

CONSERVATION *matters*

FALL 2021

Celebrating 25 Years of Protecting the Places You Love

Traditionally, a 25th anniversary is linked to silver. However, we prefer to think of it in terms of dirt, grass, trees and water.

Of course, we're thinking of our farms, woodlands and landscapes. The places that identify and define us, and make us unique. Our quarter-century milestone allows us the opportunity to pause and look back, celebrating all we've accomplished together. Your energy and passion has:

- Preserved 10,900 acres in the Hunterdon County area.
- Established miles of trails where everyone can hike, bike, horseback ride, cross-country ski or snowshoe, or just enjoy a few hours of peace and tranquility.
- Protected our precious waterways to ensure clean drinking water for everyone.
- Continued to grow our Farmers' Market – despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic – so we can support both our farmers and our shoppers searching for nutrient-rich, locally grown food. (See page 2.)

These are just a sampling of your achievements. They are all truly remarkable.

Still, our 25th anniversary also reminds us of all the hard work that remains.

For starters, HLT has 21 preservation projects in the works in several townships, including Readington, Kingwood, Bethlehem, Franklin, Raritan, Lambertville and Holland. Most recently, it helped facilitate the preservation of 28.7 acres at the Fitzgerald tract, and 106



The Zega-Locatong Preserve in Delaware Township.

acres of farmland and open space at the Saums property, both in Readington; the 135-acre Silva Farm in Holland Township; and 104 acres of the Maritan property in Kingwood. (You can read about these recent preservations starting on page 4.)

Perhaps our most significant undertaking involves the restoration of our Dvoor Farm headquarters. Plans call for a sensitive rehabilitation of the barns, allowing for them to be utilized for children's camps, corporate retreats, educational programming, and other life celebrations; infrastructure improvements to provide public restrooms and improve traffic flow and parking; and natural resource restorations to benefit pollinator meadows and wetlands, streams and stormwater management.

"As Hunterdon Land Trust celebrates its anniversary, no project has been more vital to linking the past, present and future for all we serve than the transformation of Dvoor Farm," said Patricia Ruby, HLT's executive director. "This effort will ensure the farm remains a place for families and friends to gather to remember the past and forge new memories, and allow more people to enjoy a variety of educational and recreational opportunities that honors Hunterdon County's agricultural, cultural and natural heritage, all while boosting the local economy."

So far, we have raised more than \$2 million toward this initiative. We encourage you to learn more about this project by contacting Catherine Suttle, our director of cultural resources, at catherine@hunterdonlandtrust.org.

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Celebrating 25 Years of Protecting the Places You Love

And we will continue to steward your land through monitoring, clearing and marking trails, and protecting our waterways.

As local historian John W. Lequear penned in the late 1800s:

“We have climbed the hills, and threaded the valleys, and sauntered along the streams of old Hunterdon, till we have learned to love them. From the long range that sends out its spurs, and stretches from the beautiful Delaware to the classic Hudson, there rises a mist of the loveliest blue, that seems like a delicate curtain which ‘half conceals, half discloses’ the deeds that were done in the past, and the life we live in the present.”

We would expand upon Mr. Lequear’s statement to add: *“...and the legacy we wish to leave to our children and our children’s children.”*

We need your continued support to make everything happen. During these difficult times, so many funders are shifting to other priorities. We need your help more than ever, so we can continue to do your good work.

Please join us for our 25th Anniversary Virtual Celebration and Fundraiser (see page 8) or learn more about making a contribution to Hunterdon Land Trust (see page 7).



Cabbage Throw Farm at Comeback Farm offers a large selection of organic vegetables and fruit every Sunday at our Farmers’ Market.



Apple Ridge Farm features a variety of freshly baked breads.

HLT Farmers’ Market: A Sure Bet in Uncertain Times

As we prepare this newsletter for publication, we struggle to read the tea leaves and predict the future – even if it is only a month from now!

Bearing this in mind means we cannot trumpet a market that continues its march toward normalcy, where visitors are welcomed with a plethora of events or special guests. Yet, we prefer embracing optimistic feelings that our steady efforts to get back to the future will continue unabated -- while preparing for whatever challenges come our way.

These are neither the best of times, nor the worst of times. These are uncertain times. And despite all of this uncertainty, there is one thing you can bet on: Our Farmers’ Market will continue to bring you the best and most nutritious local food you can find in a safe and friendly environment.

