

Edward L Rose Conservancy

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Conservancy Currents

Fall 2026



Fall Winterberry

Upcoming Events

Woodland Tour at the Greenwood Sanctuary



Conservancy members and their guests are cordially invited to a guided woodland walk, Saturday, October 10th at 2:00 PM at the Greenwood Sanctuary in Dimock.

The event will include light refreshments (cider and ginger snaps) and features a woods walk led by Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) forester Michael Antonishak. Conservation Specialist Kristi Sullivan, author of the new forest management plan for Greenwood, will also be present. They will outline how landowners, conservancies and volunteers can promote the long-term health of local forests and protect these resources for future generations.

Directions to Greenwood Preserve:

From the main stoplight in Montrose, take State Route 29 south. Pass the blinking light in South Montrose (3 miles.) Pass the entrance to Woodbourne Preserve on the left (2 1/2 miles.) Turn left at the blinking light at the Dimock/Brooklyn Road (1 mile). Pass Baker Road on the left and Carter on the right (1 mile). After another 1/2 mile, look for the Greenwood Sanctuary sign on the right, near the bottom of a long gentle hill. Turn right and follow the long one-lane access road to the pond and barn.

We look forward to seeing you on the 10th.

The Raptor Platform Video Streaming Project

The board has approved the purchase of the equipment needed to live-stream raptor activity at the eagle's nest located high up in a white pine tree on Conservancy property at the outlet of Silver Lake. The plan will be to have nesting activity at the site streaming on the Conservancy website elrose.org. The project was proposed and designed, and will be implemented, by Tim Matthews who set up the original nesting platform. Eagles begin setting up housekeeping in late Fall, so it is hoped that the project can be completed soon. If we are fortunate, we might just be able to watch eagle chicks hatch and grow to the fledging stage this winter and early spring.



Equipment will include:

- 3 POE weather-proof hi-res IR video cameras
- Power and Data via ethernet cables with surge protectors
- Low voltage Ethernet cables housed in conduit
- On-ground Equipment – with 2 security video cameras to monitor equipment
- Network Video Recorder (NVR)
- Cabinet Hub receiving video data and sending POE electrical power to platform
- Local Recording video and platform video events and security video
- Connection for fiber-optic internet for streaming
- Electric power and Internet connection
- 120v electrical outlet – to power NVR; POE to platform cameras
- WIFI extender or Ethernet cable connection to Router to connect NVR data to 'Revolution' internet

Conservancy Board Notes

- The 2026 Annual Membership Meeting was held at the Williams Pavilion at Salt Springs State Park. The meeting featured a presentation on Hemlock Wooley Adelgid and Emerald Ash Borer monitoring and control efforts by Conservation Specialist Kristi Sullivan. Members enjoyed coffee and bagels as they learned about the Conservancy's accomplishments this year and its plans for the future during the business meeting.
- This year saw the planting of a Heritage Oak in the Butterfly Garden in honor of one of the founding families of the Conservancy, Jim and Betsy Brewster. The new tree joins trees previously planted in honor of our founders, the Wilkerson, Bloomer and Donovan families. And, with the generous help of Evan Everitt, a stone and plaque were placed just beyond the garden, naming these founding families.
- Two trail bridges were replaced by our conservancy land steward on the white trail at the Highpoint Preserve. Boundary markers have been added at the Little Gem and are being renewed elsewhere around the Preserve.
- The Woodbourne Forest Preserve has seen a major cleanup around the dam at Cope's Pond, as well as new efforts at controlling beaver damage to the hemlocks around the wetland. In addition, a new loop trail is in development.
- The Greenwood Sanctuary barn has been repaired, and painted and is receiving roof gutters to prevent splash damage.
- The board has begun meeting in person at the Community Foundation of the Endless Mountains facility on Lake Ave. in Montrose. Many thanks to the Community Foundation for the use of a fully equipped board room with video conferencing equipment to allow us to include those unable to attend in person.

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

Supporting Local High School Students



Last month Leah Taylor, a sophomore at Susquehanna Community High School, went afield with Conservation Specialist Kristi Sullivan to partially fulfill her school's job-shadowing requirement. Leah is interested in ecology and linguistics (she is especially interested in endangered indigenous languages!) and enjoys birding. While working with Kristi, she learned about the invasive pest “hemlock woolly adelgid” and helped

find, measure, and mark hemlock trees at Greenwood Sanctuary so they can be treated this fall. After marking the trees, they searched for salamanders and found three different species. Leah is now an honorary member of the Conservancy.



Fisher Cats in the Neighborhood

By Keith Oberg

Finding a fisher cat in my driveway, staring at me as I arrived home from a trip to town, got me thinking about these magnificent creatures and the slow but steady



return of extirpated species to our area. A member of the weasel family (*Mustelidae*), the fisher (*Pekania pennanti*), is a powerful, agile forest predator that has made a remarkable return to northeastern Pennsylvania after disappearing from much of the state.

