



Athens Land Trust

Land for Conservation & Community

685 N. Pope Street • Athens, Georgia 30601

www.athenslandtrust.org

706.613.0122

Newsletter

Fall 2015 • Volume 18 • Issue 2

Membership Makes a Difference!

Thanks to your membership, we are able to bridge gaps for landowners and farmers, make dreams reality for aspiring home buyers, educate and inspire youth, and give a leg up to entrepreneurs and countless other members of our community. Because of your support, we are achieving great things *on a daily basis* in Athens, and beyond. We now have over 13,530 total acres protected in conservation easements across 26 Georgia counties -- roughly 25 acres of which contributed to the City of Madison earning an exclusive planning award. So far this year, we have sold four permanently affordable homes to first-time homeowners and have had 56 households complete our homebuyer education workshops. We are regularly educating people of all ages at our West Broad Farmers Market and conducting health screenings and cooking demonstrations to further promote wellness. Our Young Urban Farmers (YUF) program has nearly doubled in size and Deijhon Yearby, a young man who completed the program this summer, is now working as an apprentice at Williams Farm while attending North Georgia College. These accomplishments are possible thanks to your membership dollars, and we are leveraging your donations against other funding sources. A \$50 family membership, for example, is supporting roughly \$400 worth of services, meaning your generous gift goes even further toward making Athens a better place for all of its citizens!



Students from Downtown Academy preparing to plant beans.



A view of the recently-cleared Five-Acre Woods, adjacent to Williams Farm off Northside Drive.



New homeowners, the Bringardners, with Housing Director David Ogunsanya and ALT Board Member Kirrena Gallagher (far right).

Conservation Program Protects Land in Madison, Georgia



Left to right: Alfie Vick (ALT Board Member), Ben Whidby (DDA), Ed Latham (DDA), and Kyle Williams (ALT).

In July, ALT closed on four conservation easements in the Historic District of Madison, Georgia. Round Bowl Spring (1.35 acres), Presidents Park (2.52 acres), and Pritchard Farm (19 acres) were donated by the City of Madison. Tanyard Branch (2.85 acres) was donated by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) of Madison. All four of these parcels are now permanently protected and they comprise the first components in a planned 40-mile trail system connecting downtown, neighborhoods, parks, and places of assembly. These easements were a part of Madison's Transferable Development Rights Program, which won the city the 2015 Outstanding Planning Initiative prize at the Georgia Planning Association's annual conference in Savannah on September 10th. A special thanks to the **Riverview Foundation** for their support in making this work possible.



Athens Land Trust

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Williams Farm Manager, Dana Blanton
Williams Farm Assistant Manager, Ryan Vaughan
Project Oversight, George Wright

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Athens, Georgia 30601-2331
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www.athenslandtrust.org

Our Board meets on the third Monday of each month at 5:30 PM in our office; the meetings are open to the public.

www.facebook.com/athenslandtrust

Upcoming Events and Announcements

ALT Annual Celebration Thursday, November 19th

Join us for this year's annual meeting and celebration November 19th from 5-7 p.m. at the Athens Community Career Academy, 440 Dearing Extension, Building #1. Rand Wentworth, president of the Land Trust Alliance in Washington, D.C., will speak at this free, potluck event. Members of our Young Urban Farmer Program's new class will also be in attendance as we celebrate our 21st anniversary, reflect on the past year's many accomplishments, and look ahead to the future of ALT. Please bring a dish to share!

Give the Gift of ALT this Holiday Season!

Please consider giving gifts that give back this holiday season, such as ALT's signature coffee blend, "Community Ground," which is roasted by Jittery Joe's and is available at Big City Bread Cafe, Daily Groceries, Sips Espresso Cafe, The Fresh Market, West Broad Farmers Market and the ALT office. CSA and ALT gift memberships are also available for purchase to give to friends and family. Contact the ALT office for more information.

**We are privileged to be a host site
for AmeriCorps VISTA and
Food Corps Service Members.**



Athens Land Trust is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to conserve, empower and sustain communities through responsible and visionary land use.

