



FRIENDS OF
RADNOR LAKE
PROTECT | PRESERVE | PROMOTE

Reflections

March 2021



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About the Cover

Ring-necked ducks and other migratory waterfowl will leave Radnor Lake by spring as the days grow warmer.

Photograph by
Robin Conover

From the Board President



Kimberly Bell-Schultheis

As I opened my new 2021 Radnor Lake calendar, I was energized by how much the Friends of Radnor Lake (FORL) accomplished in 2020 and inspired by what we have planned for 2021. I was also reminded of how important our partners are to the success of each and every project we undertake. Our partnerships with the park staff at Radnor Lake State Natural Area, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, our donors, many volunteers and park visitors don't just make our projects easier, they make them possible.

I hope you enjoy the articles in this first newsletter of 2021. The pages are filled with news of how we used community dollars and partner relationships to protect, preserve and promote the natural integrity of Radnor Lake. Our partners play crucial roles in the success of all things Radnor, including the Junior Rangers Intern Program, Birds of Prey Programs, land acquisition, Native Grasslands Initiative, the Lake Trail Bridges and the Harris Ridge Trail project.

Whether you walk Otter Creek, hike the trails, watch the birds and wildlife, or enjoy a program led by park staff, your experience is enriched by these important initiatives.

This year we celebrate something that helped begin all of these projects and initiatives many years ago. We hope you will help us commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Natural Preservation Act of 1971.

Radnor Lake State Natural Area opened just two years later, giving the park the distinction of being Tennessee's first designated State Natural Area. The Tennessee Division of Natural Areas is working with State Natural Areas across Tennessee to create events to celebrate this historic legislation that created a focus on preserving the natural integrity of land throughout the state. Mark your calendars for May 1, 2021, the date of statewide celebrations, and stay tuned for upcoming events at Radnor!

I believe more now than ever that keeping our connection with the natural world calms and inspires us, but it also stirs a sense of responsibility. What I and so many others find at Radnor Lake is a refuge. It's a refuge that must be coveted and protected. More Nashvillians have visited Radnor this past year than ever before, and there's a reason for that. During the times of isolation and quarantine, finding refuge in nature serves as a necessary respite from our daily routines and uncertainty.

Friends of Radnor Lake Welcomes New Board Members

Friends of Radnor Lake is pleased to announce the appointment of two new members, Sonya Hairston and Dan Weisman, who joined the board in January 2021. We are also delighted to have Young Leaders' Council Intern Rob Hardin participate with the FORL board for the 2021 calendar year.



Sonya Hairston
Board Member



Daniel Weisman
Board Member



Rob Hardin,
Young Leaders Intern

2020 Environmental Awards

Photos by Weatherly Hulsey

Friends of Radnor Lake held the 2020 Environmental Awards ceremony on September 24, celebrating the individuals who have demonstrated significant dedication to protecting Radnor Lake. This special recognition event kicked off the National Public Lands Day celebration, the nation's largest single-day volunteer event for public lands.

While the size of the 2020 Environmental Awards Ceremony was much smaller due to COVID restrictions, the wide-reaching impact each of these award winners has had on Radnor Lake remains as large as ever. TDEC Deputy Commissioner Jim Bryson, Park Manager Steve Ward, and FORL Board President Kimberly Bell-Schultheis presented the three Environmental Awards to the following honorees.



Lester Turner Jr., left, and TDEC Deputy Commissioner Jim Bryson

Lester Turner Jr. received the Environmental Award

Awarded to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and made notable, voluntary contributions in conserving Radnor Lake's precious resources.

"Lester Turner epitomizes the word 'volunteer,'" said Park Manager Steve Ward. "Since the flood of 2010, Lester has donated more hours than I can count, ranging from volunteering to reconstruct our spillway observation deck with the Friends of Radnor Lake board; as a board member overseeing the construction, his focus on visitors with special needs emphasis and long-term sustainability of the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Center; improving the standard of care for our captive bald eagles by donating his time to install a camera system to improve the care of the birds and the efficiency of our staff time; helping park management with implementation of a parking area security system funded by Friends of Radnor Lake; and donating generous public outreach resources for Radnor Lake through Lighting 100 annually."



