

Notes from the FOREST

Fall 2023
Newsletter

LACAWAC
Sanctuary Field Station
AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

Serving as Good Stewards and Custodians

Lacawac Sanctuary becomes custodians of the Sanctuaries of the Former NEPA Audubon Society

In September, the Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, decided to discontinue as an organization. This decision was not made lightly after being in service for 52 years. Most of the board members have been aging out of service and we have not been successful in recruiting enough members to assume an active role on the board of directors or serve as part of any committee.

The NEPA Audubon Society's mission was to "conserve and restore our environment to benefit humanity, birds, and other wildlife, through education, action, and advocacy" thereby making our world a better place for all living creatures.

As a sister conservation organization, the NEPA Audubon Society chose Lacawac Sanctuary to be the custodians of their two sanctuaries: the Browning Beaver Meadow Sanctuary and the Price Simpson Wetlands.

A best-kept secret only 25 minutes north of Honesdale, PA, this beautiful 78-acre preserve hosts many wildflowers and birds abound along the 3/4-mile trail. The sanctuary is open to the public daily. There are two new parking areas and a wheelchair-accessible observation deck that overlooks a large pond where waterfowl and beaver can be seen.

Price-Simpson Wetlands is located near Lake Ariel, PA and is just north of NBT Bank and the Post Office on the left-hand side on Route 191. The sanctuary is not open to the public.





What you need to know if you plan to visit:

We invite you to come and hike the beautiful nature trails. Take some time to observe the birds and other wildlife from the comfortable viewing platform along Hawley Road. There are over two miles of well-marked trails that lead through a hemlock forest, along a creek, through hardwood glens, into meadows, and along the lake shoreline. The Sanctuary is an E-birding hotspot with over 80 species of birds tallied. Don't forget to wear sturdy, comfortable shoes, apply sunscreen and bug repellent. Parking is available at the beginning of the sanctuary along Hawley Road. Additional parking is available further down Hawley Road after the road curves to the left (stay straight) – parking spots are located on the right.



The Browning Beaver Meadow Sanctuary is open to the public from sunrise to sunset daily.

Directions to the Sanctuary: From Honesdale, take Rt. 191 north for 16 miles. Turn left at the Lookout General Store on Helmer's Hill Road. Go 0.8 mile and turn left at the sanctuary sign on Hawley Road.

Lacawac's Artists' Residencies Announced for 2024

Where Nature, Science, History and Creativity Meet



Each year professional or aspiring artists are selected to spend time at Lacawac Sanctuary a full week. During the residencies, artists are free to produce their artwork using the inspiration of the beauty that is Lacawac. Housing and studio space is provided.

Artists are provided:

- a comfortable room in the Historic Watres Lodge or the Icehouse Cottage
- access 545-acres which includes a glacial lake, 2 ponds, shore access to Lake Wallenpaupack, ledges natural area, and forests.
- studio/workspace in the Carriage House and 500 acres of outdoor space

Artists provide their own transportation and take care of their meals while at Lacawac. The lodging is well equipped with cookware and dishes and all necessary kitchen amenities. Both the lodge and icehouse have wireless internet. Residents should bring a laptop if they desire.



The cost of residency is \$300 for one week. There are no hard deadlines for the submission of applications. Applications are reviewed on a rolling process. There is a \$10 application fee. All applicants will be notified of their acceptance via the e-mail provided on the application. If accepted into the program, Lacawac will provide further details on lodging.

The 2024 Residencies are scheduled for the following weeks:

May 5-11 Spring I

June 9 -15 Summer I

June 16-22 Summer II

August 4-10 Summer III

For more information on our residency program, visit <https://www.lacawac.org/lacawac-artists-residency.html>

LACAWAC STAFF

Craig Lukatch, President
craig.lukatch@lacawac.org

Beth Norman, PhD
Director of Science and Research
beth.norman@lacawac.org

Natalie Wasilchak
Assistant Director of Environmental Education
natalie.wasilchak@lacawac.org

Casey Arnold, Director of Facilities –
casey.arnold@lacawac.org

Carlos Roca CPA, Financial Controller -
finance@lacawac.org

Alex Bros, PLEON Technician
pleon@lacawac.org

Summer Nature Day Camps 2023: A Year in Review

During summer 2023, Lacawac embarked on an incredible journey with over 128 young nature enthusiasts from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade. Our immersive day camps included over 6 weeks of exploration-based nature day camps and 2 weeks of Art camp. During their time at Lacawac, we allowed campers to discover, create, and learn amidst the beauty of the natural world.

