

The magazine of Natural Lands
No. 150 | Spring/Summer 2017

natural lands



timeless.
and just in time.
saving Bryn Coed

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natural lands
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from the president



As children, most of us learned about the concept of community in social studies class. We studied different types of communities, though usually our perspective was decidedly local. For me, it was the corner of Chester County that I called home.

As we age, our concept of community tends to expand. We come to appreciate the complex web of interrelationships that tie us all together across boundaries.

For those of us involved in conservation—or anyone who has spent much time in nature—questions about the essential importance of interconnection were long ago put to bed. Over the centuries, scientists have revealed layers of links among all life that are nearly impossible to fathom. Dr. Seuss famously put it this way in *The Lorax*:

"...I'm also in charge of the brown Bar-ba-loots, who played in the shade in their Bar-ba-loot suits and happily lived eating truffula fruits. Now, thanks to your hacking my trees to the ground, there's not enough truffula fruit to go 'round."

In this issue of our refreshed magazine, you'll read about one such special relationship—that between a tiny, beautiful wildflower and a large, shaggy bison that once roamed this part of our world. Our staff is testing a creative way to replicate the benefits of that relationship at one of our nature preserves.

Human community is essential to the work of conservation, as well. Our cover story celebrates a conservation success made possible by one such community, which has come together in an extraordinary way to save one of the largest remaining unprotected properties in the region.

Indeed, we like to think of Natural Lands less as an organization and more as a community—one made up of tens-of-thousands of preserve visitors, members, volunteers, landowners, community and government leaders, and others without whom land could never be saved, wildflowers never restored, and the joy of nature never shared.

Thank you for being part of the thriving and ever-growing Natural Lands community.

Molly Morrison

MOLLY K. MORRISON, PRESIDENT

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cover photo: Mark Williams

news

instant playground. just add kids.

A playground is more than a playground. It's a brain-expander, friend-maker, and muscle-builder. Play is central to a child's ability to grow into a productive adult. Which is why Natural Lands teamed up last fall with the City of Coatesville, PECO, KaBOOM!, and more than 200 volunteers to build a new playground at the city's Patton Park... in less than a day!

The completed playground—which includes swings, slides, and climbing equipment—will help hundreds of kids enjoy more time outside.

The initiative was part of Natural Lands' broader, long-term effort to improve access to the outdoors for Coatesville residents. ■



Recipe for play: Start with one park in need; add a committed corporate partner, one part community vision, lots of coffee, and a dash of optimism. Stir well. Fold in 200 eager volunteers. Allow six hours to rise. Enjoy!

hare repair.



Earlier this spring, members of our stewardship staff carefully removed the iconic wooden rabbits that watch over County Line Road from their perch at the edge of Stoneleigh, the 42-acre Villanova estate that was donated to Natural Lands in 2016. These charming carvings were created by local chainsaw artist Marty Long in 2002 at the request of John and Chara Haas, the former estate owners—Haas is derived from the German word for "hare." Exposure to the elements over the years had taken its toll on the sculpture, so we hired the original artist to recreate it on a new, 12-ton white oak stump generously donated and craned into position by Shreiner Tree Care.

This is just one of many projects underway at Stoneleigh as we work to convert this once private estate

to a public garden, which is slated to open to the public in spring 2018.

Other work includes construction of a visitor center and terrace that will serve as a space for programs and special events. We're also creating an open-air pavilion for more informal classes. Existing structures, such as the main house and carriage house, are being retrofitted to serve the needs of the organization with offices, volunteer spaces, and meeting rooms.

Concurrently, our new staff of six full-time horticulturists has been hard at work tending to the gardens at Stoneleigh, breathing new life into the living displays with the addition of native plants. ■

