



NORTH BRANCH LAND TRUST
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

“Conserving precious land...forever.”

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REFLECTIONS FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Executive Director's Letter **ELLEN FERRETTI**

Dear Member,

The successes of 2025 at North Branch Land Trust were made possible because of you and all the people, companies, foundations and donors who contributed to support conservation, habitat protection, clean air and water, and enjoyment and stewardship of our natural areas in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Since its inception as the Back Mountain Regional Land Trust in the mid-1990's, it has always been about each supporter who saw the need to create this land trust and donated funds to make it a reality. The Board and Staff at North Branch Land Trust take your support and trust seriously and we strive to do our best each day, month and year to conserve more land and water, to offer more nature themed events, to provide more environmental education opportunities for our children, to steward more acres of the lands we own and offer more expert advice for this who want to care for the lands they hold dear.

You are to be thanked for every acre of land conserved, every drop of water protected by conserved riparian buffers, every breathe of air made cleaner through a conserved forest, every acre of conserved farmland available to grow crops well into the future. There are no other words more appropriate than thank you, for everything.



A message from the Board Chair **STEPHEN MAAKESTAD**

This has been an exciting and productive year for the Land Trust, and I'm pleased to share that we are in a strong position. We've revitalized our marketing and development efforts with the addition of new team members and expanded our education and outreach programming to include several events each month.

We also successfully finalized the conservation easement and walking path at the Huntsville Reservoir in partnership with Pennsylvania American Water. With this project, we now protect a total of approximately 23,000 acres, and we currently have about a dozen additional conservation easements in progress.

In more recent news, we were awarded a significant grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. This funding will allow us to partner with the Earth Conservancy to transition 328 acres into the Pinchot State Forest - an exciting step forward for conservation in our region.

I am also proud to congratulate Ellen Ferretti on a well-deserved honor. Ellen will receive the Lifetime Conservation Leadership Award from WeConservePA at the annual conference in April - a testament to her dedication and impact.

All of this success is made possible by our outstanding staff, engaged board and committee members, and our long-time supporters. We are grateful for your continued commitment to our mission.

Finally, please mark your calendar for our annual dinner and auction, which will be held a bit earlier this year on Wednesday, March 25th at the Westmoreland Club. I look forward to seeing you there!

North Branch Land Trust STAFF MEMBERS



Front Row: Ellen Ferretti, Executive Director; Natalie Wasilchak, Conservation Specialist; Amy Grevera, (Consultant) CPA;
Back Row: Brittany Lynn, Marketing Manager; Emma Thompson, Senior Director of Conservation and Operations;
Leah Malarkey, Environmental Education Coordinator; Joe Butkiewicz, Director of Community Engagement



“Conserving precious land...forever.”

OUR MISSION: North Branch Land Trust partners with landowners, communities, and stakeholders to conserve and care for Northeastern Pennsylvania’s lands and waters.

OUR VISION: A future where abundant conserved lands help maintain clean air and water, diverse forests and wildlife habitats, vibrant working farms, and inspiring natural beauty.

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2025

IN NUMBERS

221

VOLUNTEER
HOURS
committed to
conservation



114

NATIVE TREES
planted at
Forest Echo Bird Sanctuary



22,949

TOTAL
CONSERVED
ACRES



16

ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION EVENTS
offered to the community



41

VOLUNTEER
STEWARDS
dedicated to NBLT's
mission and vision



384

INDIVIDUALS
LEARNED
ABOUT NATURE
through NBLT
environmental education,
school, and camp events.



7

OPEN HOUSES

hosted across North Branch
Land Trust's service regions:
driving our mission of
natural resource stewardship



220 +/-

ACRES

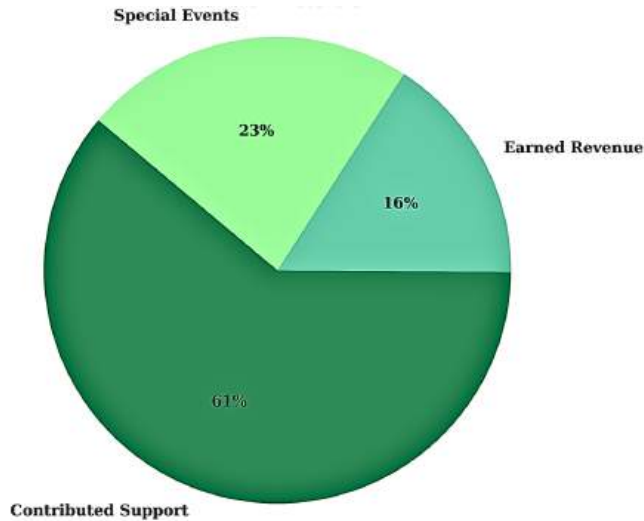
of riparian buffer forest
conserved in partnership
with Pennsylvania
American Water Company



