

Activity 2: *In Their Own Words Stories*

Stories from the heart from people who protected land. The following excerpts from *In Their Own Words: Fifteen Stories of Conservation and Inspiration* published by The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association focus on the value of conservation easements. For more information or to receive your own copy, please visit www.conserveland.org.

Jim Holden In 1973, my young family purchased an old dairy farm. The Holden Farm is an olde-style homestead operation. Participating in this process were three generations of our family, all of whom share the love of the land. The land was part of the spectacular French Creek Watershed. We decided to donate an easement of 122 acres of the farm to the French Creek Valley Conservancy to be used as a match for a grant to purchase an adjacent easement. In the end it was only a disappointing 40 acres. Our easement was the first and still is the only easement in Venango County. My son, John, and I led in the formation of a new conservancy—the Allegheny Conservancy.

Lewis and Wanda Irion This land is as much a part of our family as our children and our animals. We feel honored to have the chance to be its stewards. Our family so strongly believes in preserving open space for future generations that we have gone through the easement process two times in opposite ends of the state. We owned special property on the Chester County border at the top of a reservoir. When we moved, we donated a conservation easement. We chose Natural Lands Trust as the watchdog and developed a plan to allow future owners flexibility. We moved to northern Pennsylvania and placed an easement on our new property with the Northcentral PA Conservancy. That will be our legacy.

Faye and Carl Oberheim The land has given our family many years of enjoyment. All three properties border Penns Creek and surrounding mountains. Developments, homes and trailers were beginning to pop up around us. We learned we could protect a variety of the habitats through easements. We contacted Merrill W. Linn Land and Waterways Conservancy and an appraiser, forester, attorney and accountant with easement experience. We chose to have envelopes on each property to allow for changes like a pool or improvements. We have completed two out of three easements so far. It took about a year. We were very fortunate and privileged to work with so many helpful and knowledgeable people.

Beverly Grening Our son, Gregory, was born in Lewistown. He had a tree house in the woods. At about age 3 he wrote a note to a neighbor, who owned the woods, and said “John, Please don’t sell the woods.” Greg grew up and joined the Marines, fought in the first Gulf War in Iraq, returned home and proposed to his high-school sweetheart. Soon after, Greg died in a car accident. We decided to buy the woods Greg had so loved. We contacted the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy. On a beautiful sunny day in June 1996, we dedicated the Gregory Alan Grening Forest Preserve. Thanks to the help of many people, a young boy turned young man, who will never grow old, has his wish that no one will ‘ruin his woods.’

Activity 2: Conservation Hero Trading Cards - Page 1 (1/2)



Activity 2: Conservation Hero Trading Cards - Page 2 (2/2)

Conservation Action
Walk to School

Encourage physical activity among children. Identify and map safe biking and walking routes to schools and other places. Adults also benefit as they accompany the children. Walk to work. If distance allows... walk. Find opportunities to leave the car and walk. Ask others to walk with you. Take a bus or train.

Conservation Action
Create a Green Space

Create a greenway. Save an area at a municipal or state park or by a stream. Develop plans to plant trees or a butterfly garden. Check with Master Gardeners for help. Plant native plants. Develop maintenance plans for watering, fertilizing. Organize volunteers and a volunteer schedule. Check the garden at Kings Gap Environmental Ed. Center

Conservation Action
Happy Trails to You

Do you walk on a trail? Do you canoe on a water trail? Take an interest in helping to maintain the trail. Pick up litter. Help trim branches and manage erosion. Construct signs. Develop a map at the trailhead. Connect trails to towns and other resources. Join an Appalachian Trail Club or check on the web for rails-to-trails initiatives.

Conservation Action
Save a Stream

Check the water quality of a local stream. Map the stream and locate all the factors that could impact the stream. Determine causes of pollution. Develop action plans to improve the stream.

Plant along the stream. Stabilize bank erosion. Protect lands along the stream. Protect headwaters.

Conservation Action
For the Birds

Protect quality habitat for nesting species of birds and food sources for migrating species of birds.

Monitor birds. Set up nesting boxes for birds like Bluebirds, Kestrels, Barn Owls. Set up winter feeders. Join Cornell's Feeder Watch. Join a birding group. Contact a state park for programs.

Conservation Action
Precycle, Recycle, Compost

Find ways to reduce waste right from the start. Use cloth bags. Use glass to refill water bottles. Try to refill instead of buying new. Reuse appliances and other goods. Develop recycling programs and see that it is promoted and "enforced." Compost organics and enrich garden soil.

Conservation Action
Map your Community

Make a green map of your community and label all the green places and all the hazards. Develop a quest to encourage visitors to find out more about your community. Create or join an Environmental Advisory Council.

Conservation Action
Plant a Tree

Any day is a good day for trees. Arbor Day (last Friday in April) is a good time to plan your project and realize how important trees are. Do a tree assessment of the health of each tree in your community. Encourage tree ordinances. Check with an urban forester.

Conservation Action
Water Runoff, Water Conservation

Find ways to curtail storm water management, reducing the force of runoff from paved surfaces and roof tops. Encourage developers to use pervious surfaces. Plant wetland plants in drainage areas. Plant trees in islands at parking lots.