



Westmoreland Land Trust

Annual Report 2013



Sixth Year Accomplishments – 2013

Six meetings of the Westmoreland Land Trust were held in 2013.

Our objectives for 2013 were agreed upon at the January annual meeting. They were as follows.

- “Friends of Westmoreland Land Trust” is fully established and functioning.
- Existing DCNR grant for open space purchases is closed out by year-end, with the successful purchase of properties up to the allowable monetary amount as set forth in the grant.
- Transfer of ownership of the Van de Venne property (existing DCNR grant match) in Murrysville to the Westmoreland Land Trust/Westmoreland County is completed.
- Foundation, government, and private funding is pursued for acquisition of properties that become available, meet our selection criteria, and for which no acquisition funds presently exist.
- Purchase and placement of property boundary signs at all lands that the land trust owns or manages is accomplished.
- Regular communications are held with the Westmoreland County Commissioners regarding ongoing funding of the Westmoreland Land Trust via Act 13 Marcellus Legacy Fund monies.
- The donation/purchase of appropriate properties that are brought to the attention of the trust is actively pursued.
- Established committees meet routinely to advance their goals, with subsequent reports to the full Board.

PROPERTY

We continued during the year to work on **acquiring multiple specific properties in Murrysville**, as proposed in the grant we were awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

In 2013, we used a portion of the \$166,000 DCNR grant plus an additional \$19,000 from our own funds to purchase a 16.5-acre property in Murrysville formerly known as the Norbitrol Plan of Lots.

In addition, a 49-acre property in Murrysville owned by Theo and Pia Van de Venne was donated to the land trust. The Van de Venne property value was used as a match toward the DCNR grant.

We plan to continue work on acquiring additional properties in the Murrysville/Duff Park area in 2014 with the remaining DCNR funds. An extension of the DCNR grant was requested and granted until the end of 2014.

We also continued to **review a variety of other properties for possible acquisition** – including several that were brought to us by members of the public interested in donating or selling properties to our organization.

We are hopeful that several of these properties will eventually be acquired by the land trust.

Although we currently hold no easements, a member of our board is representing our organization in a review and adaptation of the **PALTA easement form** being conducted by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

We will have use of this revised form once the review work is complete later in 2014.

STEWARDSHIP



Amur Corktree, Cabin Hill property

Westmoreland Land Trust's two fee-owned properties, presently held by Westmoreland County -- the Ackermann Reserve in North Huntingdon Township and the Cabin Hill property north of Greensburg -- were **monitored in 2013 by members of the Stewardship Committee to evaluate the condition of property boundaries, the overall health of the natural environment, and the safety of visitors.**

The regular monitoring helps to prevent misuse of the land and its resources and to minimize risk to the organization.

No property boundary encroachments or serious misuse of the Ackermann or Cabin Hill properties were noted during the monitoring visits, and these conditions were documented

using the land trust's monitoring reports.

Our Stewardship Committee monitors did report seeing evidence that some trails on the Ackermann Reserve were being used by horses. Horseback riding is not a permitted use of the property. Our stewardship policy acknowledges that, while horseback riding can bring individuals closer to nature and the land, riding on unhardened trails can have damaging environmental effects. It also can create trail conditions that are unsuitable for other, more passive, users.

Our Stewardship Committee is discussing the best way to convey this message to the public.

FUNDRAISING

The Westmoreland County commissioners allocated \$20,000 for the land trust in 2013.

This was a most welcome grant, as the commissioners had completely eliminated the allocation for our organization in 2012.

Our annual allocation from the county prior to 2012 had averaged \$10,000 and this is the only dedicated funding our organization receives.

Chairman Chuck Duritsa made the case to the commissions that the land trust should also receive an allocation from the Act 13/Marcellus shale impact fees.

At the end of the year, we prepared a letter to the county commissioners, **requesting an annual allocation for 2014**. The commissioners allocated \$10,000 for the land trust in 2014.

