

WESTMORELAND
LAND TRUST
ANNUAL REPORT 2021



2021 Board of Directors

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Tammy Colt
William Danchuk
Alyson Fearon
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Joe Romano
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Brandon Simpson

Executive Director

Betsy Aiken

AmeriCorps Service Members

Loree Speedy
Aaron Capouellez

*Front cover shows Trillium grandiflorum in Murrysville's Duff Park,
photo courtesy of Doug Bauman*



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August 24, 2022

Dear Friend of the Westmoreland Land Trust,

2021 was a significant year for the WLT! A highlight was the acquisition of the scenic Schwarz farm in Hempfield Township. This 96-acre former dairy farm includes some of the most beautiful vistas in the region. WLT also began to work with a nationally known planning consultant on concepts for the maturing of the property into a unique nature and art park.

During 2021 WLT was also fortunate to work toward conservation of another important property, the St. Xavier farmland in Unity Township. WLT was honored to reach agreement with the Sisters of Mercy for conservation acquisition of the property, and at the end of 2021 WLT received notification of a Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant for the acquisition. Purchase of this property will be a focus for the WLT in 2022.

Providing educational opportunities was an important part of the WTL efforts throughout the year, including classes on conservation topics at Westmoreland County public schools, workshops on birdwatching, and nature and wildlife tours at the Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve in North Huntingdon.

Special thanks are extended to all our supporters including corporations, foundations, family and friends, Board members and volunteers. It is your help that makes our work to conserve special lands in Westmoreland County possible! We also want to gratefully acknowledge the Westmoreland County Commissioners for their support of the WLT.

At the end of 2021, several Board members reached term limits including founding Board Secretary Karen Jurkovic, and our Chair for the last three years, John Lohr. We thank them for their years of dedicated service. In 2021 we welcomed new Board members Cary Bohl and Kim Miller. Over the course of the year we also lost friends of WLT including Dick Byers, Cynthia Tucker Danchuk, Connie Donovan, David Bryan Grapes, Darryl Ridge and Mark Ritter.

I encourage you to look over our 2021 Annual Report. And to our supporters and volunteers, thank you again for making all these accomplishments possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill".

William Mihalco
Chair, Board of Directors



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

To conserve and steward land in Westmoreland County of special ecological, cultural, or recreational value, for public benefit.

Vision

Throughout Westmoreland County open space and recreational land abounds, water resources are protected, and wildlife flourishes. Westmoreland County is known to families, businesses, and visitors for its high quality of life.

Values

The Westmoreland Land Trust values:

- **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 Alliance Land Trust Standards and Practices.

*As the Westmoreland Land Trust (WLT)
continued to work through the crisis
of COVID-19, we were reminded of our gratitude
to our Westmoreland Land Trust community –
all who share a commitment to the
conservation of special lands in Westmoreland County.
You make our conservation work possible.*

WLT Highlights of 2021

- Acquiring the Schwarz Farm
- Reaching agreement for conservation acquisition of the St. Xavier property
- Award of a PA DCNR grant to acquire the St. Xavier property
- Securing grants to acquire the St. Xavier property, and for other WLT projects and operations
- Committing funding for land acquisition for extension of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail
- Continuing to improve the Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve
- Continuing to advance Environmental Education in Westmoreland County public schools and with other educational programming
- Continuing to build WLT's community of stakeholders and supporters
- Conducting a successful annual fundraising campaign
- Evaluating and selectively advancing conservation projects
- Hosting AmeriCorps Service Members Loree Speedy and Aaron Capouellez
- Securing invaluable assistance from volunteers during the 2021 Week of Caring and also throughout the year
- Thanking outgoing board members, and welcoming new board members
- Hosting the 2021 Westmoreland Ramble

Land Conservation

Schwarz Farm



*View of the Schwarz Farm,
courtesy of Jim Murphy,
Westmoreland Photographers Society*

On March 11, 2021, the WLT acquired the 96-acre Schwarz farm on Beech Hills Road in Hempfield Township. Funds for the acquisition were contributed by Colcom Foundation, Allegheny Foundation, Roberta N. Schwarz Charitable Foundation, the Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club, and many individuals.

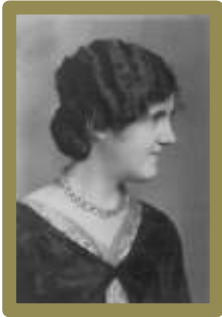
The Schwarz farm has high conservation and scenic value. It is strategically located in central Westmoreland County, just 3 miles north of downtown Greensburg. It will become a nature and art park featuring works of outdoor sculpture.

In April 2021 the WLT was awarded a Revitalizing Westmoreland grant from the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County to support planning of the future park. There is recognition of the future park's value to nearby communities in Hempfield Township, Greensburg, Jeannette, Southwest Greensburg, and South Greensburg.

