



The Athens Land Trust Newsletter

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THE CRAWFORDS: HOME ON HANCOCK



Brenda and her family, Tobias, Marquette, and Breanna, friend Ashley, and Nala on the porch of their new home at 640 W. Hancock Ave.

The Athens Land Trust house at 640 W. Hancock Avenue is now the home of Brenda Crawford and her three youngest children, ages 5, 6, and 17. "They're so excited, the little ones," Crawford said. "They say, Are we moving today? Are we moving today?" Ms. Crawford was presented the keys to her new home during the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Open House on March 8, 2002. There were dozens of neighbors and community officials present for the dedication of ALT's first home.

"The Athens Land Trust is starting something good here in Athens for families," Crawford said. "It's just a great thing they're doing for the community where I was born and raised." Her elderly mother, lives behind the new home. Ms. Crawford works as a Secretary/Monitor Tech in the Telemetry Department at Athens Regional Hospital.

The project was funded through Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds from the Athens-Clarke County Department of Human and Economic Development (HED). During the Open House, Rev. Larry Fort of the Hancock Community Development Corporation gave the opening prayer, and Mayor Doc Eldridge, Commissioner Alvin Sheats, and HED Director Keith McNeely each made brief congratulatory remarks.

ALT's Executive Director Nancy Stangle acknowledged the Athens-Clarke County Commissioners and the staff of HED for their support of the project. In addition, Ms. Stangle thanked architect and project manager Henry Parker, contractor Dave Redman, Malisa Thompson of HED, and all the many volunteers who helped with the painting and landscaping.

ALT also recognized Jefferson Holt, who previously owned the lot at 640 W. Hancock, and donated it to Athens Land Trust. Special appreciation was expressed to our neighbor, Ms. Fannie Jordan, who watered the dogwood tree which was planted last spring in memory of Loretta Cleveland. Finally, ALT would like to thank Chris Aubry for donation of plants and Curry Wadsworth's crew for installation of the landscape at the house. The completion of 640 W. Hancock was truly a collaborative effort! Thanks!

Athens Land Trust Mission

The mission of the Athens Land Trust is to promote quality of life through integration of community and the natural environment by preserving land, creating energy-efficient and affordable housing, and revitalizing neighborhoods.

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Monthly Board Meetings held on the third Monday of the month, 5:30 pm, at the ALT office.

GREENFEST TDR FORUM & ALT ANNUAL MEETING

By Beth Gavrilles

Athens Land Trust is once again participating in Greenfest, a community-wide celebration of the environment during the month of April. Greenfest provides Athens-Clarke county residents with the opportunity to increase their awareness of and interest in improving the environment of their home, yard, business, and community. Greenfest activities range from a wildflower ramble at the State Botanical Gardens To Athens Clarke County Recycling Recycling annual "Clean Your Files" Day, with various forums, children's events, bike rides and even the "Junk Yard Jog" to be held on the new trail adjacent to the landfill.

This year, ALT is teaming up with Oconee River Land Trust and the Athens Grow Green Coalition to host an information forum on Transferable Development Rights, or TDRs, on Monday, April 15th at 7:00 pm at the Athens-Clarke County Library.

TDRs are a growth management tool that can be used to protect sensitive lands and direct growth to areas better suited for it. In a nutshell, the rights to build are separated from the actual piece of property that the community wants to protect; the property owner can then sell those rights to a developer who can use them to build at a somewhat higher density than otherwise allowed, but only in those areas the community wants higher density to occur. Judy Daniel, a planner for Montgomery County, Maryland, will make a presentation on Montgomery County's extremely successful TDR program, and answer questions about whether and how such a program might work here.

For more information on the dozens of Greenfest 2002 programs, please visit www.AthensGreenfest.org. For more information on TDRs, visit <http://outreach.ecology.uga.edu.tdr.html>.

NOTE: ALT will be holding its annual membership meeting prior to the TDR Forum. Please attend and vote on the ALT Board of Directors.

