



MANADA

CONSERVANCY

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Woodlands and Wildlife for Future Generations

By Jennifer Dunlap, *Land Protection Director*

This spring, Manada Conservancy added another 40 acres of woodland to its growing list of protected properties thanks to landowner Jay Megonnell. Having grown up in the area, Jay has a special appreciation for the protection of Pennsylvania's woodlands. Jay served for twelve years on West Hanover Township's Board of Supervisors and is a member of the municipality's Environmental Advisory Council. He continues to give back as a current member of the Dauphin County Woodland Owners Association Board of Directors.

His patch of forest is diverse in habitats with healthy Eastern



Hemlock, American Holly, Eastern White Pine, and a variety of oak species, as well as vernal pools and headwaters to Fishing Creek. While walking the property, Manada staff spotted a Barred owl which adds to the extensive list of wildlife

the landowner has seen over the years including regularly visiting black bears, raccoons, flying squirrels, and a wide variety of birds.

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A Letter From The Executive Director

Toward the northern edge of Pennsylvania, a few hours up the Susquehanna River from Harrisburg, sits a little town called Towanda. There, the river, town,

and people alike live in the shadow of the Endless Mountains. Rising from the eastern shore is a peak locally known as "Tip-Top." Indiscernible from the riverside is a small overlook: a clearing at the mountaintop with old Christmas lights strung between the trees and a dilapidated camper rusting away. My friends and I would make our way there at night in an old side-by-side, long after the stars came out.

This is a portrait of where I grew up; it was from that inconspicuous overlook that I watched the valley I called home change.

For years, I thought back on the way that valley became less natural and more developed over time and wished there had been something someone could've done. Farms became power plants, woodlands became gas pads, and now, the words "data center" are common in local discourse. It has always been difficult to think back on my childhood home and wonder whether more could've been done to protect it. But what could I have done? In my youth, I believed there was no organization that would ever concern itself with preserving places like this on a regional level.

Then, I learned of Manada Conservancy.

At the time, I hardly knew what a land trust was, but I quickly learned enough to become enamored. I still remember sitting on a bench between delivering undergraduate lectures and watching a webinar from one of Manada's founders, Sally Zaino, as she explained conservation easements. I couldn't shake the thought that this was exactly the sort of organization my home had needed; it needed people willing to protect land not just for today, but forever.

When we are children, adults often ask us what we want to be when we grow up. Had I known that leading an organization like Manada was an option, my five-year-old answer to that question would have been simple: "I want to be the Executive Director of a land trust."

Thankfully, I know now. Today, I have the privilege of working to ensure that the people of Dauphin County never have to look back on the places they love and wonder what more could've been done to preserve them.

Your support of Manada Conservancy means a great deal to us as an organization, but part of me will always be that boy who didn't have a "Manada," and he just wants to say, "Thank you."

Logan Andrew Daly
Executive Director

STAFF



Jennifer Dunlap
Land Protection Director



Chris Silvis
Director of Finance



Caitlin Troxell
Outreach Specialist

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The property is also home to Dauphin County's largest hybrid chestnut tree as registered in the PA Champion Tree Program through the Pennsylvania Forestry Association.

Completion of this project also marks another for the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, formerly known as the Army Compatible Use Buffer program (ACUB). In partnership with program administrators, the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, REPI serves to prevent encroaching development and protect the dark skies and flight path necessary for military training operations around Fort Indiantown Gap, one of the country's busiest National Guard training sites.

Fort Indiantown Gap (FIG) extends from the Kittatinny Ridge, a landscape highly prioritized for protection due to its global significance as a migratory

flyway, contiguous forest and wildlife habitat, and climate resiliency. In addition to its natural resource value, both the FIG and Letterkenny military installations are located within the landscape. Because of this, in 2024, the Kittatinny Ridge received federal recognition as a Sentinel Landscape, further supporting conservation of this critical landscape.

For a landowner who already wished to see his property protected for future generations, a conservation easement with Manada Conservancy through the REPI program was an easy decision.

It is Jay's hope that the property will someday be available for public use with rustic recreational trails and an environmental education center for which he has given the name MECA, the Megonnell Environmental Conservation Area.

Swatara Creek Collaborative

Preserving Land. Protecting Water. Together.

An open partnership working across the Swatara Creek Watershed to ensure a thriving future for nature and people alike.

Manada Conservancy, in partnership with the Swatara Watershed Association, is proud to introduce the Swatara Creek Collaborative a strengthened regional effort focused on conservation of the Swatara Creek and land along it.



This Collaborative has goals to unite conservation organizations, municipalities, and local residents around a shared goal: safeguarding the health of the Swatara Creek watershed. Through coordinated efforts, the group aims to restore wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and preserve open space within the watershed.

Spanning approximately 571 square miles across central Pennsylvania, the Swatara Creek watershed flows into the Susquehanna

River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, making its protection vital not only locally but far beyond.

The Collaborative recently hosted its first connected event through participating in Swatara Watershed Association's annual Swatara Sojourn on May 2, bringing partners and community members together on the water to celebrate and support this important initiative.



Manada Conservancy Volunteer Corps.

