

# Welcome to our socially distanced birthday hike!

There are **48** informative signs that describe our work and the history of the land for you to enjoy on this very special birthday weekend. Please come back to headquarters and pick up your free gift and wish us a happy birthday!





## STATION 08



What is now called Old Lane was a wind-swept driveway that was planted after 1945. Those thin shadows are sapling trees planted in the form of an “allee” after 1945. They are now the large maples you see in a rhythm down the trail. Look what nature can do in 75 years!





## STATION 16



That's Mr. and Mrs. Brookshire in 1945. They were tenants of the Ruck Family that last owned the farm that is now our headquarters. The Rucks emigrated from Germany and purchased the farm in 1917. The small house shown here was built for Mrs. Ruck's brother and sister, Herman and Martha Belz who were care-takers.



## STATION 17



Farming was in serious decline by the 1950's. One hallmark of the landscape under cultivation are shelter-belts. These lines of spruces and pines were promoted by the Soil Conservation Service as a way of reducing soil erosion and protecting homes and barns from heat loss. You can see these shelter belts in various landscapes around the Trust.





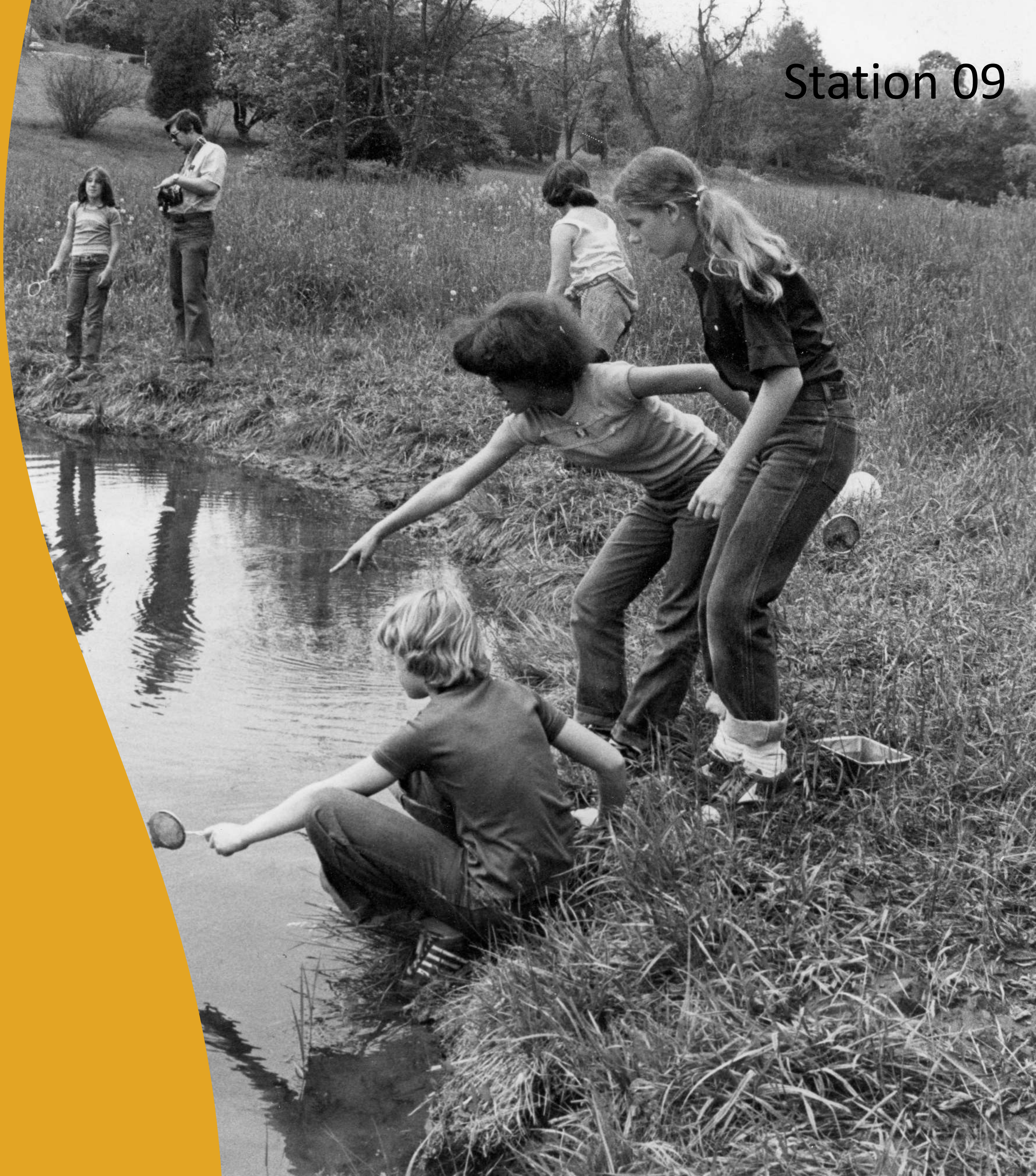
## Station 27



This image dates from sometime after 1925. Conifer trees are yet to meet the roofline of the house (now the Trust's office) where images from 1945 show the same conifers far taller than the house. The capacity for environmental change lays nascent in the soil and in human potential for environmental stewardship.



This pond was dug in 1978 when the Trust was just 25 acres. Notice the number of trees that line the background looking uphill. Today this is habitat for owls, green herons, and snapping turtles.





## STATION 02



Crossroads Marsh: this marsh was a hayfield until the early 80's when it was excavated to make a wetland habitat for ducks and herons. Now we also have mink and beaver!





## STATION 05

This portion of Raytharn was most recently a grazing area but has been used for various crops for at least 200 years. You can still see rectangular patterns in the meadow accounting for different depths of tillage that still have an impact on plant growth today.





## Station 10

Paper Mill Road was in use during the Revolutionary War until 1980. Closing the road enables plant communities and wildlife to rebound without the light, noise, and salt pollution that come with roadways. Being “roadless” is essential to being wilderness.





