



## Summer 2026 Newsletter

*"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community." - Aldo Leopold*

### CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

First of all, I want to say how proud I am of our staff for securing a National Recreation Trail designation for Leopold's Preserve. This honor recognizes the superb efforts of our land stewardship team, including staff, volunteers, and partners. Head to Page 2 to learn more.

Spring heralded our participation in a variety of community efforts. Some were familiar traditions, like the Trash Free Shenandoah cleanup and field trips with the Alternative Paths Training School. Others were new ventures, like "Paws at the Preserve" and a joint program with the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition. These efforts reached new audiences and old friends alike, connecting folks with the natural world.

This summer, beloved programs like wildlife releases, naturalist hikes, and butterfly counts are already on our calendar. However, I'm most looking forward to continued progress on the White House rehabilitation! See Page 3 for the latest updates on this project.

Happy trails,  
- Scott C. Plein, WHFF Board Chairman



Volunteers posing with a pickup truck full of debris collected from the riverbanks.



Volunteers got out on the water to pick up trash with grabbers.



VOP residents collected two loads of trash from their community.

### 1 DAY, 3 CLEAN UPS

On Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, in celebration of Earth Month, we hosted three clean ups across our properties.

Saturday morning, volunteers at the Farm collected trash from the banks of the Shenandoah River that runs along the Farm's edge. At the same time, volunteers at Leopold's Preserve also took to the water, gathering trash and painting over graffiti at the Big Pond. In the afternoon, volunteers from the Villages of Piedmont joined the fun and cleaned the edges of the Preserve along Route 15 and within their community.

We were excited to partner with multiple organizations for these cleanups, including Trash Free Shenandoah, Shenandoah Riverkeeper, Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District, and the Villages of Piedmont HOAs!

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT LEOPOLD'S

Updates from the Preserve in Haymarket

## We're a National Recreation Trail!

We are beyond thrilled to have recently received designation as a National Recreation Trail (NRT) by the National Park Service and the US Forest Service. As a newly designated NRT, we have joined over 1,350 other trails across the 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico. NRTs are a network of high-caliber trails across the nation that are earmarked for special recognition from the Department of the Interior. Leopold's Preserve will benefit from the prestige and increased visibility of being part of the National Trails System. We'll also gain access to technical assistance from NRT partners, federal letters of support for our fundraising efforts, and support for events designed to highlight our trails and programs.



Achieving this recognition was a team and community effort. We cannot extend enough thanks to our staff and volunteers, whose countless hours of hard work have maintained the trail system to a standard worthy of this recognition. And to our partners involved in our land management, education, engagement, and research, thank you as well. We are honored to be part of such a supportive network of nonprofits, agencies, and community members. We are excited to continue serving you as a public-access trail system in Prince William County.

## Tree Rescues

Nearly halfway through the year, our staff and volunteers have already rescued over 1,000 native trees from invasive vines!

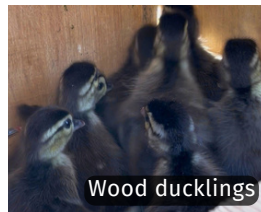


## Seasonal Observations

- Trumpeter swan
- Milkweed
- Eastern tent caterpillar
- Common moonseed
- American toad

## Birds of a Feather (are Monitored)

Nesting season has been in full swing for the waterfowl and grassland birds that call Leopold's Preserve home. Between our staff, our partners at Bull Run



Wood ducklings

Mountains Conservancy, and our volunteers, we have been monitoring 12 purple martin gourds, 21 bluebird boxes, and 32 wood duck boxes across the Preserve since early spring.



Bluebird eggs

Monitoring these species involves weekly checks of the nesting structures and record-keeping of the nest type, egg count, fledgling development, and more found in each box and gourd. Monitoring these birds increases their chances of survival and also provides vital data on bird populations and trends in our region.

## 2026 FIELD CONSERVATION INTERN: ELISA DASS

There's going to be a new face around the Preserve this summer! We are excited to have Elisa Dass join us as our Field Conservation Intern. Over the course of the summer, Elisa will be working with volunteers, learning about preserve management, and completing a capstone research project. For her capstone project, Elisa has chosen to conduct a biodiversity survey of Berry Pond.



