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Dinnamin marks anniversary at tree planting event

More than 100 volunteers gathered with State Senator Andy Dinniman (D-19) and officials of Natural Lands Trust at the organization's Stroud Preserve in East Bradford, Chester County, Saturday to plant trees and commemorate the non-profit conservation group's 55th anniversary. Founded in 1953, Natural Lands Trust preserves natural areas in eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey and ranks as the largest conservation group in the region. At a ceremony before the tree planting began, Senator Dinniman presented a proclamation from the Senate of Pennsylvania praising Natural Lands Trust for its years of preserving and caring for natural areas in the region.

"For more than half a century, Natural Lands Trust has been protecting our region's natural assets and in doing so, protecting our way of life," Dinniman said. "I am proud to recognize Natural Lands Trust and offer it my best wishes and support for another 55 years of growth and success in preserving our open spaces and beautiful places."

Following his comments, Senator Dinniman joined Molly Morrison, Natural Lands Trust's president, and Peter Hausmann, Chairman of the organization's Board of Trustees, in planting a white oak tree in honor of the Anniversary. The volunteers then set out to plant 1,000 more trees before the end of the day.

"It was a beautiful morning to celebrate fifty-five years of preserving the region's remarkable landscapes," Morrison said. "We are grateful to Senator Dinniman for honoring Natural Lands Trust in this way. He has been a strong supporter of preserving open space since his time as a Chester County Commissioner and we are fortunate to have him as a frequent partner in our efforts."

"The Philadelphia region is a national leader in public investment in conservation and Senator Dinniman and our many other friends from both parties at the state, county and local level are to be applauded for understanding the value of protecting our natural heritage," Morrison added.

Natural Lands Trust was founded in 1953 as the Philadelphia Conservationists when a group of bird-watchers came together as volunteers to preserve the marshes at Tinicum, Delaware County - what is now the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge. Over the years, the group expanded its work and grew into a professional organization that now has over 64 staff members and is one of the largest regional land trusts in the country. Currently, Natural Lands Trust owns and manages 42 nature preserves totaling over 20,000 acres and holds conservation easements and other development restrictions on an additional 244 properties totaling more than 17,500 acres.

The trees planted at the Stroud Preserve were just a portion of the thousands that have been planted in recent years to reforest portions of the preserve. Many of the volunteers helping with Saturday's planting were from EARTHNEXT, a national non-profit headquartered in Philadelphia that seeks to protect the future of life for all species by engaging young people around the world in being good stewards of the environment.

More information about Natural Lands Trust is available at www.natlands.org or by calling 610-353-5587.

State Senator Andrew Dinnamin (center) helps to plant a tree at the Stroud Preserve in East Bradford Township.

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