



DELAWARE
HIGHLANDS
CONSERVANCY

Spring 2020

Highlands JOURNAL

Moving Forward

Life looks very different than it used to just a few months ago. We have all been facing high levels of stress, tension, and anxiety while we adapt to new routines for work, school, and home life to keep ourselves and other people safe.

But while everyday life may look vastly different than it ever has, there is one thing we can continue to rely on: the sense of renewal, solace, and peace to be found in nature. Spring has arrived in the Upper Delaware River region, and with it, the promise that the seasons will change and we will continue to move forward.

We invite you to find time everyday to step outside, whether to sit in your backyard or to take a walk on a local trail while safely practicing social distancing. Spending time in nature has been scientifically proven to reduce stress and anxiety, improve your mood, and boost the immune system. And, something as simple as actively observing the

natural world—noticing what you see, hear, smell, and feel—can immediately benefit your physical and mental health and is a great activity for the family to do together.

At the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, we work to protect working farms and forests, clean waters, and wildlife habitat now and for future generations, and to offer quality educational programming for all ages. Our staff is working remotely these days, but our commitment to the community and to a sustainable future has not changed.

Read more inside about how we're continuing to work for the future of the Upper Delaware River region.



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Thank You

Although our annual Foods of the Delaware Highlands dinner was cancelled this year due to COVID-19, we are deeply grateful to everyone who converted their ticket purchase or sponsorship to a full donation to the Conservancy, and to the auction item donors who invited us to keep their donated items for a future fundraising auction.

The staff and Board of Directors of the Conservancy are looking forward to the day when it is safe for all of us to get together again, and we offer our sincere thanks for your continued support of our mission of land and water conservation in the Upper Delaware River region.

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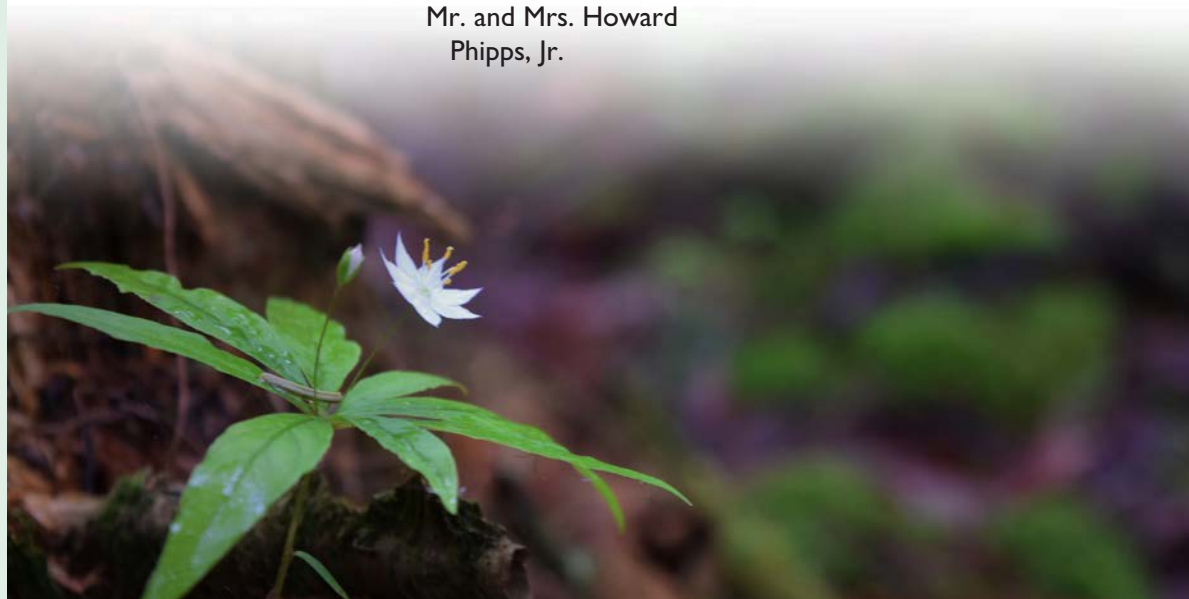
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Habitat for Happy Bees

By Mary Anne Carletta

Whether you want to keep bees or just make your yard a friendlier and safer place for pollinators, there are plenty of ways to manage your land to keep pollinators healthy and working for you. Honeybees, which were originally imported from Europe, and native bees have the same basic requirements we all do: water, food, and shelter.

Beekeepers recommend providing water near your beehives or locating them near an unpolluted pond, lake, stream, or just an area that's always wet. Of course, native pollinators also require water. If you don't have water nearby, you can use a birdbath or a chicken waterer. Bees may not be picky about the cleanliness of their water supply, but do make sure it's free of pesticides and herbicides. Bees also need a landing zone to stand on without risk of drowning. They use more water during droughts and dry seasons.

For food, both honeybees and native bees generally prefer a diversity of native wild plants, since hybrids and other highly bred cultivars often have far less nectar and pollen. However, honeybees and native pollinators can have somewhat different preferences. For example, bumblebees tend to like perennials because they have more nectar. Honeybees like open flowers because they have short tongues, whereas bumblebees have longer tongues and can buzz to shake pollen loose. Some plants such as tomatoes need that buzzing to release pollen at all.