Special Events at West Broad:

Athens Heritage and Urban Agriculture Festival,
Saturday, November 7th,
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Holiday Craft Market, Saturday,
December 12th, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

2015 Greenfest Awards

Congratulations to this year's ALT award recipients:

Donor of the Year - CMC of Georgia, Inc.
Easement Donor of the Year - Kevin York
Community Garden of the Year -
Salvation Army HOPE Garden
Volunteer of the Year - Ally Chastain



ALT Board Member, Alfie Vick, and Heather Benham presenting the ALT Volunteer of the Year Award to Ally Chastain.

RCPV Kickoff

ALT and NRCS hosted a kickoff ceremony of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPV) on June 25th at the farm of Senn Yuen in Covington. Senn is one of the farmers we've been working with through our Farmer Outreach Program. Our RCPV funding will support soil and water quality protection on farmland.



Athens Land Trust

Success Story: Haregu Bahtu

Athens Land Trust, the land that I trust. Just the name, Athens Land Trust, has special meaning to me. I am from the other side of the world and have lived in many places, but I have lived longer in Athens than I have anywhere else. I've raised four children here and hope to retire here. My youngest daughter and I began coming to the West Broad Farmers Market (WBFM) last year. It was the Athens Land Trust that had suggested I consider selling my Ethiopian and Eritrean dishes at WBFM since I had no physical location where I could sell my foods. From my first visit, I was immediately impressed by the friendly atmosphere that met us when we entered the market place. The other vendors were of all different backgrounds, selling their fresh fruits and vegetables, their foods, drinks, breads and other baked goodies, candies, plants, and various wares. Then there was the music, the children, and the wonderful garden that really contributed to this atmosphere.

The Land Trust staff have always been very courteous and helpful. It's amazing when you walk into a place and immediately feel welcomed. To this day, they can be depended on to make sure we have table space, electricity and a tent. They, along with some of the other vendors, work together to make sure everyone has



Haregu serving her Ethiopian/Eritrean cuisine from her booth at the West Broad Farmers Market.



Haregu in her new brick and mortar restaurant!



Haregu opened Mannaweenta Ethiopian & Eritrean Restaurant in August, located in the Omni Club shopping center at 1055 Gaines School Road. (706)850-8422

everything they need. Unfortunately, I get so busy at the Farmers Market that I don't get the chance to talk to many of the other vendors. Of course, being so busy means that the community is coming out to visit the Market. The crowds show how valuable the Farmers Market is, and can become, to the Athens community. In all honesty, it is because of the customers that I have moved forward, trying to open a restaurant. Many of the customers have shown an appreciation for the foods of my country and have made clear how important the addition of an Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurant would be to the Athens community. In fact, it has been the customers who have given me many of the important contacts I've needed in order to find a space for my restaurant. I am not sure what I'd be doing without the help and support of the Athens Land Trust and its West Broad Farmers Market. I'm very grateful and appreciative of all the Land Trust has done. I look forward to having a long relationship with them. I hope that they become a permanent fixture in the Athens community.

- Haregu Bahtu, May 2015

Member Spotlight: Bertis Downs

We are fortunate to have several influential members of the Athens community as consistent ALT supporters. Bertis Downs is one such member who has been an advocate of our organization for many years. We sincerely appreciate his continued support and ALL of our generous ALT members. We could not do this important work without you.

I think the Athens Land Trust is one of the most dynamic and effective groups in all of Athens, or anywhere for that matter. The Land Trust is involved in our community in so many ways, from traditional conservation easement efforts to community gardens, from Young Urban Farmers to affordable housing. ALT is very adept at initiating and managing useful partnerships with allied institutions like the government, various family foundations, the university and the school district all to very good effect as seen in its projects. In fact, I am constantly amazed at how much they get done and how strategic they are in their efforts, and results. The Athens Land Trust is definitely one of the shining stars in the vitality that is Athens, and their ongoing work makes a difference in so many lives, every day.



