



Spring 2024 Newsletter

“Does the educated citizen know he is only a cog in an ecological mechanism?” - Aldo Leopold

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

March has given us some lovely warm days so far - I hope you are taking advantage of the weather to enjoy strolls through Leopold’s Preserve or other natural areas near you.

Though the unseasonable weather has introduced some land management challenges for us, our staff have continued to make progress on important projects across our properties, including habitat restoration, trail improvements, and wildlife monitoring. Most impressively, I am happy to announce that we are now 99% of the way there with regard to removing legacy trash from Leopold’s Preserve (see page 2 for details).

One of our largest educational initiatives this season is the Plein Environmental Scholarship, which provides a fund of up to \$15,000 annually to support future environmental professionals. The scholarship is accepting applications now through April 26th, and I hope you will share it with any high school seniors or college students in your life. We have recently restructured the scholarship to make it easier than ever for students to qualify - don’t miss out on this opportunity!

Continue reading for all the latest news about our work at the Farm and the Preserve. Happy spring!

- Scott C. Plein, WHFF Board Chairman



Staff from the Virginia Department of Forestry conducted a controlled burn at the White House Meadow on February 8th, 2024.

MEADOW MANAGEMENT

The White House Farm Foundation manages a 50-acre buffer area along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River at the White House Farm in Luray, Virginia. Part of this area has been restored into a riparian meadow, which helps to reduce the impacts of runoff from the nearby working farm.

We have been managing the area using eight small “test plots” for many years, but this spring we unified the meadow into one management regime, only preserving the “control” plot as an area to compare with the larger managed zone. This will streamline our work with the Virginia Department of Forestry, which often has trouble scheduling burns for very small parcels of land. After the burn, we seeded the meadow with a blend of native grasses and of course, plenty of wildflowers.

We are also thrilled to be renewing our partnership with the Smithsonian’s Virginia Working Landscapes, whose staff will be visiting our grasslands at both the White House Farm and Leopold’s Preserve to conduct biodiversity and soil surveys throughout the summer.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT LEOPOLD'S

Updates from the Preserve

Spring Cleaning

We recently hosted our third annual Volunteer Trash Cleanup at Leopold's Preserve. These cleanups have been focused on removing "legacy trash" from the Preserve - items dumped by folks who previously lived on this land, including household waste and trash associated with small businesses.

Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated volunteers, we removed 4.5 tons of legacy trash from the Preserve during our latest cleanup! After three years of cleanups, our team has assessed that we have eliminated the majority of legacy trash dumps on the property. In the future, we don't anticipate hosting any more trash cleanups on this scale. What an achievement!



Volunteers removed 40 tires from the Preserve at our annual cleanup.

Moving Outdoors

Our Winter Lecture Series was a resounding success, attracting nearly 100 participants across the series. We are so proud that this series has provided high quality environmental education while connecting community members with our great partner organizations. Special thanks to Valerie Huelsman of the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Matt Bright of Earth Sangha, Deneith Reif and John Lenox of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and Bill Crisp of K2C Wildlife Encounters for leading four excellent programs.

Though the Lecture Series has concluded, we are still offering programs on the first Wednesday of each month! Join us at Leopold's Preserve for "Hike with a Naturalist", the monthly guided hike series led by our friends at the Bull Run Mountains Conservancy. This popular series offers a chance for informal learning while enjoying a casual stroll along our trails.



Participants enjoy searching for frogs during an outdoor program.

Celebrating Earth Day

Since 1970, April 22nd has marked "Earth Day", an event to show support for environmental protection around the globe. Here at Leopold's Preserve, we're offering three ways to celebrate Earth Day with our staff!