In September 2021 the WLT engaged LaQuatra Bonci Associates to plan phased development of the future nature and art park. The farm fields will be conserved predominantly as meadows of indigenous wildflowers and grasses. This will provide much-needed habitat for pollinators and upland bird species, and will enhance the land's considerable aesthetic appeal. It is foreseen

that the future nature and art park will become an important destination, contributing both to the ecological integrity of the region and to the cultural attractions and economic vitality of Westmoreland County.

History of the Schwarz Farm



*Roberta Schwarz,
photo courtesy of
Gladys Naugle Light*

The farm was previously owned by Carl and Roberta Schwarz. Carl's father Rudolph Schwarz was a sculptor who came to the U.S. from Austria and settled in Indianapolis, where he created many sculptures for public spaces. Carl passed away in 1973, and Roberta in 2004. Upon Roberta's passing the farm was bequeathed to a trust for conservation as the Carl A. Schwarz Memorial Park.

Prior to ownership by Carl and Roberta Schwarz, the farm was owned and operated as a dairy farm by Joseph and Mary Baur.

In September 1931 hundreds of farmers attended an Electric Field Day at the farm, which was very progressive in uses of electric power. The event was hosted by West Penn Power and Westinghouse Electric, with demonstrations of feed grinding, silo filling, home lighting, and cooking.



*Clipping courtesy of
Susan Baur Scherff*



*Members of the
Westmoreland
Photographers
Society
visited and
photographed
the farm*

*Photo courtesy
of Alan Gardner,
Westmoreland Photographers Society*



*Photo courtesy of Jim Murphy,
Westmoreland Photographers Society*

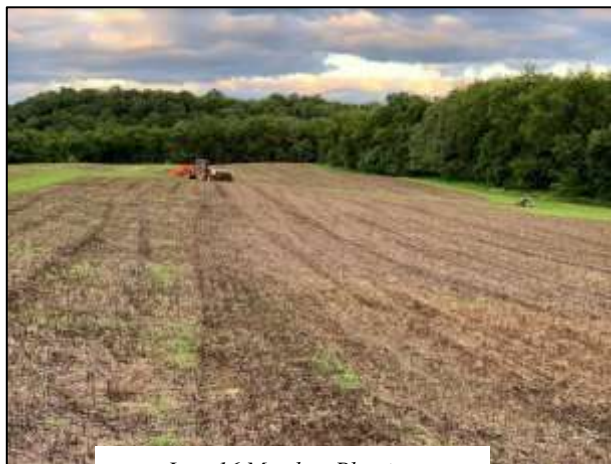
Planning Future Meadows

During 2021 WLT developed an experimental meadow of wildflowers and native grasses at Twin Lakes Park, to inform planning of future meadows at the Schwarz farm and elsewhere. The Twin Lakes Meadow was made possible by the generous support of the Colcom Foundation and partnership with Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation. PA Master Naturalist volunteer Joanna Moyer and AmeriCorps Service Member Loree Speedy assisted with planning the meadow and observing its development, and PA Master Naturalist volunteer Paula Purnell placed a kestrel box overlooking the meadow. As the meadow becomes established, it will be enhanced with interpretive information and trails, to add to the many appealing destinations for visitors within Twin Lakes Park.

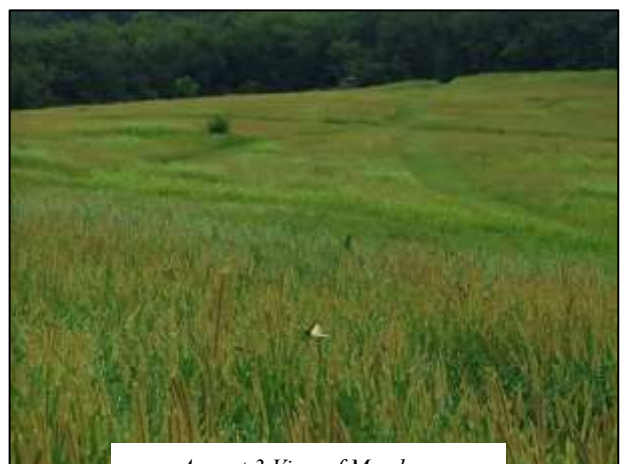
In May members of the Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club visited the Meadow, and throughout the year PA Master Naturalist volunteers and WLT board and staff members monitored the meadow's growth and development.



*August View of Meadow,
photo courtesy of Joanna Moyer*



*June 16 Meadow Planting,
photo courtesy of Friendship Farms*



*August 3 View of Meadow,
photo courtesy of Paula Purnell*

Schwarz Farm (continued)

United Way Day of Caring

On September 14 2021, five hard-working volunteers joined WLT at the Schwarz farm to “make the farmhouse sparkle” in preparation for October Visitor Days. Special thanks to Walter Moorhead, Chandler Daugherty, Kaitlyn Lewis, and Lori Tyke from PES Testing, and to Chee-Kay Tai from West Penn Power, for a remarkable effort.



