Brandywine Red Clay Alliance

WINTER/SPRING 2025

Light snow at Marshall Mill House by Chad Hudson

Land Preservation Update

The winter months provide our staff with time to focus on behind the scenes management needs.

Tools and equipment get inventoried and inspected. Repairs are made as needed and everything is prepped for our busy spring and summer. BRC has seven public preserves with dozens of miles of trails for you to explore year-round. You may see the land management team working on winter invasive species management, tree removal, and minor trail maintenance when out and about during these months. Many of us get cabin fever during the winter months and as it warms up, we need to get out. Just remember that the preserves are open year-round so bundle up and enjoy our open spaces in all weather.

Many BRC supporters are familiar with the Myrick Conservation Center, but are you familiar with the Marshall Mill House Preserve (MMH)? This preserve is located right on Rt 82 in Kennett Township and is unique in that it is our only preserve that is completely wooded. On colder days, warm up with the hike to the top of the hill and enjoy a bird watching break on the bench in the heart of our high-quality woodland looking down over the forested valley.

Marshall Bridge Preserve trails

If after hiking the hill you want additional time outdoors, you can travel south and visit the Marshall Bridge Preserve (MBP). This 82-acre preserve is accessible via the original Auburn Valley State Park parking lot on Farm Lane. Farm Lane connects to Benge Rd, which lies just under one mile south of Marshall Mill House Preserve off of Rt 82. These two preserves make a great combination for a morning or afternoon in nature. Just remember that our preserve parking is free so take Farm Lane to the Delaware parking lot and you will see our access drive on the right that will lead you into Pennsylvania to our lot. Our MBP remains unique in requiring you to leave the state to enjoy its beautiful trails. Our trails do connect to the Auburn Valley State Park trails in Delaware so you can enjoy two spaces on one visit.

The MBP trails span multiple meadows as well as the woodland along the Red Clay Creek. Heading into the spring, keep an eye on the new meadow planting where we partnered with Weeds Inc and the E. Kneale Dockstader Foundation to convert some of the warm season grass meadow to a more diverse pollinator meadow. This project will be blooming at New Leaf Sensory Garden and the Myrick Conservation Center as well so check out each site and enjoy the spring flowers.

Regardless of which preserve you visit, we hope to see you on the land. Learn more about each of our preserves on our website

brandywineredclay.org/our-public-preserves

Summer Camp

Our 43rd season of summer camp registration opened on February 2nd.

At the time this newsletter went to print, our camps at Myrick were already 75% full. This year we're offering 38 camps over 8 weeks at the Myrick Conservation Center and 10 camps over 5 weeks at the Chandler Mill Nature Preserve.

Summer 2026 is expected to be hotter and drier than normal but our campers will be wet and muddy every day!

12-15 Caving field trip

Whittling

Mud Kitchen

Tubing on the Brandywine

Critter Catch

Campers harvesting the Victory Garden

Fort building

Archery lessons

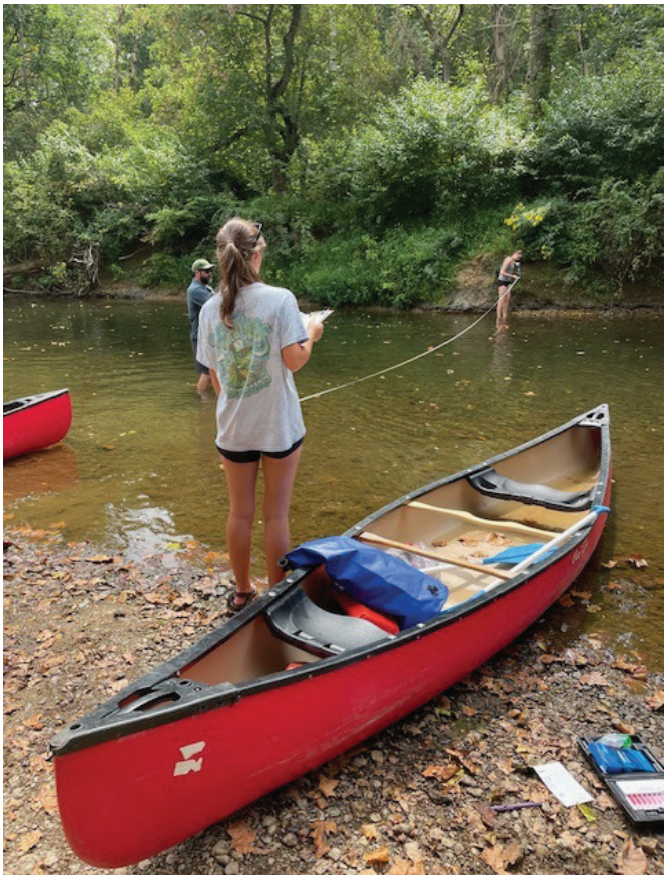
Educational Programming

Our spring calendar is filling fast for education programs. Our first programs begin in late March and extend into early June. If you're interested in a school, scout or community program check out our Education Page where you will find our brochure as well as program request form.