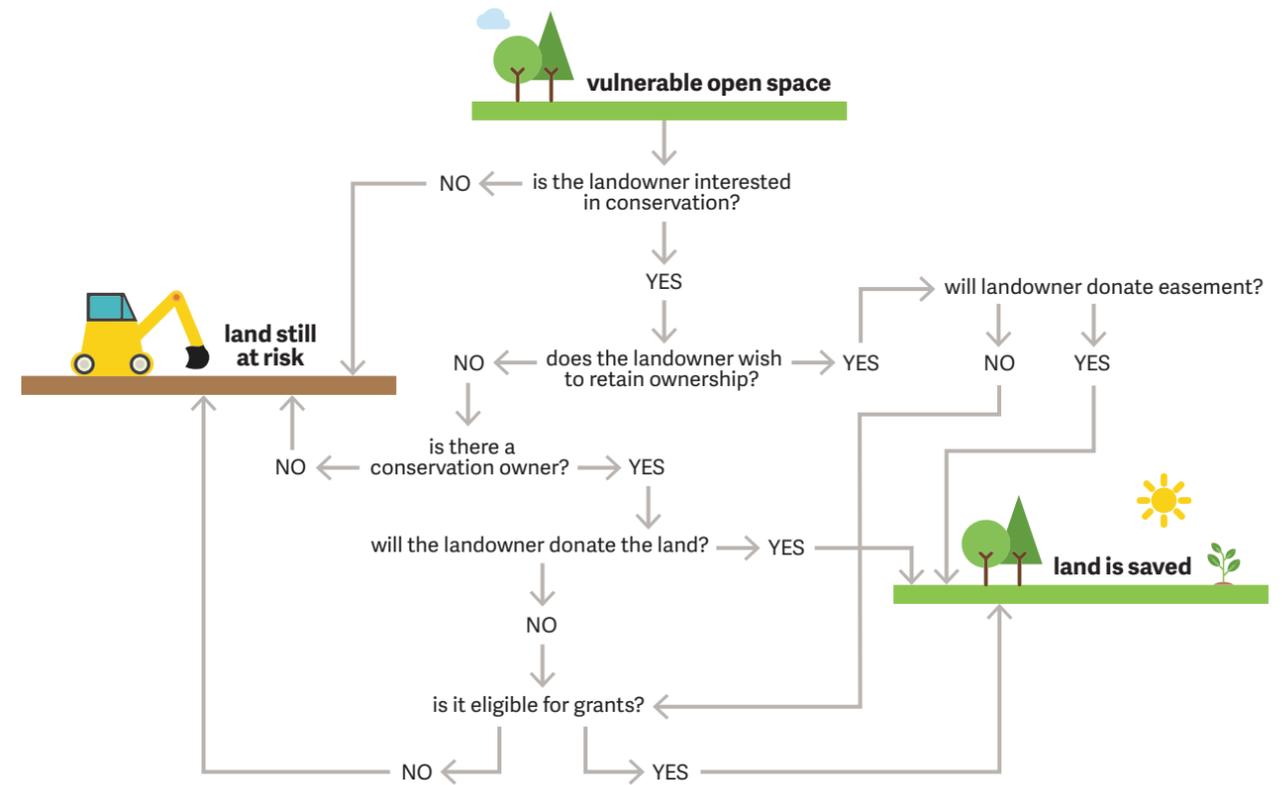
See photos and more at natlands.org/stoneleigh.

how conservation works.

Natural Lands has been protecting open space for nearly 65 years. In that time, we have completed hundreds of conservation projects

and we can assure you that the work is never boring or routine! There is, however, a common thread to every conservation story (hint: it begins

with a landowner who chooses to protect her or his land). So how does it all work? Here's a peek under the hood. ■



growing greener.

Since 1999, Pennsylvania's Growing Greener funding program has been an essential tool for ensuring access to open space, parks, clean water, local food, and much more. Thanks to Growing Greener, more than 80,000 acres of open space and 78,000 acres of farmland have been preserved, and some 500 local and state parks

improvements completed.

But funding for the Growing Greener program is at an all-time low, having suffered a 75 percent decline in the past decade. That's a problem, given that 19,000 miles of the state's streams and rivers are still unsafe for drinking or recreational use, the majority or the state's 6,000

local parks need significant improvements, and 1,500 family farms are on the waiting list to be preserved.

Legislators from across Pennsylvania are working to reverse the decline in Growing Greener. ■

To learn more and to offer your support for increased funding for Growing Greener, visit growinggreener3.org.

left, top: Mae Axelrod, left, bottom: Ethan Kauffman, graphic: Brittni Albright



timeless. and just in time.

It's quiet here. There is the occasional sound of a distant airplane overhead or a barking dog, but, for the most part, Bryn Coed feels like another century and a simpler time. Just birdsong, rustling meadow grasses, tree branches sigh against a spring breeze. The rolling fields are dotted with 19th-century stone farmhouses and barns; only the overhead power and telephone lines offer evidence of contemporary life.

For many, this seems like heaven on earth. To a developer, the 1,505 acres known as Bryn Coed Farms are the perfect setting for a sprawling housing subdivision.

For Natural Lands, it's an opportunity to save one of the largest remaining unprotected swaths of land in the greater Philadelphia region.





In 1964, brothers Richard, Daniel, and William Dietrich began acquiring adjoining farms in rural Chester Springs, Chester County. They'd noted with consternation increasing encroachment of development and wanted to protect what they could of this bucolic valley.

The Dietrichs decided to keep the land in agriculture. They constructed a state-of-the-art dairy that featured 500 individual, automated milking stalls. Machinery pumped fresh milk through a pre-cooler and then into a 10,000-gallon stainless steel tank, where it was stored until it was picked up by a refrigerated truck. The herd of 1,000 Holsteins—fed on corn and alfalfa from Bryn Coed's fields—won many ribbons at state and local farm shows.

But by 1984, with slim profit margins for milk, the Dietrichs sold off the herd and shut down the dairy.

