



DELAWARE
HIGHLANDS
CONSERVANCY

Highlands JOURNAL

Spring & Summer 2022

PHOTO BY DAVID SOETE

It's a beautiful time of year to be outdoors in the Upper Delaware River region, and studies show that spending time in nature—even just a few hours each week—has immediate and measurable benefits for your body and mind.

Time spent outdoors is proven to reduce stress levels, lower blood pressure, enhance immune system function, reduce anxiety, and improve mood and overall feelings of well-being. It's even been shown to enhance concentration and creativity.

Best of all, these benefits are seen in people of all ages and abilities. The research is clear that the natural world provides a desperately needed restorative break for our overstimulated brains.

This spring and summer, we hope you'll join us for a restorative visit to our 144-acre Van Scott Nature Reserve

in Beach Lake, PA, open daily from sunrise to sunset with three miles of walking trails through the meadows and forest. Join us for a trail walk, or simply sit and enjoy the sights and sounds of the natural world. We have a series of family-friendly guided walks scheduled in 2022 (*details inside*) if you would like to learn more about the lands, waters, and wildlife at the Reserve.

Thank you for caring about the people, the wildlife, and the irreplaceable special places of the Upper Delaware River region. We are truly grateful to share this beautiful home with you, and to steward it together. **We hope to see you soon at the Reserve!**



DELAWARE
HIGHLANDS
CONSERVANCY

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Trey Talley
Land Protection Coordinator

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Stewardship Coordinator

Sara Velazquez
*Education and Development
Associate*

CONTACT US

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Scholarship Fund Supported by the Local Community

The Conservancy annually awards the Vanessa Joy VanGorder Memorial Scholarship to a local student. The 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 lakes, rivers, and forests of the Upper Delaware River Region with her friends and family. The Conservancy established this scholarship in Vanessa's memory and to honor her dream of becoming an educator.

In March 2022, the Fall Music Festival at Dorflinger generously contributed \$2,500 toward the scholarship fund from funds raised during their 2021 fall event.

The \$2,000 annual scholarship is open to high school seniors pursuing a career in education or environmental stewardship, in school districts bordering the Upper Delaware River in New York and Pennsylvania. These include Hancock Central, Deposit Central, Eldred, Monticello, and Sullivan West in NY, and Wallenpaupack Area, Honesdale, and Delaware Valley in PA.

Learn more about the scholarships at www.delawarehighlands.org/learn/scholarships.

Donations to the scholarship fund and other environmental education programs can be made at DelawareHighlands.org or by mail to 571 Perkins Pond Rd, Beach Lake, PA 18405.



A \$2,500 donation toward the Vanessa Joy VanGorder Memorial Scholarship Fund is presented to the VanGorder family.



PHOTO BY KAYLAN HUBBARD



Mason Bees: The Super Pollinators!

by Nicole DeCarolus

Mason bees (genus *Osmia*, of the family Megachilidae) are solitary bees, named for their habit of using mud, or other "masonry" products, in building their nests. Many are native to North America, although they are found worldwide.

Female mason bees are best known for their scopa, which is a dense mass of long, branched hairs on their abdomens that are used to collect pollen. These solitary bees are considered "belly floppers" because of their tactic to drop onto flowers and collect pollen all over their bodies, which allows them to pollinate 95% of the plants they land on as they visit over 1,600 flowers a day. Mason bees are exceptional pollinators and are recognized as being more efficient than honeybees, given their ability to fertilize an entire acre—depending on the type and density of pollinator plant species—with about 250 female bees.

Solitary bees do not produce honey or live in a hive. Since mason bees do not have a queen and support from a colony, every female bee must create her own nest and raise offspring alone. A mason bee will fill as many nesting tunnels as she can during her four-to-six-week lifespan. Their male counterparts, on the other hand, only live for two to three weeks, with their sole purpose being to reproduce.