The stream is severely down-cut and in contact with a glass dump. Look carefully and you'll see shards of colored glass, parts of milk bottles. Now this area is productive for salamanders which are indicators of a pesticide free environment. We hope to place old Christmas trees in this swale this winter to trap sediment and improve water quality.





## Station 12



Thank you Feo Pitcain (centered) who founded, guided, and helped finance the Pennypack Trust in its opening decades. Feo continues to point the way towards the sustainable stewardship of our planet for ours and other species.

Owen Freeman (Left) and David Witwer (Right).





# STATION 13



When mowing stops, trees grow. Thousands of trees have grown from seed dropped from adjacent forest. Volunteers diligently protect them by removing vines and other invasive species every fall for the past 20 years. Want to help? Become a Re-Forester and get training and your own tree plantation to care for. Sign up at <https://pennypacktrust.org/support/reforesters/>







This is a warm season grass meadow. Naturally, it only occurs for a few years after forest fires. Since we no longer have natural forest fires, and grasslands are essential to many songbirds, these grasses need to be mown and “hayed off” by farmers to keep trees and shrubs from taking over.





This deer exclosure protects 1.77 acres of young forest trees and shrubs from deer. This new generation of growth is meant to provide native plant tissue that will be food for insect larvae.

Those larvae are an essential source of protein for adult songbirds to give to their hatchlings. This reforestation project was made possible by your 2018 Annual Fund gift and a matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Thank you!





## STATION 18



This image, taken in 1907 illustrates that the Pennypack Creek has been much more than just a power source for mills. It's been an important part of growing up in Huntingdon Valley for generations. Some of our most dedicated board members are still motivated to protect and expand the Trust because of their memories in these woods.





## STATION 19



This is the site of Paper Mill School, a one-room school house that worked from around 1850. After the school district consolidated, it became a private residence and fell into disrepair. Look around and you can still find the concrete foundation for one of the privies!