Our Development Committee further refined the details of the **“Friends of Westmoreland Land Trust,”** and our board unanimously approved this effort to increase the organization’s public profile and encourage donations.

As envisioned, the Friends would have four tiers of membership, with the number and level of benefits increasing as the friends’ financial commitment increases.

The Friends format will not require us to adapt the bylaws or to host an annual meeting, and will allow for a relatively easy conversion to a members format, should the organization decide to go that way in the future (the reverse transition is not as easily accomplished).



Our Development Committee Chair worked with the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management to identify several **donor database software companies** toward our goal of selecting the best one for building the land trust’s contact list.

A webinar was held in July that allowed our board members to talk directly to several donor database software companies, to observe firsthand the capabilities of each, and to ask questions. From this information, a company called Little Green Light was unanimously selected.

Having a database will allow us to build a comprehensive donor base.

The land trust updated its profile and once again participated in the Pittsburgh Foundation/Community Foundation of Westmoreland County's **Day of Giving** on October 3.

In 2013, we came within \$90 of tying our highest-ever donation year. Nineteen donors contributed to the land trust on this day and their donations were matched at 20.8 cents on the dollar by the foundations.

In addition, an anonymous donor matched the foundations' match, bringing us to a grand total of \$3,081.49 raised on that day.

The land trust received **an additional single donation of \$100** from a benefactor during the year.

2013 DONORS

Partner

\$500 to \$999

Betsy Aiken

Lewis and Katherine Laffey Lobdell

Joanne Foerster

Alexander Graziani

Representative R. Ted Harhai

Karen Jurkovic

Commissioner Ted Kopas

David Lester

Thomas Lindqvist

John Lohr

Janet McNeel

Anthony Quadro

Vincent Quatrini, Jr.

Loree Speedy

Virginia Stump

Joseph and Mary Lou Tarara

John Ward

Associate

\$250 to \$499

Charles and Judy Duritsa

The Pittsburgh Foundation/The
Community Foundation of
Westmoreland County

Stephen and Susan Huba

Donor

up to \$249

Mark Bowers

Julie Cohen

Jane Menchyk, land protection specialist with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, spoke with us at our March meeting about that organization's **Colcom Revolving Fund**, which provides land trusts and other conservation organizations throughout western Pennsylvania with short-term access to funding for critical land conservation and which also provides technical assistance, including reviewing legal documents, sharing processes, and so on.

FISCAL ADMINISTRATION

Board members raised some questions and concerns regarding the draft **2013 audit**. Erroneous statements as to the date of the organization's founding and the number of grants received during the year were identified, along with some questions as to fiscal procedure, including whether or not items valued at less than \$200 should have been depreciated.

The audit was tentatively accepted by the board, subject to the corrections being made.

At the end of the year, these matters were still outstanding.

Even though the amount of interest earned was small, the organization continued to operate with **an interest-bearing checking account** for the year. Our treasurer discontinued our receipt of paper statements early in the year to eliminate a bank charge for this service.

Our revenue in 2012 was such that we were exempt from filing federal tax in 2013. Our treasurer filed the exemption (the organization's **990-N**) on line in a timely fashion, as well as filing the **Pennsylvania sales tax exemption** forms.

At the end of 2013, an **internal annual financial review** revealed that about 88% of our spending was on program costs, mainly because of the \$15,000 match going to the Murrysville project.

In November, the Finance Committee developed a **draft operating budget** with line items for 2014. This budget was presented via email to all board members for further discussion at the January 2014 meeting.

LEGAL/LIABILITY CONCERNS

We submitted the organization's **required charitable organization filings** with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations.

We **maintained insurance for our directors and officers** during the year.

BOARD

After the last board meeting of 2012, the Governance Committee received notice that **Bruce Corna, Lewis Lobdell, and Lisa Smith**, whose terms were up on December 31, 2012, were interested in reappointment.

At the January 2013 meeting, these individuals were unanimously appointed to a new three-year term, effective January 1, 2013.

