



Good intentions will not save your land

Cautionary tale in conservation: A handshake is not enough

By Carol Hillestad

For Pocono Heritage Land Trust

Back in the 1920s, a group of landowners, mostly farmers, got together to do something good for local kids.

Each family carved out a piece of their land — fields and forest, creeks and ponds — to create a Boy Scout camp in the heart of Polk Township.

All told, it was 755 acres of natural beauty.

Their intention was clear: to provide healthy outdoor experiences for generations to come. They worked with Harry C. Trexler, a well-known

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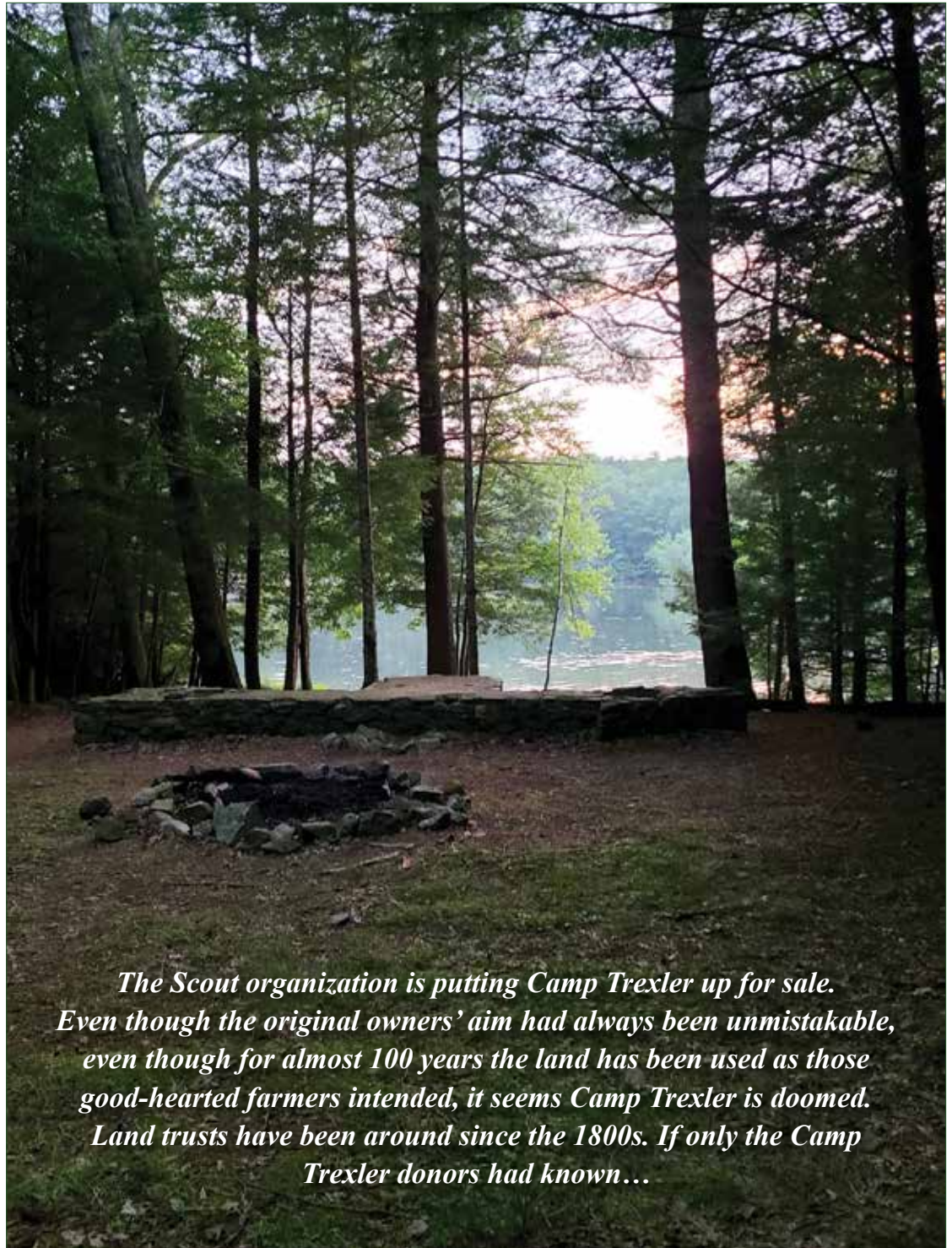
ABOUT PHLT

Pocono Heritage Land Trust (PHLT) is dedicated to the conservation of important lands and waters — including open space, agricultural landscapes, and natural areas in the Poconos. The beauty and diversity of the Pocono landscape have drawn people to this region for well over a century.

