

“James E. Holden Greenways Volunteer of the Year”

For having provided significant uncompensated hours and expertise:

Susan M. Hilton, Ed.D.



Susan M. Hilton, Ed.D., of Franklin, Pa., has been an avid and active volunteer supporting sound conservation of natural resources, wise development and stewardship of recreational trails, cultivation of beautification projects, public education about the outdoors, and prudent non-profit organization management for many years. She concentrates her direct involvement on hands-on projects and Board participation in vital non-profit groups situated in Venango County and the Allegheny River watershed. Her willingness to contribute as a volunteer in such activities was evident while she was an Associate Professor in the Communication Department at the Clarion Campus of Clarion University of Pennsylvania from 1988 through 2013. Since retiring, she continues to eagerly participate and promote projects and events for a growing list of non-profits related to the natural world and free public outdoor recreation.

Allegheny Valley Conservancy (AVC) Sue has been a board member of this non-profit Land Trust since its founding in 2003, and has served as secretary for the past few years. She helps publicize and assist in whatever ways are needed for their annual Allegheny River clean-ups and fun floats, as well as helping host escorted hikes through special greenways conducted for students and the public. She is not bashful when it comes to fund-raising to enable AVC to provide permanent stewardship to the multiple protected sites through own and/or manage through easements.

Penn State Master Gardeners of Venango County. Sue enrolled in the Master Gardener class in 2012. She completed the required 50 hours of volunteer work, and now each year completes the required 10 hours of education and 10 hours of volunteer work. She is currently the secretary of the group, and participates in several of its many projects. She coordinated the information table about pollinators which she and five others from this chapter operated during the 2025 Nature Arts Showcase and Sale.

Franklin Gardeners Association. She has been a long-time member of the FGA and has served in various capacities, including Ways and Means and is currently the secretary. For eight years, from 2014-2022, she was co-chair of the May Garden Mart. FGA's mission is beautification, so Sue has assisted with the planting and maintaining of gardens at the Franklin Fire Station and other sites.

Allegheny Valley Trails Association. Sue was a member of the board for several years, and participated in its many activities, including the fund-raising auctions, the clean-up days and riding safety patrol. She continues to support the trail organization and uses it frequently for recreation.

This award is co-sponsored by the Holden Family and anonymous friends.