

MARSH MUSINGS

The latest news and updates from Friends of Heinz Refuge

Friends of Heinz Refuge Annual Report



Photo by Matt Cohen

Fiscal Year 2025

Our Mission

"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." (Revised 2/20/14)

Message from our President



Dear Friends,

Greetings as we welcome our new fiscal year. Unfortunately, our year started with a government shutdown that has had a direct impact on the programs and services provided by the John Heinz Wildlife Refuge (JHNWR). This included furloughed staff, the closure of the Visitor's Center, and the indefinite postponement of activities and events. The good news is that we have reopened and can now get back to the business of serving our

community. Now, more than ever, we need and appreciate your support! Throughout the year, our supporters have been instrumental in helping us maintain open space, wildlife recreation, outdoor recreation, and educational programs at the Refuge. All the programs and services at the Refuge are provided free of charge to the public, and your support of FOHR is critical to help maintain these services. In addition, we host or sponsor community events during the year. This includes annual events such as: Spooktacular, Groundhog Day, Earth Day Darby Creek Clean-up, Summer Solstice, Fall River Fest, and our annual photo contest "Nature in Focus." We continue to help underwrite the cost of the Refuge's flagship education program, Philly Nature Kids (PNK) and have received funding through grants to underwrite the programs' transportation costs. Again, this year, we participated in the Walk for the Wild and the second annual Delco Gives Day. All of these programs and activities provide the greater community with the opportunity to enjoy all that nature has to offer in the wonderful space at JHNWR.

At our recent Annual Meeting, we welcomed three new members to our board and three returning members. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to those individuals who have served on our board for their commitment of time, talent, and treasure to our organization. We also have a team of volunteers who support our efforts, including our volunteer manager and sales support at our Nature Store. Over the last few years, the store has added new inventory, and our revenue has increased, a direct benefit to the Refuge. Our programs operate solely on grants, individual donations (gifts and memberships), and proceeds from our store. Supporters like you do so much to continue educating the public, bringing new visitors, participating in cleaning up the Refuge from refuse and plastic pollution, and restoring critical areas like our tidal marsh.

Please consider becoming a member or making a new or additional donation this year. Gifts of all sizes are welcome. Please visit our website for information on how to make a gift online at www.fohrefuge.org or by mail to FOHR, P.O. Box 333, Folcroft, PA 19032.

Thank you for being a supporter of the Friends and our efforts to be a protector of open spaces for all who live, work, and visit our community.

I hope you will enjoy our review of this year's activities.

With my best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season from all your Friends at Heinz Refuge.

Sincerely,

Mary

Mary Batt, President FOHR

Annual Events Sponsored by FOHR Walk for the Wild 2024



Contributions are used for land water restorations, child and public environmental education, experiences in a wild environment, and support for wildlife diversity.




The 2024 Walk for the Wild campaign held in October 2024, raised more than \$1,685.12 to benefit programs at the Refuge supported by the Friends including Philly Nature Kids, a program that provides school year and summer camp environmental education to children from the local public schools.

Spooktacular 2024

On Thursday, October 26, 2023, more than 700 people got into the spirit, and costumes, to paint pumpkins, shoot archery, make spooky crafts, and walk the Trick or Treat Trail! Refreshments were provided by FOHR.



Annual Meeting November 2, 2024



The Friends of Heinz Refuge (FOHR) celebrated our 28th Annual Members Meeting and Election event at the Heinz Refuge! FOHR President, Mary Batt, welcomed members, guests and speakers on 11/2/2024. It was our pleasure to unanimously elect new board members. Welcome to our newest Board Member, Julia Volz, and returning Board Members and Jaclyn Rhoads and Lynn Roman.

Thank you to the 400+ people who gathered at the Refuge to celebrate at our annual Groundhog Day Festival! We had a great time making groundhog crafts, learning about wildlife winter adaptations, and drawing ducks. Special thanks to Philadelphia Metro Wildlife Center for bringing live rescued animals, to the Friends of Heinz Wildlife Refuge for providing pretzels, cookies and cider, and to Glenn Waldeck for the lively music! Tincicum Tim saw his shadow predicting six more weeks of winter!

