

Open Space Chronicles

Spring 2023

HOPEWELL BOROUGH: Small but Mighty

With its total area under a square mile and population under 2,000 people, Hopewell Boro is the tiniest municipality in both Hopewell Valley and Mercer County and is smaller than 90% of municipalities in NJ. Yet, don't let its size fool you.

With dedicated local leaders and productive partnerships, Hopewell Boro has delivered the conservation impact of a giant.

While FoHVOS is well known for its preservation work at Baldpate Mountain in Titusville, or Curlis Lake Woods in Pennington, a lesser-known fact is the role we played in the preservation of Hopewell Borough Park. **John Jackson**, former FoHVOS President, 2022 Jack Gleeson Award winner and the longest serving FoHVOS Board Trustee shared:

“One of our very earliest actions was to partner with the citizens’ group that was working to acquire the Ruhland tract, part of which now comprises Hopewell Boro Park. Our former president Ted Stiles worked tirelessly with the group and FOHVOS provided funds from its Green Acres grants that made the acquisition possible.”

From that seed, the quality of life in Hopewell Borough has benefitted from conservation and recreation initiatives by groups such as Moms Clubs, Sourland Conservancy, Boy and Girl Scouts, Mercer County Park Commission, Hopewell Elementary, and even the municipality itself.

FoHVOS removed tremendous numbers of invasive species through out the park, which made room for others to improve the landscape. Significant projects have included a playground, bandstand, foraging forest, wildlife and forest restorations, hiking connector trails and ongoing land stewardship.

Every year on the first Saturday of May, Borough Council hosts a tree planting and park clean up. Council President **Sky Morehouse** donates trees and plants and brings a backhoe to Hopewell Borough Park so groups can help with planting. The increase in participation at this annual event demonstrates positive community engagement.

Through partnering with the municipality, local businesses, and non-profits, FoHVOS maximized the impact of our mission work and helped Hopewell Borough provide additional services and benefits for its residents and the earth.

Ryan Kennedy, FoHVOS Vice President, has been on our Board since 2014. As a Borough Council member and YMCA President, Ryan offers FoHVOS exceptional insights into the needs of the greater Boro community, and its young children, respectively. Our community youth focus is also on display at Hopewell Elementary School ever-expanding outdoor learning and mindfulness areas championed by FoHVOS Board Trustee and Hopewell's STEM

Coordinator **Helen Corveleyn**. She plays an integral role in the school's indoor and outdoor gardens and Helen project managed FoHVOS-sponsored outdoor learning areas.

FoHVOS began sponsoring outdoor learning areas at every HVRSD school prior to COVID-19, and their availability has been credited with helping the district to safely open schools sooner than neighboring districts during the pandemic.

In addition to supporting important facilities work, Helen inspires young people to engage in

Continued on page 3

NEWS INSIDE

- **Mighty Hopewell Borough**
- **Clean Communities Finale**
- **Executive Director Update**
- **Strike Team Professionals**
- **OEA Growth & Expansion**
- **Thank you Donors!**



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 15, 2023 FoHVOS Final



In This Issue

The Mighty Hopewell Boro cover shares FoHVOS long-standing relations that help keep Hopewell Borough green. Momentum built from our earliest days of funding *Hopewell Boro Park*, to our current trail extensions, advocacy, and outdoor learning and mindfulness areas. The secret to our success has always been our partnerships with the public, businesses, nonprofits, and strong Board members from **Ted Stiles** and **John Jackson** (still serving!) in the early days to **Ryan Kennedy**, **Samara McAuliffe**, and **Helen Corveleyn** and so many more today.

FoHVOS collaboration with government bodies makes all the difference in our ability to *preserve, protect* and *inspire*. FoHVOS facilitated valley-wide clean up days for over 30 years. As the *Clean Communities* program transitions to Hopewell Township, we take special pride in our original role of designing a program that donated more than \$100,000 to local charities, school clubs and nonprofits, enlisted thousands of volunteers, and removed more than 25 tons of trash from Valley neighborhoods!

A common thread in these achievements is vigorous support and connection to people of all ages. From senior citizens enjoying our parks and supporting our trails, to the school groups using our learning areas and supporting our clean up days, all contribute to a greener, healthier earth with an eye toward future conservation.

While public volunteers ensure future demand for a healthy climate, career professionals engaging in advocacy and research ensure that we employ the most productive techniques in land stewardship. On Page 4, see how FoHVOS Stewardship Director **Dr. Michael Van Clef** facilitates professional development for the continuing education of top conservation experts in New Jersey.