After the millennium, the brothers—now into their late 50s—began to look for a way to divest themselves of the expansive property. Development pressures were increasing as Chester County's population soared. Several proposals—some to develop the land and some to conserve it—were explored but never came to fruition.

a creative solution

When Natural Lands approached the Dietrich family in 2012 to offer a plan to permanently protect Bryn Coed, the stars seemed to align.

While every conservation effort begins with a willing landowner, in this instance the Dietrichs were being

asked to embark on an unconventional journey—one that would preserve their family legacy but would be much more complex than a typical preservation effort. Fortunately, they were open to creative solutions and, last fall, Natural Lands and the Dietrichs reached an agreement to save Bryn Coed Farms.

"My family sees this property as our touchstone—a place unchanging," said Richard Dietrich, III. "But now the changes are exciting to contemplate! We know that Natural Lands is an organization with the experience and ability to achieve the conservation results we want and that we've chosen a great partner to protect Bryn Coed."

Retaining all 1,505 acres of such a vast and valuable property in Natural Lands ownership simply wasn't feasible. So we devised a plan through which we will retain about a third of the land as a nature preserve, and sell the rest to private buyers with conservation easements in place, ensuring the land is protected. The result will be a unique conservation community with a large new Natural Lands nature preserve and publicly accessible trail system, all neighbored by a number of preserved private properties.

"It's a deal with many moving parts, but Bryn Coed is certainly worth working through the complexities," said Molly Morrison, president of Natural Lands. "We know of no other expanse of vulnerable, unprotected land like it in the five-county suburban Philadelphia area. It's a community and ecological treasure."

building the foundation

Funding support from Chester County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the three municipalities in which the property is located was key to crafting a successful transaction.

Chester County Commissioners Michelle Kichline, Kathi Cozzone, and Terence Farrell noted, "There are reasons why Chester County's open space program is thriving and wins awards, and the dedication of organizations like Natural Lands plays a major role in this. Achieving a balance of preservation and growth can be challenging, but it is made easier when we have landowners willing to find ways in which Chester County's green fabric can remain, and when we have conservancies and other partners that are persistent and creative in acquiring the land. This is welcome news for all Chester County residents."

"The value of working together toward a shared goal never shined brighter," said state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "We commend the demonstrated, extraordinary commitment of Chester County, three local municipalities, and Natural Lands in working together to preserve and protect open lands like Bryn Coed, which lend such a very special character to the region."

the Campaign for Bryn Coed Farms

Thanks to a creative approach to conservation and leadership support from Chester County, the state, and the

hi(stories)

Bryn Coed Farms

Chester County was one of the three original counties created by William Penn in 1682 and thus enjoys a rich cultural history. The farms that make up today's Bryn Coed represent lands leased and released, bought and sold, expanded and inherited for nearly three centuries.



wooded hill

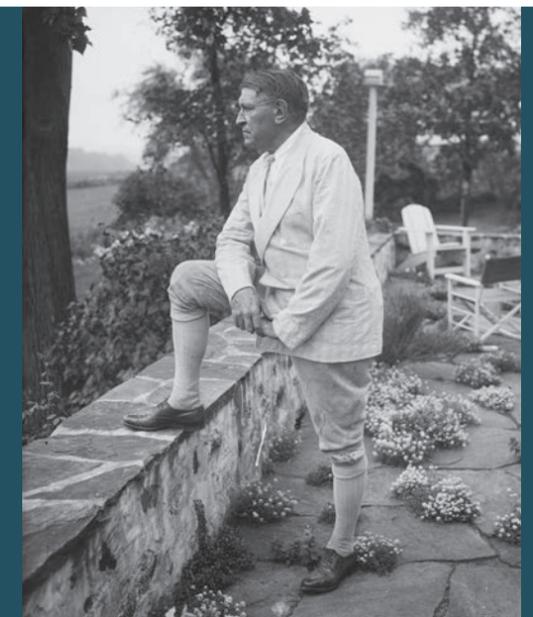
Owen Josephus Roberts was born in Philadelphia in 1875. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School where he would later become a professor. In 1918, Roberts was appointed Special Assistant United States Attorney to prosecute espionage cases in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. But it wasn't until a few years later that he gained national attention as Special Counsel in the infamous "Teapot Dome"

scandal where he prosecuted illegal actions in connection with Navy oil leases at Elk Horn, California and Teapot Dome, Wyoming. In 1930, he was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Hoover.

That same year, Roberts and his family moved from Philadelphia to a 700-acre property he named "Bryn Coed" (Welsh for "wooded hill"). He hired the now-famous architect R. Brognard Okie to restore the 19th-century home.

Roberts was truly in his element on the farm where he was often spotted behind the wheel of his tractor, surrounded by his orchard, organic vegetable fields, and 150 Guernsey cows. He also raised pigs, chickens, and ducks and grew award-winning flowers.

