

DELAWARE ACORNS

FALL/WINTER 2018

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The Brandywine-Christina Revolving Water Fund Moves from Theory to Reality

INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE MECHANISM IS FIRST OF ITS KIND

During the past four years, under a grant from the William Penn Foundation as part of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, The Nature Conservancy has worked with the University of Delaware's Water Resources Center and other partners to develop the Brandywine-Christina Revolving Water Fund (the "Water Fund"). A water fund is a finance and governance mechanism for downstream beneficiaries to invest in upstream conservation practices designed to secure freshwater

resources—both in terms of water quality and quantity—for people and nature, far into the future.

The ecologically and culturally rich Brandywine-Christina watershed is comprised of the Brandywine, Red Clay and White Clay Creeks, and the Christina River which collectively provide more than 100 million gallons of drinking water per day to over half a million people in Delaware and Pennsylvania. Legacy pollutants, nutrient

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COVER Sunrise at Prime Hook © Deborah Felme; THIS PAGE The headwaters of the Brandywine Creek begin in Honeybrook Twp., PA, approximately 35 miles upstream from Wilmington, DE (as seen from Brandywine Park in this photo). The Brandywine Creek is the sole source of drinking water for Wilmington, Delaware's largest city; Brandywine Creek © John Hinkson/TNC

and sediment overloads, and urban runoff have rendered a majority of creeks and streams in this watershed unsafe for swimming and fishing, let alone drinking. By facilitating large-scale public and private investment, the Water Fund is designed to dramatically increase the pace, scale and efficiency of water-quality conservation in the Brandywine-Christina watershed.

In addition to William Penn Foundation funding, i2 Capital, an investment firm specializing in conservation finance, secured a two-year US Department of Agriculture Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to bring impact investment capital to the Water Fund. The Water Fund aims to push regulatory-driven municipal stormwater and drinking water utility investments toward agricultural restoration projects and to create marketable “Environmental Impact Units,” which can be sold to generate revenue for more conservation and create a self-sustaining, revolving fund structure.

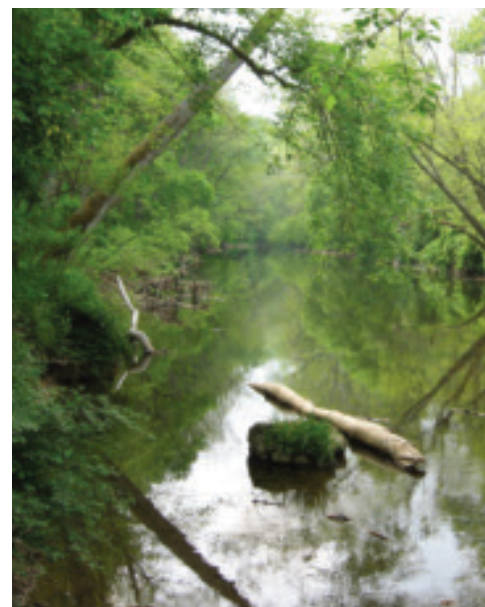
Scientific data have shown that relatively simple conservation projects on agricultural lands at the headwaters typically have the highest return on investment for those downstream. By keeping soils and nutrients on fields and livestock out of waterways, farmers can improve water quality throughout the watershed. The same agricultural practices can also help municipalities meet their obligations under the Clean Water Act and reduce the cost of producing drinking water in the more populated portions of the watershed.

Common agricultural practices include planting cover crops on fields in the off season, building manure-retention facilities and fencing off stream segments. Keeping

animals out of streams also reduces stream bank erosion, allowing vegetation and trees to grow, shading the streams and providing improved fish and wildlife habitat. Another effective way to improve water quality is to plant trees and plants along streambanks that are not forested. These “riparian buffers” filter sediment and excess nutrients (like nitrogen and phosphorus) which can run off agricultural lands into streams, increasing the cost of water filtration downstream. Conservation-based agricultural practices not only improve livestock and soil health, they also tend to provide a more cost-effective means of improving water quality than downstream interventions (i.e., filtration/purification methods).

The Water Fund completed its first pilot project with the City of Newark, Delaware in June 2018. Newark contributed \$20,000 from its 2017 municipal budget for source water protection. The Water Fund provided an additional \$10,000 utilizing a grant from the DuPont Company. The Hutchison farm near Landenburg, Pennsylvania implemented several conservation practices to protect the headwaters stream that transects the farm. That stream feeds into White Clay Creek which is the source of drinking water for the City of Newark.

The completion of the pilot project moves the Brandywine-Christina Revolving Water Fund from theory to reality, making it the 30th active water fund that The Nature Conservancy has helped develop world-wide. A cleaner, healthier Brandywine-Christina watershed is possible, and we thank you for your support along the way as we work toward the goal of swimmable, fishable waterways throughout the region we call home.



LEARN MORE about the Brandywine-Christina Revolving Water Fund at revolvingwaterfund.com and waterfundtoolbox.org

A Look Back at Our Achievements

DELAWARE IN 2018

As the cooler weather and shorter days creep in, we reflect on some of our greatest successes from the past year. These accomplishments were possible thanks to the generous supporters who gave their time, contributed funding, and offered their expertise to help further the mission of The Nature Conservancy here in Delaware. **Thank you!**



The Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future (LEAF) internship program provides paid summer internships for high school students from urban areas during the month of July. Through their work with TNC and other nonprofits across the state, the interns gain job skills and learn about career opportunities in the field of conservation. Learn more at nature.org/LEAF.



