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For Immediate Release

**WILDLANDS CONSERVANCY**  
**ANNOUNCES UPPER SAUCON TOWNSHIP TAX INCENTIVE WORKSHOP**

**June 14, 7:00-9:00pm, Upper Saucon Township Municipal Building,**  
**5500 Camp Meeting Road Avenue, Center Valley**

Emmaus, PA – May 29, 2007 –Wildlands Conservancy will host a Tax Incentive Workshop at the Upper Saucon Township Municipal Building, 5500 Camp Meeting Road, in Lehigh County on Thursday, June 14, 2007 from 7:00 to 9:00pm. Interested landowners are welcome to attend and receive the latest information on time-limited incentives available to landowners who preserve their property in 2007.

**Speakers:** The lead speaker at the workshop is Attorney Michael Henry of Gross, McGinley, and LaBarre & Eaton. Attorney Henry specializes in local, state and federal

taxation, tax and estate planning, and real estate law. Diane Matthews-Gehring, Land Preservation Manager for Wildlands Conservancy, will also speak to attendees about preservation options. The workshop is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

**Registration:** To register for the workshop or for more information about the workshops of Wildlands Conservancy, please contact Diane Matthews-Gehring at (610) 965-4397, ext. 20.

**Current Situation:** According to the 2003 report by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources entitled Pennsylvania's *Wildlife and Wild Places – Our Outdoor Heritage in Peril*, Pennsylvania is losing approximately 350 acres per day to development. Pennsylvania has the fifth highest amount of acreage lost to development but was ranked 48<sup>th</sup> lowest among all states in population growth during the 1990s. The landscape of Penn's Woods is dramatically changing from undeveloped valleys and ridges to residential subdivisions, housing the area's moving population. The report continues to say "as private forests and farmland are being converted for housing, the pressures on existing public lands will increase while undeveloped landscapes and open spaces will face increased peril. Wildlife, streams, natural areas, threatened species, recreational opportunities, community vitality, economic health, and our general connections with the outdoors are likely to be adversely affected by the consequences of these mounting pressures on Pennsylvania's natural land base."

**Preservation Instruments:** Several tools exist for the preservation of open space. Among the most equitable are conservation easements, which allow a property owner to limit certain uses on all or a portion of a property for conservation purposes while the owner retains possession and control of the land. A conservation easement is an agreement between a landowner and a third party using terms to which the landowner agrees during negotiation. The agreement may limit the additional number of structures

allowed on a property in the future or limit the number of lots which can be subdivided. Conservation easements do not force a landowner to allow public access to a property. In most cases, owners can either receive cash for the sale of the right to develop (with certain state and local programs) or receive credit for donation of development rights. The sale or donation of development rights permanently preserves a piece of property and is binding upon current and future owners. Added incentives for 2007 provide much larger benefits than ever before for those who donate development rights.

**The New Law:** In 2006, Congress added tax incentives for landowners choosing to permanently preserve their land. Among these changes are provisions raising the income tax deduction allowed a landowner for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income in the year of the donation plus 5 more years, to 50% in the year of the donation plus 15 more years. It also allows qualifying farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to deduct up to 100% of their taxable income (e.g., pay no federal income tax) for the year of the donation plus 15 more years. These added incentives are available until the end of 2007. Wildlands Conservancy is hosting a series of workshops, including this Lehigh County workshop scheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-9:00pm at the Upper Saucon Township Municipal Building, in order to help interested landowners take advantage of these time limited incentives.

**WC Mission:** Wildlands Conservancy, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3), member-supported organization dedicated to protecting the “quality of place” in the Lehigh River valley in eastern Pennsylvania. The vision of the organization is to save the natural treasures of the Lehigh River valley for now and for future generations. Further, the Conservancy’s mission is to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the land, water, ecological, and recreational resources of the Lehigh River valley through involvement with many partners in broad-based educational programs, land-protection and stewardship strategies, water quality and ecological restoration projects, comprehensive

community planning efforts, plus greenway and recreational trail development. In 34 years of conservation activities, the Conservancy has preserved more than 45,000 acres of open space.

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**Directions to the Upper Saucon Municipal Building**

**From points North of Allentown via Route 309:**

Take Route 309 South towards Allentown; follow Route 309 as it joins I-78 East. Bear right onto Exit 60 (Route 309 South/Quakertown). Follow Route 309 South for approximately 2.5 miles and turn left onto Camp Meeting Road. Make another left at the first stop sign. Look for the Municipal Complex on your left. The Municipal Building has red brick and a green roof.

**From points South of Allentown via Route 309:**

Take Route 309 North towards Allentown. Turn right onto Camp Meeting Road (approximately 2.5 miles North of Coopersburg). Follow Camp Meeting Road for less than ¼ mile and look for the Municipal Complex on your left. The Municipal Building has red brick and a green roof.

**From points East of Allentown via I-78:**

Take I-78 West to Exit 60A (Route 309 South/Quakertown). Follow Route 309 South for approximately 2.5 miles and turn left onto Camp Meeting Road. Make another left at the first stop sign. Look for the Municipal Complex on your left. The Municipal Building has red brick and a green roof.

**From points West of Allentown via I-78:**

Take I-78 East to Exit 60 (Route 309 South/Quakertown). Follow Route 309 South for approximately 2.5 miles and turn left onto Camp Meeting Road. Make another left at the first stop sign. Look for the Municipal Complex on your left. The Municipal Building has red brick and a green roof.