

# Open Space Chronicles

Newsletter of the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space

Spring 2017

## Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space assumes statewide leadership for land stewardship

**L**ocal residents know that FoHVOS is a leader in invasive species management and native plant restoration throughout Hopewell Valley. We are the first call that neighboring nonprofits and local municipalities make to consult on their invasive species management. Private landowners also rely on us to support their land stewardship efforts.

Less publicized locally is our statewide presence and reputation as experts in managing invasive species, restoring meadows and habitats, and establishing walkable forest trails. New Jersey Audubon Society, New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF) and the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife are among a small sampling of the statewide organizations with whom we currently partner.

Recently, another statewide organization sought to leverage our considerable expertise. The New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (NJSST) is a statewide cooperative effort to prevent the spread of emerging invasive species across the state of New Jersey. It partners with several hundred public and private organizations representing all levels of government from federal to municipal, nonprofit conservation groups and consulting foresters.

After working for six years as an independent nonprofit organization, the Strike Team has decided to join our FoHVOS family and we will assume the leadership for the organization. We look forward to building on all the great work that they have initiated.

The FoHVOS stewardship team was enthusiastically welcomed on April 5, as we joined 80 attendees at the 2017 New Jersey Invasive Species Conference at Duke Farms in Hillsborough, NJ.

For more information about the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team – FoHVOS project or to download our Smartphone App that tracks and submits invasive species data to our database, go to <http://www.njsst.org>



NJ Invasive Species  
**Strike Team**

a project of **FoHVOS**  
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE



*Michael Van Clef, Ph.D., FoHVOS Stewardship Director, presents at Strike Team Annual Conference*



*Beth Craighead, FoHVOS Land Steward, presents at Strike Team Annual Conference*



## Mark your Calendar!

**Mount Rose Grand Opening Day**  
Saturday – June 3rd

Plan to visit Hopewell Valley's newest preserve at Mount Rose featuring a 2.25-mile hiking trail!  
For more details, see Page 2!





## News and Events

# Come to the Mount Rose Grand Opening on National Trails Day!

Celebrate National Trails Day on June 3 by joining us at Mount Rose Preserve for the Grand Opening and experience one of the many inaugural hikes! FoHVOS staff, our partners, and volunteers have been hard at work creating a trail system for this expansive ecological landscape. (see MAKING TRAILS on page 5)

There will be a ribbon cutting, refreshments, plus hikes and activities for all ages and fitness levels, including the challenging and longest trail in the FoHVOS family of preserved land -- an amazing 2.25-mile long walkable trail!

The preserve is a mosaic of forest, shrubland, and meadow, and is home to many rare and threatened species. Habitat restoration has been a big part of the Preserve's stewardship plan. One important restoration project reintroduces a wide diversity of native woodland wildflowers, thanks to funding from a generous anonymous donor.

Overabundant deer have virtually stripped the forest floor of

native species, creating an "empty forest" containing only canopy trees. We are installing a 5-acre deer enclosure and over 2,000 native wildflowers, which will ultimately fill the entire area.

Ongoing efforts to reduce the deer population will allow restoration plantings to spread throughout the Preserve.

Mount Rose Preserve's entrance is located across the street from 350 Carter Road, Hopewell, NJ.

Mount Rose Preserve is a nearly 400-acre preserve owned and managed by New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, Hopewell Township, and Mercer County. This land was preserved by these partners along with Hopewell Valley Citizen's Group Inc., NJ Green Acres Program, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association, Hopewell Borough, Pennington Borough, Friends of Princeton Open Space, D&R Greenway Land Trust, Lawrence Township, and Princeton.



## Meet our new Executive Director – Lisa Wolff



Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space is pleased to introduce Lisa Wolff as our new executive director. Ms. Wolff is also the current President of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District Board of Education. A natural writer at heart, she has already started a blog,

<http://fohvoss.blogspot.com>, that highlights the impact of our work. An excerpt from her first post shares her motivation:

"My dream job is collaborating with a team that directly improves lives -- both locally and ultimately as part of our global community..."

I believe that much of what we call success is driven by personal connections. Education and environment are both areas that personally touch everyone and directly affect individual development and future success. Everybody has been to school. Everyone strolls our land, breaths our air, and drinks our water. A mere moment's reflection is all that's needed to remind us of their significance."