Groundhog Day 2025

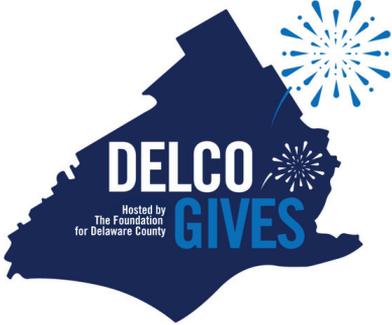


Earth Day Clean-Up April 13, 2025

More than 75 volunteers helped at the Earth Day Creek Cleanup on April 13, 2025! Volunteers donned chest waders and eliminated more than 5,000 pounds of plastic from Darby Creek at the Refuge. The Friends of Heinz Refuge provided pizza for lunch!



Delco Gives Day



The Friends of Heinz Refuge was one of more than 300 local non-profit organizations participating in the 2nd Annual Delco Gives Day, a 24-hour fundraising event that celebrates Delaware County's people and organizations and encourages people to donate to local organizations. Nearly \$2,000 was raised to help underwrite the cost of events sponsored by FOHR. Join us for the 3rd Annual Event next year, May 6 – 7, 2026, from 7 PM – 7 PM.

FOHR Plastic Reduction Working Group Highlights from FY25

***In 2025 we were successful in applying to the Philadelphia Tire Roundup program, which will accept the abandoned tires found in the Refuge at a Philadelphia-located site.**

***We researched for the Refuge staff the characteristics and types of natural ropes that are most stable in marine and aquatic environments that can be used to replace plastic ropes that degrade into microplastics.**

***We provided a talk on the Impacts of Microplastics in Our Bodies to a community meeting sponsored by Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition, that was held at the Refuge.**

***We tabled at two Refuge events about how plastics are degraded by sunlight (Summer Solstice) and on the impacts on aquatic and marine animals (Fall Festival). We will continue to have educational materials for adults and children on different topics regarding plastic waste for display at Refuge events.**

***We provided information to the Cobbs Creek Ambassadors about the impacts of plastic waste within the Refuge, and the data we have on the density of plastic waste in the riparian zone in the upstream Darby and Cobbs Creeks.**

Summer Solstice June 20, 2025

Many families and friends joined us on June 20, 2025, for a fun evening of free archery, live music, nature programs, food and more to celebrate the Summer Solstice. This event is sponsored annually by the Friends of Heinz. Look for our next Solstice event in June 2026.



Philly Nature Kids (PNK)



Last year, 125 students participated in the Refuge's flagship environmental education program, Philly Nature Kids (PNK). With grant funding and donations, FOHR provided more than \$11,000 in support to cover the cost of busing, special project funds, and support for school events. Every 4th grader at two Title 1 elementary schools, less than two miles away from the Refuge, John M. Patterson Elementary and Penrose School, participate in monthly Ranger-led science lessons in their classroom and monthly visits to the Refuge. Philly Nature Kids visit the Refuge nine times per year, allowing them to see the Refuge change each season and directly observe phenomena like migration and decomposition. This year PNK celebrated their 10th Anniversary at our Annual Summer Solstice Event!



Field Trips/Transportation



Transportation is frequently a barrier to accessing all the benefits that nature can provide for students. The Friends of Heinz Refuge (FOHR) helps to remove that barrier for local students by providing bus scholarships for schools to visit and learn at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. Last year, FOHR dedicated more than \$10,000 in bus funding, to Title 1 schools and after school programs in designated environment justice areas to visit the Refuge. These trips allowed students to access all that JHNWR has to offer and served more than 1,000 PreK-12th grade students in Philadelphia and Delaware Counties. The cost per bus averages \$325.

Philly Fall Nature Fest



Hundreds came out to celebrate Fall with all day archery, fishing, birding at the boardwalk, guided walks, nature crafts, resource tables, food, and music! Thank you to Philly Metro Wildlife Center, Elmwood Park Zoo, and others for providing interesting presentations for our visitors. The winners from this year's photo contest were also announced.

JOIN US



A Special Holiday Shopping and Membership Event!

Saturday, December 6th, 9 am to 3 pm

Nature in Focus FOHR 2025 Photography Competition & Exhibition

Our annual photo contest, "Nature in Focus," was held from April 1, 2025 through August 10, 2025. Photographers of all ages were invited to submit entries, and more than 92 adult, teen, and children photographers participated in the event.

All entries were reviewed by our competition judge, Julia Holz, board member and professional photographer.

Winners were announced at our awards event on September 13, 2025, during the "Philly Fall Nature Fest." Additionally, visitors to the Photo Exhibition had the opportunity to vote for the People's Choice Award during this period.