Athens Land Trust

ALT Hosts Inclusionary Zoning Trip to Chapel Hill

With the support of the National Community Land Trust Network, we were able to take Athens-Clarke County elected officials and staff to Chapel Hill, North Carolina to visit their local community land trust, Community Home Trust, and learn about their inclusionary zoning program. There the land trust works closely with the county to ensure that new residential developments include 10% set aside as permanently affordable housing. Our trip was in support of one of the Mayor and Commission's goals for this year to evaluate how inclusionary zoning could work in our community. Attending the trip was Mayor Nancy Denson, Commissioner Sharyn Dickerson, Commissioner Melissa Link, Assistant County Manager Blaine Williams, Planning Director Brad Griffin, Director of Housing and Community Development Rob Trevena, and ALT Executive Director Heather Benham. The group came back with some valuable information and efforts are underway for a pilot project here in Athens.

Affordable Housing, Economic Development, and Homebuyer Education Grants Awarded

We are grateful to receive funding through **Athens-Clarke County's Community Development Block Grant** (CDBG) through June 2016. This includes \$180,500 to support our Affordable Housing Program, a \$16,300 CDBG Public Service grant to fund housing counseling and homebuyer education, and a \$75,900 Economic Development grant which will go toward activities at the West Broad Farmers Market, including our vendor development and Young Urban Farmer programs. A big thanks to the Mayor and Commission and Athens-Clarke County Housing and Community Development for helping us to secure these funds which make home ownership possible for more citizens (see story at right).

ALT was also awarded a \$29,000 capacity building grant for community development and affordable housing from **Enterprise Community Partners** which will allow us to conduct an organizational assessment in order to prioritize future actions that will sustain and enhance our anti-poverty efforts. This funding will allow ALT to work with experts in developing strategic partnerships with stakeholders, including low-income community members, to ensure that they share in the benefits of future economic development and affordable housing work.

This summer, ALT received a \$2,500 grant from the **Bank of America Foundation** and \$4,000 from the **Wells Fargo Housing Foundation**. Both of these grants will go toward our homebuyer education and credit counseling programs. This funding will help us to offer homebuyer and financial literacy workshops every month, which should expedite the process of turning qualified homebuyers into homeowners.



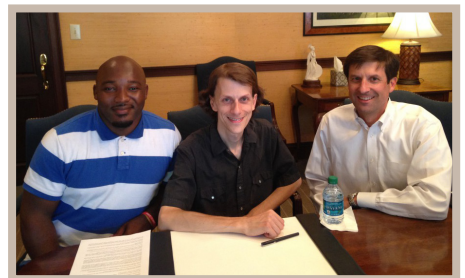
Heather Benham (right) poses with new homeowner, Kathy Daniel, holding an artist's rendition of her house on Evans Street.

New Homeowners!

The Bringardners (pictured on front page) are a young family who were previously renting a two bedroom home in town. After having a baby, they searched for a house suitable for them to purchase but couldn't find anything in their price range that didn't need a lot of work. After learning about our program they were able to purchase a four bedroom house for the same amount they paid in rent and now have enough space for their family to grow.

Alex has been an Athens resident for over 17 years and never imagined that he would own a home. After being forced to move out of his rental residence, he found an ALT home he liked with payments equal to his rent and became a homeowner in July. Alex is happy to no longer share walls with college students!

Kathy, who's a school custodian, was tired of renting and wanted a comfortable home that would accommodate both her and her mother. One of our homes fit the bill and even has room for a treadmill, which will help Kathy get in shape for her son's upcoming wedding!



Housing Director, David Ogunsanya (left) pictured with new homeowner, Alex Gural, and Jeff Bishop of Athens First Bank and Trust.

Funding made available for these affordable housing projects by Athens-Clarke County Department of Housing and Community Development HOME and CDBG Programs of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, an Equal Opportunity Employer.