Continue to Page 5 to learn how additional advisors and partners in academia, business, nonprofits, and government are collaborating to achieve *Nature For All!*

Finally, on almost every page, you'll see lists of supporters -- people like **YOU!** Words are not enough to express our gratitude and appreciation for your work with us toward our common goal of a cleaner, greener tomorrow. 🌳

Clean Communities Scrapbook

Thursday, April 18, 1991

Hopewell Valley News



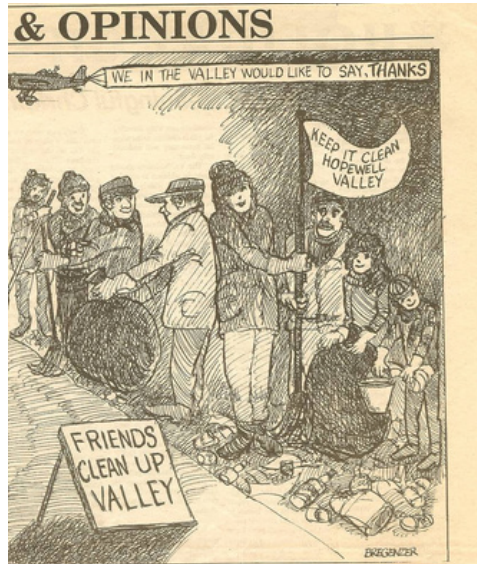
Dave Gentilin, Hopewell Township Public Works driver, and Ted Stiles of Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space begin to load the trash collected April 13.

Hopewell Valley News - April 1991



Pat Sziber, FoHVOS Board Member and Clean-Up Day volunteer, shows off one of the day's most unusual finds, a feather-trimmed lamp shade.

Open Space Chronicles - 2005



Pennington Post - November 1992

MIGHTY HOPEWELL BORO

Continued from Page 1

conservation advocacy. Last month, her students mulched the FoHVOS sponsored infinity garden at HES; this month her Girl Scouts participated in FoHVOS Clean Communities; and she regularly leads groups to engage in partnered conservation work at neighboring Borough Park.

While Borough Park and Hopewell Elementary provide outdoor opportunities within the Borough, open space and trail connections to surrounding Township properties seamlessly extend the bucolic nature and feel of the area.

The new Hopewell Sourland Trail, co-owned and managed by FoHVOS and D&R Greenway, begins at Highland Cemetery and extends to Featherbed Lane. It offers wide views of Hopewell Valley, parallels a small Bedens Brook tributary with pleasing waterfalls, skirting sheep meadow and farm fields, and winds through a peaceful spruce forest. Boro officials encourage visitors to park at the Hopewell Train station when accessing the trail.

Kennedy has shared that talks are underway with FoHVOS, D&R Greenway, Lawrence Hopewell Trail, and government agencies to build additional trail spurs to connect Hopewell Borough with St. Michael's Preserve, the LHT, and Mount Rose Preserve. Those extensions will improve outdoor accessibility for Boro residents and provide a healthy alternative for visitors to enjoy.

Wildlife protection is also an important component of conservation. Hopewell Borough Council Member David Mackie and his wife Mary Rabbitt began sponsoring a new program known as FoHVOS Reptile Rescue to address declining turtle populations due to automobile collisions. The program, which partners with state and county agencies, as well as private residents, volunteers, business owners and nonprofits, began with volunteer monitoring and a research study that determined the most hazardous road for turtles. This month Reptile Rescue signs were installed to warn drivers of frequently used turtle crossings. With its unfortunately descriptive name, Crusher Road near Hopewell Borough was found to have a high turtle mortality rate and was prioritized.

"FoHVOS has done so much for Hopewell Boro and I am grateful for the role I can play to help it and its partners make positive changes for our Boro community and environment," said Kennedy. "The insight I've gained working to implement the FoHVOS mission to preserve, protect, and inspire, seems to naturally inform so much of the community work for our land, our community's health, and our legislative advocacy."

Already leaders in conservation, both Hopewell Borough and FoHVOS have also extended their efforts to advocacy. For example, FoHVOS was the first nonprofit to support a plastic bag ban in Hopewell Boro

Hopewell Elementary Infinity Garden



FoHVOS Board Trustee & Hopewell Elementary STEM Coordinator Helen Corveleyn, FoHVOS Vice President & Hopewell Boro Councilman Ryan Kennedy, and FoHVOS Executive Director Lisa Wolff work at FoHVOS sponsored outdoor learning area at Hopewell Elementary.

