

THE
FRENCH
CREEK
watershed



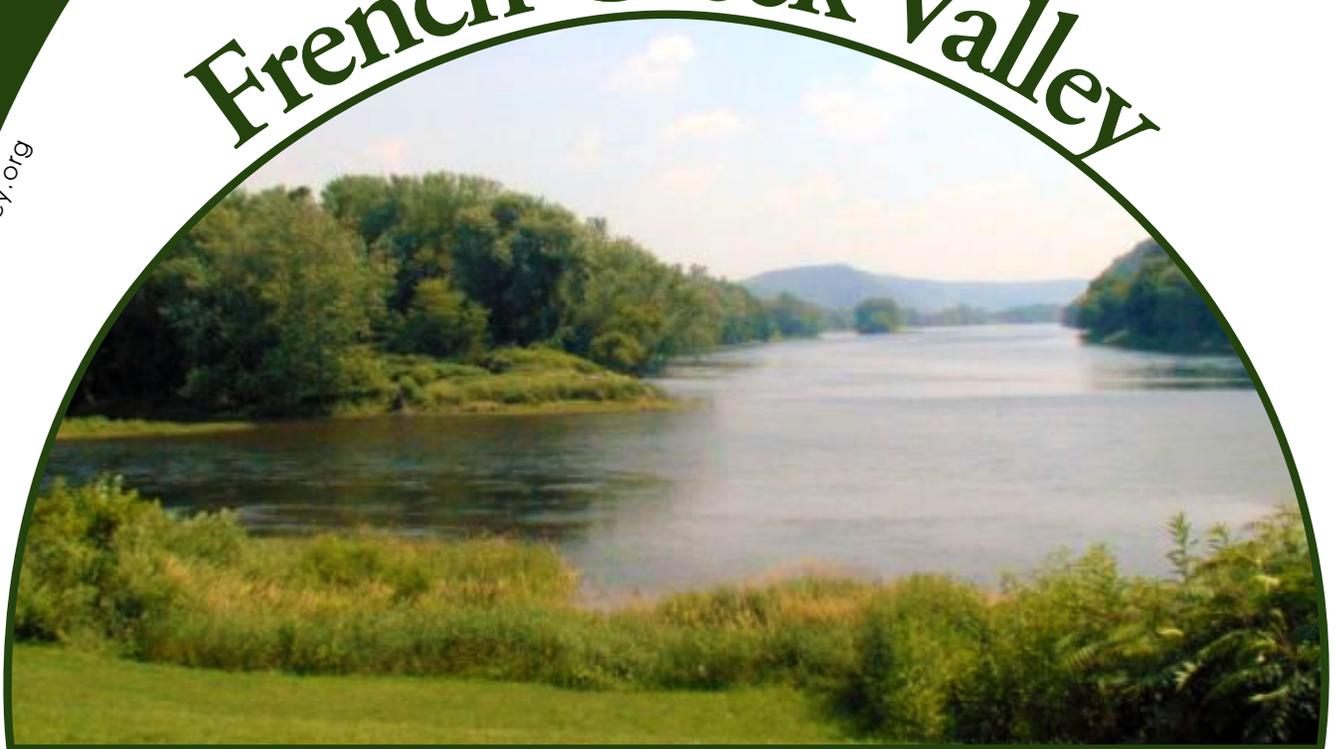
A COMMUNITY TREASURE

FACT SHEET

Conservation and Land Protection

in the

French Creek Valley



Confluence of French Creek with the Allegheny River

What is Land Conservation?

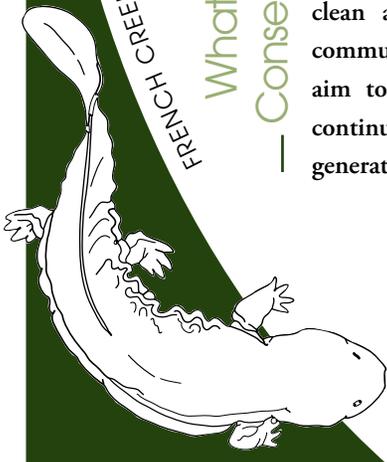
— Land conservation is the protection of the land's natural resources and habitats for plant and animal species. Good land use is essential for clean air, clean water, and livable communities. Conservation efforts aim to preserve resources for their continued sustainable use for future generations.

What is a Land Trust?

— A land trust is a nonprofit organization that, as all or part of its mission, actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in land or conservation easement acquisition, or by its stewardship of such land or easements. Land trusts work with willing landowners and the community to conserve land by accepting donations of land, purchasing land, negotiating conservation agreements on land (called conservation easements), and stewarding conserved land through the generations to come.

What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that permanently protects the conservation values of private land.



FRENCH CREEK VALLEY CONSERVANCY www.frenchcreekconservancy.org





Land Conservation Saves Limited Resources

— Our air, water, and soil are limited resources. The tree canopy and vegetation serve as critical filters for our air. Wetlands that border our rivers, lakes and streams filter pollution before it reaches our drinking water. If we do not remove the pollutants that our society puts into the air, water, and soil, we consume them ourselves. In many communities it is not uncommon for air quality alerts to close schools and businesses. Already, nearly half of the river miles in America are too polluted to drink from and over 50 percent of our drinking water comes from rivers. Saving land in local communities helps offset this danger.

Your Land Is A Vital Link

In this nation's food and fiber chain, your land helps support wildlife habitat, clean water and air, local food supplies, and open space. A donation of a voluntary conservation easement on your farm makes an important contribution to preserving this legacy for future generations.