After mating, the female bee will find an existing tunnel for her nest and gather mud in her mouth to build a back wall. She then makes multiple visits to flowers to collect pollen and nectar, which she will place at the end of the nest as the egg's first meal when it hatches. After the food source has been placed, the bee lays an egg on top of it and will then collect more mud to build a chamber, sealing off the egg inside. The process is repeated until the nest is filled with eggs, which she will then cap with mud to protect the larvae from predators. Depending on the type of mason bees, most of this work occurs during the early months of spring.

As spring progresses into summer, the eggs begin to transform into adult bees. The eggs hatch into larvae and consume their pollen-nectar food source, and, after a rest period, the larvae spin cocoons. Around September, fully-grown adult bees are nestled inside each of their chambers and wait out the winter months. Once spring air temperatures reach a consistent 55-degree range, the bees emerge from their chambers and then repeat the mating and pollination cycle.

Mason Bee Houses

Mason bees nest inside tunnels, such as those made from wood-boring beetles, hollow stems of pithy plants, and ones that are man-made. Solitary bees are gentle and easy to raise, and you can encourage them in your backyard by providing nesting tunnels, pollinator plants, and a mud source. Mud sources should be about 50 feet from the nest, while rich-pollinator plants can be within 200-300 feet. However, the closer these necessities are to the nest results in the bees spending less energy traveling to obtain them and instead focusing on laying eggs.

If you choose to create a man-made nest for mason bees, it is important to mount the nest securely on the side of a building, tree, or fence, facing east or south, where it will receive warmth from the sun and protection from wind and rain. It is also recommended to place the nest four to seven feet off the ground for protection against moisture.

In the fall, take down your egg-filled bee houses and store them in a dark, unheated garage or shed during the winter months. During this time, it is important to inspect the cocoons to minimize disease, parasites, and other pests to ensure the bee populations maintain or increase every year. Homemade wooden bee houses with paper tubes are also easy to clean or replace yearly. In early spring, before the flowers bloom, return the cocoons to your garden and watch mason bees stream in and out of the nest as spring takes hold.

These mason bee houses were made and donated by the students from the SHINE program in Wayne and Pike counties. A limited number are available for pickup at the Conservancy's Van Scott Nature Reserve at no cost. To claim your mason bee house, please contact Sara Velazquez at sara@delawarehighlands.org or 570-226-3164 ext. 8.



Meet the Delaware Highlands Conservancy Staff

Contact Conservancy staff anytime with questions about our work, protecting and stewarding your land, getting involved as a volunteer, or becoming a member.



Diane Rosencrance • Executive Director

As Executive Director, Diane oversees the activities of the organization, working directly with the staff, Board of Directors, and committees on a daily basis. She calls the Delaware River watershed home and is dedicated to protecting the water and habitat for the people, plants, and animals that live here.



Bethany Zarnowski • Communications & Development Director

Bethany directs fundraising and communications for the Conservancy. She writes and designs outreach and press materials, manages social media and the website, and coordinates fundraising events and mailings.



Amanda Subjin • Stewardship and Education Manager

Amanda provides oversight and direction for the Stewardship and Education staff. In addition, Amanda works with partners and professionals to coordinate the Women and Their Woods educational program.



Jason Zarnowski • Reserve and Facilities Manager

Jason's primary responsibilities are to oversee operations at the Van Scott Nature Reserve and the Conservancy's offices. Jason also manages the GIS system for the Conservancy.



Trey Talley • Land Protection Coordinator

Trey's responsibilities include serving as the initial contact for landowners interested in protecting their properties, coordinating ongoing land conservation projects, and working directly with landowners to design conservation easements that meet their goals and the standards of the Conservancy and Land Trust Alliance.



Kaylan Hubbard • Land Protection Coordinator

Kaylan's responsibilities include serving as the initial contact for landowners interested in protecting their properties, coordinating ongoing land conservation projects, and working directly with landowners to design conservation easements that meet their goals and the standards of the Conservancy and Land Trust Alliance.



Nicole DeCarolis • Stewardship Coordinator

Nicole's primary responsibilities are to manage annual visits to the Conservancy's protected properties, ensuring the conservation goals of the agreements are upheld, and to communicate with landowners about environmental questions and inquiries related to their conservation easement.