We will continue to bring you all of your seasonal favorites – from apples to zucchini and everything in between. You can be assured that our locally grown fruits and vegetables are freshly picked just before the short trip to our market, so you can enjoy them at their nutritional and flavorful peak. Also know that the breads at our market are freshly baked, the cheeses hand-crafted, the honey recently harvested, and the selection of meats – beef, chicken and pork – all-natural, and free of antibiotics and hormones.

Despite the pandemic, our Farmers’ Market continues to grow. During the high point of our season, we welcomed 25 local farmers and vendors to the Dvoor Farm. As our Market Manager Robert Reid aptly noted, “The response from friends and supporters has been gratifying. Our volunteers, farmers and vendors have helped us flourish without missing a beat.”

Since starting in 2007, Hunterdon Land Trust’s producers-only Farmers’ Market (“producers only” means the vendors make or produce the goods they sell at the market) has focused on fostering a unique venue and a special place that directly benefits farmers and producers, while providing healthy food for area residents, and a place of community and connection.

Though the pandemic has undoubtedly strained the bonds of those connections, we remain fully confident that we will all weather these challenges and grow to become a more resilient and strong community as we move forward.

In the meantime, know that our Farmers’ Market will remain a sure bet for you and your family.

About our Farmers’ Market:

Farmers’ Market Hours:
Through Nov. 21, every
Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

December to early May: the
first and third Sundays of the
month, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Water, Water Everywhere!

HLT Stream Project Aims to Improve How Walnut Brook Handles Rainstorms

On Saturday night, July 17, a brutal rainstorm tore through Hunterdon County, pounding the area with up to 6.11 inches of rain between 6 p.m. and midnight. Roads were flooded, cars were stranded in the high waters, and countless basements needed bailing out.

At the Dvoor Farm, the heavy rain swelled the Walnut Brook. The water slammed over the concrete bridge that leads from the wagon house to the wetlands.

It washed away gravel that smoothed the walk from the bridge to the trail, and tore about two dozen tree cages away. (Thankfully, the trees held fast.) The flood created two giant log jams along the river, and several smaller ones.

"My God, water was everywhere. It was violent and high and it blasted across the wetlands to the hillside below the parking area at the Dvoor Farm," said HLT Land Steward Kristin Winters. "The water was flashing through there, moving very fast and very powerfully."

Hunterdon Land Trust's Stream Restoration Project aims to improve upon this problem, decreasing the energy and swelling of the Walnut Brook during rainstorms, and shifting water onto the floodplain rather than having it rush downstream. About 1,200 feet of the Walnut Brook's stream channel and riparian buffer – an area stretching from the shed and wagon house on the farm to the bridge on Mine Street – will be restored. (A riparian buffer is the naturally vegetated area near the stream.)

The project comprises four major components:

- Stabilizing and protecting the banks from erosion by placing boulders and plantings in key positions. Once stabilized, less soil from surrounding fields will wash into the stream during storms, which will serve the double benefit of reducing soil erosion and improving water quality, not only for the Walnut Brook, but also downstream where it flows into the First, Second and Third Neshanic rivers.
- Excavating several shallow vernal pools near the stream channel to manage the flow of water during a storm. The vernal pools will enhance and diversify wildlife habitat and provide a stable



This section of the Walnut Brook will be part of the stream restoration project. To the left, you can see trees that were swept down the brook during the July 17 flood.

area for water to collect during large rain events. This will help reduce runoff by giving stormwater a place to go during storm events, and may improve groundwater recharge as the water has more time to percolate through the soil.

- Restoring a three-acre area within the riparian buffer by planting 280 bare root native trees and shrubs. This will reduce the number of invasive species by the brook.
- Using existing debris and brush found around the stream channel to improve the aquatic and terrestrial habitat.

"We're going to beautify the creek and create a place that will help educate people on how excellent stormwater management works," Winters said.

This is the second part of the Walnut Brook Stream Restoration Project; earlier work was completed upstream on the Dvoor Farm in 2011. Funding for this project is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service's EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) Grant; a North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) 319 Grant; a Church & Dwight Grant; and the Washington Crossing Audubon Society's Polly Holden Conservation Endowment Grant. The work will be done by Trout Scapes.

Catherine Suttle, HLT's director of cultural resources, said RC&D managed the first part of this project back in 2011 and spearheaded the effort to get funding for this second and final round of improvements.

"It's great to see this project coming to fruition," Suttle said. "We appreciate that RC&D kept this project on their radar all these years. And NRCS has been extremely helpful in the design and funding of this project and will be onsite when the work is being done."