The Environmental Experience

Canoeing on the Brandywine

Pond Study



High School Canoeing Water Quality

Education Coordinator

We welcome Evan Fox as our new Education Coordinator.

Evan has a B.A. in Public Policy and minored in Insect & Wildlife Conservation. He has a background in environmental education as well as land stewardship. His hobbies include music, hiking, bird watching and kayaking. When asked what his action figure comes with, he responded that binoculars are hanging off the front and his guitar hanging off the back.

BRC welcomes Evan Fox!

Water Conservation Update

This past fall BRC completed a comprehensive Watershed Assessment and Restoration Plan for the Pocopson Creek Watersheds with our consultant Clauser Environmental.

The project was funded by a $91,700 PADEP Growing Greener grant with $22,000 matching funds provided by Brandywine Conservancy. This watershed totals 10.4 square miles and 13.1 miles of streams in Pocopson, Newlin, East Marlborough and Pennsbury Townships. We added the Browning Barn tributary in the plan as it starts at our springhouse at the Myrick Conservation Center flowing under route 842 past our Browning Barn and directly to the Brandywine Creek.

The assessment portion of the plan included 10 stream sampling sites to collect baseline water quality data as well as extensive mapping and data research of the watershed resulting in 13 watershed maps highlighting land use, preserved lands, areas lacking riparian buffers and more. During this phase the BRC and Clauser team walked over 75% of the streams to "ground truth" data collected and take photographs and GPS locations of locations where we found eroding streams banks, sources of nutrient pollution, lacking riparian buffers and more. During the planning stage locations for high, medium and low priorities for stream restoration practices where identified and described. The recommended practices include: tree planting, live stock fencing, manure management and stream bank stabilization.

This is our tenth watershed plan completed as part of our Red Streams Blue Initiative started in 2008 and will serve as a blueprint for targeted stream restoration work in this watershed for the next decade. So far BRC has completed 30 projects on over 7 miles of streams since the Red Streams Blue Program started.

As part of the pocopson, BRC reached out to 175 residents with properties along the stream and talked with each of the four municipalities in the watershed before and after the planning process for their input. Copies of the plan are available at our website; contact Brian Winslow, Watershed Conservation Director for more information.

Sampling the Pocopson Creek

Pocopson Creek

Three New Riparian Buffer Projects Completed in Fall 2025

This fall BRC planted 280 trees and shrubs on 3 acres as part of three tree planting projects in the Red Clay Creek Watershed.

Two of the projects were part of our goal to plant 7 acres of trees in the Red Clay Creek Watershed funded by a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant. One was located on a private parcel downstream of Barkingfield Park in Kennett Township and continues the tree planting there on a headwater tributary. The second planting is located at the Kennett Borough Public Works building on a small tributary to the West Branch Red Clay Creek. Our third project was planted on Burrows Run in Delaware on a private parcel furthering our goal to do more work in the Delaware portion of the watershed

Tree Planting at Kennett Public Works

Staff with Homeowner at Tree Planting

$457,264 PADEP Growing Greener Grant Awarded for Red Clay Tributary Projects

In January, BRC received funding to address stream bank erosion on a tributary of Red Clay Creek in Kennett Township.

This new project will work with Phillips Mushrooms and a private landowner to address stream bank erosion on a 350 foot segment along with stormwater reductions at the headwaters of the tributary and address stream bank erosion on 750 feet of stream encroaching the roadway. The project will restore 1,110 feet of stream, connect 0.6 acres of floodplain with new wetland creation and 1.1 acres of new riparian buffer plantings, resulting in a modeled estimate of 49,817 lbs/yr reduction of sediment pollution. Phillips Mushrooms will contribute stormwater work on their site and Kennett Township is a funding partner contributing funds for the design and permitting phase of the project as well as portions of the construction phases. The design phase will begin this spring and take nine months to complete, construction would occur in spring or fall of 2027.

Proceeds from this event benefit BRC's environmental education and watershed conservation programs.

83rd Running of the Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point

Sunday April 5th

BRC and the Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point Committee are looking forward to spring and race day.

Spend Easter at BRC's 318-acre Myrick Conservation Center and enjoy an action-packed day of pony races and timber races including a side-saddle race and a parade of foxhounds. Join in on the fun in the finish line stretch with bouncy pony races and spoon egg races. A variety of children's activities including an Easter Egg Hunt will take place in the children's activity area. This is a fun family event and a great way to entertain clients, family, and friends. Gates open at 11 AM with the first pony race at 12 Noon.

