

PENNYPACK ECOLOGICAL
RESTORATION TRUST



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

– DEAR VALUED PERT MEMBER –

It has been a tumultuous and remarkable year. One in which we pushed our organization and our membership to support our emergency-level need to protect the June Fete Fairgrounds. The need for rapid messaging and near instantaneous response (in the form of cash and pledges) absorbed most of our attention at the staff and board levels.



It is with great pleasure that I can report that we've purchased the June Fete Fairgrounds. We met the \$4.15M price tag (actual market value based on our appraisal) with your help. Membership (including new members) who donated to this campaign met more than half of the total expense. PERT borrowed \$1M from the Open Space Institute, and we borrowed from our own funds, earmarked for property acquisition, to make the deal happen. Montgomery County also graciously supported the effort as they often do.

We are deeply honored and humbled by the outpouring of love and support for this organization from our members and neighbors. And we are pleased to have served as your local land trust, able to act quickly and decisively to seize this sensitive opportunity and turn it into a successful collaboration. Now the Pennypack Trust can switch gears and consider the June Fete through the lens of a traditional nature preserve. Our ambitions for this place are to:

- continue our community partnership with the Jefferson-Abington Women's Board and enable the June Fete to be held for years to come;
- improve water quality protection that this land uniquely offers us (you should be able to see some site preparation for new plantings happening as of this publication);
- improve and expand habitat for our native plants and animals; and
- leverage the land as a new connection from headquarters to our northerly parcels reaching almost to Davisville Road.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



In the midst of this acquisition, PERT is completing the projects scheduled for this, the third and final year of its major facilities upgrade. The walled garden area in back of the visitor center has been reconstructed into a venue for relaxation and contemplation, with new plantings to arrive this fall. Bathroom facilities have been refurbished and the new BLBB classroom below the headquarters building is in full operation. An entirely reconstructed entranceway into the trail system is under construction and will be completed before you read this. It will incorporate a memorial to Feo Pitcairn whose vision and counsel have been the inspiration making PERT the local, ecological treasure it has become. The final touch will be new signage to inform and direct visitors throughout the property.

All of this has happened because of your financial support and commitment to PERT's mission. It has also happened because of the constant, devoted effort of the PERT staff and the hundreds of volunteers who together give countless hours to this organization. They inspire all of us. But particular credit and appreciation goes to our Executive Director, Chris Mendel. PERT thrives under his direction and because of his leadership. Do not miss an opportunity to thank him.

PERT is strong and healthy. Together let us keep it that way – that it may continue opening the natural world as a place of respite and wonder to this community and providing healthful habitat to our furred, feathered and aquatic friends and the living networks that sustain them. 🌿

Respectfully,

Gilbert P. High, Jr.



The fairgrounds are more than grasses and trees. They carry traditions and identity.

Photo by: Harris Brown



Sometimes an Annual Report can feel like a propaganda sheet, celebrating achievements or drumming at the urgent needs of the institution (particularly to raise money). But we think that the inner workings of what makes a nature preserve work, or the challenges that people, nature, and weather present to us may provide you with a deeper understanding of why we do what we do.

In this annual report, we've asked each of our contributing staff members to write a piece that reflects on their daily or seasonal responsibilities and concerns at the Trust. More than this, it's a chance to document what they regard as their accomplishments, what remains incomplete, what worries them over the horizon, and what they want for the future.

Ecology is the study of the exchange and transformation of energy through a natural system over time. This is a glimpse of how your energy is transformed, transported, cached into the land, converted into growing tissues, and how it supports a village.

Chris Mendel, Executive Director



AS THE DUST SETTLES

Two campaigns and an assortment of "little things" begin to coalesce

By Chris Mendel, Executive Director

It should be no surprise to hear that lately my work life has been in many ways consumed by our bid to purchase the June Fete Fairgrounds from Jefferson Abington Hospital. As many of us know, that goal has been accomplished.

The fairgrounds opportunity rocketed us into a second and concurrent fundraising campaign just as we began the physical work of transforming our campus and our buildings to fulfill the first campaign's promises. Having crafted the blueprints for some of the best contractors I've ever worked with, my staff and I quickly re-tooled for another campaign of messaging and fund-raising. There was real pressure to pull off the June Fete Fairgrounds deal; but sometimes pressure brings out the best in us. We worked quickly, but just as importantly, so did you. It's evident that you, our conservation financiers, were eager to push back against development and the tremendous and

I came to the Trust, not as a CEO with an MBA, but as a landscape architect. My job was to implement a strategic plan that put special emphasis on improving the visitor experience. Our governing board of 21 instructed me to update a nature preserve (that's legally a land trust), and deal with the curve balls that nature and the public will throw at it. Amid the daily hum of running a small non-profit, I was to plot the necessary adaptations to keep our preserve vibrant and special for decades to come.

ongoing loss of rural spaces we have suffered in recent decades. Thanks to our very nimble board and staff, and a tremendously generous member base, we were able to move from the miasma of real estate rumors to a solid "Agreement of Sale" and a uniquely crafted "License and Use Agreement" that enables two non-profits to cooperatively share the fairgrounds.