"I've been obsessed with nature and animals since I was a kid. However, I only really considered a career in environmental conservation after I took an environmental science course at my local community college. As a result, I am now a student at Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment, majoring in Wildlife Conservation. During my studies at Virginia Tech, my favorite classes have been Wildlife Field Biology and Dendrology. I really enjoyed learning about the native plants and animals in different regions of Virginia. I'm excited to be working at Leopold's Preserve with the White House Farm Foundation this summer! I hope to learn more about real-life applications with preserve management and nonprofit programs, such as public outreach and project research. I'm excited to gain hands-on field work experience in habitat restoration, monitoring, and maintenance, as well as expand my knowledge of flora and fauna, including identification and behavioral ecology." -Elisa Dass

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE FARM

Updates from the White House Farm in Luray

## White House Rehabilitation Progress

As we approach the one-year milestone on this project, many of the key structural elements have been fully completed. Our friends at Urban Development Partners have done a tremendous job stabilizing the exterior stone walls, cellar ceiling vaults, and cellar stairwell.

Inside the house, work to conserve and restore the original paint and woodwork is continuing. Parlor 2 on the ground floor has received special attention over the past few months. This room features lots of decorative wooden millwork, including a large built-in cabinet and several doors that were originally painted with a faux-wood grain. This effect was achieved by applying and then selectively removing a colored translucent glaze over a base paint color. The trim and wainscot had received a strié paint effect, which involves applying a color translucent glaze over a base color, then dragging a brush over the surface to create a soft, natural striped texture.

Over time, the wood trim became heavily soiled and mildewed, and it was later painted over with at least two layers of brown, semitransparent glaze. Paint conservators have been removing the brown glaze using a paint stripper paste and then removing the underlying surface dirt using an enzyme-chelated surfactant solution. This is a time-consuming and detail-intensive process, but one that produces remarkable results!



Cellar stairwell, October 2024. Prior to the renovation, the shallow stone steps were unstable and collapsing.



Cellar stairwell, June 2026. The stairwell has been stabilized, and a new ladder provides safe access.



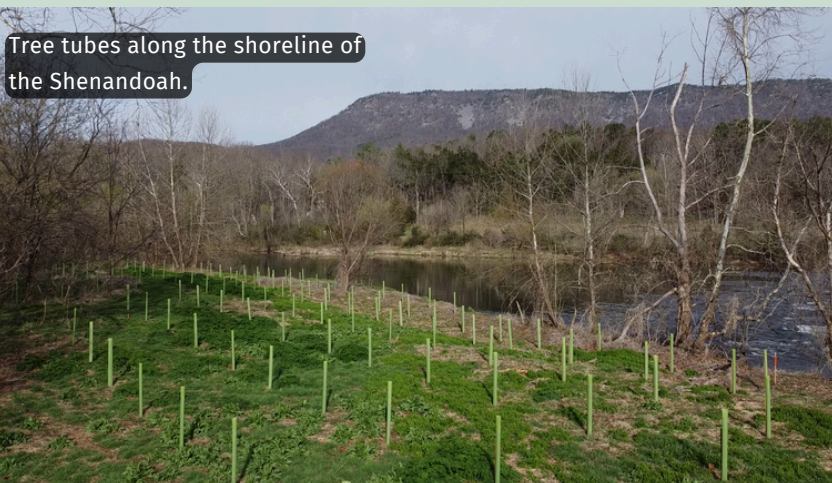
Paint conservation work in Parlor 2, May 2026.

A delicate striped pattern was hidden under brown glaze.

Built-in cabinet in Parlor 2, July 2025.

## Totally Tree Tubular!

As the winter weather began warming in late March, Shenandoah Habitats visited the White House Farm to plant 330 native trees as part of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's "Cool, Clean, Connected" program. The trees were planted at the edge of the White



Tree tubes along the shoreline of the Shenandoah.

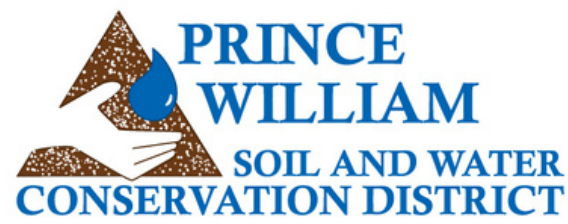
House Farm property along the banks of the Shenandoah River, with an additional 620 trees planted on the adjacent Kauffman's Mill property. Planted as just tiny whips, each tree is accompanied by a tree tube that will protect it from wildlife and human disturbance until the trees grow big enough to split and cause the tubes to fall off.

