

CREATING A NEW LIFE FOR OAKFORD PARK

On November 4th, the Conservancy received a generous donation of land in Westmoreland County with an unusual and storied history. The property, known as Oakford Park, is 33 acres of forested slopes with a half-mile of frontage along Brush Creek in Penn and Hempfield townships. For decades, Oakford Park had attracted thousands of people each year as an amusement park, featuring rides, a theater, dance hall, opera house, gazebo, and later, a swimming pool.

Oakford Park originally opened as a trolley park in 1896. Trolley parks were destination sites created by trolley car companies to increase ridership on the weekends. They were often park groves offering some form of entertainment, and at one time, the Pittsburgh area contained nearly two dozen of these mini amusement parks. Oakford

Park even pre-dated Kennywood Park by three years.

In the park's earliest years, a dam above the park held back Brush Creek to create a manmade lake for recreation. Tragically, on a summer afternoon in 1903, a heavy rainstorm dumped inches of rain in a very brief time. The lake overflowed and then destroyed the dam, flooding the area with more than six feet of water and resulting in loss of life. Only a few buildings were left on their foundations, and accounts report that even the roller coaster was swept into the next town. The park was restored and reopened the following year with new attractions.

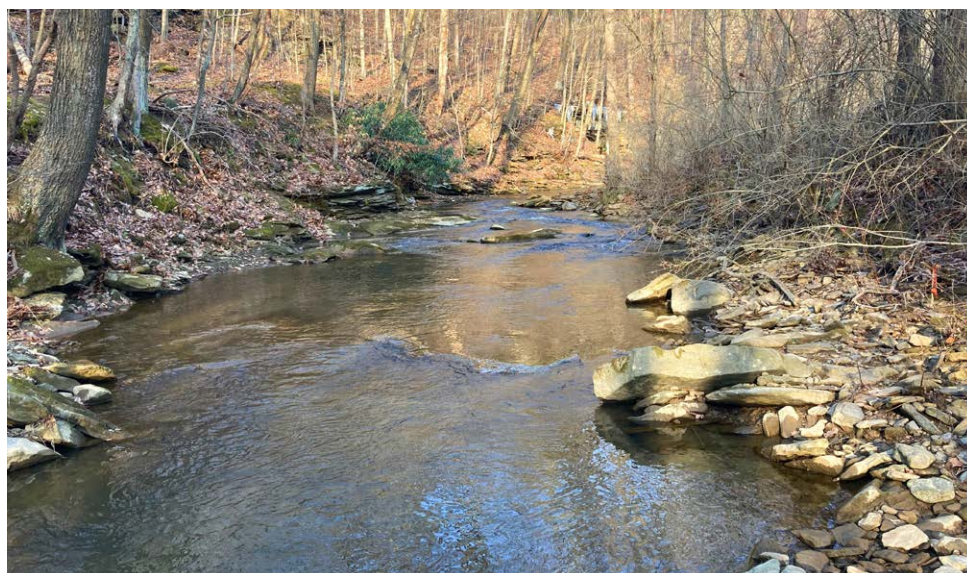


In 1921, the owners added a swimming pool and operated it until about 1940. By this time, the more widespread use of cars diminished the need for trolleys, and many of these parks closed due to low attendance. Most of Oakford Park's attractions were sold or torn down, but the pool was restored in 1945 and remained open until the 1980s when the property finally closed for good. The last of the manmade structures was removed by 2003, and Oakford Park began to return to forest.

In 2020, Regis and Jamie McHugh, Hempfield Township residents, acquired the property. They had grown up visiting the pool and recognized the potential for the community to enjoy this resource once again. They are passionate about sharing its spirit and story.

"The property sat vacant for years, but we always believed it had so much potential for the greater good to help the community, environment and nature thrive," Regis explains.

Brush Creek, Oakford Park



Continued

Creating a New Life for Oakford Park

(continued)

"We had many good times there and didn't want to see this important local history vanish." Regis and Jamie donated the land to WPC to protect Brush Creek and the forest while providing a green space for the community.



Jamie and Regis McHugh

The Conservancy is excited to be part of reimagining Oakford Park, and has already held one meeting with local stakeholders. In 2023, WPC will facilitate clean-up and tree planting events to restore the forest while working with the Westmoreland County Conservation District and the Westmoreland Land Trust to promote community engagement. Initial plans may include a hiking trail, signage and parking lot.

We are grateful to the McHughs for their selfless vision to permanently protect and share this landscape and its unique history. 🌿



The Scaggs appreciate the community gardens throughout the city, such as the garden at the Carnegie Museum in Oakland.

HERITAGE CIRCLE PROFILE: Beth and Allan Scaggs

In this issue, we are featuring Beth and Allan Scaggs, who have supported the Conservancy since 1988. They are members of the Evergreen Circle, our loyal donor giving society. They have also included the Conservancy in their estate plans, so we are pleased to call them Heritage Circle members as well.

