

## **Libraries to receive book on Westmoreland's Natural Areas**

Each library in the Westmoreland County Library Network will soon receive a copy of *Natural Areas in and around Westmoreland County*, thanks to the Westmoreland Land Trust. The book, written by members of the Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club and edited by longtime Club leader, Dick Byers, is a guide to 98 natural areas that are open to the public, each within 35 miles of Greensburg.

The book has something for everyone—hikers, birders, wildflower enthusiasts, and history buffs. A little bit of the history of each site is included, as well as a list of birds and plants that the visitor is likely to see. Scenic views and can't-miss features are given. For those who are new to exploring nature, or looking for a short excursion for the kids, the book is clear about trail length and difficulty, stating which sites are okay for a short visit in your sneakers versus those that require sturdy hiking boots and a day pack.

At face value, the book is a tour guide, maybe even a life-list of sites for the diehard naturalist. Look deeper, and you will see that it is really a current snapshot of our county's natural areas. It explains the healed scars of mining, logging, and even war that happened here, and describes the current threats that are evident, such as invasive plants and deer overpopulation. As pointed out by Byers in the introduction, this is a freeze frame of the conditions now, that may be an important comparison as climate change impacts these lands in future decades.

Betsy Aiken, Executive Director of Westmoreland Land Trust, pointed out that four of the natural areas listed have been preserved, all or in part, by the Westmoreland Land Trust. "The land trust is so pleased to make this donation. We hope this excellent publication will deepen readers' appreciation of our county's exceptional natural resources and the value of their conservation," says Aiken. The Land Trust works to conserve land in Westmoreland County of special ecological, historic, scenic, or recreational value. For more information [westmoreland-landtrust.org](http://westmoreland-landtrust.org) or call 724 325-3031. The books will be presented to the county's libraries during the months of February and March. Copies may be purchased from Dick Byers, email [otusasio@Lhtot.com](mailto:otusasio@Lhtot.com), for \$30 plus shipping.