Athens Land Trust

ALT Partners with St. Mary's Hospital to Organize Weekly Produce Stand

Since July 22nd, ALT has operated a Wednesday produce stand at St. Mary's Hospital from 11a.m.-2p.m. featuring fresh produce and value-added goods from farms in ALT's farmer network. This partnership aims to make it easier for hospital staff, patients and visitors to purchase and consume more fresh produce while also providing an additional market for small-scale growers. For St. Mary's, this is part of an effort to get involved in the "Farm-to-Healthcare" movement that's catching on across the nation as more healthcare providers shift their thinking about preventive care and improving health through the food their institutions make available. The produce stand also serves to fulfill ALT's mission to establish new market opportunities for local growers. While this is currently a small-scale produce stand set to operate through October, both ALT and St. Mary's hope to expand in the future so that more consumers and farmers will benefit.



YUF Program Welcomes New Class!

We're excited to continue our partnership with the Clarke County School District



through the Young Urban Farmers (YUF) Program, an increasingly popular opportunity for local high school students. We've nearly doubled the number of participants this school year -- 15 from Clarke Central, five from Cedar Shoals, and one from Foothills Charter. These students meet three days a week at either the West Broad Market Garden or Williams Farm to learn about sustainable agriculture and operating their own agri-businesses. They also participate in a six-week Cooking Matters course to learn how to prepare healthy meals. September 15th was the kickoff for the new group and, since then, the YUF have been enthusiastically engaged in the many farm tasks necessary to running a small farm in the fall. They've also begun their classroom series and are working to create a logo for the program. A huge thanks to **Half Moon Outfitters** for providing water bottles for each of the YUF!

NRCS Funding Supports ALT Farmer Outreach

Recent funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will allow ALT to work with more farming communities and increase the number of permanently protected farms in Georgia. With a three year, \$300,000 Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agricultural Land Easement (ACEP-ALE) outreach grant, we will host meetings and educational activities throughout the state on the benefits and structure of the ACEP-ALE program. We will also work to identify communities that have not participated in the program but could benefit from it. This program aims to permanently protect farmland that is at risk of being neglected or developed.

With a \$50,000 NRCS farmer outreach grant, we are able to continue programs for farmers including workshops on pollinators, irrigation, high tunnels, livestock and on-farm processing, as well as strategic planning for farm businesses. On August 24th, a dozen farmers converged on John Bradly's farm near Commerce for one of ALT's on-the-farm workshops where Ricky Allen of Flora Hydroponics gave a presentation on aquaponic production. Ricky shared his experience and was helped by Mr. Bradly who had installed an aquaponics set-up on his land. The workshop then shifted to a hands-on session where everyone pitched in to help Mr. Bradly put up his 20x100 foot hoop house.



With the expert guidance of Don Wardlaw of the Ocmulgee River RC&D (Resource Conservation & Development) Council, the group made quick work of the assembly of dozens of aluminum rib pieces. Soon, a long hoop house skeleton towered over the farm. From atop a ladder, Mr. Bradly tightened the final bolts on the stabilizing spine as the sun set and the helpers cheered. With this new hoop house, he is ready to extend this fall growing season on into the winter months and get a jump start on growing next spring. The workshop attendees gained first-hand knowledge on building a hoop house -- knowledge they will take back to their farms and apply in growing their own operations.

Athens Land Trust

West Broad Market Garden Awarded Seeds of Change Grant

ALT's West Broad Market Garden was one of 50 finalists to be considered for a Seeds of Change Grant available to school and community organizations across the nation. ALT was selected as one of 34 recipients and was one of just two community gardens to be awarded with \$10,000 to help support sustainable, community-based programs focused on teaching people about the food they eat and how it's grown. Funding for this grant comes from the Seeds of Change commitment to donate one percent of net sales to community-based nutrition and gardening programs. In order to be considered for the grant, applicants had to have a minimum number of votes from garden supporters. "Not only does this grant give us an opportunity to expand our programs, it also demonstrates a community appreciation for the Market Garden," says ALT Community Agriculture Program Director Kelley Robbins-Thompson. "With this award, we will be able to engage more people from the community with opportunities, such as growing food and eating the food they grow, participating in sustainable agriculture and garden workshops and taking part in health and wellness activities at the garden." A big thanks to all who voted!



