

Edward L Rose Conservancy

Conservancy Currents

Summer-2026



Yellow Loosestrife-Butterfly Garden

Annual Meeting

Save the Date - Annual Members' Meeting, E. L. Rose Conservancy



The Board of Directors of the Edward L. Rose Conservancy invites its members to attend its annual business meeting on Saturday, July 25th. This year we return to the Williams Pavilion at Salt Springs Park, off Silver Creek Road just north of Franklin Forks. Please arrive between 10:30 and 11:00 for social time with other members and a complimentary brunch of bagels, fruit, and coffee. The event begins with an educational presentation at 11:00 AM on hemlock wooly adelgid and emerald ash borer, with updates on the establishment of biocontrol predator species that could help save our hemlock trees and give ash a future in the region. The speaker is Conservation Specialist Kristi Sullivan from Cornell University. Following her presentation, Conservancy members will be asked to remain for the annual meeting.

The Conservancy depends on its dues-paying members, not only for financial support but for appointing Board members, electing officers and voting on other key issues. The annual meeting is an opportunity to learn how your dues are being spent to help shape the future direction of the organization. All Conservancy members are invited, along with family and accompanying guests. This year we are pleased to include members of the Susquehanna County Forest Land Owners Association (SCFLOA).

The Trail Less Travelled

*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."*

"The Road Not Taken" Robert Frost

There is, of course, the tried and true trail, the one we take on a regular basis. It's a familiar, comfortable walk in the woods. It's great exercise, with fresh air, sounds of nature, maybe a chance encounter with a neighbor. You recognize the landmarks, you note any changes, you plan to do it again soon.

But there are other trails, not as well worn, maybe even a little overgrown. You're not quite sure how long they will take, what kind of condition they might be in, who or what you might encounter. Are you wearing the right clothes, do you have what you need in case of a problem? These are the trails that become the adventures that turn you into explorers.

These longer, out of the way trails might require more effort and you might encounter the unexpected, but every trail on the map has something to offer. Our Preserves have both types of trails. We hope you will also try the trails not usually taken.



Conservancy Board Notes

- The process of attaining national accreditation for the Conservancy continues, with final approval expected before the end of the year. The most recent step was a conference call between the Land Trust Alliance's Accreditation Commission and your Board. This is a standard part of the process with over 30 questions about our governance, finances, acquisitions and stewardship to be answered. We are confident that our policies and practices will meet the required standards for accreditation, but the process continues.
- The program on sandhill cranes in Susquehanna County, sponsored by the Conservancy, was well attended and fascinating. The program was put on by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and was held at the Susquehanna County Conservation District offices. The program was followed by a field trip to a wetland south of Elk Lake that has acquired a resident pair of sandhill cranes over the last few years. This expansion of their range into our area has been quite unexpected, but much appreciated.
- Our battle with invasives will be ongoing, but we have managed to eliminate a large patch of barberry shrubs that were taking over the slopes at the south section of the Highpoint Preserve. Random barberry plants remain around the Preserve, and will need to be removed going forward, but the worst concentration has been successfully addressed.

- A policy regarding nature cameras, and sound recorders in our Preserves, has been developed and approved by the board. Any interested users must now register with the Conservancy, and notices regarding such devices have been posted at Preserve entrances.
- A major project slated for this year is repairs and improvements to the barn at the Greenwood Sanctuary. Doors and windows have been repaired this Spring, but in the process significant decay was discovered in the sill beam and posts around the double front doors. Brandon Pipher of Big Woods Timber Frames has been hired to do the repairs. Michael Bailey of Finishing Touches has been hired to do exterior painting once the repairs are completed, followed by new gutters that hopefully will help prevent any further deterioration.

If you have questions or concerns about any board activities or our ongoing projects, reach out to a board member or email board@elrose.org.

Land Steward

The Conservancy truly appreciates its volunteers. Without them, we wouldn't be able to keep our Preserves open to our members and the public. But, it has been hard to keep up with just our volunteers. The natural world is constantly changing and growing. It has its own agenda and does not respect our trails, or our boundaries.

The Conservancy has taken a step in a new direction, hiring our first part-time land steward. Armed with a weedwacker and brush cutter, he is busy many afternoons, weather permitting, taking care of Conservancy properties. The trails come first, but the list of chores is long. We are confident that he will not run out of things to do.

