

# Game Commission acquires property

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has announced its formal acquisition of the Stanley Gittleman property, located three miles south of Port Allegany near the village of Wrights.

The 900-acre parcel was known for years as the Charles Seyler farm and includes the entire Tramroad Hollow watershed. It was acquired in cooperation with the Seneca Highlands Conservancy.

The farm has now been purchased by the Game Commission for inclusion in the state's Game Lands system. As such, it will be managed both to protect the environment of the valley and to allow the public additional recreational opportunities in the Port Allegany area.

Since the Gittleman property was one of the biggest farms left in Liberty Township, it made an ideal foundation for a new game land. Of the 900 acres included in the purchase, roughly 250 are now pasture land with the remainder of the tract being wooded.

This land was assembled gradually from many smaller tracts over the past 100 years, with William E. Sawyer, Lester E. Eastman and Charles Seyler among those who did the most to build the farm to its current size.

Since 1968, the property has been owned by Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Gittleman who are residents of Philadelphia. The Game Commission's purchase of the tract is to a great extent the result of Dr. Gittleman's interest in conservation and his willingness to work with the Game Commission to provide the

land to the public at reasonable cost.

As a part of the state Game Lands system, the farm will be managed with the maintenance of a good environment for wildlife as the primary goal.

Consequently, it can be expected that much of the open land will continue to be planted in various grains which can be left unharvested for deer and other animals to eat.

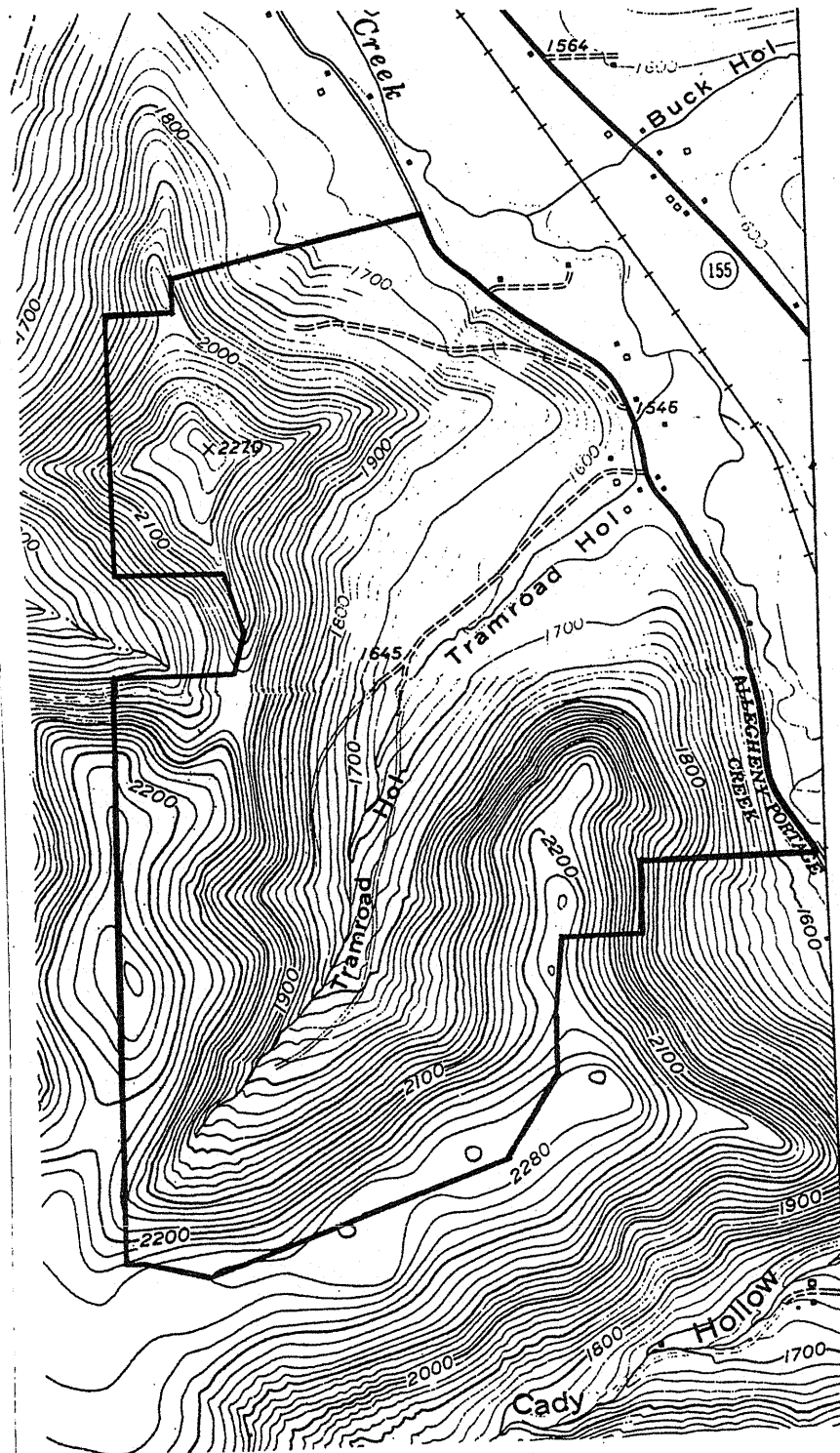
The woodlands will likewise be managed with wildlife as the first priority and timber production secondary.