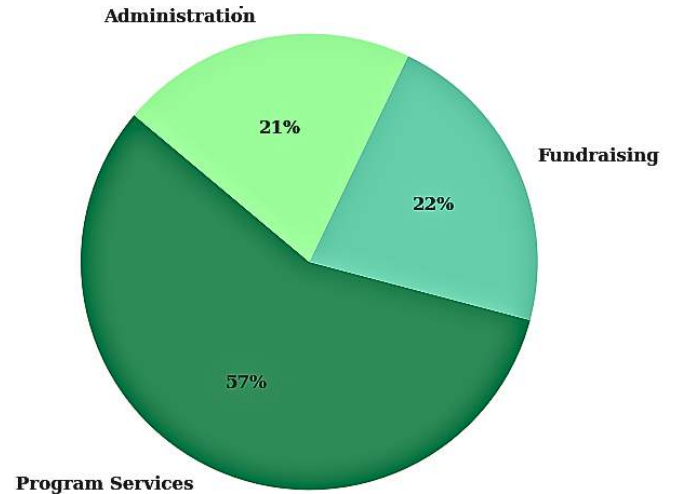
Financial

ACCOUNTABILITY

The provided pie charts display our income by source and expense by type. For more information including our public documents, visit nblt.org/financials



INCOME



EXPENSES

OUR CORE VALUES

Although there are many important principles that guide our work, the North Branch Land Trust emphasizes the following values as core to our efforts:

- We are committed to preserving the beauty and environmental health of Pennsylvania for the benefit of future generations.
- We are committed to achieving that goal by working in collaboration with individuals, organizations, businesses, communities, and governments on all levels.
- We are committed to helping create a sustainable balance between economic growth and the healthy, natural surroundings that sustain flourishing communities.
- We are committed to conserving a wide variety of natural landscapes for the benefit of all living things, utilizing the standards and practices established by the national Land Trust Alliance.
- We are committed to working at all times with the highest degree of informed, conscientious, and cutting-edge professionalism.

A Look Back at 2025 EVENTS

Thank you to all who participated in North Branch Land Trust's events of 2025! From supporting our Annual Dinner to hikes and environmental educational discussions, artistic natural creations and volunteering your time to help better our public lands, YOU are the future of NEPA conservation and stewardship.

With more than 30 events planned for 2026, we encourage you to visit nblt.org/events to view the full listing!



April Bird Walk



Tree Planting at Forest Echo



June Orchid Visit with Bob Sprague



Native Wreath Forage



Paddle & Pour



Moth Monitoring at Butler Preserve



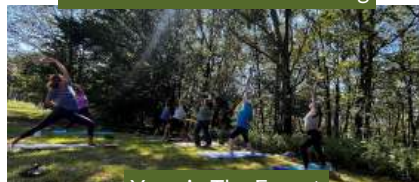
Producers, Consumers, Decomposers



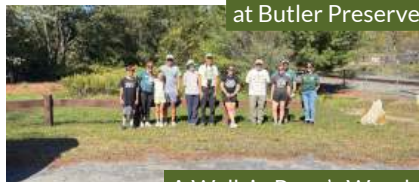
Nature Ornament Decorating



NBLT Nature Trivia Night



Yoga in The Forest



A Walk in Penn's Woods



2025 Annual Dinner & Auction



NBLT's NEPA Barn Banquet

March 28
Amphibian
Migration
Watch

April - Sept.
Nature's
Canvas

April 25
Birds &
Bagels

May 2
Mother's
Day Buds

May 5th + 9th
Beginner's
Bird
Photography

July 25
Moth
Magic

August 1
Macro
Mania

August 22
Monarchs
on the Move

Sept. 21
Fall
Fungi Foray

2025

CONSERVATION SUCCESSES



HUNTSVILLE RESERVOIR CONSERVING 220 ACRES OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

North Branch Land Trust, in collaboration with Pennsylvania American Water Company, successfully completed a major conservation easement on the Huntsville Reservoir in Dallas Borough and Lehman Township, Luzerne County. The project, (which had been in development since 2022), provides a buffer, protects habitat, and preserves the natural beauty of the area.