Land Currently under Conservation Easement

- 30 acres in eastern Athens of sloped Oak-Hickory forest, with two creeks and wetlands
- 17 acres in western Athens of mature hardwoods, rock outcroppings, and two springs which flow into the Middle Oconee River
- 4.6 acres in western Athens with hundred-year-old oaks and old field
- an urban open space on Boulevard for a neighborhood park
- an urban open space on Satula Avenue with a large stand of hardwoods protected for bird nesting and wildlife habitat
- 23 acres of Oak-Hickory forest and streams within a planned conservation subdivision in eastern Athens
- 11.5 acres of Oak and Pine Forest within a new subdivision in north Athens
- 15 acres of hardwoods, including a small lake within a new subdivision off of Tallasse Road

Don't Let Another Tax Year Pass Without Conserving Your Land

April 15 doesn't have to be painful again next year. Instead, it can be a day you celebrate both your tax savings and the satisfaction of permanently conserving important open spaces.

ALT is one of the nation's 1,200-plus land trusts that are independent of government and work hand-in-hand with landowners who choose to conserve their land. Land Trusts offer a variety of ways that you can permanently protect your open space lands and perhaps shave your tax bill:

- * Donate it to a non-profit land trust such as ALT
- * Donate a conservation easement, which permanently limits the type and scope of development;
- * Sell the land to a land trust in a "bargain sale" for below fair market price.

Income Taxes

Under the Internal Revenue Code, for most gifts of appreciated land or conservation easements, a taxpayer can deduct up to 30 percent of his adjusted gross income in the year of the donation. If the value of the gift exceeds that deduction the taxpayer can carry forward the balance for up to five additional years.

For example, if Mrs. Landowner has an adjusted gross income of \$50,000 and makes a gift of a conservation easement worth \$80,000, her deduction in the first year would be \$15,000. The balance can then be carried forward for each of five years until she has deducted the full \$80,000 value of her gift.

Estate Taxes

Because development pressures in most parts of the country dramatically increased property values during the past 20 years, many people are forced to sell lands that have been in the family for generations in order to pay estate taxes.

Consider the Triple Bar Ranch, a fictional working ranch, but a true-to-life financial example. The family patriarch bought the ranch in the 1960s, when land was far less expensive. Today, it is worth \$1,250,000.

Mrs. Landowner is a widow, and the ranch comprises nearly her whole estate. She and her hus-

band accumulated just \$250,000 in other assets. Therefore, her total estate is worth \$1.5 million. In nearly every state, the combined state and federal estate taxes would be around \$200,000 - more than the surviving Landowner's children could afford to pay, even though they want to see the ranch remain as open space.

The solution may be the voluntary donation of a conservation easement, which legally limits the amount and type of development that can take place on land. An easement can be tailored to a landowner's desires.

The easement may, for example, permit construction of just two more large-lot homes but protect the land from construction of a subdivision. As a result, Mrs. Landowner may reduce the land's market value to \$750,000, down from its current \$1,250,000 value. Her estate, including \$250,000 in other assets, would then be worth \$1 million, and no estate taxes would be due.

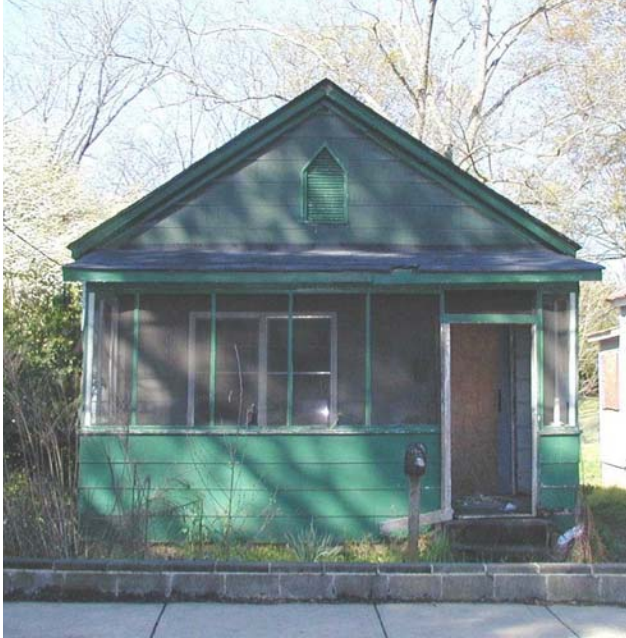
The Growing Use of Easements

The nation's private, nonprofit land trusts have been tremendously successful at land protection. Grassroots land trusts had permanently protected more than 6.2 million acres by the end of 2000. Of that, approximately 2.6 million acres had been protected by conservation easements, according to the Land Trust Alliance. The amount of acreage protected by conservation easements increased more than fivefold since 1990.

