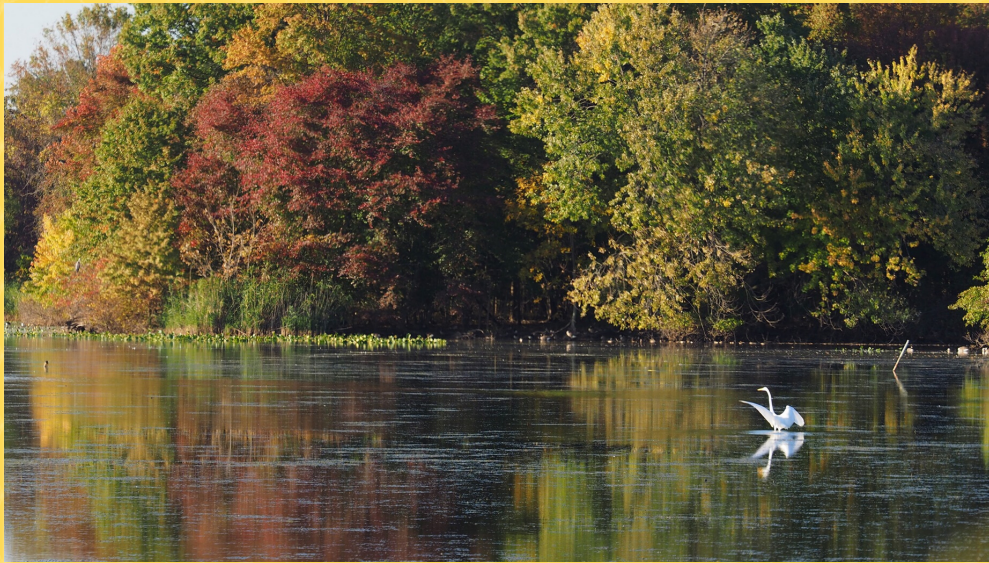


Friends of Heinz Refuge

Annual Report



Fiscal Year 2019

Our Mission

The Friends of Heinz Refuge (FOHR) is a non-profit charitable organization working in partnership with John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge to connect people with nature and promote a culture of environmental stewardship through education, outreach, service and nature-based recreation for the conservation of wildlife and habitat.

Friends of Heinz Refuge Annual Report

First and foremost, please allow the FOHR Board of Directors to thank you, our dedicated members, for your continued support each year. Without you, a great deal of what we do as a non-profit would simply be impossible. As we celebrate our 22nd year of operation, we would like to share with you some of the amazing accomplishments we have made thus far. We would also like to share some of our goals and how we can go about achieving them in the upcoming fiscal year. Let us continue to work together, hand in hand with refuge staff, to promote habitat restoration, wildlife conservation, and environmental education at the refuge. As always, we remain committed to implementing the FWS initiatives of "*Connecting People with Nature*" and, more recently, the "*Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership*."

Thank you for making our work possible!

Dear Friends,

Before we embark on a recitation of FOHR's accomplishments in the last fiscal year and a listing of our upcoming plans, we want to take a moment to reflect upon the positive effect our dedicated volunteers have had upon the programs, projects, events and services they have provided to the Heinz Refuge.

*Did you know, for example, that nationwide volunteers provide more than 20% of the work performed on National Wildlife Refuges? At Heinz, volunteers donated **7,000 hours** of service to the refuge, valued at **\$172,829**. This amount represents the cost of hiring **4 entry level staff members**.*

Volunteers who so generously share their skills may be seen everywhere on the refuge performing such varied tasks as walk leaders, photographers, reception and store personnel, Weed Warriors, working with community leaders, sponsoring annual events and more. FOHR works together with Fish & Wildlife to bring environmental education to largely underserved local communities, through funding bus transportation for thousands of school children to learn about nature and their place in it firsthand at the refuge. We helped out at Free Fishing Days, Creek Clean-ups, holding special events on Groundhog Day, summer solstice events, Urban Wildlife Refuge Day, and more.

Our volunteers provide us with credibility as we strive to add sponsors, partners, and grant funding. We could always use additional support, so kindly consider volunteering at the Heinz Refuge this year.

