

CONSERVATION *matters*

SPRING 2017

Celebrating 20 Years

OUR MISSION

To preserve and protect the places you love in the Hunterdon County region.

You reap the rewards when donating to the Hunterdon Land Trust because you enjoy what we all treasure most about our beautiful county: its emerald green meadows that beckon to be explored, its crystal-clean waters that sparkle like diamonds, its breathtaking hillside views where we can marvel at the rich golden hues of a setting sun.



TREASURE HUNTERDON

The Great Escape: Discover the Zega-Lockatong Preserve

Do you need a little break? A chance to unwind, breathe, and just get away from everything for a few hours?

Then why not enjoy one of Hunterdon County's most stunning places that you helped protect!

The Zega-Lockatong Preserve in Delaware Township is the perfect place to visit any time of the year. Safeguarded from development more than a decade ago, the property links up with the Westcott Preserve and the Ralph Peters property to form a gorgeous greenbelt of about 250 acres.

The trail can be found just past the historic Rosemont-Raven Rock Bridge; crossing it feels like stepping back in time. At the trail head, an incline bends, leading you to a meadow where, with the summer's breeze, the grass flows gently like waves on an emerald sea. Keep your eye open for the kestrels and bluebirds which flock to this broad expanse. At the edge of the clearing, tall trees stand sentinel against the sky. In autumn, the leaves on those trees burst brightly in crimsons, purples and ambers – nature's final fireworks show of the year.

This wooded trail – known as Mimi's Trail in honor of dedicated environmentalist Mimi Upmeyer – winds along hillsides, dropping to a broad floodplain where hickory, beech and maple trees abound. Rest beside the Lockatong Creek, whose waters roll over a smooth bed of rocks today, as they've done for centuries. Gaze across the stream at the craggy rock outcroppings that stir the imagination.

The trail swings northeast into Hunterdon County's Wescott Preserve before turning north toward the Peters Property and the Ralph Peters Trail. You will ascend a steep bluff, and a trail spur that offers expansive views all year round. During a springtime visit, rapturous birdsong heralds the season's renewal, as trees bud and tender shoots stretch forth toward the warming sun.

The Hunterdon Land Trust ensures the Zega-Lockatong Preserve is cared for year-round because you care about its well-being. This year, a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant will enable us to remove invasive plants such as Japanese barberry, multiflora rose and autumn olive, which threaten to choke off native plants that benefit the environment. We'll also continue working to protect the Lockatong Creek and Mimi's Trail from erosion.

Efforts to steward Zega-Lockatong Preserve also support the goals of the National Park Service's Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic Program, which aim to protect the natural, historic and recreational resources that earned this stretch of the river the Wild and Scenic designation.

When You Visit....

Zega-Lockatong Preserve is located on Rosemont-Raven Rock Road in Delaware Township. Parking is available just west of the bridge. If you wish to explore from the Ralph Peters Property, you'll find parking off Strimples Mill Road about 1.5 miles north of Route 519.



IN MEMORIAM

Remembering a Dedicated HLT Volunteer



Tricia Haertlein had passion, drive and a knack for finding the most efficient and effective way of getting things done. She was a good friend and steadfast volunteer at the Hunterdon Land Trust ever since she joined the fight to save Horseshoe Bend in Kingwood from development.

"She just had this way of jumping into something with so much enthusiasm and making things happen," said her sister Barbara Haertlein.

Tricia passed away on December 13, 2016, having donated her time, talents and energy to HLT for more than six years.

She was a familiar face in our offices, and most recently had dived into a months-long project to create and maintain a records management system. Tricia brimmed with ideas for building a filing system that worked faster, easier and better.

"She sat across from me every Thursday, and had so many wonderful ideas," said Jacqueline Middleton, our Land Acquisition Director. "I miss her."

Tricia worked on many HLT events including our Farm to Table dinner, a plein air painting event, and our Treasure Hunterdon fundraiser, for which she created the driving routes.

Tricia grew up in Westfield and developed a life-long love for horses. As a teenager, she would bike to the outskirts of Scotch Plains to ride. When she turned 19, Tricia started a horse club for children who didn't own horses. She moved with Barbara to Lebanon Borough, and later joined the fight to save Horseshoe Bend.

