



Open Space Chronicles

Newsletter of the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space

Summer 2011

Guide Book Beckons You to Hopewell Valley Trails

"I love finding new trails to enjoy. Thank you, FoHVOS!" S.K., Hopewell

"Thank you for making this wonderful resource available!" J.M., Pennington

Discovering new places to explore can be a delightful pastime. Did you know that there are about 70 miles of walking trails scattered around the Hopewell Valley? There probably is one near you! Maybe you've seen a sign near the road but were hesitant to venture onto unfamiliar land. Now there is the Guide to Walking Trails in the Hopewell Valley—released by FoHVOS as our way of celebrating National Trails Day on June 4—that gives locations, maps, trail distances and descriptions, and GPS coordinates for 19 local trails. The beautifully illustrated guide is a convenient size (10 x 7 ½ inches) to keep in the car or with your hiking gear as a handy reference.

The idea for the guidebook came about in a conversation between FoHVOS President John Jackson and Pennington resident Jim Vinson last October. Jim pointed out that it was a shame that few people seemed to be aware of the amount of preserved land in the Hopewell Valley and, especially, the hiking opportunities. He and his wife, Rhonda, generously offered to fund a printed booklet to include not only trails on FoHVOS preserves but also those on land owned by our many preservation partners. The Vinson's offer inspired and energized volunteers and staff alike and, with FoHVOS Vice President Tom Ogren taking the lead on the project, we dove into the 6-months effort to assemble the maps, text, photographs and artwork. It was truly a labor of love.

The guide includes seven trails on preserves owned by FoHVOS, as well as those owned or managed by Mercer County, D&R Greenway Land Trust, Stony Brook-Millstone

Guide to **Walking Trails** in the Hopewell Valley

Explore Hopewell Valley's thousands of acres of preserved open space by taking a hike — short or long — on one of the valley's many walking trails.



Watershed Association, the State of New Jersey and Hopewell Borough.

Trails featured in the guide range from the gentle 1.1-mile Kate's Trail on Elm Ridge Road, to 13 miles of connecting trails over varied terrain at Washington Crossing State Park, to the steep ascent of the 1-mile Summit Trail at Baldpate Mountain. Many of the trails provide an easy 45-minute amble through woodland and meadow...very nice for a family stroll on a late afternoon. Except during the hunting season, all trails are open dawn to dusk seven days a week. Most trail descriptions include notes about the natural and/or cultural history of the preserves. Informational kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along the paths enhance the hiking experience.

The guide is similar to one published by the Lawrence Township Greenway and Open Space and Stewardship Advisory Committees in 2009. Mahlon Lovett, Director of Multimedia Design in Princeton University's Office of Communication, did the layout and graphic design and his wife, Heather Lovett, gave us beautiful drawings of birds and plants. Much of the text and maps were copied with permission from the NJ Trails Association website www.njtrails.org. Volunteers Chris Berry and Simcha Rudolph spent countless hours working on text and maps. We are grateful for technical assistance from the GIS Center and D&R Greenway Land Trust for cartography and map data. Staff and volunteers contributed the many photos that appear in the guide.

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Guide Book Beckons

Continued from page 1.

We are very grateful to Jim and Rhonda Vinson for underwriting this very worthy project. As stated in the booklet, the Hopewell Valley is defined by its natural beauty and scenic vistas. We hope that the Guide to Walking Trails in the Hopewell Valley will encourage you and your family to enjoy close-up what nature has to offer.



To order your own free copy of the Guide to Walking Trails in the Hopewell Valley, send an e-mail to trailguide@fohvos.org with "trail guide" in the subject line.



The Thompson Preserve trail meanders through a meadow filled with black-eyed Susan and wild bergamot.

Photo by Tom Ogren.

On the Trail

"I walked yesterday on the Jacob's Creek Trail. What a discovery for me! It's stunning. Leviathan trees and delicate wildflowers. Congratulations to FoHVOS."