Roberts died at Bryn Coed on May 17, 1955. Much of the land he farmed remains part of the present-day Bryn Coed Farms. Though his farmhouse was sold as a private





municipalities involved, we had the foundation to realize our plan for saving Bryn Coed Farms.

But to fulfill our vision, an additional \$5 million in private support needed to be raised in just a few months via what would primarily be a community-based effort—a campaign larger than any Natural Lands has ever undertaken for a single property. Fortunately, Bryn Coed Farms occupies a special place in the hearts of many who live or grew up nearby.

We launched the Campaign for Bryn Coed Farms in early 2017 with open space champions George and Christy Martin and Peter and Eliza Zimmerman as co-chairs. Armed with extraordinary leverage—a \$2 million dollar-for-dollar challenge grant from the William Penn Foundation, one of Natural Lands’ longest-standing and most stalwart partners—they went to work inspiring others to join the effort.

“Opportunities to protect landscapes like Bryn Coed Farms don’t come around every day, or even every lifetime,” said Christy and George Martin.

“We’ve worked neighbor by neighbor and friend by friend,” explained Eliza Zimmerman. More than 600 individuals have joined the effort and every single gift, no matter the size, has had an impact!”

“We knew the community wouldn’t squander this opportunity,” added Peter Zimmerman.

“The outpouring of enthusiasm for this project from community members has been overwhelming,” said Morrison. “It further reinforces how special Bryn Coed is, and how it embodies those qualities that we treasure about our region.”

“This project offers a regionally significant opportunity to permanently protect open space and water quality in the Delaware River watershed,” said Andrew Johnson, program director for watershed protection at the William Penn Foundation. “Bryn Coed Farms was under severe threat of development due to its location, and as the largest remaining private, unprotected property in Chester County, we thank Natural Lands for its work to preserve these critical acres.”

The Campaign for Bryn Coed—which is expected to conclude in the very near term—is a milestone for the landscape and the community that embraces it. For years, neighbors worried about the fate of this special property. Now, at long last, a secure future is within reach. Bryn Coed Farms will be available for generations to experience, enjoy, and love. ■

the “peacock” tree

It was a blustery February day when arborist Scott Wade measured the massive white oak (*Quercus alba*) on Flint Road at the far eastern edge of Bryn Coed Farms. The circumference, height, and canopy were verified—all key measurements that are required for official status as a Pennsylvania Champion Tree, a program run by the Pennsylvania Forestry Program.

Wade, the program’s coordinator, used the measurements to calculate the tree’s total point value. A tree must score 300 points to qualify for inclusion on the PA Big Trees list; the Bryn Coed oak totaled 305.

Wade estimates the tree—which some locals call the Peacock Oak for its proud, showy display—is relatively young: perhaps 100 to 150 years old. On average, white oaks may live two to three centuries, but older specimens do exist and have been well documented. In Nancy Ross Hugo’s book, *Seeing Trees*, she describes the life of a white oak as 200 years growing, 200 years living, and 200 years dying.

Fortunately, this specimen has a long life ahead of her.



left: Brian Sundermeir, right: Mark Williams, graphics: Brittni Albright

hi(stories)

residence years ago, it can be spotted at a distance along Saint Matthews Road.

winter harvest

The rolling hills of Bryn Coed give way to flood plains and streams, including the Pickering Creek headwaters. In fact, Bryn Coed Farms alone constitutes 17 percent of the remaining unprotected high-priority land in the Pickering Creek watershed.

One lowland area provided a winter “crop” for generations of the Stauffer family, who lived on the land from 1802 until 1922. By damming up a small but constant stream running through their farms, the Stauffers could flood a low field and then cut the resulting ice into large blocks that were sent by wagon or sled to Phoenixville.

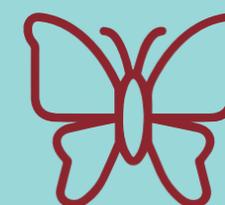
In the 19th century, the process of ice harvesting was a dangerous one. The 300-pound ice blocks were

unwieldy and could easily crush bones. Only about one tenth of ice harvested made it to sale. In 1825, Boston native Nathaniel Wyeth (a distant cousin of the famous painter Wyeths) developed a more efficient way to harvest ice. Wyeth devised a new form of horse pulling ice plow that scored the ice into large grids which would triple the amount of ice harvested. The industry thrived until the 1940s when electric refrigerators replaced the ice box. ■

16.9
foot trunk
circumference



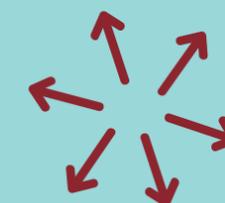
534
species of
moths and
butterflies
supported



74.5
foot height



108
foot spread
of canopy



15,000
pounds of oxygen produced
over its lifetime, enough for
1,000 people to breathe





Ask people who love the outdoors how they first formed their connection to nature and it won't take long before someone mentions scouting. For generations, summers at Boy and Girl Scout camps—and the requisite bug bites, canoeing incidents, campfire songs, and endless pranks—have helped to plant the seeds of a life-long yearning to explore.

