



SPRING 2005 ♦ VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1

PERMANENTLY PROTECTING VALUABLE FARMLAND IN ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY & OCONEE COUNTY

On April 5, ALT submitted two applications to the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This program of the United States Department of Agriculture provides partial funding to purchase agricultural conservation easements on working farms. The Breedlove Farm in Oconee County was protected through the FRPP, with the help of the Oconee County Greenspace Program.

If selected by Georgia NRCS, the program will protect approximately 60 acres in Athens-Clarke County and 53 acres in Oconee County. The FRPP provides 50% of the funding for the purchase of the easement; the landowner may provide 25%, and the remaining 25% must come from a local source. Athens-Clarke County committed \$70,000 as the 25% local match for an application for a farm in the Winterville area. The funds will come from the Greenspace Acquisition program to be funded by the Special Local Option Sales Tax.

Oconee County made a commitment of \$75,000 and individual donors have pledged an additional

\$4,700 for the local match on a farm on Astondale Road near Bishop. The Commissioners from both counties have expressed an interest in protecting farmland in the area.

The two applications will be reviewed by the Georgia NRCS office along with others submitted from other areas of Georgia. The two farms will be competing for a portion of the \$1.4 million allocated to Georgia in the 2005 Farm Bill for farmland protection.



Oconee County farmland that we hope to protect

According to the American Farmland Trust's *Farming on the Edge*, Georgia ranked 3rd nationally during the period from 1992-1997 for productive agricultural acreage lost to paved surfaces. (NRCS, 2004) Oconee County has 45% of its land in farmland, ranking 27th in the State. The Oconee County Farm Gate Value (agricultural production) was \$102,135,000, which is 28th in Georgia. Athens-Clarke County had a total of 104 farms in 2002. The value of agricultural production in 2003 was \$29,484,000, ranking ahead of 56 other counties even though it is the smallest in the State.

—Nancy Stangle

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Monthly Board Meetings

Our monthly meetings are open to the public.

They are held on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 pm in our offices.

BOARD NEWS

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Gregg Bayard is the co-founder of Parallel Housing, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development of affordable housing. Gregg has over twenty years experience in food processing and commodities. He also provides experience in historic preservation and the practicalities of rehabilitation.

Latitia (Tina) Franklin brings to ALT the perspective of a local mobile homeowner. Tina, her four children, and husband Jeff were residents of Garden Springs Mobile Home Park when it was closed. She immediately became a strong voice working towards justice in the world of affordable housing, and has been Secretary of the People of Hope for three years. She works at McLane Grocery Distributors, and is a native Athenian.

We are fortunate to have found two such dedicated and experienced Board members to represent our organization.

OUTGOING

Allen Morse, lifelong resident of the Hancock Corridor, stepped down after many years on the ALT Board of Directors. Allen, ALT's former Vice-President, also serves as the President of the Hancock Advisory Committee and the Hancock Community Development Corporation. He works tirelessly to strengthen and revitalize the Corridor. We miss him greatly but look forward to working with him through our partnership with the Hancock Corridor.

Al Pless, Treasurer of ALT for the past several years, also retired from the Board of Directors recently. Al, an Economist with the Department of Energy, did an excellent job as Treasurer, and we hate to see him leave that position. We are very grateful for all his time and we appreciate his continued support of ALT through work such as Hands on Athens.

Thank you, Allen and Al, for all your time and support of ALT during the past several years. We wouldn't be where we are today without both of you.



Nanette Nelson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear ALT Members,
We have been very busy here at the Athens Land Trust. I believe that as you read this newsletter you will undoubtedly agree with me. The list of projects is numerous and varied including significant strides in housing as well as conservation. Probably the wisest decision we made in the recent past is to hire a new staffer. We are very proud to introduce John Kissane as our new Conservation Director. John has already, in his first week, completed two farm preservation applications (see article on page 1). If you have had any experience with the applying for funds from the federal government you recognize that this is a huge task.