Congratulations to all of our participants and thank you to the FOHR Photography Committee led by Board Member Matt Cohen. Look for Information on our 2026 event early this spring.



Ike Bostic, Teen - Best Wildlife



**Barbara Holland
Adult Best Animal**



**Jerry Flynn
Most Artistic**



**Steve Docimo, Adult
Best Bird**



**Charles Ragucci
Honorable Mention**



**Lucy Swainson, Child
1st Place Wildlife**



**Finnegan Grimble, Child
1st Place Nature**

Winners 2025 Nature in Focus

Adult – Best Bird Steve Docimo All Dressed Up	Teen – Best Bird Luca Asteriti Red Eye	Child 1 st Place – Wildlife Lucy Swainson Butterfly Art
Adult – Best Animal Barbara Holland Duskywing Butterfly	Teen – Best Animal Ike Bostic Turtle on the Path	Child 2 nd Place – Wildlife Maggie Swainson Patriotic Swallow
Adult – Best Landscape Kathleen Combs Summer Fire	Teen – Best Landscape Eva Hopkins Bench in Greenery	Child 3 rd Place – Wildlife Sidaarth Ghatta A Hopeful Bird
Adult – Best Nature Erica Smith Foggy Double Exposure	Teen – Best Nature Eva Hopkins Birds from Binoculars	Child 1 st Place – Nature Finnegan Grimble Bird Over the Refuge
People’s Choice Award Collin Free First One Awake	Bill Buchanan Award Maureen Dwyer Foggy Morning	Child 2 nd Place – Nature Nathan Scudder Up A Tree
Funniest Photo Jaqueline Burke Did I Just Quack Myself Up	Best Macro Photo Evan Harra Floral Fixation	Child 3 rd Place – Nature Taim James Leaves and Light
Most Artistic Photo Jerry Flynn Grace in the Marsh	Honorable Mention Ethan Kang Shouldered vs. Winged	Honorable Mention Craig Hedlund The Lookout
Honorable Mention Charles Ragucci Heart of the Bloom	Honorable Mention Nicholas Wertman Reflections of the Wild	Honorable Mention Destiny McGahee A Colorful Pair

This years contest had 92 Participants, 70 adults, eight teens, and 14 children with 275 photos submitted. The exhibition included 88 of these photos, 58 from adults, 16 teen photos and 14 children’s photos.

SAVE THE DATE

Our in-person membership meeting has been rescheduled for Saturday, February 21, 2026. Look for details soon!