Sincerely,

*Jean Diehl
Co-founder of FOHR*

Sponsored by FOHR

JEAN DIEHL FIELD TRIP FUND

Formerly known as the Field Trip Bus Grant Program, FOHR has changed the name in honor of Jean Diehl, one of the founding members of our organization! We are excited to continue an 8-year tradition of providing busing grants for student field trips. The scope of students served ranges from gifted to special needs, with a few catering to immigrants with multiple languages; the majority are average students. Children who are fortunate enough to experience these field trips find themselves engaged in nature-related activities, begin to understand the role nature plays in their lives, and finally, gain the potential to become environmental advocates!



Refuge manager, Lamar Gore, and environmental education supervisor, Brianna Amingwa, reading books to third grade students outside



First Place Adult
Michael Dougherty
"Optimistic Osprey"

ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST

It seems hard to believe, but the Nature Photo Contest gets better every year! The FOHR Photo Group organizes this annual contest of nature images taken at the Heinz Refuge. This year, the 18th Annual Nature Photo Contest showcased the wondrous variety of the refuge with images that ranged from wide open landscapes to majestic birds to the tiniest of insects. 36 talented photographers entered their best images to the competition and the judges faced some difficult choices. Prizes were awarded in the Adult, Teen and Child categories. Once again, the Heinz Junior Ranger summer

campers competed in the children's division. New this year was the Wes Stuchlak Teen Wildlife Photography Award, given in memory of dedicated photographer Wes Stuchlak by his wife Karan. In addition, refuge staff chose the prestigious Bill Buchanan Award for the photo that best represents the Heinz Refuge, and visitors voted for the popular People's Choice Award. Congratulations to everyone who participated!

AMERICORPS VISTA PROJECT

For the first time ever, FOHR has decided to sponsor an Americorps VISTA project! VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a federal program that provides full-time volunteers to work on projects at organizations like FOHR with the hopes of alleviating poverty within the community. Madilyn Schwer was chosen as the first Americorps VISTA member to serve with FOHR during 2019. She has agreed to serve one more year and will complete her service in October of 2020. Madilyn graduated from Penn State with a degree in Biology. She will continue to work on forming community partnerships, developing new programs and events, and securing resources. Madilyn hopes to create a sustainable foundation that will allow FOHR to continue to expand their outreach efforts indefinitely.



Madilyn facilitating the TreePhilly giveaway in April 2019

Sponsored by FOHR

ANNUAL GROUNDHOG DAY FESTIVAL

February 2nd, 2019

The 10th Annual Groundhog Day Festival brought a record number of visitors (we're talking hundreds!) to the Heinz Refuge this year to learn about weather and winter wildlife. There were activities for all ages including wildlife walks, arts & crafts, and live music! We had support from several partners including the Philadelphia Zoo with a live animal program, The Franklin Institute with programs on shadows and weather, and L.L. Bean. The festival concluded with a singing processional to the groundhog burrow. Everyone booted when our mascot, Tincum Tim, predicted six more weeks of winter. This event was entirely funded by FOHR. Thank you to our volunteers for making this day a success!



Larry leading the singing processional to the groundhog burrow



Deanna leading a Sun Salutation

ANNUAL SUMMER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL

June 22nd, 2019

The 3rd Annual Summer Solstice Festival took place during the evening and attracted more people than ever before! Visitors came out to enjoy the beautiful weather along with food, activities, and live music organized by FOHR. The event opened with a beautiful Yoga Sun Salutation led by Deanna Santiago. Under the pavilion, people took part in face painting and bubble blowing while listening to live music by Glen Waldeck. As dusk approached, L.L. Bean led a special paddle for a limited number of attendees on a first come, first served basis. We look forward to continuing this new tradition for many years to come!

ANNUAL MONARCH DASH 5K

September 28th, 2019

This year, FOHR held their 2nd Annual Monarch Dash 5K right before the Annual Philly Fall Nature Festival. The race took place in the morning with a total of 85 participants, an increase from last year's participation! NovaCare provided snacks and answered orthopedic questions about aches and pains. The race was professionally timed by Bryn Mawr Racing Company and an award ceremony was held afterwards with prizes for top place winners. Following the race, participants were encouraged to join in Philly Fall Nature Fest activities. A huge thank you to L.L. Bean for being a sponsor!



