Helen Beck: Her Legacy
By Carey Scheide Miller, Senior Director, Development

Rattlesnakes can unnerve many — even an avid nature lover — but not Helen Beck. Her appreciation for the small, timid Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake, sometimes visible at Jennings Nature Reserve, is emblematic for the way she lived her life, enjoying nature to the fullest.

Mrs. Beck’s love of nature was formed while growing up on her family farm in Greene County. She loved hiking, horseback riding and riding her bicycle through the countryside. Later in her adult life, she relished mornings in her wildflower garden, wearing a big straw hat, recalls her daughter, Billie Moser. She loved feeding the birds each day — including a chickadee that was so comfortable with her that it would eat from her hand. Mrs. Beck’s desire to see nature took her and her late husband, Richard, all around the world; however, even after all these adventures, Western Pennsylvania remained most dear to her.

She particularly enjoyed hiking at WPC’s Wolf Creek Narrows, Jennings Nature Reserve, Moraine State Park and McConnells Mill. In fact, for nearly her 90 years, Mrs. Beck rarely missed a chance to experience nature each day. Given her affinity for these WPC-conserved natural areas, it was no surprise that she called the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy her favorite charity — one that she faithfully supported since 1962.

A mother of two daughters, stepmother to a son, grandmother of five grandkids, and great-grandmother to another 10 children, Mrs. Beck passed her love of nature to many of her descendants. Billie shares her mother’s passion for nature, particularly wildflowers and birds — and has a goal of visiting the 59 national parks in the United States (with 33 visited already).

I had the privilege to get to know Mrs. Beck in her golden years — often over a hike at Wolf Creek Narrows. I was impressed with her knowledge of the many wildflowers there — learned over years of observation and study of her field guide — and I really felt privileged to be a part of her hiking adventures — even in her late 80s!

In 2010, Mrs. Beck shared that she had included the Conservancy in her estate plans. This gave us the opportunity to acknowledge her ultimate support while she was living. I was saddened to learn of her passing in late 2011 at the age of 90. I think of her every time I visit one of her favorite places.

Some of Mrs. Beck’s bequest will support a site improvement at Wolf Creek Narrows, the addition of a railing that will make it easier for people to access the hiking trail. It’s a fitting, lasting tribute to a woman whose adventurous spirit touched so many.

Is WPC in your will, or would you consider including it? We hope you will let us know by filling out the form in the enclosed envelope.
**With Gratitude** for Our Heritage Circle Members

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy is grateful to the 114 Heritage Circle members who have given notice of their intentions to support WPC through their estate plans. They have made a significant and lasting impact on the Conservancy’s future without affecting their current standards of living.

If you have included the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy as a beneficiary of your will, trust, life insurance policy or retirement account, we hope that you will take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed envelope to let us know. By allowing us to express our appreciation for your foresight and commitment now, you will help us to also demonstrate how your ultimate gift will be appreciated and stewarded.

Mr. and Mrs. James E. Abraham  
Ms. Ann Lee Alexander  
Saralynn J. and Alan T. Allaire  
The Bernard C. Artman Family Fund  
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Francis J. Barilar  
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Richard N. Bartlett  
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Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Blackstone, Jr.  
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Edith Cole  
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Dr. Andrew Dekker  
David G. DeLong  
Joyce Lewis DeYoung and Larry A. DeYoung  
William and Cora Lee Dice  
Margaret M. Dudash  
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Ms. Karen D. Fennell  
Linda R. Finley  
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Moore Family Trust Fund  
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Nancy F. Seabol  
Gary and Janet SeGall  
J. Edmund Shott, III  
Dr. David B. Shryock  
Dr. Charles H. Shultz*  
Mr. Paul A. Skuta  
Ms. Amy M. Solomon*  
Mr. Marc G. Stauffer and  
Mr. Steven W. Patterson  
Dr. Chauncey H. Steele, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Timothy R. Thyreen  
Dr. and Mrs. Richard C. Ulsh  
Lynda S. and Thomas R. Waggoner  
Philip F. Warner  
Mr. and Mrs. David L. Watters  
Mrs. Virginia L. White  
Ruth Wilder*  
Rick and Mindy Williams  
Mark M. Wilson and Mary Hart Wilson  
Mr. and Mrs. Maurice S. Yeiser  
Burton L. Ziskind  
S. J. Zoerb  
Anonymous (19)

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* We are pleased to welcome seven new Heritage Circle members, of which two would like to remain anonymous. These members notified us of their plans between January-August 2013. New members are annotated with an asterisk.