The Thursday morning trail crew boring holes for a kiosk. Photo by Pat Sziber

Ruth Jourjine was one of the first hikers to walk the new mile-long Jacob's Creek Trail when she made these observations in early May. The trail ambles along a scenic stretch of the historic creek between Pennington-Titusville and Pennington-Harbourton Roads. Small parking areas at either end enhance access and a recently-installed kiosk will soon welcome visitors with trail details and other information.

This is just one of several trail projects that have kept FoHVOS staff and volunteers busy these past several months. Chris Berry, board member and the leader of the FoHVOS trail program, designed and built six kiosks and orchestrated their installation. Besides the one at the Jacobs Creek trail, kiosks can now be found at trailheads on our Nayfield, Skyview, Elks, Eames and Thompson preserves. Installation at our Heritage preserve is coming soon. The kiosks are set in concrete footings for stability and feature shingled roofs and polycarbonate covers to protect the displays. FoHVOS staff will soon have the display areas filled with useful information including maps of the trails. Parking was improved with a layer of crushed stone at all seven of the preserves with trails and printed guides have been placed in boxes at the beginning of each trail. All of these improvements were funded by the generous Recreational Trails Program grant that FoHVOS received in 2008.



State Street Global Advisors after a day of building the Jacobs Creek trail. Photo by Tom Ogren

The latest enhancement is the installation of 35 interpretive signs highlighting plants, animals and natural features found on the preserves—five along each of our seven trails. The durable fiberglass signs, designed by FoHVOS staff and manufactured by the Pannier Corporation, were partially funded by a grant from the Church & Dwight Employee Giving Fund.

We are grateful to our mostly-volunteer Thursday morning trail crew for their dedication to creating pleasant hiking opportunities. Many thanks to the 23 employee volunteers from State Street Global Advisors, an institutional asset management firm with offices in Princeton, who spent six hours on April 15 clearing weedy vegetation and creating a level walking path for the Jacobs Creek Trail.



President's Note

As I read through the articles in this issue of the Chronicles, one theme stands out in this time of soul searching about whether we as a nation are on the right path - a lot of people are at least doing the right things when it comes to open space.

We can start with long-time supporters Rhonda and Jim Vinson who sought us out with a proposal to fund the production of a trail guide which would get out the good news about just how much has been done to open up preserved land in the Hopewell Valley for hiking and passive recreation. The result is FoHVOS' beautiful and detailed 28-page booklet covering all of the 19 existing trails in the Hopewell Valley. The printing costs were substantial, but overall costs would have been much higher were it not for the dedicated volunteers who devoted hundreds of

hours putting together the maps, trail descriptions, and other information.

The article on the Jacobs Creek trail brings to mind the fact that this brand new trail would not have been possible were it not for easement donations by Martha and Joe Logan and Linda and Kurt Vollherbst. And the hard work of constructing the trail was again accomplished with a couple of hundred hours of volunteer effort by our regular Thursday morning trail group as well as 23 employee volunteers from State Street Global Advisors.

Finally, as we celebrate the 50 year anniversary of the NJ Green Acres program it is only right to acknowledge the vital role that you, our members, and indeed all of the residents of the state, have played in supporting all 13 of the open space bond referendums which

have made New Jersey a leader and an example to the rest of the nation in open space preservation. Locally, the Green Acres program has been absolutely essential to the success of FoHVOS in preserving or facilitating preservation of more than 4000 acres of open space in Hopewell Township.

So it's reassuring to see how many people in Hopewell Township and throughout the state are doing the right things to preserve our precious natural heritage. You are absolutely essential to what we do - we thank you for all the right choices you have made and we look forward to your support in the future.



John Jackson, President

Happy 50th Anniversary, Green Acres

New Jersey took its first step to becoming the national leader in land preservation and recreational development in June of 1961 when then-Governor Robert B. Meyner signed the first Green Acres bond act. Voters had approved our first open space bond referendum the previous November by a 3-2 margin, no doubt in reaction to concerns about the pace of development that was swallowing up farmland and forests in the prosperous post-WWII decades. This year we celebrate our state's 50th anniversary as one of the most successful land conservation efforts in the nation. Since the program was launched, the Green Acres program and its public and nonprofit partners, including Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, have protected 650,000 acres of open space throughout the state. New Jersey voters have resoundingly approved all 13 open space bond referendums put before them, authorizing \$3.1 billion in Green Acres funding.

