



DELAWARE
HIGHLANDS
CONSERVANCY

Highlands JOURNAL

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Strengthening Your Relationship... With Your Land

A fenced area 8 feet wide and 100 feet long may seem like a strange design choice, but it keeps the deer out of the apple orchard—and is just one of the many examples of how Kenna and Walt Levendosky creatively live in harmony with their land.

For many landowners, a relationship with the land is just like any other relationship in life—it requires an investment of time and effort, tends to change over the years, and comes with its own set of unique challenges. And, like any healthy relationship, the energy invested is returned tenfold.

Kenna, her sister Karen, and their father Ken Knapp protected their 220 acres of forests and meadows in Delaware County, NY in 2002. Though they had numerous offers to develop the land, the family refused them all, deciding instead to work with the Conservancy to protect the property. Located on the West Branch of the Delaware River, the forests help to ensure that the water quality in the river—upstream of New York City's Cannonsville Reservoir, a source of drinking water for millions—remains pristine. And the great blue herons and bald eagles that roost in their tall, healthy hemlock trees have safe habitat.

Now, Kenna and her husband Walt live on the property, and are finding that stewarding the land—or, more accurately, sharing a love of the land—is a way of life.

Caring for the Land

Kenna, who has attended two Women and Their Woods educational retreats, explains, “I think the whole family has to be involved in caring for the land—and women are at the heart of the family. They often spend the most time with the children, they get them outdoors—one of our granddaughters got into the woods and said ‘Oh, this is much better than the house!’”

Protected lands also offer abundant opportunities for proactively making improvements. Their vegetable garden has room enough for dozens of plants that the family enjoys all year. For pollinators like butterflies and bees, the Levendoskys have planted bee balm, milkweed, thimbleberries, and goldenrod in their flower garden and



Nesting chambers provide safe habitat for native bees.

orchard, and have installed nesting chambers for native bees in the form of bamboo tubes lined with parchment paper. To restore and stabilize their steep riverbank—the site of an old railroad track that is beginning to erode—they are planning a big planting project with native seed mixes and saplings.

Deciding to protect your cherished piece of land is only the beginning of a lifelong relationship. To truly steward the land is to strike a careful balance among resolving any problems that arise, making improvements that benefit nature and wildlife, and taking time to appreciate it for its inherent beauty and value.



DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

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Welcome Your New Board President, Karen Lutz

At our Annual General Meeting on October 17, the Conservancy board thanked outgoing president Michael Geitz for his years of service to the organization, and welcomed new board president Karen Lutz.

Michael joined the board in 2009, was elected Vice President in 2012, and President in 2013. Most recently, Michael founded the River Club, which celebrates and recognizes investment in the Conservancy. River Club members will establish a legacy that lives on and helps to ensure the perpetual continuity of the mission of the Conservancy. You can become a member of the River Club with an annual gift of \$2,500 or more, exclusive of auction purchases.

Karen Lutz retired from banking in 2012 after a 37 year career with European American Bank (EAB) and Citibank in the New York Metro area. She has served as a Trustee of Hofstra University for over 20 years and is Chair of the Finance Committee. She has also served on the board of several nonprofit organizations including the Long Island Fund for Women and Girls; the Nassau County Museum of Art; the Long Island Women's Agenda and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation.

Karen and her husband Charlie have had a home in Lakeville since 1990.

Since joining the Conservancy's board in 2013, Karen has served on our finance and development committees, and has chaired our accreditation renewal committee. Welcome, Karen!



River Club Charter Members

The future of the Upper Delaware River region is in our hands. Let's work together to protect it forever.

— Michael Geitz, River Club Founder

Lifetime Member

Anonymous

Club Founder

Michael Geitz

\$5,000 and Up

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Barbara Yeaman

Innovations in Your Community

For a small nonprofit organization like the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, partnerships with other area businesses and organizations are key—not just to save time, money, and resources, but to expand our perspective and inspire new ideas.

The business of land conservation is unique in that land trusts pledge to be in existence forever—to steward and defend the conserved forests, farms, and waters that landowners have entrusted us to protect now and for future generations. This requires a significant annual investment and strategic planning—and it means that partnerships are key to long term success.

This summer the Conservancy partnered with the Open Space Institute to share responsibilities for monitoring more than 45 of their own protected properties—conducting annual visits to meet with landowners and ensure that the conservation values of the property are protected. One of these visits led us to the Center for Discovery in Harris, Sullivan County, New York. The Center is a residential, educational, and medical facility for children and adults with developmental disabilities, with more than 600 acres protected with a conservation easement held by the Open Space Institute. **It is an example of what can be done with a creative vision for protected lands.**

Community Investment

Land trusts always emphasize that investing in land protection is investing in the community. That protecting our natural areas—working farms and forests, pristine waters, and wildlife

habitat—is for the benefit of all. In stewarding their 600+ protected acres in innovative and creative ways, the Center for Discovery has embodied this ideal, creating a resource for the community and a healing space for people and for nature.