We rushed our urgent agenda through legal, state, and county channels, raised more than \$4 million and closed on the property in just 9 months.

As it has many times in decades past, this little organization abruptly locked into its stance as an agile and professional non-profit land trust. This nature preserve and its stakeholders possess an ambition to grow and the focused grass-roots energy to accomplish our goals.



A new vista for a new head of trails under construction this past summer.



ABOVE: PERT founder, Feo Pitcairn will be memorialized at the new Head of Trails in 2025.

LEFT: The 2023 Annual Fund project under construction. Intern Brett Barnes armored the trail to protect it from erosive floodwaters.

The dust is now settling on the June Fete campaign.

I can now go back to my comfort zone of design and construction. My current task is to focus on the landscape improvements underway at headquarters, planting plans for gardens, a memorial for Feo Pitcairn, and deciding on the materials and final graphic layout of a comprehensive sign program across all our trails and entrances. I can return to finishing the first fundraising campaign, thank you very much! As a landscape architect, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to know a place, its seasons, weather, and wildlife, to design for it and to fuse built and living forms. Thank you for your trust in me and my teammates.

I can also return to the not-so-mundane aspects of running a small business. As Executive Director, I have team and community-building functions. Having inadvertently worked my entire professional life in small teams, I've come to realize how important dynamic, collaborative, but specialized and unique people are to any group.



PERT volunteers and Upper Moreland residents pitch in to restore a riparian corridor at Farmstead Park.

Fielding a team of competent, collaborative, and joyful professionals in each of our core functions is one of my central responsibilities. There are seven departments and just nine full-time staff.

It's tough to run a 950-acre nature preserve and land trust with such a tiny squad. That said, we're a cute little cadre that can't resist shaping itself into familial bonds. Staff require almost 80% of our annual operating budget so I've sought ways to magnify our impact through volunteers and

We can become impromptu therapists to nearby landowners perplexed by snakes, woodchucks, and mangy foxes.

seasonal interns. Each of our staff need volunteers in various ways. Without their energy and comradery, we would be quickly overwhelmed.

The youthful intensity of our interns gets us through the difficult summer

work of keeping up with voluminous plant growth. Staff almost instinctively invest heavily in their interns' on-the-job training. I'm confident that our interns are maturing into the next generation of natural areas stewards and conservationists. Our work is very meaningful to each of us, so building community comes easily when we and our volunteers and interns can naturally coalesce around shared values of nature, the responsibility for sustaining unique and revered places that define a part of us and a part of our world.

Finally, let's not forget those curve balls that nature and the public will unleash. The nuances of any given Tuesday in the middle Pennypack are the stuff of timeless village life.

There might be someone on the phone unnerved by a snapping turtle enjoying his annual vacation away from ponds and creeks. We can become impromptu therapists to nearby landowners perplexed by snakes, woodchucks, and mangy foxes. On the preserve, the hikers are upset at cyclists and dog-walkers, the fly fisherman suspect others are using worms, and the birders are quietly but fiercely competing for the unspoken title of "most attuned".



I'm blessed to have an extended family of volunteers and nature enthusiasts who understand that many of these concerns come from a passion for preservation.

Through it all, my hands are not calloused, the keyboard and the phone are probably my most useful tools. I wish I was outside more. I wish I "worked for a living" like most of my teammates. But there is a relentless need to communicate with donors, grantors, board members, and volunteers. I have to keep my thoughts on the future.

Our land trust must adapt to a changing climate, anticipate forests plagued with more pests and disease, higher foot traffic and continue to find ways to protect this growing island of nature. To do so we need real relationships with governments, planning partners looking to address human needs and that of other species, too. What can seem like busy work is actually relationships and resources held in a liquid suspension, a slurry of conversations and little projects, waiting for the next opportunity to coalesce into meaningful action.

Our team stands ready to do the work. I know our members do too. 🌿



Working for the Pennypack Trust has been a breath of fresh air. The immersive experiences that this unique organization provides is a glimpse of what a career in conservation is all about.

POP-ART MEETS PURPOSE

By Abbi Winters, Communications Coordinator

In my first few months with the Trust, I collaborated with my colleagues to create an original t-shirt design for a trial fundraising initiative. The "Go Birds" shirts exceeded all our expectations. I developed the "Go Birds" design to feature bird species found right here at the Trust, blending our mission of preserving land and creating habitat for wildlife with the Philadelphia Eagles' well-known phrase and a heavy dose of local pride. This brief fund raiser sold over 350 products to local supporters and even those from out of state, raising nearly \$5,000 for the Trust. The funds raised were used to purchase 25 new high-quality binoculars* for the Trust's bird-watching programs. It's fascinating how closely the outcome connected straight back to the original subjects of the "Go Birds" shirts.

fulfilling in ways I have found are hard to come by in most professional settings.

