



DELAWARE
HIGHLANDS
CONSERVANCY

Highlands JOURNAL

Fall & Winter 2022



PHOTO BY LAURIE LOBBREGG - WINNER, LANDSCAPE, 2022 PHOTO CONTEST

Like many other nonprofit organizations, the Delaware Highlands Conservancy is facing new challenges this year in raising the necessary funds for our work. But these new challenges also bring new opportunities.

Inside, you'll read about our vision for the future of the Van Scott Nature Reserve as a community resource with an accessible and sustainable conservation education center, and you'll see the latest updates on our popular community events and programs.

As a member-supported organization, we are able to offer year-round activities and welcome the public to the Van Scott Nature Reserve to enjoy our walking trails because of the generosity of our members, volunteers, and friends.

In a few weeks, you will also receive our autumn fundraising appeal letter in the mail. As you read this newsletter, we hope you will begin to consider a special year-end gift to

the Conservancy. Each gift is a direct investment in the future of the Upper Delaware River region.

The donations we receive are put to work right here in the local community. They support the permanent protection of the working farms and forests, clean waters, and wildlife habitat of the region, they allow us to maintain and improve the Van Scott Nature Reserve and keep trails open for the public to enjoy, and they help to support quality educational programs for people of all ages.

Thank you for caring about the people, the wildlife, and the irreplaceable special places of the Upper Delaware River region.



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Looking Toward the Future

VISION FOR THE CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

As the Conservancy continues to grow, so do our plans for the Van Scott Nature Reserve. When this special property was donated to us in 2020, the Board of Directors voted to undertake a \$5 million Fund for the Future capital campaign to assure the long-term sustainability of the organization, to expand educational programming, and to sustain our ability to meet the conservation needs of our community.

In October 2021, we officially opened the Reserve to the public with more than three miles of hiking trails through the woods, wildflower meadows, and wetlands and for our educational programs and workshops.

As we look toward the future of the Reserve as a resource for the community, our next phase of growth will include the development of an accessible Environmental Learning Center for people of all ages and abilities. The existing two-story garage on the property will be renovated and converted into a sustainable center for conservation education, used for school groups, adult learning sessions, and informal educational programs.

The first floor will feature a fully functional science lab for citizen scientists of all ages to learn about conservation, ecology, and sustainability with hands-on activities, modern equipment, and up-to-date resources. The second-floor space will host educational workshops, retreats, and meetings in a comfortable and adaptable setting with full audio-visual capacity. A covered three-season extension will feature covered tables with audio-visual capability to bring the classroom outdoors.

To learn more about the Fund for the Future and to discuss named gift opportunities for the Environmental Learning Center and the Van Scott Nature Reserve, please contact Executive Director Diane Rosencrance at 570-226-3164 ext. 5 or diane@delawarehighlands.org.



The Conservancy's vision for a sustainable, accessible Conservation Education Center at the Van Scott Nature Reserve. Named gift opportunities to support the development of the education center are available.



2023 WINTER SCHEDULE Eagle Watch Bus Tours

Please visit

[DelawareHighlands.org/events](https://delawarehighlands.org/events) or call 570-226-3164 ext. 8 to register. Tours are 11am-3pm, departing from Lackawaxen, PA. Tickets are \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members. Kids under 12 are free!

January 7
January 21
January 28
February 4
February 18
February 25

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

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

PHOTO BY DAVID B. SOETE

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 2023! 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. 8.

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 14 or February 11. Visit www.TheSettlersInn.com for more the details on this special weekend getaway package.

Follow the Conservancy on Facebook [@DelawareHighlandsConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/DelawareHighlandsConservancy) and Instagram [@DHConservancy](https://www.instagram.com/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.

Thank you for doing your part to keep eagles and people healthy and safe!