Although camping is not permitted on state game lands, hiking is always in season and good access to the property is available all along the property's one mile of road frontage. People using the property have been advised, however, to stay within the land's boundaries and to avoid crossing other nearby properties without permission of the landowners involved.

Plans have been made to expand the Game Land over the years ahead but to date no final boundaries have been determined.

The eventual shape and size of the new game land will be a result of the willingness of adjoining owners to sell their property to the Game Commission. All land purchases are handled on a voluntary basis thus the Game Commission can only purchase what lands are offered to it.

Working through the Seneca Highlands Conservancy, options covering an additional 72.5 acres have been acquired from two nearby landowners, bringing the total size of the project close to 1,000 acres.



**NEW ACQUISITION** — The 900-acre Gittleman property now formerly owned by the Pennsylvania Game Commission is located three miles south of Port Allegany off Route 155 near Wrights.

# New Game Lands Located In McKean

By Howard Gustafson

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has announced its formal acquisition of the Stanley Gittelman property, located three miles south of Port Allegany near the village of Wrights. This parcel of land is more familiar to local residents as the Charles Seyler farm. It is also known as Tramroad Hollow by those who follow contour maps.

Since 1968 this property has been owned by Dr. and Mrs. Gittelman of Philadelphia. It is one of the largest farms left in Liberty Township, covering 900 acres. It was assembled over the last 100 years by adding smaller tracts, with William Sawyer, Lester Eastman, and Charles Seyler being among those who built it to its present size.

Roughly 750 acres of the tract are wooded with the remainder pasture land. As a part of the Game Lands system, it will be managed with a good wildlife environment as the primary goal. Much of the present pasture land will be planted with various grains that will be left unharvested for wildlife food. The woodlands will also be managed to provide the best food and cover for wildlife, with timber harvesting a secondary consideration.

As with all Pa. Game Lands, camping is prohibited, as is the use of motorized vehicles. However, hiking is permitted at all seasons, and good access to the property is available along the one mile of road frontage.

Working through the Seneca Highlands Conservancy, options covering an additional 72.5 acres have been acquired from two nearby landowners, bringing the total size of the project to nearly 1000 acres.

The Seneca Highlands Conservancy was formed by four men for the purpose of preserving available land for public use. John Young, Minard Run; Jeff Duke, Duke Center; Philip Schuler, Bradford, and Bill Franklin, Coudersport, are the founders. In addition to the Gittelman property, they have been instrumental in acquiring a large tract of important wildlife habitat near Larabee.

Known to most area residents as the Larabee flats, this apparently useless property is now State Game Lands No. 301. Ultimately, this project will put some 2000 acres under

the jurisdiction of the Pa. Game Commission, although at the present time it is only about 54 percent complete.

About 400 acres of the planned acquisition are in the area bounded by Potato Creek and the Allegheny River on the east side and by the Conrail tracks north of Rt. 446. Generally the balance of the property now owned by the game commission lies between the river and the tracks north to a point just past Canfield Hollow. Not all of the property in this section has been purchased yet; in fact, there are at least five privately-owned pieces of property that separate the pieces owned by the commission. Until boundaries are clearly defined, users are cautioned to be sure they are not trespassing on private lands.

This area of McKean County contains some of the most valuable wildlife habitat available. By the same token, it is of little use for any other purpose. Most of it is wetlands, containing little or no valuable timber, and in order to put it into farm use, it would have to be drained, which is illegal, if not impossible. The Conservancy recognizes the value as wildlife habitat and was able to bring about the sale to the commission.

The Seneca Highlands Conservancy has no connection with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, or any other groups for advice and assistance. The purpose of the Conservancy is to locate desirable property that can be purchased for the price the game commission or other conservation agencies are allowed to pay. It owns no property, although the founders have purchased land on their own with an eye towards inclusion in the conservation effort.

A third project is under way in the Wrights district, but to date only 125 acres of a proposed total of 1200 have been committed. One of the difficult problems affecting purchase is the limited amount the game commission is allowed to pay per acre. This figure is often less than the market price for timber or farmlands. A willingness on the part of the owner to sell to the conservancy is necessary, which limits the possibilities. According to Mr. Young, the conservancy is not knocking on doors to acquire purchase options, but if someone is looking for a way to donate land, the group contains enough legal expertise to help the process.