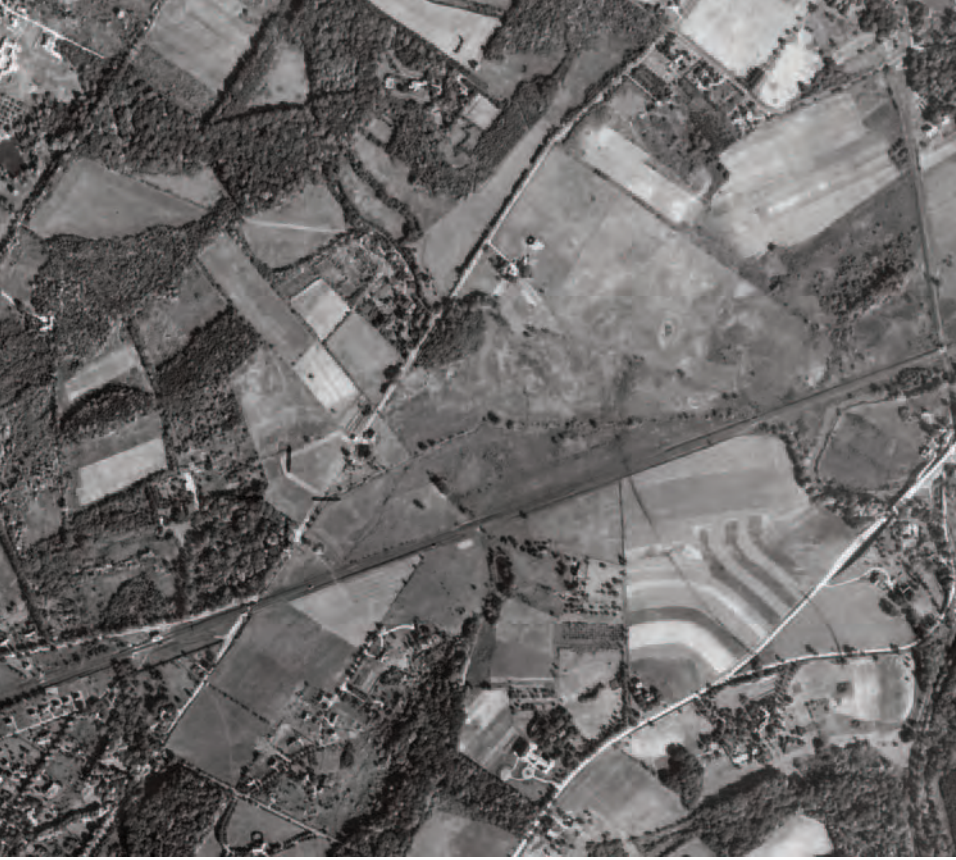
Trained as a scientific illustrator at Arcadia University, I've been able to apply my skills to a wide variety of graphic and illustrative needs around the Trust. The range is ever-expanding and includes concert-poster compositions for events, diagrammatic sections of stormwater basins, and depictions of wild animals and plants for education and marketing materials.

Each project gives me a deeper understanding of how the Trust functions – a symbiosis between supporter and organization. My work tries to distill the essence of this place and its natural inhabitants to resonate personally among a wide array of people. 🌿

Seeing one of my first projects succeed was incredibly gratifying, and the creative freedom and collaboration I experienced through the process were

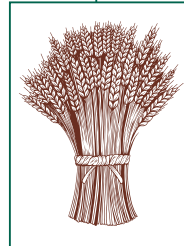


*Vortex, the manufacturer of the binoculars, certainly helped by providing a special discount to us.



Valley Road and the SEPTA rail corridor bisect farms and pastures circa 1942.

Nick and Shelley Schorsch donated 14.14 acres to the Pennypack Trust this past December. Situated along Valley Road, just north of Mill Road, the land is strategically significant as open space because it lies between Lorimer Park and the Pennypack Trust and contains a section of Meadow Brook. Meadow Brook drains northern Abington Township to the Pennypack and forms a wide floodplain and wetland area that most will recognize as the former Korman or Meadow Brook Executive Golf Course. This property and its wetlands are easily visible along Valley Road.



In my conversation with Mr. Schorsch it was clear that he had a deep understanding of how the landscape has changed (particularly when large family estates sprung-up from old farmlands in the early 20th century and intermingled with those of founding Quaker families like the Hallowells). Having only recently relocated to Newport, Rhode Island, Nick and Shelley came to the conclusion that they “wanted the Pennypack Trust to have it” and they donated the land to the Trust for a dollar this past December. This 14-acre parcel sits apart from any land that the Pennypack Trust currently protects; but that doesn’t mean it couldn’t connect to our preserve in the future.

The prospect of one day acquiring this parcel and adjacent open space has been a long-standing priority for the County.

Montgomery County took ownership of 22 acres of wetlands just on the other side of the former golf course in 1996. Joining lands protected by the County (via Lorimer Park) and the Pennypack Trust would connect well over 1,200 acres of conserved land, achieving a scale of habitat connectivity most would only think possible in the less developed portions of western Montgomery County.

However, roadways and rail lines fragment Meadow Brook’s floodplain and wetlands. It’s difficult to envision

public access through it. But not every corner of the Pennypack Trust needs a trail.

Undisturbed habitat for plants and animals leaves them to quietly bask in soggy silts and in that state they buffer our floodwaters naturally. Thankfully, the Schorsch’s recognize those values and, as a result, another corner of Huntingdon Valley is pulled into the embrace of conservation.

TOP PHOTO, quiet places like these allow Wool Grass and American Jump Seed to grow in wild patches.

