

Dana

I think land conservation is so important because it affects so many arenas. It's not just the wildlife habitat, which is something dear to my heart, but as I have done research, I have found that it [over development] also causes a lot of harm to people as far as the infrastructure to build the roads, highways, and sewage systems; it raises our taxes. It also causes more air pollution. There are more people driving further distances to go to work, and there is a lot of water pollution from the runoff from the roads in these new developments.

My first inspiration was watching my favorite places getting turned into developments. As I looked around, I realized there are plenty of groups out there that are trying to make a better way—more sustainable development that won't affect our wildlife areas. If people joined these groups and we started working for change, we could make a change.

The easiest way to get involved is to join an existing group. There are land conservation groups all across Pennsylvania. You can Google your area to find one, or you can ask PALTA—Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, and they can tell you local links to groups in your area.

Another way to get involved is to go to your townships and talk to the township leaders about their zoning plans. Do they have a plan to protect any wildlife areas in your township?

The tip I have learned is you do need to build up a relationship with your township supervisors, go to the meetings, talk to them, find out what is going on in your area. Instead of looking at them as the "enemy," find out what their interests are. You might be surprised to find out they have some of the same concerns and would like to know more and have more information that they can bring to their meetings.