Scott Hanyon has taken on the role, and he seems ideally suited. He is a physical trainer in his other employment and hires out as a handyman in his spare time. He is an outdoor enthusiast and clearly enjoys the work. Like our members and our volunteers, he is our eyes and ears when it comes to the condition of the Conservancy properties. Be looking for him when you are visiting our Preserves.

The butterfly garden remains in need of professional help. If you are aware of someone who could help us maintain the garden, please let the Conservancy know.

The Edges are Fuzzy

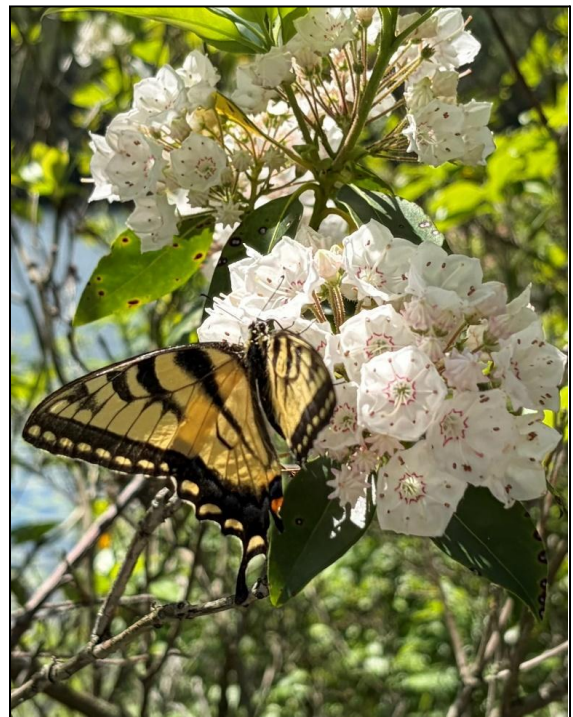
June 13th, across from the Highpoint Preserve, I stopped to photograph a Swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio glaucus*) feeding among the blossoms of mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*). The scene is straightforward; the butterfly is yellow with black stripes, the flowers are white, the sky is blue and the leaves are green. These are objective facts that we can all agree on. After all, it's reality, right?

But what exactly was the butterfly seeing? The answer seems obvious; it saw the same flowers I saw—the white blossoms with their delicate pink markings. Not so fast please. Recent reading on consciousness and perception by Michael Pollan introduced me to an unsettling idea: color may not be a property of the world itself, but an interpretation constructed by the brain.

Light reflected from the objects we “see” is electromagnetic radiation whose wavelengths may be measured with precision. Nowhere in those measurements is there anything called “white,” “pink,” or “green.” Colors emerge only when the brain interprets the incoming signals. The wavelength exists in nature. The color exists in consciousness.

The colors we name are a consensus built from shared experience. You may remember the familiar spectrum chart from a high school physics textbook, showing the wavelengths of light visible to the human eye. Most of us agree that light around 680 nanometers appears “red,” but even that agreement allows for variation. As we near the limits of the visible spectrum, those variations grow wider—or, put another way, reality gets fuzzy at the edges.

The butterfly does not experience these blossoms as we do. Butterflies can perceive ultraviolet wavelengths invisible to humans. To a butterfly, flowers



display patterns and signals we cannot see. What appears to us as a simple white blossom may contain vivid contrasts and directional markings that guide the butterfly toward nectar. The flower has not changed; the observer has.

The butterfly and I occupy the same place at the same moment. Light reflected from the same flower reaches both of us, yet our nervous systems transform that information into different experiences. It can be argued that neither is seeing the flower as it really is.

Each perceives only part of reality, filtered through the different sensory tools evolution has provided. The butterfly perceives signals unavailable to us, while we experience a world shaped by human vision. The flower exists independently of either observer, but the experience of it is unique to each.

What fascinates me most is not what this says about butterflies, but what it says about certainty. We often assume that seeing is believing and that what appears before us is reality itself. Yet even something as simple as the color of a flower is more complicated than it seems. What we experience is not reality in its entirety, but reality as interpreted by a human brain. There is a certain humility in that conclusion.

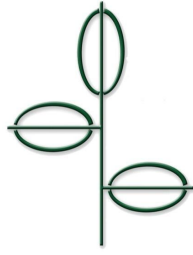
Nature continually reminds us that there is more to the world than we can perceive. The closer we look, the more we realize our understanding is incomplete. But there is something on which I think we all can agree. However you may define beauty, butterflies and flowers fit within that spectrum.

Submitted

Bill Fischer

More info at ELROSE.ORG

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