Protecting Your Land: TOP 5 Frequently Asked Questions

by Kaylan Hubbard and Trey Talley, Land Protection Coordinators

As the Conservancy’s Land Protection Coordinators, we answer a wide variety of questions from landowners interested in conservation. While many questions are specific to the individual landowner or their property, there are some questions that come up again and again. Here are our answers to five common questions:

- 1

What makes a property a good fit for a conservation easement?
The Conservancy’s mission is to conserve the forests, farmland, clean waters, and wildlife habitat of the Upper Delaware River region. We therefore prioritize properties that have an abundance of one or more of these resources. We also prioritize properties that are adjacent to land that has already been conserved, such as state forests, parks, and other conservation easements. While we will consider properties of any size, we typically focus our work on properties larger than 20 acres.
- 2

Does a conservation easement mean the Conservancy owns the land?
No, the landowner retains ownership and use of their property. They can still sell or transfer the property, but all future owners will have to follow the terms of the conservation easement.
- 3

Do conservation easements require public access?
No, Delaware Highlands Conservancy does not require public access for our conservation easements. It is up to the landowner to decide if they would like to allow public access to their property through a conservation easement.
- 4

Do conservation easements prohibit hunting & fishing?
No, passive outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, is allowed. In fact, the Conservancy holds conservation easements on land owned by hunting and fishing clubs, and we recognize the value of these activities for the people and ecosystems of the Upper Delaware River region.
- 5

Do conservation easements allow any future development?
The Conservancy’s Land Protection staff work with each landowner to draft a conservation easement that balances the landowner’s goals for current and future use of the property with meaningful and perpetual conservation. For undeveloped properties, this means setting aside a small area to allow for a new house or other structures to be built in the future. For properties that already have structures on them, it means limiting the number and location of new structures. In general, our conservation easements allow limited development as long as it does not harm the conservation values of the property.

If you are interested in learning more about conservation easements, please reach out to our Land Protection Coordinators at 570-226-3164, by email at kaylan@delawarehighlands.org or trey@delawarehighlands.org, or join the Conservancy’s next Conservation Conversations webinar in the Spring.

KEY VALUES



Natural Habitat



Working Farms



Clean Waters



Heritage



Community Recreation

Save the Date!

Please mark your calendar and save the date for **Foods of the Delaware Highlands** on **Saturday, April 29, 2023** at The Inn at Woodloch in Hawley, PA.

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.

We hope to see you there!



Notes from the Reserve Meadows: Good for Pollinators, Good for the Planet

by Jason Zarnowski, Reserve and Facilities Manager

With nearly 65 acres of meadows, the Van Scott Nature Reserve provides important habitat for pollinators like bees and monarch butterflies, which have recently been listed as an endangered species. If you’ve visited the Reserve recently, you may have noticed that these meadows have been mowed. The milkweed, goldenrods, and grasses that adorned these fields so beautifully in the summer have been reduced to stubble. In order for these areas to remain as great pollinator habitat, a bit of maintenance is required.

If left alone, tougher grasses, brambles, and woody vegetation begin to move in and reduce the area suitable for wildflowers such as milkweed, which is the sole plant on which the monarch butterfly lays its eggs. Over time, trees begin to sprout (if the deer don’t get to them first) and the meadows succeed into forests.

With such intense pressure from invasive species like multiflora rose and autumn olive, all of the meadows at the Reserve are mowed annually. Places where there is less pressure from invasives can be mowed on a rotational basis, such as once every 2-3 years.

When mowing the meadows, timing is important. We begin mowing around mid-August once the ground-nesting birds like bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows have fledged and left their nests. Since many of the wildflowers in the meadows are either still in bloom or not yet in full bloom at that time, we mow the areas that are mostly grasses first, saving the areas with late summer wildflowers until later in the season once the blooms have passed and the pollinators have had an opportunity to do their jobs. We also try to start mowing each section in the middle and work out to the edge or mow in smaller strips to reduce the chances of a wildlife strike.

Meadows can be any size! Replacing your lawn with native vegetation can provide food and cover and attract a variety of wildlife. Visit <https://extension.psu.edu/meadows-and-prairies-wildlife-friendly-alternatives-to-lawn> to learn more about converting your lawn into a pollinator-friendly meadow.



Congratulations to the Photo Contest Winners!

Confluence: Land, Water, Wildlife

Through summer 2022 the Conservancy held its fifth 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 - Laurie Lobbregt (*newsletter cover photo*), runners-up - Tracy Harris and Daniel Pilz. **Wildlife category**, winner - Peter Kolesar, runners-up - Stephen Hansen and Jeffrey Sidle. **Water category**, winner - Roger Gottlieb, runners-up - Sarah Hine and Stephen Hansen. **Macro category**, winner - William Brown, runners-up - Lynda Asprinio

and Kathe Williams. **Van Scott Nature Reserve category**, winner - Jeffrey Sidle, runners-up - Claire Shickora and Sarah Hine. **Youth category**, winner - Anna Brown, age 14; runners-up - Owen Doyle, Aidan Hague, Reilly Hague, Mckayleigh Lokuta, Giada Mancuso, and Kallista Straut. The **People's Choice** winner is Eileen Chorba and the **Conservancy Staff Pick** is John Butler.