The work on the stream bank is expected to be completed sometime in September. The planting of native species will begin either late fall or in the spring of 2022.

HLT Keeps Busy with Preservations in Kingwood, Holland Highlands and Readington

Hunterdon Land Trust may have surpassed its goal late last year to preserve 10,000 acres, but that does not mean we are resting on our laurels. Our three most recent preservations demonstrate our tireless determination to continue protecting the places you love.

You'll notice a common theme running through the below vignettes: All three properties build upon past preservations, connecting and thus expanding previously protected acres to create contiguous corridors of green spaces.

Maritan Inc., Kingwood Township

This 104-acre property connects with HLT's Idell Preserve and is adjacent to nearby preserved farmland creating an impressive green corridor. Maritan is comprised of a mix of forest and farmland, contains 16 acres of wetlands and two tributaries of the Lockatong Creek, a Category One (C-1) stream, flows through a portion of it.

(C-1 waterways are protected from any measurable change in water quality because of their exceptional ecological significance, exceptional recreational significance, exceptional water supply significance, or exceptional fisheries resources.)

Maritan and Idell will be connected by a trail. Combined, the two parcels will offer visitors a chance to explore 160 acres with vernal pools and numerous amphibious creatures, said Land Acquisitions Director Jacqueline Middleton.

This mostly flat property hosts several small ponds where, recently, a beaver built a home. Barred owls can easily be heard hooting on the property as the fields are an excellent habitat for grassland birds, rabbits, foxes and other small rodents that provide the base of the food chain. The open wetlands and ponds are inhabited by numerous reptiles and amphibians and provide nesting areas for waterfowl.

"Anytime we can expand one of our preserves for more open space it is always a nice win," Middleton said.

Kingwood Deputy Mayor Richard Dodds said the township intends to begin laying the groundwork on the preserve by mowing out the trails, then next spring will establish a connection between Idell and Maritan.

When completed, the trail will offer visitors the chance to enjoy hiking, birding and fishing in the ponds.

Maritan will be managed by Kingwood Township through its Parks and Recreation Commission and used for passive recreation. HLT will coordinate the trail expansion with Kingwood. It's anticipated that four miles of trails will be added.



"This preservation effort began when the owner, Sharon Gonen, contacted HLT around 2014 to discuss preservation options," Middleton said. "We were able to get available funding from Hunterdon County and through Kingwood's Green Acres grant."

Dodds said he's excited about the preserve's future, envisioning the township perhaps getting a major grant from the state to improve the property.

"The park is so flat it really lends itself to being a completely accessible trail," Dodds said. "We could have a large accessible trail that uses a permeable surface that would be perfect for strollers, people using wheelchairs or for someone unable to hike up hills."

"It's the most accessible park in Kingwood because there are families living close by on Barcroft Road, who could easily walk to the park," Dodds noted.

Silva Farm, Holland Township

If you climb the hill at the trailhead of the Thomas Saeger Preserve, and cast a backward glance, you will likely stop in your tracks: The forested hillside opposite Shire Road is just that stunning. Now, thanks to this preservation, that vista will remain as is for future generations to enjoy.

The 135-acre Silva Farm connects previously preserved lands, forming a corridor that stretches roughly 2.5 miles from the tip of the Kolonia North Preserve to the bluffs of the Delaware River. The acquisition brings the total number of preserved acres in Holland Township to more than 4,713.

"I love how it's sandwiched between two preserved properties," Middleton noted.

"It touches the Holland Township Preserve, it touches the Thomas Saeger Preserve, and those two connect with Kolonia -- north and south," said longtime HLT Trustee Larry LaFevre, whose involvement in the project dates back to 2002 when he first visited the farm with former Board of Trustees President John Gattuso. "It connects with two other farms and other preserved open space. It completes the corridor from Anderson Road all the way to the Delaware.

"It felt like fortune was smiling upon us — that's the way I look at it -- because not only is it going to be preserved but it's also going to stay in the family," LaFevre said. He noted that a fourth generation of the Silva family will farm the land.

"It's beautiful flat farmlands, and it has one of the oldest barns in town," LaFevre added.

"We were thrilled to work with Holland Township, the State Agricultural Development Committee and Hunterdon County to help preserve this farm," Middleton said.

The Maritan and Silva preservations both fall under the aegis of the National Park Service's Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic program, which aims to protect the natural, cultural and historic value of the Delaware River.



