Allegheny Land Trust • Allegheny Valley Conservancy • Allegheny Valley Land Trust • Appalachian Trail Conference Land Trust • Armstrong County Conservancy • Audubon Society • Bedminster Land Conservancy • Berks County Conservancy • Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club and Wilderness Park Association • Bradford Woods Conservancy • Brandywine Conservancy • Buck Hill Conservation Foundation • Central Pennsylvania Conservancy • Centre County Farmland Trust • Chartiers Nature Conservancy • Civil War Preservation Trust • ClearWater Conservancy • Connemaugh Valley Conservancy • Connemat Lake-French Creek Valley Conservancy • Conservancy of Montgomery County • Cooks Creek Conservancy • Countryside Conservancy • Coventry Land Trust • Delaware Highlands Conservancy • Earl Township Farmland Preservation Trust • Earth Conservancy • East Mariborough Land Trust + Eden Hill Conservancy + Edward L. Rose Conservancy + Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County + Farmland & Forest Conservancy + Fox Chapel Land Conservation Trust • French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust • Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association • Heritage Conservancy • Hollow Oak Land Trust • Independence Marsh Foundation • Kennett Township Land Trust • Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation • Lackawanna Valley Conservancy • Lake Erie Region Conservancy • Lancaster County Conservancy •

Land trusts are charitable organizations that conserve land by purchasing or accepting donations of land and conservation easements. Land trust work is based on voluntary agreements with landowners and creating projects with win-win outcomes for communities.

Nearly a hundred land trusts work to protect important lands across Pennsylvania. Governed by unpaid boards of directors, they range from all-volunteer groups working in a single municipality to large multi-county organizations with a dozen or more staff. They depend on landowner goodwill, member support and other donations for their continuing efforts.

About Land Trusts

Some land trusts address a wide variety of conservation needs. Some focus on a single conservation priority. Land trusts may conserve land to protect our rivers, streams and groundwater. They may protect community open space for new parks, scenic views, wildlife preserves or neighborhood gardens. They may conserve productive farmland or working forests. Some focus on protecting biodiversity while others preserve traditional hunting grounds.

Regardless of size or conservation focus. Pennsylvania's land trusts share a commitment to conserving natural resources for the people of today and for the generations not yet born.

about environmental concerns

Since 1957, the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association has been the leader in protecting the open space of the Wissahickon Valley, in enhancing its water quality, and Wissahickon Valley in educating people of all ages shed Associatio

Visit www.wvwa.org

Conservation Options Land trusts and landowners as well as government can

access a variety of voluntary tools for conserving special places. The basic tools are described below. A land trust can *acauire land*. The land trust then takes care of the property as a wildlife preserve, public recreation area or other conservation purpose. A landowner and land trust may create an agreement known as a conservation easement. The easement limits certain uses on all or a portion of a property for conservation purposes while keeping the property in the landowner's ownership and control. Landowners can donate land and easements. These charitable gifts may qualify the donor for federal tax deductions. In unusual cases, the land trust may offer to *purchase* a property interest for an agreed-to price using donations from others. A land trust can acquire a property place a conservation easement on it, and then sell it to a conservation buver-someone who wants to own a conserved property. Sometimes a municipality or state agency wishes to

conserve a property but can't meet the financial or timing demands of the landowner. A land trust can help by acquiring and then donating or selling the land to the government when the government is ready.

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association fosters public understanding of conservation issues, advances public policy and provides land trusts and local governments with resources and training to more effectively

> conserve land. It is comprised of more than 70 voting conservation organizations. Visit www.conserveland.org

It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all cauaht in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly

~ Martin Luther Kina, Ir.

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Pennsylvania's Land Trusts Conserving our Commonwealth

ne by one, the fields and farms of Ellen Lea's childhood are disappearing. "When we were children.

my mother would point out places and say, 'this used to be a field and that one a farm,' and we would think. 'Oh mom you're so old," Ellen said. "I find myself saying the same thing to my children but now, it's everyday instead of once a year. It's happening so much faster now.'

Ellen and her brothers had spent their childhood days riding horses, frolicking in fields or chasing crawfish in the Wissahickon Creek. Their great uncle's farm was a 300-acre natural playground, not only for them but also for other children and adults who lived in the area. At that time in Montgomery County, land was still open, and people less conscious of property lines.



A Ribbon of Blue, A Ribbon of Green

"We grew up with open land," Ellen said. "It's ingrained in us."



Walking on the Upper Wissahickon Creek the Green Ribbon Preserve.

Ellen's mother, Jane O' Neill, inherited her bachelor uncle's farm and found herself fielding calls from developers offering big money. As she counted the new developments consuming the land around her, she began to wonder about her property's future.

Jane decided to ask her children how they felt about preserving the land.

The family's unanimous decision was to forgo their inheritance and make a multi-million dollar gift to the community.

The land was donated to the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association. It is a welcome addition to the Association's 22-mile strip of

permanently protected land along the creek, aptly named

"It's one of those properties with memories that mean more than any amount of money that would have come from cashing out," said Jane's son, Jake Lea.

A Ribbon of Blue

On a map, the Wissahickon Creek is a ribbon of blue, ensconced by a ribbon of green-the Green Ribbon Preserve.

The Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association's preserve provides open space, scenic beauty, wildlife habitat and a trail linking communities from northern Montgomery County to Philadelphia.