Participants running along a beautiful refuge trail during the Monarch Dash 5K

Our Role as a Friends Group

FWS employs a myriad of programs, projects, and events in order to accomplish the congressionally mandated goals set for the Heinz Refuge. Their mission includes implementing measures to restore habitat lost in the years immediately prior to the establishment of the refuge, to improve and maintain healthy habitats, and to provide environmental education and compatible recreation opportunities for the public. The available funds to accomplish these tasks are often limited by the federal budget. Therefore, FOHR's monetary support for FWS programs, projects, and events makes it more feasible for the Heinz Refuge to accomplish their goals. Aside from direct monetary assistance, FOHR also provides countless volunteer hours in support of FWS's mission and we publicize refuge programs and events through our newsletter, e-bulletin, Facebook page, and website. We are proud to be volunteers and proud that we make a meaningful impact!

Donations to FOHR directly support programs, projects, and events at the refuge. Together we are stronger and can make a huge difference in the world!

Supported By FOHR

PHILLY NATURE KIDS (PNK)

In the 2017 annual report, FOHR announced that we had received a two-year grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection totaling just under 50K to continue and expand the Heinz Refuge's PNK Program. Funding from this grant provided the refuge with lesson and project materials, iPods, bus funding, and professional development workshops for teachers. This year, a PNK school, Patterson Elementary, was recognized in The Philadelphia Tribune for notably increased PSSA science test scores! Obtaining grants for the purpose of promoting environmental education and stewardship to our youth is just one example of the work FOHR does in support of the refuge and surrounding community.

SUMMER CAMP

This year, the refuge provided multiple opportunities for full day programming through three summer camp sessions. Two sessions of three-day Junior Ranger Camps were held with registration open to the entire community. Many local youth from Delaware and Philadelphia County were able to attend. One additional three-day camp was also held for students who graduated from the PNK program. All camps provided opportunities for students to immerse themselves in the outdoors and learn outdoor skills like archery, fishing, and kayaking. **FOHR supports this program by providing snacks and bus transportation.**

GUIDED WALKS

One of the first programs established at the refuge was FREE guided walks staffed by volunteer naturalists. These walks touch on a variety of topics including birds, plants, butterflies, photography and physical fitness. Occasional evening walks have been added to the schedule, much to our visitors' delight. Some walk leaders have been volunteering since the program began, while others continue to be added as time goes on. **FOHR supports this program by providing volunteer leaders.**

WEED WARRIORS PROGRAM

Weed Warriors continue to wage a never-ending war against invasive plant species at the refuge. This year, the Weed Warriors focused on removing Japanese honeysuckle, Japanese knotweed, Japanese hop, Phragmites, thistle, and purple loosestrife at the refuge. The program also works on replacing invasive plant species with native plant species. **FOHR supports this program by providing volunteers and promoting the program.**

Supported By FOHR

DARBY CREEK CLEANUP

April 20th, 2019

The Darby Creek Cleanup is one of the largest events organized by the Heinz Refuge. This major cleanup event is celebrated in recognition of Earth Day and is sponsored by our partner, Darby Creek Valley Association. The cleanup is always scheduled at low tide to allow volunteers to have access to the refuge's mudflats. The refuge is a recipient of storm borne trash traveling downstream and tidal borne trash sweeping in from the Delaware River. In both cases, much of the trash settles onto our mudflats and remains there until someone comes along to pick it up. As a result, cleaning up the refuge is an ongoing challenge. Despite the rain this year, we had 90 enthusiastic volunteers from Student Conservation Association, PennEnvironment, Trash Academy, Tree Philly, and of course, Friends of Heinz Refuge! We were able to clear more than 8,000 lbs of trash, but the reality is that there is so much more to do. While cleanups are very much needed, the solution to trash will take more action. **FOHR supports this annual event by providing volunteers, providing lunch, and promoting the event.**



Volunteers pulling a large plastic pool and children's vehicle from Tinicum marsh



WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

May 11th, 2019

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) highlights the importance of international efforts to conserve birds through agreements, laws, treaties, and collaborations. WMBD was celebrated at the Heinz Refuge this year with guided bird and nature walks scheduled every hour all day for the public. The 2019 conservation theme was "Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution." WMBD is the only international education program that highlights and celebrates the migration of nearly 350 species of migratory birds between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in Latin America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. **FOHR supports this annual event by providing volunteer guides, selling WMBD t-shirts, and promoting the event.**