2021
Day of Caring
at the
Schwarz Farm

October Visitor Days

The **WLT Board of Directors** hosted **Visitor Days** at the Schwarz Farm on October 22 - 24, 2021.

Participants toured the house, looked into the barn, and explored the farm fields on foot and in tours in a Gator kindly lent by WestCentral Equipment of New Alexandria. Visitors also viewed and discussed plans for the property’s conservation, and shared knowledge of the farm’s history.



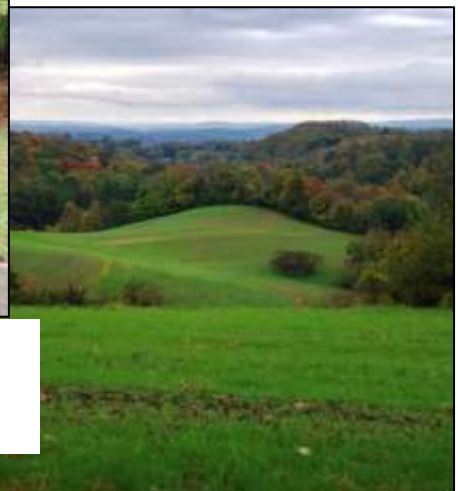
Décor by Cary Bohl and Alyson Fearon
(photo courtesy of Alyson Fearon)



Plantings and flowers by Susan Bortz and Michael Larese



A tour in the John Deere Gator lent by
WestCentral Equipment
of New Alexandria
(photos courtesy of Cary Bohl)



The WLT is deeply grateful to the many organizations and people who have helped with this important conservation acquisition.

Supporting Land Acquisition for the Westmoreland Heritage Trail



John Lohr presents a check to Brandon Simpson, Director of Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation

As in 2019 and 2020, for 2021 the WLT committed funding to support Westmoreland County's acquisition of land for extension of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail. The trail runs from Trafford through Monroeville, Penn Township, and Murrysville to Export, and from Delmont through Slickville to Saltsburg.

The WLT continues to support extension of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail via commitment of funds, and also by assisting with the annual Westmoreland County March for Parks. Westmoreland County's 2021 March for Parks raised over \$80,000 to support Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation facilities and programming.

Special thanks to supporters of land acquisition for extension of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail and projects within the Turtle Creek Greenway, as well as participants and supporters of Westmoreland County's annual March for Parks.

The Westmoreland Heritage Trail runs through the **Turtle Creek Greenway**, conservation of which has been a focus of the WLT since Theo and Pia van de Venne's 2013 donation of 49 acres to enlarge Murrysville's Duff Park within the greenway. The van de Vennes' generous donation provided the local match for a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant for conservation of an additional 46 acres to further enlarge Duff Park and establish a greenway connection to Murrysville's Pleasant Valley Park, yielding a block of conserved land of 500 acres. Pia van de Venne kindly provided the following narrative about the project.

My husband Theo and I have long had a strong commitment to Murrysville's parks, especially Duff Park which surrounds our property. Duff Park is a Pennsylvania Wild Plant Sanctuary, with an abundance of spring-blooming ephemerals and other wildflowers. For many years I have led stewardship of the natural areas in Murrysville's parks, serving on a volunteer basis as the municipality's Volunteer Coordinator. I have particular interest in controlling the invasive plants that threaten our native flora and fauna, and work with many volunteers to protect our parks by removing troublesome invasive plants.

For some time Theo and I had considered donating a significant part of our land to enlarge Duff Park, and in 2009 we began to discuss this possibility with the Westmoreland Land Trust (WLT). We reached agreement to donate about 49 acres of our land; the WLT was able to use our prospective donation as a match to apply in April 2010 for PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant funding to buy 3 other properties to further enlarge Duff Park and establish a greenway connection between Murrysville's Duff and Pleasant Valley Parks.

Duff Park's many attributes include deciduous old growth forested areas, miles of forested hiking trails, and lovely views overlooking wooded hillsides. The park is bounded to the north by Turtle Creek, with a wide creekside trail providing an easy and scenic walk for visitors of all ages and abilities. This land conservation project had particular value because it would correct an existing discontinuity between the east and west portions of Duff Park, and would help to buffer and protect Duff Park as a PA Wild Plant Sanctuary.

The WLT worked assiduously to secure award of the DCNR grant, and then throughout the many steps and negotiations needed to bring about all of these acquisitions. Several challenges were presented along the way – some significant - but each was overcome. After acquisition of the properties, Westmoreland County turned them over to the Municipality of Murrysville to enlarge Duff Park and establish a greenway connection to Pleasant Valley Park. We are so pleased that the WLT used our donation of land to seek and secure funding to acquire the three adjacent properties comprising over 46 additional acres. We are especially grateful that our donation of 49 acres of our land resulted in a block of contiguous conserved open space of 500 acres in the heart of Murrysville, not far from the busy State Route 22 corridor.

