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Brian Jones

**Coordinator of Education Programming**

Paula Purnell

**AmeriCorps Service Members**

Loree Speedy  
Aaron Capouellez

*Front cover photo of mountain laurel in bloom courtesy of Doug Bauman*



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September 30, 2023

Dear Friend of the Westmoreland Land Trust (WLT),

Once again 2022 was a significant year for the WLT! A highlight was the acquisition of the ecologically and culturally significant St. Xavier Nature Preserve from the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community, Inc. This 248-acre property was the site of the former St. Xavier Academy and Convent. It is located near Latrobe, along U.S. Route 30 just west of the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport. During the year WLT also started extensive conservation work on the property.

During 2022 WLT also continued to plan the future nature and art park at the Schwarz farm just north of Greensburg. This beautiful 96-acre property is exceptionally well suited to become a significant nature, art, and sculpture park as well as a base for nature programming for both children and adults.

Nature programming remained an important WLT focus throughout the year. AmeriCorps Service Member Loree Speedy led development of Westmoreland Nature Backpacks for libraries throughout the Westmoreland Library Network, and WLT's Coordinator of Educational Programming Paula Purnell presented workshops about use of the backpacks at libraries throughout Westmoreland County. WLT's extensive educational outreach also included workshops at Westmoreland County public schools (funded by the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit program), and several nature walks and other events.

It is your help that makes our work possible! Special thanks are extended to our supporters - corporations, foundations, individuals, families and friends, Board members, and volunteers. We also want to gratefully acknowledge the Westmoreland County Commissioners for their support of our work.

In May 2022 WLT welcomed new Board member Jack Paulik, and in July 2022 Rob Cronauer. During 2022 Greg Phillips and Stephanie Jellison stepped down from the Board, and at the end of 2022 those reaching term limits included founding Board Secretary Karen Jurkovic, and our Chair for the last three years, John Lohr. We thank them for their many years of dedicated service.

I encourage you to look over our 2022 Annual Report. And to our supporters and volunteers, thank you again for making all these accomplishments possible.

Sincerely,

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

Bill Mihalco  
Chair

The Westmoreland Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Contributions to the trust are tax-deductible under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code to the extent of the law.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Cary Bohl • Commissioner Douglas W. Chew • Robert Cronauer • Alyson Fearon • Brian Lawrence  
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## Mission, Vision, and Values

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### 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 we assemble this report, we are 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 work possible.*

## **WLT Highlights of 2022**

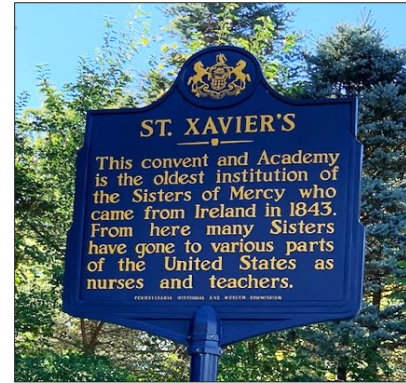
- Engaging part-time employees Paula Purnell, D. Ed. as Coordinator of Educational Programming and Brian Jones as Manager of Operations
- Hosting AmeriCorps Service Members Loree Speedy and Aaron Capouellez
- Acquiring the St. Xavier property, and initiating conservation work
- Planning the future nature and art park at the Schwarz farm
- Continuing to improve the Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve
- Managing and learning from the Twin Lakes Meadow
- Organizing nature walks and events throughout the year
- Developing the 2022 Westmoreland Ramble
- Continuing to advance Environmental Education in Westmoreland County public schools and libraries
- Developing and distributing Westmoreland Nature Backpacks, and presenting workshops explaining their use
- Securing grants to support projects and operations
- Continuing to build WLT's community of stakeholders and supporters
- Conducting a successful annual fundraising campaign
- Evaluating and selectively advancing conservation projects
- Securing invaluable assistance from volunteers throughout the year
- Thanking outgoing board members, and welcoming new board members

## Land Conservation

During 2022, WLT's land conservation efforts were focused on the Saint Xavier property, the Schwarz Farm, the Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve, and the Twin Lakes Meadow. During the year, WLT also evaluated and selectively advanced prospective new conservation projects.

### St. Xavier Property

On August 26, 2022, the WLT acquired the 248-acre St. Xavier property in Unity Township from the Sisters of Mercy for conservation as a nature preserve accessible to the public. The St. Xavier property has an exceptionally rich heritage as the site of the former St. Xavier Academy and Convent of the Sisters of Mercy. WLT is honored to have worked with the Sisters to secure conservation of this property, and is deeply grateful to the Sisters and all who have supported or assisted with this project.



### Background

Tom Guelcher, Property Director for the Sisters of Mercy New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community, Inc. first contacted WLT in July 2018. Over the next year WLT visited and explored the St. Xavier property, researched possibilities for its conservation, and learned about the Sisters' wishes for stewardship of the land.



*Students on the lawn of the former St. Xavier Academy*

Throughout 2020 the Sisters and discussed possibilities for the property's conservation, guided by a 1993 statement of the Sisters, "Principles Governing Stewardship of St. Xavier's". On January 28, 2021, WLT and the Sisters entered into agreements for conservation of the St. Xavier property, and in April 2021 WLT applied for grant funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for conservation acquisition of the property.

During 2022 WLT received a DCNR grant of \$1,100,000 for conservation purchase of the St. Xavier property, and undertook work in preparation for the purchase. On August 26, 2022 WLT completed conservation acquisition of the property, and the Sisters of Mercy made an extremely generous contribution for ongoing maintenance of St. Xavier as a nature preserve. The Sisters have retained ownership and care of the St. Xavier Cemetery, which is the resting place for five of the seven women who came to the United States from Ireland to establish the Sisters of Mercy in the Americas. The Cemetery remains in active use today.

