

WHITE HOUSE FARM FOUNDATION

1917 Kauffmans Mill Rd.

Luray, VA 22835

www.whfarmfoundation.org

Summary Report 2016

Mission Statement: To enrich individuals with knowledge of and involvement with our natural ecological systems, sustainable agriculture, holistic community planning, and respect for local history and culture.



Summary: We had another great year at the White House Farm Foundation, hosting both adult and youth classes at the farm, providing a meeting space for partner groups and organizations and using the farm for research and education. This report includes photographs of some of our partners and visitors.

In 2016, the White House Farm Foundation took over management of Leopold's Preserve, the 380 acre nature preserve in Haymarket, VA. We continue to meet the goals of our mission as envisioned by owner Scott C. Plein and strive to educate others on the importance of conservation, good land use and ways to increase biodiversity.

We maintained our website and Facebook pages over the last year so please check these out for more info.

We look forward to working with everyone in 2017.

Scott C. Plein, President

Chris Anderson, Executive Director

2016

Luray-Page Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours

With great pleasure, we partnered with Amy and Tommy Chan with [Bijou's Sweet Treats, LLC](#) to co-host the [Luray-Page Chamber of Commerce's](#) monthly networking even 'Business After Hours'. We partnered with other wedding and event professionals including Jennifer Perrot with [Flourish Root](#), who designs beautiful fresh flower bouquets, Anita Riggleman with [Valley Heirlooms](#), a business renting antique furniture and decorations for unique outdoor weddings and events and [Ashley and Ashley photography](#) who took lovely photos of the event.





Page County High School students visit the White House and EMJ Farms





Partnering with the Shenandoah Valley Soil and Water Conservation District, the White House Farm hosted a class from Page County High School who learned about macroinvertebrates in Big Run and in the Shenandoah River. Blake Rogers and Megan Croushorn taught the class and explained the importance of protecting and improving water quality for our benefit as well as the macroinvertebrates who live in the water.

RIPARIAN BUFFER



We continue research in the 52 acre riparian buffer which farm owner Scott C. Plein has returned to native warm season grasses and wildflowers in order to improve water quality in the South Fork of the Shenandoah River and to provide habitat for native insects, birds and mammals.

As the plant biodiversity increases, so does the type and numbers of insects which, in turn, supports an increase in bird numbers and diversity.

Volunteers Enhance the River Trail with Native Plants



Members of the Oakbrook Church Stewards of Creation installed native wildflowers and shrubs along the river trail. We are very grateful to the [Pure Water Forum](#) for supporting this project.



River Trail



South Fork of the Shenandoah River



Students of Dr. Dan Downey's environmental class at James Madison University visited the farm to learn about the watershed, history of the farm and activities of the Foundation



We worked with a James Madison University (JMU) student who researched soil in the Shenandoah Valley, comparing the structure to soils in Costa Rica.

Left: Students gather soil to test.

Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute



We were glad to host a meeting organized by the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) of landowners and farmers interested in the benefits of native warm season grasses for forage and the value they provide for soil stabilization (with roots up to eight feet deep). Keeping soil in place by decreasing erosion helps improve water quality.

The White House Farm has served as one of the survey locations for the SCBI [Virginia Working Landscapes](#) project for several years; this project promotes the conservation of native biodiversity and sustainable land use through research, education and community development. Trained volunteers gather data on plants, pollinators and bird species on properties across the Commonwealth. We also participated in the [E-Mammal program](#) in which motion-triggered cameras were positioned at strategic locations in order to gather data on wildlife presence, variety and density.



This year, we participated in the Emammal camera program in conjunction with the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute's Virginia Working Landscapes program. This motion-activated camera captures the species which live in or pass through the area

Members of the New Market Historical Society held their meeting and annual picnic at the farm and also visited the historic White House. We appreciated the opportunity to share information on the farm, Native American history and architecture of European settlers.



8TH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION COUNT AT THE FARM



The 52 acre riparian buffer is a playground for our local Lepidoptera and it is fascinating to see the numbers and diversity of species increase as Mr. Plein installs additional native grasses, shrubs, trees and wildflowers. These native species serve as hosts for the baby caterpillars that become butterflies and moths which are critical for pollination.

Each month in the riparian area is different with different wildflowers blooming, trees flowering, leafing out and then turning color in the fall. The native warm season grasses provide continual interest as they flourish during the hottest parts of the summer and also serve as hosts to a variety of skippers and other Lepidoptera species.

We have been graced by eagles flying over the field watching for prey, resting in the sycamores and then navigating back up river to their nesting sites.

