



Forks of Cheat Forest 2006



Forks of Cheat Forest 2013

Snap Shots

WEST VIRGINIA
LAND TRUST

A Protected Community

The Forks of Cheat Forest residential community tells a nature story unlike any other development in the area. The housing development, which has seventeen plots of land designated for residential structures, sits along the Cheat Lake shoreline just north of Morgantown. The community, which began development in 1995, had a vision for a residential community of high quality homes where living in harmony with the natural world was emphasized. As such, the desire to include a large tract of green space, where ecological values could be preserved along with the enjoyment of the blue space (Cheat Lake), needed to become a reality.

A 100+ acre tract of lakeside land adjacent to the housing community remained on the market as the plans for construction progressed, and was eventually incorporated into the development. The land contains numerous assets that best remained in their natural state, including three perennial streams with several small waterfalls, hiking and biking trails, healthy forests, and abundant wildlife species that include deer, turkey, beavers, and numerous species of songbirds.

In the winter of 1997 the Forks of Cheat Forest Homeowners Association donated a conservation easement to the West Virginia Land Trust. The Land Trust, newly developed as a statewide land preservation group at that time, received the Forks of Cheat Forest as its first conservation easement. The Forks of Cheat easement protects sensitive Cheat Lake shoreline, as well as scenic views from the lake. Wildlife habitat and open space in the fastest growing area of Monongalia County are preserved for future generations and Forks of Cheat Forest residents for years to come.

“We have monitored this land from the time of our easement placement back in 1997,” said Terrell Ellis, Senior Program Manager of the West Virginia Land Trust. “Since that time we have been excited to see the way that residents and visitors use the land for its scenic beauty and natural landscape. This is a great example of how conservation and development can exist in harmony, and how the protection of green space can enhance property values and the desirability of a community.”

FALL 2013 In This Issue

Partnerships to
Preserve Land

Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
Awards WVLT Grant For Wallace
Hartman Nature Preserve



The Facts:

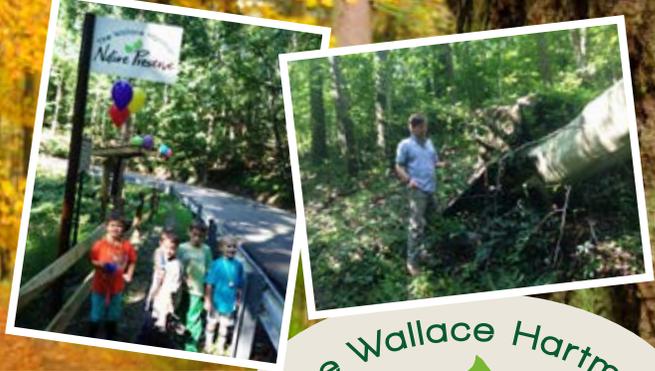
Land Trusts in West Virginia have protected 31,696 acres - this represents a 44% increase in acres conserved since 2005. West Virginia ranks 40th in the nation in acres conserved, and 9th in the Southeast.

There are now 8 land trusts operating in West Virginia , including 3 staffed groups and 1 all-volunteer group.

West Virginia increased their full and part-time staff and contractors by 50% in 5 years, for a total of 6 paid positions in 2010.

Land Trusts in West Virginia drew upon the work of 41 active volunteers (an increase of 58% since 2005) and the contributions of 269 members and financial supporters.

Partnerships to Preserve Land



Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation Awards WVLT Grant For Wallace Hartman Nature Preserve

The Wallace Hartman
Nature Preserve

The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation has awarded the WVLT a \$10,000 grant to support the development of a management and recreation plan for the Wallace Hartman Nature Preserve (WHNP), a 52-acre forest in the heart of Charleston's South Hills residential neighborhood. In 2002, Dolly Wallace Hartman and her family donated the land to the Kanawha County Parks and Recreation Commission and a conservation easement to the WVLT. The Preserve has suffered from storm damage during the July 2012 derecho and Hurricane Sandy, as well as effects from invasive plant species and infestation of hemlock trees by the Woolly Adelgid pest.

The WVLT has retained Holly Grove Forestry to develop a long term management plan that, when implemented, will dramatically improve the health of the forest. At the same time, neighbors around the Preserve will be engaged in helping to plan an interpretative trail system that will be constructed with another \$10,000 grant awarded to the WVLT from the West Virginia Recreational Trails Program. These grants will allow the WVLT to bring Dolly's vision of a neighborhood Preserve to life.



WVLT Ushers Dunkard Creek into Retirement

Dunkard Creek has a powerful story to tell. It's a modern-day cautionary tale for Appalachia's waters, told through the images of 90 species who once called the creek their home. Dunkard Creek, which flows into the Monongahela River, was home to 18,000-22,000 animals that perished during a catastrophic contamination in 2009. With the skills and passion of 90 artists from the watershed, Dunkard Creek's gilled residents were memorialized through the images of these species in a two-year traveling art exhibit.

The West Virginia Land Trust, in coordination with The Mountain Institute, hosted two gallery showings of Reflections: Homage to Dunkard Creek during the past year. Carnegie Hall in Lewisburg, West Virginia, included a reception featuring guest speaker, Joe Lovett, an ardent advocate for clean water. In the art gallery of Wheeling Jesuit University, faculty and students from departments of biology, chemistry, religion, art, and history explored the impacts of stream impairment, species loss, and the long-term effects of land and water contamination. These successful gallery exhibits allowed viewers to purchase these works of art, as the exhibit moves into retirement.

Morgantown Celebrates *the Year of the Tree*

On December 18, 2012, the City of Morgantown declared 2013 to be the Year of the Tree (YOTT), "to appreciate and learn about trees and their many benefits, and to LOOK UP," as the official proclamation states. Organizers, including Morgantown artist Ann Payne, developed a roster of activities that included guided walks in local preserves, a tree pruning workshop, a "Tree of the Month" feature in the newspaper, a Facebook page, and an art exhibit, "Shady", which was on display in a local gallery.