Once its momentum grew, both the school district and the Watershed Institute played key roles in raising awareness for the ban, which took effect prior to the statewide plastic bag legislation.

Since the Boro viewed education as integral to the initiative's success, Kennedy wrote a "small business transition plan" with input from Boro businesses and non-government organizations before approving a date for the ban to take effect.

Partnering with the FoHVOS fiscally sponsored Outdoor Equity Alliance, Hopewell Borough and its leaders participated in the OEA's Juneteenth activities. Ryan Kennedy supported the Juneteenth Freedom Ride by chairing the break area at Hopewell Elementary School for the 50-mile bike ride. FoHVOS's newest Board Trustee Samara McAuliffe, also a Hopewell Borough Council member, staffed a booth at the Outdoor Equity Alliance's Juneteenth Black Farmers Market.

Looking to Hopewell as a model, there is reason for optimism that New Jersey towns are prepared to take positive climate action. The Borough Council strives to establish town policies that prioritize the earth. The secret to their success is leveraging relationships both within and outside of town borders, especially with environmental organizations like FoHVOS. Hopewell Borough continues to exert an outsized impact as it faces the environmental challenges of the future. 🌳

Strike Team Professional Conference

Professionals learn latest conservation practices in time for 2023 season!

FoHVOS Strike Team Annual Conference returned to April at Duke Farms Coach Barn amidst sold out attendance.

Conservation professionals throughout the state came to learn and earn Continuing Education Units from nationally recognized environmental experts. Topics included the latest industry trends and innovative practices in forestry, wildlife, and invasive species management. 🌳



Senator Bob Smith, Chair of State Environmental and Energy Committee, addresses FoHVOS Invasive Species Strike Team Conference attendees.



Conservation Advocacy Progress

New Jersey has a strong chance to catch up with our neighboring states in regulating the sale of invasive species – NJ is currently one of very few states nationally without regulations.

Senators Bob Smith and Linda Greenstein, are sponsoring Senate Bill No. 2186 that calls for the regulation of nearly 30 invasive plants. To evaluate the full suite of invasive species, the bill would establish the NJ Invasive Species Council consisting of conservation groups, nursery industry professionals, and academia to advise the Departments of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

In fall 2022, a subgroup of Senator Smith's Forest Task Force, including Mike Van Clef, worked closely with members of the nursery trade to craft amendments to strengthen S2186. They also provided testimony to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee chaired by Sen. Smith.

We hope a final bill passes by the end of June. 🌳



DR MIKE VAN CLEF
CONFERENCE HOST



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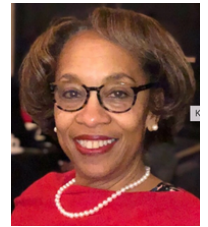
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		Charles Martin	Princeton Hydro	Christy Zolty

OUTDOOR EQUITY ALLIANCE EXPANDS

Welcome New Advisors & Board Members

The Outdoor Equity Alliance, a fiscally sponsored project of FoHVOS, began in 2019 as a coalition of organizations working with a common objective of “Nature For All.”

On January 31, 2023, Outdoor Equity Alliance held its first annual meeting, added three Board Members, and initiated our highly anticipated Advisory Committee. We welcome **Karen Andrade-Mims**, Executive Director of *The Father Center*, **Julio Enrique Badel**, Director of Education & Community Engagement at *Grounds For Sculpture*, and **Andre Thomas**, Senior Training Manager at *Isles, Inc.*, to the OEA Board! 🌳



Karen Andrade-Mims



Julio Enrique Badel



Andre Thomas

Outdoor Equity Alliance Advisory Committee Members

Dr. Joy Barnes-Johnson Princeton High School	JoAnn Groeger Lawrence and Mercer SBA	Tomia MacQueen Wildflower Farm	Jamie Kyte Sapoch PACF Bunbury Fund
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Mark Gallagher Princeton Hydro	Ryan Kennedy Hopewell Boro and Stevens & Lee	Verlina Reynolds-Jackson Legislative District 15	Jay Watson NJ Conservation Foundation



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			Amie Rukenstein	

Thank You

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space welcomes members and gratefully acknowledges donors who made contributions between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022. With your support, we continue to preserve land, protect natural resources, and inspire the next generation of conservationists.
(Thanks to Steadfast Supporters: * 10+ years and ^ 5+ years)

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Leslie Kuchinski
OEA Program Director
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Website Manager
Lauren Matthews
Office Admin Intern
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Mike Van Clef
Senior Land Steward
Beth Craighead
Land Stewards
Catherine Atwood
Dana Christensen
Tyler Christensen
Strike Team
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