

**Combined Meeting of the New Jersey Open Space and Farmland Preservation Coordinators'
Roundtable & the Pennsylvania GreenSpace Coordinating Committee**

Friday, January 30, 2015

9:30 AM to 3:00 PM

Coffee and tea available at 9:00 AM; lunch served

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

8th Floor, ACP Building

190 N. Independence Mall West (corner of 6th and Race Streets)

Philadelphia, PA 19106

www.dvrpc.org/directions

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Keynote: What you need to know – An Update from Washington, D.C.

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Russell Shay is Director of Public Policy for the Lands Trust Alliance (LTA), the national association of conservation organizations working with private landowners to protect open space. Russ has been with LTA since 1998. In his 25+ years working on conservation issues, Russ has also represented The Nature Conservancy, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and the Sierra Club, as well as working for the Congress.

Russ started his discussion by introducing LTA. LTA provides training and education to its member land trusts and advocates for land trusts at the federal level. Russ described that the driving force behind all federal discretionary spending decisions, including how much to spend on land conservation, is tied to the ever increasing portion of the federal budget dedicated to mandatory spending and interest payments on the national debt. This tightening budget picture has forced federal agencies to be more creative and focused in how they spend conservation funds. The recent U.S. Department of Agriculture Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant for \$13 million to the Delaware River Watershed Working Lands Conservation and Protection Partnership exemplifies in its support of a regional coalition of conservation partners focused on a particular geography and its leveraging of \$20 million in private funding from the William Penn Foundation.

In a look at the current politics in Washington, D.C., Russ posited that not much had changed as a result of the recent elections. Though Congress is controlled by Republicans, dividing lines still exist between the majority-led House of Representatives where no concessions need to be made to minority and the Senate in which the minority wields more power and can force more concessions. Bills that manage to pass both chambers still face a Presidential veto. The shrinking portion of the budget available for discretionary spending, will restrict both parties' options. In this context, Russ recommended open space supporters stay committed, be creative, and build relationships with politicians at all levels and of all political persuasions.

Panel I: Proactive Relationship Building with Elected Officials

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Jaclyn Rhoads is Assistant Executive Director at the Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA). Jaclyn received her Ph.D. in environmental policy from Drexel University. Prior to joining PPA, she worked a consulting firm specializing in indoor environmental quality, green buildings, and environmental psychology. She is active in the Delaware Valley Regional Network of the Environmental Leadership program and a board member of Darby Creek Valley Watershed Association.

Recently the Keep it Green Campaign, with Jaclyn and PPA's leadership was successful in achieving an affirmative vote on a ballot initiative to state revenue to replenish the New Jersey's Green Acres, Blue Acres, and farmland and historic preservation programs. Jaclyn indicated that the next focus is on implementing the program, which is the purview of the state legislature. She commented that though a coalition as broad as Keep it Green can give rise to management challenges, the diversity of experience, expertise, and relationships its members gave it strength and authority when relating its message.

Andrew Heath has served as executive director of Pennsylvania's Growing Greener Coalition since 2010. Prior to joining the coalition, Andrew handled marketing strategy, media relations and event planning for the Office of Jonas & Anne Beiler, philanthropists and founders of Auntie Anne's Soft Pretzels. He also successfully managed the campaign of State Senator Mike Brubaker and later served as the executive director of the Republican Committee of Lancaster County. Recently the Coalition has led successful campaigns to ensure preservation funding in Act 13 and protect Keystone 93 from being eliminated in the 2012-2013 state budget. The Coalition was also instrumental in halting legislation that would have radically changed Pennsylvania law, facilitating the sale of parks by local governments.

Andrew described the Growing Greener Coalition as a group of 17 leading organizations, with a unified focus on advocating for funding for conservation, namely replenishment and strengthening of the Growing Greener fund. The coalition does not advocate on regulatory issues. Though Growing Greener is in better shape today, due to Act 13 funding, the coalition will continue to advocate. With a new administration and legislature, this will include education and relationship-building and eventually the launch of a Growing Greener 3 campaign.

Karen Martynick is the Executive Director of Lancaster Farmland Trust, a private nonprofit land trust dedicated to preserving the rich, productive farmland of Lancaster County. Prior to assuming her position at the trust, Karen served for 12 years as County Commissioner in Chester County, where she was involved in the protection of over 30,000 acres of open space and farmland, and initiated and implemented the County's award-winning comprehensive land use plan "Landscapes."

Karen spoke of both her experience as an elected official and now as executive director of a land trust. She emphasized that all politics are local and that land trusts need to be persistent in their relationship-building with politicians and community leaders. This will give rise to opportunities and will help protect the land trust's interests in the long run. She emphasized not only approaching elected officials when there is a problem, but also by helping them by providing the positive stories, building solutions, and showing them what land preservation means to their constituencies and local economy. Land preservationists need to be involved in politics, even if they view them as "dirty."