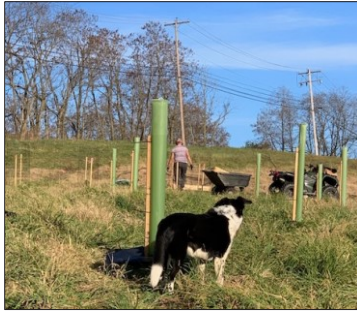


*Students enjoying tennis at the former Academy*



## Conservation Work

About 80 acres of the St. Xavier preserve has been enrolled in the United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP is a federal state partnership program administered by the Farm Service Agency, that pays farmers and other landowners to take make conservation plantings to protect water quality and provide habitat for wildlife.



*Tree planting at St. Xavier*

During fall 2022 WLT initiated conservation work on the enrolled acreage with planting of 2380 tree saplings and 612 shrubs to strengthen riparian buffers. During 2022 WLT also started preparation of CREP fields for 2023 planting of meadows of native grasses and wildflowers.

These efforts were supported by a grant from the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation.

*Farm Service Agency  
& National Resource  
Conservation Service  
representatives  
inspecting the St.  
Xavier riparian  
buffer plantings*



*Aerial view of St. Xavier showing land enrolled in CREP  
(marked with CRP)*

## History of St. Xavier Academy & Convent

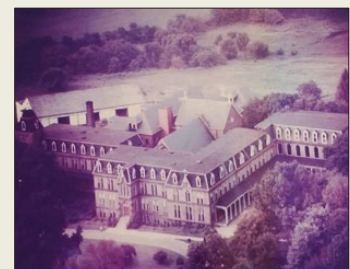
The Congregation of Sisters of Mercy started in the 1820s when Catherine McAuley made use of an inheritance to build a house in Dublin, Ireland as a shelter and school for poor girls and women. In 1828, the name "Sisters of Mercy" was chosen for the women assisting with the shelter, and in 1829 the Sisters unanimously decided that the group would become a religious congregation. In 1831, Catherine McAuley, Mary Ann Doyle, and Mary Elizabeth Harley professed their vows, thereby founding the religious order.

Throughout the 1830s and early 1840s the order established facilities in England and Ireland which offered shelter to poor women and children and also provided nursing assistance during outbreaks of cholera. Invited by Michael O'Connor, Bishop of the Catholic diocese in Pittsburgh, seven Sisters travelled to the United States from Carlow, Ireland in 1843. They settled on Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh, where they established a convent and grade school.

In 1844, Henry Kuhn offered a 108-acre farm near Latrobe to the Sisters, and in 1845 Frances Warde opened Mount St. Vincent Academy for Young Ladies at this location. When the Benedictine monks came to the St. Vincent property, the Sisters constructed a new building and in 1847 the Academy moved to the new building named St. Xavier Academy. Pittsburgh Sisters also went on to teach at St. Paul's parochial school in Oakland, establish Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh, and travel to build convents, schools, and hospitals in many locations throughout the United States.

Both the St. Xavier Academy and Convent 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 their buildings were again destroyed by fire on March 16, 1972. After that fire, the only structure undamaged by the fire was the large guesthouse "Bellbrook".

*St. Xavier  
Academy  
and Convent  
buildings  
destroyed by  
a fire in 1972*



## Other Work at St. Xavier

Other 2022 work at the St. Xavier property included the start of rejuvenation of the Grove of magnificent specimen trees along St. Xavier Road. WLT volunteers also worked extensively throughout fall and winter to remove downed trees and on trails throughout the property, mow farm roads, and reopen woodland trails.



*Rejuvenation of the Grove included removal of the spruce trees that had died along the entrance drive*



During 2022 WLT also started work within the Civil War-era dwelling “Bellbrook”, the only structure situated on the property, to repair interior water damage that had occurred during the winter of 2021-2022. Westmoreland Photographers Society Member Bob DeJesus visited Bellbrook several times to make photo documentation of the interior water damage and progress with repairs.

*Two views of Bellbrook*



".... In 1861, Mother Rose Hostetter, one of the most progressive Mother Superiors, built a trim brick guest house on a corner lot bordering the Pike and the little country road. It still stands, a sturdy monument to the architecture of those days."

From "The Guest House (Bellbrook)"

## Looking Ahead

Future efforts at St. Xavier will include development of:

- a comprehensive Stewardship Plan for the St. Xavier land
- a Master Plan for the nature preserve/park
- a plan for improvement of the property's farm stand area
- interpretive materials about the rich history of the property.

Bellbrook will become the base of operations for the park, with the possibility of other complementary uses as well. The expansive St. Xavier Nature Preserve will become a beautiful and culturally significant park as well as an ecologically valuable nature preserve.

*Examining a structure at St. Xavier*





## Carl A. Schwarz Memorial Park

After their engagement in September 2021, LaQuatra Bonci Associates (LBA) worked with a Steering Committee throughout 2022 to plan phased development of the future nature and art park to be established at the Schwarz property north of Greensburg. LBA worked with the large committee of stakeholders to develop and refine plans for the property.

A 2021 Revitalizing Westmoreland grant from the Pittsburgh Foundation/Community Foundation of Westmoreland County allowed WLT to host meetings during this process to gather community input in Greensburg, Jeannette, and Hempfield Township about the future park.

During 2022 WLT moved donated furniture and file cabinets into the Schwarz farmhouse. The farmhouse will become a base of operations and programming for the future park.

The Schwarz fields will be conserved as meadows of native wildflowers and grasses to provide habitat for bird and pollinator species, and to enhance the fields' considerable scenic appeal. Wooded areas will also be managed for habitat improvement, focusing on control of invasive species.



*Schwarz Farm (Photo courtesy of Jim Murphy, Westmoreland Photographers Society)*

It is foreseen that the future nature and art park will become an important destination, contributing both to the ecological resilience of the region and to the economic and cultural vitality of the surrounding communities including Greensburg, Jeannette, and Hempfield Township.