The Athens Land Trust offers two brochures for landowners - "Protecting Your Land with a Conservation Easement" and "Conservation Options for Private Landowners." Individuals can get these by sending a self-addressed, stamped business envelope with their request to the *Athens Land Trust*, 195 Park Avenue, Athens, Georgia 30601.



Foxhall Farms Conservation Easement



235 Rocksprings

What ALT is doing for Affordable Housing

By George Wright

Athens Land Trust bought two adjacent houses on Rocksprings Street just north of Broad Street. These houses are part of the original development of an older in-town neighborhood less than a mile from downtown, which now has many elderly and low-income residents. There are also a number of boarded and unoccupied houses and some encroaching rehabs for student rentals. Our two houses will be rehabilitated and put into the hands of local low-income families — and remain affordable through partnership with the community Land Trust.

We delayed this project for some time hoping to do much of the work with job trainees and instructors paid by GA Department of Labor (DOL), thus involving jobless citizens in the project and in the construction industry. That approach has taken a great deal of time and effort, and we are ready to move on with the Rocksprings houses. We hope to involve DOL or DFACS trainees in one of our future projects, but now plan to rehab the two Rocksprings houses with HOME funds and a loan from Equity Trust. A request for bids has been advertised.

There are still many abandoned and vandalized houses close to downtown that could be fixed up and sold to lower income families through our

community land trust, allowing them to become and to remain affordable homes for working families.

Editors Note: Rehabilitation of vacant houses is part of the Athens Land Trust's goal of providing affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization. If anyone would like to sell a house to the Athens Land Trust, please contact the office at 613-0122.

The Athens Land Trust would like to thank the Athens-Clarke County Commission and the staff of HED for their support of ALT's affordable housing program and the allocation of \$40,000 of Community Development Block Grant funds and of \$130,000 of HOME funds for the FY03 fiscal year. The CDBG funding is used for the housing program staff, consultants, training, and supplies. The HOME funding will be used for construction of new houses or the acquisition and rehabilitation of vacant housing in the Hancock Corridor.

Alvina Gilham, Outreach Coordinator, attended a workshop on the HOME program as part of the Neighborhood Reinvestment Training Institute in Atlanta on February 21 & 22.

ALT staff Laura Hall Gabriel, Nancy Stangle and ALT Board members Al Pless and Frank Burdette attended a workshop on Neighborhood Revitalization with Social Equity at the Greenprints conference in Atlanta on February 21 & 22. Other sessions addressed ecological and building practices, land conservation and natural resource protection.



245 Rocksprings

The Athens Land Trust would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations who support our work. Your support is crucial for us, and we greatly appreciate all donations of time and money. During the past year, \$.90 of every dollar which was donated was used directly for our programs and efforts.

If you would like to renew your membership or join us for the first time, please complete the following and mail to ALT at 195 Park Avenue, Athens, GA 30601.

Please check one of the following levels:

Forest \$1,000_____ Grove \$500_____ Oak \$250_____ Seedling \$100_____
Acorn \$50_____ Family \$20_____ Individual \$10_____

Name_____ New_____ Renewal_____

Address_____

Telephone_____ Email_____

Special Skills or Interests:_____

Please make your checks payable to Athens Land Trust. ALT is a non-profit corporation and all donations are tax-deductible as provided by law.

The Athens Land Trust, Inc.
195 Park Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30601

Save this date!!!

May 11, 2002

Join us for a hike, music, and refreshments on the 21 acres of land under conservation easement at the Kenney Ridge Community. Guided hikes will begin at 3:00 P.M., with refreshments following. Music will be provided by Julie Powell and Erik Hinds.

Tickets are \$15 per person, which includes a year's membership in ALT. Children are free. Come as a family and enjoy an afternoon under the oaks. (See page 3 for more information.)

An Afternoon under the Oaks: May 11, 2002

Please join us at our first annual fundraiser featuring land which is permanently preserved through conservation easements. The Kenney Ridge Community is co-hosting this event which will include guided hikes on the 50 acres of common area in the neighborhood. Beginning at 3:00 P.M., members of the Kenney Ridge Community will lead hikes on several miles of trails throughout the common areas. Following the hikes, refreshments will be provided in the Three Oaks Commons. Jazz musicians, Erik Hinds and Julie Powell will perform.