Speaking directly about FoHVOS she adds:

"We make a great impact with long-lasting effect. FoHVOS preserves and protects more Hopewell Valley land than any other nonprofit and every acre preserved is secured for future generations.

We focus on positive, nonpartisan outcomes. Since we all agree on the ultimate mission, we can minimize political controversy by focusing on common ground. Whether discussing education, farmland preservation, stewardship, or open space, we achieve the best outcomes when everyone has a seat at the table."

Lisa joins us after the recent retirement of Patricia Sziber. Pat was a founding FoHVOS organizer and trustee since its inception 30 years ago and later became Executive Director.

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary year of FoHVOS, we welcome Lisa Wolff as she helps usher us into a new era of preservation and stewardship in Hopewell Valley.





## President's Note

Celebrating the 30th year milestone of our organization is a great way to honor the legacy of Ted Stiles whose death 10 years ago led to the evolution of FoHVOS to a broader environmental emphasis. We are proud to have continued to champion the preservation of open space and wildlife as we approach our 4th decade. Recognizing the poignancy of the loss of Ted energizes us in our efforts to restore native habitat and maintain the rural character of the valley. On Arbor Day one of Ted's favorite trees, a white flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*),

was planted and a plaque mounted in his honor at Woolsey Park.

Looking forward, our new five year strategic plan continues to reflect the need to advocate for the environment and open space preservation. A larger commitment to invasive species control, reforestation campaigns, public access to preserves, and habitat restoration promise another 30 years of impact on the Valley.

Recently our staff and volunteers along with New Jersey Conservation

Foundation and Mercer County and Hopewell Township have been putting in overtime to get our newest preserve, Mount Rose, ready for the grand opening on June 3. We are excited about working with these partners toward fulfillment of the 10 year Mount Rose plan developed by our Stewardship Director Mike Van Clef. We hope to see you there at the June 3 event, so check out page 2 for more details.

Carol Kleis, President



## Celebrating the FoHVOS career of Pat Sziber

Pat Sziber recently retired as Executive Director of our organization. We want to express our profound appreciation for Pat's contributions and unwavering commitment to FoHVOS for 30 years. Her biography is practically synonymous with the history of Friends, from the formative early years when she was a founding member during the Curlis Lake Woods campaign, through the Ted Stiles prolific land acquisition years, to our current leading role in preservation across Hopewell Valley. She was a key motivator in the original grassroots effort to build support for preserving Baldpate, and she raised awareness of the need for understanding and responding to the big issues about habitat loss. Pat

helped define the mission of FoHVOS during a difficult period after the death of Ted Stiles, which led to her taking the Executive Director role temporarily, which expanded to 8 years. In this position Pat kept the organization running smoothly, represented us in dealings with the Township and County, and acted as spokesperson on many environmental advocacy issues across the region. A consummate wordsmith, Pat authored numerous articles in the newsletter and local newspapers and virtually all of the minutes of our board meetings through the decades. Her deep concern for wildlife and helping out wherever she could was the guiding principle of her life over the past 30 years.



# Partner Spotlight

## Clean Communities Day - Hopewell Township & FoHVOS - Partnering with everyone!

Each year FoHVOS and Hopewell Township partner and bring Clean Communities Day to Hopewell Valley. Clean Communities Day is an amazing opportunity to earn funds for your favorite 501(c) (3) nonprofit by cleaning up the community.

On Saturday April 22, 2017 about 150 people representing 20 groups came out to support Clean Communities Day. While we haven't received a final total yet, we know that last year we disbursed \$7,000 in donations to nonprofits.



Boy Scout Troop 71



Hopewell Valley Lacrosse Team



Brownie Troop 70380

# Volunteer Spotlight

## WithumSmith + Brown keep our preserves green!



Volunteers from WithumSmith + Brown helping with Restoration Project.

Last November, volunteers from the accounting firm WithumSmith + Brown came out to the Fiddler's Creek Preserve. They spent several hours braving the cold weather and wind in the forest to help restore the native plant population of the preserve.

Much of their time was spent cutting down invasive shrubs and small trees, like autumn olive and privet.

This very important work was designed to clear the invasives to prevent spreading into the forest restoration area that is beside it. We cleared out most of the invasives from inside the forest restoration to give the natives a better chance at survival but we need to be vigilant so the invasive plants from outside the fence cannot sneak back in.