Pia Van de Venne

St. Xavier Property

Agreement for Conservation Acquisition

In January 2021 WLT was honored to enter into an agreement with the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community, Inc. for a conservation acquisition of the Sisters' property along Route 30 and St. Xavier Road in Unity Township, just west of the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport.



The approximately 247-acre property has an exceptionally rich heritage. St. Xavier Academy was established there in 1847; establishment of the St. Xavier convent soon followed; and the institutions grew until a fire destroyed the buildings in 1868. The Sisters rebuilt with the help of local benefactors, and the new buildings of the Academy and Convent operated continuously until the buildings were again destroyed by fire in 1972.

Photo from PA Historical Marker Database

Since that time, much of the St. Xavier land was actively farmed. In July 2018 WLT began to discuss possibilities for the property's conservation with the Sisters, who are deeply committed to the environment, community, and stewardship of the property. From mid-2018 WLT undertook several visits to the property, research, study of the land, and development and collaborative refinement of a vision for the land's conservation.

Preliminary plans include enrollment of the former farm fields in the United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (USDA CREP) with establishment of meadows of indigenous grasses and wildflowers, and improvement of riparian buffer areas with plantings of native trees and shrubs.

Photo from St. Xavier Academy Alumni Facebook page, courtesy of Susan Baur Scherff



DCNR Grant Award

During late winter and spring 2021, WLT completed work supporting a spring 2021 grant application to Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for funding for conservation acquisition of this property. On December 30, 2021 WLT received the good news of a DCNR grant award of \$1,100,000 for the acquisition.

Postcard image of the former St. Xavier Academy



Forthcoming Effort

WLT continues to work with the Sisters of Mercy to complete the efforts required for the conservation acquisition of this important and historic property. Completion of the acquisition will be a focus of the WLT during 2022.

Planning will follow, based on the future establishment of a nature preserve open for low-impact public visitation and enjoyment. Detailed plans will be developed to include accessible trails through the former campus and convent areas, walking trails through the fields and woodlands, and phased addition of visitor amenities along with interpretive signage and materials explaining the history of the property.

Short and long-term management plans will include improving the quality of wildlife habitat in the former farm fields and woodlands; restoration of wetland lands; and strengthening of buffer areas flanking Monastery Run and its tributaries.

There is considerable interest in collection and organization of historical and anecdotal information about the property, which will support the future development of interpretive materials about the history of the site.



Postcard images of the former St. Xavier Academy



Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve

Throughout 2021 the WLT made improvements at the Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve with the help of generous donations from the Ackermann family and many other individuals, a Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape initiative grant (funded by PA DCNR and administered by the PA Environmental Council), and much assistance from WLT Board members and volunteers. Efforts included building and maintaining trails, clearing downed trees, removing rubbish, selective control of invasive plants, and caring for improvements including benches and signs.



From top left: Tammy Colt removing trash; Brock and Brynnley Simpson pausing from work; Malcolm Sias, Brandon Simpson, and Bill Mihalco loading materials.
From bottom left: Malcolm Sias, Jim Fedorka, Brandon Simpson, Bill Mihalco and Mark Bowers digging holes; Jim Fedorka transporting materials, and Loree Speedy, Mark Bowers, and Delia White transporting tools.



Rocks and Rucks! Members of the Steel City Ruck Club from left to right: Kathleen Depan, Caitlin Elben, Kirk Albrecht, Amber Perry and Eric Perry

High school student Destiny Walker at the floodplain during an Ackermann work day

***Thank you all,
Ackermann
volunteers!***



Events at the Ackermann Preserve

United Way Day of Caring



On September 15, 2021 three hard working volunteers from Bayer joined WLT at the Ackermann Preserve for a **United Way Day of Caring**. Special thanks to Kenton Derikito, Veronica Thompson, and Michelle Zowacki from Bayer for a most excellent day of stewardship.

Efforts included caring for the 2021 shrub and tree plantings in the floodplain, removing trash, and removing snagged branches in the floodplain of Blue Dell Run.

In the floodplain



From left: Michelle Zowacki, Veronica Thompson, Kenton Derikito and Loree Speedy

Earth Day

On April 22, 2021 AmeriCorps Service Member Loree Speedy led a group of wildflower enthusiasts for a **Wildflower Walk** through the Preserve. Late April and early May are excellent times to see the Preserve's spring ephemerals in bloom.

Enjoying wildflowers at the Ackermann Preserve



Walk in Penn's Woods



On October 3 2021, the **Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association** once again partnered with the WLT to host the annual **Walk in Penn's Woods** at the Ackermann Preserve.