The easement aligns with North Branch Land Trust's mission of partnering with landowners, communities and stakeholders to conserve and care for Northeastern Pennsylvania's lands and waters. A public access area off Reservoir Road provides limited access to the northwest section for walks on nature trails and environmental education. The site design employs green stormwater management practices and landscaping to enhance aesthetics of native flora and the riparian forest.

Funding for this project was received through a grant from the Community Conservation Partnership Program, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Keystone Recreation Park and Conservation Fund (Key '93); a very generous donation from Pennsylvania American Water, and American Rescue Plan Act funds from Luzerne County.



FOREST ECHO BIRD SANCTUARY

STUDENT STEWARDSHIP

In February, 2025, Wyoming Seminary students and their chaperones Cheryl Connolly (Director of Advancement) and Anne Lew (Associate Director of College Counseling and History Instructor) along with NBLT's Leah Malarkey (Environmental Education Coordinator), spent the day picking up litter and clearing nature trails, along with discussing the impact of air, water and land pollution. While the students were looking for litter, Leah discussed the sanctuary and natural items, such as trees, birds, and wildlife found at this location.



NATIVE TREE PLANTING

North Branch Land Trust was chosen as a recipient of the 2025 Healing Our Planet Grant Program, presented by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, for an "Invasives to Natives" project. Funding from the awarded grant, provided by The Giant Company, was utilized to purchase 114 various native trees including basswood, sumac, tulip poplar, sycamore, service berry, cottonwood, and black gum, which were planted at Forest Echo Bird Sanctuary by NBLT board members, staff and volunteers.

Native trees play a critical role in protecting local ecosystems. They support wildlife, reduce erosion, and require less maintenance to thrive. Tree planting efforts also help improve the appearance, safety, and enjoyment of our communities.



PICTON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

NATIVE GRASS & POLLINATOR MEADOW PLANTING

Volunteers from The Aqua Water Company and employees of North Branch Land Trust celebrated Earth Day 2025 in true conservationist fashion by planting a meadow of native pollinators and grasses at Picton Preserve, with 30 plants donated by PPL Empowering Communities Program. The crew worked tirelessly throughout the day to dig up grass, prep the area, and finally spread the seed and get the plants in the ground. Pollinator gardens reduce the amount of mowing needed on the property, which reduces fuel costs and emissions, while also improving wildlife habitat.



HANOVER CROSSINGS MARSH

INTERPRETIVE WETLAND SIGN

In December, North Branch Land Trust unveiled a new contextual, interpretive sign at Hanover Crossings Marsh. The project was made possible through grant funding from The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership provided by The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Environmental Stewardship Fund, and additional support from The Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce.

The sign features accessible, visually engaging content that explains the ecological importance of freshwater marshes and the species that depend on them. By placing the sign directly along the marsh's overlook, North Branch Land Trust aims to foster a deeper connection to local natural resources.

This installation is part of North Branch Land Trust's ongoing commitment to expanding environmental education opportunities across its public preserves and strengthening community awareness of conservation importance in NEPA.

Thank You SUPPORTERS!

As North Branch Land Trust relies on
friends and sustainers like you!

We remain committed to shaping the future
of Northeastern Pennsylvania's special lands,
waters, and vistas.

GUARDIAN SOCIETY

Highland Guardians

Altitude Foundation
Sarah Block
The Community Foundation of the Endless Mountains
Earth Conservancy
Kenneth and Caroline Taylor Family Foundation
Geisinger
Greater Wyoming Valley YMCA
The Luzerne Foundation
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WeConservePA

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Thank You SUPPORTERS!

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Wyoming Seminary Lower School
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3 Sisters

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 Elva Valentine
 Verve Vertu Art Studio
 WBS Penguins
 John Wheatley
 Wyoming Seminary Upper School
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 Janet Zimmerman
 Ryan Zych

Thank You SUPPORTERS!

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"An Appreciative Turtle"
Susan Anderson
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Back Mountain Bloomers Garden Club
Back Mountain Chamber of Commerce
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Bear Creek Inne
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Caroline Chronowski
Rebekah Cleary
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Wild Birds Unlimited
John & Karen Zapotok
Wyatt Zapotok

2025

TRIBUTES

North Branch Land Trust is grateful to share
your honors, memorials, and celebrations

John C. Foster III
James T. Shoemaker
Tambur Family
John Barancho & Paul Kabacinski
Turtles
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Conserving precious land... **FOREVER**



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