



## Winter 2023 Newsletter

*“Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.” - Aldo Leopold*

### CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

It's hard to believe that the end of the year is already upon us. It has been a busy one for the White House Farm Foundation! We've seen staffing changes, ambitious program launches, new partnerships, and exciting media coverage. Though I am proud of all the work we do, I want to particularly highlight accessibility improvements at Leopold's Preserve, increased activities in the Shenandoah watershed, and our support of local students through the Plein Environmental Scholarship as WHFF's key achievements of 2023.

I am immensely grateful to you - our neighbors, partners, visitors, and volunteers - for your continued support. We could not do it without you! I am honored that the work of the White House Farm Foundation and the creation of Leopold's Preserve has impacted so many people. I hope you continue to enjoy our programs, trails, and resources for years to come.

Check out our calendar to see upcoming events, including several indoor program offerings this winter. If you're feeling generous, stop by a volunteer workday to give back to Leopold's Preserve. Of course, winter is a great time to simply enjoy a walk through the park. I hope you can make it out on the trails this season!

- Scott C. Plein, WHFF Board Chairman



Farm Manager Eric Sours speaks to Sheridan School students about promoting healthy tree growth at the White House Natives Nursery.

### FIELD TRIPS - LURAY AND HAYMARKET

In October, we hosted the Sheridan School for their annual field trip to the White House Farm. Students learned about operations of the White House Natives nursery, then explored the riparian meadow to see a buffer strip in action.

In November, we welcomed students from Alternative Paths Training School to Leopold's Preserve for a volunteer workday. Students helped to install native plants while learning about their ecological significance.

School groups are always welcome at both Leopold's Preserve in Haymarket and the White House Farm in Luray. We hope to continue growing our outreach to local schools in 2024.

### WHFF'S YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

- 70 educational programs and outreach events
- 1292 program attendees
- 50 Volunteer workdays
- 118 Volunteers
- 800 Volunteer Hours
- 161 bird species observed
- 241 birds fledged from nest boxes
- \$17,500 awarded through the Plein Environmental Scholarship
- More than 10,000 visits to Leopold's Preserve!

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT LEOPOLD'S

## Updates from the Preserve

### Winter Lecture Series

We are thrilled to once again be presenting our Winter Lecture Series! This year, we've partnered with the Bull Run Mountains Conservancy to host lectures at their Mountain House headquarters, just a few miles down the road from Leopold's Preserve. We started the series strong last week with a lecture about Spotted Lanternfly impacts and management strategies. If you couldn't make it, you can watch a recording of the lecture on [BRMC's YouTube page](#).

The series of indoor programs runs on the first Wednesday of each month from December through March. Join us on January 3rd to hear from Matt Bright, Executive Director of Earth Sangha. He'll teach us about native plants, their role in our habitats, and the importance of restoring them on public and private land. [Click here to register](#).



Valerie Huelsman, VCE Natural Resources Specialist, speaks about spotted lanternfly.

### Busy Beavers

This season, we've noticed an uptick in beaver activity across many of our aquatic habitats. On the North Fork, beavers built an impressive dam that is easily visible from the trail. If you're hiking Leopold's Loop, keep your eyes on the river near sign 27 to see ecosystem engineering at its finest.

The second area of beaver activity isn't visible from any of our trails or observation areas. The secluded wetland sits in the northwest corner of the Preserve, tucked away in a low spot. Recent surveyors discovered large felled trees, multiple levels of dams, and new lodges in this area. Though they are rarely seen by visitors, we're happy to report that our beavers are thriving.



New beaver dam on the North Fork.

### Habitat Restoration

We are making tremendous progress towards our goals of managing invasive species and restoring native habitats at Leopold's Preserve. Habitats that have dramatically changed over the course of 2023 include Berry Woods, Thoroughfare Meadow, and the savanna. There's more to come in 2024!



**Bald Eagle**

### Seasonal Observations

- Green-Winged Teal
- Bald Eagle
- Red Fox
- Winterberry Holly



Berry Woods  
October 2022



Berry Woods  
October 2023



Savanna  
June 2022



Savanna  
July 2023

# VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

We are honored to have the support of so many dedicated volunteers at Leopold's Preserve and beyond. Without their support, we could not have achieved such tremendous progress - everything from trail maintenance to habitat restoration to wildlife surveying has been supported by volunteers.

In particular, we would like to thank the following volunteers and groups for contributing an exceptional amount of their time to projects at Leopold's Preserve:

- Mike Dow: 244 hours
- Frank Jaworski: 89 hours
- Amy Scala: 37 hours
- Rick Rogowski: 36 hours
- Steve Daly: 25 hours
- Micron Technologies corporate volunteers: 40 hours
- Yahoo corporate volunteers: 30 hours



We are grateful for anyone who has volunteered even one hour of time to improve Leopold's Preserve. Feeling inspired? You can get involved through our Friday Conservation Corps, which meets every Friday morning to tackle projects across the property. We also offer citizen science opportunities in the spring and summer months, including bluebird nest box monitoring. We welcome school groups, local clubs, corporate volunteers, and more. Contact us to schedule a special volunteer project for your group.

Right now, we are excited to be planning an expansion of our volunteer programs for 2024. [Join our mailing list](#) to be the first to know when these new programs launch!

## JOIN US: UPCOMING EVENTS

### Native Plants Lecture

Wednesday, January 3, 10:00 AM  
17405 Beverley Mill Dr

Part of our winter lecture series! Learn about common native plants, why they are critical for wildlife, and how to make their populations healthier.

### Green Fire Film Screening

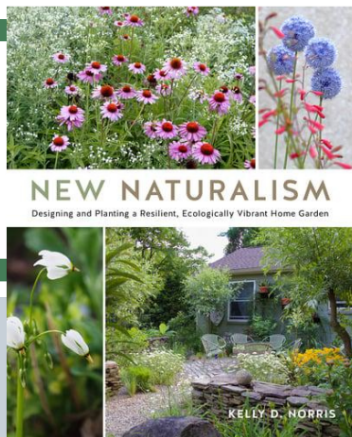
Thursday, January 11, 10:00 AM  
17405 Beverley Mill Dr

Celebrate Aldo Leopold's birthday with us by watching a documentary about his life and legacy. The 73-minute film will be followed by a short discussion.

### 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.



### New Naturalism: Designing and Planting a Resilient, Ecologically Vibrant Home Garden

Author Kelly D. Norris outlines a new paradigm which understands garden beds as ecological systems. His in-depth guide provides inspiration for naturalistic garden designs that connect humans to the environment.

### What We've Been Reading



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[www.whfarmfoundation.org](http://www.whfarmfoundation.org)



@LeopoldsPreserve  
[www.leopoldspreserve.com](http://www.leopoldspreserve.com)

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