That's team work! This remarkable image is illustrative of life on Huntingdon Valley farms, the draft horses need to do common construction-related and land clearing tasks, and the use of remnant forest patches as sources of lumber and shade for grazing animals. The Trust's remnant forest patches looked like this 100 years ago and were selectively right up to 1970.







Both beef and dairy cows were raised here into the early 1970s. Naturally occurring seeps were used to water the cows as they grazed in the floodplain of the Pennypack. These seeps are formed when groundwater from Raytharn Farm infiltrates the soils and runs against bedrock. That rock face exhibits at the base of steep slopes and helps to create unique wetland pockets inside the floodplain.





Thank you to some of the first restoration and education staff of the Pennypack Watershed Association, which later became the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust. From left to right, Marvin Clymer, Ruth Wallison, and David Widwer, the organization's first Executive Director.







The Pennypack Watershed Association was first to collect data on fish populations and macroinvertebrate diversity; data which continues to be useful to us in measuring changes in long-term stream health and water quality.



## Station 24



Hooray for Spray! One of the most forward-thinking projects ever tried at the Pennypack Trust was “Spray Irrigation” an alternative sanitary waste management technique that uses soil microbes to digest waste and return the water and nutrients to soils and groundwater. This technique was pioneered here on these fields with effluent from Masons Mill Business Park. The project was ended in the early 1990s.







This courtyard has been an outdoor classroom since the beginnings of the Trust. New designs are underway to enable teaching and learning to happen in the visitor center and spill out into a new garden space using rainwater harvested from rooftops. In case you're wondering, we still have those folding chairs!





Creating space for wild animals has been at the heart of the Pennypack Trust from day 1. The craft of making owl boxes, wood duck boxes, bat boxes, bluebird boxes, and other simple projects is something we can all do at home. The Trust will continue to offer this basic extension work, but this time we're going to use a harness!

Station 26





Station 28



Why is the Easter Bunny out and about for Halloween? You'd have to ask Kathy Howard who's been the Easter Bunny every year since 1980. We also have an Easter Skunk because diversity is important.





## Station 29



The wetland was excavated from a hay field and grazing area in the early 1980s as a place for wood ducks, turtles, and other wildlife to have a still-water wetland. This wetland (now called Crossroads Marsh) is spring fed and has grown substantially in plant and animal diversity over the years.





## Station 30



What is now the warm-season grass meadow complex known as Raytharn, was last used as a hay field (likely for livestock consumption). Hay fields are generally cool-season grasses but are harvested in May when songbirds most need them for foraging and nesting. Our warm-season grasses are managed to provide maximum habitat benefit for wildlife and soil conservation. Notice the uniformity of the haygrasses in this image and uniformity of our meadow today.