BOTTOM PHOTO, Meadow Brook courses across the property near where a small farm complex once stood.



COULD A RECENT DONATION BECOME A KEY LINK TO 1,200 CONNECTED AND PRESERVED ACRES?

By Chris Mendel, Executive Director

The land was farmed for more than 200 years, up until the 1950s. A farmhouse once owned by the Hallowells (a founding Quaker family in the area), a barn, and some outbuildings were neatly arranged along Valley Road. Farming occurred on both sides of the road back when crossing wasn’t the hazard it is now.



These soils were wet and heavy, better suited to livestock pasture than vegetable crops. But agriculture was declining decades before the 1950s. Post-war residential development was in full swing. A private, family-run golf course soon sprang up next door. The landscape’s value was changing from production to private leisure.*

The little tributary of Meadow Brook has always been a feature of the parcel. Nearly all of the land is in the stream’s floodplain. Their protections aside, Nicolas Schorsch has been looking out for this property for more than fifty years.

Within his lifetime, Mr. Schorsch has seen the wetlands on the parcel expand and remain wetter throughout the year, a consequence he said of residential development further up the catchment.

Nicholas’s father bought the land in 1967 as part of 65 contiguous acres that reached up across the SEPTA railroad tracks to a fine vantage point off of Moredon and Warner Roads. In keeping with his father’s values, Mr. Schorsch said “We bought this and the old school district property so that they wouldn’t be developed. We were certainly aware of the long history of the Hallowells in this area and we wanted it to stay as open space.”

**History buffs and attentive readers of the Annual Report will recognize this as a common thread to much of the land acquired by the Pennypack Trust. The MacPhee estate and the transition of the A.R. Mann farm to Theodore Pitcairn’s estate have similar stories.*





PENNYPACK PRESERVE: THE OUTSIDE STORY

The colors of change and the joys of observation

By Maria Paula Mugnani, Director of Research and Restoration

One of the great joys of the Pennypack Preserve is that no visit is the same. A trail brimming with pink clusters of joe pye weed flowers one week will have bowed out the next to the vibrant yellows of goldenrod. Each day is one step closer to a new seasonal transition – a new phase in the life stages of our plant and animal species.

Like our wild counterparts, there is a seasonality to our staff's activities. There is the time to plant trees, to monitor the plant communities in our landscape; to plan our restoration. To step out into the preserve is to become part of the outside story unfolding every day. On your next visit, I invite you to become a rapt observer engaging with what each month brings.

March

After a long winter of browns and grays, the yellow flowers on Northern Spicebush are a welcome sight.

Spring peeper frogs reach peak chorus in wetlands and swales as males compete for females. Since tadpoles will not mature into frogs for 3 years, it is important to maintain undisturbed aquatic habitat on the preserve.

With spring on the horizon, I plan for a fresh season of the ReForester program, in which volunteers adopt and care for planted forest plots. Hand pruners and loppers must be ready to combat the abundant invasive vines that cover native trees throughout the warm season..



April

Spring ephemeral plants like trout lily, spring beauty, trillium and Virginia bluebells quietly emerge.

The Eastern redbud trees' pink flowers bloom along the forest edge. Flowering dogwood is not far behind, supporting early emerging bees.

Tree planting begins in our restoration sites. Staff plant a diverse group of canopy species to make our forests more resilient and to better support wildlife and insects.

Several streams that flow into Pennypack Creek are hubs for aquatic insects called "macroinvertebrates". Mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies are among the most sensitive to water pollutants and oxygen availability. With a small team

of volunteers, we collect samples and later identify the insects to use their diversity as an indicator of water quality.

Responding to the warming temperatures, eastern box turtles leave their burrows and are on the move through Raytharn meadow in search of a mate.

May

The new flush of green leaves is accompanied by flowers: penstemon, mountain laurel and phlox.

Birds are nesting in our meadows and forests. Staff are careful when removing invasive vines to not disturb nests. Since a clutch of chicks requires thousands of insects (especially caterpillars) to develop, it is vital to ensure our meadows have a diverse, native plant composition.

I begin surveying vegetation structure and diversity in priority forest sites. The data will be used to draft their formal 5-year management plans.

June

Invasive vines like porcelain berry, mile-a-minute and Asiatic bittersweet are resprouting in earnest, smothering and strangling native vegetation. Thank goodness that ReForesters are visiting their plots to care for our native trees.



Fledging birds can be spotted in the meadow learning how to capture food with their parents.

On warm nights, the first luminescent displays of male fireflies can be seen in the meadow and along the forest edge. Each species displays a unique flash pattern, many of them continuing to display into August.

July & August

Native mountain mint, bergamot, and common milkweed bloom across the meadows, supporting countless bees, butterflies and other insects. I collect data on the pollinators present and the flowers they visit to learn about what species we host and where we could improve.

Turkey foot grass (*Andropogon gerardii*) grows tall and densely in the meadows. Although it is wind-pollinated, small bees collect some pollen to stockpile in their ground nests.



Two insects that rely on dogbane as a food source can be found among its leaves. Look for the rainbow iridescence of the dogbane beetles and the white wings of the tiger dogbane moth.