Not surprisingly, the same social trends that have resulted in the much-talked-about “nature deficit disorder” among children are posing a challenge for scouting. Summer camp enrollment is down, leaving scouting councils with a conundrum: how to continue to provide valuable camp experiences while sustaining their broader mission.

In eastern Pennsylvania, conservation is proving to be part of the solution. **Since 1996, Natural Lands has helped preserve more than 8,000 acres of former Girl and Boy Scout Camps in our region.**

The Cradle of Liberty Council of the Boy Scouts of America was among the first to embrace conservation. Natural Lands secured grant funds to purchase conservation easements on a number of camps, ensuring that the properties are preserved permanently and providing a much-needed infusion of capital funds for the council. Other area Boy Scout and—more recently—Girl Scout councils have followed suit.

In 2012, the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania made the difficult decision to close Camp Hidden Falls—an 1,100-acre property at the eastern edge of the Pocono Mountains—the result of efforts to consolidate camp operations across the region and improve facilities at their remaining sites. Concurrently, the Girl Scouts hired Natural Lands to explore conservation solutions for the camp and for other Scout-owned properties. After five years of searching for an appropriate conservation owner for the property, all the pieces came together.

This spring, Hidden Falls took the first step toward its new life as public parkland. The property will soon be purchased by The Conservation Fund and transferred to the National Park Service as an addition to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

The breathtakingly beautiful property includes more than two miles of pristine streams, eight “hidden” waterfalls, and 15 acres of wetlands teeming with wildlife. The bulk of the Camp is wooded, offering essential habitat for a myriad of raptors and songbirds. The property is an important acquisition that will help make a future connection between the 70,000-acre Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and 20,000 acres of Delaware State Forest.

“I have very fond memories of Camp Hidden Falls,” said Judith Samans-Dunn, a former Girl Scout who attended

preserved forever. scout's honor.



the camp in the 1960s. “One night, when our counselors knew that there would be a meteor shower, we slept outside without tents. Lying on our backs to look at the night sky, we counted more than 100 shooting stars before falling asleep. The night sky was so amazing from the darkness of Camp Hidden Falls compared to our built-up suburban yards!”

Many former campers are heartened to know that the place where they forged an enriching connection to nature will remain natural.

“For generations, Scouting has been a way for kids to experience nature in a deeply personal way. These vivid experiences—like sinking your toes into the mud at the bottom of a swimming pond, learning to build a campfire,

or finding the constellations on a starry night—can catalyze a life-long love of the natural world,” said Molly Morrison, president of Natural Lands and a former Girl Scout. “Natural Lands applauds the Girl Scouts for finding a conservation solution for Camp Hidden Falls, and we’re so glad to have helped make it possible.”

In addition to Camp Hidden Falls, here are a few other camps we’ve helped to preserve:

Musser Scout Reservation

Montgomery County, PA
1,198 acres

Located along the Unami Creek, the Musser Scout Reservation includes three Boy Scout camps owned by the Cradle of Liberty Council: Camp Hart, Camp Delmont, and Camp Garrison. The property is within the Unami Forest, one of the largest remaining intact forests in southeastern Pennsylvania. The Forest includes a vast, interconnected mosaic of woodlands—punctuated by dramatic boulders and rocky outcrops—and more than 24 miles of sparkling streams.

Natural Lands holds a conservation easement on the entire Reservation, which protects the land from development while allowing the Boy Scouts to retain ownership and continue to operate the Camps there.

Marshall Island

Bucks County, PA
131 acres

Marshall Island and neighboring Treasure Island, which are connected by a footbridge, were among the oldest Boy Scout Camps in the country and the only ones completely surrounded by water. Located in the Delaware River, the Camps sustained heavy damaged from repeated flooding over the years, leading to the decision to close them in 2009.

With Natural Lands’ assistance, the Cradle of Liberty Council sold Marshall Island to the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, which agreed to restrictions protecting the island’s natural state.

Marshall Island was used by Lenni-Lenape Native Americans during their annual treks from the Pennsylvania hills to the New Jersey coast; artifacts were found there as late as 1987. Today, Bald Eagles use the island as a nesting site.

- 1** **Goose Pond Scout Reservation**
455 acres
- 2** **Rock Hill Scout Camp**
486 acres
- 3** **Camp Acahela**
245 acres
- 4** **Resica Falls Scout Reservation**
4,015 acres
- 5** **Camp Hidden Falls**
1,100 acres
- 6** **Marshall Island**
131 acres
- 7** **Musser Scout Reservation**
1,198 acres
- 8** **Camp Indian Run**
124 acres
- 9** **Camp Horseshoe**
194 acres

Camp Horseshoe

Chester County, PA
194 acres

Camp Horseshoe, located on the Mason-Dixon Line separating Pennsylvania and Maryland, derives its name from the Octoraro Creek that makes a meandering four-mile horseshoe through the property.