### THE FUTURE PARK WILL ...



**Provide** low impact public enjoyment of the property and significant works of outdoor art

**Inspire** delight and appreciation of nature

**Preserve** and enhance beautiful views



**Encourage** children's appreciation and enjoyment of nature, both by design and by programming

**Facilitate** support for land conservation and the work of the Westmoreland Land Trust

**Create** synergy with Westmoreland County's vibrant art community and add to the cultural and tourism offerings in Westmoreland County

**Model** best conservation practices.



*Top photo is aerial view of Schwarz farm courtesy of Ron Bryant; middle is from Storm King Art Center; bottom is from deCordova Sculpture Park.*

### CONSERVATION OF THE PARK'S FIELDS AS MEADOWS OF NATIVE WILDFLOWERS AND GRASSES WILL ...

**Provide** habitat for grassland bird species of the greatest conservation need including the bobolink, eastern meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, Savannah sparrow, and American kestrel

**Enrich** habitat for pollinator species including bees, butterflies, and other insects and small mammals

**Support** stormwater management and protection of the watershed

**Strengthen** carbon capture and sequestration

**Enhance** a setting where visitors can enjoy the benefits of time spent in nature

**Reflect** the rural character and beauty of Westmoreland County, and help to preserve these qualities

**Demonstrate** the value of land conservation.



*Photos of the pilot meadow at Twin Lakes Park*





## Visitor Days

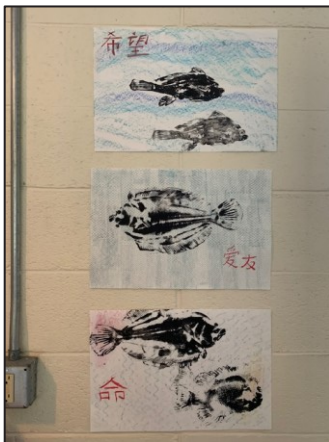
On October 8th and 9th WLT hosted 2022 Visitor Days at the Schwarz Farm. The weekend featured tours of the farm; family activities including gyotaku (Japanese fish printing), preparation of leaf journals, and giant Jenga; wildlife displays; visiting goats; refreshments; and Celtic harp music. Noteworthy was participation by plein air painters and Westmoreland Photographers Society Members resulting in many beautiful images of the property. WLT board members and volunteers and students from the Greater Latrobe Science National Honor Society assisted throughout the weekend with parking, activities, tours and refreshments.



*A fall view at the Schwarz farm (Photo courtesy of Rex Moyer, Westmoreland Photographers Society)*



*Plein air painting during October Visitor Days, from left to right: Barbara Wang, painting by Michael Keim, Ron Donoughe, painting by Paula Martino, painting by Pat Dickun (All photos courtesy of Barbara L. Jones). Additional plain air paintings from the Visitor Days weekend are shown on Page 18.*



*Gyotaku (Japanese fish printing) during Visitor Days*

*Members of the Greater Latrobe Science National Honor Society who assisted with the Open House*





## Planning the Art and Nature Park

Planning the phased development of the future art and nature park at the Schwarz farm with LaQuatra Bonci Associates was a major focus for the WLT throughout 2022. During the year the process entailed developing a consensus about the mission for the future park; thorough review and analysis of the natural and built features of the property; gathering community input; many discussions of ideas; and evaluation of resources and project logistics.



*3-D Scan of the Schwarz farmhouse interior*



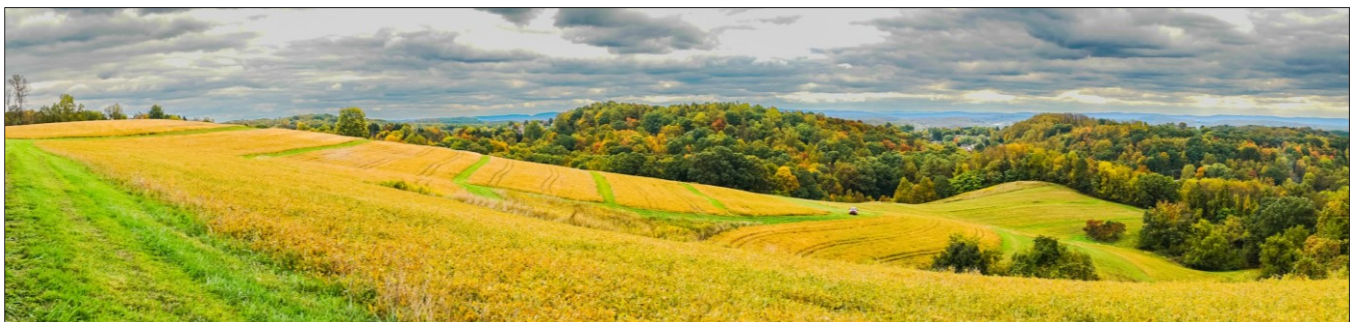
*Deer at the Schwarz farm (Photo from a trail camera, courtesy of Brian Jones)*



*Preliminary concept for structures for the park*



*Community meeting for Hempfield Township, held at the Westmoreland Conservation District Barn (Photo courtesy of Joe Hackett)*



*Panorama of Schwarz fields (Photo courtesy of Bob DeJesus, Westmoreland Photographers Society)*

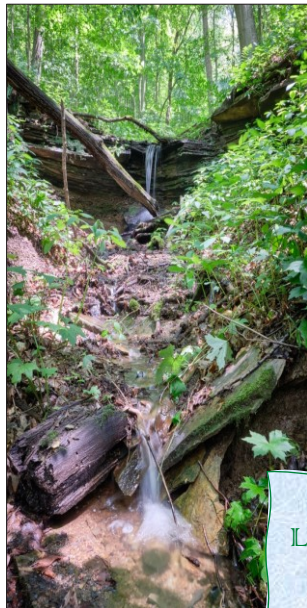
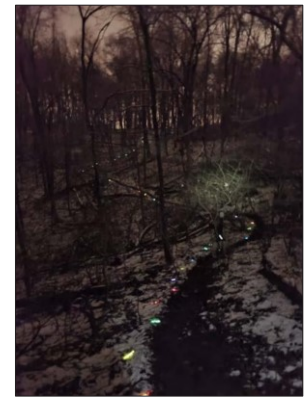


## Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve

As in previous years, the Ackermann Preserve remained the site of most of the WLT's stewardship work and site-specific programming throughout 2022.

