

OPEN LAND CONSERVANCY OF CHESTER COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

April 9, 2019

Present: Wilson, Clarke, Blumenthal, Lander, Etherington, Schuster, Rogers. Magee, Taylor, Danbach, Burg

Absent: Bush

WELCOME: Board President Mac Wilson opened the meeting with introductory remarks and thanks for attending members and guests.

MINUTES: On a motion by Magee and a second by Rogers, it was approved that we dispense with the reading of last year's minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasure Rogers reported a challenging year for 2018, with net income down. The preliminary reports are available on the table in the back. Dave gave thanks to our members for their financial support.

NOMINATIONS

Ray Clarke presented the slate of directors for renewing membership on the Board. No additional nominations were forthcoming from the floor. On a motion by Lander and a second by Etherington, the slate was approved as presented. Art Blumenthal, Ray Clarke and Tim Magee were re-elected to 3 year terms.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Mac Wilson reviewed the mission of the Conservancy and summarized our over 470 acres of holdings, with 380 acres owned in fee in managed as eight nature preserves, and 93 acres held under easement.

- Mac mentioned the passing of Mitzie Toland, and her vision, determination, enthusiasm and tireless efforts that lead to the strength of the Conservancy as it is today.
- The history of land acquisitions, from the gift of Lydia Robinson creating the Airdrie Forest Preserve in 1940 to the most recent acquisition adding 15 acres to the Diamond Rock Preserve in 2011 was detailed
- The Conservancy is continuing its efforts to control non-native plants within the preserves. Various control methods are employed, followed by planting of native trees and shrubs.
- The first step was to professionally treat the phragmites with an approved herbicide followed by mowing the area. The next phase is the planting of this site with over 750 native trees. The Conservancy was awarded a grant from the Marjorie L. and Arthur P. Miller foundation to financially support this project. These plantings are doing well and showing significant growth – this success had encouraged the Conservancy to undertake additional restoration projects.
- The Conservancy is also dealing with allanthus, the host for the spotted lantern fly, which can cause significant damage to native hardwoods and agricultural crops.
- Ongoing trail maintenance provides visitors with access to the preserves to enjoy the natural settings within our community.
- The Conservancy is also working with Chester County on the Warner Spur

extension of the Chester Valley Trail system. This extension would border and possibly pass through two of the Conservancy's Preserves. The Chester Valley trail has proven to be popular with many in our area and we are looking forward to participation in this project.

- Since most of our preserves live within the Valley Creek watershed, we work to minimize the effects of storm water runoff on our property and on the creek and help protect the Exceptional Value character of the stream.
- We have used various methods including erosion controls and re-vegetation of flood plains to help reduce the effects caused by excess storm water runoff.
- A project to reduce erosion in the Airdrie Preserve, professionally designed and to be built by an approved environmental contractor, was awarded funding through the Valley Creek Trustee Council and the Pennsylvania DEP Growing Greener program and will hopefully take place this summer.
- Last year an outreach and educational walk highlighting stormwater issues was led by Mary Westervelt of the Tredyffrin Environmental Advisory Council. The Conservancy has also partnered with Penn State's master Watershed Steward Program. This program is designed to strengthen local management and protection for watersheds, streams and rivers through the education of volunteers.
- The Conservancy's board of directors have made a commitment to pursue formal accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance. In 2017, the Conservancy retained a professional consultant to guide us through the process. In 2018 the Chester County Community Foundation awarded the Conservancy a grant to offset the cost of this consulting assistance.
- Accreditation provides independent verification that your land trust meets the highest standards for conservation, stewardship, and nonprofit management established by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This will be a multi-year project involving a significant effort by the Conservancy's board of directors.
- Board member Art Blumenthal and volunteer Krista Jones will be launching a new website with updated information about the preserves, including trail maps, increased mobile compatibility, and simplified and more flexible contribution options.
- Board members volunteer a great deal of time and effort in not only maintaining the Conservancy's preserves and monitoring easements, but to the growth of the organization, and encouraging awareness of environmental issues and the value of protecting natural resources for future generations. Again, this year's Board members will attend the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association annual conference and participate in various workshops on matters that are important to the Conservancy.
- OLC has benefited significantly from the service of many volunteers including Boy and Girl Scout groups, Siemens volunteer, Tredyffrin Environmental Advisory Council, West Chester University Valley Forge Trout Unlimited, the Sierra Club, Green Valley's Watershed Association, Conestoga High School, the Youth Conservation Corps, and OLC members and other area residents.
- Mac offered many thanks to our members for their support and thanked the Great Valley Presbyterian Church for the use of their facilities.

There being no further business to conduct, the business portion of the meeting was adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER

Margo Taylor introduced Amy Ritter, who received an MS in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources, is currently adjunct instructor at Cecil College North East, Maryland, and researching the impact of spending time in natural environments on the behavior of children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. She discussed the impact of contact with nature on human functioning in the areas of stress reduction, attentional processing, self-discipline, and physical fitness.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Etherington