ANNUAL PHILLY FALL NATURE FESTIVAL

September 28th, 2019

The Philly Fall Nature Fest is a great tradition that the Heinz Refuge has upheld for many years now. The refuge hosts approximately 1,000 people at this event with the help of volunteers, partners, exhibitors, and refuge staff. Festivities include trolley rides, kayaking, archery, fishing, guided tours, and nature crafts. The FOHR Photo Group announces the winners of their Annual Nature Photo Contest during this event. These photos can be accessed on our Facebook page. This year, the Philly Fall Nature Fest was celebrated in conjunction with Urban National Wildlife Refuge Day which recognizes the 101 urban refuges located across the country. The day turned out to be the largest festival to date! **FOHR supports this annual event by providing volunteers, promoting the event, and covering the cost of the food, exhibitors, and trolley.**

Our Latest Projects

SUMMER VISTA

FOHR welcomed another Americorps VISTA, Gracia Fuentes, to work with us for 10 weeks over the summer. Gracia worked with Madilyn, our full-time Americorps VISTA, to improve the FOHR Nature Store. She was primarily responsible for bringing local and sustainable products into the store and structuring a business plan. Gracia is currently studying Management Information Systems at Penn State and has experience in business management due to her parents being entrepreneurs. Serving as a summer VISTA gave Gracia the opportunity to gain further experience in business. Farewell, Gracia!



Gracia getting her face painted at the Summer Solstice Festival

MARKETING PLAN FOR DELAWARE VALLEY FRIENDS ORGANIZATIONS

FOHR was awarded just over \$13,000 by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to develop a marketing plan for Delaware Valley Friends organizations, including Friends of Bombay Hook and Friends of Forsythe. Ultimately, this project will help Friends groups, locally and regionally, bring awareness to their organizations, increase membership and fundraising, and develop an identity separate from their refuge partners. Meetings will be held between Friends groups to collaborate on a strategic marketing plan with assistance from a hired marketing consultant. All meetings will be free and open to the public. As a member, we highly encourage you to participate in these meetings to offer insight and perspective. Meeting dates and times are to be determined.



Our Commitment to Community

The **Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition (EFNC)** was formed in response to the threat of high-density residential development on a 128-acre tract of land immediately adjacent to the Heinz Refuge. After lots of hard work, the coalition has gained respect and support including that of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA). The coalition has consistently attended PRA and City Planning Commission meetings to remain engaged in the process of planning potential uses for the 128-acre tract. As a community partner, FOHR board members have attended Public Land Strategy meetings where residents and other supporters demonstrate strength in numbers as well as our dedication in keeping our public lands safe from misuse. On October 25th, 2018, EFNC held their 4th public meeting to address any comments and concerns related to the Eastwick Public Land Strategy recommendations that were presented at the public meeting on July 26th, 2018. EFNC greatly urged all Eastwick residents and supporters to submit comments to the plan before the deadline of the 90-day public comment period. It is of vital importance to the refuge and the residents of the Eastwick community that potential site development be planned with their best interests in mind to assure the well-being of both the refuge and Eastwick in the future.



Recognition

FRIENDS OF HEINZ REFUGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jaclyn Rhoads, *President*
Jeannette Guess, *Vice President*
Lynn Roman, *Secretary*
Dick Carroll, *Treasurer*
Jean Diehl, *Honorary Board Member*
Ann Faulds
Carol Armstrong
Fran Miller
Ron Miller
Thomas Koger

FRIENDS OF HEINZ REFUGE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Alliance for Watershed Education (AWE)	PennFuture
Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed (CDRW)	Pennsylvania Audubon Society
Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA)	Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC)
Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN)	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition (EFNC)	Pennsylvania Game Commission
Friends of Bombay Hook	Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Friends of Forsythe	Pennsylvania Sea Grant
L.L. Bean	Philadelphia Zoo
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
National Wildlife Federation (NWF)	Student Conservation Association (SCA)
National Wildlife Refuge Association	The Franklin Institute
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters (NJLCV)	TreePhilly
Patterson Elementary School	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
Penrose Elementary School	Volunteering Untapped PHL

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John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge (JHNWR)

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The Philadelphia Tribune
Michael Dougherty
Madilyn Schwer

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Jeff Linder (Photo Group member)

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JHNWR
birdday.org

Page 7

Jeff Linder
Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition