



Fall 2022 Newsletter

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Thoughts from Laura Hassell,
WHFF Executive Director

When you think about Leopold's Preserve, what comes to mind? Is it our 7 miles of hiking trails dotted with interpretive signs? Or maybe it's the scenic ponds, meadows, and woodlands that you encounter along the way. But have you considered visiting Leopold's to observe our diverse wildlife? On a typical day you might encounter bluebirds, egrets, turtles, and dragonflies. And if you're lucky, you may see a spotted salamander, muskrat, or even a trumpeter swan!

I'm excited to announce that this summer we worked with the Department of Wildlife Resources to add Leopold's Preserve to the Virginia Bird & Wildlife Trail. This prestigious network of outdoor sites highlights the best places in the state to see birds and wildlife. You can check out our listing here: dwr.virginia.gov/vbwt/sites/leopolds-preserve

Summer might be coming to a close, but our programs and volunteer opportunities are going strong as we enter the fall season. Keep an eye on our website calendar, join our mailing list, and follow us on Facebook and Instagram to find out how you can get involved.



Native grasses and wildflowers create scenic views around our stormwater management pond.

A NEW APPROACH

Stormwater ponds are undeniably important - they capture and regulate runoff from impervious surfaces like roads and buildings. This reduces flooding and prevents severe damage to local waterways. Unfortunately, typical stormwater ponds are planted with mowed turf grass, an ecological desert. This fall, take some time to check out our approach to stormwater ponds at the Preserve.

WHFF manages two stormwater ponds in the community adjacent to Leopold's Preserve. Both are planted with native grasses and wildflowers that are mowed only once per year. This native vegetation offers wildlife habitat and attracts pollinators. Plus, many native plants have deep root systems that can trap pollutants more effectively than shallow-rooted turf grasses.



Staff and volunteers use a probe to analyze water in our pond.

To better understand the impacts that native plants can have on water quality in our ponds, we recently joined the chemical water quality monitoring team through the [Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District \(SWCD\)](#). The SWCD also sponsors our annual pond trash cleanup, taking place this year on October 1. Want to join in the fun? [Click here to register!](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT LEOPOLD'S

Updates from the Preserve



Volunteers installed protective wire cages around vulnerable oak trees at a workshop in September.

Beavers and More: Summer Events

We've been busy this season with nature walks, volunteer days, and educational events for all ages! We were excited to welcome the Human-Beaver Coexistence Fund to the Preserve last week. Founder Alison Zak showed volunteers how to install wire fencing to deter beavers from chewing on our most important trees. In just two hours, 11 volunteers worked together to protect more than 30 trees around our pond! To get involved, check out upcoming events on our [calendar](#) or join our [mailing list](#).

Invasive Plant Control

Volunteers are an essential part of our invasive plant management strategy at Leopold's Preserve. We hosted our third annual Invasive Pull this summer, where volunteers removed several bags of Japanese Stiltgrass from our upland depression swamp. We also welcomed Plant NOVA Natives and the Merrimac Farm Master Naturalists for a Tree Rescuers training last month! Tree Rescuers focus on saving trees from strangling invasive vines.



Wildlife at Leopold's Preserve. L-R: Tree Swallow, Monarch, and Muskrat.

Wildlife Habitat Management Grant

We're thrilled to announce that we were awarded a grant through the Department of Agriculture's Environmental Quality Incentives Program! This grant will allow us to move forward with several long-term objectives including invasive species management and habitat restoration in our two meadows. Invasive management is one of our most important goals at Leopold's Preserve, and is an essential part of restoring habitats to their natural state. Species like Carpetgrass (*Arthraxon*) and Japanese Honeysuckle provide subpar food for native insects and animals, and often outcompete beneficial native plants in our meadow and forest habitats.

PLEIN ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO TWO RECIPIENTS

Our Scholarship Committee has awarded the 2022 Plein Environmental Scholarship to two outstanding applicants! We're excited to help support these students through their college journeys and into environmental careers.

Leilani Cabrera



Leilani has always enjoyed nature and the outdoors. With the help of the Plein Environmental Scholarship, Leilani hopes to devote more time to studying and less time to "worrying about money". In their future career, Leilani wants to address problems that can stem from human effects on the environment.

Ahmed Ibrahim



Ahmed has a deep appreciation for biologically active soil and enjoys getting his hands dirty. The support of the Plein Environmental Scholarship will help him continue to study Environmental Horticulture. In the future, Ahmed hopes to share his love of trees, shrubs, and soil as an educational farmer.

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: THE CARBAJAL FAMILY

Dedicated to Serving Their Community

Siblings Anthony and Adriana, and their mom Beatriz, first signed up to volunteer with the Friday Conservation Corps in early July. Since then, the family hasn't missed a single workday, accruing more than 35 volunteer hours - each! In addition to Friday mornings, the Carbajals often complete extra volunteer hours throughout the week. Their reliable and consistent work has been a great help at Leopold's Preserve.

The Carbajal family is close-knit, and the three enjoy making memories while volunteering together. Adriana, a police officer, has a strong sense of duty when it comes to caring for



The Carbajals pose together at a volunteer workday (L-R: Beatriz, Adriana, and Anthony)



The Carbajal Family with Park Manager Nick.

the Preserve. "We can't just leave him alone," she says, referring to Park Manager Nick. With volunteers' help, Nick has improved nearly all of the Preserve's trails this season, eliminating encroaching vegetation and enhancing viewsheds.

Anthony hopes to follow in Adriana's footsteps and plans to enroll in the police academy when he is older. We know that the community will benefit from the service of these hardworking and dedicated siblings! If you're interested in joining the Carbajals to complete volunteer projects at the Preserve, head to leopoldspreserve.com/calendar and sign up!

JOIN US: UPCOMING EVENTS

Plein Air Painting

Wednesday, Sept 21, 9 AM - 12 PM
Leopold's Preserve

Bring your own supplies and join us in the Preserve to make a plein air painting of your own! Artists of all ages and skill levels are welcome.

Birds & Blooms Walk

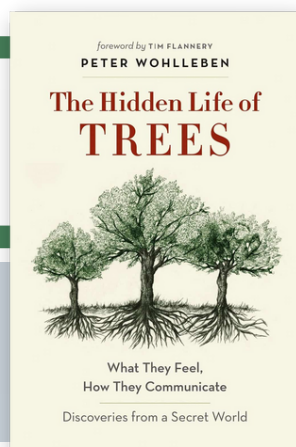
Sunday, Sept 25, 10 AM - 12 PM
Leopold's Preserve

Led by our partners at the [Bull Run Mountains Conservancy](#), this guided naturalist walk will focus on the fall bird migration and wildflowers!

3rd Annual Pond Cleanup

Saturday, Oct 1, 9 AM - 12 PM
Leopold's Preserve

Volunteer to help remove trash from our stormwater management pond. If you are interested in bringing a canoe or kayak, please [contact us](#)!



The Hidden Life of Trees, Peter Wohlleben

Wohlleben, a German forester, draws on his experiences to paint a picture of the novel ways that trees live and communicate. His vivid analogies help readers understand the true complexity of forests - and their trees.

What We've Been Reading



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www.whfarmfoundation.org



@LeopoldsPreserve
www.leopoldspreserve.com

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