A Stream Stewards Citizen Scientist measures the nitrate level in Rocky Run, a stream that runs through the Beaver Valley unit of First State National Historical Park (FRST) into Brandywine Creek. The William Penn Foundation awarded a three-year grant to The Nature Conservancy to support Stream Stewards and to build on the initial success of the program by leveraging the partnership with FRST and Stroud Water Research Center. Learn more at nature.org/destreamstewards.





The Chapter's new Urban Conservation program celebrated the completion of the first collaborative lot-greening project in West Center City, Wilmington. Trees planted on the vacant lot will provide mental and physical health benefits to neighbors, soak up storm water runoff and help keep the immediate area cooler in the summer thanks to shade. TNC's Public Ally intern Melisa Soysal assists with planting a redbud tree.



Staff from Chesapeake Utilities volunteered at Ponders Tract in May. They planted more than 60 native trees and shrubs in an expansive new parking lot planter, cut down immature trees along trails, and filled in mud puddles. Ponders Tract has more than 9 miles of trails for the public to explore. Plan your visit at nature.org/ponders.



Dogfish Head Craft Brewery employees helped spruce up the Edward H. McCabe Preserve on the company's annual Beer & Benevolence Day in April. This year, Dogfish volunteers cleared downed trees and brush, planted new trees, stained a fence, and built new bog bridges on sections of wet trails.



This summer, the Stream Stewards program hosted two GLOBE interns, Camille Kauffman and Grace Haumersen. The GLOBE interns also served as the Watershed Fellows for the Alliance for Watershed Education of the Delaware River. Camille (left) and Grace (right) worked on outreach efforts in the Wilmington community, making connections between watershed stewardship and urban residents as well as visitors to FRST. nature.org/GLOBE



In June, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the new floating dock located on the banks of the Broadkill River at the Conservancy's Edward H. McCabe Preserve. The publicly accessible dock is open for use by canoers and kayakers and is located two miles downstream from the public boat launch at Milton Memorial Park. Plan your adventure at nature.org/mccabe.



A prescribed burn was conducted on 20 acres at the Hurley Tract of Middleford North Preserve, near Seaford. TNC is managing 45-acres of the 171-acre tract as an "early successional scrub-shrub habitat." This habitat type is important for numerous species, especially our declining shrubland-dependent birds including American woodcock and Northern bobwhite. Ten weeks after the prescribed burn, the native purple love grass had grown extensively throughout the burn site. This is the first time that prescribed fire has been used to manage the land at this preserve.

Carefree Summers on the Bay

JOANNE T. GREENSPUN'S BAYSHORE LEGACY



In many ways, summers at the beach in Lewes haven't changed drastically since the 1930s when Joanne Greenspun was a child. Her mother was from Lewes and her grandmother lived on Front Street, now Gills Neck Road, in a Victorian house that overlooked the canal. For the summers, Joanne's mother and aunt would rent a cottage near the beach where she would spend her days playing in the gentle waves rolling in off the Delaware Bay.

"Sometimes Mother would go crabbing, but I would usually just spend my time playing in the water with my cousin Jim," says Joanne. She fondly recalls making beach plum jelly with her mother with fruit harvested from the shrubby plants that grew in the dunes. Joanne says the only time they weren't in the water were the days when the rotten smells and oil-sheened water drifted down from the menhaden fish factory, then located just east of the

present-day ferry terminal. "That's about the only thing I don't miss about the beach when I was a little girl," Joanne adds with a smile.

Joanne went on to attend Wellesley College and later Drexel University for her Master of Library Sciences. She settled in New Jersey and served as the director of Vineland Public Library for 28 years. But she didn't forget Lewes and the many summers filled with happy memories as a child: she eventually bought a vacation home there.

Joanne's connection to nature brought her back to Lewes, and it also brought her to The Nature Conservancy. She's supported the Conservancy for 30 years and especially appreciates the organization's commitment to preserving green spaces and protecting special sites from development. When thinking about the future, the Conservancy came to mind: "I don't have any children, so when I saw

that you can give property to The Nature Conservancy, I thought that would be a nice way to help support projects on both sides of the Delaware Bay that are special to me," remarks Joanne.

Joanne generously donated her vacation home in Lewes to The Nature Conservancy to fund a Charitable Gift Annuity—proceeds support conservation projects along the Delaware Bayshore in New Jersey and Delaware. Joanne's forward-thinking gift will help advance conservation for years to come. She shares, "I think The Nature Conservancy is a great organization, and I want other people to support it, too."



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SUPPORT The Nature Conservancy, from donations of stock to leaving a gift to TNC in your will. Contact Director of Development Laura de Ramel at 302-654-4707 X 421 or visit [nature.org/giftplanning](https://www.nature.org/giftplanning) to learn more about how gift and estate planning can benefit you and nature.

We thank the following contributors for their generous gifts and pledge payments of \$500 and above to support The Nature Conservancy's work in Delaware and around the world from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. Although space does not permit listing all gifts to the Conservancy, each contribution, no matter the size, has a direct impact on our work to protect critical habitat for people and nature.

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



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BELOW © Dogfish Head

The 13th annual Dogfish Dash raised an incredible \$150,000 for The Nature Conservancy in Delaware on September 30, 2018. Three thousand runners participated in the 8K race, cheered on by hundreds of additional supporters. We would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to Sam and Mariah Calagione, Mark Carter, and all of the committed Dogfish employees for their longtime support. Many thanks also go out to the outstanding volunteers who helped make the event possible, including the many volunteers from Chesapeake Utilities. Funds raised help us fulfill our mission to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends and support our programs, projects, and 5,000 acres of preserves across the First State.



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