Our campers enjoyed a safe and fun environment where questions and observations were encouraged and celebrated.

Campers dove into fun and educational games that brought critical components of our ecosystem to life. They unraveled the mysteries of the food web, gained insights into water quality for macroinvertebrates, and learned what plants and animals need to survive. Through interactive play, they developed a deeper understanding of our environment. We didn't just immerse campers in the wonders of the natural world, but we empowered them to become leaders of tomorrow by fostering

leadership skills through games and activities.

Past campers who have aged out of camp were invited back to participate in camp as junior counselors. This experience taught life skills such as leadership, interpersonal communication, and responsibility. It also developed a greater connection between campers and counselors. We appreciate all the hard work and effort they put forth this summer and their ability to be fantastic role models for our younger campers. We are also extremely grateful for our amazing volunteers which aided our nature day camps this summer. You have brought great leadership skills, creativity, and your passion for the outdoors to camp.

Our Day camps all have a screen-free policy, which provides a refreshing escape into the embrace of nature. From exploring the secrets of salamanders, capturing the beauty of Lake Lacawac on canvas, taking, and analyzing water samples, and much more, our campers could take time for themselves and delve deeper into their interests with hands-on experiences that left a lasting impression.

At the core of all our camps is a commitment to nurturing the next generation of earth stewards. We

instilled this importance with our Leave No Trace policy, teaching campers to respect and protect our natural spaces. We are truly grateful to have had the privilege of educating our campers!

We had many positive responses from parents and campers:

- "It's a lot of fun, learn a lot, make new friends, and enjoy being outside a lot. Definitely would recommend!"
- "Yes, my son attended 8 different camps this summer at various locations and various subjects and this was his favorite!"
- "Counselors were professional and caring. The site is beautiful and offers many opportunities for learning and exploring."

As Lacawac opens its new Environmental Education Center in 2024, we will be adding more nature day camps throughout the summer.

Registration for Summer Camps 2024 will open early next year.

Creature Feature Campers Learning about sedges, rushes, and grasses.



What's that in Lake Lacawac?



Exploring Nature Campers investigating macroinvertebrates

A 2023 Summer of Adventure at CLA

On Sunday, June 18th, seventeen quiet, unsure teenagers timidly walked into the lodge at Lacawac. On Friday, June 23rd, seventeen excited friends enthusiastically shared their life changing experiences during their week at Conservation Leadership Academy (CLA) with their families during the closing program. The time in between those two days was packed full of new experiences for each camper. During the week the campers participated in programs led by local conservation professionals. Some favorites included water sampling on Lake Wallenpaupack, Lake Lacawac, and Wallenpaupack Creek, analyzing the samples, visiting a fish hatchery, and geocaching. The highlight of the camper's week was kayaking on the Delaware River. Along the way they learned about the geology and natural history of the river, saw Bald Eagles and several other animal species, and enjoyed swimming during our lunch stop. One camper noted, "I met so many new people and did so many new things."

Along with being introduced to careers and professionals, campers participated in leadership activities that aided in building relationships and strengthening self-confidence. One activity enjoyed by all was learning how to canoe and work with a partner. As the evening light faded many quiet conversations could be heard over the water. According to one camper, "It was

great, I loved all the things we did. I really loved being on Lake Lacawac and the Delaware."

Campers had many new experiences, some being away from home for the first time. As one camper stated, "I learned a lot about things I didn't even know existed and this experience has taught me a lot." We have a screen free policy for the week which provides a refreshing escape from the hustle and bustle of the world and allows campers to experience nature, build self-confidence, and learn valuable communication skills. "The only sad thing about this week is that we only had a week" commented a camper at the end of his time at Lacawac.

At the core of CLA is the nurturing of the next generation of earth stewards through conservation practices, "My week at camp was amazing. I made new friends, I was outside a lot, everyone was nice, the meals were amazing, it was perfect."

Lacawac would like to thank the following conservation experts for volunteering their time to make CLA a success:

- Nick Spinelli, Director of the Lake Wallenpaupack Watershed Management District
- Darryl Speicher, Pocono Avian Research Center
- Jess Yoder, Pike County Planning Office
- Jack Barnett, SEEDS
- Dr. Beth Norman, Director of

Science and Research at Lacawac Sanctuary

CLA is financially supported through various sponsors. Sponsors included: The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, SEEDS (Sustainable Energy Education and Development Support) in memory of Jake Burkhardt, The Junior Academy of Science, the Newfoundland Rotary Club, Hemlock Farms, Lake Wallenpaupack Watershed Management District, and the Lake Region Long Beards Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation.