September

Goldenrods, late boneset and Indian grass bloom in a colorful patchwork across the meadows.

Staff begin planting trees, wrapping unprotected trees to save them from bucks rubbing the itchy velvet cover off their antlers.



October

As temperatures cool, staff clear invasive vegetation and debris in targeted sites in preparation for spring planting. Volunteers and the Free-a-Tree monthly sessions provide invaluable support.

Turkeys and rodents consume fallen acorns and hickory nuts. Colored leaves mat the forest floor, filling the air with a thick, earthy sweetness.

November

Canada geese fly overhead as they migrate to warmer climates remind us that winter is coming.

The iconic tall prairie grasses in the meadows are now brown and will remain uncut through winter to provide all sorts of wildlife with cover and seeds to eat.

December, January & February

With the leaves fallen, the ruins of various mills along Creek Trail are visible, a reminder of the bustling agricultural villages that once occupied the area.

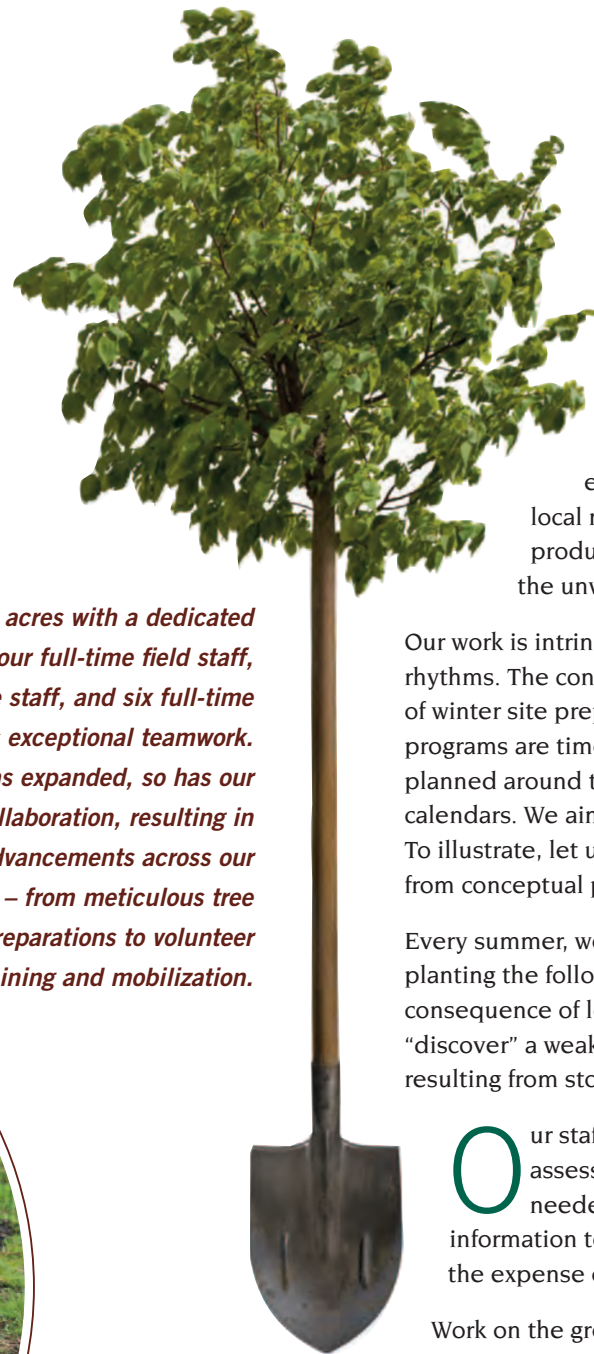
The purple mottled flowers of skunk cabbage emerge in wetland areas, their thermogenic properties melting the surrounding snow.

Resident mink fish for prey under the ice at Crossroads Marsh and in Pennypack Creek. In a few weeks, males will begin searching for a mate. 🌿



A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

By Kevin Roth, Education Director



Managing 956 acres with a dedicated team of just four full-time field staff, seasonal part-time staff, and six full-time office staff demands exceptional teamwork. As our team has expanded, so has our inter-departmental collaboration, resulting in significant advancements across our initiatives – from meticulous tree planting preparations to volunteer training and mobilization.



Former intern, now part-time stewardship staff, Jackie Carroll planted trees alongside a volunteer group.

The Pennypack Preserve has seen the resurgence of beaver and mink into our ecosystem, as well as a thriving bald eagle population, with 15 chicks fledged from the local nest since 2015. These achievements are the product of effective ecological restoration, bolstered by the unwavering support of our volunteers and members.

Our work is intrinsically cyclical, aligned with many different rhythms. The conclusion of the growing season marks the onset of winter site preparation and trail improvements. Educational programs are timed with the school year, and internships are planned around the summer months and varying semester calendars. We aim for a meticulously orchestrated team effort. To illustrate, let us walk you through our tree planting process – from conceptual planning to maintenance.

Every summer, we vet several reforestation sites as candidates for planting the following spring and fall. The sites chosen are usually a consequence of long-term restoration planning but sometimes we “discover” a weakness within a forest canopy or along an edge resulting from storms or pest damage.