The Open Space Institute has also worked with the Center to create the Hurleyville Rail Trail as an economic driver for the Hamlet of Hurleyville, NY, where the Center is working with community leaders to revitalize the town by making it accessible to the people it serves and a vibrant, interesting community for all.

Fresh from the Farm

The centerpiece of the protected property at the Center is Thanksgiving Farm, a 298-acre biodynamic and certified organic farm that grows vegetables, flowers, and herbs and is home to livestock including cattle, hens, pigs, and sheep. The farm also includes hoop houses and heated greenhouses for off-season growing. Residents at the Center work on the farm, helping with both planting and harvesting, and contributing in a meaningful way to the fresh, healthy food they will enjoy at mealtimes.

In addition, the farm supports a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program with more than



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300 members who purchase an annual share of the food that is produced there. Each member gets to take home and enjoy fresh, locally grown food on a weekly basis throughout the summer and fall. The healing gardens at the Center also supplement the farm, with walking paths that wind through medicinal and culinary herbs and flowers, also tended by residents of the Center.

The 298 protected acres—known as Stonewall Preserve—was formerly a dairy farm, owned by one family dating back to the Revolutionary War. Miles of stone walls meander across the property, constructed by the six generations of farmers that came before. The conservation easement that protects this property honors its history and the cultural heritage of Sullivan County farming. It is a living example of how land conservation can be carried forward across the generations while honoring the past; of investing in the community while ensuring a sustainable future for people and for the land.

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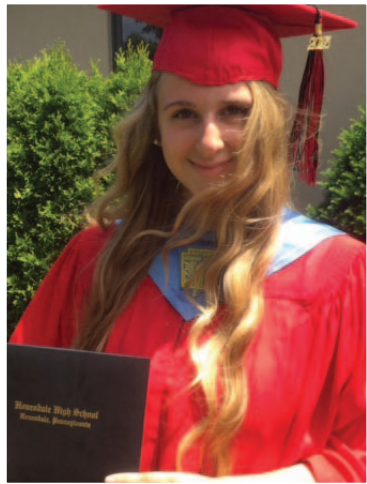


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Next Generation's Leaders Graduate!

Alex Hess graduated as the valedictorian from Deposit Central School in June 2015, and will be attending SUNY ESF (Environmental Science and Forestry) in Syracuse, where he will major in Environmental Resources Engineering.

Alex feels at home in nature and hopes to help maintain our healthy environment; as he explains, "I hope that with continued community support we can help make our rivers flourish. As an avid fisherman, I know the importance of the river and its benefits to society." Alex was awarded the Yeaman scholarship, given annually since 2004 in honor of the Conservancy's founder.



Claire Harvey graduated cum laude from Honesdale High School, and spent her summer as a counselor at Journey's End Farm Camp in Sterling, PA where she taught children about nature, conservation, and respect for each other. This fall, Claire will attend the University of California, Irvine to study Literary Journalism. She hopes to further the ideals and views fostered growing up in Wayne County when she graduates.

As Claire explains, "I believe it is my duty as a resident on this planet to do my part to try to protect it. I wish to expand my efforts to conserve resources and keep the planet thriving by pursuing a career where I can make a larger impact on helping our environment." Claire was awarded the Vanessa Van Gorder memorial scholarship.

The Vanessa Van Gorder Memorial Scholarship was established this spring in honor of Vanessa, who tragically lost her life on December 26, 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 region with her friends and family. The Conservancy established this scholarship in Vanessa's memory and to honor her dream of becoming an educator.

If you are interested in supporting the scholarship fund and other environmental education and conservation activities, donate online at DelawareHighlands.org or mail a contribution to PO Box 218, Hawley, PA 18428.

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With the support and generosity of our members, the Conservancy has been able to achieve a great deal in the past twenty-one years, protecting over 14,000 acres in our region since being founded in 1994. And in the past year, the Conservancy has been fortunate enough to receive significant investments from larger organizations, the William Penn Foundation and the New York State Conservation Partnership Program of the Land Trust Alliance, that have recognized the value of our work and our capability to grow. Most importantly, these investments have inspired exciting new partnerships throughout the Upper Delaware River region—partnerships that will help us learn new skills, share our experiences, and evaluate potential next steps for the Conservancy.

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy is currently working on updating our strategic plan and vision for a healthy and sustainable future. If you have ideas you would like us to explore, please contact us.

When was the last time you saw a bald eagle?

Join us for one of our upcoming Eagle Watch bus tours or for Eagle Day on January 23rd.

On our tours, you'll sit on a heated bus for a scenic drive throughout the region while you learn from an expert guide and look for eagles. On Eagle Day, enjoy live presentations from Bill Streeter of the Delaware Valley Raptor Center, and activities and fun for the whole family.

