



DELAWARE  
HIGHLANDS  
CONSERVANCY

# Highlands JOURNAL

Fall & Winter 2023





DELAWARE  
HIGHLANDS  
CONSERVANCY

#### OFFICERS

Douglas Hayes, *President*  
Barbara Cuffe, *Vice President*  
Sabry Mohideen, *Treasurer*  
Michael Cann, *Secretary*

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Kevin Barber  
Greg Belcamino  
Amy Erlwein  
Nancy Kiesendahl Bloch  
Karen Lutz  
Jacqueline Sailer  
David Satnick  
Scott Van Gorder  
Louise Washer  
Marie Zwyer  
Barbara Yeaman, *Director Emerita*

#### STAFF

Diane Rosencrance  
*Executive Director*

Bethany Zarnowski  
*Communications and  
Development Director*

Trey Talley  
*Senior Land Protection Coordinator*

Nicole DeCarolis  
*Stewardship Coordinator*

Lucas Green  
*Reserve and Facilities Coordinator*

Kaylan Hubbard  
*Land Protection Coordinator*

Samantha Mango  
*Donor Relations Coordinator*

Rachel Morrow  
*Education and Volunteer Coordinator*

Steven Gosch  
*Conservation Programs Associate*

#### CONTACT US

Van Scott Nature Reserve  
571 Perkins Pond Rd  
Beach Lake, PA 18405

DelawareHighlands.org  
info@delawarehighlands.org  
PA: 570-226-3164  
NY: 845-583-1010



## Scholarship Awarded to Local Student

**The Delaware Highlands Conservancy has awarded the annual Vanessa Joy Van Gorder Memorial Scholarship for \$2,000 to Bailey Tesseyman, a 2023 graduate of Sullivan West Central High School.**

The Vanessa Joy Van Gorder Memorial Scholarship was established in 2015 in honor of Vanessa, who passed away on December 25, 2014. A recent graduate from West Chester University with a degree in education, Vanessa was passionate about the outdoors and loved exploring the region with her friends and family. The Conservancy established this scholarship in Vanessa's memory and to honor her dream of becoming an educator.

Recipient Bailey Tesseyman will attend the University at Albany (SUNY) to study sociology. According to Bailey, "The development of the upcoming generation is both pivotal and vital. I think it's incredibly important to help shape their view of the world so real change and progress can flourish." In high school, she participated in several extracurriculars including the art club, as a student ambassador for the Chi Hive in Narrowsburg, NY, and a member of STEAM.

To continue to inspire youth and encourage study and careers in natural science and education, contributions to the scholarship fund and other environmental education and conservation initiatives can be made online at [DelawareHighlands.org](https://DelawareHighlands.org) or by mail to 571 Perkins Pond Rd, Beach Lake, PA 18405.



*Bailey Tesseyman,  
Sullivan West Central High School;  
2023 scholarship recipient.*



VAN SCOTT NATURE RESERVE  
PHOTO BY NICOLE DECAROLIS





PHOTO BY DAVID SOETE

## 2024 WINTER SCHEDULE Eagle Watch Bus Tours

Please visit

[DelawareHighlands.org/events](https://DelawareHighlands.org/events) or call 570-226-3164 ext. 2 to register. Tours are 11am-3pm, departing from Lackawaxen, PA. Tickets are \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members.

Kids under 12 are free!

**January 6**

**January 20**

**January 27**

**February 3**

**February 17**

**February 24**

Or, visit our Eagle Observation Areas staffed by volunteers on weekends in January and February.

[DelawareHighlands.org/eagles](https://DelawareHighlands.org/eagles)

# Winter Eagle Watching in the Upper Delaware

**In the winter months, our region becomes a temporary home to hundreds of bald eagles. Arriving in December from Canada and upstate New York, the eagles come in search of open water to fish, and large stands of trees in which to perch and roost.** The clean waters and protected forests of the Upper Delaware River provide the perfect winter habitat for these magnificent birds, and eagle-viewing is a popular winter activity.

## Eagle Watch

Join us for a guided Eagle Watch bus tour, scheduled in January and February 2024! Trips will depart from our Winter Field Office in Lackawaxen, PA at the Zane Grey Museum. For more information or to register, please visit [DelawareHighlands.org/events](https://DelawareHighlands.org/events) or call 570-226-3168 ext. 2.