SAVE THE DATE: MAY 17-19, 2024

*Are you a member of a lake association tasked with managing your community's lake?
Have questions about what you should do to keep your lake healthy?
Concerned about water quality changes in your lake?*



Learn lake ecology basics
Gain hands-on experience monitoring water quality
Practice interpreting data
Discuss emerging threats to PA lakes
Network with other lake associations facing the same challenges

**DETAILS AND REGISTRATION
COMING SOON**

WWW.LACAWAC.ORG/PLEON

Insights into Cyanobacteria Toxicity Using Heron Pond as a “Living Incubator”

By: Sarah DeVaul Princiotta, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Biology, Penn State Schuylkill

Residents of the Pocono Region are all too familiar with harmful algal blooms (HABs), or dense accumulations of microbes that can plague the shorelines of our beloved lakes. HABs are often composed of cyanobacteria, or “blue-green algae,” which are a group of bacterial microbes that are too small to be seen with the naked eye. Although they are a natural component of aquatic ecosystems, cyanobacteria communities can grow out of biological control, especially under warm, nutrient-rich conditions that occur during summer in our temperate region. When HABs form, some species can produce toxic compounds (“cyanotoxins”) that are especially dangerous for other aquatic biota. It is not possible to determine if a HAB contains toxin-producing species of cyanobacteria with visual inspection alone, so scientists must conduct additional analytical testing to verify toxin levels. Unfortunately, scientists lack a consensus for why cyanobacteria

produce toxins and how we can predict if a HAB contains toxin-producing strains. Although originally hypothesized to act as a deterrent to grazing by micro-crustaceans, additional theories for toxin production in cyanobacteria include mechanisms to store nitrogen and combat physiological stress. Regardless, HABs are a global issue that threatens water quality, even in our own backyard.

Dr. Sarah Princiotta, Assistant Professor of Biology at Penn State Schuylkill, used funds provided by the Robert Estabrook Moeller Research Fellow Award to provide insight into the biological mechanisms that accompany the formation, and eventual decay, of a HAB. Dr. Princiotta and her team of undergraduate researchers* collected surface water from Lake Lacawac, a protected and pristine lake located on the property of the Lacawac Sanctuary Field Station, in July and September 2023. Next, they created a series of experimental treatments within 3L transparent bags that included the simulation of a HAB event either with or without the addition of (i) nutrients and (ii) the natural microbial community. Theoretically, repeating the experiment during two



Sarah Tran (PSU Bio, focus in Vertebrate Physiology, with minor in Communication Arts and Mass Media), Elyssa Yeagley (PSU Bio, focus in Vertebrate Physiology), and Aloura Gavalis (PSU Bio, focus in Ecology, with minor in IST) prepare experimental bags for deployment on Heron Pond.

seasons will provide different initial microbial communities and light/temperature conditions. These bags were affixed to a rack constructed of PVC tubing and netting, which was incubated on nearby Heron Pond for eight days. The team collected samples to assess any changes in microbial community composition, dissolved nutrients, algal pigments, and cyanotoxins. What makes this design unique is the naivety of the microbial community from Lake Lacawac to HABs, as a HAB event has never occurred on the lake. Additionally, using Heron Pond as a “living incubator” allows scientists to create experiments in more natural conditions that cannot be created in a laboratory alone. Dr. Princiotta hopes that the results will be useful in understanding how HABs form and which members of the microbial community, if any, are resistant to cyanotoxins. Stay tuned!

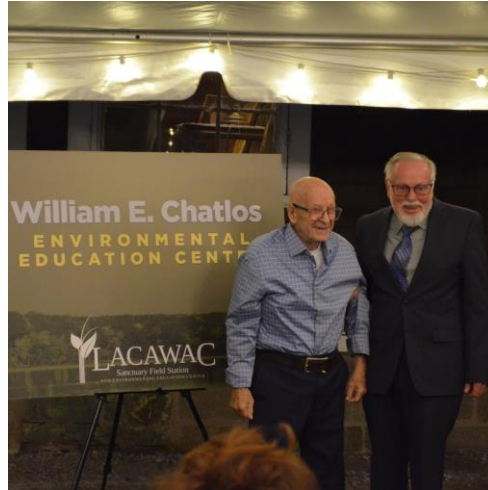
*Undergraduate research team from Penn State Schuylkill: Elyssa Yeagley, Aloura Gavalis, Sarah Tran



Undergraduate biology major, Aloura Gavalis, prepares to collect incubation racks. Each bag represents a replicate of the experimental design, which includes simulation of a cyanobacteria bloom.