"In getting involved with Horseshoe Bend, she learned of the Hunterdon Land Trust, and thought they were doing something really important," Barbara said. "She had a lot of respect for the organization, and was looking forward to volunteering more."

"We are grateful for Tricia's dedicated service, and her passion and positive energy will be truly missed," said HLT Executive Director Patricia Ruby.

ON THE FARM

Unlocking Mysteries at the Case-Dvoor Farm House

Every old home has its own stories and mysteries hidden beneath its floorboards and behind its walls, and the 218-year-old Case-Dvoor Farm House is no exception.

Trouble is, the deeper you dig, the more mysteries you uncover:

Work began in January to reconstruct the back entrance to the house and repair the damage caused by the fire last August. We now believe the rear addition was built before 1920, and may date back to the 1890s, when the Davis family owned the farm.

When the 1980s-era sheetrock and a layer of bead board were removed, we discovered architectural relics like compartments and shelving with evidence of built-in cabinetry. An old shutter, which was part of the original wall paneling, had been cut into for a light-switch box and for other modern changes.

Hidden beneath the flooring in the crawl space, we found the usual detritus (a couple of old critter bones, glass bottles and a can), but we also discovered a child's block, pennies dating back to 1864 and 1890, a buffalo nickel, and a glass container shaped like an airplane with the words "Spirit of Goodwill" on its fuselage. This item – which once held tiny candies – likely commemorated Charles Lindbergh's Goodwill Tour of South America, after his flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927.

We were puzzled to discover a dozen old shoes beneath the floorboards. No pairs – just single shoes. We posted a photo of them on our Facebook page, prompting someone to forward us a link to an ominously titled article Keeping Evil at Bay: Concealed Garments. Shoes were sometimes hidden under floorboards or below staircases to ward off evil spirits or witches, the article states.

We have no way of confirming if that's why the shoes were left there, but we can say we haven't encountered any evil spirits interfering with the reconstruction, and anticipate the project to be completed early spring.

The goal is to return the entrance to how it likely looked during the 1930s. Why? Well, while the farm's period of significance ranges from the 1790s to the 1940s, all the buildings on the farm – including the iconic horse barn – existed by the early 1930s.



Adam Wengryn, of Restoration Technologies, and Catherine Suttle, HLT's Director of Cultural Resources, discuss the reconstruction of the back entrance to the Dvoor Farm House.

CRITTER CORNER

Stick Your Neck Out and Help a Turtle

Why did the turtle cross the road? We may never reach a definitive answer, but one thing we know for sure is that close encounters with cars are one of the foremost threats to turtle populations. As more land is developed, forest and wilderness shrink, and turtles find their habitats crisscrossed by roads. Many don't survive their attempts to cross.

One well-known turtle native to New Jersey is the Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*). They have been sighted on Hunterdon Land Trust's Muddy Run Preserve in Kingwood Township. While box turtles are common in the eastern US, their population has steadily declined in New Jersey, largely due to habitat loss and being struck by cars. Their decline is particularly troubling because the Eastern box turtle plays an important role in forest regeneration.

Box turtles, like many other freshwater turtles, are omnivores and eat a wide variety of things, but most important for our forests are the fruits and seeds that they eat. Turtles are important agents of seed dispersal; it has been shown that seeds of certain plants that pass through a box turtle's digestive system are more likely to germinate. These plants include black cherry, mayapple, summer grape, and Jack-in-the-pulpit.

Box turtles are also extremely helpful in controlling garden pests, as their diet also includes a variety of insects, slugs, and snails. They are fond of vegetables, so if you recruit box turtles to help with garden pest control, be sure to place a low barrier around plants you don't want them munching on.

To encourage box turtles into your garden, try to mimic their natural habitat. Box turtles usually inhabit open woodlands and meadows near streams or ponds. Cultivate plants with native fruits they like, such as huckleberry, elderberry, blackberry, American persimmon and frost grape. Leave leaf litter beneath trees for them to forage and hide in, and provide them with a moist area



such as a pond or rain garden, and a sunny area for them to bask in. Inviting turtles into your garden is a good way to protect your plants and conserve habitat for an important native species.