Fitzgerald Preserve & Saums Farm, Readington Township

Just like a jigsaw puzzle, the pieces of Readington Township's land preservation plan are fitting together quite nicely.

The latest piece added is the Fitzgerald tract, 28.7 acres nestled in the northern Chambers Brook watershed and off Coddington Road. Hunterdon Land Trust played a key role in this project by acquiring a grant for \$143,500 from Hunterdon County's Open Space Trust Fund to help purchase the property, Middleton said.

The Fitzgerald tract consists mostly of forested land with wetlands and two streams. Two small tributaries of the Chambers Brook flow through the southeast portion of the land, and preserving this parcel will help enhance water quality in the area. The property also provides habitat for a variety of species including bald eagles, eastern box turtles, and great blue herons.

"HLT's preservation projects target parcels with critical water resources and habitat values that exist in proximity to other protected tracts of land. Creating such continuous swaths of natural lands produces an overall greater benefit to water quality and native species throughout the region," noted Patricia Ruby, executive director of Hunterdon Land Trust.

Another project HLT offered vital assistance with was the Saums Farm, located on Rockafellows Mills Road. Readington Township owns the 105-acre property after having purchased it from Floyd Saums. Fifty-five acres will be preserved as farmland and the remainder will be preserved as open space. HLT helped by getting funding for the open space portion and meeting with the landowners to help facilitate the acquisition. The land is currently in the process of getting preserved.

Preservation partners for these projects were NJ Green Acres, NJ State Agriculture Development Committee, Hunterdon County and Readington Township.

Postscript:

"Last year and this one have been, and will continue to be, a very busy time for land acquisitions for Hunterdon Land Trust," Middleton said. "We're on our fifth closing for this year and we're anticipating two more in the very near future and another one hopefully coming in the fall. And they've been terrific acquisitions that have expanded existing preserved corridors."

You can play a vital role in helping our efforts to protect the place you love by making a gift to Hunterdon Land Trust. Visit page 7 to learn more.

CRITTER CORNER

Brood X Cicadas – They’ll Be Back!

Anyone who visited HLT’s Quakertown Preserve earlier this summer may have wondered why an unusually loud burglar alarm was sounding in the woods. A quick walk along the trail would have revealed the source. It was no burglar – just a massive crowd of noisy, busy cicadas!

While some areas of Hunterdon County were quiet, others heralded the arrival of the regionally famous Brood X (Roman numeral 10) cicadas. Brood X is one of the largest groups of periodical cicadas in the world. They emerge in 15 states, with concentrations in the Mid-Atlantic region, Indiana, Ohio and Tennessee.

While there are more than 3,000 species of cicadas on the planet, periodical cicadas reside in the eastern U.S.; the broods emerge in different years, and their ranges fit together across the region like a jigsaw puzzle. Annual broods ensure that there are always cicadas around, typically in the latter half of the summer. Our local annual cicadas are *Neotibicen canicularis*.

PERIODICAL CICADAS	ANNUAL CICADAS
Emerge after 13 to 17 years	Emerge after two to five years
Black and reddish-orange in color	Black, green and white in color
Larger in size	Smaller in size

Like annual cicadas, periodicals have two large eyes and three small ones in between, but their large eyes are a distinctive reddish-orange color. While underground, periodical cicadas feed on tree root sap, and develop from nymph to adult until they emerge in May/ June at a rate of up to 1.4 million insects per acre!

Why so many at once? It is thought that periodical cicadas have evolved their precise schedule owing to a survival strategy called “predator satiation”; there are so many insects at one time that predators can’t eat them all. Scientists don’t entirely understand how cicadas time their simultaneous emergence, but it may be related to changes in the tree sap or weather. Immediately after emerging, cicadas shed their nymphal exoskeletons, climb on a vertical surface, and allow their shells to

harden for a few days, changing from white to darker colors. The males emerge first, and many do get eaten, but enormous numbers (especially females) remain to produce the next generation.