Board members voted at the January meeting to **retain the existing slate of officers for 2013: Chuck Duritsa, chair; Bruce Corna, Jr., vice chair; Virginia Stump, treasurer; and Karen Jurkovic, secretary.**

To help with the expanding duties of the secretary and treasurer, the board created assistant positions for each, which were subsequently filled by Betsy Aiken and Susan Huba respectively.

At the July 19 meeting, Chairman Chuck Duritsa informed the board that **Bruce Corna, Jr. resigned**, creating both a vacancy on the board and a vacancy in the officer position of vice chairman.

Neither vacancy was filled until November, when new board members were appointed (see following items).

At the Sept 13 meeting, a lively discussion on the topic of **board term limits** ensued, as 2014 would mark the first year that current board members would not be able to be reappointed, according to our bylaws.

After much discussion, a motion was made and passed to amend our bylaws to extend the maximum consecutive term of service from two terms (6 years total) to four terms (12 years total).

Existing board members who were up for reappointment – Betsy Aiken, Susan Huba, Ted Kopas, Larry Larese, Tony Quadro, and Loree Speedy – all indicated a desire to continue their service.

Two of these board members – Ted Kopas and Larry Larese – were appointed to the land trust board by the county commissioners and needed the commissioners to vote to reappoint them. That vote occurred on December 19.

The other four individuals were reappointed by unanimous vote of the land trust board in November.

Five new nominees were suggested and unanimously approved for service on our board in November:

- Martha Frech, president and owner of Streamline Engineering;
- Mike Kuzemchak, who has returned to his previous position with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and who previously served on the land trust board from January 2008 until September 2012;
- Brian Lawrence, assistant deputy director in the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development;
- Gregory Phillips, District manager/CEO of the Westmoreland Conservation District; and
- Jay Tarara, retired program manager with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Terms of these new board members begin on January 1, 2014 and conclude on December 31, 2016.

Westmoreland Land Trust

Income and Expense Statement

1/1/2013 through 12/31/2013

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
UNRESTRICTED REVENUE		
Donations	\$ 3,531	\$ 3,687
Grants	20,000	-
Interest	19	45
Misc.	0	-
Total Unrestricted Revenue	<u>23,551</u>	<u>3,732</u>
RESTRICTED REVENUE		
Grants	-	-
Total Restricted Revenue	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>\$ 23,551</u>	<u>\$ 3,732</u>
<u>EXPENSES & DISTRIBUTIONS</u>		
GENERAL OPERATING		
General Administrative (Postage/Copies/Refreshments)	\$ 217	\$ 437
Meeting Advertisements	144	136
Non-Capital Equipment	-	228
Organizational Dues	405	400
D & O Insurance	1,038	1,019
Appraisal Fees	-	-
Environmental Assessment	-	-
Audit	777	1,748
Web Domain Hosting/Maintenance	72	91
State Tax Return	-	100
Bank Charges (Paper Statements/Deposit Fees)	6	3
Legal	243	-
Westmoreland County - DCNR Match (Murrysville)	15,000	-
Misc: PALTA Conference Attendance	195	-
Depreciation	651	651
Total General Operating	<u>\$ 18,748</u>	<u>\$ 4,813</u>
RESERVE DISTRIBUTIONS		
Ackermann Property Maintenance	\$ 250	\$ 250
DCED Grant	-	8,504
Checking Account Interest - Returned to State	-	10
Total Reserve Distributions	<u>\$ 250</u>	<u>\$ 8,764</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES/DISTRIBUTIONS	<u>\$ 18,998</u>	<u>\$ 13,576</u>
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ 4,553	\$ (9,844)