Bees can't see red, but are most attracted to purple, blue, and violet flowers. A good bee habitat has plants blooming from early spring through late fall. Penn State Extension has a chart of bee-friendly plants native to Pennsylvania with estimated blooming periods (<https://extension.psu.edu/conserving-wild-bees-in-pennsylvania>). At

least three local beekeepers plant acres of forage for their honeybees, including various types of clover, buckwheat, and fruit trees. (If you plant clover or buckwheat, check with the local extension office to make sure that the type you plant is not invasive in this area.)

Don't use pesticides! Bees actually recognize landmarks, but neonicotinoid pesticides in particular reduce honeybees' ability to remember landmarks and to navigate, as well as reducing their sperm count. This makes it difficult for them to return to their hives and decreases bee populations. As a result, the European Union has banned three neonicotinoids (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam) and France has banned two more (thiacloprid and acetamiprid). In addition, herbicides reduce the diversity of plants available for bees to feed on.

It's best to avoid all pesticides on your property and nearby properties if possible, as bees can forage miles away. Local authorities that apply roadside pesticides will avoid the border of a beekeeper's property if requested.

For shelter, beekeepers provide manmade hives for honeybees, but **native pollinators like undisturbed "wild" areas**. Ground nesters like undisturbed soil (no tilling or plowing), and other bees will nest in rock piles, bird nests or boxes, dead trees, unkempt hedgerows, and uncut tall native grasses and reeds.

In general, areas that contain diverse native plant species attract more and varied species of bees. Grass lawns don't provide good shelter or food for honeybees or for native bees. Leave substantial ungroomed areas: it reduces your workload and provides good habitat.

River of the Year: The Delaware River

The Conservancy is pleased to announce that the Delaware River has received national recognition as River of the Year by American Rivers, which states, “American Rivers gave the Delaware this honor to recognize its momentous progress for water quality, river restoration and community revitalization. Key to this success are the countless local individuals and groups who have worked for decades on the river’s behalf. The progress on the Delaware illustrates the power of partnership and collaboration.”

As a nationally accredited land trust working in the Upper Delaware River region in Pennsylvania and New York since 1994, the Delaware Highlands Conservancy has worked with landowners and communities to forever protect more than 18,000 acres of working farms and forests, wildlife habitat, and clean waters—all of which directly support a healthy and clean Delaware River. Millions of people rely on clean drinking water from the Delaware River, in our region and downstream in New York City and Philadelphia.

“The Delaware River is a national success story,” said Bob Irvin, President and CEO of American Rivers. “The River of the Year honor recognizes the hard work of many local advocates who understand that a healthy Delaware River is vital to the health of millions of people. The Delaware shows how a healthy river can be an engine for thriving communities.”

Learn more about the Conservancy’s work in the Upper Delaware River region and what you can do to protect nature at www.DelawareHighlands.org.

Four Generations on the Delaware

By Conservancy Member and Volunteer, Scott VanGorder

Our father, Don, took my brother Steve and me on an overnight canoe trip on the Delaware in 1961. We started at the confluence of the east and west branches; Dad still calls that place, “the wedding of the waters.”

With the farmer’s permission, we camped around sunset near Callicoon, on the New York side of the river. A curious bear paid us a brief visit, then went on his way. The next morning, we shot the rapids at Skinner’s Switch (“don’t call it Skinner’s Falls!”). My mother picked us up early that summer afternoon at the Big Eddy in Narrowsburg. We were tired, but we were hooked.

Fifty years have gone by, and the river has barely changed. In all the world, it’s still the place I love the best. My own children are grown now, and a day on the river has always been a day of wonder for them, too. On a beautiful summer day in July, a dream came true. My son Max and I took his son, Greg, out on the big river. We’d been talking about it for a long time, but he’s only three and we wanted perfect conditions. Well, we got them: golden sunshine, clear water,

2000cfs. It was the best day of summer 2011. In the middle of the afternoon, we pulled up on the Pennsylvania shore among smooth rocks, high grass, and forget-me-knots. Greg learned how to cup his hands to hold pollywogs. No knotweed in sight.

As I stood knee-deep in the water with my son and my grandson, the world around us felt like a perfect place. Indeed, the river has barely changed. Now and then in our lifetimes, we seem able to reach toward a higher understanding; a knowledge of what is truly valuable. To do this, your best bet is to stand in the river. The water that flows by represents all that has happened in our four-county watershed. The river is ground-zero for our quality of life. It is the incontrovertible litmus, the ultimate indicator, the final arbiter of all that happens upstream, along its banks, and in the lands and waters that directly contribute in their diverse ways to its flow. The river is the final page of every story that takes place in the entire watershed. If the river is in good shape, then so are we. We are free to love it, to share in it, to indulge our capacity for wonder as we swim, fish, canoe or hike its banks.