Once again **Glowstick Walks** on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day set the stage to start the year with enchanted evenings along the woodland trails of the Ackermann Preserve.

On March 20th AmeriCorps Service Member Loree Speedy led a **Things that Once Were** hike to explore evidence of past industry and history in and around the Ackermann Preserve.



*Photo courtesy of  
Jim Murphy,  
Westmoreland  
Photographers Society*

*Hikers  
observing  
the stone  
quarry  
in the  
Ackermann  
Preserve*



On April 22nd (Earth Day) AmeriCorps Service Member Loree Speedy led a **Wildflower Walk** through the Preserve. During that evening AmeriCorps Service Member Aaron Capouellez led a **Twilight Exploration** of Blue Dell Run and the Preserve.

*Earth Day  
Twilight  
Exploration*



*Late April and early May  
are excellent times to  
see the Preserve's  
Trillium grandiflorum  
and other spring  
ephemerals in bloom.*



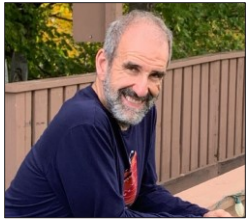
*Earth Day Wildflower Walk*

*Graphic designer  
LaZae LaSpina and  
AmeriCorps Service  
Member Loree Speedy  
visit one of the  
interpretive signs in the  
Ackermann Preserve*





## Research Work at Ackermann Preserve



During 2022 Dr. Robert Loeb, Professor of Biology and Forestry at Penn State University, Dubois Campus, started a research project within the Ackermann Preserve, to study the effect of soil pH and the availability of micronutrients on the mix and regeneration of tree species. During July test plots were established, soil sampling conducted, and test plot tree populations surveyed. Laboratory analysis of soil samples followed, and statistical analysis and interpretation of relationships between soil chemicals and forest (tree) composition.

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

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AmeriCorps Service Member Aaron Capouellez developed two story maps, "Frogs of Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve" and "Salamanders and Snakes of Otto and Magdalene Nature Preserve", which can be viewed at the WLT website.



*Entrance to the  
quarry at  
Ackermann  
(Photo courtesy  
of Jim Meehan,  
Westmoreland  
Photographers  
Society)*

*In May Peter  
and Cindy  
Ackermann  
visited from  
Texas*



***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.***

## Twin Lakes Meadow

During 2022 WLT continued management of the pilot **Twin Lakes Meadow** of wildflowers and native grasses at Westmoreland County's Twin Lakes Park. WLT had established the Meadow in 2021 with support from Colcom Foundation.

The Meadow is intended:

- to strengthen the ecological value of its 17-acre field
- to create an interesting and scenic destination for park visitors
- to serve as an educational resource to inform WLT's planning of future meadows at the Schwarz farm, the St. Xavier property, and elsewhere as well as visitors' planning of their own meadows.



The Meadow is maintained via partnership with Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation (WCP&R).

### Pollinator Partners

During 2022, the WLT joined the Westmoreland Pollinator Partners (WPP), enrolling the Meadow as a pollinator site. Formed in 2019, WPP is a group of 24 nonprofit organizations, parks, schools, and community gardens dedicated to promoting, protecting and preserving pollinators and their habitats in Westmoreland County. Pennsylvania Master Naturalist and WLT volunteers monitored the development of the Meadow, which grew beautifully throughout 2022, with rich species diversity and an abundant variety of flowers throughout the growing season to attract and support pollinators.



The largest meadow-related challenge observed during 2022 was the growth of poison hemlock in one area. Carefully planned and targeted mowing by WCP&R yielded successful control of this troublesome plant.

Another challenge was the presence of Canada thistle plants lightly scattered throughout the Meadow, with heavy infestation in a few areas. Heavily infested areas were mowed, but the best means of control for this troublesome plant, designated by Pennsylvania as a noxious weed, has yet to be determined.

## 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. Recognizing the limitations of available resources, WLT works to advance those projects with the greatest conservation value.



## Environmental Education

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. Throughout the year, WLT Coordinator of Education Programming **Dr. Paula**



**Purnell** reached over 1200 Westmoreland County public school students with in-class workshops and an additional 600 individuals with extracurricular programming.

Workshops are offered for use free of charge in participating Westmoreland County public schools and to groups of home-schooled students, to the extent that funding allows. For the 2022-2023 school year, the WLT was authorized to present workshops in the following school districts:

- Belle Vernon
- Burrell
- City of Jeannette
- City of Monessen
- Franklin Regional
- Greater Latrobe
- Greensburg Salem
- Hempfield Area
- Mount Pleasant Area
- Norwin
- Southmoreland
- Yough

The workshops are extremely popular with students and teachers. WLT welcomes the participation of businesses in the EITC program. Businesses and individuals may also support WLT's environmental education efforts directly.



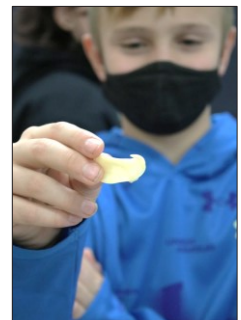
*Sing-along at Sewickley Township Public Library (Photo courtesy of Jen Worley)*

### Environmental Education

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



*Learning about parts of a seed (Photos courtesy of Paula Purnell)*



Businesses may apply for generous Pennsylvania Tax Credits that if awarded can be used to support WLT's educational workshops.