Back By Popular Demand In 2026!

*An Online Auction is replacing the raffle. Check out the items at 32AuctionsLLC; bidding begins on February 15th at 9:00 AM & closes @ 8 PM on Race Day.

* Jumbotron and upgraded sound system for a better spectator experience.

Parking costs range from $40 to $400 per carload. Sponsorships are available; if interested please contact the BRC Office at 610-793-1090 and speak with Betsy Stefferud.

Outrider horse with young attendee *Photo by Jim Graham*

Paul Aguilera, winner of 2025 Large Pony Race *Photo by Jim Graham*

Bouncy Pony Race *Photo by Tisa Della-Volpe*

Novice Race *Photo by Tisa Della-Volpe*

Follow and share the Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point Facebook page.

Spring Litter Clean-ups Coming Soon!

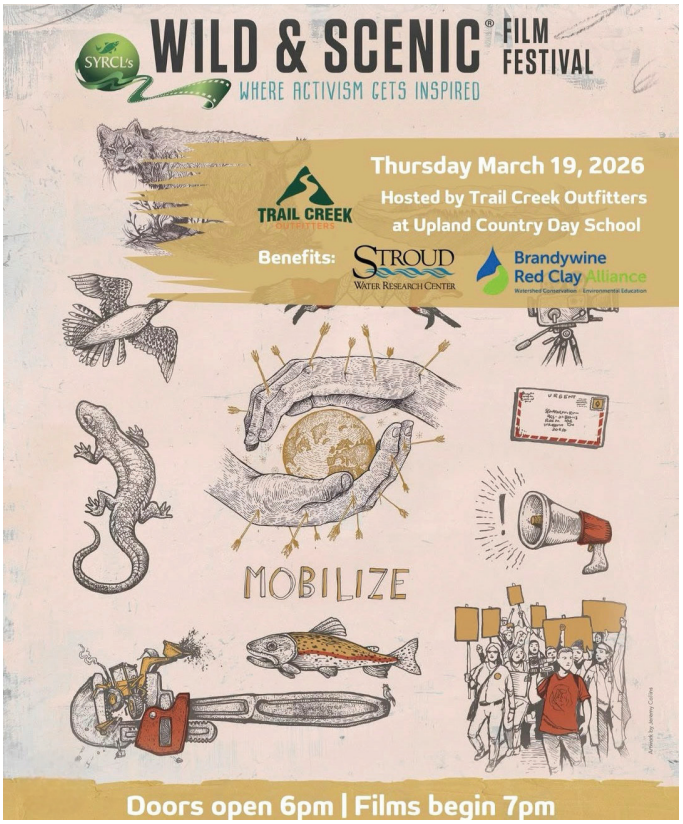
Red Clay Valley Clean Up is Saturday, March 28 from 8 am to noon.

Volunteers will clean up over 103 miles of roads in Chester County Pennsylvania and New Castle County, Delaware meeting at Ashland Nature Center in Hockessin or Kennett Township Pennsylvania.

Brandywine Valley Clean Up is Saturday, April 18 from 8 am to noon.

Volunteers will work out of four staging areas to clean up litter along roads, streams and trails including in Modena, Downingtown, Pocopson in Chester County and First State National Historical Park in Delaware.

To register visit: brandywineredclay.org



On March 19, the 19th Annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival will be held at Upland School in Kennett Square.

Trail Creek Outfitters sponsors the event, with proceeds going to BRC and Stroud Water Research Center. Attendees will enjoy food and drink from local restaurants, raffle items and a 90-minute curated selection of awesome nature films. We would like to thank the event sponsors and donors and look forward to seeing you there! Tickets are $45 each or two for $80 and can be purchased at **trailcreekoutfitters.bigcartel.com**

FIND EVENTS HERE

Upcoming Events

Wild and Scenic Film Festival
Thursday March 19th

Red Clay Valley Clean Up
Saturday March 28th

Brandywine Hills Point to Point
Sunday April 5th (Easter)

Brandywine Clean Up
Saturday April 18th

Trout Rodeo
Saturday April 25th

1st Day Summer Camp
Monday June 22nd

July & August Summer Music Series
Thursday evenings
7/9 – 8/20

DeadFest
Friday September 11th

Annual Dinner @ The Mendenhall Inn
Thursday October 22nd

Brandywine Red Clay Alliance

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Address Correction Requested

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In Kind Item Request

Woodburning Tools - (max. 15... 5 is a great start)

Bug Boxes - (2 sets would be nice)

Bug Viewers - (4 sets would be nice)

Digital Cameras - (5)

brandywineredclay; #weheartbrc **Brandywine Red Clay Alliance**