Highlights from the past few months include receiving funds for the Fourth Street Village, our green, multi-family affordable housing development, passage of SPLOST 2005 that included funds for purchasing easements on lands that are part of the Athens-Clarke Greenway Network, the donation of several houses on Waddell Street by the Athens Housing Authority, participation in Hands On Athens, and designation as a State Community Housing Development Organization. We have also been very busy getting ready for our first annual fundraiser with the Oconee River Land Trust. We are eagerly awaiting this event and hope you will be able to join us.

We sincerely hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying this beautiful spring.

Thank you.

Nanette Nelson

HOUSING UPDATE

A NEW ADDITION TO THE LAND TRUST FAMILY!

We are excited to welcome the Alstons to the land trust family. Kimberly and her daughter Emily were living right around the corner when they saw our latest house up for sale. By moving into a three-bedroom home, Kimberly has been able to help care for her niece and nephew who recently lost their mother, Kimberly's sister, to her battle with cancer.

Kimberly has lived in the Henderson Neighborhood for four years and is excited to see the improvements that are taking place. She has already been a great advocate for ALT, speaking out about the affordable housing program to her homebuyer education class and educating her co-workers at Pilgrim's Pride.



239 Field Avenue

HENDERSON NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

In partnership with the Athens Housing Authority, we have started to focus our attention on the Henderson neighborhood.

We have acquired two homes on Waddell, one has been rehabbed with a new family already moved in and the other is undergoing a remodeling job with volunteer labor from the ALT Board of Directors and



Two historic homes on Waddell Street will hopefully be our next big undertaking.



Board members, George Wright (left) and Neal Anderson (right) hard at work on the kitchen expansion at 772 Waddell Street.

should be ready for a new family this summer.

We also have two historic homes under contract and should be able to start extensive restoration on the homes this summer. The houses on the corner of Waddell and Dallas Street have sat vacant and boarded up for over ten years now, but were once the crown jewels of the neighborhood. We hope to restore them to their former glory.

The families that purchase these homes will be purchasing a piece of history from the Henderson neighborhood. We also have offers out on a couple more pieces of property in the neighborhood and we will keep you posted as things progress.

—Heather Benham

LEASE-PURCHASE TO HOMEOWNERSHIP CELEBRATION

We are very excited to report that our first homeowner has successfully moved from lease-purchase to homeownership!

Brenda Crawford, a board member, qualified for and received a mortgage in February on her home at 640 West Hancock. We want to congratulate Brenda on her hard work and success!

GOOD NEWS! CDBG FUNDS & CHDO STATUS

On April 5th, the Mayor and Commission allocated \$90,000 of Community Development Block Grant funding to ALT for the administration of our affordable housing program. We greatly appreciate the support that will assist us in our neighborhood revitalization

efforts by providing affordable housing for low-to-moderate income residents of Athens-Clarke County.

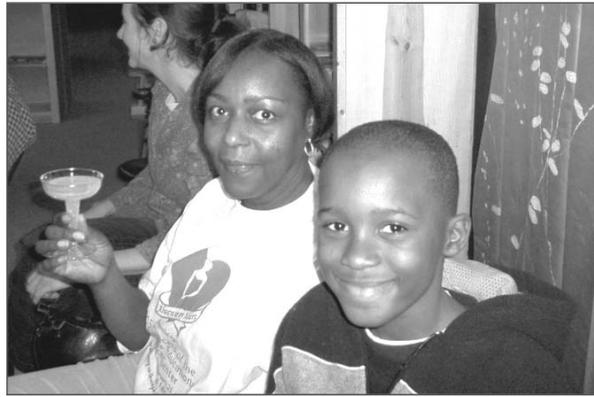
The Athens Land Trust has also received its designation as a state certified Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).

A CHDO must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission that includes providing safe and decent housing that is affordable for low to moderate income people.

The organization must also have a demonstrated capacity for carrying out activities assisted with HOME funds by having experienced staff. Another requirement is that at least one-third of our governing Board be made up of residents or representatives of low-income neighborhoods. This has never been a problem as it is the

foundation of the community land trust movement. We are excited about the recognition and look forward to using this status to help us grow as an organization.

—Heather Benl



Brenda Crawford and her son, Marquette, enjoy the celebration in their honor for her hard work and success in achieving homeownership.