Permanently protected with a conservation easement held by Natural Lands, Camp Horseshoe offers one of the Boy Scouts’ last traditional, seven-day resident camp programs in the country.

Excerpt of Camp Horseshoe Song

(Words credited to Kevin Grewell and Vance Hein)

*The sun comes up over Flagpole Hill
Where Old Glory flew and is flying proudly still.
And we’ll march to the call at the end of the day
In the loop of the Octoraro bend.*

*So let’s hoist our packs once again my friend
Where the waters flow round the tranquil horseshoe bend
And we’ll hike and we’ll camp in the old Scout way
In the loop of the Octoraro bend.*

*They built a camp upon the Mason-Dixon Line
Historic land where values shine.
Old Horseshoe your memory will ‘er be mine
In the loop of the Octoraro bend.*

Resica Falls Scout Reservation

Monroe and Pike Counties
4,015 acres

Resica Falls Scout Reservation is a Boy Scout’s paradise set in the Pocono Mountains. The expansive, forested property includes two freshwater lakes, more than six miles of Big Bushkill Creek, and a 45-foot waterfall from which the Camp takes its name.

In addition to the Boy Scouts that camp there, Resica Falls is visited by several thousand people a year—including local elementary school groups—who take advantage of its hiking trails, fishing access, picnic facilities, and cabin rentals.

Through a multi-year effort to raise funding to protect the entirety of the Reservation with a conservation easement, Natural Lands has ensured this wilderness treasure will remain forever for future campers and visitors. ■



saving open space

September 1, 2016 – January 31, 2017

BERKS COUNTY, PA

1 White/Trexler

45 acres
Heidelberg and South Heidelberg Townships

Key Partners: PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry; PA DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation – Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund; US Forest Service – Highlands Conservation Act; Virginia Cretella Mars Foundation

Natural Lands acquired this 45-acre wooded property for the PA Bureau of Forestry. It will be added to the 400-acre George W. Wertz State Forest located in the Bureau's William Penn Forest District. It's adjacent to

1,300 acres of open space owned by the local water authority, and is in the heart of the Schuylkill Highlands, a region designated by the state as a conservation priority. Nearby 234-acre Gibraltar Hill was preserved in a partnership between Natural Lands and the Bureau of Forestry in 2014.

CHESTER COUNTY, PA

2 Boddorff Farm

15.4 acres
London Grove Township

Key Partners: Jim and Dominique Boddorff; London Grove Township; National Park Service – White Clay Creek, National Wild & Scenic River

This scenic horse farm is located within the White Clay Creek watershed, so its conservation helps to

ensure clean drinking water for thousands of people downstream. Dominique Boddorff, a former member of the London Grove Township Open Space Committee, and her husband had long-hoped to permanently protect their property. They realized that vision by donating a conservation easement to Natural Lands. It is a powerful testament to their commitment to land conservation and their love of their land.

3 Gillen/Graul

1.9 acres
East Brandywine Township

Key Partners: East Brandywine Township; Wilfred Donnell Gillen, Jr. and Barbara Graul

Natural Lands assisted East Brandywine Township with securing a conservation easement on the 1.9-acre

Gillen/Graul property. The property is forested and will remain so in perpetuity, thanks to the provisions of the conservation easement. It's also located along a stretch of road identified by the Township as an area valued for its scenic vistas, an important part of the Township's rural identity.

4 Larmore Farm

15.3 acres
London Grove Township

Key Partners: Catherine Larmore; London Grove Township; National Park Service – White Clay Creek, National Wild & Scenic River

Another property located within the White Clay Creek watershed, Larmore Farm has unique ties to the watershed. Catherine Larmore was part of decade-long group effort to