From left, Brian Goodwin, Terri Goodwin, Betty Hatcher, and Jerry Hatcher



From left, Rev. Brian McVey, Karen McVey, and Kimberly Bell-Schultheis

Church of the Advent received the Partnership Award

Given to an individual or group that has shown exceptional support for Radnor Lake.

"Church of the Advent is our neighbor to the south and has proven to be a critical partner for more than eight years as we pursue our goal of creating a gateway trail to Radnor Lake from Franklin Road.

Their unwavering support has enabled us to engage park visitors, students, volunteers and neighbors in our community at a new level, and has demonstrated that they understand the importance of saving these last critical pieces of land at Radnor Lake, making this trail possible for future generations to enjoy," said Kimberly Bell, president of the board of Friends of Radnor Lake.

Bob Hatcher family received the Blue Heron Leadership Award

in memory and appreciation for Bob's leadership and passion in protecting and restoring bald eagles while overseeing the Tennessee Bald Eagle Recovery Program.

This award is a special distinction given to recognize the highest level of support toward preserving Radnor Lake. Bob led the effort with the bald eagle restoration project across the state and was critical in creating the partnership with the American Eagle Foundation.

"Every time I see an American Bald Eagle anywhere in our great state, I think of Bob Hatcher," said Ward. "Thanks to his time, leadership, and passion in protecting and restoring bald eagles while overseeing the Tennessee Bald Eagle Recovery Program, 50 years later, every Tennessean can now enjoy viewing a bald eagle at places such as Radnor Lake State Natural Area."

Thanks to everyone who volunteers their time at Radnor Lake! The collaborative effort to protect, preserve and promote Radnor Lake has been a focus for many, and all of us who enjoy the park are reaping the rewards.



Steve Ward
Park Manager

Lyndy Maness
Administrative Assistant

Ann Duncan
Receptionist

Paul Schauer
Park Ranger

Matthew Bowling
Park Ranger

Brandon Jarratt
Park Ranger

Dameon Fontenot
Park Ranger

Will Brazill
Park Ranger

Mackenzie Maness
Aviary Intern

Jack Foresman
Seasonal Interpreter

Taylor Smith
Ranger Aide

**Radnor Lake State
Natural Area**
1160 Otter Creek Road
Nashville, TN 37220
(615) 373-3467

Park Hours:
6:00 a.m. until 20 minutes
after sunset

Visitor Center Hours:
Thurs – Mon:
9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
(Closed: Tues and Wed,
and daily 1-2 p.m.)

Walter Criley
Visitor Center:
(615) 373-3467

**Event Schedule, Updates
and Volunteer Days:**
www.radnorlake.org



Southern view of Harris Ridge Tract #1 (37 acres purchased in 2011) and future route of the Harris Ridge Trail.

Harris Ridge Trail Project 2020-2021

By Steve Ward and Lyndy Maness | Photos by Steve Ward

One of the most rewarding highlights of the past year has been our Harris Ridge Trail Project. This future 3-mile planned trail with a 100-car parking area off Franklin Road has been moving forward. Since June 2020, the park staff, volunteers and Junior Ranger Interns have been working on this project while we also saw an all-time record number of visitors to Radnor Lake State Natural Area, exceeding two million visitors this past year. Here is a summary of our highlights during 2020:

1. Trail construction: Thanks to funding dedicated to the trail construction by Friends of Radnor Lake and work by our park staff with Tennessee State Parks Trails Coordinator Michael Meister and our Junior Ranger Interns, we built $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of trail this past summer.



Tennessee State Parks Trails Coordinator Michael Meister cutting a new section of Harris Ridge Trail (July 2020)

2. Invasive-Exotic Plant Removal: As part of our construction of the Harris Ridge Trail, the removal of invasive-exotic plants goes hand in hand with every part of the trail project. As we all know and experience from hiking at Radnor Lake State Natural Area, the diversity of plant life along with wildlife viewing opportunities occur only when there is not a monoculture of invasive-exotic plants. Starting in September thru November 2020, we were able to remove over 10 acres of invasive-exotic plants along

the future trail route. This was completed thanks in large part to a Tennessee Division of Forestry-Forestry Stewardship Grant. We targeted some of our most dense sections of bush honeysuckle and tree of heaven stands. This contracted work was managed by the park staff working with Friends of Radnor Lake, ensuring we got the maximum benefit of these grant funds. Park volunteers provided much needed help in removing trash that was uncovered in these same areas adjacent to a public roadway. At the time of this newsletter, that team effort has cleared a future bridge site, allowing us to move forward on trail planning and bridge plans for another section of trail, now free of these invasive exotic plants.