## Westmoreland Nature Backpacks



During the year WLT also partnered with the Westmoreland Library Network to contribute sixty-seven "Westmoreland Nature Backpacks" to Westmoreland County libraries via use of a

Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape initiative mini-grant (funded by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and administered by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council).



WESTMORELAND NATURE BACKPACKS	
BIRDS RESOURCE GUIDE	
WHAT'S IN THE NATURE BACKPACK?	
	Stinger 8x22mm Binoculars: Binoculars let you see the birds close-up. You can see details like the reddish tail of a hawk or the blunt beak of a cardinal. Review the HOW TO USE BINOCULARS to learn how to best use them.
	Stokes Beginners Guide to Birds - Eastern Region: This field guide of over 100 birds is simple to use, and organized by the color of the bird's feathers.
	Sibley's Woodpeckers of North America (Laminated Tri-fold): Woodpeckers commonly seen in our area include Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Northern Flickers.
	A Guide to Hawks Seen in N.A. and the Project FeederWatch Guide to Common Feeder Birds: These one-page field guides are easy to use in the field.
	FIELD BOOK: The Field Book is a birding journal that allows you to share with other backpack users what birds you saw. To record your birds, please follow the instructions. It must be returned with your Birding Backpack.
	Feather in a Plastic Bag with fun feather facts.
	Resource Guide (Multi-page Laminated): The Resource Guide includes HOW TO USE BINOCULARS, SMARTPHONE APPS and WEBSITES to prepare and learn more about birding, and information about POISON IVY and TICKS
	Westmoreland County Parks Passport is an informative guide to ten Westmoreland County parks and five trails.

Three types of backpacks contain high-quality tools and resource materials for exploration and observation of Streams & Forests, Wildflowers & Pollinators, and Birds. Each backpack is designed to enable children, families, and adults to explore nature on their own. Feedback forms included with the materials allow families to offer suggestions for additional materials, other improvements and subjects for new backpacks.

After early summer distribution of the backpacks to libraries, WLT Coordinator of Educational Programming Paula Purnell presented 15 workshops throughout Westmoreland County explaining use of the backpacks. Workshops were well attended, and contributed to strong demand for the backpacks.

*Backpack Workshop in Latrobe*





## Other Activities

### Supporting Land Acquisition for the Westmoreland Heritage Trail



Since its formation WLT has participated in the annual Westmoreland County March for Parks, which in 2022 raised over \$80,000 to support Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation facilities and programming. For the fourth consecutive year in 2022 the WLT also supported land acquisition for extension of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail via commitment of funds.

*WLT Treasurer Fred Bononi presents a check to Jay Tarara, Chair of the Citizens Advisory Board for Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation*



*Caboose at the Westmoreland Heritage Trail in Export*

### Westmoreland County Historical Society

On January 13th Westmoreland County Historical Society (WCHS) Collections Manager Joanna Moyar hosted the Board of the WLT for a tour of the WCHS's exhibit "Penn's Forest: Plenty for the Use of Man" and discussion of some of outdoor amenities at Historic Hanna's Town.



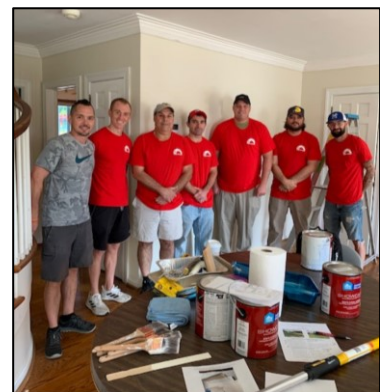
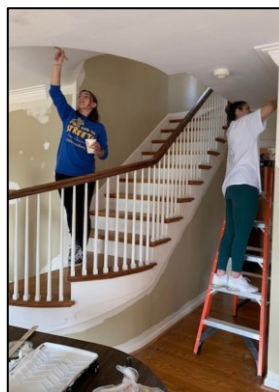
### Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club Visit to Twin Lakes Meadow

On August 13 the Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club explored the Twin Lakes Meadow, and enjoyed many observations of the wildflowers, butterflies, and meadow birds.



### United Way Week of Caring

During September, employees from Elliott Group, PES Testing, Menasha, and West Penn Power assisted WLT with painting of the interior of the Schwarz farmhouse.



## Other Activities (continued)

On September 27th, 2022, WLT Executive Director Betsy Aiken addressed PA Master Naturalist trainees about WLT properties and projects, and volunteer opportunities with the WLT.

On September 30th, 2022, WLT Board and Schwarz Steering Committee members participated in a field trip with guided tours of the sculpture park at Kentuck Knob and the grounds of Fallingwater.

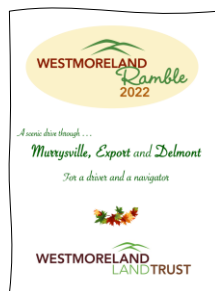


On October 11th, 2022, WLT hosted Bradley Barkdoll, Advocacy Manager for WeConservePA, for a Legislative Site Visit to the Schwarz farm.

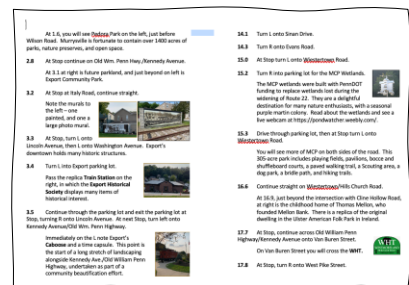
On October 26th, Betsy Aiken addressed the Kiwanis Club of Scottdale.



