



## Winter 2022 Newsletter

### DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Wow, what a year it has been at the White House Farm Foundation! With the addition of two new staff members, we have been able to accomplish so much more - from higher standards of trail maintenance at Leopold's Preserve, to an expanded offering of educational events, to a full-fledged volunteer program. Check out our stats on this page.

But none of this would be possible without you – our supporters and volunteers. You are the ones who attend our events, spread the word, and volunteer your time. And speaking of volunteers, be sure to read about Mike Dow on our Volunteer Highlight page. He has committed over 120 hours of his time to help improve Leopold's Preserve!

Will you help us increase these numbers in 2023? We would love for you to join us at any of our educational hikes or lectures, help out during a volunteer event, or report your bird sightings on eBird. Keep an eye on [our calendar](#) for all of our upcoming events. And during this holiday season, don't forget that winter is a beautiful time to visit Leopold's!

Laura Hassell, WHFF Executive Director



Staff members Nick, Marie, and Laura (L-R) pose with the new Leopold's Preserve entrance sign.

### WHITE HOUSE FARM FIELD TRIP

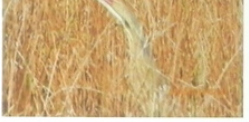
We were honored to host the Sheridan School for a field trip this fall! Students got to explore our riparian buffer area and learned about the operations of the adjacent White House Natives (WHN) nursery. School groups of all ages are always welcome at the Farm in Luray and at Leopold's Preserve in Haymarket! [Contact us](#) to plan a field trip or group visit.



Sheridan students learn about nursery operations from WHN manager Eric Sours.

### 2022 BY THE NUMBERS

- 36 Educational Programs
- 418 Program Participants
- 34 Volunteer Opportunities
- 85 Volunteers
- 550 Volunteer Hours
- 4 School Field Trips
- 164 Bird Species Observed
- 1,623 Stems of Invasive Multiflora Rose Removed
- Over 10,000 Visits to Leopold's Preserve!



Guest speaker Dave Larsen points out details of the American Bittern during his presentation.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT LEOPOLD'S

## Updates from the Preserve

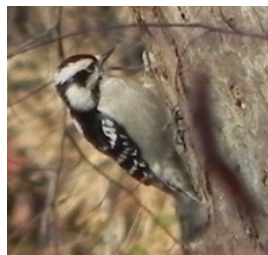
### Winter Lecture Series

We're excited to have begun a new series of indoor educational programs this month! Our first-ever Winter Lecture Series features a host of expert speakers who will discuss the flora, fauna, and ecosystems that make up Leopold's Preserve and the surrounding areas. Last week, we hosted Dave Larsen, a local birder, who taught us all about birds at the Preserve. We're offering programs from now through March on the first Wednesday of each month. Can you join us for the next one on January 4th? [Register here!](#)

### Invasive Plant Management

Have you noticed a suspicious lack of underbrush this season? With the support of a grant from the USDA, we've been moving forward with a large-scale invasive plant management plan, including forestry mulching.

The area where we are completing this work has experienced many disturbances due to farming and development, making it the perfect place for invasive plants to flourish. While these spots can look very green, they are actually overrun with invasive plants - which do not provide the same benefits to our ecosystems as native plants. Clearing out these badly invaded areas is the first step in our plan to help native species thrive. To learn more about forest management, [check out this article](#).



### Birding Checklist

We were lucky to cross paths with graphic designer Danta Reilly on the trails this fall - she generously volunteered to design a birding checklist for Leopold's Preserve! We encourage you to [download the checklist](#) from our website and print a copy to use next time you're out at the Preserve.

### PLEIN ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP

We were thrilled to award the Plein Environmental Scholarship to two excellent students earlier this year. Now, we're looking ahead to next year! This scholarship is designed for current high school seniors planning to attend Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), or current NVCC students planning to pursue a degree in an environment-related field. In total, awardees can receive up to \$15,000 to support two years of study at NVCC followed by two years at a Virginia public university. Applications for the 2023-2024 school year will open in January. Keep an eye on [our website](#) or social media pages for updates!

# VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: MIKE DOW

## Most Hours Volunteered in 2022

In March, we launched a new volunteer program at Leopold's Preserve, the Friday Conservation Corps. Of the three participants who attended that very first volunteer day, one was Mike Dow. Since then, he has volunteered more than 120 hours with us! He often comes in multiple times per week to help out - we are so lucky to have his consistent support. He has worked with Park Manager Nick on a variety of projects including trail maintenance, invasive species removal, repairing boardwalks, cleaning up abandoned dump sites, and even offering his kayaks to help remove trash from hard-to-reach spots.



Mike uses his kayak to reach floating trash at our annual Pond Cleanup.

Besides his hard work on the projects themselves, Mike has fostered a sense of community among volunteers at the Preserve. "He's not shy about asking folks where they're from and what they do", Park Manager Nick explains. Mike's easy going nature helps new volunteers feel comfortable, and his conversations add color to repetitive maintenance tasks.

Ever humble, Mike is quick to acknowledge the work of every volunteer to improve the Preserve. "It's nice to be part of a dedicated team," he says. "[We have] a shared purpose in advancing conservation and making Leopold's a great place to visit." You can join Mike and the whole team of Preserve volunteers for workdays every Friday morning at 8:30 - we welcome everyone, whether you can volunteer for just an hour, or if you'd like to come back every week like Mike. Register at [leopoldspreserve.com/calendar](http://leopoldspreserve.com/calendar).



Mike stands near a pile of newly cleared invasive plants after a workday this summer.

## JOIN US: UPCOMING EVENTS

### Winter Lecture Series

Every 1st Wednesday, 10 AM - 11 AM  
Villages of Piedmont Clubhouse

Indoor educational programs led by guest speakers who discuss flora, fauna, and ecosystems at Leopold's Preserve. Next lecture: Jan. 4.

### Hike With a Naturalist

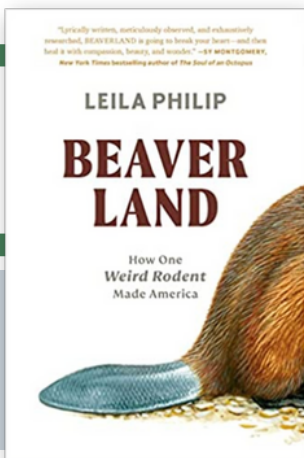
Every 2nd Wednesday, 10 AM - 12 PM  
Leopold's Preserve

Led by our partners at the Bull Run Mountains Conservancy (BRMC), these guided hikes are offered year-round. Next hike: January 11.

### Geology Hike

Saturday, January 21, 10 AM - 12 PM  
Leopold's Preserve

Join Michael of the BRMC to explore and discuss the geology of the Triassic basin. Winter is the best time to see our rock formations unobstructed!



Beaverland: How One Weird Rodent Made America, by Leila Philip  
This charming narrative outlines how beavers have shaped the history, culture, and environment of North America. Philip presents research and anecdotes that emphasize the importance of beavers in our landscapes.

## What We've Been Reading

   
@WHFarmFoundation  
[www.whfarmfoundation.org](http://www.whfarmfoundation.org)

   
@LeopoldsPreserve  
[www.leopoldspreserve.com](http://www.leopoldspreserve.com)

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