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2023 Annual Newsletter

We had a very productive year securing new partnerships, properties and forging new relationships with a common mission of protecting natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources in Sussex County, DE. This year marked a new beginning for the Trust with the start of several new projects in partnership with Sussex County Council, all with a focus on public access. With new opportunities come new responsibilities and the Board of Trustees successfully executed a

strategic plan which will guide the Trust and its mission into the future.

This upcoming year, the Trust and its Board will be focusing its efforts on the launch of several exciting projects which have been in the planning stages for several years and an emphasis on raising public awareness and support for each project will be a key focus in 2023.



Heidi Gilmore Elected as New Chair



Our Board of Trustees elected Heidi Gilmore as its new chairperson after serving on the Board for several years. An attorney with Baird Mandalas Brockstedt Federico & Cardea, Gilmore has been practicing law for the past 25 years. Born and raised on a dairy farm in Cecil County, MD, Gilmore has deep agricultural roots which cultivated her love for the outdoors and her appreciation for land preservation. Heidi is passionate about Sussex County, its rich history and culture and can be found on any given weekend enjoying our waterways,

trails or supporting local events. She is a true leader and we are fortunate and thankful for her dedication and service to the Sussex County Land Trust. Casey H. Kenton served as Board Chair of the Trust for the previous four years and chose to remain on the Board as Secretary for another three year term.



HEIDI GILMORE, CHAIR AND CASEY KENTON, SECRETARY
AT THE WOLFE HOUSE, SCLT HEADQUARTERS



HEIDI GILMORE SHOWCASING MASTERPLAN AT HOPKINS PRESERVE – ARTICLE ON PG. 5



AERIAL IMAGE OF CANNON-MASTON HOME IN FOREGROUND
AND RELOCATED WILLIAMS-LITCHFORD HOME IN BACKGROUND



HISTORIC CANNON-MASTON
HOME, CIRCA 1727

Ickford Update



Development of the Trust's Ickford property in western Sussex continued apace with a variety of measures being undertaken to restore the park's two historic structures. Following the earlier relocation of the 1912 Williams-Litchford farmhouse to accommodate the recreation of the 18th century landscape which surrounded the Cannon-Maston House (1727), work at both sites continued to move forward.

Constructed in two phases 1727-1733, the Cannon-Maston House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. In order to facilitate its proper restoration, the Trust contracted Barton Ross and Partners to assess the structure and create plans for renovation. A nationally-prominent preservation architect, Mr. Ross has been recognized for his professional excellence and dedication to historic preservation by the National Park Service and Society of Architectural Historians. With plans in place, the first phase of work is expected to commence in late Spring. Funding to support this effort was provided by the Delaware Preservation Fund and Delaware General Assembly.

Work on the Williams-Litchford farmhouse continued with improvements to the building's basement level and removal of newer interior and exterior finishes to restore the structure's original appearance. Upcoming activities will include roof replacement, rehabilitation of original wood siding, and installation of new plumbing, HVAC, and electrical systems. Major elements of the project will be completed this year in preparation for occupancy and interpretation. The two historic farmsteads are located on 59 acres of field and forest purchased by the Trust in 2008. Efforts to develop a trail system for Ickford Park are also planned for what promises to be a busy 2023.



AERIAL IMAGE FROM 1950 OF WILLIAMS-LITCHFORD HOME WITH THE CANNON-MASTON HOME SITUATED DIRECTLY BEHIND IT. THE WILLIAMS-LITCHFORD HOME WAS RELOCATED TO THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE PROPERTY IN 2020

STEPHEN P. HUDSON PARK SIGN, INTERSECTION
OF RT. 9 AND COOLSPRING ROAD, MILTON



Hudson Park Update

Stephen P. Hudson Park was acquired by the Trust four years ago due its strategic location along the Lewes-Georgetown Bicycle Trail, a 16 mile bike and pedestrian trail extending between Lewes and Georgetown. The 30-acre property is located at the intersection of Rt. 9 and Coolspring Road near Milton and was acquired by the Trust in partnership with Sussex County, the State of Delaware (Division of Parks) and the Delaware Open Space Program.

