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For Immediate Release

**Partners Complete Permanent Protection of First Two Parcels for
Neighborhood Initiative in Marlborough Township**

*Natural Lands Trust and Montgomery County Lands Trust work together to
safeguard 20+ acres of natural woodland.*

August 10, 2005 – Marlborough Township. Working again in collaboration, Natural Lands Trust and Montgomery County Lands Trust completed the permanent protection of two more parcels of land in the larger area known as the Unami Forest. This newest conservation project completed on June 1st in Marlborough Township adds another 20+ acres to the safeguarded land in this area designated as “high priority conservation land” by the multi-state Highland Coalition. Lying within the Pennsylvania Highlands Region, the parcels feature wetlands and the native hardwoods and dramatic diabase boulders unique to the area.

The project began when a group of seven neighbors in Marlborough Township met to discuss how they could work together to protect their individual parcels. Landowners Ines Baentsch and Craig and Barbara Waters are the first of the group to take this important step to ensure that their two separate parcels will remain forever

free from development. Craig Waters says “as we’ve come to appreciate how incredibly diverse and beautiful this forest is, more and more of it has been chopped up for development. We strongly felt it important to do what we could to protect this unique environment.”

Working cooperatively, Drew Gilchrist of Natural Lands Trust and Jake Lea of Montgomery County Lands Trust used a newly designed easement that they believe will be a model easement for other landowners who, like the Waters and Ms. Baentsch, wish to join together in a more streamlined process for land protection. Natural Lands Trust is the primary holder of the easement and bears responsibility for monitoring the easement annually and ensuring proper enforcement. MCLT acts as the back-up agency and will help assure that the terms of the easement are followed. The conservation groups are still in discussion with the other neighbors about possible protection and hope that the Baentsch and Waters easements will inspire further conservation in the area.

Craig notes that Drew and Jake made it possible for them to preserve their land by “guiding us through the legal process patiently and professionally.” On behalf of his wife Barbara and neighbor Ines Baentsch, he gives sincere thanks to Natural Lands Trust and Montgomery County Lands trust. He urges conservation-minded neighbors to contact either group and to act on preservation because “it really is up to us.”

Last year the U. S. Congress passed the Highlands Conservation Act which gave national recognition to the conservation value of land within the Highlands Region. The newly preserved parcels lie within the Unami Forest, in close proximity to five protected properties including the 1,200-acre Musser Scout Reservation.

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--- Montgomery County Lands Trust and Natural Lands Trust