FOURTH STREET VILLAGE IS A REALITY!!

A few months ago ALT learned that DCA awarded Low Income Housing Tax Credits to ALT and experienced partner Cooperative Resource Center to build Fourth Street Village. The project is now being designed by architects Pimsler-Hoss, along with Long Engineering as the civil engineers and The Jaeger Company as landscape architects. ALT and CRC are also partnering with Southface Energy Institute to ensure that the buildings are highly energy-efficient. ALT applied for a Green Communities Initiative Grant from the Enterprise Foundation, which will certify not only the buildings but also the site as "green," or developed as environmentally friendly as possible. With the grant, we hope to include innovative features such as porous pavement for some of the parking areas and rain gardens for stormwater management. In addition, we hope to clean up the stream on the site and make the 150-foot stream buffer into a natural area for residents to enjoy.

Fourth Street Village will provide rental housing for 96 low-income families making 50% of Area Median Income or below. This project will also include 24 market rate apartments. ALT is very excited about the many supportive services that will be provided to residents including employment programs, literacy classes, health services, homeownership counseling, resident involvement in decision making, a safety program, and tenant counseling. These services will be administered by ALT and CRC in partnership with many local agencies and businesses.

Fourth Street Village will be located directly across from the Fourth Street Elementary School on a 9.45 acre tract which is currently zoned for multi-family housing. It is located along the bus line and is close to a grocery store, pharmacy and other desirable amenities. The property will have a community building on site that will include a technology center, meeting room and fitness center.

ALT and CRC plan to begin construction on the first phase of the project during the coming summer. We'll be sure to let everyone know about our groundbreaking in the next few months.

—Nancy Stang

CONSERVATION NEWS



Prime farmland that we hope to protect

County staff made several changes to ALT's proposal, the main one being to allow the funds to be used to purchase land as well as easements. ALT had proposed funding the purchase of easements because it is more cost-effective and keeps more land on the tax rolls. Nevertheless, we are delighted that the project was included in SPLOST 2005 and that it received such an overwhelming response from the voters.

—Beth Gavrilles

See related article on page 1.

See our **NEW**
clickable easement map
on www.athenslandtrust.org

ACC VOTERS AGREE TO FUND GREENSPACE PROTECTION WITH SPLOST FUNDS

ACC voters passed SPLOST 2005 by a wide margin in November. One of the projects included in the SPLOST package of infrastructure and quality of life enhancements was a proposal by Athens Land Trust to set up a county-administered fund for greenspace protection. Approximately \$2.1 million in sales tax revenues will be set aside for this purpose while SPLOST 2005 is in effect.

As originally proposed, this fund would have been used to purchase easements on land that served as "Green Infrastructure" for the county. "Green Infrastructure" is a term that describes an interconnected, multi-functional system of significant natural areas (such as riparian buffers, wetlands, steep slopes, forest lands, and farm lands) that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, sustains clean air and water, and provides a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife. Green infrastructure performs many of the same functions that "gray" (engineered) infrastructure does, but at a fraction of the cost, while also providing other benefits, such as wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

NEW CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

John Kissane joined the ALT staff in March of 2005 as our part-time Conservation Director.

John has a Master of Planning degree with a Certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Virginia and completed course work toward a Master of Historic Preservation degree at the University of Georgia. He has worked with a regional planning commission in Iowa and with a landscape architecture and historic preservation firm in Georgia.

Prior to joining the ALT staff, John was self-employed for nearly ten years. John is married to Amy Kissane, Executive Director of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, and is the father of Emma and Will, students at Barrow Elementary School.



John Kissane,
Conservation Director

PEOPLE OF HOPE MOVING FORWARD WITH... THE SUMMER OF HOPE

The People of Hope (PoH) are working hard to create Georgia's first affordable resident controlled mobile home community. After rezoning and purchasing the land, which is now in trust with ALT, the 99-year lease with PoH is being created, ensuring the site will be used for affordable housing in perpetuity. A great bonus to the project was permission by the A-CC Commission to allow the property to be hooked to the County sewer system with a force main. This allows a greener buffer around the park, and cuts out the time consuming state septic system permitting process. With the property and septic secured, construction documents are being completed by Beall and Co. and the THE SUMMER OF HOPE fundraising is being initiated to raise \$200,000 locally to cover the gap between construction costs and the loan the members will pay with their lot fees.