Come and experience firsthand the value of open space to a neighborhood. Bring your family, chairs and/or a blanket. Tickets are \$15 per person which will include the hike, food and a membership to ALT. Children are free. Proceeds from the event will be used for ALT's conservation program.

Kenney Ridge is located on Tallassee Road, four miles beyond Loop 10 (the bypass). Turn left onto Three Oaks Drive and follow signs to the event.

For more information please contact the ALT office at 613-0122.

Hands On Athens In the Hancock Corridor

ALT was proud to be a partner in the 3rd annual Hands on Athens project which was held on April 5-7, 2002. Approximately 200 volunteers gave their time to assist seven homeowners in the Hancock Corridor. The volunteers scraped and painted, planted flowers, and did repairs on the historic houses throughout the weekend. ALT Board members Frank Burdette, George Wright and Al Pless served as house captains.

ALT once again provided food for the volunteers with donations from the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, Wal-Mart, Sam's, Big City Bread, Earthfare, Bi-Lo, Don Myers, Jittery Joe's, Dunkin Donuts, and Buffalo's. On Sunday, the families and friends of homeowners Clara Wise, Rosa Kelley and Robert Smith, Paul Nelson, Fannie Thornton, and Sara Lawrence, provided a home-cooked meal for the volunteers.

ALT would like to thank everyone who gave their time or provided food for the event.



Laura Hall Gabriel, Nancy Stangle, Skipper StipeMaas

Alec Little Award Presented to ALT

The Alec Little Environmental Award was established in 1992 as the first major prize that recognizes individuals and organizations for environmental responsibility in the Northeast Georgia area. It is named for the late John A. (Alec) Little, who worked closely with many environmental organizations in Northeast Georgia.

This year the 10th Alec Little Award is being presented to the Athens Land Trust and three of its long-time members—Nancy Stangle, Skipper StipeMaas, and Laura Hall Gabriel. The award will be presented on April 19, at 5:30 p.m. at the Treanor House on S. Lumpkin Street. To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the award, previous winners will be recognized at the ceremony.

ALT was founded in 1994 by Skipper StipeMaas and Nancy Stangle. Ms. StipeMaas is presently serving as Legal Counsel and Ms. Stangle has served as Executive Director for the past two years. Laura Hall Gabriel is a past President and board member of Athens Land Trust, and she is now ALT's Conservation Coordinator. ALT is one of the few land trusts in the country doing both conservation and housing with the two land trust models.

We are very honored to be the 2002 Alec Little recipient. Please join us in celebrating on April 19th!

ALT would like to thank the Turner Foundation for their grant of \$5,000 for general support. Since our last newsletter, ALT also received grants on behalf of the Garden Springs community from the Governor's Discretionary Fund, Department of Community Affairs, the Newland Foundation, and R.E. M.

New Faces at ALT

The Athens Land Trust is pleased to welcome Alana Maddox as our new Executive Director. Ms. Maddox has a Master of Public Administration from the University of Louisville, and she has extensive experience with non-profit management and fund-



raising. Alana served most recently as the city manager of a small town in West Virginia. Alana moved here with her husband Tim, a professor at Truett-McConnell College

and their two sons, Seth, 14, and Luke, 4. She said she is “thrilled to be working at the Athens Land Trust.”

The Athens Land Trust also welcomes Alvina Gilham as the new Outreach Coordinator. “It is a great pleasure and opportunity to serve in such a meaningful position to assist in bettering the community in which I was raised”, Gilham said.

“My goal here at ALT is to save our historic neighborhoods from becoming a market for rental property. If you can rent a home, certainly

you can own a home. This can only be done with self determination. You must think, If they can do it, then surely I can do it”.



Note from Nancy Stangle:

I want to say how much I appreciate all the support from so many wonderful people that I have received during the past two and a half years as Executive Director of ALT. I have thoroughly

enjoyed doing such meaningful work and knowing each of you. I am leaving the position of Executive Director to spend more time with my family, but I am not leaving ALT. I will remain an active member and I look forward to continued collaboration with each of you during the coming months.

