

From the Director

Roger Holnback



Wow! What a great Fall Celebration we had at the Kegley Farm! But we have to do even better next year, because we have just learned that we will not be receiving a \$40,000 grant from the Pittsburgh-based Colcom Foundation that we have received each year since the Land Trust was founded in 1996. Losing this support comes at a time when meeting the financial needs of our small non-profit may be challenging, especially if the U.S. economy continues to slide into a prolonged recession. The story on page 3 by our founding executive director Dr. Rupert Cutler tells you all about this large grant that began as an anonymous gift from Cordelia Scaife May, a Pennsylvania philanthropist and conservationist.

In each of my seven years as executive director of the Land Trust, we would send the grant application off to Pittsburgh in the summer, and each September worry that this

would be the year that our wonderful anonymous support would end. After all, we knew the support was from a generous lady in Pittsburgh, who insisted on anonymity yet was kind enough to support Rupert's

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effort to promote conservation. But he retired from WVLT in 1999, and three years ago when we learned that Ms. May had passed away, I was sure that would be the end. However, her staff

respected her request that they support us a little longer. But with time and a new foundation board, came a reaffirmation of the Colcom Foundation's focus on southwest Pennsylvania. To their credit they graciously, and in person, informed us that this year would be the last time they would provide us with general operating support.

So what this means to us is simply that the time has come for western Virginia, and not western Pennsylvania, to support our local land trust. It was a great run, and this out-of-state support helped us to focus our efforts mostly on saving land and not as much on grassroots fundraising. That focus will now need to change somewhat, but all over America, hundreds of land trusts just like the Western Virginia Land Trust are supported entirely from the generous support of local donors. Now our land trust will need to be as well.

Our development committee is excited about the challenge, and our new board members have been a wealth of ideas for getting more local support. To many in our community we are known for our conservation efforts and our successes. We are regularly in the press or the evening news, but despite our best efforts there are still folks out there who don't know the role we play. Do all of your friends know about WVLT? Can you increase your gift this year? We just need 400 \$100 gifts to make up the difference. Or 40 \$1,000 gifts. There are lots of ways to get there, and while it's a big number, it is just one third more than last year's member support. We hope you will help us get there.

-RBH