Welcome to the Board of Trustees!

Please join us in welcoming Milton D. Roegner, recently elected to Lacawac's Board of Trustees. A native of Wayne County, Milt is the President of Analytics 21st Power located in Honesdale which provides financial market research, technical analysis and consulting services to foundations and other nonprofit organizations. He currently serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the William E. Chatlos Foundation and the Chatlos-Roegner Charitable Gift Fund. Besides his expertise in the financial domain, Milt has served 15 years on the foundation board of the Wayne Memorial Health System.



Buy a Veteran Brick, Leave a Legacy. *Veteran Brick Campaign*

Commemorate members of your family and others who courageously protected our country, the United States of America, by participating in the Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation Veteran Brick Campaign.

The campaign is a tribute to veterans who served in the military and individuals who provided support services, keeping our country safe and free. The bricks will be placed around Lacawac's new flagpole dedicated to all veterans, located in front of the Coulter Visitor Center. All proceeds will support Lacawac's mission and work. Paver Bricks have a lifetime guarantee and are an ideal way to commemorate: Your family and its members; "In Honor" or "In Memoriam" of loved ones or Veterans that served.

For more information or to place your order visit:
<https://polarengraving.com/lacawacsanctuary>



Meet the TEAM

Craig Lukatch – President

Lukatch is a Hazleton native who has extensive experience with more than 20 plus years in nonprofit administration and fundraising. He is a graduate of the University of Scranton with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and Theology. Lukatch currently serves on the Boards of Directors of the Rainbow Alliance and the Newfoundland Rotary and has served on various boards of nonprofits: the Hazleton YMCA, Indraloka Animal Sanctuary, Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators. Over his tenure he has raised over \$8 million from foundations and for capital projects for local nonprofits. Lukatch has been employed with Lacawac Sanctuary for over 10 years.



Beth Norman, PhD. – Director of Science and Research

Beth grew up in a small town in New Hampshire where interaction with the natural world was a way of life. She has always been interested in science, particularly ecology. She received a B.S. in Biology from Bridgewater College. After a short interlude teaching middle and high school science and math classes, she earned a M.S. degree in Biology from James Madison University and a Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from Virginia Tech. Beth has also worked as a post-doctoral researcher for Trent University and Michigan State University. Beth is an ecosystem ecologist interested in how interactions among organisms influence the structure and functioning of freshwater habitats. Her research investigates how essential elements like nitrogen and carbon are transformed and transported through ecosystems and the role microorganisms, plants, and animals play in these processes.

Casey Arnold- Director of Facilities

Casey is an avid outdoor enthusiast with a strong passion for the environment. He has been the Director of Facilities for the last two years working on various projects to improve and restore Lacawac. Prior to Lacawac he was a professional free skier traveling the country skiing for Samuel Adam's, Ski The East and Peak resort. He was a freestyle skiing coach for a range of kids from beginner to Olympic level athletes. He loves anything that is adrenaline packed and is always seeking out the thrill. He has 10+ years of experience as a carpenter/construction worker. When he is not holding a power tool, he is planning his next thrilling adventure mountain biking, rock climbing, or anything exciting outdoors.



Natalie Wasilchak – Assistant Director of Environmental Education

Natalie Joined Lacawac after attaining her bachelor's degree in environmental biology. For the last two years she has assisted in Lacawac's environmental education programs, public outreach, and ran nature day camps. She is currently working on the Northern Saw-whet Owl banding project. When she is not running programs at Lacawac she enjoys spending time with her partner and dog on outdoor adventures.



Carlos Roca – Controller

Carlos joined Lacawac in March 2022. He started his Accounting and Finance career as an auditor at KPMG Peat Marwick in Barcelona, Spain where he obtained the top certification of Chartered Accountant in the Country ("Auditor-Censor Jurado de Cuentas"). Carlos holds a Degree in Economics and Management Sciences from the University of Barcelona, and earned a Global Professional MBA in Finance & Accounting at Fordham University and holds official Certified Public Accounting Licenses in New York and Pennsylvania. When not crunching numbers, he enjoys biking and hiking the beautiful PA countryside.