Mark Bowers discusses mushrooms during the 2021 Walk in Penn's Woods



Autumn Bioblitz

Powdermill Nature Reserve and the **Flight 93 National Memorial** held an **Autumn Bioblitz of Westmoreland and Somerset** Counties on October 22 – 25 2021. AmeriCorps Service Members

Aaron Capouellez and Loree Speedy led at Ackermann with Yale Cohen, Delia White and Mark Bowers.



Photos and credits, from left: Fairy caps - Delia White; Bluets - Yale Cohen; Wood frog - Yale Cohen; Witchhazel - Loree Speedy

Events at the Ackermann Preserve (continued)

“Things that Once Were” Hike

On November 28, 2021 Loree Speedy led a **Things that Once Were** Hike to explore the Ackermann Preserve for signs of past industry and history.



The WLT thanks the Ackermann family for their conservation donation of the Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve, and their support for stewardship of the preserve.

Other WLT Activities

Be a Better Birder! Workshops

Throughout the summer, the WLT hosted **Be a Better Birder!** workshops at four locations throughout Westmoreland County. Paula Purnell, WLT's Partner for Educational Programming, conducted these free, family-friendly events designed to build participants' birdwatching knowledge and skills.



Old Joe Club Croquet Tournament

On September 19, 2021 the WLT was a featured non-profit at the 2021 Old Joe Club Croquet Tournament. Board and staff members represented the WLT and held a raffle for a basket promoting the Westmoreland Ramble. *The WLT thanks the Old Joe Club for their subsequent grant (early in 2022) to support conservation of land of special value in Westmoreland County.*



PA Master Naturalist Program

On September 28, 2021 WLT Executive Director Betsy Aiken addressed the 2021-2022 PA Master Naturalist trainees about WLT properties and project, and volunteer opportunities with the WLT.



New Year's Eve Glowstick Hike

On December 31, 2021 volunteers Pat and Sonny Wagner, Mark Bowers, Delia White and AmeriCorps Service Member Loree Speedy organized a New Year's Eve walk through the Ackermann Preserve, with the preserve's trails illuminated by glowsticks.



Photo courtesy of Loree Speedy

Westmoreland Ramble

On October 17, 2021 WLT hosted the **2021 Westmoreland Ramble**. The morning included a light breakfast, a Laurel Highlands British Car Club display of cars, a Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) "Game, Tour, and Adventure" Divisional Rally, and an family-friendly Westmoreland Land Trust Road Rally on scenic roads in Westmoreland County. The road rallies



*Photo courtesy of
Patrick Varine/ Tribune-Review*

were organized by Bruce and Carol Gezon. Bruce is a SCCA Hall of Famer who holds 43 national championships. The afternoon featured food trucks and American roots music by the NewLanders.

The Westmoreland Ramble was held with extensive help from members of the WLT Board of Directors, support of the **Westmoreland Conservation District** and **Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation**, and the sponsorships of Patrick and Lynn Gurrentz, Spitzer Toyota, Gridiron Partners, SCORE Westmoreland, Quatrini Rafferty, and Hillview Motors.



Photos courtesy of Cary Bohl



Environmental Education

Throughout the year, the WLT continued partnership with **Dr. Paula Purnell** for education programming. WLT's designation by Pennsylvania as an Educational Improvement Organization enables businesses to apply for generous credits for PA taxes under PA's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program to support WLT's nature-oriented educational workshops.



Learning about parts of a seed (Photo courtesy of Paula Purnell)

The workshops are offered for use free of charge in participating Westmoreland County public schools, to the extent that funding allows. For the 2021-2022 school year, the WLT was authorized to present workshops in the following school districts:

Belle Vernon
Burrell
Jeannette
Derry Area
Franklin Regional
Greater Latrobe
Greensburg Salem
Hempfield Area

Leechburg Area
Ligonier Valley
Monessen
Mount Pleasant Area
New Ken-Arnold
Norwin
Penn-Trafford
Southmoreland
Yough

The workshops are extremely popular with students and teachers. WLT welcomes the participation of businesses in the EITC program, as well as support for general educational programming.

**The joy of looking and comprehending
is nature's most beautiful gift.**

Albert Einstein

Environmental Education

- Enhances academic achievement
- Supports learning in STEM content areas
- Develops research and analysis skills
- Encourages teamwork
- Promotes environmental stewardship

Photo courtesy of Walt Bechtell



Businesses may apply for generous Pennsylvania Tax Credits to support WLT's educational workshops.

AmeriCorps

Nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups may apply to Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corps (PMSC) to host an AmeriCorps Service Member.



Throughout 2021 the WLT benefitted from the assistance of Loree Speedy as an AmeriCorps Service Member. Loree continued her 2020 AmeriCorps service to the WLT, after leaving the board of the WLT to serve in this capacity. Loree provided valuable assistance with stewardship, development of interpretive materials, and project evaluation. Loree also serves as an Officer of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania and has provided volunteer mapping and botanical projects for many groups including the PA Rare Plant Forum, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Heritage Reservation and Western PA Conservancy.

