## Protecting Penna.'s natural wonders

campaign to protect six of Pennsylvania's rarest and most threatened ecosystems was announced recently by The Nature Conservancy, the national land conservation organization.

The Conservancy's Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter is conducting the \$480,000 effort to acquire 520 acres at six areas in eastern Pennsylvania. The project, named the Pennsylvania Land Protection Program, also includes start-up funding for a comprehensive statewide inventory of Pennsylvania's rarest and most threatened plants, animals and natural ecological

According to Ralph (Bud )Cook, Director of the Conservancy's Pennsylvania/New Jersey Office, the Pennsylvania Land Protection Program is the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter's most ambitious fund raising effort to date.

Thus far the two largest contributions to the campaign have come from the McLean Contributionship and the William Penn Foundation. The McLean fund, headquartered in Bryn Mawr and formerly called the Bulletin Contributionship, donated \$58,000 for the natural areas inventory and land acquisition. The William Penn Foundation, of Philadelphia, contributed \$50,000 to the inventory.

"The McLean Contributionship and William Penn Foundation grants encouraged us to seek additional funds from corporations, individuals, and other foundations," Cook says. "We've received gifts and pledges totalling \$385,000, and we're now in the midst of a direct appeal to the 3,700 members of The Nature Conservancy's Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter. With help from our members — and additional corporate and foundation gifts - we expect to attain our \$480,000 goal by the December 31 deadline.

Cook listed the following types of ecosystems to benefit from the Pennsylvania Land Protection Program:

Delaware River Intertidal Marsh, Serpentine Barrens, Limestone Fens, Northern Lake Wetland, Black Spruce/Tamarack Bog, Virgin Northern Hardwood Forest.

In some cases, such as Tannersville Cranberry Bog Preserve (near Stroudsburg, in the Pocono region), the campaign will fund the acquisition of additional land needed for an existing Conservancy preserve. Other examples, such as the Delaware Other River marshes, represent new undertakings and the establishment of new preserves.

The Conservancy recently signed an agreement to purchase 193 acres of swamps and wooded uplands for inclusion in its Tannersville Cranberry Bog Preserve, which currently is a 150-acre reserve. The additional land will cost \$67,000. The Tannersville site has been listed as a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. government and reportedly is the southernmost low-altitude boreal bog on the eastern seaboard.

Cook emphasizes the importance of the statewide natural features inventory, which has been named the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory.

"This program," he says, "is similar to the 'Natural Heritage Programs' initiated by The Nature Conservancy in 34 other states plus several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The inventory is a precise mapping of the state's

PHILADELPHIA — A \$480,000 most endangered wildlife, plants and natural communities. It is computerized and continually updated to help The Nature Conservancy and other conservation groups direct their land acquisition activities toward the places most in need of protection.'

Cook expressed the hope that the state government will eventually integrate the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory into its environmental planning and review functions. He added that this transfer has taken place in about 20 other states thus far.

The Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory is a cooperative venture of The Nature Conservancy, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the Morris Arboretum, and the state's Department of Environmental Resources. It is currently being supported primarily by private charitable contributions, with partial assistance from the state agency.

The chairman of the Pennsylvania Land Protection Program is Robert K. Campbell, President of Pennsylvania Power and Light Company (PP&L), headquartered

in Allentown. The regional vice chairmen are William L. McLean. III, for the southeast region, and Dorrance R. Belin for the northeast. McLean is the President of Independent Publications, Inc., of Bryn Mawr, and Belin is a partner in the Scranton law firm of Oliver, Price and Rhodes.

The Nature Conservancy is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of rare ecosystems and habitat for endangered species of plants and animals. Founded in 1951, the 175,000 member group has protected two million acres of natural lands through approximately 3,200 separate projects. The Conservancy owns and manages some 700 natural areas, which constitute the largest privately owned network of nature preserves in the world. In Pennsylvania The Nature Conservancy has protected over 6,000 acres in 16 acres throughout the state.

The address of The Nature Conservancy's Pennsylvania/New Jersey Office is 1218 Chestnut Street, Room 1002, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107. The telephone number is 215-925-1065.

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