Today, fishers occupy a wide variety of forest habitats. They generally favor areas with

substantial overhead cover and abundant downed logs, brush, and other structures on the forest floor. Such conditions are common in the mixed hardwood forests, hemlock stands, and regenerating woodlands of our Preserves. Fishers have also demonstrated an ability to use fragmented and human-altered forests, allowing them to occur near rural homes and other developed areas throughout northeast Pennsylvania.

Fishers are not small. They can reach up to four feet in length. Fishers have long, slender, low-to-the-ground bodies with dark brown fur and bushy tails that make up about one-third of their total length. They are an unusually versatile predator and scavenger. They hunt primarily on the ground but are also excellent climbers. Their diet includes squirrels, chipmunks, mice, and other small mammals, along with birds, reptiles, insects, fruit, and fungi. They are particularly famous for their ability to kill porcupines—a prey item that few other Pennsylvania predators can routinely exploit.

This makes the fisher an important participant in the northeastern forest ecosystem. By hunting a broad range of small and medium-sized animals, they participate in regulating prey populations. Their consumption of fruits and berries also gives them a less obvious ecological role: fishers can disperse seeds as they move through the forest.

The fisher's return is more than the comeback of an unusual mammal. It reflects a broader story in northeastern Pennsylvania: forests that were once heavily cleared have regenerated sufficiently to support a diverse community of predators and prey. The fisher has reclaimed a place within that community, moving through the same ridges, hollows, and wooded valleys where its ancestors once lived. The “fisher cat”, more often moving through the woods at night than in broad daylight, is actually evidence of a successful wildlife recovery—a native forest predator once lost from Pennsylvania and now once again occupying its ecological niche. Conserving that environment is the primary mission of the Edward L. Rose Conservancy.

The Oak at the Edge of the Maple – The Light We Cannot See

By Bill Fischer

I have been watching a young oak grow near the edge of the lake beside a maple standing further inland. The gnarled old maple has shed many limbs, its leaves

already losing color in response to cooler nights. The two trees do not touch. The oak stands just beyond the reach of the maple's canopy at a heading of 230 degrees southwest, so the maple never casts its shadow on the oak. Yet the oak continues to grow farther away, into the open sky.

How does a tree know another tree is there? The answer lies partly in light we cannot see. Green maple leaves absorb much of the red light that falls on them, but they reflect far-red light – a light mostly beyond our human visual spectrum. The oak has light-sensitive proteins called phytochromes that register the balance between red and far-red light. As that reflected light travels across the gap, the balance changes, influencing neighboring foliage. Because the tree responds to the far-red light, in a sense, it can “see” light that we cannot.



The oak also has more open sky to its southwest. So, although the maple never casts a direct shadow on the oak, the sky does not appear equally open to it in every direction. Leaves on the maple's side intercept some of the blue light scattered across the sky. More of that light reaches the oak's outer shoots from the southwest.

Here is the part I find most surprising: when a young shoot turns toward light, it is the cells on its less illuminated side that lengthen more. How can the shoot arrange that?

It begins with receptors called phototropins. Blue light activates them more strongly on the side of the shoot facing the light. That difference starts a chain of signals within the growing tissue. Proteins that move the growth hormone auxin between cells help redistribute it toward the less illuminated side. There, the extra auxin stimulates cells to expand and lengthen. That side of the young shoot becomes a little longer than the side facing the light, and the shoot curves toward the brighter opening. The older, woody branches do not bend in this way; the change occurs in tender new growth.

Light may also affect which branches prosper. Leaves with better access to the open sky can capture more energy for photosynthesis. Over successive growing seasons, shoots extending into that space develop more vigorously, while others contribute less to the oak's expanding crown.

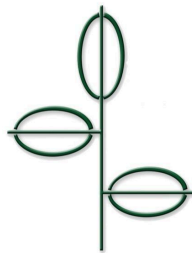
I cannot tell by watching these two trees which influence matters most: the maple's reflected far-red light, the direction of the open sky, or both. But the oak need not be touched, or even cast into shadow, to respond to its neighbor.

I had assumed that the clear space between their branches meant the trees had no direct effect on one another. Now I look at that gap differently. Light crosses it in ways I cannot see, and a young shoot can turn those differences into growth.

The principal natural auxin is IAA (indole-3-acetic acid). The uneven signal changes the placement of proteins called PIN transporters, which help move IAA out of cells. The resulting transport pattern directs more IAA toward the shaded side. When IAA accumulates on the shaded side of a young shoot, it promotes more cell expansion there; that side lengthens faster, bending the shoot toward the light.

The key point is that the shaded cells do not have to “know” they are in shade. Cells on both sides respond to an unequal light signal, and their transport machinery creates the unequal IAA distribution. “It's auxiomorphic my dear Watson.”

More info at ELROSE.ORG



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