Economic Benefits of Land Conservation

In addition to health and food benefits, conserving land increases property values near greenbelts, saves tax dollars by encouraging more efficient development, and reduces the need for expensive water filtration facilities.

Preserving A Way Of Life

— The farming and working forest way of life supports qualities that are widely valued by society and that go far beyond the scenic vistas and rural character of the landscapes. While producing livestock, fiber, and other agricultural commodities, properly managed 'working forest lands' and farms protect critical habitat for game, fish, and other wildlife; agricultural soils; watersheds; and scenic and recreational resources. Further, farms and 'forest lands' sustain families with close ties to the land and the economy and traditions of rural communities.

Thinking about conserving your farm?
Now's the time.
Urban sprawl overtakes two acres of productive agricultural land every minute. But, you can stem the tide with a voluntary easement that conserves your land for active production – as you continue to own and work it...or even if you sell it or pass it on to your heirs.

How Land Trusts Can Help

— Operating in rural settings with varied land resources, easement programs are creating new and diverse strategies to protect farm and forest land, and they are addressing specific regional needs. To-date, the land trust community has protected approximately 6,000 acres in the French Creek Watershed.



The French Creek Valley Conservancy can Help Your Community!

By helping individuals protect resources that come from the land – water, wildlife, food security, and places for recreation and reflection.

Call us today @ 814-337-4321.



What are my options?

Land trusts provide several options to interested landowners and can tailor these options to meet the specific needs of the property owner. Options include conservation easements, donating a conservation easement by will, land donation, bargain sale of land, donating a remainder interest in land and many more. Talk to your local land trust and your legal and financial advisors to find out what option may work best for you.

What does protected mean?

“Protected” means protected from development. Land that is owned by a land trust remains open to the public for recreational purposes including hiking, fishing, hunting, bird watching, and more. Landowners may also donate land with specific intentions such as creating a wildlife refuge, which may limit some uses according to the original landowner’s goals. Land that is placed in a conservation easement may or may not be open to public use, depending on the landowner’s goals and desires.



Land Conservation Has Significant Benefits!

Donating land or conservation easements to a land trust for conservation purposes is truly a great legacy to leave for future generations.

But it may also provide significant financial advantages including Federal income tax deductions and reduced real estate taxes!



Landowner Testimonials

“I’ve been interested in conservation for a number of years and I had really seriously considered placing a conservation easement on this farm...I approached French Creek Valley Conservancy to see if they were interested in doing this and we leveraged another 40 acres in addition to my property we protected that sensitive 40 acres and about a mile of French Creek frontage. Putting a conservation easement on this farm has not changed how I operate in any way. I continue to farm and raise animals, I’m selling Christmas trees right now even as we speak, we can fish in French Creek and I do manage the timber property... Would I do this partnership again? Yes, if I had the opportunity I’d love to own another piece of land that I could put into a conservation easement.”

Jim Holden, 126 acre conservation easement in Venango County

“There is no negative side to this, we still use the land and enjoy the land as we had intended to...Not only the historical aspect and the historical importance of French Creek to this nation, [but] also the nature of the aquatic life and the natural aspects of it is something that really demands that it be preserved and the French Creek Valley Conservancy has to exist and I’m glad that it exists because its role and its purpose is to recognize, protect, and preserve this national treasure, French Creek.”

Bob Cranmer, 43 acre conservation easement in Crawford County

Partners Working to Protect Land in the French Creek Valley

The French Creek Conservation Joint Venture

Since 2007, the three-way partnership between the French Creek Valley Conservancy, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy has made up the French Creek Conservation Joint Venture. It is the Joint Venture's goal to protect ecologically important lands in the French Creek watershed such as riparian buffers and floodplain areas. The French Creek Joint Venture continues to grow and expand its list of working partners in conservation.

The French Creek Valley Conservancy (FCVC)



Incorporated in 1982, the FCVC is a non-profit corporation addressing issues such as preservation of land, habitat, scenic beauty, and quality of life in the French Creek watershed. The FCVC is a land trust that currently holds and monitors acquired properties and easements in the French Creek watershed. The FCVC also hosts various outreach and educational activities.

(814) 337-4321

The French Creek Valley Conservancy
301 Chestnut St
Meadville, PA 16335
www.frenchcreekconservancy.org

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC)

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy



Established in 1931 as the first conservancy in Pennsylvania, the WPC protects and restores exceptional places to provide the region with clean waters, healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas. To date, WPC has protected more than 225,000 acres of natural land in Pennsylvania. The WPC creates green spaces and gardens for cities and also preserves Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater.

(412) 288-2777

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
800 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
www.paconserve.org

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)



Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

Founded in 1951, The Nature Conservancy has worked around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. With more than a million members, The Nature Conservancy has protected more than 119 million acres of land and 5,000 miles of rivers.

(703) 841-5300

The Nature Conservancy
4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100
Arlington, VA 22203-1606
www.nature.org

The Allegheny Valley Conservancy (AVC)

Formed in 2002, the AVC provides conservation options for the owners of property in and around the watersheds of lower French Creek and the Allegheny River. The primary tool of the AVC is legally binding, perpetual, and enforceable conservation easements. The AVC purchases and accepts donations of land which may include historic or cultural resources, important natural area or wildlife habitats, open space, recreation lands, and water resources.

(814) 437-5623

Allegheny Valley Conservancy
442 Takitezy Rd.
Franklin, PA 16323-5542
www.avta-trails.org