Radnor Lake Volunteer Tom Hanks (left) working with Ranger Dameon Fontenot and Seasonal Interpretive Ranger Jack Foresman pulling invasive-exotic plants on the Harris Ridge Tract #2 on November 27th, 2020.

2021 Harris Ridge Trail Project Volunteer Opportunities

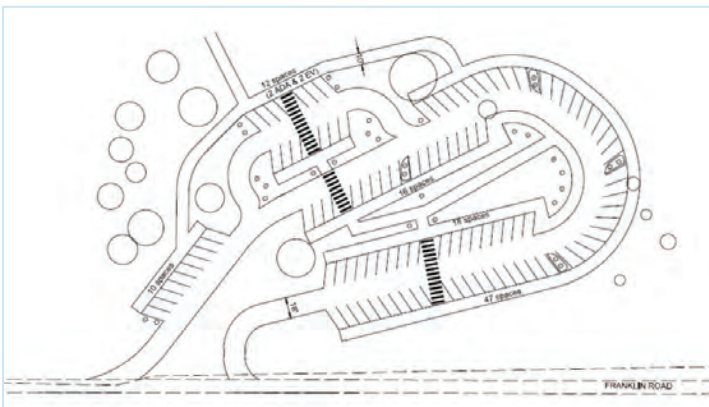


Ranger Will Brazill with members of Forest Tree Care working on invasive-exotic plant removal on Harris Ridge Tract #1. This work was funded thanks to TDF Forestry Stewardship Grant and Friends of Radnor Lake to clear 10-plus acres of invasive-exotic plants for future trail planning thru this area.

3. Harris Ridge Trail Project Bridge and Parking Lot Design

Thanks to Tennessee Department of Transportation for working with us to help design our new parking area off Franklin Road as part of the Harris Ridge Trail Project. Designing this parking area and trail head is being done with planning now for anticipated visitation needs for the next 20 years. Some of the goals being incorporated into this design include:

- 100-car parking area that fits the topography of the Harris #3 Tract
- Safe entrance and exit onto Franklin Road
- Exceeding ADA Guidelines for accessibility for visitors with special needs
- Preservation of all our mature trees identified in our vegetative research
- Preservation of all historical features identified through our historical research
- 10-20% of parking spaces dedicated for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations as part of our Go Green Sustainability Efforts
- Security gate and camera installation as part of the design phase for park visitor safety
- LEED-certified restroom for energy efficiency and reduced annual cleaning costs
- Native Grasslands Initiative for pollinator viewing adjacent to parking area



Tennessee Department of Transportation Design Concept for Harris Ridge Trail Project parking area.



Ranger Brandon Jarratt and Ranger Matthew Bowling working with Weaver Contractors on marking gyrotac work for exotic plant removal-native grasslands restoration on the Harris Ridge Trail Project.

What's ahead... We need volunteers to build trail, remove invasive-exotic plants, and work with the park staff on the Harris Ridge Trail Project. With the help of volunteers, we believe we can complete another section of trail and clear several more acres of invasive-exotic plants this spring:

March 19 (2 - 6 p.m.) - pre-registration is required
Harris Ridge Trail Volunteer Day

March 20 (6 - 9 a.m.)
First Hike of Spring-Harris Ridge Trail Sunrise Hike

March 27 (8 a.m. - noon)
Harris Ridge Trail invasive plant removal volunteer opportunity



Friends of Radnor Lake Board Members attending ranger led hikes to see the progress of the Harris Ridge Trail Project.

Thanks to funding by Friends of Radnor Lake, our new Harris Ridge Volunteer T-Shirts will be distributed to volunteers who work with us on these scheduled volunteer opportunities on the Harris Ridge Trail Project in 2021. We hope to see you at one of our scheduled hikes or volunteer days on the Harris Ridge Trail Project!