Voters approved the most recent round of Green Acres funding in 2009. Of the \$57 million approved for projects in the 2011 funding round, \$10.2 million in matching grants will go to 33 nonprofits around the state. FoHVOS will receive \$275,000, the maximum granted to local nonprofits such as ours. Just as we have in the past, we will stretch these preservation dollars by joining with our county, municipal and nonprofit preservation partners in securing transactions that satisfy both buyers and sellers alike and help to meet our preservation goals.

The 50th celebration officially began on June 3, the anniversary of Governor Meyner's signing of the bond act and DEP rolled out the slogan, "Green Acres: It's All Yours." Events will be held throughout the year at dozens of properties acquired or developed for recreation with Green Acres funds. In addition, a photo contest is open for the public to submit pictures taken at Green Acres properties. Check for events and contest information at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/ga50/>



Green Acres funding has protected thousands of acres in the Hopewell Valley, including the thirty preserves owned wholly or in part by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space.
Photo by Rachel Mackow





News & Events

Dr. Henry Horn is 2011 Gleeson Award Recipient

President John Jackson presented the 2011 Jack Gleeson Environmental Award to Henry S. Horn, Ph.D. at the FoHVOS annual meeting held at the Baldpate Mountain Visitor Center on April 17. Dr. Horn became Professor Emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology in June, capping off a 45-year teaching and research career at Princeton University.

Dr. Horn's interest in forest structure and its relationship to foraging behavior and microhabitat choice of birds goes right to the heart of FoHVOS' conservation work. His passion, curiosity and powers of analysis inform our efforts to protect our open spaces. More than 20 years ago, he added some forest analysis to the body of data that helped to preserve Baldpate Mountain. He also advised and mentored young ornithologists and other students whose data became part of the natural resources inventory that got conservationists throughout the state behind our efforts to preserve what is now the Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate Mountain. We congratulate Dr. Horn, not only upon receipt of the award, but also on his brilliant Princeton career and wish him well as he sets about adding to his very long bibliography of publications that have added to the breadth and depth of our understanding of forest dynamics.



FoHVOS President John Jackson (left) and Dr. Daniel Rubenstein (right), FoHVOS trustee and Chair of Princeton's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, congratulate Dr. Henry Horn (center) on receipt of the 2011 Jack Gleeson Environmental Award. Photo by Pat Sziber

Cleanup Day – It's Not Just About Roads

Over 100 volunteers came out for Clean Communities Cleanup Day on April 9. The Bellscheidt family, working on behalf of the Timberlane Middle School German Club, removed a huge amount of trash from our Eames Nature Preserve on Harbourton-Woodsville Road. Included in the haul were 6 tires, steel car parts, a battery, plastic items and many very heavy bags of glass from an old farm dump—two pickup truck loads in all. It is not uncommon to find dumps on former farms, but we like our preserves to provide a pristine natural experience for those who visit them. Many thanks to the Bellscheidts for their hard work, which they performed with great zeal and enthusiasm.

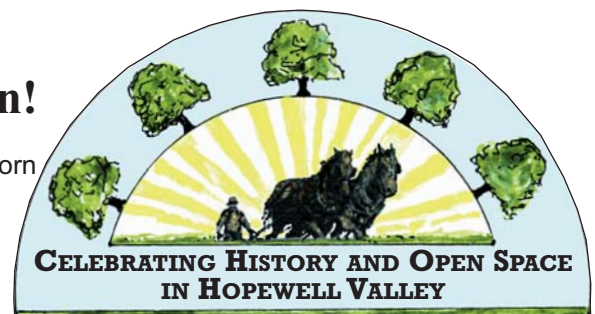


Paul, Carrie and Kris Bellscheidt, left to right, smile after completing their cleanup of the Eames Preserve. Photo by Pat Sziber

Save the Date

Mountain and Valley Fest is coming again!

