

CONSERVATION IMPACT

Fall/Winter 2023



Morneau Farm Preserve, Southbridge & Dudley, MA

THANK YOU!



Enjoy these stories, which demonstrate the impact that your support has on local land, water, and wildlife.

INSIDE

2

“Mr. Morneau’s farm is now a thriving sanctuary for birds...”

3

“Thanks to you, this cherished family land will be conserved.”

4

“Families in Southbridge have cleaner, cooler air to breathe.”

CREATING A SAFE HAVEN FOR AT-RISK BIRD SPECIES

Nestled amid rolling hills and meadows on the outskirts of Southbridge, MA sits the 140-acre Morneau Farm Preserve. Maurice Morneau once raised dairy cattle, corn, and hay on this property. Upon his passing in 2008, Mr. Morneau willed the land to Opacum Land Trust, ensuring its permanent protection.

Thanks to the support of donors like you, Opacum stood ready to make the most of this opportunity, aiming not only to conserve the land, but to maximize its potential by creating a safe haven for at-risk bird species. With time and careful management, Mr. Morneau’s farm is becoming a sanctuary.

The forests of Massachusetts host a diverse array of bird species. Sadly, many of these species are facing alarming declines in numbers. Bird-friendly forestry management practices are an important tool in their protection.

Continued on Page 2

MAKING SPACE FOR BIRDS

Continued from Page 1

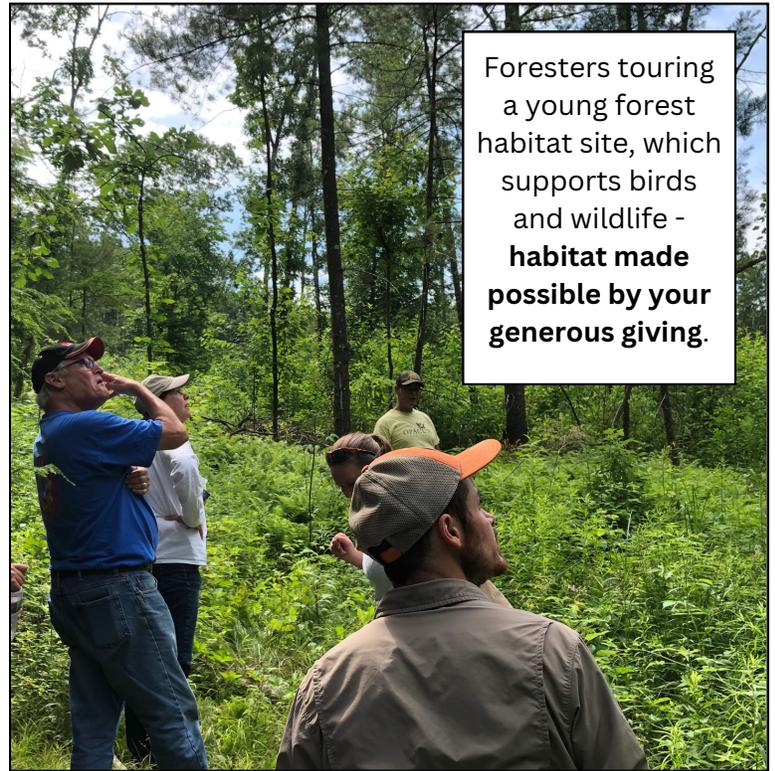
The Morneau Farm Preserve already had mature forests, grasslands, and wetland habitat that supported a variety of wildlife. In 2017, Opacum began creating young forest habitat to maximize the benefits this property can provide to birds.

Thanks to your support, Opacum is actively managing this land to support many species of birds, including the Mourning Warbler, a state-listed species of special concern.

Young forest habitats include grassy and herbaceous plants, shrubs, brush, and small trees that provide a wide variety of forage, shelter, and nesting sites for birds.

The resources available in a young forest habitat attract a high diversity of species not only supporting birds but other wildlife including cottontail rabbits, red fox, turtles, and pollinators. By adding young forest habitat the property now provides a mix of all the habitat types that birds and other wildlife require to thrive.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Mr. Morneau's farm is alive with the sound of birdsong and hosts a thriving community of birds and other wildlife. This achievement is a testament to the power of the Opacum community to come together and make a difference for wildlife through conservation.



Brush pile habitats provide shelter for a variety of wildlife.



THANK YOU for protecting the natural resources and rich wildlife habitat that surrounds Lebanon Brook!

PROTECTING IMPORTANT LAND, WATER, AND WILDLIFE HABITAT IN SOUTHBRIDGE

Down along Alpine Drive in Southbridge, MA sits a pristine 165.5 acres of land along Lebanon Brook. The property is currently owned by the Para family, who want to conserve their family's land and legacy.

Because of supporters like you, this critical land, water, and wildlife habitat will be permanently protected.

Once this project is completed, with the help of a competitive grant awarded as part of Opacum's Emerald Forest Borderlands project, the property will be permanently protected and open for the public to enjoy.

What started out in 1956 as a dream for the future has been a blessing to four generations. The late Robert and Jeanne Para purchased this property to build a family home. Siblings Nancy Whittemore, Richard Para, Robert Para, the late Donald Para, and the late William Para were raised here.

From fishing to ice-skating, hiking, picking blueberries for blueberry pies, and playing "Para baseball", many wonderful memories were created.

Robert and Jeanne Para passed on a love of this land to their children who in turn shared their parents' love of nature, forestry, ponds, brooks, and wildlife with their own children and grandchildren, all of whom want to see this special place protected and shared with the community.

Thanks to you, this cherished family land will be conserved, and the Para family can share the beautiful views of Lebanon Brook and its unique history with the community, while also protecting the important wildlife habitats and water resources of Lebanon Brook Pond for generations to come. Once the project is completed, we look forward to welcoming you to the public trails where you too can create memories with your family.

THANK YOU for protecting 165.5 more acres of land, water, and wildlife!



P.O. Box 233
Sturbridge, MA 01566

Return Service Requested

Your support
has protected
3,852 acres of
land, water, and
wildlife habitat.

THANK YOU!

TREES PROVIDE CLEAN, COOL AIR: THANKS TO YOU!

With 13.5 acres lost to development in Massachusetts each day, we are facing an epidemic of deforestation. This loss of tree cover uniquely impacts cities, where it creates urban heat islands, areas with low tree cover, poor air quality, and higher temperatures.

People living in heat islands experience higher rates of asthma and other breathing problems and extreme heat leads to increases in cardiac events like heart attacks and stroke.



Thanks to your support, families in Southbridge have cleaner, cooler air to breathe.

Opacum's Southbridge Tree Planting initiative has planted 335 trees in urban areas of Southbridge so far, with a goal of planting 1,000 trees and improving the health of the community and the environment. These trees cool temperatures by providing shade and evaporating water into the air. They improve air quality by filtering fine particulate pollution, reduce runoff, sequester carbon, provide oxygen for us to breathe, and so much more.

Learn more and sign up for your free tree at www.OpacumLT.org