Much of the work on Fiddler's Creek was underwritten by a grant that Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space received from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This ongoing restoration project has been conducted with Mercer County Parks with both groups receiving multiple grants, recruiting volunteers and providing expertise.





# On the Trail

## Earth Day Hike . . . at Baldpate Mountain

The Honey Hollow area of Baldpate Mountain was the location for this year's Earth Day hike. The hike, which started from the Pleasant Valley Road entrance to the Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate Mountain, featured views of old, hand constructed house foundations and stone walls which marked property lines and agricultural fields. Also viewed were spring wildflowers, examples of invasive species, and the impact of the proposed PennEast pipeline on Baldpate Mountain.



*Native Rue Anemone seen along the trail*

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space (FoHVOS) once again partnered with the Hopewell Valley Historical Society in hosting a guided hike to explore the Valley's natural landscape and its history. The Sourland Conservancy joined in the partnership this year since Baldpate Mountain is part of the Sourlands which span the northern border of Hopewell Valley.

Guiding the hike this year were Michael Van Clef, Ph.D, FoHVOS Stewardship Director, and David Blackwell, local historian with the Historical Society. Both Michael and David served as guides last year for the hike at Woolsey Park. Tom Ogren, Vice President of FoHVOS, gave a brief overview of the history of Baldpate Mt. and efforts to preserve the 129-acre Honey Hollow section of the mountain by Ted Stiles, the long time past president of FoHVOS.



*Historian David Blackwell shares insights with 24 Honey Hollow hikers.*

Due to the overwhelming interest in the Honey Hollow hike and the limited number of hikers who could be accommodated, FoHVOS plans to host a second hike of the area in the fall.



## Making Trails . . . at Mount Rose

Bristol-Myers Squibb has sent scores of volunteers to help us build trails at Mount Rose and has been a consistently excellent partner to FoHVOS and Mount Rose. Come out on June 3rd to see the beautiful trails they have helped make. See page 2 for Grand Opening details and check out these photos. Thanks BMS!



*Beth Craighead - FoHVOS Land Steward, Alan Wong - BMS, Kevin Terhorst - BMS, Lauren Griggs - BMS, Hima Kher - BMS, Chris Berry - FoHVOS Trustee*



*Shawn Silverstein clearing a tree for the trail.*



*BMS folks hard at work.*



## Stewardship Corner

### Is the PennEast pipeline a habitat threat?

The major component of the FoHVOS stewardship mission is protecting and restoring natural habitats. A quick review of our stewardship staff and volunteers' time indicate various types of activities that ultimately lead to protecting habitat. From invasive species management through forest and grassland restorations, our eye is always on stewarding an environment where flora and fauna will thrive.



Previously the NJDEP noted that PennEast's draft Environmental Impact Statement lacked information on the pipeline's impact on threatened and endangered flora and fauna and required that they conduct two years of wildlife surveys along portions of the proposed route. Unfortunately, these conditions were not included in their latest feedback to PennEast.

We are aware that many groups opposing the PennEast pipeline were encouraged when the Army Corps of Engineers and the NJDEP ruled that PennEast's application for its Clean Water Act permits were incomplete, missing significant required data. Additionally, NJDEP ruled that PennEast's application was made without having legal authority to enter all of the impacted properties along the proposed route since almost 70% of landowners in New Jersey have denied PennEast survey access. PennEast was given 30 days to remedy those application deficiencies.

We are less encouraged. The NJDEP delay does not mitigate our habitat concerns. Environmental impact should be considered before PennEast's applications are reviewed.

The Mercer County Parks Commission has partnered with FoHVOS for over 10 years to properly steward the Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate Mountain. Our champion, for whom the preserve was named, spent a decade protecting the mountain from improper development. Now, Baldpate



Mountain is under serious threat from the proposed pipeline, with PennEast proposing to expand the existing utility right-of-way by clear-cutting an additional 150+ feet of mature forest.

Baldpate Mountain is not only Mercer County's largest contiguous forest and wildlife habitat, but also has also been designated as an Audubon Important Bird Area and is an important migratory stop and breeding area for Neotropical birds, many of which are ranked by the American Bird Conservancy as birds of conservation concern. Hooded and Kentucky warblers are not found elsewhere in Hopewell - Baldpate harbors the only forest large enough for them. The potential damage to these breeding birds cannot be mitigated by PennEast.