Our staff then work in two directions simultaneously, assessing the site for its size and the extent of work needed to prepare it for planting, while also using that information to write grants that usually subsidize about half of the expense of the restoration effort.

Work on the ground can only begin once the growing season is over. The stewardship staff swings into action with heavy equipment, dropping hazard trees, clearing the site with brush mowers and sickle bars, and preparing access for weekend work by our Free-A-Tree volunteers.



Employees from EPA Region 3 worked alongside other volunteers and staff to plant over 800 trees this year.

On the first Saturday of every month, from October to March, our Free-A-Tree volunteers steadily liberate native trees from invasive vines and do the essential handwork to get the site ready for planting. This purposeful volunteering fosters a sense of accomplishment and a shared commitment to our mission, with volunteers returning month after month, driven by their desire to save just “one more tree.” Not only does the Trust benefit from the extra manpower, but every hour of volunteer time also counts as an “in-kind” match for our grant application to purchase the trees.

During this restoration, we don’t forget about our commitment to educating future generations. Our Education Team develops a 6th-grade field trip program centered around the planting location. Students rotate through stations, learning about macroinvertebrates, plant identification, and birding, with the tree planting station as a focal point. They gain hands-on experience by planting a tree, and understanding the vital role native trees play in our ecosystem. Any remaining trees are planted by our staff and weekday volunteers. This year we also had help from a local Eagle Scout and other members from Troop 97, who spent more than 100 hours prepping tree cages for protection from deer and planting trees within them.

We generally plant two reforestation zones each year, roughly 800 trees in total. Other than the 6th grader’s site in the spring, fall planting usually is accomplished by Pennypack Trust volunteers, corporate volunteer groups, and staff.

However, the work does not end once a tree is planted – on the contrary, this marks the beginning of a critical 5–10-year maintenance phase. Newly planted trees face numerous challenges, including storm damage, buck rub, deer browse, and competition for light from invasive vines. Our ReForester program rises to this challenge. After planting, Maria Paula Mugnani, our Director of Research and Restoration, carefully selects and trains a new crop of volunteers to adopt each site, ensuring that each tree receives the care it needs to thrive. Maria Paula now manages 70 ReForesters, keeping tabs on their needs for tools and materials, along with fielding their questions and visiting their sites.

While a newly trained ReForester volunteer nurtures one site, the process begins anew at another. The Research and Restoration Team collaborates with the Stewardship Team, planning logistics for the next fiscal year while managing ongoing operations and projects.

We invite you to become an active participant in this restoration journey. Join a Free-A-Tree session this winter, plant a tree with us in the spring, and consider becoming a ReForester this summer.

Ecological restoration at the Pennypack Preserve is a dynamic, team-driven effort, one that must be sustained across generations to achieve long-term success. By continuously refining our methods and strengthening our collaboration, we advance our mission and underscore the importance of teamwork and planning to preserve our natural heritage. 🌿



ReForester volunteer Karen Ericsson



VITAL EDUCATION TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAND STEWARDS

By Luke Rhodes, Stewardship Manager

Whether I'm exploring in nature, trail running, or just driving along the highway... my inner naturalist is continually assessing, writing prescriptions and strategizing about how to restore a given natural area invaded by exotic plant species. Rarely do we see a healthy system of native plants perpetuating an ecological balance unassisted. When I do find myself in a thriving native plant ecosystem, the experience is truly awe inspiring.

Our mission at the Pennypack Trust is to restore and preserve natural landscapes. Each year, we welcome a team of interns and seasonal employees that are seeking a career in conservation.

It is a humbling experience to manage natural areas, both in the significance of affecting living systems and the amount of effort and resources required. Patience and persistence are paramount to achieving substantial change. The saying "three steps forward, two steps back" typifies the experience of getting one invasive plant species under control only to find another aggressive invader take its place. Or visiting a site a few weeks after planting trees to find smothering vines working their way up the protective caging. Preparation for restoration planting is a multi-year process. Establishment of a new forest is measured in decades, with years of battling invasive vines before a forest canopy begins to shade out their invasive competitors.

Our mission at the Pennypack Trust is to restore and preserve natural landscapes. Each year, we welcome a team of interns and seasonal employees that are seeking a career in conservation. The Pennypack Trust staff collectively builds an environment of experiential learning to help them understand the complexity of

ecological relationships. With the help of our interns, we work to incrementally build ecological balance at the Trust. At the end of the season, they head back to college or move onwards in conservation throughout the region. All of this is made possible by a grant from BLBB Charitable and by the support of PERT's Robertson Fund for Environmental Education.

During the intern interview process it is made clear to candidates that

stewardship at the Trust involves a lot of hard work. From day one they are in the field practicing the art of restoration with hands on experience. After learning the safe operation of tools and how to identify native and invasive plant species, they are deployed to assist hundreds of newly planted trees become

established in the forest. They also keep trail corridors, vital to our safe enjoyment of nature, cleared.

Trained in proper pruning and stormwater's effects on trails, they install check dams in eroding gullies, and rolling dips to shed stormwater from legacy trails. As they learn the growth habits and dispersal mechanisms of invasive plants, they also come to understand the timing and strategy of management techniques.

