P ALTA in 2016 researched the question of how land trusts might collaborate more effectively and efficiently to build their memberships. The Association hired Development for Conservation to look for models across the nation and interview Pennsylvania land trusts to understand where they stand in their recruitment and retention of members.

Development for Conservation found that collaboration in direct mail fundraising is the only strategy that is likely to deliver solid results. It also found, however, that, with few exceptions, PA land trusts are not ready for such collaborations.

Many land trusts have basic work to do in understanding just how many individuals and organizations they have as members. The program is designed to be flexible. PALTA will provide support but ultimately give participants the freedom to shape the mentorship to fit their needs and operate independently.

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PALTA Publishes 7th Edition of Model Grant of Conservation Easement and Declaration of Covenants

This edition of the model benefits from more real-world testing, user scrutiny, and cycles of peer review than any other easement document in existence.

The 7th edition capitalizes on the experiences and lessons learned by land trusts, governments, and landowners across Pennsylvania and the nation in the model’s five years of regular and heavy use since the publication of its previous edition.

You can find the model, notes on changes, and the commentary, which has expanded by 42%, at ConservationTools.org.

The 7th edition is a culmination of numerous roundtables, discussions, webinars, and other public feedback that helped a stronger, more adaptable document.

Thank you to all who provided input!

Membership Development Study (Continued)

Individual contributors they have each year, how many of them are new, how many are repeat contributors, and so forth.

Until a land trust can track such information and assure certain levels of retention and fundraising performance, it’s not feasible to fully engage in direct mail solo, never mind in a collaboration.

The full study findings are posted at ConservationTools.org (keywords “membership recruitment”).

ConservationTools.org Breaks 100 Guide Milestone

PALTA Introduces Five New Guides and Refreshes Ten More as Website Enters its 8th Year

PALTA crossed a milestone in winter 2017, publishing its 100th guide and four more at ConservationTools.org. The new guides cover basic ground to help those new to land conservation while also providing information useful to experienced conservation practitioners.

The guides are entitled:

• Conservation Easements: An Introduction for Private Landowners
• What is a Land Trust?
• Why Preserve Farmland?
• Farm Preservation Options for Landowners: Government and Private Approaches to Conservation Easements in Pennsylvania
• Bird Research and Conservation

At least as important as developing new material is ensuring that PALTA’s growing body of guidance doesn’t grow stale. PALTA dedicated substantial effort over the winter to improving and refreshing ten PALTA guides. Four of the guides were essentially rewritten to better address user needs.

PALTA Launches Sign Gallery

A few months ago, PALTA unveiled the Sign Gallery. This collection of images is intended to serve as a source of inspiration for those designing signs for various conservation, recreation, and education purposes.

Visit gallery.conservationtools.org.

Easy steps to share photos for the gallery:

1. Request a Sign Gallery login password* from PALTA by emailing info@conserveland.org.
2. Login at gallery.conservationtools.org/login.
3. Click on the icon that represents the type of sign you’d like to upload.
4. Upload your photo(s) and add a caption.

Thank to everyone who have already shared photos for inclusion in the gallery. The collection of images is designed to grow.

* Sign Gallery users require a different login than used for ConservationTools.org or ConserveLand.org.

Standards and Practices

Revised Guidelines Necessitate Updates to Land Trust Practices


PALTA executive director Andy Loza served as one of 14 members of the Standards Advisory Team that helped LTA and Accreditation Commission staff in collecting public feedback and deliberating potential changes to the Standards.

Regarding the revision, Loza stated that “team members came to the table with very different experiences and perspectives, and our long deliberations reflected that. Although we weren’t unanimous in supporting each of the practices that was ultimately approved, I believe each of us walked away satisfied that (1) the revision is a substantial improvement over 2004; (2) the process was good and excellently supported by the Alliance; and (3) every comment—every point of view expressed—was given reasonable consideration.”

PALTA held a webinar in March in which Loza reviewed the various additions and other changes made to the guidelines. PALTA highlighted the significant changes in a document that you can download from the ConservationTools.org library (keywords: standards practices). You can also find more information at lta.org.

2 Pennsylvania Land Trust Association ConserveLand Spring 2017
Conservation and Preservation Easements Act

(Continued)

ment and the legislative act. (This innovation discarded the long-standing common law standard that resolved all ambiguity in favor of the landowner.)

The act, twelve years in the making, began with the initiative of State Representative Sam Morris and the collaboration of several conservation stakeholders. Morris, who served in the legislature from 1971 to 1990, co-founded the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust (FPCCT) with his wife, Eleanor.

The legislation was of particular importance to Morris because, at the time, a landowner was defiantly challenging restrictions on a property protected by FPCCT.

FPCCT had filed three injunctions with the Chester County Court of Common Pleas to stop development of a 4,800 square-foot house, all three of which were denied. The judge ruled in favor of the landowner noting that one could not farm a lot the size of a home. After appealing all the way to the Superior Court and having the case referred back to Common Pleas, the court ordered the landowner to remove the structure. FPCCT eventually “won” the case but incurred huge costs and had its organizational energy sapped for over a decade. Better Pennsylvania law could have greatly eased this easement enforcement burden.