In nature, everything is connected; nothing happens without involvement from the surrounding biotic community. Conservation work bears some similarity in that being good stewards of the resources and landscapes around us cannot be carried out by a single individual. It is a community effort. Manada Conservancy knows this well, as our decades of conservation work have always been supported by an indispensable part of our community: volunteers.

This year, we are taking steps to strengthen and expand volunteer engagement across the organization. As part of that effort, we are updating our volunteer database, reconnecting with past volunteers, and creating new opportunities for community involvement.

If you have volunteered with Manada in the past, we would love to reconnect with you. And if you are interested in getting involved for the very first time, we invite you to reach out and learn more.

Volunteer opportunities may include:

- Serving on organizational committees
- Event support and coordination
- Educational programming and outreach
- Stewardship and trail workdays
- Photography and communications support
- Office and administrative assistance
- Native planting and habitat restoration projects

Conservation has always depended on people willing to invest their time and energy into protecting the places they love. We hope you will consider joining us in that work.

Nature Inspires Art

This September, experience the beauty of the local landscapes through the eyes of talented regional artists at Manada Conservancy's Plein Air Event. "Plein air," a French term meaning "in the open air," celebrates the tradition of painting outdoors and capturing nature in real time. Throughout the event, artists will create original works inspired by the rolling fields, forest, and scenic views offered at the Pronio Family Farm.

Guests are invited to spend the day at a preserved Manada Conservancy farm while enjoying art, nature, and family-friendly activities. Visitors can watch artists at work, meet participating painters, and take part in scheduled events throughout the day, including a nature journaling workshop and activities for children. Landowners interested in learning about options to protect their land are invited to attend!

Whether you are an art enthusiast, nature lover, or simply looking for an inspiring community event, the Plein Air Event offers something for everyone. Join us this September and experience how conservation inspires creativity,



Learn more and register
here!

Landowner Video Series

Manada Conservancy is pleased to share our Landowner Video Series on YouTube, offering an inside look at the people and places behind local land conservation within the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape.

Each video highlights why landowners choose to protect their properties and how those decisions help preserve the rural character, working landscapes, and natural resources that define our region. From multi-generational connections to the land to forward-looking stewardship goals, these stories reflect the shared commitment that unites our community in conservation.

In one story, a landowner reflects on the lasting peace of knowing a beloved forest, filled with wildlife, streams, and personal history, will remain undeveloped for future generations. Moments like these capture what conservation truly means: not just protecting land, but preserving a way of life and a sense of place.

Watch the full series on YouTube and hear directly from the landowners whose choices continue to shape and safeguard the landscape we all value.

Check out the
series here!



This project was supported by Audubon.

MANADA CONSERVANCY PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION

Partners in Preservation have protected land with Manada Conservancy

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Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation

Learning Through Nature



Take Learning Outside with Nature Backpacks

Bring learning outdoors with our new nature backpacks for kids, now available for checkout at the Middletown and Alexander Libraries in the Dauphin County Library System!

Each backpack is designed to spark curiosity and encourage hands-on exploration, with a unique nature theme: Air and Sky, Insects, Trees, and Birds. Inside you'll find books, activities, games, and tools like binoculars to help young explorers connect with the world around them.

Perfect for families, these backpacks make it easy to turn any walk, park visit, or backyard into an exciting learning adventure. Stop by the library to check one out and start exploring!



Read and Explore Outdoors

Families are invited to enjoy the outdoors and a good story at the new StoryWalk® located at East Hanover Township Nature Park!

This self-guided experience combines reading and nature by placing pages of a children's book along a walking path, perfect for kids and caregivers to enjoy together at their own pace. It's a great way to build literacy skills while getting fresh air and staying active.

The current featured story is Backyard Critters and Creatures by Cheryl Johnson, a fun and engaging look at the animals you might spot right in your own backyard.

Stop by, take a stroll, and see what critters you can discover along the way!



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Dauphin County Woodland Owners Assoc.
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Horse-Shoe Trail Conservancy

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☐ RENEWAL MEMBER

Manada Conservancy is a 501(c)3 organization. Our tax identification #25-1784517.

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☐ I HAVE INCLUDED MANADA CONSERVANCY IN MY LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLANS.

☐ PLEASE CALL ME TO DISCUSS PLANNED GIVING OPTIONS.

☐ I WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER; PLEASE CONTACT ME.

THANK YOU!



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING 2026 EVENTS

Check our website, Eventbrite page, your inbox, and future newsletters for details about these and other events!

August 11, Conservation at the Carsonville 6pm - 8pm | Carsonville Hotel

3176 Powells Valley Rd, Halifax, PA 17032

An evening with five-time NASCAR Cup winner and wildlife conservationist Ward Burton. Dinner included.

September 3 | Conservation on the Kittatinny 7pm - 8pm | East Hanover Township Building

Learn about the ecological importance of the Kittatinny Ridge and why protecting it matters. Free education program.

September 12, Plein Air at Pronio Farm 10am - 4pm | Pronio Farm

Join us for a special day of outdoor painting, children's activities, and food at the beautifully preserved Pronio Family Farm.

Thanks to our education program sponsor!