Currently living in Beaver County, Pa., both Beth and Allan have Western Pennsylvania roots. Beth was born and raised in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of East Liberty and attended city schools for eight years before her family moved to Oakmont. Allan grew up outside of Pittsburgh in Hopewell Township, Beaver County.

Beth and Allan first became interested in WPC through the community gardens in the city. They became volunteers, helping in Greentree and Beaver County gardens. Beth has also volunteered at tree plantings with TreeVitalize Pittsburgh in the Crafton neighborhood. Beth retired in 2013 after careers as a bank teller and teacher, and is a former volunteer for the Allegheny Land Trust. Allan worked as a steelworker for 30 years at LTV Steel until its operations closed in the Pittsburgh region.

Beth and Allan had met briefly while attending Edinboro University in the 1960s, but it wasn't until 17 years after college that they reconnected outside of a University of Pittsburgh football game. Beth had attended Pitt games since her childhood, but couldn't get a ticket for

this sold-out game. She bumped into Allan along Fifth Avenue in Oakland, and he just happened to have an extra ticket. The rest, she says, is history. They married in 1989, and Beth introduced Allan to WPC.



Allan and Beth on the Potomac River in northern Virginia

Beyond Pitt college football, the Scaggs share an interest in architecture, especially mid-century modern. They enjoy walking around New York City and seeing the details in the buildings. They believe that Fallingwater is a true gem for Western Pennsylvania and have enjoyed their many visits over the years.

Sustainability is another special interest. They are especially concerned with how development sprawl has worsened over the years. They believe that the Conservancy's mission of conserving land and important habitats is a crucial part of our work that needs to continue.

We are grateful for Beth and Allan's continued support for nearly four decades and are honored that they have included the Conservancy in their estate plans so the work they value now can continue in the future. 🌿

With Gratitude for Our Heritage Circle Members

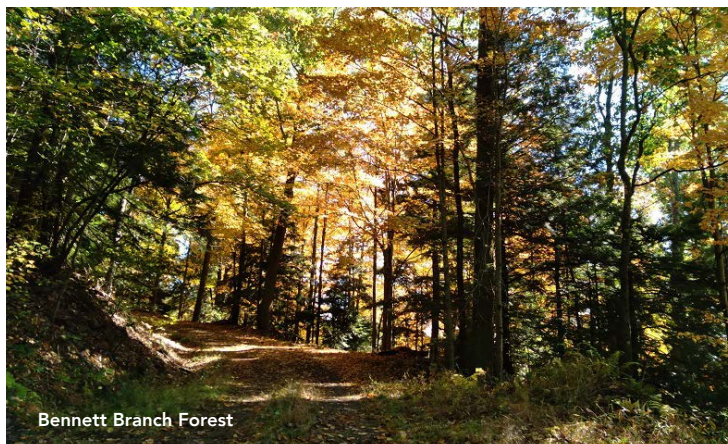
We all want our region's communities, forests, watersheds and exceptional places to be healthy, vibrant and beautiful in our lifetime. It takes exceptional people to act on this intention to benefit future generations.

The Heritage Circle is a special community of people who have included WPC or Fallingwater in their estate plans. Heritage Circle members are invited to special events and receive insider updates throughout the year.

If you have already included us in your estate plans or are interested in learning how to establish a legacy gift from your will, trust, charitable gift annuity, insurance or other financial vehicle, please return the enclosed envelope or contact Julie Holmes at **412-586-2312** or **jholmes@paconserve.org**.

We're grateful to all of the Heritage Circle Members who have included the Conservancy or Fallingwater in their estate plans, and would like to extend a special welcome to our newest members (indicated by an asterisk).

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* Denotes member is deceased

Ultimate Legacies

We are deeply grateful to the following donors whose planned gifts have been received by the Conservancy since March 2022:

Thomas Burzawa

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We're back
at The Barn!

Save the Date

We hope you'll join us for WPC's Members' Day and Annual Meeting at The Barn at Fallingwater on **Saturday, May 6, 2023**. Guided hikes, info sessions, Fallingwater tours and more!

Make a High-Impact Gift by Donating Appreciated Assets

Do you have appreciated assets — such as publicly traded securities — that you've held for more than one year? If so, you have a unique opportunity to leverage these investments to achieve an even greater impact with your charitable giving.

First, with a gift of appreciated securities, you potentially eliminate the capital gains tax you would incur if you sold the assets yourself and donated the proceeds. This may increase the amount available to WPC by up to 20%. Second, you may claim a fair market value charitable deduction for the tax year in which the gift is made, leading to a lower tax bill.

If you are interested in making a gift of appreciated assets, please contact Julie Holmes at 412-586-2312 or jholmes@paconserve.org.



Mission Statement: The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.