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**The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy’s Heritage Circle**

You can provide for the future of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy without sacrificing your current income streams — and possibly receive favorable tax benefits in the process. Members of the Heritage Circle support WPC by:

- Adding WPC as a beneficiary of their current wills with a simple codicil;
- Making WPC a beneficiary of their IRA or retirement fund;
- Creating a charitable gift annuity through WPC;
- Including WPC as a beneficiary of their charitable remainder or charitable lead trusts;
- Naming WPC the owner and beneficiary of an insurance policy.
Explore Gift Planning from Your Armchair

Would you like to know more about how a charitable gift annuity would work for you? Interested in finding out the true cost of making an outright gift to the Conservancy after factoring in potential tax savings? You can log onto our website at www.WaterLandLife.org/60 and click on the “Explore the Gift Plan” link to research the giving options — outright or deferred — that are right for you.

Of course, your calls are always welcome toll free at 1-866-564-6972.

Current Charitable Gift Annuity Rates*

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* As of August 2013. Assumes IRS discount rate of 1.4% and a cash gift. Subject to change.

For more information, please contact Carey Scheide Miller, senior director, development at 412-586-2356, toll-free at 866-564-6972 ext. 2356, or cmiller@paconserve.org.

Donations made through wills, trusts, and life insurance are a crucial part of WPC’s future. Our vision for Western Pennsylvania’s water, land and life would not be achievable without the foresight and commitment by so many loyal donors. We are deeply grateful for the following donors’ generosity.* Their ultimate legacies are supporting WPC’s work:

Mrs. Helen G. Beck, Butler, Pa. — member since 1962
Mr. Gibson P. Buchanan, Verona, Pa. — member since 1969
Mr. George D. Bungard, Jr., Washington, Pa. — member since 1964
Mr. Stanley F. Collis, Cranberry Twp., Pa. — member since 1983
Mr. Robert C. Cooper, Butler, Pa. — new donor through bequest
Dr. William G. and Mrs. Elizabeth L. Everett, Cranberry Twp., Pa. — members since 1968
Ms. Lorraine M. Gross, McKees Rocks, Pa. — member since 1985
Ms. Florence M. Knoll – Montclair, Ca. — member since 1996
Mr. Charles F. Nichol, New Castle, Pa. — member since 1967
Ms. Elizabeth E. Quashnock, DuBois, Pa. — new donor through bequest
Ms. Sue A. Rotharmel, Washington, DC — member since 1992
Mr. George H. Rowley, Tennyville, Ga. — member since 1964
Mrs. Marion M. Schnurer, Pittsburgh, Pa. — member since 1987
Mrs. Nina J. Whitney, Bethel Park, Pa. — member since 1963
Mr. Rufus J. Wyisor, Pittsburgh, Pa. — member since 1968

* WPC received bequests from these donors’ estates between January 2012 – August 2013.

You can also visit www.WaterLandLife.org/60 or fill out the form in the enclosed envelope and return it to:

Development Department
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
800 Waterfront Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Mission Statement: The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.

Learn more about WPC’s goals for this decade at WaterLandLife.org/Legacy

Program Updates

- This summer, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy reached a land conservation milestone when it completed a conservation easement on a family farm in Donegal Township. All told, the organization has permanently protected more than 10,000 acres in the Ligonier Valley through voluntary conservation easements since the 1970s.

- Fallingwater recently made the house and surrounding areas more accessible for all visitors. Adding to a new ADA-accessible shuttle that runs between the house and the Visitors’ Center, staff constructed a trail that provides all visitors with the opportunity to view Fallingwater from the Birdseye Overlook.

- Bates Street, a busy corridor connecting the Oakland section of Pittsburgh with the South Side of Pittsburgh, is getting a significant “green makeover.” Thanks to the initial vision of Dr. Eugene Myers, the Conservancy is removing invasive species and vines and replacing them with native flowering trees and shrubs, taking a once-neglected area and making it new, native and green.

- Over the summer, watershed conservation scientists surveyed four creeks for the Eastern Hellbender salamander, catching and tagging 72 animals over 8.5 days. Besides tracking Hellbenders in their usual places of Little Mahoning Creek, Tubmill Creek, and the Allegheny National Forest, scientists were pleased to find them in Buffalo Creek for the first time. Hellbenders are an excellent indicator of high water quality and can live for up to 30 years.

- The Our Shared Legacy campaign for the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has raised more than $30 million toward its $40 million goal. Nearly $2 million came from realized bequests and an additional $2.2 million is counted from intended future bequests. These legacy gifts have made a significant impact on WPC — now and in the future.