If you prefer to take your own driving tour, visit [DelawareHighlands.org/eagles](https://DelawareHighlands.org/eagles) for information on viewing eagles safely on your own and to download a map with GPS coordinates for the Eagle Observation Areas located throughout the Upper Delaware River region. On weekends in January and February, the viewing areas are staffed by Conservancy volunteers ready to help you have a great eagle-watching experience!

**Or, make a weekend of it!** Our Green Lodging Partners at Settlers Inn and Ledges Hotel in Hawley, PA will host

you for a winter eagle-watching weekend which includes a guided Eagle Watch bus tour on January 13 or February 10. Visit [www.TheSettlersInn.com](https://www.TheSettlersInn.com) for more the details on this special weekend getaway package. Plus, stay tuned for details on a special “Brunch and Bus Tour” coming later this year!

Follow the Conservancy on Facebook

**@DelawareHighlandsConservancy** and Instagram

**@DHConservancy** for photos, videos, and updates from our volunteers through the winter season.

## Eagle Etiquette

During your visit, remember to practice ‘eagle etiquette’ to ensure you do not disturb the birds. Avoid loud noises such as yelling, car door slamming, horn honking, and unnecessary movement. Use binoculars instead of trying to get closer, and don’t do anything to try to make the eagle fly. If the viewing blind is closed, remain inside your vehicle to avoid disturbing the birds, and park only in designated public parking areas.

Practicing eagle etiquette ensures that the eagles are able to conserve the precious energy they need to survive the cold winter months.

The Upper Delaware River region is one of the largest wintering habitats for eagles in the northeast United States. Being respectful when watching wildlife means we can continue to experience the joy and satisfaction we get from seeing eagles soar above our rivers and forests.



# Conservancy Responds to Timber Theft on Protected Property

**A**s a nationally accredited land trust, the Conservancy's primary responsibility is to ensure that the terms of its conservation easements, set forth to permanently protect each property's unique conservation values, are being upheld. Through required annual property visits, frequent communication with landowners, and diligent recordkeeping, the Conservancy strives to reduce instances that have adverse effects on the protection of these properties. Occasionally, incidents do occur and the Conservancy is obligated to take legal action.

**During a walk on her property in April 2019, Helen Beichel, a landowner of a conserved property in Sullivan County, NY, discovered that a logger had crossed her well-marked property boundary, illegally cut down and removed 120 sawtimber-grade trees, and destroyed a memorial site dedicated to the original property owner and donor of the conservation easement, Tom Raleigh.**

The trees cut were primarily mature white oaks—not only the most valuable trees on the site, but also the most ecologically important for production of the food supply critical for wildlife habitat. In addition, the logger created roads across the property traversing wetlands and vernal pools and left mud-filled ruts across steep slopes, endangering the high-quality stream located nearby.

"I nearly fainted when I saw what had happened to my forest. How could good neighbors do this? When I saw they had utterly destroyed Tom's memorial, I cried," said Ms. Beichel. "If people are planning to do a logging job on their land, consult with a forester to do it sustainably. The forester will pay for themselves by making sure you are paid properly for your trees, property lines are respected, as well as making sure your forest will recover."

**Since this discovery was made, the Delaware Highlands Conservancy has worked in partnership with the landowner, the New**

**York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and legal counsel for restitution.**

In 2023, a settlement was reached between the Conservancy, the landowner, and the defendants in this case to provide remediation and restoration of the trees that were removed and to repay the Conservancy's legal expenses in defense of this conservation easement.

"We are pleased to have brought this to conclusion," stated Conservancy Executive Director Diane Rosencrance. "Though the timber theft caused significant damage to the property, the landowner and the Conservancy remain committed to restoring the forest that was impacted and ensuring that it is protected for future generations."

## **The History of Mitchell Pond Brook**

The Conservancy was first contacted about this special Sullivan County property in the mid-1990s by the original landowner, who wanted to permanently protect his cherished land for future generations. Although Mr. Raleigh passed away before he could conserve his land, his niece honored his wishes after she inherited the property and donated the land to the Conservancy in 2009. She also installed the memorial site that was destroyed during the timber theft, intended as a lasting tribute to the man who recognized the need to preserve this valuable woodland.

In accordance with the donor's wishes, the Conservancy then sold the property, protected with a conservation easement, to a conservation-minded buyer, Ms. Beichel, in 2012. Since then, Ms. Beichel has diligently cared for the property, including working with several natural resource professionals in an effort to enhance, further protect, and support a healthy and productive forested ecosystem.

Like the memorial site, the conservation easement also represents the original donor's testament and legacy, which Ms. Beichel is honored to preserve and respect.