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025

Ms. Leslie Abreo	Mr. Nicholas Croce	Mr. Ed Gruber
Mr. John Adams	Ms. Judy Crozier	Ms. Annie W. Guertin
Ms. Sandra Adams	Ms. Melissa Curry	Ms. Jeannette Guess
Ms. Kathleen Adamson	Mr. Ronald Dawson	Ms. Katie Haas
Mr. George Ahern	Ms. Maggie Dee	The Hamilton Family Charitable Trust
Mr. Anwar Ali	Ms. Peggy deProphetis	Margaret and Ernest Hanna
Dr. Carol Armstrong	Ms. Diana DiMattia	Ms. Karen Hardy
Ms. Sarah Kate Atkins	Ms. Terry Diubaldi	Ms. Diane Harmon
National Audubon Society, Inc.	Mr. Steven Docimo	Mr. Evan Harra
Ray Holland and Elizabeth Augustine	Mr. Keith Donnellan	Ms. Dale Harris
Vince and Jim Austin-Cole	Ms. Lena Dorsey	Ms. Carol Hart
Ms. Suzanne Barton	Ms. Mary Dougherty	Ms. Amanda Hartman
Ms. Mary Batt	Jane and Gordon Downing	Peter and Janice Harvison
Ms. Deborah Beer	Ms. Catherine Doyle	Mr. Craig Hedlund
Ms. Valda Berge	Ms. Christine Du Bois-Buxbaum	Ms. Judy Heller
Ms. Jane Beriont	Ms. Elizabeth Dunford	Cliff and Nancy Hence
Mr. Jeff Berman	Ms. Lillian Dunn	Ms. Beatriz Hernaez Estrada
Ms. Christine Blidan	Ms. Maureen Dwyer	Ms. Barbara Holland
Ms. Linda Blythe	Mr. Hihn Eory	Ms. Julia Holz
Ms. Bonnie Boothroyd	Mr. Frank Erdlen	Mr. Keith B. Housley
Mark Bostic and Jodi McCormack	Mr. Noah Erkes	Ms. Pat Hoyt
Ms. Sarah Boucas-Neto	Holton and Deborah Falk	Mr. Zachary Irons
Ms. Amanda Boulton	Mr. Marcus Ferreira	Ms. Cintia Isles
Ms. Kellie Bowker	Mr. David Fiedler	Mr. Alan Jackman
Ms. Lucy Bregman	Mr. Steven Field	Ms. Barbara Jaffe
Mr. Denis Brennan	Ms. Gabrielle Field	Mr. David Jeanclos
Mr. Robert Briselli	Ms. Johannah Fine	Mr. Richard Jenks
Ms. Alexis Browsh	Mr. Jerry Flynn	Mr. Tim Johnson
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Ms. Lyvette Byrd	Ms. Joan Francis	Mr. Steve Jones
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Ms. Arlene Cessna	Ms. Michelle Franko	Mr. Orson Kachele
Joan and Joel Chinitz	Mr. Collin Free	Ms. Roberta Karmels
John Ciocco and Chauwing Lam	Mr. Hal Freedman	Ms. Alexandra Keech
Ms. Carson Connor Clark	The Hamilton Family Charitable Trust	Mr. George Keighton
Ms. Holly Clark	Mr. Sam Gardner	Mr. Scott Kemper
Ms. Lauren Pilar Cliggitt	Ms. Shanee Garner	Mr. Chris Kennelly
Ms. Patricia Coleman	Mr. Adrian Gatewood	Mr. Simon Kenyon
Ms. Marcia Coleman	Ms. Elizabeth Gemmill	Mr. Bob Kestler
Ms. Lisa Coleman	Ms. Samantha Giglio	Dr. Laurence Klugman
Ms. Bernice V. Coles	Ms. Susanna Gilbertson	Ms. Debora Kodish
The Foundation for Delaware County	Ms. Gina Gilliam	Mr. Thomas Koger
Mr. Ned Connelly	Mr. Bill Giuliano	Ms. Christine Kozak
Ms. Susan Cornell	Mr. Noah Gocial	Mr. David Krah
Ms. Juanita Cortes	Mr. Eugene Gonzalez	Mr. William Kunze
Mr. Christophe Cortès	Ms. Krista Graham	Mr. Nicholas Kuzma
Ms. Angie Cosey	Ms. Mary Therese Grob	Ms. Corinne Lagermasini