Saturday, April 20: Volunteer Tree Planting

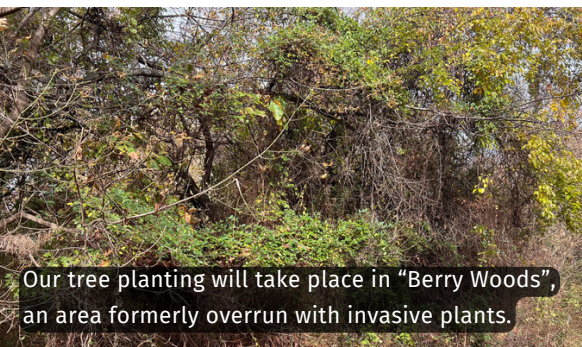
Join us in the morning (8:30 AM) or afternoon (1 PM) to plant 200 trees across our woodland restoration area in honor of Earth Day.

Saturday, April 20: Volunteer Appreciation Event

After our tree planting, we'll be offering refreshments and appreciation at the Bull Run Mountain Conservancy's (BRMC) headquarters, just down the road from Leopold's Preserve. All guests must RSVP - registration will open soon.

Monday, April 22: Earth Day Film Screening

We'll watch a film with an environmental theme at BRMC's headquarters. Stay tuned for more details!



Our tree planting will take place in "Berry Woods", an area formerly overrun with invasive plants.

Seasonal Observations

- Wood Duck
- Tundra Swan
- Spring Peeper
- Skunk Cabbage
- Spring Beauty



Skunk Cabbage

PLEIN ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP: APPLY NOW!

Applications are now open for the 2024-2025 Plein Environmental Scholarship. We present these scholarships annually to support students studying environmental topics at colleges in Virginia. This year, we have restructured the scholarship, allowing even more students to qualify!

Each awardee will receive \$5,000 for their studies, given over two semesters in one academic year. Three scholarships will be awarded per academic year.

“With the help of the Plein Environmental Scholarship, I can focus on my academics instead of worrying about my finances.”
- Anna Labrie, 2023 Scholarship Awardee



Key application requirements:

- Student must be either:
 - a graduating high school senior set to attend NVCC or a Virginia four-year public university, or
 - a current student at NVCC or a Virginia four-year public university.
- Student must be pursuing a degree in an environmental field of study. Possible degrees include: Environmental Science, Conservation, Forestry, Biology, Urban Planning, Economics, Public Policy, or otherwise related.
- Student must demonstrate financial need through the submission of a short written statement.
- Student must clearly and compellingly demonstrate why they wish to pursue an environmental field of study, and how they hope to utilize their degree, through the submission of an essay.

Applications are due on Friday, April 26th! Apply now at whfarmfoundation.org/scholarships.

JOIN US: UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday Volunteering

Saturday, March 16

AM Shift: 8:30 - 11:30 | PM Shift: 1 - 3

Leopold's Preserve

Help prepare our young woodlands for tree planting later this spring! Stop by for one or both shifts.

Hike with a Naturalist

Wednesday, April 3, 10:00 AM

Leopold's Preserve

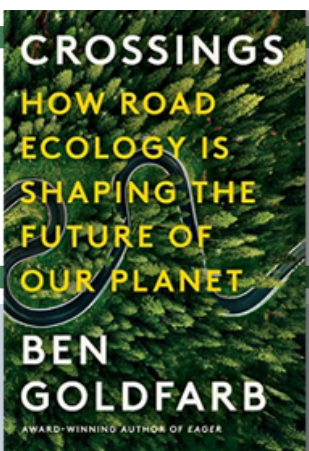
This guided hike will explore the flora and fauna of the season. Offered every first Wednesday in partnership with the Bull Run Mountains Conservancy.

Volunteer Workdays

Every Friday, 8:30 AM

Leopold's Preserve

Join us on any Friday morning to help maintain and improve the Preserve. Projects include trail maintenance, habitat restoration, and more.



Crossings: How Road Ecology is Shaping the Future of Our Planet

Author Ben Goldfarb describes the emerging field of “road ecology”, which studies how roadways impact our natural environments. Written for general audiences, this book explores the consequences of car-centric infrastructure and potential solutions which could benefit both people and nature.

What We've Been Reading



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www.whfarmfoundation.org



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www.leopoldspreserve.com

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*The White House Farm Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation dedicated to conservation and education. The Foundation's work is privately funded by the **Plein Family Charitable Trust**.*