From October 2021 the WLT also benefitted from the assistance of Aaron Capouellez as an AmeriCorps Service Member. Along with other assistance Aaron provided valuable help with outreach and stewardship. Aaron is a graduate student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania with particular interest in herpetology. Aaron is also the founder of an organization, PA Woods and Forests, devoted to education about frogs and toads, and conservation of target species.



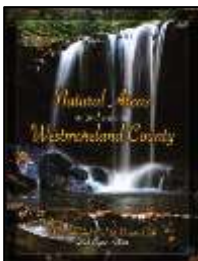
Evaluating and Selectively Advancing Conservation Projects

Throughout the year, the WLT evaluated several potential projects throughout Westmoreland County. Evaluation involves one or more site visits, research, and discussions with landowners. Project selection criteria are used to consider a property's attributes, extent of the prospective project's public benefit, potential problems, availability of project partners, availability of necessary funding, and consideration of WLT capacity. The WLT works to advance those projects with the most conservation value, recognizing the limitations of available resources.

Strategic Planning

Board member Andy Mack during the strategic planning discussion

During 2021, Dennis Puko facilitated strategic planning for the WLT including a November Saturday retreat. The board updated WLT's mission and vision, and defined priority issues including funding, board recruitment and development, and increasing public support for and understanding of the WLT's work. WLT's strategic planning will continue in 2022.



Natural Areas in and Around Westmoreland County

Throughout 2021 the WLT continued to offer copies of the excellent **Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club** book, Natural Areas in and around Westmoreland County, at cost.

Board News

In September, Malcolm Sias and John Ward were recognized as inductees in the Westmoreland Land Trust Hall of Honor.



Malcolm Sias served on the Steering Committee that led to the formation of the WLT, and then served on the WLT Board from its founding in December 2007 through December 2020. Malcolm's effort has been integral to almost all of the WLT's land acquisitions, and Malcolm has also contributed significantly to work at WLT properties.

John Ward also served on the Steering Committee that led to the formation of the WLT, and then served on the WLT Board

from its founding through December 2020. John was instrumental in assisting with the land trust's formation and organization, and also has provided invaluable guidance, advice, and assistance about legal and procedural matters throughout the land trust's existence.



During 2021, the WLT welcomed new board members Cary Bohl and Kim Miller in September. In March Jeff Silka resigned from the board. Founding Secretary Karen Jurkovic and founding board member and outgoing Chair John Lohr reached term limits at the end of 2020. ***The WLT extends thanks to every board member for his or her service; board members' efforts have been essential to the success of the WLT.***

During 2021, WeConservePA's and others' use of remote conferencing capability eased access and participation by WLT board and staff members in educational workshops.

Staff News

During 2021, Executive Director Betsy Aiken joined the Policy Council of WeConservePA, and also served on the Citizens Advisory Board for Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation, and the organizing committee for Westmoreland County's annual March for Parks. At the September 16 Westmoreland County Citizens Advisory Board Green Luncheon, Betsy was honored with a Lewis Award, based on service.



K.C. Grapes and Bob Michaud during a 2021 visit to the Ackermann Preserve



WLT summer outreach at Hempfield Park

Thank you, WLT Donors and Supporters



In 2021, the WLT's fall fundraising campaign once again coincided with "Give Big Pittsburgh". *Thank you to all who supported the WLT in some way during the year – your support made our work possible!*

*WLT's 2021 fall fundraising
appeal mailing*



Benefactor

\$10,000 and above

Anonymous
Allegheny Foundation
Colcom Foundation
The Community Foundation
of Westmoreland County

Laurel Foundation
Roberta N. Schwarz Charitable Foundation
Westmoreland County

Patron

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Norbert and Joanne Ackermann
Gurrentz International Corporation

Patrick and Lynn Gurrentz*

Friend

\$2,500 to \$4,999

Pennsylvania Environmental Council/Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape
Michael J. and Aimee Rusinko Kakos

Sponsor

\$1,000 to \$2,499

Anonymous
Betsy Aiken & Arvind Paranjpe*
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Gridiron Partners, LLC
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Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club*

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\$500 to \$999

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\$250 to \$499

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K.C. Grapes and Bob Michaud

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Glenn and Mabel Matteson*

Dale and Xina Matuza*

Regis and Jamie McHugh

Barbara and David McMillan*

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Art McSorley

Kim and Dianne Miller

Tom and Billie Moser*

Lauren and Clint Mullen

Robert Mulvihill*

Mary and Bob Pelland*

Greg and Leanne Phillips

Bob and Sally Ralph

Patrick Roberts

Joe and Chris Romano

Susan Salata

Andrew and Mary Lou Schreffler*

Malcolm and Patti Sias

Brandon and Alicia Simpson

Jeanne and Delver Smith

Lisa Smith

Jack Solomon*

Eleanor P. Stanton*

Virginia McCracken Stump

Katherine Tarara

Jan Van Gemert*

Delia White

Tribute GiftsMegan Kellogg – *in honor of Bill Mihalco*Katherine Tarara – *in honor of Jay Tarara*