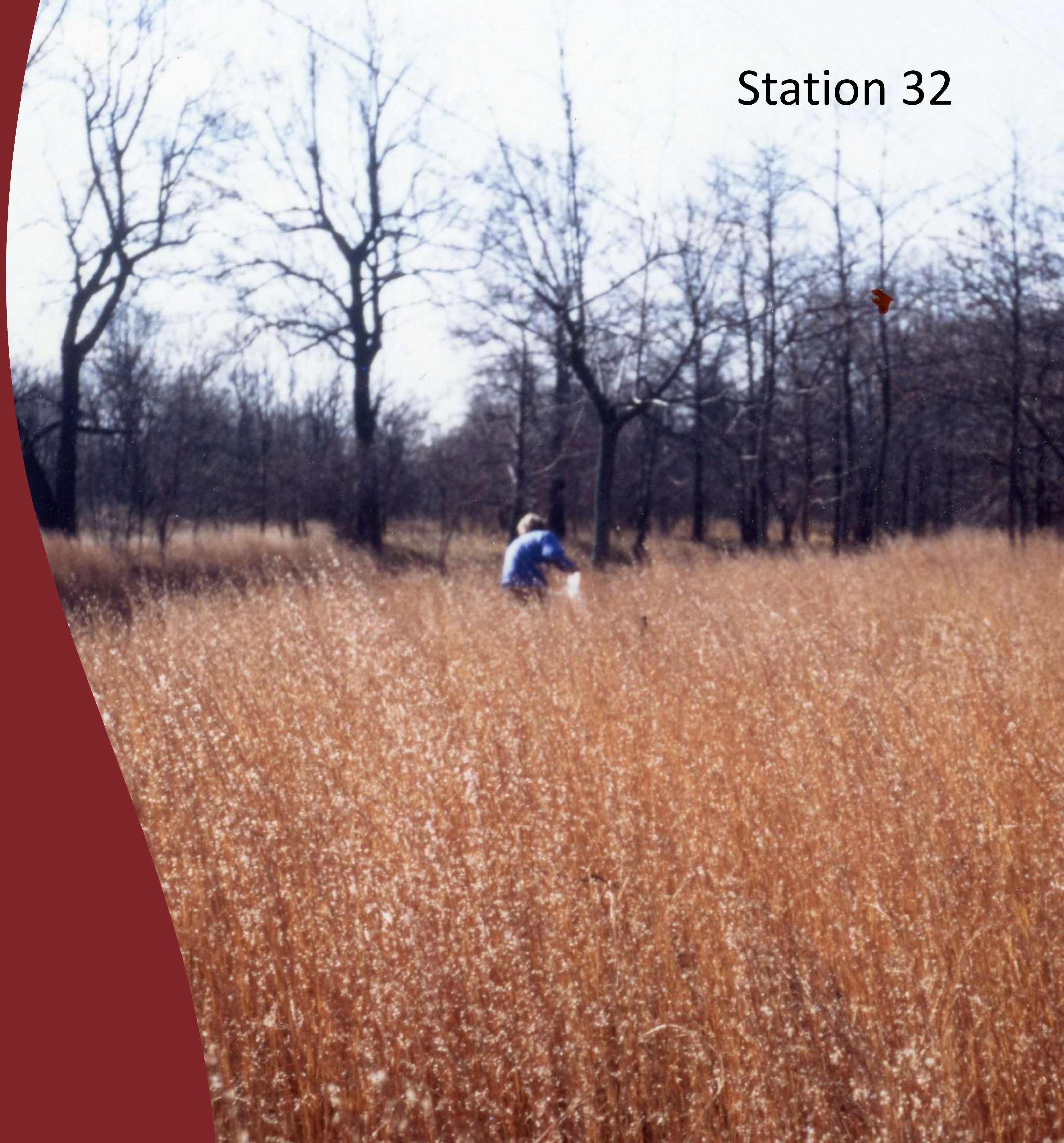
John Mitchell is a self-taught botanist who was born and raised on this property. His family is the name-sake of Mitchell Woods. John was the first to create a remarkably detailed and accurate record of plants that grew in the Trust in 1975 and 1980 when he was in his late teens and early twenties. John continues to help us from his position at the New York Botanic Garden.





## Station 32

Raytharn's warm-season grass meadows were originally sown with seed collected from the region. The importance of local plant genetics in restoration cannot be understated. These plants are uniquely evolved to our climate and the needs of wildlife responsible for their dispersal.





## Station 33



Bethayres woods was acquired by the Trust in 1999. Jack Chapman (far right) played an instrumental role in managing the woods and establishing the Bethayres Loop trail. Jack is one of the many volunteers that have made the Trust what it is today. Volunteers will continue to be central to the life of the Trust.





Creek cleanups used to be a lot of work! Creek Road was a popular dump site. Volunteers had to heft couches, bookcases, and myriad refuse into township trucks to begin to turn the corner on Pennypack Creek.





## Station 35



Birding and support of migratory songbirds are among the most popular and important functions we provide at the Trust. The Pennypack Trust hosts the second highest diversity of birds in Montgomery County and is an Important Bird Area as designated by the Audubon Society.