Westmoreland Land Trust
Statement of Cash Flows
1/1/2013 through 12/31/2013

	2013	2012
CASH ON JANUARY 1	\$26,639	\$35,833
Cash to General Account	23,532	3,687
Cash to Restricted Account	- 0	- 0
Investment Income (Interest)	19	45
Cash from General Account	(18,748)	(4,813)
Cash from Restricted Account	(250)	(8,764)
Capital Expenditures	- 0	- 0
Proceeds from Sale of Equipment	- 0	- 0
Proceeds from Sale of Property	- 0	- 0
Payment of Long-Term Debt	- 0	- 0
Depreciation	651	651
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	\$5,204	\$(9,194)
CASH ON DECEMBER 31	\$31,843	\$26,639

Westmoreland Land Trust
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2013

<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>2013</u>		<u>2102</u>	
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash	\$	31,843	\$	26,639
Accounts Receivable		-		-
Prepaid Expenses		-		-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		31,843		26,639
LONG-TERM ASSETS				
Equipment		2,602		3,253
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		(651)		(651)
Total Equipment		1,951		2,602
Property (None)				
TOTAL ASSETS	\$	33,794	\$	29,241
<u>LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS</u>				
SHORT-TERM LIABILITIES				
Accounts Payable		-		-
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES				
None		-		-
NET ASSETS:				
Unrestricted	\$	29,842	\$	25,039
Restricted:				
Ackermann Reserve		3,952		4,202
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$	33,794	\$	29,241



Mission

To conserve and steward lands and waters of Westmoreland County that harbor ecological, scenic or recreational qualities to offer a healthier and more sustainable future for all.

Vision

All Westmoreland County residents and visitors enjoy the scenic and natural value, accessibility and quality of open space conserved. Throughout Westmoreland County recreational land abounds, water resources are protected, wildlife flourish, and the quality of life is high because of the continuing work of the Westmoreland Land Trust complementing the work of like-minded entities.

Values

The Westmoreland Land Trust values the following.

Conservation of diverse real property that is in, or in close proximity to, Westmoreland County and culturally, historically, ecologically, recreationally, or scenically valuable

Restoration, protection, and maintenance of conserved property as appropriate for its best long-term stewardship

Partnership with public or private entities where beneficial to encourage collective effort

Research and planning in support of conservation efforts

Promotion and education of conservation opportunities and benefits

Conformance with the Land Trust Standards and Practices published by the Land Trust Alliance in 2004, or as amended

2013 Board of Directors

Betsy Aiken

Mark Bowers

Bruce J. Corna, Jr.**
Vice Chair

Chuck Duritsa
Chair

Alan Fossi

Alex Graziani

Rep. R. Ted Harhai

Susan L. Huba

Karen Jurkovic

Secretary

County Commissioner
Ted Kopas

Larry Larese

H. Lewis Lobdell

John Lohr

John Pallone

Tony Quadro

Vincent Quatrini, Jr.

Malcolm Sias

Lisa Smith

Loree Speedy

Virginia Stump
Treasurer

John Ward

*** Resigned in July 2013; position not filled*

Background

The Westmoreland Land Trust was formed in December 2007 in response to citizens' desire to conserve land of special value in Westmoreland County, such as land that contributes to the local quality of life because of its scenic, recreational, environmental, historical, or cultural qualities. The trust was awarded nonprofit status by the Internal Revenue Service in January 2009, making donations to the land preservation group tax-deductible.

From its founding in December 2007 through the end of 2013, the Westmoreland Land Trust has acquired some 184 acres in five distinct communities:

- the 59-acre Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve in Ardara, North Huntingdon Township;
- 22 acres in Murrysville, adjacent to the Lillian Kellman Nature Reserve;
- 21 acres in Rostraver Township, along the Youghiogeny River;
- 3.5 acres in the City of Greensburg, near Cabin Hill Drive;
- 9 acres in Murrysville adjacent to Duff Park;
- 4 acres in Ligonier Township along Route 30 (in partnership with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Loyalhanna Watershed Association);
- 16.5 acres in Murrysville adjacent to Duff Park, a property formerly known as the Norbitrol Plan of Lots; and
- 49 acres in Murrysville adjacent to Duff Park and accessible from Round Top Road.