* Sent gift(s) in memory of Dick Byers

**Sent gift(s) in memory of David Grapes

***Sent gift(s) in memory of Darryl Ridge

****Sent gift(s) in memory of Mark Ritter

In-Kind Donations of Services or Goods

During 202 the WLT also secured in-kind donations including office space, supplies, postage, video production, and legal services. Contributors of in-kind donations included:

Betsy Aiken

Harold Ayers

Cary Bohl

Fred Bononi

Susan Bortz

Mark Bowers

Aaron Capouellez

Tammy Colt

Export Makerspace

Alyson Fearon

John Hapach Creative Art

Direction and Design

Mike Larese

LaZae LaSpina, Simetra Design

Gladys Naugle Light

John Lohr

Andy Mack

Helen Murray

Joe Romano

Patrick Roberts

Susan Baur Scherff

Malcolm Sias

Brandon Simpson

Loree Speedy

Paula Purnell, Sense of Place Learning LLC

Pat and Sonny Wagner

WestCentral Equipment

Westmoreland Conservation District

Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation

Thank you, WLT Volunteers!

Note: this list does not include WLT Board members, who also devoted many hours of volunteer work!

Bruce Adamson
Kirk Albrecht
Susan Bortz
Mark Bowers
Ron Bryant
Mary Jane Busch
Susan Caroleo
Yale Cohen
Kim Ottovian Cuomo
Pam Curtain
Chandler Daugherty
Kathleen Depan
Kenton Derikito
Becky Drudel
Chuck Duritsa
Caitlin Elben
Dillon Evans
Don Johnston

Jim Fedorka
Alan Gardner
Bruce & Carol Gezon
Eric Hall
Mark Jackson
Michael Larese
LaZae LaSpina
Faith Lesniak
Kaitlyn Lewis
John Lohr
Jim Meehan
Greg Miller
Walter Moorhead
Bob Morseburg
Joanna Moyar
Jim Murphy
Martha O'Grady
Amber Perry

Eric Perry
Jim Pillsbury
Paula Purnell
Melissa Reckner
Tim Savisky
Patti Schildkamp
Malcolm Sias
Alicia Simpson,
Brock and
Brynnley Simpson
Chee-Kay Tai
Veronica Thompson
Lori Tyke
Pat and Sonny Wagner
Destiny Walker
John Ward
Delia White
Michele Zowacki

WLT also thanks these companies, who generously contributed volunteer time to WLT:

Bayer

PES Testing

West Penn Power

WLT also thanks these organizations, who generously contributed volunteer time to WLT:

PA Master Naturalists
United Way of Westmoreland County
Westmoreland Photographers Society
Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association

We make a living by
what we get, but
we make a life by
what we give.

Winston Churchill

*Volunteers Susan Caroleo and Becky Drudel at
the Ackermann Preserve with Loree Speedy and
WLT Board member Joe Romano*



Financial Statements

DeBlasio & DeBlasio Associates completed review of the Westmoreland Land Trust financial statements for 2021.

Westmoreland Land Trust Statement of Financial Position As of December 31, 2021

	<u>2021</u>
Assets	
Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 460,204
Prepaid Items	<u>500</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>460,704</u>
Capital Assets	
Property and Equipment	239,236
Accumulated Depreciation To Date	<u>(2,300)</u>
	<u>236,936</u>
Total Assets	<u><u>\$ 697,640</u></u>
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Accounts Payable	\$ <u>20</u>
	<u>20</u>
Net Assets	
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	454,345
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	<u>243,275</u>
Total Net Assets - December 31, 2021	<u>697,620</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u><u>\$ 697,640</u></u>

Westmoreland Land Trust
Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Other Changes in Net Assets
For the Year Ended December 31, 2021

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenues and Other Support			
Grants and Donations	\$ 111,099	\$ 114,332	\$ 225,431
Miscellaneous Income	303	-	303
Interest Income	54	-	54
Net Assets Released from Donor Restrictions	<u>264,324</u>	<u>(264,324)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Revenue	<u>375,780</u>	<u>(149,992)</u>	<u>225,788</u>
Expenses			
Program Services	110,975	-	110,975
Administrative Expenses	<u>11,759</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11,759</u>
Total Expenses	<u>122,734</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>122,734</u>
Changes in Net Assets	253,046	(149,992)	103,054
Beginning Net Assets - January 1, 2021	<u>201,299</u>	<u>393,267</u>	<u>594,566</u>
Ending Net Assets - December 31, 2021	\$ <u>454,345</u>	\$ <u>243,275</u>	\$ <u>697,620</u>



... SAVING SPECIAL PLACES IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Properties Conserved

From its founding in December 2007, the Westmoreland Land Trust has acquired properties **in seven distinct Westmoreland County communities.**



*Brewster's Warbler
(photo courtesy of Dale Matuza)*

The land trust has added 74 acres to **Murrysville's Duff Park**, increasing the park's size by almost 50%, and providing a link between Duff and Pleasant Valley parks that allows visitors to enjoy continuous access to 500 combined acres.

