



Donor Preserves 55 Acres

Easement Marks the Trust's 17th

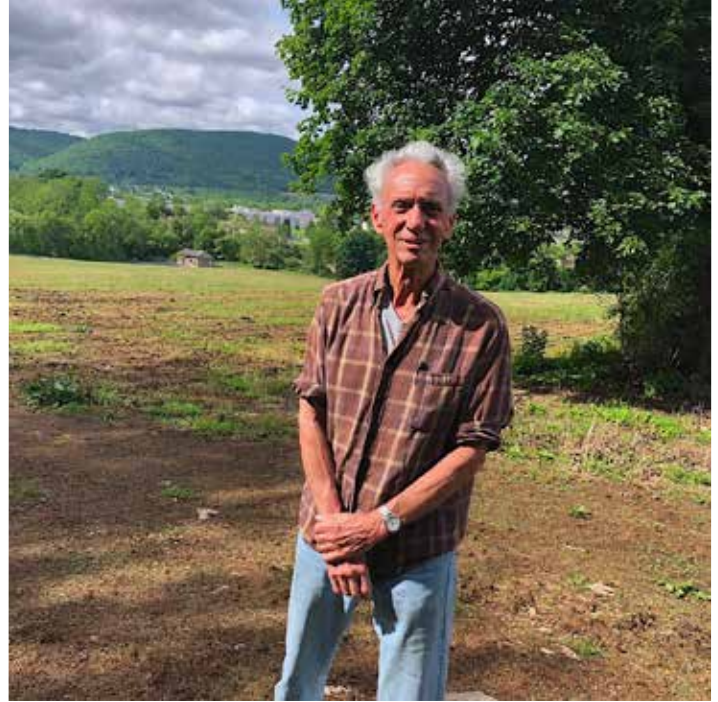
David Litke often appreciates beautiful land from the sky, as he flies his helicopter over the area's rolling fields of farmland including his own 55 acres in Bellefonte that he leases to a neighboring farmer and has decided to preserve.

Litke, 75, is donating a conservation easement on the land to the Centre County Farmland Trust. The easement will stay with the land, guar-

anteeing it will remain open and undeveloped in perpetuity. This kind of easement reduces the commercial sales value of the land and represents a landowner's valuable donation to the public (through the Trust).

The property off Blanchard Street is on track to become the 17th property preserved through a donated farmland conservation easement with the Trust.

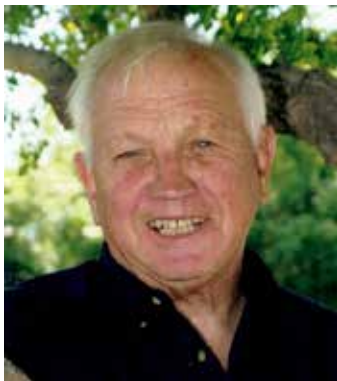
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New easement donor David Litke on his Bellefonte land.

Lynn Miller Bequeaths Major Gift

Donation is a 'game-changer' for organization



Lynn Miller, the late, distinguished landscape architect, professor and co-founder of the Centre County Farmland Trust, bequeathed a generous gift of \$128,700 to the Trust to advance its land preservation mission.

preservation under the Centre County Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement.

In 2015, Miller attended a CCFT event and saw a viable organization that by then had preserved several farms through conservation easements, and benefitted from engaged people plus a Board of Trustees, said Derek Canova, Miller's stepson and a CCFT Trustee.

"I think he saw that it was taking a good direction, sustaining itself," said Canova.

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Then and Now

In 1994, Miller worked with Centre County planners to establish the Trust, a non-profit organization. The Trust provides a way for farmland owners to still preserve their land if it does not qualify for

PRESERVATION TALK

Join us to learn more about farmland preservation on Sat., July 30, 10 a.m., at the CCFT-preserved Schempf Farm, 156 Cedar Run Road. This event is part of Route 45 Getaways, July 30 - Aug. 7, <https://route45getaways.com/home>





Land to be Preserved *(cont.)*

The Trust pays the costs of securing the easement then will hold, steward and enforce the easement into the future.

Access to Good Farmland

“You don’t get it any better than this,” said Litke, standing among his fields on a sunny May afternoon with views of mountain ridges, a water tower and nearby rooftops. “You’re out in the country and you’re a mile from the grocery store.”