Grants have been written for affordable housing funds from private and commercial foundations. The members are raising funds through car washes, yard sales, and food sales, but they need help to meet the larger goal. The PoH Church Challenge was kicked off with a \$2,500 donation from the Oconee Street Methodist Church. It has been matched with \$1,250 from Saint Gregory the Great Episcopal, and matched and exceeded (\$4,300) by individuals at the First United Methodist Church, who also sponsored our Formal Exchange Dress Sale fundraiser this

HANDS ON ATHENS

This was the sixth year for HOA and the sixth year that ALT has been a partner. Over the years, our amazing Board members past and present, George Wright, Neal Anderson, and Al Pless have donated countless hours working on the logistics of the event, making possible the repair of over forty homes in the Hancock Corridor and East Athens. In addition, this year the rest of the ALT Board and residents adopted a house on Waddell Street for HOA. We partnered with the Students for Historic Preservation and worked on Shirley and Billy Grant's house at 971 Waddell Street. Volunteers repaired the front porch on the house, put a new metal roof on the back of the house, and gave the whole house a new coat of paint. The results were amazing and Shirley was thrilled. She has already signed up to be a volunteer for Hands on Athens next year so she can help someone else feel as proud of their house as she is of her house.

-Heather Benham

winter. We extend our deepest thanks to all of these congregates and encourage others to respond when it is brought to your church.

The First American Bank and Athens First Bank and Trust Co. have joined the Community Challenge by offering to match donations from the public. Funds can be given directly to these banks. In addition, an anonymous donor has given \$5,000 and challenges others to help the most vulnerable members of our community by contributing, and by encouraging you and neighbors to contribute to support this incredible life-changing project! 40 low-income families will be able to live in this new park for generations to come, increasing their economic power by putting their lot fees back into their own community. 40 families will be able to recreate a supporting neighborhood that will help them gain economic and personal empowerment.

The goal is to raise the local funds to develop the People of Hope Mobile Home Community by August 1st. Help the People of Hope realize their dream and contribute to this innovative affordable housing project. Be part of THE SUMMER OF HOPE.

Please go to www.peopleofhope.us to donate by credit card or for more information or send your tax-deductible contribution to People of Hope, Inc. 2109 W. Broad Street, Athens, GA 30606.

-Maureen O'Brien



Edward Smith, resident of an ALT home and Tylil Marshal, resident of the neighborhood helping out at Shirley Grant's house on Waddell Street. Ed has known Shirley for years and was happy to help his neighbor.

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT MEMBERS & DONORS

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Kate Blane
Philip Juras



Philip Juras, *Rainy Hemlock Forest, Wallhalla Fish Hatchery, SC*, Oil on Canvas, 2004

THE ATHENS LAND TRUST
&
THE OCONEE RIVER LAND TRUST
P R E S E N T

*Spirit of the
Land*

~
April 16, 2005

*An evening of Wine & Art to
benefit land conservation*



PLEASE JOIN THE ATHENS LAND TRUST

The Athens Land Trust would like to welcome new supporters and thank all of the individuals and organizations who have been supporting our work over the years. Your support is critical to our continuance. We greatly appreciate all donations of time and money.

If you would like to renew your membership or join us for the first time, please complete the following:

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LEVELS:

Forest \$1,000 _____ **Grove \$500** _____ **Oak \$250** _____ **Seedling \$100** _____

Acorn \$75 _____ **Family \$50** _____ **Individual \$10** _____

Name _____ **New** _____ **Renewal** _____

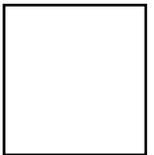
Address _____

Telephone # (s) _____ **Email** _____

Would you like to Volunteer? **Skills or Interests:** _____

Please make your checks payable to the Athens Land Trust, Inc.

ALT is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation. All donations are tax-deductible as provided by law.



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WWW.ATHENSLANDTRUST.ORG

THE 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.