The Pennypack Trust was originally the Pennypack Watershed Association, and it was based out of a storefront in Bryn Athyn before the Rook's (originally Wynkoop) farm was bought in 1975.





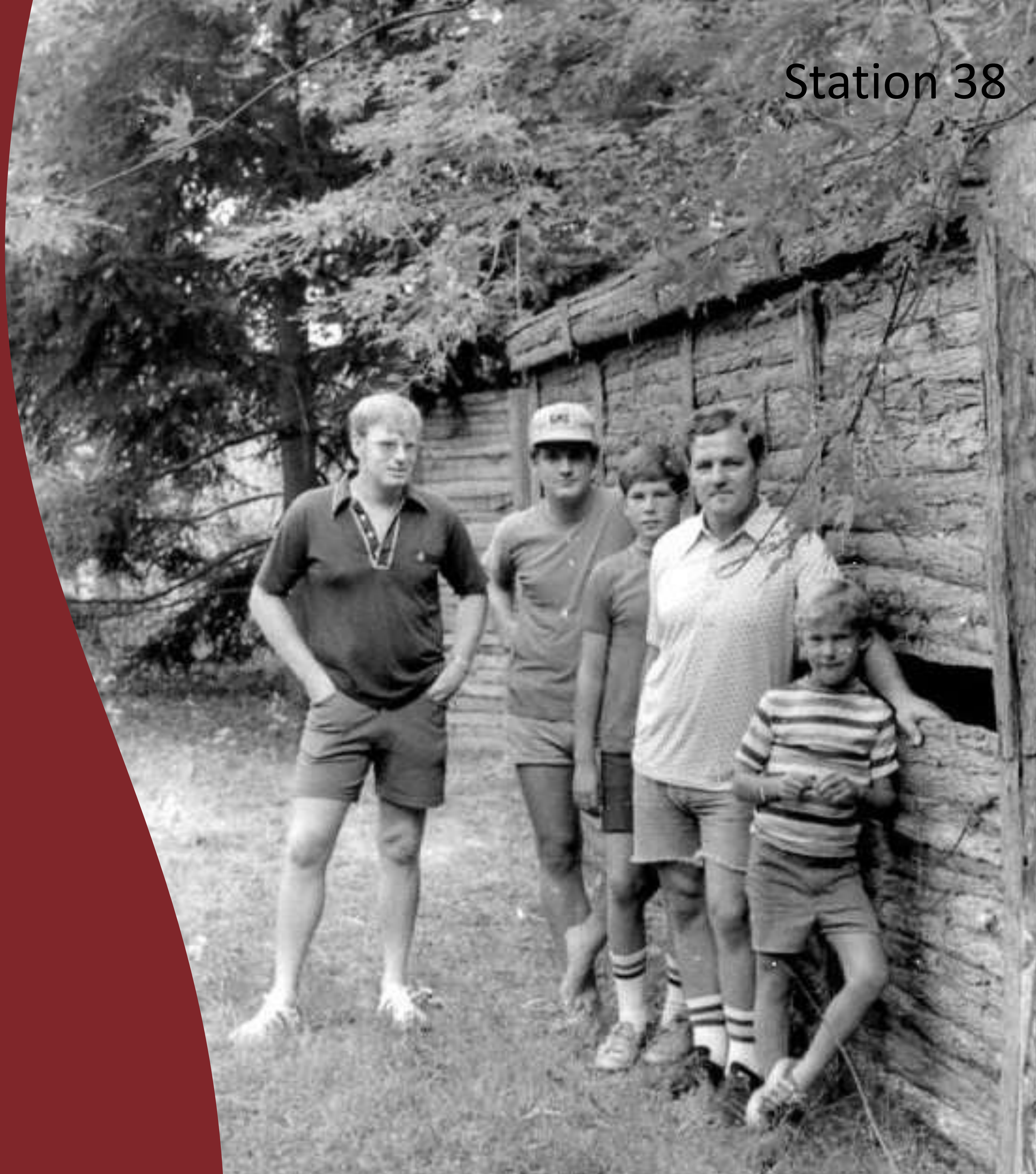


It took years of creek cleanups to unburden the Pennypack of generations of waste. But just as important, it took a cultural shift about litter and recycling to keep the creek clean. Change can and does happen!