Guided hikes and mountain bike tour. Horse-drawn wagon rides and corn maze. Outdoor sketching. Ice cream and fun stuff for kids. Cooking and wool spinning demonstrations. History lecture. Celebration at Strawberry Hill mansion atop Baldpate Mountain. FoHVOS and the Friends of Howell Living History Farm have the weekend of **September 16 – 18** packed with activities and invite you to revel in the beauty and bounty of this wonderful place we call home. Watch our website www.fohvos.org for details; better yet, send your e-mail address to execdir@fohvos.org to be included in our Constant Contact updates.





News & Events

Save the Date

Annual Ted Stiles Memorial Hike - Saturday, October 22

Join us for a hike to the summit of Baldpate Mountain when the trees are in their autumn glory. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the parking lot on Fiddler's Creek Road, about a quarter mile east of Route 29 in Titusville a short distance from the gated driveway. Bring drinking water, snack or even a picnic lunch to enjoy while taking in view of the Delaware River. Dogs are welcome but must be on leash.



Stewardship Corner

Stewardship Staff Doing and Planning to Do More!

The goal of land stewardship is the mitigation of human impacts on natural systems. Towards that goal, the FoHVOS staff has been able to accomplish a great deal over the last several years since beginning our stewardship program. Highlights include initiating a Deer Management Program on our preserves, co-creating the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team to stem the spread of new invasive species and significantly contributing to the Hopewell Valley Deer Management Task Force to effect landscape-scale deer herd reduction to reduce negative impacts to human health, economy and ecology.

While being proud of these accomplishments, we know that so much more should and can be done to reduce human impacts on natural lands throughout the Hopewell Valley. As always, human and capital resources are limiting and we have very few 'bullets' to undo past and continuing harm to our flora and fauna.

Q: How will we most effectively use our 'bullets'?

A: By planning carefully!

In 2011, FoHVOS will complete the "Hopewell Valley Community Stewardship Plan". The plan will include careful cataloging of conservation values (including rare and common plants and animals and their habitats), an assessment of their current condition and threats, and strategies to improve their health. This work will include multiple analyses using computer-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) along with field surveys. Examples of GIS work include analysis of land cover types and patterns, land ownership and soils. Field surveys will include mapping of invasive species distributions on our preserves and review of our forest health monitoring data. We have also received a \$15,000 grant to contract a forester who will map the composition and health of forests stands.



FoHVOS Land Steward Rachel Mackow is mapping the distribution of invasive species as a basis for formulating effective and efficient stewardship strategies.

Photo by Pat Sziber

Using all of this information, effective and efficient strategies will be developed to maximize our stewardship resources – both as a single organization and through existing and future partnerships with multiple public and private landowners throughout the Hopewell Valley. The completed plan will provide detailed stewardship prescriptions to guide efforts on our preserves. Annual work plans/schedules will be developed to predetermine required FoHVOS staff and volunteers efforts along with estimated material costs. We will also create pre-prepared cost estimates for desired restoration efforts that can be plugged into future grant proposals.

However, we realize that efforts solely located on our preserves would not be enough to effectively assure the health of our natural heritage across the 40,000-acre Hopewell Valley. Our vision is to complement and supplement our partners' existing stewardship efforts and recruit additional public & private organizations and private individuals toward a common goal of improving ecological health. For example, our plan will identify areas of highest ecological value where multi-partner grant proposals could be applied to restorations. The plan will also develop the concept of a "Private Lands Stewardship Program" to provide stewardship advice and link private landowners with grants specifically designed for private lands.

The idea of performing stewardship to improve ecological health can be more than daunting with so many severe threats and so little resources – but a concrete and realistic plan will assure that we choose our battles wisely.





Stewardship Corner

Invasive Species Strike Team Goes Statewide

The Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is now the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (NJISST). While CJISST was a joint project of FoHVOS and the Upper Raritan Watershed Association, NJISST is an independent nonprofit organization. Melissa Almendinger, formerly the Invasive Species Coordinator for CJISST, is now the NJISST Executive Director and Mike Van Clef, FoHVOS Stewardship Director, is consulting Science Director. FoHVOS is designated as the Central Regional hub of the new organization, with our Land Stewards Rachel Mackow and Beth Craighead serving as Regional Coordinators. North and South regions with their own hubs will also be established. This is a big step for both the Strike Team and FoHVOS and we are well on our way to making it a success. Grant funding has supported two interns who have been working throughout the Central region, including right here in the Hopewell Valley.



