



Media Advisory – For Immediate Release

A \$5 million gift from Clark Associates Charitable Foundation will help protect and restore Lancaster County’s natural landscape

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Lancaster, PA – The Lancaster Conservancy (“the Conservancy”) received a \$5 million dollar gift from the Clark Associates Charitable Foundation in celebration of the Clark Associates’ 50th Anniversary. This important philanthropic contribution will support the Conservancy’s future land acquisition efforts and stewardship of its nature preserves across Lancaster County with a special focus on an area along the Susquehanna River between Safe Harbor and Holtwood Dam, known locally as the River Hills.

“We were looking for a project that would keynote our 50 years of business that we’re celebrating this year,” said Fred Clark, Founder and Chairman of Clark Associates. “This was the best way to share the gift of our good fortunes with the community and the county – to preserve as much of these natural lands as we can, so that everyone can enjoy these wild places for generations and generations to come.”

In honor and recognition of this remarkable gift, the Lancaster Conservancy combined three separate nature preserves previously known as House Rock, Reed Run and Pequea South into a large contiguous 373-acre nature preserve to be called the Clark Nature Preserve. A ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, August 19 unveiled the new name of this beautiful area along the Susquehanna.

“The Conservancy’s mission to protect our forests and open spaces for recreation and habitat received a tremendous boost with this gift,” said Conservancy President Phil Wenger.

“Generations of future users will benefit from this transformational gift to protect our natural landscape. This gift will allow the Conservancy to accelerate our efforts to protect our few remaining forests and wild places for the community.”

The Conservancy protects and manages over 7,500 acres of natural lands and owns 47 nature preserves. These preserves serve as critical open natural space for wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, water protection, and carbon storage in the fight against climate change.

“When we think about business, we think like the Conservancy, about the long-term future of Lancaster County,” said Gene Clark, CEO for Clark Associates. “For us, we know you have to invest in your employees to build a strong company that delivers exceptional customer experiences. As a result, our business has grown rapidly. We made this gift to invest our earnings back into our community – helping to protect natural lands for all to enjoy. This creates an even better place to work for our employees so that we can continue to attract and maintain our amazing talent,” continued Clark. “This is the repeatable cycle that builds a great company operating in an exceptional community.”

The Conservancy will also name a soon-to-be built universally accessible trail at Clark Nature Preserve, in memory of the Clark Associates’ founder, Lloyd Clark. This trail will loop through the meadow by the American chestnut research groves and include views of the river. This new trail, to be built next year, will include accessible wildlife blinds, and will provide members of our community, including those who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices, the ability to explore this unique meadow ecosystem and participate in hunting, a passion of Lloyd Clark.

“My father’s passion for hunting and exploring nature were values he taught me that I love sharing with my kids,” said Fred Clark. “Building a universal access trail in Dad’s memory is something we are very excited about.”

Clark Associates is a collective of dynamic companies leading the food service industry in equipment, supplies, and service. From its humble beginnings in 1971 as an electrical supply company, it has become a rapidly growing national supplier for restaurants.

“When we can partner with community builders like the Clark family and when businesses step up to support protecting nature, the opportunities for expanding our work and building out these critical assets for future generations is endless,” said Wenger. “These partnerships are truly invaluable, and we want to give a huge thank you to the Clark Associates Charitable Foundation for their commitment to our mission and this community.”

Clark Nature Preserve is open to the public to explore 365 days a year from sunrise to sunset. The preserve, located in Martic Township, has multiple miles of hiking trails including the Conestoga Trail and offers a scenic overlook of the Susquehanna River. Deep eastern deciduous forests and pawpaw groves cover the steep sides of the river valley between outcrops of bedrock. The preserve also features open meadows that have been restored and several American Chestnut Foundation research groves studying resistance to chestnut blight.



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Driving directions as well as hiking and hunting maps are available on the Conservancy's website at: www.lancasterconservancy.org/preserves/clark/

For more information regarding this announcement, please contact:

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Additional photos, map & a video are available via dropbox or by request:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gskl4lwxphvdfnt/AAC5uJcJEoZlcBCWWS32d1dga?dl=0>