The Lewes-Georgetown Bicycle Trail is a multi-phase project spearheaded by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DELDOT) converting a decommissioned railroad line into a perpetual recreational amenity. The Trust and its partners acquired the 30-acre property for the purpose of developing a trailhead, parking area and recreational area for trail enthusiasts. DELDOT has completed four phases of the trail and has plans to complete the remaining three phases of the trail by the end of 2023. The completion of the Lewes-Georgetown Bicycle Trail is an extension and connection to the 18.5 mile Gordons Pond Bike Trail and the Junction Breakwater Trail resulting in a 30+ mile trail, a 20 year project.

Last year, DELDOT completed the phase of the trail which runs parallel to Stephen P. Hudson Park and the Trust and its partners have been working concurrently on engineering plans and approvals for the first phase of the project. The first phase of the project which will consist of a gravel parking area, landscaping and a trail connection from the parking area to the newly completed section of trail. We finalized our construction estimates and plan to start construction on the first phase of the project this spring.

AERIAL VIEW OF STEPHEN P. HUDSON PARK, RED LINE
REPRESENTING THE LEWES-GEORGETOWN BICYCLE TRAIL



Hopkins Preserve Acquisition



Sussex County Council and the Sussex County Land Trust have a long and successful history of working together to preserve and protect land in Sussex County. One of the underlying principles of the Trust is to serve as a recommending body to Sussex County for land acquisition opportunities. Earlier this year, Sussex County partnered with the Trust on the acquisition of a 52 acre property located along Sweetbriar Road and contiguous to the Lewes to Georgetown Bicycle Trail near Lewes, DE.

The property had been owned by the Hopkins family for several generations and the family wanted to ensure the property was protected in perpetuity and utilized for public access. Sussex County

acquired the property with funding through its open space program and secured a partnership with the Trust to manage the planning and development of the property into a future public amenity.

In October, the Trust and the County hosted a public onsite event to celebrate the acquisition and protection of the property with nearly 500 people in attendance. The event featured the unveiling of the masterplan design for the future of the property along with live entertainment, food trucks, craft beer, face and pumpkin painting and a sunset bonfire. The Trust is now focusing on a development plan for the property and is looking forward to opening this property for future public use.



COUNCILMAN AND TRUSTEE JOHN RIELEY, HEIDI GILMORE, SCLT CHAIR AND MIKE NALLY, SCLT VICE CHAIR



TODD LAWSON, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSING THE AUDIENCE

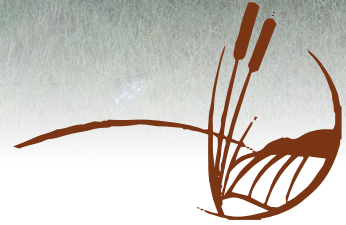


MICHELE MCCABE, WALTER HOPKINS, RUSS MCCABE, TRUSTEE



HOMESTEAD BLUEGRASS BAND, LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Nanticoke Crossing Park



Planning is still underway for public use of Nanticoke Crossing Park, located on the Laurel side of the Nanticoke River at the Woodland Ferry. The 41-acre site contains a 12-acre open area with large trees and dirt roadways and a 29 acre mixed hardwood-pine forest. The property was acquired in partnership with Chesapeake Conservancy, Mt. Cuba Center, Sussex County, Delaware Open Space Council, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Navy.

Activities over the past year included:

- Prepared a draft Concept Master Plan that focuses on public access to the Nanticoke River, recreational use, and enhancement of plant and animal species
- Forest Stewardship Management Plan prepared by the Delaware Forest Service that aims to maintain and improve the naturally occurring trees in the woodland, retain soil and water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide recreational opportunities
- Securing gates and facilities on-site, maintaining mowing of the open area
- Preliminary plant and animal surveys
- Trail camera use along a sandy road in the forest revealed deer, foxes, raccoons, squirrels, a turkey vulture, an opossum, a rabbit, and a cat
- Bald Eagle watching

Actions for the upcoming year:

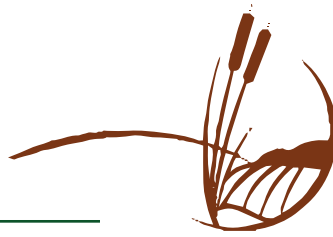
- Continue to revise the Concept Master Plan; solicit public input
- Seek funding for site improvements
- Focus on safety with hazard pruning of trees in the open area
- Plan for control of invasive species; plant trees in selected areas for buffers
- Continue plant and animal surveys
- Continue trail camera monitoring

The public can use the park in a casual way to enjoy the river, watch the ferry, and walk the roads. Enjoy and know there is more to come.