Mike Bellaus of Hopewell Township and AeLin Compton of Highland Park spent the summer as NJISST's first interns. Photo by Pat Sziber

Ford Ranger Is Newest Member of Stewardship Team

Stewardship Director Mike Van Clef and Land Steward Beth Craighead proudly show off FoHVOS' 2005 Ford Ranger pickup truck, purchased in April to haul tools and equipment for trail work and other stewardship projects. The 4WD vehicle is proving to be a valuable member of our Stewardship Team!



Photo by Pat Sziber

Site Stewards Outing

FoHVOS' volunteer Site Stewards were treated to a get-together on May 7 starting with a nature walk led by Stewardship Director Mike Van Clef at the Heritage Preserve. The Stewards then regrouped at the home of Stewardship Committee Chairman Chris Berry and Simcha Rudolph for a barbecue where they enjoyed good food, good conversation and good company. In the photo, Mike explains an ecological detail to, left to right, Site Stewards Chuck Hansen, Jim Golis, Sherry Campbell, Jim Gambino, Pat Witkowski, Sally Gullette, Greg Imbroglia, Peter McGrath and Kathy Fortenbaugh. Stewards Wendy Morelock, Ed Basford and Pete Ongaro were unable to attend.



Photo by Chris Berry

Volunteer Spotlight

In the Spotlight: Jim Golis

by Chris Berry, Stewardship Chair

Who is a regular trail volunteer, a Site Steward keeping an eye on two preserves, a mover of rocks and, when the snow is deep, a builder of homes for our feathered friends? It can only be Jim Golis. Jim is a resident of New Road who has been volunteering for Friends of Hopewell valley Open Space for over two years. We often see him on Thursdays with the trail crew and, although he is an official Site Steward at FoHVOS' Nayfield Preserve on Lamberville-Hopewell Road, he also walks the Eames Preserve almost daily. Nayfield has many wet spots, so Jim has moved countless flat rocks to serve as stepping stones.



Tree swallows lined their nest with pigeon feathers in a bluebird house at Nayfield Preserve. Photo by Pat Sziber

One of Jim's recent winter projects was to build birdhouses for FoHVOS preserves. The 6 bluebird and 6 flicker houses are beautifully built and finished. Three of each type were placed in appropriate spots at Nayfield early this spring. The others were strategically placed at Heritage Preserve. As of May, all of the houses had occupants.

We are grateful to have such a dedicated volunteer as Jim Golis and are very pleased to put him in the Volunteer Spotlight.



Jim Golis, our featured volunteer, with one of 12 birdhouses he built for FoHVOS preserves. Photo by Pat Sziber

Reap the rewards of being a FoHVOS volunteer: find an outlet for your hidden talents, make new friends, stand back and admire the results of a job well-done. Sign up at www.fohvos.org or phone 609-730-1560. Help is especially needed for our Tuesday and Thursday morning work days, but weekend work can also be arranged. Event volunteers are also needed.



Yes, I want to preserve open space throughout the Valley!

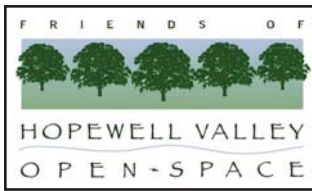
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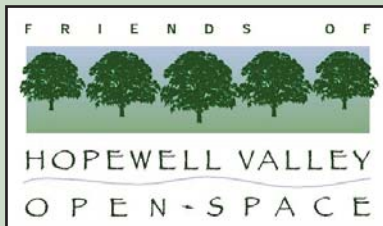
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Printed on recycled paper.



The purpose of the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space is to promote conservation in the Hopewell Valley region through open space preservation, wise stewardship, education and outreach.

Board and Staff List

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Beth Craighead – Land Steward

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

info@fohvos.org