Radnor Achieves Go Green Platinum Recognition



Platinum is the only thing better than gold; at least that is the case with our sustainability goals for Radnor Lake! During this past year, Radnor Lake State Park and Natural Area earned the Platinum Recognition Level of the Tennessee State Parks Go Green With Us Initiative. In 2019, Radnor Lake achieved Gold Certification with the goal of achieving the highest level - Platinum this past year. The guidelines include multiple areas of environmental sustainability including education and outreach, water conservation, energy efficiency, waste and recycling, and much more. Many of these goals were accomplished with the hard work and support from our park staff, park visitors, volunteers, Friends of Radnor Lake and other partners.

The mission of the Tennessee State Parks Go Green With Us program is to preserve and protect our state parks through sustainable park operations, resource conservation, and recycling. Program components cover a diverse array of initiatives, including energy and water conservation through equipment and operations upgrades, recycling programs, projects to enhance ecosystem health, and erosion control, among many others.

A few Radnor Lake sustainability 2020 highlights below:

- Recycled more than 700 Christmas trees into mulch used on park trails as a part of the Trees to Trails program
- Removed over 10 acres of invasive-exotic plants from Harris Ridge Trail Project thanks to a Tennessee Division of Forestry Stewardship grant
- Converted more than 20 acres back to native grasslands using a custom seed mix that included common milkweed to promote monarch habitat thanks to funding from Friends of Radnor Lake
- Installed new tankless water heaters at the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center funded by Friends of Radnor Lake and the Barbara J. Mapp Foundation
- Installed new tankless water heaters at the East Lot Restrooms and Walter Criley Visitor Center to improve energy efficiency and provide hot water faster for COVID-19 CDC guidelines
- Worked with Motlow College Professor Kevin Fitch and students to target the removal of wild garlic mustard
- Recycled 9,260 pounds of mixed materials
- Installed a new bottle refilling station at the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center
- Hosted our second annual Invasive Plant Week targeting the removal of invasive-exotic plants in the natural area
- Removed invasive-exotic plants from our native grassland project areas thanks to a grant from Iris Fund License Plate monies
- Converted firewood from our native grasslands initiative in the Hall Farm to supplement heat for two facilities
- Only 1 of 22 sites in North America to host a World Wetlands Day Event, which resulted in 387 pounds of trash collected from 36 acres of the watershed of Radnor Lake State Natural Area

Thank you for supporting our sustainability efforts at Radnor Lake!



Photo by Steve Ward

The Hermitage Lowe's Store number 0390, donatee more than 60 trees to the Radnor Lake Trees to Trails Program.



Photo by Steve Ward

2020 Volunter Day RLSNA Trees to Trails



Photo by Paul Schauer

Ranger Will Brazill and Jaclyn Mothupi with TDEC External Affairs working together for submission of Radnor Lake's Go Green Assessment for 2020.

Junior Ranger Intern Program at Radnor Lake

By Steve Ward and Lyndy Maness | Photos by Steve Ward



In June 2020, we began our annual Junior Ranger Intern Program at Radnor Lake. The park staff worked with eight interns on numerous projects around the natural area over three weeks, with Junior Rangers participating in six-day sessions that were held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

For the past 18 years, Radnor Lake has conducted this unique internship program that creates an opportunity for participants to work with our state park rangers on trail maintenance and environmental education projects at the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center. These projects increase the interns' exposure to quality environmental education programs, and the youth participants gain an insight into natural resource protection.

This is a labor intensive collaborative effort among Friends of Radnor Lake, Radnor Lake staff, Tennessee State Parks and the Junior Ranger Interns. This summer, one of our main education pieces for the Junior Ranger Interns was working with State Parks Trails Coordinator Michael Meister (thank you, Michael!) who conducted trail building training with youth interns. Together, we focused on improvements on our trails and construction of the Harris Ridge Trail.

In addition, youth interns worked with park ranger staff at the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center to improve the care of our captive wildlife through numerous maintenance projects, including installing new gravel—via 5-gallon buckets—to our flighted eagle aviary.

These Junior Ranger Interns also averaged 4-5 miles of daily hiking on the trails at the natural area and to our worksite on the future Harris Ridge Trail.

Special thank you to Friends of Radnor Lake for funding the Junior Ranger Intern Program in 2020 and the past 18 years! Friends of Radnor Lake provided all meals, T-shirts, and work gloves, along with funding additional supplies this year. This summer, additional measures were put in place so we could ensure we continued to conduct this intern program safely, which included the increased expense and safety of individually boxed meals, hand sanitizer and face masks for each of our youth participants throughout the 18-day period.