## 2022 Westmoreland Ramble

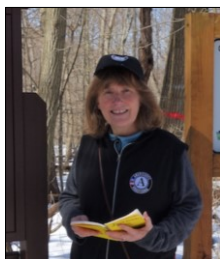


For the 2022 Westmoreland Ramble, WLT developed written directions for a scenic drive through Murrysville, Export, and Delmont along with supplementary information about points of interest along the way. The 2022 Ramble is available as a printed booklet and in a print-friendly format [online](#).



## AmeriCorps

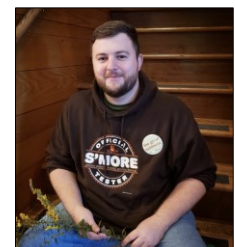
Nonprofit organizations, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups may apply to Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corps (PMSC) to host an AmeriCorps Service Member.



During 2022, WLT benefitted from the assistance of Loree Speedy as an AmeriCorps Service Member. Loree continued her 2020 AmeriCorps service to the WLT, after stepping down from 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.



During 2022 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. He is also the founder of the organization "PA Woods and Forests" devoted to education about frogs and toads and conservation of target species.





## Loyalhanna Watershed Easement

WLT agreed to serve as backup holder for a June 2022 Loyalhanna Watershed Conservation Easement for a portion of a tract of land in Ligonier Township, to enable work for wetland and stream protection.

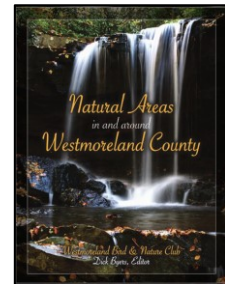
## Strategic Planning

On April 30, 2022, WLT continued with **Strategic Planning** started in 2021, facilitated by Dennis Puko. During the Saturday retreat, the Board refined priorities to focus on:

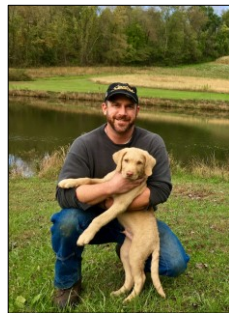
- Funding
- Board recruitment
- Increasing public support for, understanding of, and engagement with WLT's mission.

## Natural Areas in and Around Westmoreland County

Throughout 2022 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



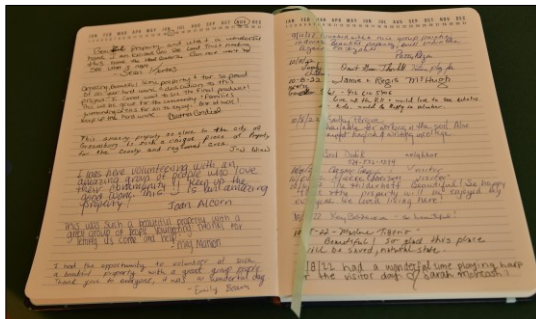
In May 2022 WLT welcomed new Board member Jack Paulik (far left), and in July 2022 Rob Cronauer (left).

During 2022 Greg Phillips and Stephanie Jellison stepped down from the Board. At the end of 2022 Board members reaching term limits included founding Board Secretary Karen Jurkovic, and WLT Chair for the last three years, John Lohr. WLT is grateful to all the outgoing Board members for their dedicated service.

## Staff News

In June 2022 WLT welcomed Brian Jones (right) as Manager of Operations.

In September 2022 WLT welcomed Paula Purnell, D. Ed. (far right) as Coordinator of Educational Programming.



*Notes left by Visitors to the Schwarz Future Nature and Art Park*

## Thank You WLT Donors and Supporters

In 2022, 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!*

### Benefactor

\$10,000 and above

Joanne Ackermann\*  
Allegheny Foundation  
Colcom Foundation  
Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation

PA Dep't of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Ben Sampson  
Roberta N. Schwarz Charitable Foundation  
Sisters of Mercy  
Westmoreland County

### Patron

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Gurrentz International Corporation  
Center for Philanthropy Initiatives of the Pittsburgh Foundation

Lynn and Patrick Gurrentz

### Friend

\$2,500 to \$4,999

Frederick Bonci  
PA Env. Council/Laurel Highlands Cons. Landscape

Michael J. and Aimee Rusinko Kakos  
Theo and Pia van de Venne

### Sponsor

\$1,000 to \$2,499

Anonymous  
Betsy Aiken and Arvind Paranjpe  
Cary and Ken Bohl

Chuck and Judy Duritsa  
Bill and Kathy Mihalco  
Old Joe Club Charities

Spitzer Autoworld Monroeville

### Partner

\$500 to \$999

Alyson Fearon  
Richard A. Kacin  
David Lester  
Lewis and Katherine Lobdell  
Carol and John Lohr  
Pam and Barry Paulisick

Robert and Jocelyn Sanders  
Mike Schneck, Gridiron Partners  
Larry and June Schultz  
Regis and Diane Synan  
Skelly and Loy, a Terracon Company  
Jay and Mary Lou Tarara

### Associate

\$250 to \$499

Amare Medical Network  
Commissioner Doug Chew  
Dianne Henderson\*

Brian and Julie Lawrence  
Andrew L. Mack  
Joe and Chris Romano



## Thank You WLT Donors and Supporters

### Donor

Up to \$249

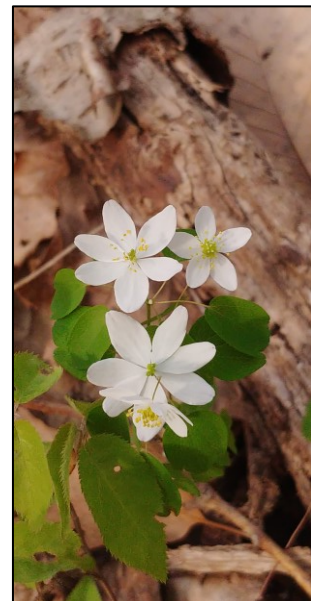
Anonymous\*  
Eileen Bartolomucci  
Carl and Judith Baumeister  
Allison Beeghley  
Beeghley and Company  
Fred and Norine Bononi  
Joe and Deborah Bulava  
Susan Caroleo  
Robert Chamberlin  
Tammy Colt  
John R. Conti  
Diane and Charles Conway  
Rob Cronauer  
William Danchuk  
Mark and Sharlene Emerson  
Mara Evans  
Carolyn Falcon  
Barbara Ferrier  
Dwayne Fielder  
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Greensburg  
Kenneth Goebel  
Ted Harhai  
Tom and Donnis Headley  
Hillview Motors, Inc.  
Susan Hunter\*  
Stephanie Jellison  
Larry Laude & Marianne Kasica