The building blocks they need to succeed are further assembled when they view aquatic invertebrates under a microscope from Mitchel and Cairn Run in the



The relationship is mutually beneficial. The enthusiasm, passion and curiosity these individuals bring to their daily tasks is a critical resource for us.



BLBB Field Station; study insect pollinator and plant interactions in Raytham meadow, and watch through binoculars as birds prey on those insects and gather nesting material.

To break up the heavy labor in the heat of summer they choose an individual project. This year the subjects ranged from testing management techniques of lesser celandine for reintroduction of spring ephemerals, phenology of wildflowers and their seasonal support of pollinators, and Beech Leaf Disease, a new and destructive nematode.

The six interns and three part-time seasonal staff are critical to keeping the Trust going. And in turn, we care deeply

Staff and interns from left to right: Kris Aldrete, Kirk Laule, Luke Rhodes, Chris Dartley, and Jackie Carroll

about educating and establishing them as the next generation of professional conservationists.

The relationship is mutually beneficial. The enthusiasm, passion and curiosity these individuals bring to their daily tasks is a critical resource for us.

Their tending of the landscape, trails and facilities of the Trust provide an inviting space for members and visitors to have an immersive experience. They contribute to research that will shape future management decisions.

Perhaps most importantly, they gather foundational experience that sets them up for a future career in conservation.

This is just one way the Pennypack Trust fulfills its mission of promoting restoration and stewardship of natural landscapes.

In time, our interns and seasonal staff become employees of fellow land trusts, parks, and other municipal grounds where they can continue to protect, preserve and restore land, hopefully, to the benefit of generations to come.

We thank BLBB Charitable for having committed funding specifically for these internships over six years. Their long-term commitment to local conservation and the growth of young conservationists is a prime example of their dedication to both community and environment.



Photo by: Harris Brown



ALL I HAD TO DO WAS ASK

By Maureen Malloy, Director of Development

When I joined the Pennypack Trust as Director of Development in March of 2023 I was ready for a change of pace. I had just left public radio and its monotonous on-air fundraising. You know the kind I'm talking about – when regularly scheduled programming is interrupted by endless appeals for your financial support. All of radio-land must stop to meet their financial goals.

I was well aware that I'd be responsible for maintaining and growing Membership through messaging and events. I was also aware that the Trust was wrapping up a successful capital campaign. Construction was well underway. Part of my job was to find out how to celebrate those accomplishments. I was not aware that the Trust was about to take on the June Fete Fairgrounds and launch a second massive campaign.

Surprise! Questions flooded my mind. Another campaign? Is the last one even over? How can we run two campaigns with, like, nine employees? How do I maintain our membership base with all of this other stuff going on? I was new and hadn't gotten a taste of the inner workings of the Trust and there was so much to do! It seemed impossible.

As the weeks went on I got to experience some of PERT's regular happenings.

I found my flow. I sent out Membership letters and issued bulk mailings. Volunteers helped me sort and send massive quantities of missives. I experienced my first large event – the Earth Day Trail Race. The Marketing Committee and their volunteers had it covered. I helped where I could, and it was wildly successful. I started to notice that it was really easy to find helpers here. All I had to do was ask.

When we could finally announce our campaign to acquire the June Fete Fairgrounds, it was at the very beginning of the "Season of Giving." These weeks in late fall also happen to be the busiest month for Membership renewals, and here I was, about to send everyone ANOTHER mailing asking for ADDITIONAL financial support. Another campaign. I pictured people at home throwing their mail in the air, wondering where I got the audacity to send so many things asking for support all at once.

And then the gifts rolled in. Sometimes twofold; membership and June Fete envelopes on the same day. We held

events to bring new families to the Trust and we asked them to become members to help support our new acquisition. Many of them happily obliged. Because there were so many events happening, I had to ask some tried and true volunteers to step into new roles and take over important tasks. They did so gladly and transitions happened seamlessly. All I had to do was ask.

The people who frequent the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust not only support it, but they truly care about it. They care about the trails, the environment, wildlife, and their neighbors who share their values. Only because PERT volunteers were so keen to step up, were we able to conquer a huge new undertaking without interfering with "regularly scheduled programming."

So, thank you, Pennypack Trust community. You stepped up in a big way so we could continue to be here for you, and we plan on doing just that. Let us know what we can do for you. All you have to do is ask. 🌿

THANKYOU!
PENNYPACK TRUST COMMUNITY



OPERATING STATEMENT

FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Revenues and Support

Membership	\$ 286,355
Endowments	508,371
Unrestricted Contributions	118,704
Programs and Retail Sales (net)	115,168
Grants	183,372
Other.....	51,551
Total Revenues and Support	\$ 1,263,521

Expenditures

Ecological Restoration and Stewardship	\$ 752,805
Membership Programming and Communications	77,728
Administration	290,196
Facilities.....	137,310
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,258,039



Photo (detail) by: Michael Silverman | 2024 Photo Contest Winner

THE JUNE FETE FAIRGROUNDS CAMPAIGN

*Inclusive of Annual Appeal

\$100,000 and Up

Elizabeth Ann Asplundh
Kurt and Jennifer Asplundh
Marilyn P. Asplundh
Susan Asplundh and Chuck Blair
Dick and Sally Brickman
Andrew Christy and
Nicole Tomlinson
Peter and Kathryn Davis
The Glencairn Foundation
Faulkner Family Foundation
Steve & Clara Huntzinger
Montgomery County
Open Space Board
Paul, Dorothy and Heather Morse

\$50,000 - \$99,999

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Brent and Kelly Asplundh
Gregg and Christine Asplundh
Hali and Scott Asplundh
Steven and Lisa Asplundh
Stefan and Donna Keller
Beatrice Pitcairn
Carol S. and Robert B. White, Jr.