Jaclyn and Andrew echoed Karen's sentiments, emphasizing that credibility is also incredibly important. In building a relationship, they said never give wrong information. If an elected official repeats wrong information received from you and gets called on it, he or she will never invite you back. They also expressed that though you may have a good relationship, a politician may not always support your position. Nevertheless, they suggested working to maintain those relationships as well as build relationships with those you think will never agree with you, because you never know when in the future that connection can make all the difference.

Panel II: Embracing New Constituents and Partners in Conservation

12:30 PM to 1:45 PM

Chris Jage is the Assistant Director of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Chair of DVRPC's New Jersey Open Space Coordinating Committee. Chris introduced the speakers, noting that although they are a seemingly disparate group of organizations, they can serve as new partners in conservation.

Andy Kricun is the Executive Director and Chief Engineer of the Camden County Municipalities Utilities Authority, which operates an 80 million gallon per day wastewater treatment plant and a large regional sewer system that services over 500,000 customers in southern New Jersey. Andy recently received an Environmental Quality Award from the USEPA and was also the 2012 recipient of the Praxis Award for Professional Ethics.

Andy introduced Camden's green stormwater infrastructure program, Camden SMART, which was founded in 2011, when six Camden organizations – Cooper's Ferry Partnership (CFP), the City of Camden (City), Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA), Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program (RCE), New Jersey Tree Foundation (NJTF), and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) – came together to help reduce flooding in Camden City. Andy noted that although these organizations may not have worked together in the past, they all believed in the environmental, economic, public health, or social justice benefits that Camden SMART hoped to achieve. They developed a five pronged plan to reduce flooding that included developing green infrastructure, conserving water, and optimizing the current sewer system. Since their founding, they've constructed 52 rain gardens, planted over 1,000 trees, and worked with the City to adopt a water conservation ordinance. Andy also mentioned that he's noticed a greater interest nationally around water organizations becoming environmental stewards; that often the good thing to do is the smart thing to do.

Juliane Ramic is the Director of Social Services at the Nationalities Service Center. She oversees the agency's services to refugees, asylees, and survivors of torture. These services include individual and family services, group work, and ethnic community building. Juliane's extensive work with refugees includes work with local communities, national organizations, and refugee camps in east Africa.

The Nationalities Service Center is a non-profit organization that provides social, educational and legal services to immigrants and refugees in the Greater Philadelphia area. NSC welcomes approximately 400 refugees each year, helping them to find housing and work, enroll their children in schools for their children, and connect to their community. In 2008, NSC began resettling a number of refugees from Burma and Nepal in South Philadelphia. Many of these newly arrived refugees were interested in growing food – an activity that many had engaged in before they were forced to flee their country. NSC worked with partner organizations to find

suitable land for a community garden close to these newcomers. In 2009, NSC broke ground on the first Growing Home Garden. They had 78 raised beds in 2011 and 109 beds in the second, with over 200 families on the waiting list both years. They are now hoping to partner with a church in South Philadelphia to access more land and build over 500 additional raised beds. NSC found that the gardens not only served as a source of fresh food, but also helped to build a sense of community and restore dignity to many of the refugees.

Babette Racca is Senior Vice President of Programs and Facilities for the Girls Scouts of America Pennsylvania Chapter. Babette began her position with Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania in 2013. She has thirty years of experience working as an operations leader and development professional in youth-serving organizations. Her career includes positions in YMCAs, urban youth centers, a community hospital and a charter school organization. Babette has a master's degree from Harvard University in City and Regional Planning, and a bachelor's in Geography from Boston University.

Babette presented ideas on how to engage youth, specifically girl scouts, in the outdoors. She noted that the Girl Scouts have their roots in the outdoors and manage many camps that allow Girl Scouts to experience the outdoors. To engage youth, she recommended offering hands-on activities and projects like hiking or building trails. Land conservation organizations could work with the Girl Scouts to develop service projects or nature activities that connect the girls to different preserved land. Babette also emphasized the importance of role models for young girls. She recommended that conservation professionals engage with youth by talking to them about what they do – showing them an example of the different jobs available to them. Finally, Babette noted that there is a growing interest among young people in community service. Many boys and girls are interested in caring for the environment. Open space professionals should use this growing interest to connect to children and get them engaged in caring for the outdoors.

Gail Farmer is the Director of Education for the Schuylkill Center in Philadelphia, which offers immersive learning experiences in nature for people from all walks of life. Gail is spearheading the Center's new innovative partnership initiative: Nature Rx, which aims to educate the public about the health benefits of nature and increase the amount of time Philadelphia families spend in local parks.

Gail spoke about the Schuylkill Center's innovative new initiative, Nature Rx, which seeks to connect patients to existing outdoor assets in Philadelphia through doctors. This program follows a growing national movement to create a stronger link between health and nature. To develop Nature Rx, the Schuylkill Center partnered with the Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia. Pedestrians will be able to prescribe outdoor activities to patients and provide them with information on the nearest park or outdoor resource through the Nature Rx website. The Schuylkill Center is currently completing their strategic planning process for Nature Rx and will begin to pilot Nature Rx at four CHOP locations.