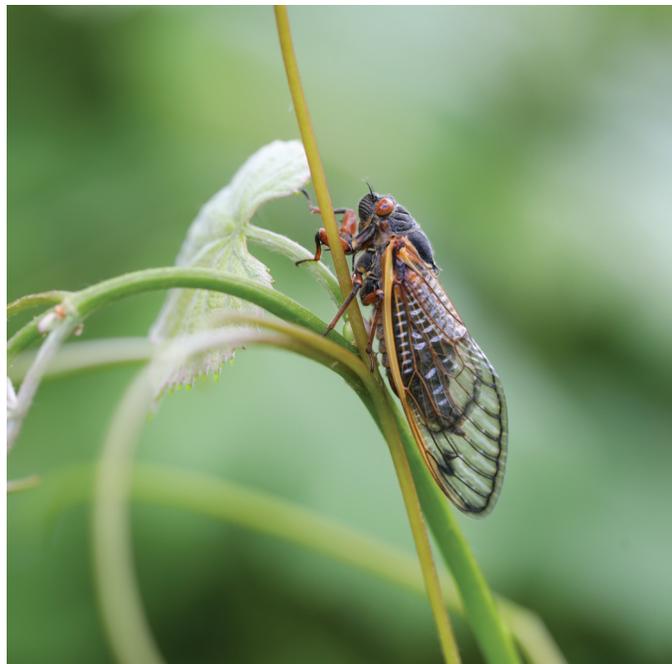
The females lay hundreds of eggs in the branch tips of deciduous trees; the branch tips die, turn orange, and droop down (called “flagging”). Regions where periodical cicadas have laid eggs can be identified by the orange-polka-dotted trees! While young trees may be damaged by flagging (the trees can be protected with nets), more mature trees are not usually harmed. Humans and wildlife don’t have to worry either; our local cicadas don’t sting, bite, or carry diseases, and don’t enter buildings unless they accidentally hitch a ride on a person or packages.

The cicadas are, however, noisy! To attract mates, males use a drum-like apparatus called a tymbal organ to create a 90- to 120-decibel sound, equal to a lawnmower, car horn, or rock concert at close range, and the females click their wings in response. The concert, which is louder during hotter weather, only lasts three to four weeks; after this the adults reach the ends of their short lives aboveground and fall to the bases of the trees, where their bodies provide nutrients to the soil. The eggs hatch by late August, and the tiny nymphs fall to the ground and burrow under the soil, where the cycle begins again, during which time the nymphs of periodical cicadas will molt four times until finally the mysterious signal calls them back aboveground.

Since they can fly only a few hundred feet, cicadas tend to stay in the same grove of trees; as a result, all cicadas depend on the

preservation of land, and are vulnerable to habitat loss, pesticide use, invasive species, and development. Open space preservation and responsible land management help ensure their survival, and will allow them to avoid extinction like Brood XI, gone since the mid-1900s. The ideal habitat for cicadas is land that will look the same 13 or 17 years later.

Keep an eye out in 2025 for the next nearby group of 17-year cicadas to emerge – Brood XIV in east-central PA and southern NJ. And Brood X will be back in 2038.





Caring for young trees at the Dvoor Farm.

An oriole keeps a watchful eye on its surroundings.
Photo by Jill Dodds.

Horseshoe Bend Preserve in Kingwood Township.

Make a Gift to HLT Today!

While perusing this newsletter, you will likely notice two overarching themes running throughout.

First, and perhaps it's no surprise, is how uncertain and challenging these times are. The pandemic has compelled us to consider – and reconsider – our programs and fundraising events. Events that we rely upon to raise awareness and funds have been canceled or have morphed into new events. Additionally, funders who have traditionally supported HLT have shifted to other priorities as they deal with these turbulent times.

The second theme worth noting is that despite all of these challenges, we continue working ceaselessly to do everything we can to protect the places you love in the Hunterdon County area. We have now preserved 10,900 acres, and have roughly 20 other preservation projects in the works in several townships, including Readington, Kingwood, Bethlehem, Franklin, Raritan, Lambertville and Holland.

Your generosity allows us to continue doing your good work. Your compassion helps ensure that our drinking water is clean, our farms and fields are protected, our plant and wildlife habitats are safeguarded, and our county's cultural heritage will be lovingly cared for, and handed down, for the next generation to enjoy.

To achieve these shared goals, we cannot rely heavily on distant funders with changing priorities to consistently make Hunterdon County a prime concern. We rely on you, our neighbors, to protect the places you love. We encourage you to give generously during these challenging times to help make our shared vision a reality.

Please make a gift to HLT by enclosing a check in the envelope included in this newsletter; or make a secure online donation at <https://www.hunterdonlandtrust.org/donate-volunteer/>

Other ways you can protect the places you love include:

- **Matching Gifts:** Make the most of your gift to Hunterdon Land Trust. Many companies will match the charitable gifts of their employees, so be sure to check with your employer to see if it has a matching gift program. Most corporate procedures are simple; just request a Matching Gift Form from your company and submit it to Hunterdon Land Trust, along with your gift.
- **Planned Giving:** Create a lasting legacy by including HLT in your estate plans. You can make a gift through or outside your will, and even make a gift that gives you income for life. Planned giving mechanisms include bequests, gifts of appreciated securities, IRAs, life insurance, real estate, charitable remainder trusts and charitable lead trusts.

