

Western Pennsylvania  
Conservancy



**Thomas D. Saunders**  
**President and CEO, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy**



*"The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy does such important work in conserving and enhancing the best of the region. I look forward to leading such an extraordinary organization and working with WPC's board of directors, many supporters and volunteers. The Pittsburgh area and western Pennsylvania region are unique in their remarkable beauty, and their scenic and natural resource values."*

*--Thomas Saunders*

Thomas Saunders comes to the Conservancy from Gainesville, Florida where he was Community Development Director for the City of Gainesville for the past ten years. In that role, Saunders directed planning, growth management, redevelopment, housing, historic preservation, neighborhood planning and other duties. His approach to planning is noted for its careful growth management, protection of tree canopies and environmental qualities, and enhancement of public and open spaces in areas needing revitalization. Gainesville has adopted land use plans that protect the city's significant ecological open space areas and is remediating former brownfield sites for open spaces. Gainesville is home to the University of Florida, the third largest university in the nation. Saunders also served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Florida School of Law.

Prior to that, Saunders was director of the Maryland Environmental Trust, a statewide land trust that protects open space and also supports the conservation work and capacity growth of 40 local land trusts across the state. As one of the largest conservation and voluntary preservation easement-holding organizations in the country, the Maryland Environmental Trust works with property owners across the state on planning and conservation efforts.

Saunders' distinguished career also includes a visiting professorship at the University of Maryland in Urban and Regional Studies and Public Affairs as well as positions at law firms in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco. He holds a J.D. from Stanford Law School and a Masters in Public Affairs and Urban and Regional Planning from Princeton University. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Vanderbilt University with a B.A. in Economics.

Mr. Saunders spent part of his childhood in the Pittsburgh area. Today, he resides here with his wife, Lisa Auel, and their children, Caroline, 12, and Carter, 8.