



International Mountain Day



The rolling hills of Delaware Water Gap are the ancient, eroded remains of a prehistoric range of mountains that was once four miles high. (National Park Service photo)

Celebrate this ancient land we love (especially on Dec. 11)

By Carol Hillestad

For Pocono Heritage Land

12,000 years ago, humans we would recognize as people like us lived on this land.

With the changing seasons, they returned again and again, year after year for millennia, to ancient hearths along the Delaware River — hunting here, fishing here, gathering nuts and roots and berries, struggling, surviving, raising new generations.

The earliest of the early, they left evidence of their lives: symbols and images in caves, stone tools, and other relics of the past — celebrating deep roots in the land we walk today.

But even they were newcomers.



ABOUT INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY

International Mountain Day is Sunday, December 11, 2022. Established by the United Nations in 2002, the annual event marks the spiritual and environmental importance of mountains in human life. Half the drinking water of the world rises in mountains.

- Information on International Mountain Day: un.org/en/observances/mountain-day
- For a detailed picture of how Delaware Water Gap was formed: npshistory.com/brochures/dewa/gap-formation-2016.pdf
- Find a summary of the path of life on Earth here: newscientist.com/article/dn17453-timeline-the-evolution-of-life/

500 million years ago — before dinosaurs, before humans — right here, where we live, inland seas came and went. Unimaginable weight of eons of sediment layers — trilobites, jellyfish, early land creatures, plants, and eroded minerals in a thick primordial stew — were heated, compressed, shifted, and

changed over thousands and millions of years. And became rock.

And then continents collided!

A slow-motion collision that cracked the rock and split the heavens and reared up

Continued on reverse



International Mountain Day

Continuing from front

mountains as high as today's Alps and Himalayas— four miles above the surface, so high the peaks could not be seen from the lowlands.

Even then, water coursed. Working its way north and west from the shore of what we call New Jersey, relentless river water, drop by drop, eroded a path to the solid wall of mountain.

Exploiting tiny crannies in the rock, over millennia the water broke through to our side, the Delaware River was captured, drawn through the mountain, becoming a force of its own, carving, widening and eroding the rock — the Water Gap of today.

This is part of the story of the place where we live.

Repeated eons of ice and fire,



Hike Jonas Mountain to see this view for yourself. (R. Hare photo)

glaciers, wind and water, folding and eroding wore down the craggy mountains to this more intimate landscape, the hills and creeks we live with every day.

At Pocono Heritage Land Trust, this storied land fills us with

purpose. Respect. Gratitude for the forested land that sustains us, and countless generations that went before.

By protecting and conserving woodlands, wetlands and water, we safeguard this gift from the

past. Our aim: to preserve this deep, natural legacy of beauty, clean air, and pure water for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

After all these years it's the least we can do. Will you join us?



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.

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Email: _____