Or, stop by the Upper Delaware Visitor Center in Lackawaxen, PA and view our interpretive exhibits, watch the short film about the bald eagle's return, and pick up a map to go on your own driving tour to talk to volunteers in our eagle-viewing areas.

Visitor Center Hours

January – February

Saturdays and Sundays • 10am-4pm

176 Scenic Drive, Lackawaxen, PA 18435

WINTER SCHEDULE

Space is limited and reservations are required for all Eagle Watch bus trips.* Be sure to dress warmly in layers and wear waterproof boots. Bring binoculars, camera, and snacks.

Fee: \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members.

Call the Conservancy at 570-226-3164 or 845-583-1010 or email info@delawarehighlands.org to register.

Saturday January 16

Eagle Watch Bus Tour

Upper Delaware Visitor Center

Lackawaxen, PA 10am-1pm

Saturday January 23

Eagle Day

Lake Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center

Hawley, PA 1pm-4pm

Saturday January 30

Eagle Watch Bus Tour

Upper Delaware Visitor Center

Lackawaxen, PA 10am-1pm

Saturday February 6

Eagle Watch Bus Tour

Upper Delaware Visitor Center

Lackawaxen, PA 10am-1pm

Saturday February 13

Eagle Watch Bus Tour

Upper Delaware Visitor Center

Lackawaxen, PA 10am-1pm

*Be sure to check our website for the most up-to-date information and any additional trips. Refunds are not given in the event of cancelled reservations. In the event of inclement weather, snow dates are the Sunday immediately following. Reservations not required for Eagle Day.

Thank you to our partners and supporters!



Orange & Rockland



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New Online Tools for Landowners

You asked—we delivered. On our “Landowner Corner,” you’ll find new information on protecting and caring for your lands, interesting stories from other landowners who have protected their land, and educational resources to help you learn more. **Check it out and let us know what you think! Visit www.DelawareHighlands.org/Conserve.**

**The Landowner Corner website update 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.*

Plan A Winter Weekend Getaway

The Conservancy’s Green Lodging Partnership has continued to grow, with 16 participating local lodgings collecting voluntary, \$2-per-stay donations from their guests to help support land and water conservation.

Why not plan a winter eagle-watching weekend with one of our lodging partners? You can find complete listings on our website at www.DelawareHighlands.org/greenlodging.



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Conservancy Seeks Accreditation Renewal

The Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. It means that our standards for fiscal, fundraising, stewardship, easement acquisition, and overall non-profit management meet or exceed rigorous national requirements.

We became accredited in 2010, and it is now time to apply for renewal of our accreditation. As part of this review process, the commission invites public input. **We invite you to comment on our renewal application, beginning on November 1.** Comments must relate to how the Conservancy complies with national quality standards. For the full list of standards, see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/tips-and-tools/indicator-practices>.



To learn more about accreditation and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, attn: Public Comments, 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Comments of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy's application will be most useful by May 29, 2016.

Leaving a Legacy

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 hope you will consider joining them to help ensure that we can carry out our mission into the future. 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.

Legacy Leaders

Sue Currier
Mary Evans
Susanne Hand and David Kinsey
Susan Hartney
Alfred Lees and Ronald Nelson
Ed MacGregor
Dorothy Merrill (*deceased*)
Sally and Enrico Moretti
Kimberly (Mimi) Raleigh
Brenda Seldin
Shary and Gary Skoloff
Richard Snyder (*deceased*)
Sigrid Wilshinsky
Jonathan Wind
Barbara Yeaman



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If you can't shop local, shop to give back

Through AmazonSmile, 0.5% of the purchase price of your items is donated back to the Delaware Highlands Conservancy by the AmazonSmile Foundation. **It's free to sign up and costs you nothing.** Visit smile.amazon.com to get started.



The same environment that attracts and sustains us—clean water, clean air, undisturbed and unfragmented forests—helps hundreds of bald eagles survive the cold winter months. When lakes and rivers freeze over up north, bald eagles head south—to our backyard—to open water where they can find fresh fish, and large stands of trees where they can perch.

You don't want to miss our eagle-watching bus trips!

Winter schedule and registration information inside.

To learn more about...

the Delaware Highlands Conservancy or to make a donation in support of our work, visit DelawareHighlands.org.

Find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/DelawareHighlandsConservancy> and on Twitter @DHConservancy

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When our lands and waters are healthy, we are healthy too.

PO Box 218 Hawley, PA 18428-0218

SERVING NEW YORK AND PENNSYLVANIA

DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

"No matter how much one may love the world as a whole, one can live fully in it only by living responsibly in some small part of it. Where we live and whom we live there with define the terms of our relationship to the world and to humanity." — Wendell Berry

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