Leopold's Preserve

In 2016, the White House Farm Foundation accepted management responsibility for [Leopold's Preserve](#), a 380 acre property in Haymarket, VA. We are very proud of the Preserve, as it has over seven miles of [walking trails](#), 34 information signs on the local history and ecology and is a wonderful example of good land use. It encompasses diverse wetlands, ponds, edge habitat and native warm season grass fields.

Leopold's Preserve is the vision of Scott C. Plein, who relinquished development rights in order to set the land aside for protection and recreation; it is enrolled under a conservation easement held by the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and is a public park, open from dawn until dusk. It is the site of the annual Haymarket Fun Fest, a favorite bird-watching area and a wonderful location to get outside to walk and enjoy nature, just minutes from I-66.

The Preserve is named after Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), a keen naturalist who urged a careful and holistic approach to wildlife management and conservation. Author of *A Sand Count Almanac*, Leopold carefully observed the plants and animals on his farm in Wisconsin, underscoring the often devastating impacts humans can have on the ecosystem if decisions are not based on science and awareness of ecology.



Leopold's Preserve is a 380-acre nature preserve protected by a conservation easement held by the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) and managed by The White House Farm Foundation (WHFF). NVCT is a land trust dedicated to preserving and protecting natural and

historic properties in Northern Virginia. WHFF is a Virginia-based non-profit educational foundation that focuses on sustainable agriculture, conservation, local history, and culture.

We invite you to enjoy and explore the beauty of Leopold's Preserve and encourage

exploration of nature including plants, birding, exercise, outdoor enjoyment, and much more! By adhering to the following guidelines you ensure your safety and the safety of others, while preserving the natural features and characteristics of the land.

General Guidelines

- ▶ Access is by foot only from dawn until dusk. For your safety, cars parked after dark are reported to the Prince William County Police.
- ▶ All visitors must keep to the trails. The "Private Property" boundaries are clearly marked. Please respect our neighbors in the Villages of Piedmont and other private residences, and do not trespass on their property. Park and hike in designated areas only. Villages of Piedmont is NOT part of the nature preserve.
- ▶ **MOTORIZED VEHICLES, ATVs, HORSES, CAMPING, FIRES, HUNTING, AND FISHING ARE PROHIBITED IN THE PRESERVE. BICYCLE USE IS RESTRICTED TO PAVED AREAS ONLY.**
- ▶ Pets must be leashed at all times and droppings removed.
- ▶ There are no bathroom facilities located in the preserve so plan accordingly.
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- ▶ Glass containers are prohibited.
- ▶ Open possession or use of firearms, air guns, fireworks, or explosives is prohibited.
- ▶ Collection of or disturbing of plants, animals, and artifacts is prohibited. **NOTHING MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE NATURAL AREA.**
- ▶ Help preserve nature—PLEASE DON'T LITTER. This includes cigarette butts. **PACK IN-PAK OUT.**

Please Follow
**LEAVE
NO TRACE**
Ethics

Plan Ahead

Watch for hazards and follow all the rules of the preserve. Remember proper clothing, sunscreen, hats, first aid kits, and plenty of drinking water.

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FIRST
AID

Stick To Trails

Stay on the trail system. Short-cutting trails causes the soil to wear away or to be packed, which eventually kills trees and other vegetation. Trampled wildflowers and vegetation take years to recover.



Leave What You Find

When visiting any outdoor area, try to leave it the same as you find it. The less impact we each make, the longer we will enjoy what we have. Even picking flowers denies others the opportunity to see them and reduces seeds, which means fewer plants next year. Graffiti and vandalism have no place anywhere, and they spoil the experience for others.



Respect Other Visitors

Expect to meet other visitors. Be courteous and make room for others on the trails. Control your speed when running or jogging. Pass with care and let others know before you pass. Don't disturb other visitors by making noise or playing loud music. Respect "Private Property Residents Only" signs. If property boundaries are unclear, do not enter the area.



Trash Your Trash

THERE ARE NO TRASH RECEPTACLES LOCATED IN THE PARK. Make sure all trash is put in a bag and carried out with you. Trash is unsightly and ruins the outdoor experience for others. Your trash can even kill wildlife. Organic materials such as orange peels, apple cores, and food scraps take years to break down and may attract unwanted pests.



IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

If you encounter any suspicious activity or abusive behavior in Leopold's Preserve please contact the Prince William County Western District Station at 703-792-5111.

*** DIAL 9-1-1 ***

IN A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY



Susan Caudle explains the history and layout of Leopold's Preserve to the group which visited as part of the 40th annual Field and Forest Tour hosted by the Virginia Cooperative Extensions.



It is great seeing all the healthy, happy people utilizing the trails at Leopold's Preserve for the annual [Haymarket Fall Fest Trail 5k and 1k Fun Run](#).