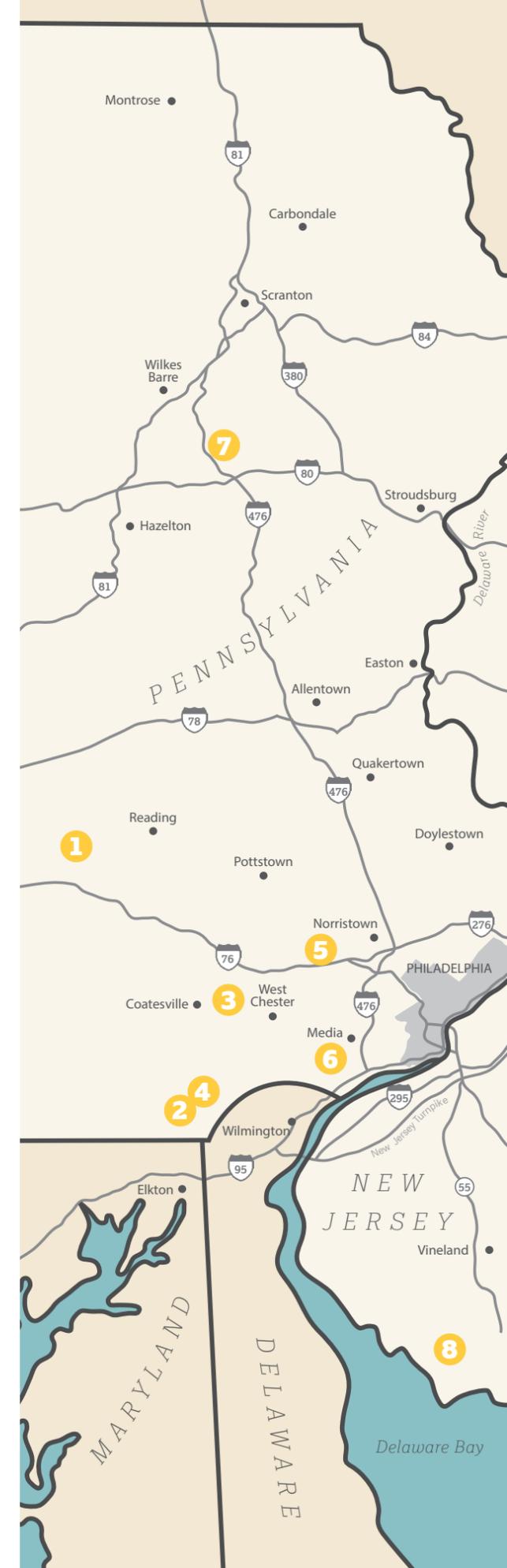
have the White Clay Creek designated as a "National Wild and Scenic River." Inclusion in this federal program requires that the river be free flowing and possess an outstandingly remarkable resource such as exceptional scenic, historic, or aquatic qualities, or recreational opportunities. The conservation easement will ensure this three-generation farm, purchased by her grandparents in 1920, will remain intact.

5 Valley Forge Meadows

19.5 acres
Schuylkill Township

Key Partners: Schuylkill Township; Valley Forge Meadows Co., Inc.

Valley Forge Meadows is located not far from Valley Forge National Historical Park. Largely wooded, the property also includes wetlands and





Larmore Farm

a tributary to the nearby Schuylkill River. The conservation easement protects a scenic stretch of highly traveled Pawlings Road and will help to maintain the natural and historical setting around the National Park.

DELAWARE COUNTY, PA

6 Miller

25.4 acres
Chester Heights Borough

Key Partners: James A. Miller; Frederick Wood; Richard Wood; Richard D. Wood, Jr.; Lisa and Christopher Wright

James Miller—now in his 90s—wanted to protect his land as a tribute to his late wife. With help from generous neighbors, we were able

to help him achieve his vision with a conservation easement on his 25-acre property on Lenni Road in Chester Heights. The Millers bought the property in the 1940s and, as the decades went by, watched with sadness as developments were built all around them.

The land is largely forested, but also includes a meadow and several streams that feed into Chester Creek. Preserving wooded areas like this helps prevent erosion and flooding by absorbing and filtering rainfall. The Miller property is located near Natural Lands' Wawa Preserve, which is a 98-acre nature preserve operated in partnership with Middletown Township. The property is also within view of the proposed Chester Creek Trail Greenway.

LUZERNE COUNTY, PA

7 Blue Ridge

Addition to Bear Creek Preserve
153.3 acres
Bear Creek Township

Key Partners: Open Space Institute's Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund, capitalized by the William Penn Foundation; PA DCNR; direct funding from the William Penn Foundation

The addition of this 153-acre property, located along the Francis E. Walter Dam Reservoir, brings our Bear Creek Preserve to a total of 3,565 acres. The dam lies along the Lehigh River, part of the massive Delaware River watershed, which supplies water to some 22 million people—about 10 percent of country's



Miller

population. The land filters pollutants to protect the water quality of the Lehigh River downstream.

The purchase also offers an exciting opportunity to expand Bear Creek Preserve's existing 31 miles of hiking trails and to connect to a trail network within the 1,800-acre Francis E. Walter Dam area. Working in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Lands also plans to install a boat launch for canoeists and kayakers.