If you have already designated a planned gift to HLT, or if you would like to learn more, please contact our Executive Director, Patricia Ruby, at pruby@hunterdonlandtrust.org, or call 908-237-4582.

Hunterdon Land Trust Wish List

Do you happen to have any of the items on this list in good working condition that you can donate to Hunterdon Land Trust to help us care for the Dvoor Farm, properties, or operations?

The items listed below are all tax deductible:

- Bungee cords (varied)
- Shade tarp (to cover plants in transit)
- A long-handled battery-operated hedge trimmer
- A utility trailer for a Toro 52-inch wide-riding mower
- Battery-operated leaf blower
- A 12-foot or 16-foot extension ladder
- A fire-rated flammable materials storage cabinet
- Adobe Creative Suite
- Over-the-ear headphones
- Laminating machine

If you would like to contribute, please contact Sue Domalgaski at sue@hunterdonlandtrust.org. Please call our offices in advance at 908-237-4582 to make an appointment to drop off any donation. **Thank you!**



HUNTERDON LAND TRUST

JOIN US!

Hunterdon Land Trust's 25th Anniversary Celebration & Virtual Fundraiser

Please join us in Celebrating 25 Years of Preservation

Sunday, September 19th 2021
5pm ET

Celebrate HLT's 25th Anniversary Event and Fundraiser

Hunterdon Land Trust invites you to join us on Sunday, September 19 at 5 p.m. for an evening celebrating 25 years of preserving and protecting the places you love in Hunterdon County!

This year we are honoring Larry LaFevre, HLT Board of Trustees secretary, for his service and dedication to the organization, and Basil Bandwagon Natural Market owners, Ralph Celebre and Susan Haase, for their commitment as business leaders to HLT's mission.

Come celebrate 25 years and more than 10,000 acres preserved with a short video, lively discussion with our honorees, silent auction, and a live auction for a weeklong stay at a property in Breckenridge, Colorado. If you are unable to attend the event, you can still support us by bidding on our fabulous auction items! (Visit our 25th anniversary page at www.hunterdonlandtrust.org to learn more.)

At the conclusion of our main program, please join us for one of our fascinating workshops: a cooking demonstration highlighting local food led by Chef Matt McPherson of Matt's Red Rooster Grill or a conversation on ecological landscape design by Stephen Panasci, owner of Agrario Design.

We also want to extend our deepest gratitude to our event sponsors Rago Auctions, Amy Greene Environmental, ShopRite, Provident Bank, Ron Subber and Martha Wood, and Patricia Stover.

Upcoming Hunterdon Land Trust Events

The Case-Dvoor Farm tells the story of the region's farm culture and architecture from the mid-18th century to mid-20th century through its impressive stone dwelling and large complex of frame barns and other outbuildings. Join us for these upcoming programs that explore the history of this Hunterdon County gem:

Sunday, Sept. 12 at 10:30 a.m.

Dvoor Farm Barn Tour: Christopher Pickell of Pickell Architecture in Flemington will lead a fascinating tour covering the diverse history of the property's barns and wagon house. While we have hosted barn tours at the farm in the past, this one will be different. For the first time, we will be taking participants inside the now-empty barns, offering a closer look at how the buildings were constructed and what makes them truly special. Space is limited; visit our website for details.

Sunday, Oct. 17 at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Dvoor Farm House Tours: Dave Harding, HLT outreach director and Hunterdon County Historical Society administrator, will conduct this basement to attic tour of the Georgian-style Dvoor Farm house, built in 1798 by Philip and Amy Case. The program features an historical exploration of the property's history, and the story of the three families (Case, Davis and Dvoor) who owned and farmed the land for about 250 years. Learn about the 1803 basement murder and come see the 18th-century graffiti in the attic. Space is limited; visit our website for details.



Thanks to Our Partners in Preservation

We extend our deepest gratitude to our Partners in Preservation: Basil Bandwagon Natural Market, Northfield Bank, Thomas McMillan – Callaway Henderson Sotheby's International Realty, Amy S. Greene Environmental, Hunterdon Healthcare, and Matt's Red Rooster Grill. Please support the businesses that support HLT!