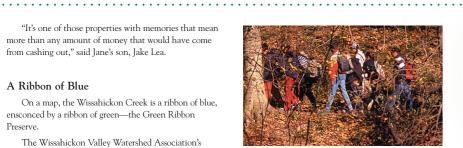
The preserve also protects water quality, absorbing the pollution from storm water runoff before it reaches the stream.

"I call it the Big Sponge," said Carol DeLancey, director of special events for the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association (WVWA).

The Wissahickon Creek starts as a trickle behind the Montgomervville Mall. From there, it flows for 22 miles, past

the homes and businesses of 253,700 people, before emptying into the Schuvlkill River. Along the way, it meanders through 11 Montgomery County municipalities, several Philadelphia neighborhoods and Fairmount Park.

A drinking water intake on the Schuylkill River, just a short distance downstream from the confluence with the Wissahickon Creek, serves 300,000 people.



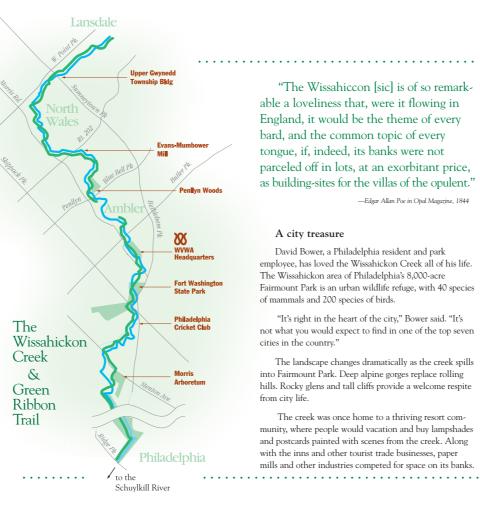
WVWA conserves land by buying and accepting donations of land and then maintaining it. It also buys and accepts donations of conservation easementskeeping land in private ownership but with permanent restrictions on development.

"It has been amazing," said Phoebe Driscoll, who owns conserved land along the creek and volunteers as an Association board member. "Some parcels took us 20 years to achieve."

While creek protection in Montgomery County is recent, creek conservation in Philadelphia dates back to the 1800s.

A watershed is all the land, which drains into a specific body of water such as a river. Sixty-four square miles of land comprise the Wissahickon Creek Watershed. All water falling on this land flows downhill into the Wissahickon or one of its tributaries.

Because rainwater flows across the land, whatever happens to the land will affect the creek. Protecting the Wissahickon means protecting the land.



"The Wissahiccon [sic] is of so remarkable a loveliness that, were it flowing in England, it would be the theme of every bard, and the common topic of every tongue, if, indeed, its banks were not parceled off in lots, at an exorbitant price, as building-sites for the villas of the opulent."

-Edvar Allan Poe in Otal Mavazine, 1844

A city treasure

David Bower, a Philadelphia resident and park employee, has loved the Wissahickon Creek all of his life. The Wissahickon area of Philadelphia's 8,000-acre Fairmount Park is an urban wildlife refuge, with 40 species of mammals and 200 species of birds.

"It's right in the heart of the city." Bower said. "It's not what you would expect to find in one of the top seven cities in the country."

The landscape changes dramatically as the creek spills into Fairmount Park. Deep alpine gorges replace rolling hills. Rocky glens and tall cliffs provide a welcome respite from city life.

The creek was once home to a thriving resort community, where people would vacation and buy lampshades and postcards painted with scenes from the creek. Along with the inns and other tourist trade businesses, paper mills and other industries competed for space on its banks.

In the early 1860s, the Fairmount Park Commission and the city of Philadelphia decided that industry was damaging water quality and the scenic quality of the creek. Then as now, the creek contributed much of the city's drinking water.

The Commission ordered dozens of industrial facilities torn down, as well as many inns and restaurants. The City acquired the land for the park to protect the drinking water supply.

The one remaining resort structure is the Valley Green Inn, a historical landmark owned by the charitable Friends of the Wissahickon (and leased to a restaurateur).

Water doesn't recognize municipal lines

In the 1800s, conserving Philadelphia County lands was sufficient to protect the creek. However, as



The Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association took the lead and started to protect Montgomery County lands in earnest about a quarter century ago. It has now protected more than a 1,000 acres, the equivalent of 760 football fields.

A Ribbon of Blue, A Ribbon of Green

development pushed outward from the city and into Montgomery County in the mid-1900s. the upper portions of the creek begged for attention.

"There's no question that the wooded areas on both sides of the creek would have been developed and water quality damaged had we not conserved them," said David Froehlich, the Association's executive director.

Not quite finished

About 140 years after the Fairmount Park Commission began preserving land along the creek, WVWA is looking forward to the completion of the Green Ribbon Preserve. Through the efforts of government as well as charitable organizations like WVWA most of the natural land bordering the Creek is protected. Only a dozen or so acres need to be protected to complete the Preserve.

However, this is not the end. The Green Ribbon Preserve helps protect

the Wissahickon's water quality, but much more land drains into and affects the Wissahickon. WVWA will continue its creek protection efforts by acquiring land and conservation easements throughout the watershed and helping landowners to consider the impact of their actions on the land and water.

For more information, visit www.conserveland.org