Regular West Broad garden workers Ms. Ethel Collins, ALT staff and members of the Young Urban Farmer Program posing with the Seeds of Change check.

ALT Interns and Volunteers

Since bringing on a full-time volunteer coordinator in March (funded by AmeriCorps VISTA), ALT has recorded over 2,000 volunteer hours and utilized over 400 volunteers! UGA Horticulture students are regulars at the West Broad Market Garden and Williams Farm, as are several community members who have simply chosen to spend their valuable time with us. **Emily Donajkowski**, a UGA student focusing her research on community agriculture, has volunteered more than 30 hours at West Broad and Williams Farm. **Irene Ivey** has made it to almost all of our 2nd Saturday Community Farm Work Days, and volunteered at the School Nutrition office's Paradise Garden. Having grown up on a farm, **Savanna Osburn** was wanting to get her hands dirty again so is now a regular morning volunteer at West Broad. **Jennifer and Jason Bray**, along with their three children, logged well over 100 hours of volunteer service at the Williams Farm this summer, and their oldest daughter, Hazel, served as an intern making flower bouquets for our CSA shares. Jennifer is currently creating weekly newsletters for our CSA members. **Olivia Cohen**, a student at the College of Charleston, was crucial in making our efforts at West Broad a success this summer by helping harvest for the market and assisting with the day-to-day tasks of running a farm.

We also had a wonderful group of interns assisting us this spring and summer and are grateful for those who are here this fall. UGA horticulture student and aspiring farmer, **Raiana Heinz**, completed her 200 hour senior internship at Williams Farm this summer. **Jasmine Ford**, a graduate student working on her masters in textiles, merchandising, and interiors helped our housing program with drawing floor plans and elevations for three new homes. UGA law students, **Mandy Moroz** and **McCall Trammell**, are both doing their civil externships with us. **Caitlin McCormack** volunteered more than 120 hours with our housing program this summer, helping with data entry and file organization. **Brittney Parks**, a law student from Gainesville, Florida, assisted with drafting contracts, agreements and policy documents for our housing program. Current intern, **Marcy Tanner**, is a housing major at UGA helping to digitize and organize our homeowner files.



West Broad Garden volunteer, Olivia Cohen, harvesting zucchini.

Bryn Murphy, UGA '12, Yale F&ES '16, was a conservation intern this summer, helping with all aspects of the conservation program, from guiding volunteers in invasive species removal at Five Acre Woods to laying out baseline reports and everything in between. In addition, Bryn wrote a grant to procure ArcGIS mapping software and set us up with a massive collection of geographic data and mapping templates for future projects. Bryn also used her GIS skills to map priority areas for farmland protection, research that will help with the rollout of ALT's RCPP project. ALT would like to thank the Edna Sussman Bailey Foundation for their generous support of Bryn's summer work. Thanks to Bryn for her unfailing good humor, insightful questions and hard work in making this a great summer for the conservation program.

Athens Land Trust

Thank you to our partners, members and donors since April 2015!

Supporting Foundations & Partners

Athens-Clarke County
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Steward

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Bertis & Katherine Downs

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The National Bank of Georgia

Oak

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Jill Carnes
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Martha Floyd
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In Memory of Dev Weeks



A true community steward, Dev served on the ALT Board for over seven years and touched countless lives. He will be deeply missed.

2x4, Inc.
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UGA and Federal employees through Georgia Shares

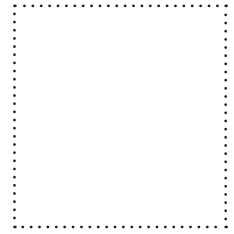


UGA Dawg Day of Service participants



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- Seedling, \$100 + Would you like to join our listserv? Yes No
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