My big questions are these: After fifty more years have flowed by, will my grandson, Greg, stand knee-deep in our perfect river teaching his own grandchild to hold a pollywog? Do we appreciate our opportunity and understand our responsibility to protect our river and our watershed for the future, for the generations whose lives it will sustain, and who deserve to know its wonder?



Max and Greg VanGorder enjoying a day in the Delaware.

Annual Photo Contest

Nature Heals: Restore, Renew, Reconnect

The Conservancy is pleased to announce our third annual juried photo contest for the Upper Delaware River region, open to professional and amateur photographers.

Nature Heals invites photographers to capture striking nature-inspired images in five categories: landscape, wildlife, macro, water, and, **new this year**, a youth category for photographers under age 18. Without disturbing or harming any creature or its habitat, be creative in showcasing the diverse wildlife, plants, and special places of our region.

Photos will be judged on creativity, originality, composition, clarity and quality, and impact. Photographers may submit entries from August 3 until August 31.

The winning photos will be chosen by a panel of judges, along with one People's Choice, and will be hung at the ARtery gallery in Milford, PA, beginning with a reception on November 14th. Photographers are invited to submit no more than two photos to the contest. Entrants must agree to the official rules and submit a \$10 entry fee to be eligible. For full contest details, to download the Official Rules, and to submit your photos, please visit www.delawarehighlands.org/photo-contest.

Landscape

The Upper Delaware River region is known for its beautiful views—scenic vistas of forests, farms, and the river itself. How do these landscapes provide fresh perspective, or a new way of looking at things? What does each season feel like? Where do you find peace?

Wildlife

From a honeybee to a bald eagle, a chipmunk to a black bear, we share our world with thousands of other creatures. What do we have in common? What do you find reassuring, calming, or even funny when watching our local wildlife? Without disturbing or harming any creature or its habitat, be creative in showcasing the diverse wildlife of our region and the places our lives overlap.

Macro

Looking closely at nature—plants, wildlife, even rocks—often reveals hidden worlds and fascinating details. Where can you find something special, inspiring, or joyful that otherwise might go unnoticed? For these extreme close-ups, try to illustrate a tiny detail that has a big impact.

Water

Even the smallest streams eventually find their way to the Delaware River. In this broad category, consider how water impacts our lives—and how our everyday lives impact the water. How do you interact with water in nature? How does clean water impact the landscape, the wildlife, the people of this region?

Youth Category

For photographers under 18 years of age. Many of you were challenged to find new ways to learn this year, outside of the classroom. What lessons did you learn from nature? What is something you now appreciate in nature that you never noticed before? *(Must be under 18 years old at the time of entry submission; entry form must be submitted by a parent or guardian. Youth entries are free.)*



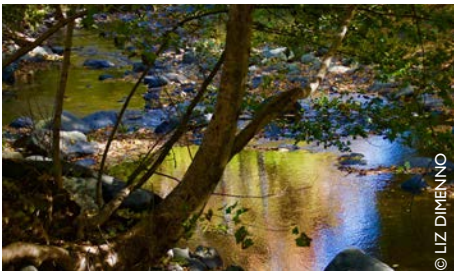
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Online Learning with the Conservancy

The Conservancy and our partners are working diligently to develop new, innovative approaches to our quality educational programs.

Follow us on Facebook @DelawareHighlandsConservancy and on Instagram @DHConservancy for daily educational posts, beautiful images from our region, and fun ways for you and your family to connect to nature.

We're also regularly posting virtual walks in the woods and educational videos where you can walk along with us and learn about what we're seeing and hearing in our forests and waters. Then, take your own walk in the woods and share your discoveries on our social media.

Stay tuned for future details as we continue to develop additional online events and workshops. To stay up-to-date with all the latest content and news from the Conservancy, be sure to connect with us online and sign up for our e-newsletter on our website at www.DelawareHighlands.org.

Questions or suggestions for virtual events? We want to hear from you. Email info@delawarehighlands.org with your ideas.

Keeping Eaglets Safe

Spring and summer in the Upper Delaware River region means breeding season for our resident pairs of bald eagles. Many nests will now be home to young eaglets until they fledge in late June or early July.

During this time of year, it's more important than ever to keep a respectful distance if you see an eagles' nest and practice "Eagle Etiquette"—staying quiet, calm, and out of sight of the birds—to ensure that the eagles stay safely in their nests until they are ready to fly. If they are startled, they may be flushed from the nest before they can survive on their own.

At about nine to ten weeks, eagles will begin practicing their flying skills by spreading their wings and jumping to nearby branches from the nest. Once they are strong enough to fly, they will begin learning to hunt, but will continue to return to the nest over the next six weeks until they are ready to live on their own.

The fluffy gray eaglet in the photo at left is just a few weeks old. By the time they are ten to twelve weeks old and ready to fledge, the eagle will be as tall as its parents.

Learn more about eagles week by week from hatching to fledging on our website at delawarehighlands.org/eagles and view the complete list of Eagle Etiquette tips.



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The Delaware Highlands Conservancy has protected 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.

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