Most eye-catching was the tree crochet project. YOTT partnered with WVU to bring internationally known artist Carol Hummel to Morgantown for a brief residency. Hummel worked with students, faculty, staff, and community members to crochet medallions which would cover a large tree on the Evansdale Campus. The finished creation, featuring variations of West Virginia University's signature blue and gold and additional accent colors, is big and bold. Using an open stitch allows the tree to breathe, and synthetic yarn helps preserve the rich colors. YOTT created opportunities for many Morgantown residents to participate, and drew attention to the green spaces that are worth looking up to... and protecting.



Land Trust Trends

A Look at Voluntary Land Conservation in America

Land conservation is often personal, allowing land owners the opportunity to protect their special place for many generations. While the West Virginia Land Trust strives to help these land owners preserve cherished memories, land trusts throughout the country are also achieving the same goals. "Saving land has given America the chance to know itself again. When we look into the mirror of our national identity, we can now see farms, urban gardens, historic sites, mountains and rivers—not just strip malls, bulldozers and traffic jams," states the National Land Trust Census Report.

The National Land Trust Census measures the pace and quality of the important conservation work of state, local and national land trusts in the United States. The most recent report, published in 2010, found interesting key facts, including the following, and data that can help shape our own conservation goals.

People Who Fuel the Land Trust Community (2010 Total)

Staff and Contractors : 12,361
(full-time and part-time)

Board Members : 5,660

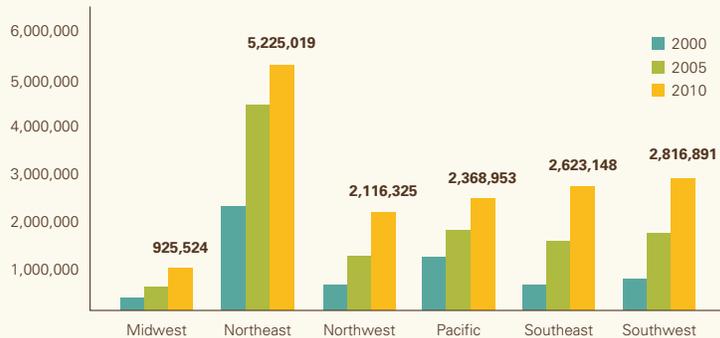
Volunteers : 347,028

Members/Financial Supporters : 4,986,093



It's in the facts...

Total Acres Conserved by State and Local Land Trusts, By Region, as of 2000, 2005 and 2010



West Virginia is in the Southeast Region.

The Midwest region saw the greatest growth by percentage in acres conserved, with an 82% increase between 2005 and 2010. The Southwest saw the largest growth by the number of total acres conserved, with an additional 1.15 million acres protected between 2005 and 2010.

Priorities for Protecting Types of Land

VERY OR EXTREMELY IMPORTANT PRIORITIES	COUNT	% OF RESPONDENTS	RANK IN 2005
Important natural areas or wildlife habitats	857	93%	#1
Water resources, including wetlands	799	87%	#3
Open space, in general	704	77%	#2
Working farms or ranchlands	556	61%	
Working forest lands	459	54%	
Recreation lands	418	46%	
Historic or cultural resources	326	36%	
Urban parks, gardens or open spaces	244	27%	

Respondents rated each land protection priority on a scale of extremely important, very important, somewhat important, slightly important, or not at all important. Ratings were not exclusive—for example, more than one land type could be rated "Extremely important." In 2005 land trusts were asked to indicate only their primary land protection type.

Total Acres Conserved

	2000	2005	2010
Acres owned by state and local land trusts	1,123,689	1,527,656	2,144,709
Acres under easement by state and local land trusts	2,316,064	6,007,906	8,833,368
Acres acquired and reconveyed and acres conserved by other means by state and local land trusts*	2,031,062	3,370,772	5,097,783
Total acres conserved by state and local land trusts	5,470,815	10,906,334	16,075,860
Total acres conserved by national land trusts	18,388,023	25,964,032	30,945,639
Total acres conserved by all land trusts	23,858,838	36,870,366	47,021,499

*Acres conserved by other means refers to land protected as a result of the activities of the land trust, but which the land trust did not directly acquire in fee or under easement. Common examples include negotiating or preparing for acquisition by other organizations or agencies, or deed restrictions.



A Note from the Director

From the Ohio River to the Greenbrier Valley, and northern coal region to the southern one, the West Virginia Land Trust is engaging with individuals and communities who seek to protect land in perpetuity. In this quarterly Snap Shot, you'll see us celebrating art, community outreach, sensitive real estate development, and urban recreation in West Virginia. Indeed, our conservation priorities include not only natural lands and their rich assemblages of species, but also areas that are important for cultural reasons, for water quality, or which serve the public good through recreation.

Land protection is a formidable challenge in the state, where mineral rights often have been severed from surface rights, and thus raise the possibility that the surface cannot be conserved with certainty. Properties on which mineral and surface rights are united represent more viable options for our work. And land conservation work is costly, with significant transaction costs and extended time with landowners, to ensure that their wishes for protecting their land are clear and firm, before any final protection agreement is signed.

The opportunities, however, are great. West Virginians are tied to the land, and eager to learn more about how conservation easements, our principal land protection tool, can help them to protect their land while retaining ownership. And the payoff – for clean water, recreational opportunities, enhanced wildlife habitat, open space, and cultural legacy – is enormous... because it's forever!

Let us know if we can help you plan to conserve your special places.

Until next time,



Brent Bailey Ph.D.
WV Land Trust Executive Director

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