If you do see a turtle crossing the road, you can help out by carefully carrying it across, but be careful! If you see a large turtle with a big pointed head and a long tail, it's most likely a snapping turtle and should be left alone. If you do decide to move a turtle, make sure you place it on the side of the road it was heading towards, or else it's likely to turn around and try to cross again. Once it's safely across, pull out your smartphone and upload a picture to HLT's interactive Community Map!

Thanks to our Partners in Preservation

Please support the local businesses who help HLT protect the places you love!

Basil Bandwagon Natural Market
Realtor Tom McMillan
McPherson & Newland Insurance
Farmers Insurance Company of Flemington
Brighton Financial Planning
Matt's Red Rooster Grill
Provident Bank Foundation
Amy S. Greene Environmental Consultants
Gattuso Media Designs
NJ Environment News
ShopRite of Hunterdon County
Kelly Mac Interiorscapes
Peragrin LLC.

You Can Build a Conservation Legacy

You have accomplished wondrous things!

You have protected more than 8,400 acres of forest, fields and streams in the Hunterdon County area. You have cared for these places so that plants and wildlife could thrive, and everyone would have someplace to hike, bike, fish, horseback ride or just enjoy nature. You have shopped at our Farmers' Market to support our local economy and our county's agricultural legacy.

You are changing lives – right here at home – and making Hunterdon County a better place for your family and your friends. In short, for all of us!

But there's so much more to do! **Your generous, tax-deductible donation will give our community and future generations room to play, forests to discover, working farms to support our local economy, and the best local food.** Every gift matters. You can use the envelope included in this newsletter, or visit www.hunterdonlandtrust.org to learn more about Planned Giving, our Monthly Giving Program and other ways to contribute.

Your contribution can build a conservation legacy to last for generations to come.



A Bountiful Spring Harvest at Our Farmers' Market

Visit the Hunterdon Land Trust Farmers' Market this spring and add a little color to your life!

Our market will be bursting with the first fresh, local greens of the season and overflowing with beautiful spring flowers.

You'll discover a wonderful assortment of local food, including organic spring produce, grass-fed meats, bread, honey, pies and cheese. Your desire to support your neighborhood farmers and love for delicious local food prompted us recently to expand our spring market schedule. **We're open from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on March 19, April 2 and 23, and May 7.**

On May 21, our regular weekly market season begins. We're open at the Dvoor Farm, 111 Mine St. in Raritan Township from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Sunday with about 20 vendors, live music, fun events and much more!

The Perfect Venue at Dvoor Farm

The Dvoor Farm wagon house is the perfect venue for your next meeting or event!

The building offers a large open space with a classic rustic charm on a property listed on the state and national historical registers. It features a lovely bucolic view of the fields and wetlands on the farm with the Walnut Brook meandering nearby. And there's plenty of parking for all your guests.

Our wagon house can seat 46 people comfortably, and is ideal for meetings, programs, talks and small private events. Please note the building has electricity, but no heat, so it's available during the warmer spring, summer and fall months. We have equipment available for your convenience including a projector screen, tables and chairs. A ramp is available to provide access to the building for all.

The Dvoor Farm is just minutes away from the shops and restaurants of downtown Flemington.

To learn more about renting the wagon house and to schedule an appointment to see it, contact Catherine Suttle, our director of cultural resources, at 908-237-4582 or catherine@hunterdonlandtrust.org. To download PDFs with more information and a copy of the rental agreement form, please visit our website at www.hunterdonlandtrust.org.

The building now known as the Dvoor Farm wagon house has an intriguing history. At one time, a section of the building was someone's home and the back portion — considered the oldest part of the facility dating back to the 1790s — served as an ice house. Ice was likely harvested from the Walnut Brook and either stored for use on the farm or supplied to Flemington residents.

We've also rented the wagon house to several organizations, who have raved about the building. Stop by and see for yourself why it's perfect for your next event!



The Dvoor Farm wagon house.