Sara Velazquez • Education & Development Associate

Sara supports our education and volunteer programs and fundraising activities. Her responsibilities include grant research and writing, coordinating events, and coordinating the volunteer program.

Notes from the Reserve Managing Invasive Plant Species

by Jason Zarnowski

Like many areas in PA and NY, the Van Scott Nature Reserve is home to some unwanted visitors—invasive species. Simply put, an invasive species is a plant, animal, or insect species that is not native to the area, spreads quickly, and can cause economic or environmental harm, or harm human health. These species have little or no limiting factors as they do in their native ranges such as pests, herbivores, or disease to help limit their spread, so they are left unchecked, displacing native species and degrading habitat for wildlife, decreasing biodiversity, and causing soil degradation and erosion.

At the Reserve you'll find common invasive plant species such as multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, and autumn olive, among others. Since total eradication is difficult or nearly impossible to achieve on a property of this size, our goal is to reduce the amount of invasive species to limit their impact to native plants and improve wildlife habitat. There are four common methods of controlling invasive species: mechanical, chemical, biological, and silviculture. Mechanical control involves pulling or cutting the plants. Chemical control uses herbicides to control the unwanted species. Biological control is when a pest such as an insect that is found in the invasive plants' native range is used as a control method. Using silviculture to help control invasive plants is when the environmental conditions are changed to make the habitat unsuitable for the plant. This is achieved by changing

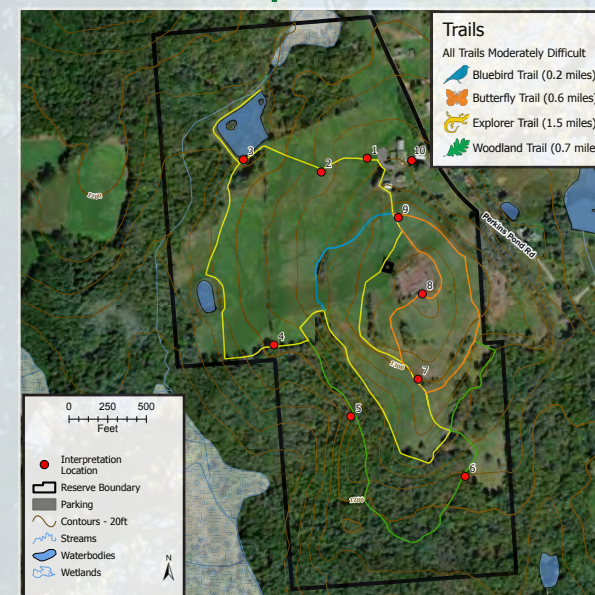
light, water, or nutrient availability by planting desirable native species. These control methods are most successful when used together.

There are many things you can do to help limit the spread of invasive species on your own property, no matter the size. Since invasive plants thrive on bare soil, minimize ground disturbance. Be sure any fill used in your project is free of weed seeds. Over-fertilizing might be giving invasive plants an advantage, so use them sparingly. Over-fertilizing also degrades water quality so be sure to use only as much as you absolutely need and be sure to follow all directions on the package. The easiest way to control invasive plants is to know your property. Periodic monitoring can help detect an invasive species before it takes hold. Since many invasive plants are the first to "green up" in the spring, it's a great time to keep an eye out for these pests. And be sure to clean your boots and equipment to prevent seeds, roots, and plant parts from hitching a ride.



Multiflora rose is a common invasive plant species that blooms in our region in May and June.

New Interpretive Trail Guide



Learn about what you see, hear, and experience on the Explorer, Woodland, Butterfly, and Bluebird trails at the Van Scott Nature Reserve with our new Interpretive Trail Guide!

Following ten numbered stops along an approximately 1.5-mile loop within our 3-mile trail system, you will learn about the wildlife, natural features, scenic views, and the history of the land use at the 144-acre Reserve.

Pick up your Interpretive Trail Guide and map at the trailhead kiosks next to the parking areas at the Reserve. To help us protect clean water and wildlife, dogs are not allowed on the Reserve.