As a nationally accredited land trust, the Conservancy is able to insure its easements through TerraFirma Risk Retention Group, which helps to cover the costs of any necessary legal defense. The Delaware Highlands Conservancy remains committed to stewarding and defending all of our conservation easements and ensuring that the conservation values are upheld, forever.







## Sometimes Brook: Conserving Generations of Family Memories

**V**ictoria Kohler's 50 acres in Sullivan County, New York has been a cherished part of her family for generations. In the early 20th century, the property belonged to her grandparents, who established a dairy farm, constructed a sawmill, and created a pond from which they would cut and sell ice. When Vicki's grandparents passed away, the property was inherited by her mother and uncles, and eventually passed on to Vicki.

She has fond memories of her childhood spent on the property, playing with her cousins and skating and ice fishing on the pond. "Somebody asked me one time if I went to summer camp, and I said I *lived* summer camp," Vicki said. "It was a beautiful childhood for all of us."

Today, Vicki still enjoys walking in the woods on the property, observing the variety of wildlife that lives there and migrates through the area. A hurricane destroyed the dam on the pond about ten years ago, but it has since evolved into a vibrant wetland area and an active bird-nesting site. Vicki speaks fondly of a place on the property she calls "Sometimes Brook," where a seeping spring turns into an ephemeral stream during periods of heavy rain. The water from Sometimes Brook, and other streams and springs on the property, eventually flows into Halfway Brook, which is a tributary to the Delaware River.

**Her love for the property, and concern for its future when she is no longer here to steward the land, led Vicki to contact the Delaware Highlands Conservancy to discuss options for conserving it. Now this special property is permanently protected with a conservation easement held by the Conservancy.**

While Vicki continues to own the land, the easement protects the property in perpetuity from subdivision and development and ensures that no matter who owns it in the future, the forests, wildlife, and Sometimes Brook will continue to thrive.

"I just plan to enjoy the property until I'm gone," Vicki stated. "I feel I've done as much as I can to put in place a protection for the future. With every year that goes by, there's less and less land that's just left alone, and I think it's important to leave certain things alone. We should really take care of what we have, or else it will be gone."

By generously donating this easement to the Conservancy, Vicki has established an enduring legacy of conservation and has ensured that generations to come will have the opportunity to create their own cherished memories on this special property.

*This project was supported with funding from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) and New York's Environmental Protection Fund. The NYSCPP is administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with the state Department of Environmental Conservation.*



# Congratulations to the Photo Contest Winners!

## Confluence: Land, Water, Wildlife

Through summer 2023 the Conservancy held its sixth annual juried photo contest, **Confluence: Land, Water, Wildlife**. The contest invites local photographers to capture striking nature photos from the Upper Delaware River region in five categories: landscape, wildlife, macro, water, and the Van Scott Nature Reserve, plus a youth category for photographers under age 18.

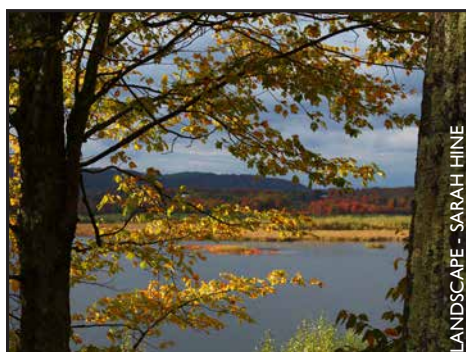
The Conservancy is pleased to announce the winners of the juried contest. In the **landscape category**, winner - Sarah Hine, runners-up - Pat Ashley and Tina Tison.

**Wildlife category**, winner - Terry Rogers, runners-up - Eileen Chorba and Kathleen Colligan. **Water category**, winner - Sarah Hine, runners-up - Liz DiMenno and Jodi Roth-Winship. **Macro category**, winner - Tina Tison, runners-up - Paulette Forgacs and David Gibides.

**Van Scott Nature Reserve category**, winner - Claire Shickora, runner-up - Meagan Hill. **Youth category**, winner - Anna Brown, age 15; runners-up - Jaxen Counts, Olivia Counts, Payton Darcy, Owen Doyle, Lily Eltz, and Ruby Richard. The **People's Choice** winner is Kathleen Colligan and the **Conservancy Staff Pick** is Victoria Sanok.

The ARTery Gallery in Milford, PA will host the Conservancy from November 10th until December 4th in an exhibition featuring the winning photographs alongside artwork created by ARTery member artists, **opening with a reception on Saturday, November 11 from 2-4pm** at 210 Broad Street, Milford.