The "Cool, Clean, Connected" program provides landowners with assistance in the implementation of riparian buffers on their property. White House Farm staff will continue to work closely with the Alliance and Shenandoah Habitats over the next several years to maintain this planting area.

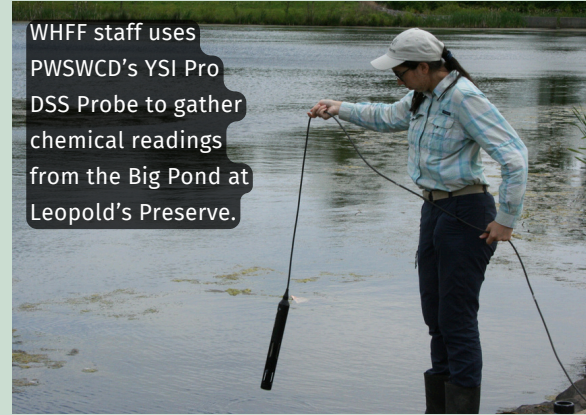
# PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: PRINCE WILLIAM SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

From chemical water quality monitoring to event collaboration, WHFF is proud to continually work with one of our longstanding partners, the Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District (PWSWCD).

PWSWCD's mission is to provide leadership in the conservation of soil, water, and related resources to all Prince William County citizens through technical assistance, information, and education. The District accomplishes this mission by administering the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice Cost-Share Program in the county and developing and administering educational programs to youth and adults. The District plays a role in the larger objective of improving water quality not only in local watersheds, but also in the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay Watersheds.



WHFF staff uses PWSWCD's YSI Pro DSS Probe to gather chemical readings from the Big Pond at Leopold's Preserve.



Volunteers don PWSWCD safety vests during a clean up.

As part of PWSWCD's water quality monitoring program, our staff monitors the Big Pond at Leopold's Preserve monthly. With over 80 chemical monitoring sites across the county, PWSWCD uses the data to track the health of our local waterways. WHFF is also fortunate to partner with PWSWCD to host pond and stream clean up events at the Preserve. This year, we're working with PWSWCD and local partners on an exciting new initiative. Keep an eye on our social media for updates in the coming months!

## JOIN US: UPCOMING EVENTS

### Freshwater Ecology Walk

Saturday, June 20, 10 AM - 12 PM  
Leopold's Preserve, Haymarket

Join us for a stream exploration and learn about all the fascinating critters that inhabit our freshwater systems. Led by a professional naturalist.

### Opossum Release

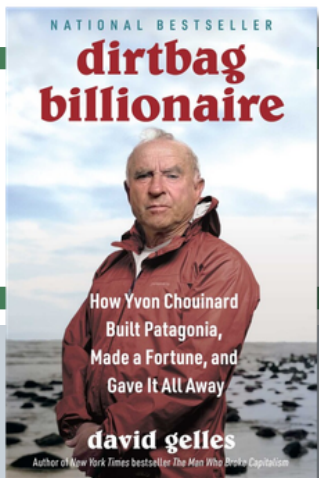
Saturday, June 27, 10 AM - 11 AM  
Leopold's Preserve, Haymarket

Join us as our friends at AERO wildlife rescue return some rehabilitated opossums to the wild! This is a great learning event for all ages.

### NABA Butterfly Count

Friday, July 3, 9 AM - 11 AM  
White House Farm, Luray

We are seeking volunteers of all experience levels to help us count butterflies in the White House Farm riparian meadow.



### Dirtbag Billionaire, by David Gelles

This biography charts the life of Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia. A trailblazer in socially responsible business, Chouinard shaped the company's values, renounced his wealth, and committed Patagonia's future profits to charity. Gelles provides insight into how business can be a tool for good.

### What We've Been Reading



@WHFarmFoundation  
www.whfarmfoundation.org



@LeopoldsPreserve  
www.leopoldspreserve.com

Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates and newsletters sent right to your email inbox!

The White House Farm Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation dedicated to conservation and education. Our work is supported by the **Plein Family Foundation**.