The first version of the bill was introduced in 1989. Lobbyist Jay Layman was tapped to help move the legislation. The bill was initially modeled after the “Uniform Conservation Easement Act” drafted by the National Conference of Commissioners of Uniform State Laws, but a number of significant changes were made—several, including the introduction of the groundbreaking principle noted above, were suggested by attorney Pat Pregmon.

Over the course of the act’s 12-year gestation (this lengthiness due in part to the act’s groundbreaking nature), the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association formed and worked with Layman to get the bill passed.

Opposition to the bill included, among others, the coal industry and the Pennsylvania Builders Association. “Pennsylvania is a diverse state with a lot of political dynamics,” Layman explained, “and this [act] was major policy, converting over 400 years of English law into a statute.”

In all, eight versions of the bill were introduced over the course of a dozen years. Over this time, language was improved and modified to address concerns from various interests.

In March 2001, House Bill 975 was introduced by Rep. Ray Bunt, a Montgomery County Republican who had sponsored previous versions of the legislation. The bill, passed unanimously in the House and Senate, was signed into law by Governor Ridge as Act 29 of 2001 on June 22.

A broad array of organizations and individuals were instrumental to the success explains Layman; in addition to those referenced above, he credits Andy Loza, PALTA executive director; Tom Kerr and Dennis Collins, founders of PALTA; Barbara Yeaman, founder of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy; John Oliver of Western PA Conservancy; and Bob Struble of White Clay Creek Conservancy.

Layman notes that PALTA was essential in organizing grassroots support and educating and engaging individuals on the issues. The passage of this act was PALTA’s first major legislative initiative and victory.

People Share How State Conservation Investments Make a Difference

The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund Changes Lives and Communities

Over the past several months, PALTA recruited more than 75 individuals to tell their stories about how projects supported by the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund affect their communities and themselves individually. The stories are posted at the Association’s website KeystoneFund.org.

If you know anyone who would be willing to tell their story, the Association would like to know. The Keystone Fund, which is the only state fund that specifically allocates money to land trust conservation projects, will complete 25 years of supporting conservation in 2018. PALTA wants to be sure that people understand why that is cause for celebration. Contact Nate Lotze at nlotze@conserveland.org or 717-306-7176 for more information.
Draft Model Easement for Riparian Buffer Protection

Comments on the draft are due by April 20, 2017.

Comments on the draft are due by April 20, 2017. This model is based on the 7th edition of the ConserveLand.org Refreshed

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association has refreshed ConserveLand.org to better convey information to Pennsylvania conservationists. The site is mobile friendly but when the homepage is viewed on a typical computer screen, viewers will notice the following improvements:

- The left column covers PALTA news.
- The right column’s “People & Projects” covers news about land conservation people and projects in Pennsylvania. It’s where to find out who has been hired and what acquisition projects have been completed in the state. Please make sure that your land trust is including Nate Lotze (nlotze@conserveland.org) in distribution of e-newsletters, news releases, and other communications that you want to share!
- The middle column hosts (1) “PA Headlines,” links to conservation news articles from papers and other news outlets and (2) “Items of Interest,” other conservation information of potential interest (grant announcements, application deadlines, etc.).

Model Grant of Conservation Easement and Declaration of Covenants

Model Grant of Conservation Easement and Declaration of Covenants. Unlike that model, which provides three levels of protection to address various conservation objectives across a property, this model uses a single set of objectives and restrictions to protect a riparian buffer.

For more information, visit ConserveLand.org (keywords: “riparian buffers”).

Meet PALTA Staff

Andy Loza has served since 2000 as executive director of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association. He leads public policy efforts, develops technical guidance, and implements technical assistance and education programs. His work is informed by seven years as a land trust executive director as well as leading planning, economic development, and other initiatives for county government. Work aside, his passions include listening to and playing music, eating good food, working out, and enjoying the outdoors wherever he might be.

Email: aloza@conserveland.org | Phone: 717.230.8560

Nicole Faraguna has served as PALTA’s Director of Outreach and Education since March 2005. Much of her work is facilitating the various outreach and education efforts for the organization including building relationships with members, donors, legislators and other key stakeholders; organizing educational opportunities, including the annual conference; managing the content of the organization’s various websites; serving as editor of the ConserveLand newsletter and serving the needs of PALTA’s membership.

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Nate Lotze is PALTA’s Communications Specialist, and spearheads PALTA’s efforts to better tell the story of land conservation. Nate has already begun to amplify the discussions surrounding conservation through a variety of traditional and social media platforms, ensuring that more Pennsylvanians understand what land conservation is and how it can benefit their communities. He most recently managed an organic vegetable farm in North Carolina and previously worked for Environment Ohio, focusing on advocacy, media relations, and grassroots organizing.

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Carol Grayshaw joined PALTA as Office and Project Administrator in 2016. Her primary duties include handling the organizations daily administrative tasks, as well as assisting PALTA members, providing program and education support, and researching special projects. Prior to her work with PALTA, she spent 6 years as the Children’s Educational Program Coordinator for the Wayne Art Center, a non-profit community art center, a non-profit community art center on Philadelphia’s Main Line.

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