Maureen Kelly  
Thomas and Janet Kuehl  
Larry and Betsey Larese  
Maryann and Eric Lassak  
Regis and Jamie McHugh  
Barbara and David McMillan  
Art McSorley  
Helga Mears  
Rose Lee and Robert Metcalfe\*  
Kestrel Michaud  
Lauren and Clint Mullen\*  
Helen and Doug Murray  
Jack and Debbie Paulik  
Vince and Patty Quatrini  
Bob and Sally Ralph  
Patrick Roberts  
Kirk Rhys  
Malcolm and Patti Sias  
Brandon and Alicia Simpson  
Robert Skena  
Lisa Smith  
Rosa Beth Snyder-Boyd  
Loree Speedy and Mark Bowers  
Virginia McCracken Stump  
Katherine Tarara\*  
Judith and Ned Wilson

### \*Tribute Gifts

Joanne Ackermann - *In memory of Norbert Ackermann*  
Anonymous - *In memory of Norbert Ackermann*  
Diane Henderson - *In memory of Norbert Ackermann*  
Susan Hunter - *In honor of Betsy Aiken*  
Rose Lee and Robert Metcalfe - *In honor of Jay Tarara*  
Lauren and Clint Mullen - *In honor of William & Kathleen Mihalco*  
Katherine Tarara - *in honor of Jay Tarara*

*Rue anemone*  
(Photo courtesy of  
Doug Bauman)



## Thank You WLT Donors and Supporters

### In-Kind Donations of Services or Goods

During 2022 the WLT also received in-kind donations from the following people and organizations:

Betsy Aiken  
Sue Anderson  
Beech Hills Blooms  
Cary Bohl  
Fred Bononi  
Susan Bortz  
Mark Bowers  
Ron Bryant  
Aaron Capouellez  
Carnegie Museum  
Justin Duncan and Family  
Ray Follador  
Friendship Farms  
Cameron Gibetta  
John Hapach Creative Art Direction and Design  
Karen Jurkovic  
Maureen Kelly  
Marcia Koynok  
Andy Krinock  
Michael Larese  
LaZae LaSpina, Simetra Design  
Carol and John Lohr  
Lowes of Greensburg  
Andy Mack  
Lydia Mack  
Paula Martino  
Massaro Law  
Sarah McIntosh  
Sarah Middlemiss  
Bill Mihalco  
Kim Miller  
Helen Murray  
Penn-Franklin News  
Paula Purnell  
Patrick Roberts  
Roberta N. Schwarz Charitable Foundation  
Malcolm Sias  
Brandon Simpson  
Sisters of Mercy  
Loree Speedy  
Maria Stiteler  
Pat and Sonny Wagner  
Walmart of Greensburg  
Westmoreland Conservation District  
Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation  
Westmoreland Museum of American Art  
Pati Lindauer Wolinsky  
Kelly Ziencik

*Painting of Schwarz  
property kindly  
donated by  
Lydia Mack*



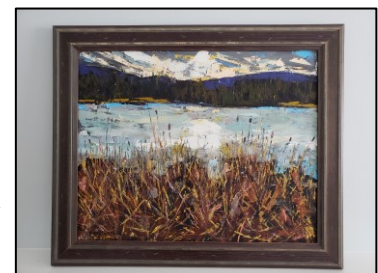
*One of the visiting goats  
brought by Justin  
Duncan and Family*

*Painting of Schwarz  
landscape kindly  
donated by  
Marcia Koynok*



*Painting of Schwarz  
barn kindly  
donated by  
Paula Martino*

*Painting of Twin Lakes  
by Nancy Rusbosin  
kindly donated by  
Andy Krinock*





## Thank You WLT Volunteers

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

Bruce Adamson  
Joan Alcorn  
Sue Anderson  
Stephen Andursky  
Robert Barbieri  
Emily Beam  
Susan Bortz  
Mark Bowers  
Ron Bryant  
Brad Butler  
Susan Caroleo  
Bob DeJesus  
Chuck Duritsa  
Caitlin Elben

Alan Gardner  
Eric Hall  
Jonathan Hertzog  
John Howard  
Mark Jackson  
Barbara L. Jones  
Karen Jurkovic  
Brent Kennedy  
Michael Larese  
John Lohr  
Meg Manion  
Maria Manon  
Kathy Mihalco  
Greg Miller

Sue Miller  
Joanna Moyar  
Rex Moyer  
Jim Murphy  
Zigmunt Osiecki  
Kathy Osiecki  
Paula Purnell  
Patricia Regg  
Patricia Schildkamp  
Malcolm Sias  
Loree Speedy  
Pat and Sonny Wagner  
Destiny Walker  
John Ward

Greater Latrobe Science National Honor Society Students  
Elliott Group Employees  
Menasha Employees  
PES Testing Employees  
West Penn Power Employees

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

PA Master Naturalists  
United Way of Westmoreland County  
Westmoreland Photographers Society

**"The best way to find yourself is  
to lose yourself in the service of  
others."**

**Mahatma Ghandi**



*Neighbor Greg Miller  
mowing at Schwarz*

**WESTMORELAND  
LAND TRUST**

## Financial Statements

Opst & Associates, LLC completed audit of the Westmoreland Land Trust financial statements for 2022.

