



pennsylvania & delaware

FALL 2021

fall update

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Nature Supporter,

The Nature
Conservancy 
Pennsylvania & Delaware



With fall in full swing, I again find myself in awe of the sights, sounds, and smells that nature presents to us each season. What I love most about fall—aside from college football—are all the outdoor recreation opportunities that tend to take a back seat in the hot summer months.

Working for an organization that offers these opportunities to the public through our nature preserves is one of the things I love most about my job.

However, as The Nature Conservancy strives to build an even stronger culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, I'm reminded that we have more work to do to provide equitable and accessible outdoor experiences to all. This past summer, we took the first step in improving preserve access to people with disabilities by installing a new wheelchair entrance at the iconic Dick and Nancy Eales Preserve at Moosic Mountain in northeastern Pennsylvania. Through a partnership with Individual Abilities in Motion (AIM)—a Pennsylvania-based non-profit focused on inclusion

and integration for individuals with disabilities—we have decided to launch a new project to take a close look at all our preserves to determine where we can make improvements that create more accessible outdoor experiences. This is new and essential work for the chapter—and frankly—it's long overdue.

Thanks to our supporters, we have several other exciting accomplishments and updates to share within this newsletter. I'm continually grateful for the passion and dedication of our staff, our supporters, our trustees, and our communities. With your help, we can keep up the good work. Biodiversity urgently needs effective action to ensure meaningful conservation outcomes. This is the decade we must deliver.

Yours in Conservation,

Lori Brennan, Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy in Pennsylvania and Delaware



Completion of First Green Stormwater Infrastructure Project

The Nature Conservancy was thrilled to complete our first green stormwater infrastructure project in partnership with Holmesburg Baptist Church and Christian Academy (HBC) this fall in Northeast Philadelphia. Starting last spring, heavy equipment was used to remove unused impervious surfaces and the aging underground stormwater infrastructure. Our contractor then installed new underground tanks that hold stormwater runoff so that pollutants and sediment can settle out, then slowly release it into the existing pipes that drain to Pennypack Creek. On the surface, raingardens were installed strategically around the school to filter and slow runoff, allowing for better infiltration into the earth before water reaches the underground storage and drainage. This project helps improve water quality in the Delaware River, helps save HBC money by lowering their water bill, and will provide new greenspace for students to interact with nature. We look forward to completing more projects like this in partnership with the Philadelphia Water Department's *Green City, Clean Waters* program.



Volunteers Return to the Field

After a year of canceled events in 2020, we were delighted to welcome back our dedicated volunteers—and meet new ones—in 2021. Recent visitors to our Cove Mountain Preserve have been treated to an enhanced hiking experience and the addition of a new trail thanks to the thousands of hours of hard work put in by members of the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club. Clean-up events at First State National Historical Park in Delaware and Bristol Marsh Preserve in Pennsylvania returned in-person in September, with volunteers picking up hundreds of pounds of trash at local parks. Trail improvements were also made possible at our Chrome Barrens Preserve thanks to longtime volunteers. In southern Delaware, volunteers cut back weeds encroaching on the young trees at a 39-acre reforestation site planted in 2019. These projects, and many others, completed by volunteers improved our preserves for the benefit of visitors, wildlife and the natural landscape.



Impaired Dam Compels Removal

Concerns about visitor safety at our Eales Preserve has obliged us to pursue removal of the 128-year-old O'Conner Reservoir dam located onsite. Removing the dam is necessary given its declining condition and structural integrity. This provides an opportunity to restore the area to more natural conditions through stream restorations. Heavy rainfall this fall required immediate short-term repairs and the lowering of water levels. The design and permitting process and the dam removal is quite costly, though, and we need your help to carry out this critical work. With your support, we can move forward with these projects that will benefit the ecosystem and local community.





Stream Stewards Plant Trees

This past spring, staff from First State National Historical Park, Stroud Water Research Center, The Nature Conservancy, and several “Stream Stewards” volunteers gathered at the park’s Brandywine Valley unit for a stream buffer planting. Nearly 250 native shrubs and trees—including Buttonbush, Silky Dogwood and Silver Maple—were planted to establish a forested riparian stream buffer. This project was made possible through funding by the William Penn Foundation.

Dogfish Head Partnership Goes National

The Nature Conservancy has partnered with Dogfish Head Craft Brewery (DFH) in Delaware since 2007. This year we took our partnership to a whole new level with a national campaign called Mother Nature, Let’s Do This! Dogfish Head founders Sam and Mariah Calagione hit the road for a month-long road trip stopping at TNC preserves, filming their adventures along the way. The footage was edited into a series of episodes that included stops at the South Wilmington Wetlands Park, Bristol Marsh Preserve and Cove Mountain Preserve. You can watch the episodes from the campaign at dogfish.com/TNC.



Improved Accessibility at TNC Preserves

Last year, when the pandemic interrupted our lives, countless people turned to nature for exercise and enjoyment. But not everyone has equal access to nature. We’re making efforts to improve accessibility at our public preserves, including the recent installation of a new access gate at the trailhead at the Eales Preserve at Moosic Mountain. The new gate replaces a large stone that was placed at the trailhead intended to keep out ATVs but also made it difficult for wheelchairs and strollers to get by. TNC staff cut cedar trees from one of our preserves, then milled the logs to become lumber for the new gate. We’re reviewing ways we can improve access at other preserves as well, as we believe conservation is best advanced when diverse teams, partners, and local communities are working together to better understand and protect our planet.

Growing Impact in Delaware

This fall we welcomed Emily Knearl as our new Delaware External Affairs Advisor. In this new role, Emily will serve as a spokesperson and advocate to broaden support for the Conservancy’s conservation priorities. Emily will lead public policy initiatives and represent TNC with elected officials, government agencies, and other conservation partners in the First State.



OUR MISSION:

TO CONSERVE THE LANDS
AND WATERS ON WHICH
ALL LIFE DEPENDS.



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Sunrise, November 2020, Big Stone Beach at Milford Neck Preserve, DE. © John Hinkson/TNC

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