



## Upper Paradise Preserve

# Protecting and connecting a large part of this Paradise

By Carol Hillestad  
For Pocono Heritage  
Land Trust

**A**we comes in many sizes. Looking into the eyes of your newborn. Stepping to the rim of the canyon. Moonrise in a night sky.

That same kind of wonder arises in small ways, too. Especially in the woods.

Consider Nothstein Preserve in Paradise Township, Pa. A 10-minute walk from the trailhead, across Cranberry Creek and up a short, rocky slope, a shady glade is filled with the sound of rushing water. Bubbling, chuckling, dropping steeply toward the Cranberry, water cascades around, under, and over mossy boulders.

The greenish air is cool with the mineral smell of water. Wild geraniums, false hellebore, ferns and yellow ragwort put on a show. Canada mayflowers bloom in the damp moss.

In the world's terms, this little run is nothing much – hardly wide enough to need its short boardwalk crossing. It doesn't even have a name. But standing there, your breathing slows. Your shoulders relax. Your chattering mind calms down.



*The route back to the Nothstein Preserve trailhead crosses an unnamed tributary of Cranberry Creek. (Carol Hillestad photo)*

On a recent Saturday, a group of hikers set out from the Nothstein trailhead. Instead of aiming first for that unnamed little run, we skirted the wetlands along Cranberry Creek, squishy with sphagnum moss. This trail hugs the meandering creek, overhung with rhododendron

and hemlock, as it splashes and sparkles against a backdrop of steep cliffs and woodlands — among the most inviting of views anywhere in the Poconos.

Heading north, we soon cross onto land conserved by Pocono

*Continued on reverse*

**PHLT'S UPPER PARADISE PRESERVE CREATES THE LINK** between large parcels of protected land in northcentral Monroe County, Pa. A hiker could start in Henryville at Browns Hill Road Preserve, walk through Paradise Price Preserve, and cross Henry's Crossing Road into Upper Paradise Price Preserve. The Upper Paradise now connects with The Oaks Senior Housing in Cresco. A walk through The Oaks leads to the Grace Avenue crossroads at Route 191/390. From there, the hiker could walk through Ice Lake and Seven Pines Preserve, into State Game Lands 221, up and over Seven Pines Mountain to Devils Hole, the Kurmes and Fieldstone Farm preserves, and so into Mount Pocono.

**THESE LANDS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.** The preserves described here are open to the public from dawn to dusk. Hiking, picnicking, photography and other low-impact activities are welcome. There are no sanitary facilities or trash cans — pack out what you pack in. Fishing is allowed in season, with proper license. Hunting is allowed on many of these properties. Wear fluorescent orange!

**PROTECTING LAND PROTECTS WATER.** This connected network of land has been strategically chosen to protect the creeks and headwaters of some of Monroe County's most valuable water resources. Tank Creek, Yankee Run, Cranberry Creek, Paradise Creek, and Brodhead Creek are among them.

*It took 10 years, but the state “designated use” of Cranberry Creek has been upgraded to “Exceptional Value.” This heightens water-quality regulations that protect waterways from pollution — including warm-water discharges. Small, cold creeks like this have been threatened by increased commercial and industrial development.*



## Upper Paradise Preserve

*Continuing from front*

Heritage Land Trust, the Upper Paradise Preserve. The trail is higher here, just below the railroad tracks with their elegant, hand-cut culverts from the 1850s. These 511 acres of upland forest protect the creek, its low waterfalls and craggy canyon.

We swoop back down to the creek, for a look at something new: a footbridge.

Across this footbridge, Pocono Heritage Land Trust has set up a new connection for this preserve. In partnership with a senior housing cluster on the far side of the creek, the new trailhead provides public access to the northern end of Upper Paradise Preserve.

The afternoon is waning. Under a darkening sky, excitedly talking about coming back to explore the possibilities of this new connection, we start the return trek. This route leads to the little

unnamed run — but approaching it, the wind rises, the leaves rustle, rain starts to fall, and the little green jewel passes unnoticed under our hurrying feet.

We've had a fair share, though, of nameless wonders today.

His eyes like saucers, the youngest little hiker has seen and held a red eft for the first time. A red-tailed hawk has kept us company along the way. Our hike leader has climbed an enormous, ancient boulder and ever so slowly assumed a yoga tree-pose.

And, back at the trailhead — tired, wet, and happy — all of us agree: It's been an awesome day.

*Thanks to hike leaders Louise Troutman, executive director of Pocono Heritage Land Trust, and Sarah Corcoran, deputy director of programs for the Sierra Club.*



*Louise Troutman, hike leader and executive director of PHLT, expresses the joy of being in nature. (Carol Hillestad photo)*

**One Cranberry Creek? Or two?** *Monroe County has two waterways called Cranberry Creek. One, which rises in Pocono Township, feeds the famous Tannersville Cranberry Bog (protected by The Nature Conservancy). It eventually runs under Route 611 to join Pocono Creek. The other, described in this story, rises on the east side of Route 191/390 in Mountainhome and runs 13.32 stream miles through Barrett and Paradise townships. It joins Paradise Creek at the intersection of Browns Hill Road and Route 191 in Henryville.*



**POCONO HERITAGE LAND TRUST**

### ABOUT CONSERVING LAND

Founded in 1984, Pocono Heritage Land Trust is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Pocono region by conserving land and inspiring people to care for, enjoy and explore their natural world. PHLT works cooperatively with landowners to preserve their property and leave a legacy of protected natural habitats, healthy forest, clean waterways and open space for future generations.

You can help Pocono Heritage Land Trust protect land for the future. Learn about membership and volunteer opportunities at [www.phlt.org](http://www.phlt.org).

**PLEASE DONATE** to preserve important lands and natural resources in the Poconos, for generations to come.

- \$25** provides supplies for one trash cleanup day, or one planting of wildflower seeds for meadow habitat restoration.
- \$50** buys tools for managing invasive plants on volunteer days.
- \$150** prints 500 trail brochures to guide visitors on preserves.
- \$500** builds a streamcrossing bridge to improve trail access.
- \$1,500** covers the cost of an appraisal, the first step in acquiring new land for preservation.
- \$3,000** funds construction of a sign kiosk on a new preserve.
- \$5,000** enables development of a new nature trail network, including trail marking, clearing, signage and maps.

**Donate online at [phlt.org/donate.html](http://phlt.org/donate.html)**

or clip this form and send it with your check made out to Pocono Heritage Land Trust to:

**PHLT, 1539 Cherry Lane Road, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301**

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