Another potential beneficiary of this conservation effort is a small bat known as the eastern small-footed myotis, which is a threatened species in Pennsylvania. This tiny bat—among the smallest in North America—is in decline due to habitat loss and white-nose syndrome. The species thrives in expansive forested areas like Bear Creek

Preserve. However, about 90 percent of their preferred habitat is on privately-owned lands, which makes protecting them a challenge. Each additional acre of protected forest land is an important step in helping these important bats survive.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, NJ

8 Nocon Inner Lakes

Addition to Glades Wildlife Refuge
20 acres
Downe Township

Key Partners: Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; Kevin Nocon; the William Penn Foundation

The 20-acre Nocon Inner Lakes property has been added to our 6,765-acre Glades Wildlife Refuge. This wooded wetland area is bounded

on three sides by Natural Lands property, so it's been a high priority for purchase for some time. Adding the property to the preserve will help to buffer the old-growth forest—a section of the Refuge with 400-year-old trees—and the pristine inner lakes, which are frequently used as a roosting area by Bald Eagles. ■



meet Cooper.

resident wood bison.

Our 321-acre Fulshaw Craeg Preserve in Montgomery County is home to a number of rare and endangered species, including native showy goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*)—an important pollinator plant. Our Natural Resources Management Task Force has been studying botanic inventories compiled over the years that indicate some of these species are in decline. Though the reasons for this drop in their numbers isn't yet entirely clear, our stewardship team is taking steps to ensure showy goldenrod and other native wildflowers have the best chance of survival at Fulshaw Craeg.

By studying aerial photos, the Task Force noted that trees have encroached on the wildflower meadows, shrinking their overall size to half of what they were 80 years ago. So we've taken down some trees along the edges to increase sunlight in the meadows. We're also working on removing invasive persimmon plants, which crowd out native species.

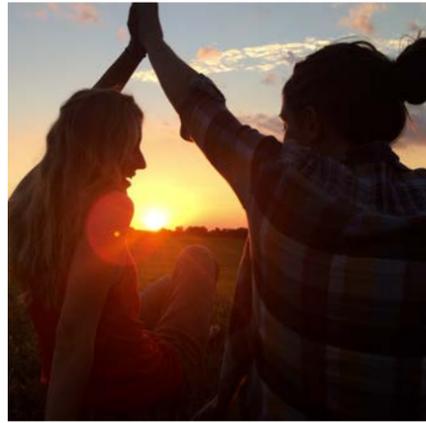
We've also unleashed a herd of wood bison to graze there. Well, more accurately, stewardship staff member Cooper Williams has been *simulating* the effects of wood bison—a lesser-known and larger cousin to the plains bison—which used to roam these parts but is now largely extinct in the continental U.S.

Showy goldenrod needs routine disturbance for its wind-dispersed seeds to germinate. In the absence of massive mammals like wood bison, Cooper—armed with a string trimmer and a strong back—mimics grazing, whacking down the meadow grasses within 10 study plots in an artfully haphazard fashion. Ten control plots are left untouched. Staff will continue to inventory the plants in these areas to determine if our efforts have been effective.

If so, Cooper has a lot of weed whacking in his future. ■

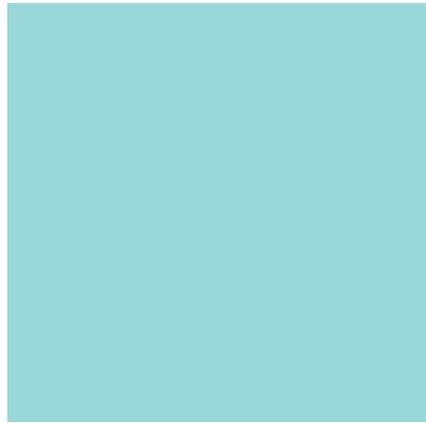
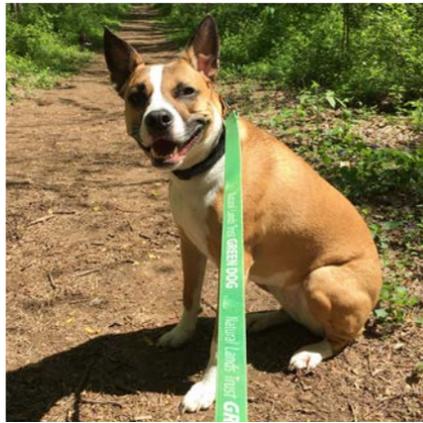


Showy Goldenrod
Solidago speciosa



our preserves.
your muse.

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Natural Lands

mission

land for life.
preserving and nurturing nature's wonders.

nature for all.
creating opportunities for joy and discovery in nature for everyone in our region.

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Field Jam
Saturday, June 24
 4:00 – 7:00 PM
 Gwynedd Preserve
 North Wales, PA

Friday Night Lights
Friday, July 14
 8:00 – 11:00 PM
 ChesLen Preserve
 Coatesville, PA

Beats & Brews
Saturday, September 9
 6:00 – 9:30 PM
 Binky Lee Preserve
 Chester Springs, PA

Roots & Bluestems
Saturday, September 16
 4:00 – 7:00 PM
 Stroud Preserve
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