In our developing Forest Stewardship Plan, we've found that nearly 1,000 species of plants and animals can be found at Baldpate. Of these species, there are over 30 rare species and another 75 species of high conservation value. Plant species include the beautiful wild comfrey and yellow giant hyssop. Rare long-eared owls have recently been discovered by Washington Crossing Audubon (see photo) and Hopewell Township just documented an American bald eagle directly on the pipeline's proposed path.

Baldpate Mountain was preserved with taxpayer monies to permanently protect its sensitive ecosystem and the rare species that depend upon it. In a mostly built out state, it's simply not possible to replace the preserved lands like Baldpate that PennEast is proposing to degrade or destroy.

We encourage the NJDEP to restore its previous protections and survey requirements for threatened and endangered flora and fauna, before it reviews PennEast's permit applications.



Long-eared owl at Baldpate Mountain - Photo by Sharyn Magee



# Successful Open House at Strawberry Hill Mansion

On March 29th, over 60 people came out to an open house for new Executive Director Lisa Wolff. She began a short address, sharing that FoHVOS is dedicated to preserving Hopewell Valley’s character through acquiring open space and natural resource protection.

“When you make a donation with FoHVOS, you can rest assured that your money will go directly toward land acquisition and stewardship,” Then, Lisa quipped, “because if you know me I’ll probably ask you to volunteer for something to keep our costs down.”

She then introduced several volunteers working the event including musician Craig Lieboff, guest bartender, Anne Nixon-Ellery and hosts Ruth Powell and Lola Crosby from Northfield Bank.

Lisa greeted many friends of open space from all over the Valley. She was delighted to spend time with many FoHVOS trustees. Also in attendance were elected officials from the NJ Assembly, Hopewell Township, Pennington Borough, Hopewell Valley Regional School District and Lawrence Township Public Schools. Our partners from the Mercer County Park Commission, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, and Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association also joined us. She was thrilled to connect with many of our strongest FoHVOS constituents as well as people new to our mission. What a great mix of supporters!

A special shout out must go to FoHVOS staff. Their work and can-do attitude made the event an overwhelming success. Thank you to everyone that took the time to come out on a busy mid week evening to welcome our new Executive Director.



*FoHVOS Staff (from left) Mike Van Clef, Beth Craighead, Lisa Wolff, Julia Snyder, Lisa Jordan*



*FoHVOS Trustee Chris Berry with Township Committee member Vanessa Sandom*



*Pennington Council member Beverly Mills, Dr. Rosetta Treece and Renata Barnes*



*Trustees: Ryan Kennedy, Dr. Dan Rubenstein, Dan Pace*



*Lisa Wolff and Beth Craighead with FoHVOS President Carol Kleis*



*Township Mayor Kevin Kuchinski with Paul Pogorzelski*



*Trustee Bruce Weise registers guests*



*Mark Bean with Trustee Ryan Kennedy*



*Volunteer Anne Nixon-Ellery serves wine*



PO Box 395  
Pennington, NJ 08534

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

*Like us on Facebook!*

*Follow us on Twitter!*



Printed on recycled paper.



*Friends of Hopewell Valley  
Open Space is a nonprofit  
land trust that is dedicated  
to preserving the Valley's  
character though open  
space and farmland  
preservation, and natural  
resource protection.*

## Board and Staff List

### Officers

President - Carol Kleis  
Vice President - Tom Ogren  
Vice President - Ryan Kennedy  
Treasurer - Paul Kuehnert  
Assistant Treasurer - Bruce Weise  
Secretary - Chris Berry

### Board of Trustees

David Glogoff	Judith Karp
Andrew Jackson	Liz McLaughlin
John Jackson	Frank Newport
Ruth Jourjine	Daniel Pace
Marjorie Kaplan	Dan Rubenstein

### Staff

Lisa Wolff - Executive Director  
Lisa Jordan - Development Director  
Michael Van Clef - Stewardship Director  
Beth Craighead - Land Steward  
Julia Snyder - Administrative Assistant

*For more information on how you can become involved, please contact us at*

***info@fohvos.org***