The ARTery Gallery in Milford, PA will host the Conservancy from November 10th until December 5th in an exhibition featuring the winning photographs alongside artwork created by ARTery member artists, **opening with a reception on Saturday, November 12 from 2-4pm** at 210 Broad Street, Milford.

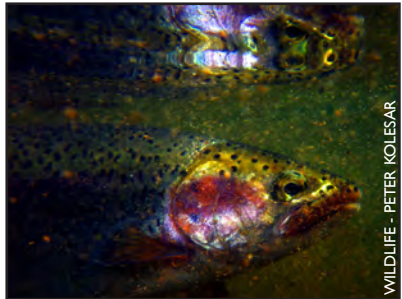
A selection of the winners is below; **all of the winning photos may be viewed on the Conservancy's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/delawarehighlandsconservancy.**



WATER - ROGER GOTTLIEB



MACRO - WILLIAM BROWN



WILDLIFE - PETER KOLESAR



YOUTH - ANNA BROWN

Scholarship Awarded to Local Student

The Conservancy awarded its annual Vanessa Joy VanGorder Memorial Scholarship for \$2,000 to **Owen Anderson, a 2022 graduate of Eldred Junior-Senior High School**.

The scholarship was established in 2015 in memory 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 Owen Anderson is attending SUNY Cobleskill in their A.A.S. Landscape Development program with guaranteed admission to SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) in Syracuse to finish with a B.L.A. in Landscape Architecture. In high school, Owen was Student Council President, a National Honor Society member, and accepted as a member of the NYS Regional Area All-State Symphonic Band as a trombone player. As a Landscape Architect, Owen hopes to "let [his] creativity run wild and construct uniquely beautiful landscapes for all people to enjoy."

To continue to encourage study and careers in natural science and education, contributions to the scholarship fund and other environmental education and conservation programs can be made online at DelawareHighlands.org or by mail to 571 Perkins Pond Rd, Beach Lake, PA 18405.



Vanessa's parents, Scott and Beth VanGorder, with scholarship recipient Owen Anderson.



Ten Years of the Green Lodging Partnership

Nearly Half a Million Dollars Raised for Conservation

Representatives from Settlers Hospitality and Woodloch properties gathered this summer at the Conservancy's Van Scott Nature Reserve to celebrate ten years of success in the Green Lodging Partnership and nearly half a million dollars raised for local conservation.

Through the Partnership, guests at participating lodgings are invited to make a small donation to the protection of the working farms and forests, clean waters, and outdoor recreational opportunities that make the Upper Delaware River region such a wonderful place to live, work, and visit. The funds raised directly support the Conservancy's land conservation efforts.

The Green Lodging Partnership launched in July 2012 with two participating pilot partners: Settlers Inn and Woodloch Resort. Since then, the Partnership has grown to include twelve participating local businesses on both sides of the Delaware River in Pennsylvania in New York.

Together, the Green Lodging Partners have raised \$467,760 in support of local conservation over the past ten years, all through voluntary \$2-per-stay donations.

The Conservancy sincerely thanks all participating local businesses for their continued efforts to protect the Upper Delaware River region.

In photo, from left: Brad Kiesendahl and Tess Murray, Woodloch; Terri Marcellus, Settlers Hospitality; Brooke James, Woodloch; Diane Rosencrance, Delaware Highlands Conservancy Executive Director; Evan Dorste, Rose Janisheski, and Grant Genzlinger, Settlers Hospitality.

Learn more about the Partnership and view all the participating partners at www.DelawareHighlands.org/greenlodging.



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 Delaware Highlands Conservancy.

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

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 personally 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 570-226-3164 ext. 9 or samantha@delawarehighlands.org so we may thank you during your lifetime.

Legacy Leaders

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



PHOTO BY LIZ DIMENNO



PHOTO BY RICHARD JUSTUS

**Your
Winter 2023
Eagle Watch
Calendar of
Events is
inside!**

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy is protecting more than 18,000 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.
Find us on @DelawareHighlandsConservancy @DHConservancy @DHConservancy

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PHOTO BY TRACY HARRIS • RUNNER-UP LANDSCAPE 2022 PHOTO CONTEST

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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