One of our pioneering birders is Gale Smith. He operated mist nets and banded songbirds on the Trust in Kempton, and on the New Jersey shore. Gale and his boys built the first bird blind and its revised version here at the Trust. Thank you, Gale!





# Station 39



This bluebird is loaded up with caterpillars to feed to their young. Insects are required for growing a healthy clutch. And insects feed on native plants. Without careful stewardship, those connections would be lost. That's what we do!

(Photo by Harris Brown)





While that farm complex is privately owned, the Trust has tremendous respect for preserving a way of life that was much closer to the Earth. These scenes of small-scale family farming are disappearing all too quickly.  
(Photo by Ernest Koch)





## Station 41



What about you? While the Pennypack Trust works to save land and make it more ecologically connected and healthy, we also value your connection to nature. Its important that you love this place and that your membership keeps the Trust thriving!  
(Photo by Kathy Leister)



## Station 42



Bald Eagles are back! Thanks to the elimination of DDT from the environment and greater open space protection, these animals are expanding all along the Delaware River watershed. The presence of a successfully nesting pair of Bald Eagles is proof that the Trust is moving in the right direction.  
(Photo by David Rosenthal)





## Station 43



Not long ago, beavers shifted the drainage of this pond onto the trail. We adapted this trail to meet their needs. How often do you see that?  
(Photo by Kyle Rose)