Alex Bros - PLEON Field and Lab Technician

Alex joined Lacawac Sanctuary after graduating with a bachelor's degree in biology from Rochester Institute of Technology. She started her time here as the PLEON intern in 2022 and is now the technician for all things PLEON in the 2023 season. In her free time, Alex enjoys tending to her many house plants, watching Star Wars, sketching, and hanging out with her dog -Winston.



Every Gift Matters

THE ANNUAL FUND

Annual Fund 2023

*Trailblazing Beyond
the Classroom*

Generous donors are the foundation of our ability to fulfill our mission. Your support inspires a greater connection to the natural world by protecting, managing, and interpreting our property; provides outdoor recreational opportunities; and offers environmental education experiences.

You can help us achieve our mission by making a gift today. Will you consider making a gift of \$100 or more this year?

Our Annual Fund is a year-round effort to raise funds necessary to support the daily operations of our organization, including the maintenance of our trails and facility.

Make your donation online at

<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/annfun201/>

or

mail your check to Lacawac Sanctuary, ATTN: Annual Fund,
94 Sanctuary Road, Lake Ariel PA 18436

2023 ANNUAL APPEAL



We are so very grateful for all the support that Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation receives from individuals, businesses, organizations, and foundations. This strong philanthropic culture dates to our founding when the Watres Family gifted the property to Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation establishing the nonprofit in 1966. Our donors help us expand our reach, engage students from underserved areas and incorporate real world experiences into our educational curriculum. Together we deliver programs and experiences that instill the values of education, stewardship, and sustainability to the community.

REVENUES AND SUPPORT

Public Support:

Contributions and Membership	\$470,676
Contribution of Land	\$655,000
Grants <i>(This includes capital contributions)</i>	\$157,508
Fundraising Events	\$38,379

\$1,321,563

Revenues:

Facility Usage	\$80,850
Program Income	\$120,221
Miscellaneous Income	\$2,544
Interest	\$139
Investment Income <i>(Gifts to the endowments. These are for restricted use only).</i>	(\$152,640)
Change in value of beneficial interests	(\$17,358)

\$33,756

TOTAL REVENUE

\$1,355,319

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$379,236
Supporting Services:	
Management	\$125,379
Fundraising	\$72,841

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$577,456

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

\$777,863

NET ASSETS – BEGINNING

\$5,550,616

NET ASSETS – ENDING

\$6,328,479

Financial Report 2022

This annual financial report is published by Lacawac for its members, supporters and collaborating partners. If you have questions regarding the information provided in the report contact Lacawac's President at craig.lukatch@lacawac.org

For more information on our audited financial documents visit <https://www.lacawac.org/governance.html>

Letter from our President

Dear Friends:

Everything we have in life comes from the natural world around us. Learning to protect this gift is the core focus of Lacawac Sanctuary- shaping the next generation of earth stewards and scientists.

As a community-based nonprofit, Lacawac Sanctuary relies on donations from friends to support our work and mission. Whether it is a membership donation, an annual appeal gift, support at one of our signature fundraising events, or a gift through a bequest, all funds support research, education, and preservation. All funds stay local!

The services we provide come at a cost and we are looking to increase our financial base of support to keep pace with our growing work. Wayne and Pike Counties are a great place in which to live, work and vacation and if we work together, we can preserve and educate all ages about the beauty of the natural world around us.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Craig Lukatch, President

THANK YOU
to all of our sponsors!

Brookfield

Renewable U.S.



Reinfurt Excavating – Paupack Fuel Oil, Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning
Wallenpaupack Veterinary Clinic – Kiley Associates – T. E. Spall & Son – Ledgedale Rec. Area
Eastern Roofing Systems – Nevarc Electric – Olsommer Clarke Insurance Group

Spall, Rydzewski, Anderson, Lalley and Tunis – Dirlam Bros Lumber Co. – Citizens Savings Bank
Cove Haven Entertainment Resorts - PDQ Print & Fulfillment Center – FNCB – Gresham's Chop House
Honesdale National Bank – Woodloch – RE/MAX of Lake Wallenpaupack – Dutch's Market
AM Skier Agency – Kohanski Company PC – Overboards Restaurant – Wallenpaupack Lake Estates
Mick's Barber Shop – Top Notch Distributors

Platform Industries – Highhouse Energy – Van Gorders Furniture – Murray Physical Therapy – Nature's Grace
Weichert Realtors Paupack Group/Debbie Friese – Lackawanna College (Lake Region) – Mick's Barber Shop – Case Tire Service
Hessling Murray Funeral Home – Pranzo's Auto Service – Topp Business Solutions – Excab Inc. – Teeters Furniture