A selection of the winners is below; **all of the winning photos may be viewed on the Conservancy's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/delawarehighlandsconservancy](https://www.facebook.com/delawarehighlandsconservancy).**



## Save the Date!

Please mark your calendar for **Foods of the Delaware Highlands** on **Saturday, May 4, 2024** at Silver Birches in Hawley, PA. We're celebrating the **30th anniversary** of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy!

**Foods of the Delaware Highlands** is the Conservancy's primary benefit event—a beautiful spring evening lakeside with good friends, an amazing farm-to-table dinner, and exciting live and silent auctions featuring fun and unique activities, art, and more, all highlighting the beauty and bounty of the Upper Delaware.





## Protecting the Confluence of the Delaware River

In June 2023, a 63.5-acre property in Buckingham Township, Wayne County, PA at the confluence of the East and West branches of the Delaware River was permanently protected with a conservation easement held by the Conservancy.

This unique property includes 5,300 feet of frontage on the West Branch and main stem of the Delaware River and 935 feet of frontage on Shehawken Creek. The conservation easement will ensure that this property is forever protected from development and subdivision. Its forests, wetlands, and meadows will help to protect the water quality in the Delaware River, provide quality habitat for wildlife, and enhance the scenic beauty for the surrounding region. **It brings the Delaware Highlands Conservancy's total conserved acreage in the region to 18,900.**

The property is privately owned and is not open to the public. A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally binding agreement between a landowner and a land trust that permanently protects a property's natural values while the landowner continues to own and manage the land, subject to the permitted uses detailed in the easement.

**Learn more about conserving your land, and read the stories of other landowners who have protected their cherished properties, at [www.DelawareHighlands.org/landowner](http://www.DelawareHighlands.org/landowner).**



## Does Your Employer Offer A Matching Gift Program?

**Make your donation dollars go further this season!**

Many employers offer matching gift programs that will double, triple, or even quadruple match your donations to nonprofit organizations like the Conservancy.

If you have any questions or need a donation verification form completed, please contact Bethany Zarnowski, Communications & Development Director at [bethany@delawarehighlands.org](mailto:bethany@delawarehighlands.org) or 570-226-3164 ext. 1. **Thank you!**

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 CORPORATE SPONSORS



**Learn more at [delawarehighlands.org/membership-support/corporate-sponsorships/](http://delawarehighlands.org/membership-support/corporate-sponsorships/).**

## Leaving a Legacy

What type of legacy will you leave behind? Our Legacy Leaders have included the Conservancy in their will or estate plans, or have helped a parent, partner, or loved one leave a legacy.

We can discuss (along with your tax and financial advisor) strategies to help you support the Conservancy's land protection mission while also maximizing your tax and financial benefits. If you would like to learn more, or if you have already considered us in your estate plans, please contact Samantha Mango, Donor Relations Coordinator at [samantha@delawarehighlands.org](mailto:samantha@delawarehighlands.org) or 570-226-3164 ext. 9 so we may thank you during your lifetime.

### Legacy Leaders

Sue Currier  
Patricia Diness  
Helen Early (deceased)  
Mary Evans  
Arnold Friedman (deceased)  
Linda Gearhart  
Susanne Hand & David Kinsey  
Susan Hartney  
Karen Lutz  
Harold MacGregor (deceased)  
Dorothy Merrill (deceased)  
Mary Sue Sweeney Price  
Kimberly (Mimi) Raleigh  
Denise Risley & Will McTarsney  
Brenda Seldin  
Richard Snyder (deceased)  
Charles Victor Traeger (deceased)  
Sigrid Wilshinsky  
Jonathan Wind  
Barbara Yeaman





**Your  
Winter 2024  
Eagle Watch  
Calendar of  
Events is  
inside!**

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy is protecting nearly 19,000 acres of working farms and forests, clean waters, and wildlife habitat in the Upper Delaware River region.

To learn more about...

the Delaware Highlands Conservancy or to make a donation in support of our work, visit [DelawareHighlands.org](https://DelawareHighlands.org).  
Find us on @DelawareHighlandsConservancy @DHConservancy

Printed on recycled paper.



DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

SERVING NEW YORK AND PENNSYLVANIA

571 Perkins Pond Rd Beach Lake, PA 18405

*"Nature is not a place to visit. It is home." – Gary Snyder*

Non-Profit Org.  
Hawley, PA  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 42