### Westmoreland Land Trust

#### Statement of Financial Position

December 31,	2022
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Cash	\$ 775,676
Grants receivable	290,000
Investments	<u>1,036,961</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	2,102,637
<b>Property and Equipment - net</b>	<u>2,824,150</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$ 4,926,787</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts payable	\$ 1,377
Accrued expenses	<u>252</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<u>1,629</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Without donor restrictions	3,062,313
Without donor restrictions - Board designated	272,552
With donor restrictions	<u>1,590,293</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>4,925,158</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<u>\$ 4,926,787</u>

*Notes to these financial statements, which are an integral part of the statements, are available upon request.*



# Westmoreland Land Trust

## Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

For the Year Ended December 31,	2022		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<b>Public Support and Revenue</b>			
Corporate and foundation grants	\$ 112,000	\$ 369,392	\$ 481,392
Government grants	99,813	1,089,125	1,188,938
Donations and contributions	63,902	1,099,530	1,163,432
In-kind donation of land and building	1,359,749	-	1,359,749
EITC revenue	-	8,889	8,889
Investment income	9,548	-	9,548
Unrealized gain (loss)	1,132	-	1,132
Insurance proceeds	278,429	-	278,429
Miscellaneous income	3,341	-	3,341
Book sales	264	-	264
Net assets released from restrictions:			
Satisfaction of donor restrictions	1,219,918	(1,219,918)	-
<b>Total Public Support and Revenue</b>	<b>3,148,096</b>	<b>1,347,018</b>	<b>4,495,114</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program services	232,487	-	232,487
Management and general	35,089	-	35,089
Fundraising	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>267,576</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>267,576</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>2,880,520</b>	<b>1,347,018</b>	<b>4,227,538</b>
<b>Net Assets - Beginning of Year</b>	<b>454,345</b>	<b>243,275</b>	<b>697,620</b>
<b>Net Assets - End of Year</b>	<b>\$ 3,334,865</b>	<b>\$ 1,590,293</b>	<b>\$ 4,925,158</b>

*Notes to these financial statements, which are an integral part of the statements, are available upon request.*



... SAVING SPECIAL PLACES IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY

## Properties Conserved

From its founding in December 2007, the Westmoreland Land Trust has acquired properties **in eight distinct Westmoreland County communities** totaling 618 acres.

### Properties Conserved by the Westmoreland Land Trust (December 2022)

Property, Size	Location	Year	Valuation <sup>1</sup>	Ownership
Ackermann Reserve, 59 acres <sup>2</sup>	Ardara, North Huntingdon	2009	\$ 148,000	Westmoreland County
Skena Reserve, 22 acres <sup>2</sup>	Murrysville	2009	\$ 415,000	Mun. of Murrysville
Budd Parcel, 21 acres <sup>2</sup>	Rostraver Township	2009	\$ 21,500	Westmoreland County
Cabin Hill, 3.5 acres <sup>2</sup>	City of Greensburg	2009	\$ 262,000	Westmoreland County
Pingor Property, 4 acres <sup>3</sup>	Ligonier Township	2011	\$ 265,000	Loyalhanna Watershed Ass'n
Yerick Parcel, 9 acres <sup>2</sup>	Murrysville	2011	\$ 36,000	Mun. of Murrysville
Van de Venne Parcel, 49 acres <sup>2</sup>	Murrysville	2013	\$ 150,000	Mun. of Murrysville
RDE Land Parcel, 16.5 acres <sup>2</sup>	Murrysville	2013	\$ 32,000	Mun. of Murrysville
Manno Parcel, 22 acres <sup>4</sup>	Murrysville	2014	\$ 84,000	Mun. of Murrysville
Marziano Parcel, 1 acre	Mount Pleasant Township	2015	\$ 4,451	Westmoreland County
Zimmaro Parcel, 28 acres <sup>2</sup>	Rostraver Township	2016	\$ 127,500	Westmoreland County
Schimizzi Parcel, 39 acres <sup>2</sup>	Hempfield Township	2018	\$ 194,916	Westmoreland County
Schwarz Farm, 96 acres <sup>1</sup>	Hempfield Township	2021	\$ 232,000	Westmoreland Land Trust
St. Xavier Property, 248 acres <sup>1</sup>	Unity Township	2022	\$ 2,180,000	Westmoreland Land Trust
TOTAL 618 acres with valuation of			\$ 4,152,367	

#### **Footnotes:**

1) The appraised value at/near the time of purchase; if this is not available, then the sum of purchase price + other expenditures directly associated with the purchase.

2) Conserved in partnership with Westmoreland County.

3) Conserved in partnership with the Western PA Conservancy and the Loyalhanna Watershed Association

4) Conserved in partnership with Westmoreland County and the Municipality of Murrysville.



# 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 volunteer as much or as little as you like. Possibilities for helping range from field work to outreach, programming, administration - or most anything of interest to you!

## **Land Conservation**

WLT will assist your exploration of 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, and if awarded may secure them by a contribution to WLT for STEM nature workshops in 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 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 can factor WLT into your estate planning by identifying the WLT as a beneficiary in your will, IRA, trust, or life insurance policy.

Email [westmorelandlandtrust@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.westmoreland-landtrust.org)

***Back cover photo of ruby-throated hummingbird courtesy of Cary Bohl***



**WESTMORELAND LAND TRUST**  
**218 DONOHUE ROAD | GREENSBURG, PA 15601**  
(724) 325-3031  
[westmoreland-landtrust.org](http://westmoreland-landtrust.org)



The Westmoreland Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, 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.