Ms. Jane Landis	The Nature Conservancy	Mr. Andy Schlosser
Mr. David Lange	Mr. Phillip Nichols	Mr. Karl Schwabe
Ms. Rachel Lanza	Mr. Alberto Nieves	Ms. Lauren Seibert
Mr. Kevin Layos	Mr. Donald Nigrone	Ms. Emily Seiter
Ms. Ponmali Le	Ms. Brenda Norris	Ms. Sophie Shah
Ms. Megan Leary	Ms. Brianna Oconnor	Ms. Lucia Shen
Ms. Debra Levy	Ms. Nancy Oetinger	Ms. Kim Sheridan
Ms. Jessica Levy	Ms. Theresa O'Malley	Mr. Phillip Siebenaler
Ms. Catherine Lindsey	Mr. Geoff Pawlikowski	Mr. Marc Silver
Stephen Lockard and Valerie Newpher	Ms. Karen Penzarella	Mr. Owen Sindler
Ms. Jillian Lopez	Ms. Samantha Petty	Jim and Mary Anne Siti
Ms. Sandy Ludwig	Ms. Magdalen Phillion	Ms. Valerie Snow
Ms. Anne Lund	Ms. Alexandrina Phoenix	Ms. Sandra Stagliano
Darien Manning	Mr. Phil Phucas	Mr. Charles Staples
Ms. Alvina Mao	Mr. Matt Pinegar	Ms. Ernie Steiner
Ms. Anna Marchini	Mr. Joshua Pirl	Ms. Judy Stepenaskie
Carl and Karin Marcus	Mr. Richard Polk	Ms. M. Stephens
Ms. Adele Margulies	Ms. Dorothy Polsz	Mr. Lawrence Stier
Lori Markusfeld and Jeffrey Cole	Mr. Robert Poole	Ms. Catherine Stock
Ms. Gina Martinelli	Ms. Elizabeth Porter	Donna and Steve Struck
Ms. Rachel Mausner	Ms. Carol Press	Ms. Karan Stuchlak
Mr. Forrest D. Mayo	Mr. Karl Preston	Mr. Owen Sugg
Ms. Elizabeth McClafferty	The Providence Garden Club of PA	Ms. Nancy Tamminga
Mr. Stephen McCoubrey	Mr. Andrew Puglionesi	Ms. Maddie Taterka
Ms. Patricia McGuire	Carla Puppini and Lawrence Lindsay	Mr. Richard Teichman
Mr. Jim McLaughlin	Mr. Rob Purpura	Ms. Laura Temple
Mr. Thomas McLean	Rand Quinn and Amy Yuen	Mr. Larry Tollen
Mr. James McNulty	Mr. Charles Ragucci	Ms. Andrea Tomaszewski
Ms. Anne Meibohm	Mr. Eric Rappaport	Mr. Nathanael Totushek
Mrs. Katherine Meng	Ms. Patricia Regojo	Mr. Jason Trenchard
Mr. Stephen Mettraux	Ms. Patty Rehn	Ms. Kathleen H. Turner
Ron and Fran Miller	Ms. Irit Reinheimer	Ms. Hilary Vadner
Ms. Julie Miller	Mr. Joe Reitz	Ms. Catherine Van de Ruit
Mr. Jeffrey Million	Mr. Al Rensbarger	Mr. Richard Wainstein
Mr. William Moses	Ms. Jaclyn Rhoads	Mr. Stephen Walker
Ms. Martha Mock	Ms. Elizabeth Rich	Ms. Elena Wapner
Mr. Andrew Mooney	Ms. Adrienne Riley	Mr. Henry Ward
Ms. Taylor Moots	Roberta Benjamin and Robert Schneider	Ms. Elizabeth Warren
Mr. Robert Morbeck	Mr. Alexander Rodgers	Ms. Susan Wetherill
Ms. Christina Moresi	Mr. Johnny Rodriguez	Bob and Theresa White
Mr. Glen Morris	Ms. Patricia Rossi	National Wildlife Foundation
Ms. Joyce Morrison	Ms. Morgan Ruelle	Brittany Williams and Erika Goslin
Ms. Mary Morton	Ms. Letitia Rushton	C. Amy and Bernard Wilson
Ms. Debbi Muenz	Ms. Maureen Rutkowski	Ms. Rachel Winslow
Mr. Andrew Muenz	Ms. Elizabeth Sabo	Mr. Tim Zechiel
Ms. Amanda Muir	Ms. Stefanie Sankey	Ms. Tara Zoltek



Our Giving Programs

Donate*

Your generous contribution will help us maintain environmental education programs, wildlife-oriented recreation, and habitat restoration projects at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum.

Sponsor a Field Trip*

Through our field trip bus grant program, we provide buses that enable students to come to the refuge for field trips. Each bus costs \$400. By sponsoring a bus, you are providing a classroom of children with an enriching experience that connects them with nature and wildlife.

Give a gift of membership*

For that friend, family member, or significant other who shares the same passion for wildlife that you do.

Join or donate online

www.fohrefuge.org

Honor a loved one

Our Leaving Legacy Program provides an opportunity for you to remember and honor a friend, family member, or significant other. We have a number of programs and projects you can support in honor of a loved one. Call 215.558-5220 or email info@fohrefuge.org to discuss what opportunities are available to you.

Matching Gift Program

Ask your employer if they have a matching gift program! If so, enclose the appropriate form with your donation.



I'd like to:

- Donate (1)
- Sponsor a field trip (2)
- Give the gift of Membership (3)

- 1) Donation Amount
\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$
- 2) Number of Buses (\$300 each)
1 bus 2 buses buses
- 3) Membership Levels

Basic*

- \$15 Duckling (student/55+ senior)
- \$25 Heron (individual)
- \$40 Monarch (family)
- \$75 Red-bellied Turtle (group)

Friends Circle*

- \$300 Merlin (sustaining)
 - \$500 Eagle (corporate sponsor)
- 4) Would you prefer physical or digital mailings?
 Digital Physical

Date _____

Contact information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Payment Method

Check enclosed made payable to
"Friends of Heinz Refuge"

Mail to: P.O. Box 333, Folcroft, Pa 19032

Charge my:

Visa MC Amex Discover

Cardholder name _____

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____ CVC _____

Thank you for your support!