



FRIENDS OF
RADNOR LAKE
PROTECT | PRESERVE | PROMOTE

Reflections

Spring 2018



From the Board President

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Dear Friends,

This edition of our newsletter celebrates a watershed event — the completion of the Harris Ridge project. This trio of land purchases demonstrates the hard work and commitment of so many. More than 10 years of work has resulted in preserving approximately 89 forested acres, and achieved a capstone, a new trailhead and parking lot on Franklin Road. This will provide the community with a destination hike that will garner accolades beyond our normal family of friends. The new trailhead and parking on Franklin Road will be nothing short of heroic once completed.

But, I need to remind our friends, family, donors and partners that we cannot let the superheroes that ensure the day-to-day experience at Radnor is always extraordinary be lost in the flashiness of the Harris Project.

Our lead ranger, Steve Ward, is the superhero each of us should thank as we pass him on the trail or see him directing traffic on sunny warm days or overseeing a couple dozen volunteers pushing full wheelbarrows.

Sure, he is the Dalai Lama of the park experience, but there is so much that the public does not see. He maintains contact not just with visitors, but the adjacent landowners, many of whom have repaid his kindnesses by allowing us to add land to the park and double the original size of the park from its beginnings in 1973. He is a key player in land purchases spanning the last 16 years.

It is the little things, like retrieving a rattlesnake on a neighbor's porch. Or the grander projects such as bringing the concept of an aviary scratched on a pad a half dozen years ago to a world class raptor habitat. Many lose sight of the fact that much of the lake was obscured by impenetrable invasive honeysuckle growth when Steve arrived 16 years ago. By unflagging, focused efforts, we will enjoy fields of purple dwarf larkspur in the next few weeks that were once overtaken by invasive plants.

He marshals the volunteers, keeps his ranger staff focused, and always has a good word for our hikers, joggers, photographers, bird watchers and those who just come to get that restorative medicine for the soul that is Radnor Lake. He would be the first to credit his staff, who are also our heroes.

However, let's all reach out to Steve Ward and thank him as the Radnor experience would pale if Steve were not the ever vigilant steward of all things Radnor.

Very Truly Yours,

Paul Buchanan



Park Manager Steve Ward

Photo by Dustin Crowell



Park Manager Steve Ward

Radnor Lake Community Rises to the Challenge!

Harris Ridge Trail project, land acquisition completed.

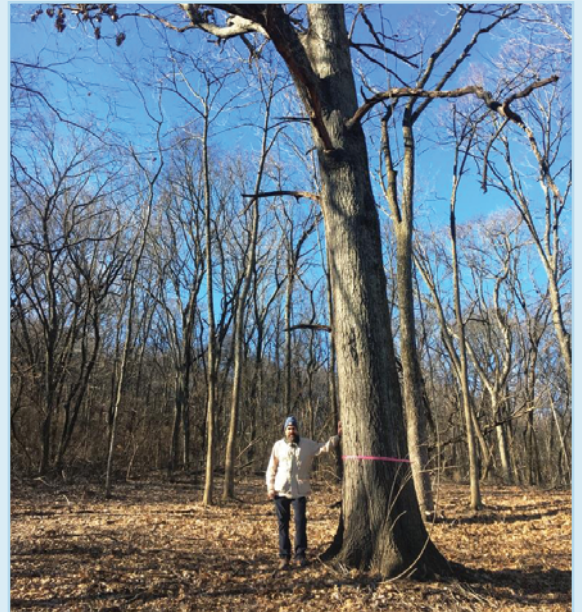
Great things happen when great communities work together.

Thanks to partnership and efforts of Friends of Radnor Lake and the State of Tennessee, the last remaining acreage of the Harris Ridge Trail Project was secured as of December 2017. The Oak Hill property will be added to the Radnor Lake State Natural Area and protected forever. This is an incredible community accomplishment that will be enjoyed by Middle Tennesseans for generations to come.



Ranger led land acquisition hikes on the future Harris Ridge Trail property.

Photo by Steve Ward



Harris Ridge Trail Parking Area Planning with Director of TDNA Roger McCoy

Photo by Steve Ward

What's Next:

Preserve and protect

We are working to close on the property and get it transferred to State of Tennessee so that it will be protected forever, under the State Natural Areas Preservation Act of 1971.

Wildlife habitat

The newly protected land secures invaluable wildlife habitat from encroaching development.

Trails and parking

The Radnor Lake park staff is excited to begin mapping out the new trail and planning with the State for much needed additional parking along Franklin Road.

Hikes

Stay tuned for news about hikes this Spring to explore this acquisition.

Park support

There will be many volunteer opportunities as we clear the land and trail route of invasive-exotic plants making way for native wildflowers.

We hope that visits to Radnor Lake this year will be even more meaningful to our many supporters, knowing that the gorgeous views you see from the trails include acres of wildflowers and wildlife habitat that you helped protect from development forever.



Southeastern viewshed is now protected forever for park visitors enjoying the lake trail observation deck thanks to the acquisition of Harris 1 and Harris 2.

Photo by Robin Conover

**An extra special thank you to our Trailblazer and Match Challenge donors
Adams Family Trust • Cal Turner Family Foundation**



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Park Ranger

Will Peters
Park Ranger

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Park Ranger

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(615) 373-3467

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(Closed: Tues and Wed,
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**Event Schedule, Updates
and Volunteer Days:**
www.radnorlake.org

Partnership

2018 Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center

By Park Manager Steve Ward

On May 1, 2015 we officially opened the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center (BJMAEC) at Radnor Lake. This project had been years in the making, thanks to the result of numerous partners who helped us with this unique environmental education facility at the State of Tennessee's First Natural Area. Currently open two days a week, this venue has enabled us to achieve and exceed expectations on our interpretive programming efforts for our more than 1.5 million visitors annually. Thanks to the work of a lot of external partners such as **Nissan** in 2017 who provided installation of new interpretive signage at each of the five birds of prey. This new interpretive signage provides key educational information for park visitors to enhance their experience.

Since the grand opening in 2015, thanks to fundraising efforts thru Friends of Radnor Lake we have been hard at work on several of our punch list items and are closing in on the finish line of this once-in-a-lifetime project:



Immature Bald Eagle at the BJMAEC courtesy Photo by Steve Ward of our partners at American Eagle Foundation

- This has included expanded training with our friends at **Wings to Soar**, installation of plumbing and electricity for the entire boardwalk (overseen by FORL Vice President Lester Turner), and our centerpiece of the aviary center, the much anticipated flighted eagle aviary at the end of the boardwalk.
- We are pleased to announce that in February 2018 our friends at the **Barbara J. Mapp Foundation** stepped up — once again — to provide the last remaining funding of \$4,900 to complete our interpretive signage goals for the boardwalk area ... thank you Barbara J. Mapp Foundation! This funding will enable us to complete the interpretive signage for our eagle program as we expand the residents of the aviary to include three American Bald Eagles and one Golden Eagle.
- The permitting for these last birds of prey additions have been submitted to our state (TWRA) and federal (USFWS) permitting agencies by Ranger Matthew Bowling. Once approved, this will enable us to transfer these three eagles into our care; they will be supported by our sustainability funding efforts.
- Generous sustainability grants from the Barbara J. Mapp Foundation and the **Røros Foundation** help support our ongoing birds of prey care, training and other critical needs at the BJMAEC.

Stay tuned as we anticipate the arrival of our new bald eagle residents in the near future as we close out the completion of the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center at Radnor Lake in 2018.

Please consider donating to Friends of Radnor Lake during The Big Payback!

Wednesday, May 2, 2018

The Barbara J. Mapp Foundation will match donations up to \$5,000.

All funds raised go directly to birds of prey care and educational programming.

The Big Payback is a 24-hour, online giving event for Nashville area non-profits, and Friends of Radnor Lake is excited to be a part of it. www.thebigpayback.org





Lester Turner, center, joins a park volunteer and Ranger Paul Schauer during the construction of the new flighted eagle aviary. *Photo by Steve Ward*



On Nov. 15, 2017, we said goodbye to our friend **Ranger Dustin Crowell** as he moved on to the same position at Natchez Trace State Park in West Tennessee. Dustin joined us and worked most notably in assisting us with our efforts to develop our bald eagle program at the Barbara J. Mapp Avairy Education Center. Of the many things Dustin accomplished at Radnor Lake as part of the ranger staff, his last notable accomplishment was overseeing the final installation of the interpretive signage at the Barbara J. Mapp Avairy Center.

We wish Dustin the best as he heads back closer to home and thank him for his assistance over the past four years at Radnor Lake!



Aviary Intern Mackenzie Maness participates in a program at the Avairy with the resident vulture. *Photo by Steve Ward*

Weed Wrangler 2018



Weed Wrangler Volunteers at Vanderbilt-Dyer Observatory *Photos by Steve Ward*

More than 120 volunteers came to Radnor Lake to work with the park staff to help us in our annual Weed Wrangle Volunteer Event in early March. The focus of Weed Wrangle at Radnor Lake is part of our resource management goal to remove all invasive-exotic plants from the natural area. This year, our volunteer efforts were along the South Cove Trail and our southern boundary with our partners at Vanderbilt-Dyer Observatory. We cut and pulled hundreds of bush honeysuckle plants for some 11 hours on March 2nd and 3rd, in our efforts to protect our native vegetation and the integrity of the natural area's ecosystem. Thank you to everyone who volunteered and to Vanderbilt-Dyer Observatory for their assistance.

This effort was one of 13 scheduled work days open to the public to come and work with the park staff on projects which include mulching trails, cleaning up newly acquired parcels of property, work at the Barbara J. Mapp Avairy Education Center and invasive-exotic plant removal along the park trail system. These volunteer efforts are made possible with the support from Friends of Radnor Lake and our partners at Nissan.

To learn more about our upcoming volunteer efforts, please visit radnorlake.org/volunteer

Radnor Lake State Natural Area receives another special gift to enhance environmental education programs for park visitors

By Park Manager Steve Ward



Rangers Matthew Bowling, Will Peters, Teshia Steuben and Paul Schauer with their new spotting scopes and backpacks.

Photo by Steve Ward

At the beginning of 2015, Radnor Lake was honored with a very special donation from a couple who are regular park visitors and wanted to “make a difference” at the park. Their gift was specifically targeted to improve environmental education efforts by the park ranger staff. It allowed us to significantly enhance our interpretive canoe floats for our park visitors. Their gift provided new canoes which have been used annually during our summer months (Memorial Day to Labor Day), canoe instructor training certification and visitors with special needs training for the park ranger staff. Thanks to Trish and Shelly Krizelman, this program will continue to benefit our visitors as we head into the summer of 2018. In 2017 alone, the park ranger staff conducted 41 interpretive canoe floats for 326 park visitors between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Since that time, we have continued to expand upon that thoughtful targeted gift to expand upon our interpretive canoe program standards to maximize that donation thanks to the following:

1. Additional funding support from Friends of Radnor Lake who provided Canoe Instructor Certification in August of 2017. This funding help us maintain this new standard at Radnor Lake for two new ranger staff members so that we can maintain our goal of every ranger being certified as a minimum requirement of leading interpretive canoe floats at Radnor Lake.
2. Tennessee State Park Leadership establishment of a statewide initiative that every state park ranger also being a Certified Interpretive Guide to improve environmental education at all of our 56 state parks. That initiative has provided additional training during the past two years which has resulted in each ranger at Radnor Lake achieving this certification as of January 2018!

Once again, Radnor Lake is the beneficiary of another special targeted donation by Trish and Shelly Krizelmans which will allow us to accomplish another park management interpretation goal in 2018. Much like the goals our interpretive canoe float program, our interpretive programs in the natural area, such as our waterfowl identification, are a staple of the park. There is often no better way to **engage our park visitors** along the trail system than by providing our visitors with highlights of migration of our waterfowl at Radnor Lake by viewing from a variety of locations, e.g. along the causeway on Otter Creek Road, from our new observation deck on the Lake Trail or on portions of Otter Creek road closed to vehicle traffic.



White-Water Crowfoot Photo by Steve Ward

When the majority of our waterfowl depart for the year, the park ranger staff continues to utilize spotting scopes to highlight unique occurrences. This includes the blooming of an endangered plant species **white-water crowfoot** (*Ranunculus aquatilis* var. *diffusus*) in the lagoon area of the lake during May-June annually. This plant was first documented at Radnor Lake State Natural Area in 1979 by Vanderbilt University,

Radnor Lake is one of only five known occurrences of the species in the State of Tennessee. Because this plant only grows about 1” in height on the shallow surface of the water, spotting scopes provide the only non-intrusive way for us to highlight this rare occurrence and to focus on the importance of protecting our watershed.



Ranger Staff at Radnor Lake have conducted over 70 spotting scope programs for over 1,300 park visitors since August 2017.

Photo by Steve Ward

We have conducted these interpretive spotting scope programs for several years; however we simply were not able to maximize these wildlife viewing opportunities due to the cost of quality spotting scopes, logistics of storage, normal wear and tear over the past 15 years of our previously purchased scopes, improvements in equipment specifically for visitors with special needs, etc...

That all changed in the Fall of 2017 when I was once again the recipient of a phone call from Trish and Shelly: "Steve, what do you need, what is really important to you, what have you and the rangers been unable to do". After a long-thoughtful discussion on how we could achieve our goal of enhancing this interpretive programming effort by the park ranger staff, Radnor Lake was the recipient of another targeted donation to help us achieve our goal of offering unique wildlife viewing experiences at the State of Tennessee's First Natural Area!

This targeted gift provides **each ranger** at Radnor Lake with an accompanying backpack which will ensure long-term protection of these high quality scopes and provide mobility by the ranger staff to utilize along the trails. Also, perhaps more importantly, the funding allows us to focus on visitors with special needs with the additional purchase of one handed trigger adjustability, low to high adjustable high-quality tripods and backpacks for mobility and iPhone adapters that mount on the spotting scope that will allow park visitors the ability to take pictures on their phones through these spotting scopes during these unique viewing opportunities! In addition, this donation has provided for the purchase of a high quality camera with zoom lens (and a backpack!) which will enable the ranger staff to take higher quality pictures for our social media, website and powerpoint programs for park visitors.

On behalf of the ranger staff and Friends of Radnor Lake, we would like to thank **Trish and Shelly Krizelman** for this special donation! It has enabled us to once again enhance our interpretive goals at Radnor Lake, and it is a perfect example of how public-private partnerships can benefit 1.6 million park visitors annually through the interpretive program efforts provided by our park ranger staff our park ranger staff at the State of Tennessee's First Natural Area.



Migrating waterfowl as seen through the new spotting scopes and iPhone adapter.

Photo by Steve Ward



Will Peters conducting spotting scope program at hummingbird nest on April 31, 2017.

Photo by Steve Ward

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Friends of Radnor Lake!
Your generosity and support are greatly appreciated and will help us to further our mission to protect, preserve and promote Radnor Lake.

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Your donation makes a difference.

These recent park enhancements, funded through Friends of Radnor Lake, were made possible through generous private donors:

- New Observation Deck
- \$1 million for land acquisition and completion of Harris Ridge Land project.
- Trail maintenance supporting over 6,000 volunteers
- Valve House restoration
- Support of new and on-going education programs
- Restoration of over 20 acres of ground nesting bird habitat
- New Reptile Display at the Aviary
- Aviary now home to 3 American Bald Eagles, 1 Golden Eagle, a Great Horned Owl, a red-tailed Hawk and a rock star Vulture
- New state-of-the-art canoes
- New Spotting Scopes for Ranger Education Programs
- Exotic plant removal allowing native plants to flourish
- Endangered plant research and historic site registration
- Funding for the amazing annual Junior Ranger Program



Radnor Lake Park Rangers conduct a waterfowl spotting scope program at the Lake Trail Observation Deck.



Junior Ranger Interns, 2017



Acres of dwarf larkspur blooming in April are a direct result of our invasive exotic plant removal efforts.

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(615) 251-1471
FORL@radnorlake.org
www.radnorlake.org

Our Mission: To protect, preserve and promote the natural integrity of Radnor Lake through land acquisition, environmental education and park support.

Friends of Radnor Lake was founded in 1971 when the lake and surrounding hills were threatened by residential development. As the Tennessee State Parks system's oldest and most successful nonprofit support group, FORL has purchased critical properties and supported protection efforts in many other ways.

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