join an ALT Educator on a Signs of Wildlife hike at Audubon Greenway. We'll look for scat, tracks, nests and galls in search of the creatures, big and small, that call Audubon Greenway home.

All Ages | Cost: Free



BETHEL PARK SERIES

September 9 | Kids 6+: Animal Athletes September 9 | Adults: All About Hummingbirds October 7 | Kids 6+: Better for the Birds October 7 | Adults: PA's Beautiful Bats

The Bethel Park Historical Society has generously supported a fall 2024 – spring 2025 event series with Allegheny Land Trust to benefit the Bethel Park community.

Time: Varies | Cost: Free



50+ AARP WALK SERIES

September 13 | 9:00 - 10:30 AM | Invasive Species Bethel Green Conservation Area October 18 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM | Haunted History Dead Man's Hollow

Join an Allegheny Land Trust Educator on our last 50+ Walking Series of 2024, sponsored by AARP Pennsylvania. Geared for those ages 50 and up, we will hike ALT's properties over moderate terrain and distances, taking plenty of breaks to stop and learn about our local flora and fauna.

Ages 50+ | Cost: Free



ALT 2024 DAY OF GIVING

September 19 | All Day

Since 1993, we've worked with supporters like you to conserve more than 3,700 acres of green space that contributes to our region's resiliency and our communities' quality of life.

We need your support to continue this work. We hope you'll mark your calendar, tell a friend, and donate to our efforts on September 19, 2024 to have your donations matched by our Board of Directors.

WEBINAR SERIES

Learn more about the outdoors from anywhere with an internet connection!



August 8 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm | Invasive Plant Species August 21 | 5:00 - 5:45 pm | Bats of PA

September 4 | 5:00 - 5:45 pm | Vultures: Gross but Great!

September 26 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm | Phenology Volunteer Info Session

October 2 | 5:00 - 5:45 pm | Awesome Opossums

October 16 | 5:00 - 5:45 pm | Nature's Vampires and Zombies

ALT's Senior Director of Education and Curriculum Julie Travaglini will take learners of all ages on a deep dive into various nature-based topics so we can all learn more about the environment around us.

All Ages | Cost: Free

VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSIONS: CURRENT PROJECTS

Learn more about our current land conservation projects in Indiana, South Fayette, and Ross Townships.



August 12 | 5:30 - 6:30 PM | Deer Creek Conservation Project August 13 | 5:30 - 6:30 PM | Panhandle Greenway Conservation Project August 14 | 5:30 - 6:30 PM | Ross Conservation Project

We have all three lands under contract for permanent conservation pending successful fundraising. Join us to learn more, ask questions, and see how you can help spread information and make these projects happen. All sessions will be hosted on Zoom. Please check our web site for more details.

All Ages | Cost: Free



Registration is required for all events. For registration and more info, visit: alleghenylandtrust.org/events

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ABOUT ALT

Allegheny Land Trust is a nationally accredited land conservation nonprofit that has been helping local people save local land in the Pittsburgh region since 1993.

ALT has protected more than 3,700 acres of green space in 41 municipalities to preserve our region's unique natural beauty, provide expanded outdoor recreational opportunities, protect and improve water and air quality, sustain biodiversity, and enhance the quality of life for all in our region. ALT's areas of strategic priority include Land Conservation, Land Stewardship, Community Conservation, and Environmental Education.

With conservation areas in 41 municipalities, there is now an ALT conservation project within 8 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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