



Article Reprint from

Cooks Current Newsletter

The View from Laughing Springs: Hans Reimann's environmental notes

Summer 2015

Audubon Bird Town Proposal

Rachel Carson said: "Conservation is a cause that has no end. There is no point at which we say, 'Our work is finished.'"

Wendell Berry said: "A useful exercise for an American is to ask which of our holders of office has ever spoken publicly in favor of beauty or the virtue of wilderness."

Christopher Ketcham said: "What is meant by primeval character is not up for debate. Wilderness is intended, among its other purposes, to be a refuge for wild animals and plants, where the processes of evolution, so far as we humans have observed them, are to remain unmolested and unhampered."

Can I share my thoughts on the living messages expressed by the flora and fauna, (native of course), of our watershed area? The best communication I always hope for is for our fellow creatures and plants to simply announce or present their appearance. After the second cold and snowy winter in a row, the native biodiversity here at Laughing Springs shows many signs of resiliency and downright feistiness. We have a family of bats spending the warmer months again in our barn. I'll need confirmation from my esteemed colleague, Scott Douglas, but a tree swallow seems to have found a home here. My lovely wife and fellow steward here was the first to sight them. The most interesting phenomena has been a sort of self-correcting time of appearance that has caused flora and fauna to show themselves later, and more in line with predator, prey, pollinator cycles of my youth (1960's). The animals most influenced by these life cycles are the migrating birds. Most of these particular descendants of dinosaurs evolved to know when to fly away to avoid freezing conditions and while moving to and from our area enjoy a diversity of food when they rest on parts of their journeys. When the birds move back into our area in late winter (robins), to mid-spring (orioles, warblers, etc.) insects and native plant fruit are critical food sources along with fresh water.

Here at Laughing Springs Forest Community, rattlesnake weed, perfoliate bellwort, rue anemone, partridge berry, skullcap, winterberry holly, wild sarsaparilla, and all the robust oak, maple and hickory saplings seem to have responded to the second hard winter by declaring with their presence - they will not be denied their right to live!

With native species responding this well, we are endorsing a plan to continue and further the progress of our Watershed's flora and fauna by formulating the Audubon Bird Town Program. The following words are the beginning of this initiative:

Springfield Township, Bucks County Strategic Conservation Plan: 2015

Vision: Springfield is a rural place where birds thrive and people prosper. Residents and family love to live, work, and visit Springfield Township because the culture of residents and officials actively support and recognize the value of birds and nature to their own quality of life, health, cost of living and economy.

Mission: To create a sustainable framework and plan for long term habitat conservation and environmental stewardship across the Township by creating awareness of the linkage of birds to the natural environment and engaging people in conservation.

Audubon Bird Town works to protect birds, not only because they are beautiful and awe inspiring, but because they are the bellwether of biological health and the health of the local economy. The vast distances they travel and the diverse ecosystems, on which they depend, make them unique barometers of our planet's health as well as our neighborhoods and backyards. When birds are at risk, so too are the greater ecosystem, the intricate web of life, and ultimately, humans. When we help birds and their habitats, we help ourselves.

By working closely together, with business, non-profits, government, schools, and environmental groups, Springfield Township's Bird Town and Environmental Advisory Council will build success by leveraging individual and joint efforts of its members and partners. Through our activities we will achieve broad demographic, geographic and habitat coverage and help people become better stewards of our Township's natural resources. We will save the Township money as well and enhance economic growth.