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For Immediate Release

17 Acres Preserved in Worcester Township

June 22, 2004 Worcester Township, PA – Long-time preservationist Peter Schlotterer just added another feather to his cap. On June 17, 2004 he signed papers to ensure the permanent protection of 17 acres that he currently owns and lives on in bucolic Worcester Township. By donating a conservation easement to Montgomery County Lands Trust, a non-profit land conservancy, based in Lederach, PA, Mr. Schlotterer ensured that his land will remain permanently free from development.

For the past couple of decades, Mr. Schlotterer has planted hundreds of oaks, hickories, and other native hardwoods on his newly preserved 17 acres, with the goal of turning the land back into the forest it was 300 years ago. Raising seedlings has been a challenge and he has had setbacks due to drought and storms. Yet he values the hardiness of native trees along with their ability to support diverse wildlife.

Mr. Schlotterer began partnering with Montgomery County Lands Trust in 1996, becoming one of the Trust's first members. When he saw farm after farm in other communities being turned under by the bulldozer, he realized that he wanted to save not only his own land, but nearby properties from the same outcome. Just a few years ago he

acted during a critical moment in Worcester Township and committed to placing a deposit on a large parcel of threatened farmland.

The vulnerable property, a 30.55-acre piece of farmland once owned by the Gerstemeirer family, combines with other properties to form a valuable oasis of open space that includes active agriculture, natural habitat, and historic farm landscapes. Connecting properties include Merrymead Farm -- a popular dairy farm open to the public, Peter Schlotterer's own land, the Peter Wentz Farmstead -- a 93-acre county-owned historic property, and also the Scarlett farm, saved through Pennsylvania's farmland preservation program. Peter stepped forward with the needed security deposit to hold the land. Then after the land was purchased by another conservation-minded owner, Mr. Schlotterer contributed a significant portion of the stewardship funds, funds set aside to ensure future maintenance of the conservation easement co-held by Worcester Township and Montgomery County Lands Trust. In the summer of 2002, the deal was sealed with the conservation easement in place.

In honor of Mr. Schlotterer's generous donation, Worcester Township recently erected a brass plaque set in a boulder placed on the 30.55 acres. From 1990 to 1998, Peter Schlotterer belonged to the Worcester Planning Commission, working with key members John Harris, Patricia Quigley and long-time manager Charles Sardo to see that Worcester Township controlled its growth and preserved its rural character.

Working with Peter to preserve his own land and with others to preserve nearby lands is the type of project the Trust likes to work on according to Jake Lea, Director of Land Preservation for the Trust. "Adjacent to existing open space, Peter's own parcel is part of a larger open space plan. Mr. Schlotterer is a dedicated and charitable owner whose goals meshed well with those of the Trust. We like to see that the owner's vision of his property's preservation is met. Because of Peter, Montgomery County is a better place." As a non-profit conservancy, Montgomery County Lands Trust works collaboratively with citizens, municipal leaders, and community organizations to permanently preserve land and to foster the wise stewardship of open space in our county.

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--Montgomery County Lands Trust