\$25,000 - \$49,999

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Andrew G. and
Madeleine C. Nehlig
Robert and Anne Riethmiller
Shelley Schorsch

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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The Asplundh Foundation
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Lach and Dorothy Brown
Chris and Julie Carr
Christopher and Amy Cleary
Louise D'Alessandro &
Richard Hamilton
The Downs Foundation
Pamela Grady
Ken and Emily Graupner
Kelly and Scott Kupper
Greg and Susan Odhner

Paul and Theresa Rutherford
Sean and Kim Seese

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Eric and Kelly Asplundh
Gwen Asplundh
Stewart and Jackie Asplundh
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Margaret Louise Clooney
Marvin and Wendy Clymer
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Doris and Jack DeLong
Regina & Douglas Diamond
Cathie Driscoll and Joe Ragg
John P. & Barbara J. Duggan
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Kathleen and Max Ernst
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Kathleen (Kat) Cote Grau
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Michael Joseph Kinkaid

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John and Susan Knauss
George and Jill Kyle Jr.
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Cheryl and Kent Wille
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*deceased

To learn more or join the **Strong Roots Society**
please reach out to Chris Mendel, Executive Director
at cmendel@pennypacktrust.org | 215.657.0830





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 Kenneth and Alaine York
 George Zotalis and Niki Bili
 Patrick Murray and
 Diane Van Zyverden 🍀

“I don’t know about you, but with each passing year, the abundance and beauty of our natural surroundings mean more and more to me. I volunteer at the Trust because it represents something I am passionate about and want to be a part of. Its existence is a blessing, its future we hold in our collective hands.”



Dan Reynolds is an Elkins Park-based journalist, outdoorsman and poet who assisted in editing the Trust’s newsletter this year.

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

As a private, non-profit organization we rely on our membership to help preserve and restore the natural lands we are entrusted to steward. Support from our members enables us to provide habitat for animals, build buffers for stormwater runoff to keep creeks clean, establish strong reforestation for cleaner air, and maintain beautiful spaces in which to discover the wonders of nature.

(Active members July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)

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Kurt & Jennifer Asplundh
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Christopher and Amy Cleary
Louise D'Alessandro & Richard Hamilton
Eloise Hyndman
Stefan and Donna Keller
Dan Schmucker
Carol S. and Robert B. White, Jr.

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Gail Faulkner and John S. Oyler
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Bill & Libby Weihenmayer

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Eric and Kelly Asplundh
Marilyn P. Asplundh
Martha Asplundh
Steven and Lisa Asplundh
Stewart and Jackie Asplundh
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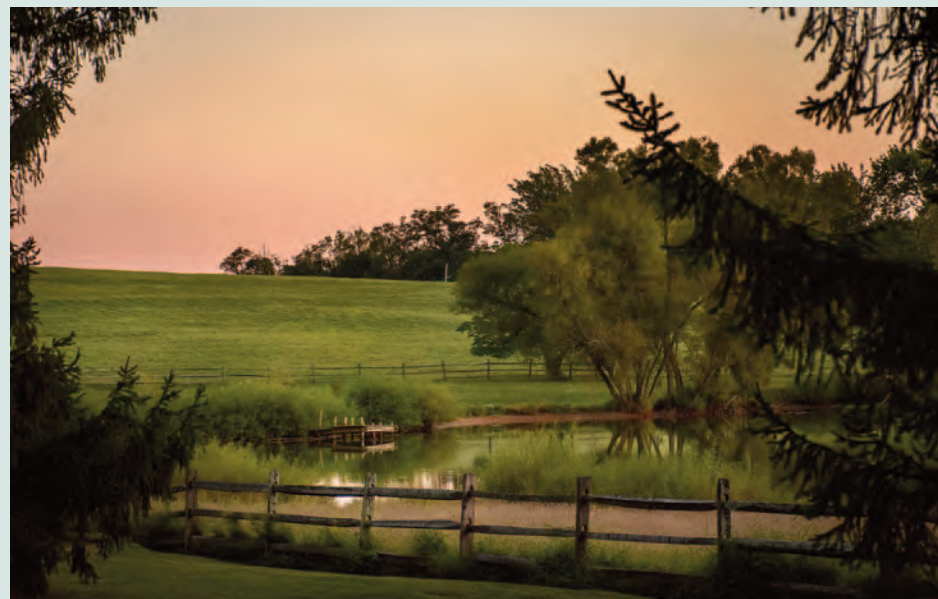
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Remain forever an enhancement to the quality
of life in our community,

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.