He is concerned about farmers having access to land suitable for farming and wants to see his fields continued to be farmed, rather than be developed into houses or apartment buildings. Housing developments border his land to the Northwest and South. Farm fields border Litke’s land to the Northeast and East.

Litke is the owner of the Polarblast sand-blasting company, which does industrial cleaning and painting of steel surfaces. He grew up in State College and has lived at the property for 54 years. His adjoining home and house-lot are not included in the conservation easement.

Litke served in the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam as an air evacuation medic. He built his own helicopter from a kit and obtained his pilot’s license. Privacy and securing a buffer from homes are also reasons Litke has decided to preserve the land. He enjoys watching the visiting deer and black bear.

Legacy

“This is a wonderful piece of land, and we are proud to facilitate this important conservation easement,” said Dan Guss, president of the Farmland Trust. “People living in this densely developed area will be able to forever enjoy having beautiful, open land nearby. The land will also continue to be available as an invaluable resource for agricultural production.”

The Farmland Trust works with landowners to secure agricultural conservation easements, which are tailored to the unique characteristics of landowners.

The Trust holds agricultural conservation easements on 16 preserved farms and 1,428 acres — to become 17 preserved farms and 1,483 acres when Litke’s gift of good land is complete.



David Litke, in his cornfield on the 55 acres of land he is preserving (below) in Bellefonte by donating a conservation easement.

The ridge view (right) from the top of the gently sloping cornfield.



THANK YOU!

The Centre County Farmland Trust thanks supporters of farmland preservation for your generous support.

Thank you to the 82 unique donors of the Centre Gives, 36-hour online giving event, May 10-11. CCFT raised more than \$7,000.

Also in May, the Trust was awarded a grant from the Hamer Foundation.

Thank you to the Hamer Foundation for their generous investment in a three-year capacity-building grant to help with the

CCFT's need for professional and administrative expertise.

In celebration and appreciation for this tremendous support for farmland preservation — plus Lynn Miller's gift and David Litke's easement donation — CCFT is hosting an appreciation event at 814 Cider Works on June 21 for donors, landowners and partners.

Because of your support, we can preserve land. We can't wait to thank and celebrate the **Gift of Good Land** with many people from our CCFT community.



Lynn Miller's Gift *(continued)*

"He also recognized it might need more support to continue to take off."

'Game Changer'

"This generous gift from Lynn Miller is a 'game-changer' for this organization," said Dan Guss, President of CCFT. "We have formed a committee to study ways to invest wisely, and use the funds to best fulfill Lynn's vision for farmland preservation."

The funds are for CCFT to use at its discretion. "He wanted to see the Farmland Trust grow as a strong, autonomous organization and a forerunner in farmland preservation, providing a need that other organizations can't provide," said Canova.

Ray Masters, Miller's longtime friend and colleague said: "Seeing the best farmland gradually disappear to housing developments and things like that was an issue for him. He wanted to preserve as much farmland as possible."

Preservation Champion & Teacher

As a landscape and land planning teacher, advocate and professional, Miller educated people about the importance of balancing development with food production and good soils, said Masters.

Professor Miller played an important role in encouraging Jennifer Shuey, the Trust's treasurer and past-president to pursue a degree in landscape architecture.

"He taught one of the first classes I took in the major—the History of Landscape Architecture. I was hooked," said Shuey. "It is wonderful to now play a small part

in stewarding Lynn's legacy by protecting more of the land that he cared about so deeply."

Rural Roots

Miller grew up with an appreciation of land in rural West Virginia, in the tiny town of Webster Springs, and earned a B.S. in agriculture from West Virginia University in 1953. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy, served during the Korean War and retired as a Lieutenant Commander. Miller earned a Master's Degree in landscape architecture from Harvard University in 1959.

He worked for 40 years in the profession of landscape architecture, and taught for 35 years as a Professor of Landscape Architecture at Penn State University.

And never forgot his roots.

"He was as proud of being from West Virginia as he was of being a fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects," said Masters. Miller was 87 when he died March 3, 2020.

Miller's private design projects included designing the Toftrees Planned Community in State College and the Urban Park of Oporto in Portugal, with Sidonio Pardal.

"The tension is always that we have to develop land for people to live on, but do you do it indiscriminately with hard surfaces and buildings? Or do you create something that helps preserve the land you have and allow people to live on it?" said Canova. Miller fiercely advocated for the latter, to the benefit of preservation — and all of us.



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