AERIAL IMAGE OF
WOODLAND FERRY AND
NANTICOKE CROSSING PARK

IPA Ride



Our friends at Dogfish Head Craft Brewery have been strong supporters of the Trust for many years and this year was no different. A pioneer of the craft beer revolution, Milton, DE based Dogfish Head is a community focused company constantly innovating and educating their customers through community and special events.

This past April, Dogfish hosted and sponsored the I Pedal A-Lot IPA bike ride through Sussex County partnering with the Sussex County Land Trust as the exclusive non-profit beneficiary for the bike ride raising \$19,000.

On race day, 650 bike riders started their two wheeled tour at the Dogfish Head Craft Brewery in Milton and had the choice between a 60 or 120 kilometer course featuring several rest stops at properties owned and managed by Sussex County Land Trust. The day ended with a true Dogfish Head celebration at the brewery featuring local vendors, great food and libations and a bluegrass band!



I PEDAL A-LOT PINT GLASS, POST-RACE ENTERTAINMENT IN THE BACKGROUND



CASEY KENTON – TRUSTEE, RUSS MCCABE – TRUSTEE, JASON KING – TRUSTEE EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE SUSSEX COUNTY LAND TRUST



IPA RIDERS BOARDING THE WOODLAND FERRY AFTER A REST STOP AT NANTICOKE CROSSING PARK



IPA RIDERS SHOWCASING THEIR DOGFISH RACE GEAR

Schell Brothers Commitment



Sussex County continues to be an attractive destination for new residents moving to the area from surrounding metropolitan areas which only accelerated during the pandemic. One of the founding principles of the Trust was to leverage the protection of open space with economic development. Earlier this year, local builder Schell Brothers committed an initial \$250,000 and doubled down with a future commitment to pledge \$1,000 to the Trust for every home settlement completed in FY 2022 and FY 2023.

Schell Brothers CEO Chris Schell estimated the home company expected to sell an average of 500 homes per year for the next two years for a total donation in excess of \$1,000,000 to the Trust. According to Schell, "Our industry has had surprising results during the

pandemic, housing took off and we need to give back. We want to get more involved with the Sussex County Land Trust. We also want to lead by example and get other members from the builder and development community to follow." We are so thankful that Schell Brothers has recognized our efforts and we are appreciative of their financial support and partnership.



L TO R CASEY KENTON – SCLT TRUSTEE, CHRIS SCHELL – SCHELL BROTHERS CEO, SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCILMAN AND TRUSTEE MARK SCHAEFFER, JASON KING – SCLT TRUSTEE AND RON VICKERS – SCLT TRUSTEE

Be a Friend of the Sussex County Land Trust!

The Sussex County Land Trust is a non-profit 501(c)3 conservation organization dedicated to protecting natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources in Sussex County. Since the organization was founded in 2001, the Trust has been involved with the protection of more than 6,000 acres. Public and private partnerships are the key ingredient to leveraging our resources and goal of making Sussex County a better place to live for everyone.

Donations are an excellent way to support the Trust and make a contribution to benefit the greater good of Sussex County. The Trust is currently involved in several projects featuring public access and recreation and we need your help.

**SUSSEX COUNTY LAND TRUST,
EIN 04-3611220, IS RECOGNIZED BY
THE IRS AS A
TAX-EXEMPT, CHARITABLE
ORGANIZATION.**

All or part of your gift may be deductible as a charitable contribution. Please check with your tax advisor. We appreciate your generous donation.



**DONATIONS CAN BE MADE BY
SCANNING THE QR CODE.**

Our Board of Trustees are all committed volunteers. We sincerely appreciate your generous support of our mission!