The land trust has conserved the beautiful **Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve** in North Huntingdon Township, the **Peter and Victoria Skena Nature Reserve** in Murrysville, and land on Cabin Hill in Greensburg.

The land trust also has added nearly 50 acres to **Cedar Creek Park**, and 39 acres to **Twin Lakes Park**, both Westmoreland County parks. In addition to recreational value, this land provides an important buffer for the parks and for the Cedar Creek Gorge, site of one of the best wildflower shows in western Pennsylvania. Properties conserved to date by the Westmoreland Land Trust are as follows:



*Carolina wren (photo
courtesy of Dale Matuza)*

Hempfield Township

- 39 acres adjacent to Twin Lakes Park
- 96 acres just north of Greensburg

Murrysville

- 49 acres adjacent to Duff Park
- 22 acres linking Duff Park and Pleasant Valley Park
- 9 acres adjacent to Duff Park
- 16.5 acres adjacent to Duff Park
- 22 acres known as the Peter and Victoria Skena Reserve
(contiguous with the Lillian Kellman Nature Reserve)



*Red-billed
Woodpecker
(photo courtesy
of Dale Matuza)*

Properties Conserved (continued)

Ligonier Township

- 4 acres along Route 30 (conserved in partnership with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Loyalhanna Watershed Association)



Barred owl (photo courtesy of Dale Matuza)



Killdeer (photo courtesy of Pat Comas)

North Huntingdon Township

- The 59-acre Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve in Ardara

Rostraver Township

- 21 acres along the Youghiogheny River (added to Cedar Creek Park)
- 28 acres bordering the Cedar Creek Gorge (added to Cedar Creek Park)

Mount Pleasant Township

- 1 acre along Route 982 (added to Mammoth Park)

City of Greensburg

- 3.5 acres near Cabin Hill Drive



American robin (photo courtesy of Pat Comas)



*Glowsticks illuminated trails at the
Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve.
for December 31, 2021 evening walks.*

Ways to Get Involved

*It is your support, contributions and assistance that make our work possible!
Here are some ways to get involved ...*

Volunteer

Volunteers are key to our success! There are many ways to enjoy helping out by volunteering as much or as little as you like. Possibilities for helping range from stewardship and trail building to outreach, programming, administration - or most anything of interest to you!

Land Conservation

The WLT will assist your exploration possibilities for conservation of your land, or of other land of special value in Westmoreland County.

Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC)

Businesses may apply for generous Pennsylvania tax credits for contributions to the WLT for popular STEM nature workshops provided to Westmoreland County public schools. Pass-through entities such as S-Corporations, Partnerships, LLCs, etc. may also apply for these tax credits.

In Kind Contributions

The WLT welcomes and values in kind contributions of needed materials and services.

Funding

Contributions of funding are essential for acquisitions, stewardship of conserved land, and WLT operations. Gifts may be made at any time of the year. ***Have Your Gift Matched*** if your employer has a matching gift program. ***Make a Gift to Honor, or in Memory*** of, someone.

Gift of Securities

A gift of securities has great value to the WLT, and may yield a tax advantage to you.

Gift from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA)

If you are age 70-1/2 and older, you may make a Qualified Charitable Distribution as described in the Internal Revenue Code, as part or all of a Required Minimum Distribution from your traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA), up to a limit of \$100,000 (if you file jointly, your spouse can also make a Qualified Charitable Distribution within the same tax year for up to \$100,000).

Planned Giving

You may incorporate the WLT in your estate planning by identifying the WLT as a beneficiary in your will, IRA, trust, or life insurance policy.

Email westmorelandlandtrust@gmail.com or call 724 325-3031 to learn more.

*The Westmoreland Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.
Contributions are tax deductible under the provisions of
the Internal Revenue Code to the extent of the law.
For any gift or transaction, it is important that you
obtain independent legal, financial, and tax advice.*

www.westmoreland-landtrust.org

***Back cover shows fields at the Schwarz Farm,
photo courtesy of Cary Bohl***



WESTMORELAND LAND TRUST
218 DONOHUE ROAD | GREENSBURG, PA 15601
(724) 325-3031
westmoreland-landtrust.org

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and is an Educational Improvement Organization under the
PA DCED Educational Improvement Tax Credit program.
Contributions to the Westmoreland Land Trust
are tax-deductible under the provisions
of the Internal Revenue Code to the extent of the law.



**WESTMORELAND
LAND TRUST**