Share your photos taken at the Van Scott Nature Reserve! Tag us in your pictures on Instagram @DHConservancy and use the hashtag #vanscottnaturereserve and we might feature your photo on Instagram.



Annual Photo Contest

Confluence: Land, Water, Wildlife

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

Confluence: Land, Water, Wildlife invites photographers to capture striking nature images in six categories: landscape, wildlife, macro, water, the Van Scott Nature Reserve (new this year) and 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.



©TINA TISON



©KATHLEEN COLLIGAN



©JEFF SIDLE



©MILICENT WIGHTMAN



©LOUISE WASHER



©ANNA BROWN

Photos will be judged on creativity, originality, composition, clarity and quality, and impact. Photographers may submit entries via the Conservancy’s website from August 1 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 in November. 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?

Van Scott Nature Reserve *NEW*

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy’s beautiful 144-acre Van Scott Nature Reserve features three miles of walking trails through the woods, wildflower meadows, and wetlands. This contest category is exclusively for photos taken at the Reserve. *Please stay on the marked trails.*

Youth Category

For photographers under 18 years of age. Many of you have been challenged to find new ways to learn, 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.)*



PHOTO BY NANCY KIERENDahl

Upcoming Events at the Reserve

Most events require advance registration, and a small registration fee may be requested. Visit DelawareHighlands.org/events for additional details, to register, and to view our complete Calendar of Events for 2022.

Guided Weekday Walk

June 23 • 9am-11am

Walk the trails with Conservancy education staff and volunteers to learn more about the lands, waters, and wildlife at the Van Scott Nature Reserve. Registration is limited to 30 participants.

Guided Walk: Animals and Their Habitats

June 25 • 10am-12pm

Walk the trails at the Reserve with experts and learn more about the wildlife, their preferred habitats, and tips for successful wildlife spotting. Registration is limited to 30 participants.

Guided Walk: Forest Bathing and Wild Plants

July 9 • 9am-12pm

Join the Conservancy and Heather Houskeeper, The Botanical Hiker, for a gentle walk on the Reserve. Participants will experience forest bathing and its benefits while connecting to several of the native plants of our region. This event is geared towards adults, but all ages can be accommodated. Registration is limited to 30 participants.

Guided Weekday Walk

July 14 • 9am-11am

Walk the trails with Conservancy education staff and volunteers to learn more about the lands, waters, and wildlife at the Van Scott Nature Reserve. Registration is limited to 30 participants.

Mindful Family Yoga with Bright Kids Yoga

July 23 • 10am-12pm

Join the Conservancy and Bright Kids Yoga instructors from The Cooperage Project for a gentle and all-age appropriate outdoor yoga practice designed to heighten our awareness of our thoughts and surroundings. A short walk and nature-themed craft will accompany the experience. Registration is limited to 20 participants.

Conservation Conversations *Virtual Event*

September 7 • 5:15-6:15pm

Join the Conservancy’s Land Protection Coordinators for a Zoom gathering to learn about the Conservancy and how we can help you protect your land. What is a conservation easement and what property characteristics do we look for? What are the steps and costs associated with placing a conservation easement on your property? Are there any financial benefits for the landowner? Following a brief presentation, you will be invited to join the conversation and get your questions answered.

Walk in Penn’s Woods

October 2 • 10am-1pm

Walk the trails with Conservancy staff to learn more about the lands, waters, and wildlife at the Van Scott Nature Reserve. Since 2017, the Walk in Penn’s Woods partnership has been working to offer Pennsylvanians a statewide day of walks in the woods on the first Sunday in October. These walks provide an excellent opportunity to get out, have fun, and learn about Pennsylvania’s forests, to see forests in new ways, and to understand and appreciate the many values we hold for the woods.

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 us at info@delawarehighlands.org or 570-226-3164 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

VAN SCOTT NATURE RESERVE
PHOTO BY NICOLE DECAROLIS

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 DAVID SOETE

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SERVING NEW YORK AND PENNSYLVANIA

DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

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