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**For Immediate Release**

## **Montgomery County Lands Trust Receives State Grant for Conservation of 81 Acres of Historic Montgomery County Landscape**

**December 19, 2011 – Northern Montgomery County.** A grant in the amount of \$678,000 has been awarded by the **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources** (DCNR) to Montgomery County Lands Trust. The grant will directly fund the conservation of 81 acres of a long sought-after parcel that is home to the historic Daniel Hiester House in Upper Salford Township and Marlborough Township.

Located off Route 63 just south of Sumneytown, the property has been ranked for three decades as “highest priority” by the Montgomery County Parks and Heritage Services Department. The project presents multiple partners with a rare conservation opportunity. DCNR funding will go toward conservation of only the land portion of the project. Funding for preservation of the historic 1757 Daniel Hiester House on the parcel must be sought from other sources. In meetings led by Montgomery County Lands Trust, owners Charles and Maureen Rogers expressed a keen interest in finding a preservation outcome, but stressed their need to divest themselves of ownership. They allowed just one year for MCLT and its partners to find the resources required to finance preservation of both property and home.

The prominent visual location of the property, combined with its natural resource value, rich history, and potential access to public trails and parkland make it the most significant current acquisition project in Montgomery County. Its natural resources alone merit conservation. The property contains diabase geology, prime agricultural soils and the confluence of Montgomery

County's only two high-quality streams: the Unami Creek and Ridge Valley Creek. The land contains hydric soils, wetlands and significant floodplains. A large portion of the property is covered with mature woodlands that are part of the Unami Forest, a notable section of the nationally recognized Highlands. It is also ideally situated to serve as the linchpin for a future connection to both Montgomery County's 3,400-acre Green Lane Park and the 19-mile Perkiomen Trail just west of the property. With 50,000 monthly users, the nearby Perkiomen Trail connects with the Schuylkill River Trail, a trail that links Philadelphia to Pottsville.

Historically, the Rogers Property is home to the Daniel Hiester House, a 1757 Georgian-style brick residence. The home is in excellent condition, and because it was never remodeled, retains exceptional, unaltered period features. The prominence of this estate was so significant that it was noted on the first official map of Pennsylvania in 1759. After a recent visit to the home, experts from Winterthur in Delaware spoke of the house as a structure of national historic significance. The rare combination of natural and historic resources, along with the prime geographic and visual location, elevates this historic landscape to a status of unprecedented importance not only regionally but statewide. "The project represents an extraordinary conservation opportunity, one that presents itself perhaps just once in a lifetime," says Jake Lea, Director of Land Preservation for the Trust. In addition to the grant received by Montgomery County Lands Trust, DCNR awarded 11 grants to 10 municipalities and the County itself for open space projects in Montgomery County. About the Rogers/Hiester project Dulcie Flaharty, Executive Director for the Trust says, "During a time when funds for open space are scarce, we are grateful to have partners recognize the significance of this incredible project, one that combines protection of the works of God with the preservation of the best works of man."

DCNR is the primary source of state support for Pennsylvania recreation, parks and conservation initiatives. Grant funding from the DCNR assists hundreds of communities and organizations across Pennsylvania to plan, acquire, and develop recreation and park facilities, create trails, and conserve open space.

As a non-profit conservancy, Montgomery County Lands Trust works to preserve and connect the natural areas, farmland, and neighborhood green spaces which contribute to our quality of life, to a clean and abundant water supply, and to the health of our region's economy. To learn more about our organization, please visit our website at [www.mclt.org](http://www.mclt.org)

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