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### Profile of a Conservationist

**Kevin Yoder**

*Director of Land Management*

Kevin Yoder spent his childhood playing in the forests and streams of Narvon, Pennsylvania. Having earned a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Penn State University, and having spent more than a decade working on forest and wildlife management in Pennsylvania, Kevin's relationship with the lands, waters and wildlife of the Keystone State is remarkable.

But part of what makes Kevin such a successful conservation practitioner at TNC is his ability to think well beyond the borders of his beloved home state. "My work to protect, manage and restore Pennsylvania's forests is of great benefit to local wildlife and biodiversity," says Kevin. "And these forests are globally important due to their ability to sequester carbon and help mitigate climate change."

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A controlled burn at the Tannersville Cranberry Bog is one of many restoration strategies being deployed at the preserve. © George Gress

## Taking a Restoration Road Trip

When it comes to conservation, sustainability and environmentalism, sometimes things can seem hopeless. The problems seem unsolvable; the solutions, not scalable. But stories of restoration give us hope. Ecological restoration can be the antidote to hopelessness. The more stories we hear about successful restoration projects, the more we realize that it is a scalable solution to some of the greatest challenges facing our planet. Nature is resilient, and with a small amount of care and attention, it can rebound in incredible ways.

Over the past few years, the Pennsylvania/Delaware Chapter of The Nature Conservancy has led several restoration projects to improve the lands and waters of our two great states. From reforestation and stream restorations to dam and invasive species removals, our restoration projects are educating and inspiring our partners, supporters, preserve visitors and local communities.

To celebrate these projects—past, present and ongoing into the future—we are taking a restoration road trip across Pennsylvania and Delaware to see how restoration improves the lives and well-being of both people and nature. Because all of the projects featured in this restoration road trip are located on TNC nature preserves, our staff, partners and volunteers working on the ground are deeply invested in successful outcomes. We want these projects to enhance the experience of people who visit our preserves, while simultaneously improving the habitat for the other species that call our preserves home.

On the next page is a list of restoration projects that are part of our road trip, along with brief descriptions. The full stories behind these restoration projects—including videos, photos and maps—can be found at: [nature.org/PADERestoration](http://nature.org/PADERestoration)

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Top: A volunteer removes unwanted vegetation from the Tannersville Cranberry Bog Preserve. © Dick Ludwig; Bottom: Staff oversee construction during the removal of the O'Conner Reservoir Dam at the Dick and Nancy Eales Preserve. © Andrea Campbell; Right: Volunteers re-stake a tree at the Middleford North Preserve reforestation site. © John Hinkson/TNC

## NATURE PENNSYLVANIA/DELAWARE

Although the growth of woody vegetation can be a natural process in this bog, recent growth has been accelerated because of nutrient input from nearby roads and developments.

### Dick and Nancy Eales Preserve Dam Removal

Last winter, TNC staff and contractors removed the failing 128-year-old O'Conner Reservoir Dam from obstructing Sterry Creek on TNC's Dick and Nancy Eales Preserve. The dam removal exposed the creek's original stream channel, which had been submerged at the bottom of the reservoir. The stream is now flowing unobstructed and vegetation is returning to some areas of the floodplain. In other areas, TNC staff and volunteers will be distributing native seeds, acorns and pine cones collected from nearby.

### Blakeslee Preserve Stream Restoration

Within the 20,466-acre Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a small TNC inholding called the Blakeslee Preserve. Flowing down the center of the Refuge—including a 3/4-mile section that runs through the Blakeslee Preserve—is Cherry Creek, a glacial stream that meanders through woodlands and fields before it empties into the Delaware River. In early August 2022, TNC and several project partners restored a diverse mosaic of wetland and floodplain habitat of Cherry Creek to improve water quality and enhance aquatic habitat.

### Pemberton Forest Preserve Controlled Burns and Tree Harvests

The 1,365-acre Pemberton Forest Preserve was once a loblolly pine tree plantation. Despite the abundance of pine trees, the forest didn't provide much habitat value for wildlife. Since 2017, the chapter has been selectively harvesting loblolly pine, implementing controlled burns, and planting a more natural mix of tree species to restore the forest.

Learn more about all these projects at: [Nature.org/PADERestoration](https://www.nature.org/PADERestoration)

## Taking a Restoration Road Trip, Continued

### Hamer Woodlands at Cove Mountain Preserve Invasive Species Removal and Reforestation

The Hamer Woodlands at Cove Mountain Preserve sits within a 14-mile stretch of protected lands along the Kittatinny Ridge, one of the most important landscapes for climate adaptation in Pennsylvania and the greater Appalachian landscape. Last spring, in partnership with the National Audubon Society's Mid-Atlantic chapter, TNC's Pennsylvania/Delaware chapter restored several acres of ridge-top forest at the preserve that had been severely degraded by invasive species.

### Middleford North Preserve Reforestation and Ongoing Tree Care

In 2019, TNC reforested 22 acres of former agricultural lands at the Middleford North Preserve with 7,150 native trees and shrubs. This National Fish and Wildlife funded project aimed to increase and improve headwater forest habitat in the Nanticoke River watershed—improving water quality in the river, and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. The area also provides new habitat for local wildlife and migratory birds. In February 2022, TNC staff and volunteers tended to the entire restoration site by cleaning up broken tree tubes and re-staking trees that needed continued support.

### Tannersville Cranberry Bog Preserve Bog Restoration

Over the course of 10 days in the spring of 2022, PA/DE chapter staff and volunteers removed woody vegetation from approximately 1/4-acre of the bog to encourage the growth of rare species of orchids, rosemary, and carnivorous sundew and pitcher plants.