Garden Springs Update

By Maureen O'Brien

The deadline came, and one by one the families left. The neighborhood of Garden Springs, once located in a mobile home park off North Avenue has been dispersed across the county. Over a hundred families had to find new homes, or new locations for their movable mobile homes, so that the property owners could build apartments targeted to UGA students. This process and expense was and is an incredible burden on these low-income families. As most of the mobile home parks in the county are located on the outskirts of town, people are now further from schools, shopping and community services, decreasing the affordability of their homes. The resettling has been painful and upsetting for many, many people, but one positive association through the entire process has been the Athens Land Trust.

The people of Garden Springs extend their gratitude to Nancy, Karen, Laura, Skipper, Alvina and the Board for their assistance in handling donations, tracking disbursements and caring so deeply. Your organization provides a very important service to the Athens community, and we wish you all great success in future ventures.

Senator Doug Haines has responded to the recent decrease of affordable housing in Georgia by introducing Senate Bill 487. This provides homeowner tenants of a mobile home park with the opportunity to match an offer, in a timely manner, to buy or lease the park when such sale or lease would change the nature of the property's use as a mobile home park. This bill will protect low-and middle-income Georgia homeowners from crises such as Garden Springs. Please go to the Athens Grow Green web site for more information about this issue.

Conservation Update

Boulevard Neighborhood Easement

The conservation easement on 230 Boulevard protects this half-acre as open space for this historic in-town neighborhood. The easement is permanent and does allow for public access. The owner has encouraged that the land be used as a neighborhood park that would include educational resources such as native plant and wildlife habitat.

The site is currently the subject of an environmental design studio led by native plant expert and professor of landscape architecture, Darrell Morrison. The designs generated by this graduate level class will focus on restoring and enhancing native plant communities on this site. Their designs will be presented to the Boulevard Neighborhood Association for possible ideas as the neighborhood group determines the best use for the site.

"This property really lends itself to a good, safe park. Because it is small and also surrounded by houses, the park is easily visible, yet offset from the street by elevation to make it a safe place for kids to play."---Laura Hall Gabriel

Satula Easement Cleanup

This property had lots of privet and eleagnus removed from it several weeks ago thanks to volunteers from Environmental Design and neighborhood residents. Emily Patterson (and ALT board member), Lauren Colunga, Stephanie and Zack Thomas, and their son were among the volunteers who worked removing exotic vegetation which takes over important native species. Thanks to everyone for your help!!

Land Preservation within New Subdivisions

Madison County is developing a conservation subdivision ordinance in order to preserve their county's rural character. The ordinance will state that a certain percentage (usually 50 percent) must be preserved in permanent green space. Ownership of the greenspace is usually transferred to the homeowner's association. A land trust or the county then holds a conservation easement on the greenspace.

ALT is explaining the role of land trusts and is willing to hold easements for these rural landowners. The holder of the easement is responsible for monitoring the property and ensuring it is protected. Public access is not required within the subdivision but may prove useful as a method of connecting community greenspace with trails and walkways.

ALT is currently working with several developers to preserve land within their subdivisions. Our goal is to preserve at least 50 percent of the development for greenspace---preserving the important ecological areas, historical areas, and scenic areas of the property, and then connecting these greenspaces with each other and eventually to parks, school, the Oconee River Greenway and other public amenities.

Five-acre Woods Neighborhood Natural Park Northside Drive

By Leafy Briggs

Development is rapidly decimating the woods and wild places that make our town the beautiful place it is. Trees clean our air, cool our summer heat, and are part of the cycle of creating rainfall. Without our remaining patches of woods and wild places Athens will be a grim and stark place indeed.

Those of us working to preserve the Five-Acre Woods as a neighborhood natural park and community open space have begun several projects. We've cleaned up litter left from years of neglect, and laid out a trail that runs the length of the property in a meandering loop. We've distributed information and solicited donations at The Loretta Cleveland Festival, Big City Bread, the BiLo shopping center on North Ave. and Earth Fare.

Last month we submitted an application requesting a portion of the Clarke County Greenspace funds be used to help finance the woods. The Mayor and Commission will allocate these funds. Please let your commissioners know you support funding for the Five-Acre Woods.

You can obtain more information about Five-Acre Woods Neighborhood Natural Park by visiting our website at us.share.geocities.com/athenovertheriver/.