While most on-site internship/youth programs were not held this past summer due to COVID-19, Radnor Lake park staff, state leadership and Friends of Radnor Lake worked together to offer this outdoor opportunity for local youth safely while also ensuring that our collective goal of offering the Junior Ranger Internship Program at Radnor Lake continued in 2020 in its goal of instilling a conservation ethic and stewardship of our natural resources for future generations.





“Let’s take our hearts for a walk in the woods and listen to the magic whispers of old trees.” — *unknown*



Those Big Old Trees

by Park Manager Steve Ward

The Nashville Tree Foundation’s Big Old Tree Contest strives each year to locate Davidson County’s largest and most notable specimen trees. The foundation has done an outstanding job highlighting the importance of the largest trees in the county and providing an opportunity for public education on the value of trees in our everyday lives and Tennessee’s largest metropolitan city. Thank you, Nashville Tree Foundation!

This year, we are submitting two trees located on a two-acre parcel acquired by Friends of Radnor Lake in May 2018. What would have likely been a developed lot with a new “McMansion” is now on course to be forever under state protection. Thank you, Friends of Radnor Lake!

Given our partnership with Friends of Radnor Lake, adjoining landowners, the Land Trust for Tennessee and other conservation partners, the Big Old Tree Contest provides an opportunity for us all to reflect on those iconic trees and the land they support as they were saved—forever.



Radnor Lake staff members have participated in this nomination event numerous times during the past 20 years. Many of you who have attended one of our Harris Ridge Hikes have seen first-hand the 2016 award-winning Tulip Poplar, which was nominated by our friend, John Froschauer and Ranger Paul Schauer.

Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the 1971 Natural Preservation Act

Mark your calendar for May 1, 2021!

Events are currently being planned across the State of Tennessee, including at Radnor Lake State Natural Area, to mark this historic event. And yes, you can count on many of these events and hikes to focus on those Big Old Trees that are now protected forever thanks to the leadership of Governor Dunn and the blanket of protection provided by the State Natural Areas Preservation Act of 1971.

Photo courtesy of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation



Doug Heffington (Henderson State University) leading an interpretive hike for park visitors to the 2015 Big Tree Contest award-winning Tulip Poplar on Harris 2 Tract.

Finding endangered and rare plant species, historical features, or one of these champion trees on newly acquired tracts of land further highlights the importance of our land acquisition efforts at Radnor Lake. It also shows the value of the foresight and vision of the 1971 State Natural Areas Preservation Act that provides a blanket of protection on every acre of land at Radnor Lake and every Big Old Tree, ensuring that millions of Tennesseans now and forever will be able to enjoy these big old trees in our state parks and state natural areas.



Dr. Robert Loeb (Penn State University) with a future Big Tree Nomination Candidate on the Cheek Tract.

As Dr. Heffington of Henderson State University, who has led our historical-cultural research at Radnor Lake for the past 20 years, has taught us, everything from our land acquisition hikes to our interpretive focus on the natural area is that these unique trees help create a “sense of place” for supporting our mission of protecting Radnor Lake long-term.

Likewise, our vegetative research with Dr. Loeb of Penn State University over the past 15 years also continues to help us put a time measure

on these big old trees, adding to our environmental education efforts and is also critical in our current planning efforts for the Harris Ridge Trail Project, which will highlight trees such as the award winning tulip poplar.

Perhaps there is no more fitting time to acknowledge these big old Radnor trees than this year. In May, we will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the State Natural Areas Preservation Act of 1971.



Ranger Dameon Fontenot measures a big old tree (Tulip Poplar) for Nashville Tree Foundation Nomination in 2021.

Rachel Carson Day at Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center

By Steve Ward | Photos by Steve Ward



On May 27, 2020, we celebrated our first Rachel Carson Day at the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center at Radnor Lake. This event was our first public interpretive program, limited to eight participants, to officially re-open the aviary center following the March 2020 temporary park closure due to COVID-19.