Today, more than ever before, long-term protection of precious natural areas depends in part on the actions of concerned private landowners. Preserving our natural legacy and ensuring that your land is protected in its natural state can bring many benefits.

Perhaps the most gratifying is the knowledge that present and future generations will cherish the natural areas your actions made possible.

For information: phlt.org or 570-424-1514.



The Scout organization is putting Camp Trexler up for sale. Even though the original owners' aim had always been unmistakable, even though for almost 100 years the land has been used as those good-hearted farmers intended, it seems Camp Trexler is doomed. Land trusts have been around since the 1800s. If only the Camp Trexler donors had known...

The spirit of Camp Trexler lives in the woods and water — and in the memories of generations of Scouts. (Photo by Robert Lubenetski, a Boy Scout with Troop 431.)



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businessman and philanthropist, to sell the land to the Boy Scouts for this purpose. Back then, gratitude and promises were strong bonds. A handshake was good enough. And so, Camp Trexler came into being.

Generations of Scouts have loved the place. Their lives and spirits sanctified it. Descendants of those generous, good-hearted people still live on their nearby farms.

But it seems a handshake is no longer good enough.

The Scout organization is putting Camp Trexler up for sale. Even though the original owners' aim had always been unmistakable,

**ABOUT CONSERVATION EASEMENTS:
Custom-made for each landowner**

Landowners have different goals for protecting their property, and no two conservation easements are the same. Each easement is tailored for a particular piece of property, its unique natural values, and the owner's goals. Specific rights retained by a landowner or restricted by an easement vary with each property.

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Whatever you think about the Boy Scouts breaking promises to those neighbors, there's a lesson here.

Maybe you have a farm, a

hunting camp or fishing club or some woodlands and fields you want to see protected — for good — from development. No matter how sincere, trustworthy and reliable others are right now, circumstances change (just ask the Boy Scouts). And relying on future good faith down the line — of heirs, fellow club members, hunting buddies, or

future generations — is inviting a travesty.

A local land trust, such as Pocono Heritage Land Trust, can help you make your wishes clear. Not informally over dinner with family, friends, or club members. But legally. And with teeth.

Maybe you don't feel ready to make decisions like this.

Talk to a land trust, anyway. At least find out what the options might be, learn about tax advantages, and understand how to accomplish your goals.

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**POCONO HERITAGE
LAND TRUST**

ABOUT CONSERVING LAND

Founded in 1984, Pocono Heritage Land Trust is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Pocono region by conserving land and inspiring people to care for, enjoy and explore their natural world. PHLT works cooperatively with landowners to preserve their property and leave a legacy of protected natural habitats, healthy forest, clean waterways and open space for future generations.

You can help Pocono Heritage Land Trust protect land for the future. Learn about membership and volunteer opportunities at www.phlt.org.

PLEASE DONATE to preserve important lands and natural resources in the Poconos, for generations to come.

- \$25** provides supplies for one trash cleanup day, or one planting of wildflower seeds for meadow habitat restoration.
- \$50** buys tools for managing invasive plants on volunteer days.
- \$150** prints 500 trail brochures to guide visitors on preserves.
- \$500** builds a streamcrossing bridge to improve trail access.
- \$1,500** covers the cost of an appraisal, the first step in acquiring new land for preservation.
- \$3,000** funds construction of a sign kiosk on a new preserve.
- \$5,000** enables development of a new nature trail network, including trail marking, clearing, signage and maps.

Donate online at phlt.org/donate.html

or clip this form and send it with your check made out to Pocono Heritage Land Trust to:

PHLT, 1539 Cherry Lane Road, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____