

## Heal Faster! Improve Your Outlook! Get Kids to do Their Homework!


Camping Trips . . .  
Nature Walks . . .  
Enjoying the Outdoors with Family . . .



Can these experiences, and being surrounded by Nature in general, provide a foundation for healthier mental and physical functioning? Our **Annual Meeting Presentation** will look at the fascinating research regarding the role of contact with nature on human functioning in the areas of stress reduction, attentional processing, self discipline, and physical fitness.

The presentation will examine research that asks the question: how pivotal is the role of our natural environment in human health and functioning?

Our guide will be Amy L. Ritter, MS, RN, a registered nurse pursuing an advanced degree in the field of mental health and an adjunct instructor at Cecil College in North East, Maryland. She received her Master's degree in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources from the University of Illinois, researching the impact of spending time in outdoor, natural environments on the behavior of children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. She is currently exploring new ways to use the benefits of nature in educational and healthcare settings.



Our partners from the Penn State Master Watershed Steward program enlist a young Vine Day volunteer to experience the weight of vines that can deform, break and eventually destroy our woodlands.

Mark your Calendar for the OLC Annual Meeting:  
7:30pm, Tuesday April 9th, The Great Valley Presbyterian Church

## Board Member Profile: Dave Rogers



Dave was born and raised in Ardmore and Villanova. He graduated from Harriton High School in Lower Merion Township and then attended Waynesburg College in south-western Pennsylvania. After college, Dave worked for several years for an accounting firm in Pittsburgh, PA. He and his family moved back to the Main Line in 1971 to work for a local accounting firm. He moved to Malvern in 1975, and began his own accounting practice in the mid 1970's.

He retired in late 2013 after 45 years of providing accounting and tax services to spend more time with family and to pursue other interests, one of which is the Open Land Conservancy.

Over the years, he had enjoyed walking through several of the preserves—and since he has retired, he chose to take an active part in the operation and furtherance of the Conservancy. Dave has served as Treasurer since joining the Board of Directors in 2014.

## Easements: Protecting The Land You Love

Landmarks readers are likely familiar with the 350 acres of OLC's six Nature Preserves, but the Conservancy protects another almost 100 acres through conservation easements on privately owned property. Although these properties are not open to the public, the public gains great benefit from the open space, working lands, natural habitat, water ways, and scenic vistas that are preserved in perpetuity.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently restricts specified uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Most easements "run with the land," meaning that not only the original owner but all owners that come after them are subject to the easement.

The easement can protect the whole property, or part of it. Typically OLC's easements prohibit activities like removal of native vegetation, dumping of waste or debris, excavation and construction of structures. Landowners retain the right to own and use the land, sell it and pass it on to their heirs.

Most conservation easements are donated. Many can result in significant tax benefits, if they meet the requirements of federal law. Often the biggest advantage of a conservation easement is that it helps pass on land to the next generation and it can lower estate taxes. Of course, it is important for donors to discuss options with their family members and attorneys and financial advisors.

It is OLC's job to make sure that the restrictions described in the easement are actually followed. To do this, OLC volunteers monitor each easement once a year and work with landowners to make sure that activities observed on the land are consistent with the easement. If activities occur that are not permitted on an easement, we are legally responsible for its remediation, restoration and return to compliance.

OLC's easements play a special role in protecting nearly two miles of Valley Creek and its tributaries and the wildlife corridors around their courses. We are really grateful to the original donors and the current owners for the care they take of their properties – not only to uphold the terms of the easements - but also to enhance the lands natural diversity. If readers know an easement owner, please thank them, too!

Each easement that the Conservancy holds comes with serious obligations and we have to be sure that new undertakings offer significant conservation values that align with our Mission. If you have, or know of, *any* land that you love, please contact us. We would be happy to discuss and review the conservation options available with you to protect it for today and the future, as well as provide potentially tax benefits to the property owner. *Ray Clarke/Margot Taylor*



## In Honor of One of a Kind: Mitsie Toland

Can one person make a difference?

Can one person really have an impact on a specific issue or cause?

You only need to look at the legacy of Mitsie Toland to answer that question . . . it is difficult to gauge the full impact she has had on our community . . .

When she moved to the Township, there was no real voice in Tredyffrin for Open Space— She became a pivotal figure in generating support for environmental issues. She assumed the presidency of The Open Land Conservancy in 1978. Even while the rolling farmland of Great Valley was being gobbled up by industrial parks and corporate campuses, Mitsie guided OLC towards the gifting, purchase and gaining easements of 352 acres adding to the original 75 acres of the Conservancy—a 500% increase. In addition to her leadership role with OLC, she helped create the Tredyffrin Township Environmental Advisory Council, and developed lines of communications with other environmental groups such as Great Valley Association, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Green Valley's Association, and Trout Unlimited.

She also convinced corporate giants and land developers to protect the land and water sheds—such as the encroachment of the Warner Quarry around St. Peters Church, and protecting Crabby Creek, a trout spawning ground and tributary to Valley Creek. She attended countless township meetings, walked construction sites, gave presentations to local groups about environmental activism, and on a broader level, was instrumental in getting the state of Pennsylvania to use BT, a far less damaging spray for gypsy moths that would not destroy a broad spectrum of insects.

"Toland has performed an invaluable service in keeping the township focused on retaining open land in the community. While her work is recognized today, she will not be fully appreciated until the 21st century," said Steve Aichele former Tredyffrin Township Supervisor.

One person can make a difference . . . Mitsie Toland has shown us how . . .



## Vine Days Branch Out



Trish Gutsche

The Vine Day in Cedar Hollow Preserve was an evolution from our historical approach. Everyone worked together on a section of woodland next to the trail around the small meadow in Cedar Hollow. We targeted not only the typical vines (grape, bittersweet, honeysuckle) but also the shrubby invasives that occur throughout our woods (honeysuckle, olive and multiflora).



In the process we were able to free up a number of healthy trees, get to the root of the vines when the shrubs were out of the way, and clear the area for a planned tree planting next Spring.

Preserve visitors will see that we left brush piles that may serve as wildlife shelters; we'll work to consolidate and reduce those in coming months. Ray Clarke and Tim Magee helped prepare the site with chain saw work prior to the Vine Day. *Ray Clarke*



Jenny Huang and Michele Liu



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**Contact Us!**

The best way to contact us is via our website at:  
**openlandconservancy.org**

**What Can You Do On-line?**

- Become an OLC Member
- Make a Donation
- Become a Volunteer
- Obtain Information on OLC Preserves Including Preserve Trail Maps
- Find Out About Upcoming Events
- Report a Safety or Maintenance Issue
- View the Landmarks Newsletter (and much more!)

**Follow Us!**

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- On Facebook at [www.facebook.com/openlandconservancy](http://www.facebook.com/openlandconservancy)

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*Are you interested in preserving the open space  
of Chester County for future generations?*

*Ask us about becoming an OLC  
Board member or volunteer!*