Rachel Carson, born May 27, 1907, began her career as an aquatic biologist in the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries and became a full-time nature writer in the 1950s. In 1962, Carson's book "Silent Spring" was released and helped shaped the mindset of current day environmental professionals across the world. Her ability to articulate the scientific argument, specifically the depth of the harmful effects of pesticides such as DDT on birds of prey, was groundbreaking. Without a doubt, we see the benefits of her research and writing today. "Silent Spring" brought environmental concerns to an unprecedented share of the American public and is understood as a distinct turning point in the conservation mindset regarding protecting our environment.

Now, 58 years later, we could not think of a more fitting event for us to reopen the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center in 2020 that aligns with the focus and commitment by Friends of Radnor Lake, the Barbara J. Mapp Foundation and the State of Tennessee partnership as we work together to provide high-quality care at this unique interpretive programming venue for captive birds of prey that cannot survive in the wild on their own due to permanent injuries.

Rachel Carson Day (May 27) will be an annual event for us at the Barbara J. Mapp Aviary Education Center.



Aviary assistant Mackenzie Maness conducting an interpretive program on Rachel Carson Day with our captive Great Horned Owl.

Mack Prichard Lifelong Environmentalist

by Ann Tidwell



Mack Prichard died on April 29, 2020. The world lost a lifelong conservationist. Radnor Lake lost a best friend! Mack was a born naturalist. He combined a jovial personality with a contagious passion for the environment, an amazing memory, and a natural eloquence.

Mack began to influence others very early in life. At 15 years old, he gave a talk in favor of preserving Parkin Mound, an ancient Indian mound in Arkansas. His reasoning convinced the owner of the property to donate the entire site to the state to be preserved. At 16, Mack was hired as a seasonal naturalist at Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park in Memphis. His talent with people and projects promoted him to a succession of increasingly important positions in Tennessee State Parks—first in the State Park Educational Services, and then, when he helped establish the Tennessee Archeology Department, he was appointed to be the first Tennessee State Archeologist.

Throughout his career, Mack worked tirelessly introducing people to the importance of nature. Betty Prichard Dunn was a cousin of Mack's, and when Winfield Dunn was elected governor, Mack began a personal campaign to introduce Gov. Dunn, a fellow Memphian, to the hidden wonders of the Cumberland Mountains, and the necessity of preserving their natural treasures. Mack convinced the busy governor and other leaders to go with him on several hiking and horseback expeditions into the Cumberland wilderness. All were amazed and inspired! These trips led Gov. Dunn to propose the Natural Areas Act, which would forever preserve treasured landscapes. The act was signed four months after Gov. Dunn's inauguration in the spring of 1971. Mack Prichard was chosen to lead this new division identifying, procuring and administering these sites.

Two years later, when Radnor Lake was to be drained and the surrounding land developed into subdivisions, Mack met with concerned citizens who formed the Radnor Lake Preservation Fund. The group held many strategy meetings, met with the governor, Congressional and General Assembly leaders, conservation groups and many others. The group had but a few weeks to raise in excess of \$3 million, a huge amount in 1973. The day before the deadline, we made it. With federal, state and private donors responding, we "Saved Radnor Lake!"

Ever since, Mack was one of Radnor Lake's strongest and most constant supporters. He served on the first board of advisors and continued to be an active advisor until his death. He was a prepared and forceful speaker whenever asked. He not only came to countless meetings, art shows and award ceremonies, he always came with his camera, documenting the occasion for posterity. Friends of Radnor Lake honored him with a well-deserved Environmentalist of the Year Award.

Other environmental groups benefited from Mack's time, influence and advice. He was a founder of the Tennessee Trails Association, Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association, and Cumberland River Compact. He was a longtime board member of the South Cumberland Regional Land Trust and Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation (now TennGreen Land Conservancy). For decades, as Tennessee's State Naturalist, Mack traveled the state, speaking, meeting and always entertaining and inspiring. As Randy Hedgepath so eloquently said, "Everyone who loves the natural beauty, biological diversity and fascinating history of Tennessee owes a debt of gratitude to Mack Prichard!"



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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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Kroger Community Rewards

Sign up at kroger.com. Choose WP565 Friends of Radnor Lake, and all your Kroger purchases will pay rewards!



TN Specialty License Plate Program

Radnor Lake specialty license plates show your loyalty and provide funding for park support. Search "specialty license plates" at tn.gov for more information.