## STATION 04

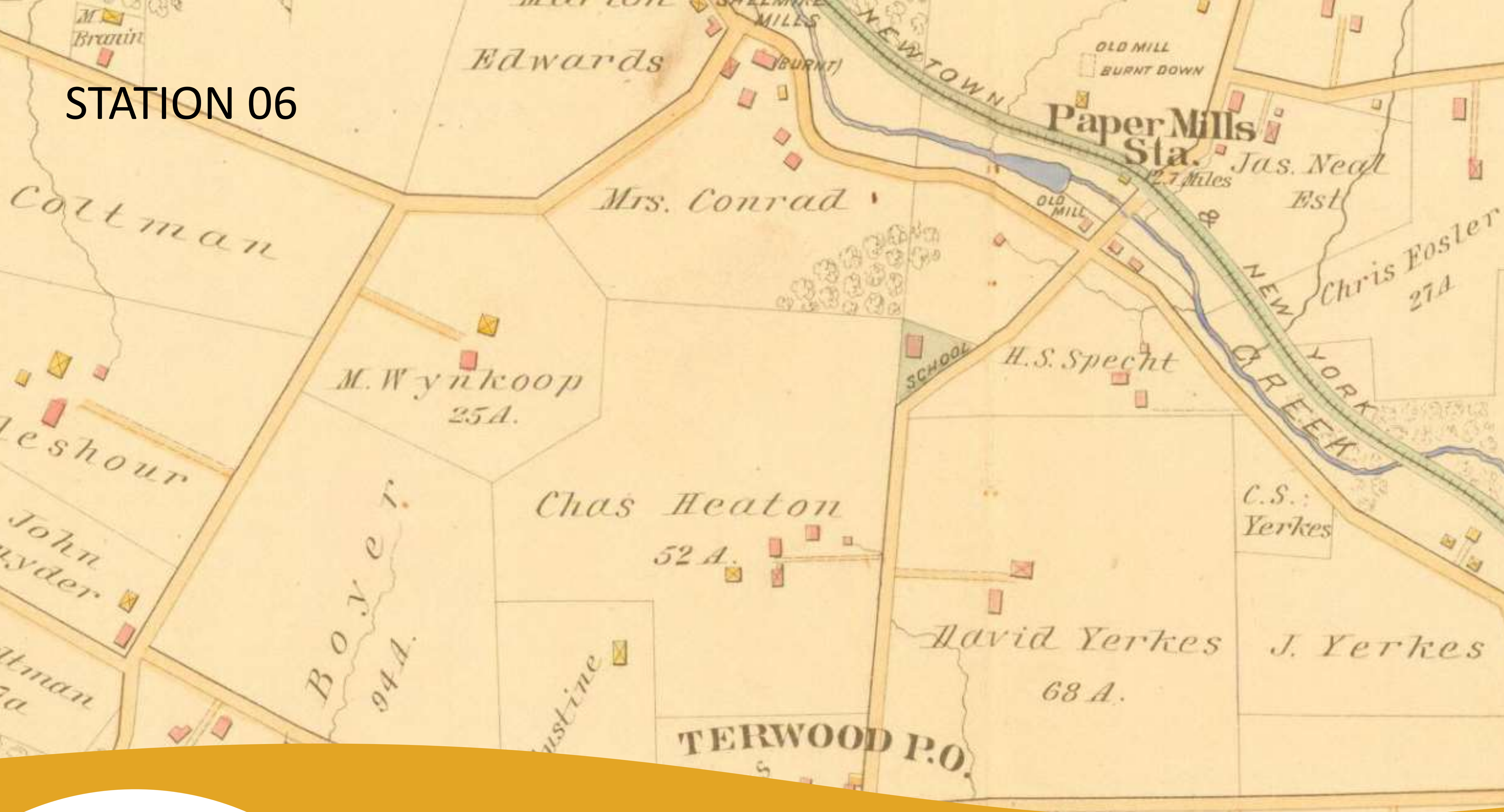


Raytharn Farm, over 160 acres, was saved from development in 1997 thanks the generosity of townships, citizens, students, private donors, membership, and Pennsylvania's open space protection program. The purchase price was \$5 million, a very sizable sum for a grass-roots conservation land trust!





## STATION 06



Overlook Woods is a remnant forest patch that goes back to the earliest maps of the area. It was likely left as a woodlot that could be used for building material and shade for livestock when mills and farms dominated the landscape.





Peak Woods is a remnant forest patch that goes back to the earliest maps of the area. It was likely left as a woodlot that could be used for building material and shade for livestock. The soils here are less than 3" deep, which accounts for the high instance of wind throw you see on its edges.





## Station 03

This was a popular sledding hill when Paper Mill Road was still a township road. The Pennypack Trust planted this area in the mid to late 1980s. Do you think it looks planted or natural?





Station 44



The mission of the Southern Montgomery County Chapter of Trout Unlimited is to conserve, protect, and restore the Pennypack Creek watershed. They educate school children and fledgling anglers alike and also stock our 4 miles of creek with their own trout every year.



## Station 45

“Just as a deer live in mortal fear of wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer.” - Aldo Leopold. The Bryn Athyn Marksman’s Association (BAMA) has kept our deer population from exploding since 1985. Without their careful skill and conscientious approach to archery hunting, our restoration efforts would have simply fed the deer.  
Photo by Mariann O’Connor







The Trust is entirely privately owned, member-supported, and open to the public. With open space protection as our central mission, we remain ever vigilant in curbing development and preserving habitat. Thank you for your long-standing membership support!





Station 47



While we do not require membership to use our trails, we greatly rely on membership to fund our operating costs, future land acquisition, and restoration projects. Please join today!  
Photo by Maria Woznyj



The mission of the Trust and its membership is to protect, restore, and preserve the lands of the Pennypack Creek Valley so that they:

- Remain forever an enhancement to the quality of life in our community
- Support forever a natural landscape populated by native plant and animal life, and
- Become a standard of excellence for innovative restoration and stewardship practices to be shared with other individuals and organizations joined in a common commitment to the environment.

Photo by Sam Wolf

