



Pleasant Valley OPENING DOORS TO NATURE

*Engaging people of all ages and abilities in
nature-based exploration in the Berkshires*



Welcome to Pleasant Valley

The gateway to nature in the Berkshires



Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, located in Lenox and Richmond, MA, was founded as the first wildlife sanctuary in Berkshire County in 1929. Pleasant Valley has grown to a 1,400-acre sanctuary featuring 7 miles of trails that connect to thousands of acres of conserved land in the Berkshires. Our trails pass through important wildlife habitat, including beaver ponds and wetlands, meadows, forests, and along the slopes of Lenox Mountain. Pleasant Valley is Mass Audubon’s base of operations for the six Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries, which include Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield, Lime Kiln Farm in Sheffield, Tracy Brook in Richmond, Cold Brook in Sandisfield/Otis, and Old Baldy in Otis.

Our Mission

To inspire people to protect nature in the Berkshires and beyond through environmental stewardship, science education and advocacy, and accessible outdoor experiences. Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary serves as the leading destination for high-quality public nature programming, as well as the premiere source of experiential nature-based education for schools in the Berkshires.

PLEASANT VALLEY and the Berkshire Sanctuaries			
2019 by the numbers			
235 public programs attended by 2,500 people	1,270 Mass Audubon members with homes in the Berkshires	6 wildlife sanctuaries with 12 miles of trails	300 volunteers donating 4,100 hours
30,000 individuals touched by our work	12,000 people greeted at the PV visitor center	1,300 Berkshire County students served from 14 schools	3,400 acres of land protected

Our Impact

Cultivating connection to nature for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds

For 90 years Pleasant Valley has welcomed visitors and served the community as a vibrant hub of conservation, environmental education, and outdoor recreation in the Berkshires. Our work cultivates a positive, personal connection to nature and inspires individual action to protect the environment for the more than 30,000 visitors and program participants we serve annually.

In the past five years, Pleasant Valley has experienced tremendous growth—500% in our school-based Berkshire Environmental Literacy Program, 300% in public programs, and 90% in sanctuary visitation. Demand for our work from schools, partner organizations, and the general public continues. Our varied and creative programming inspires a diverse audience to find their own connection to nature—through a piano concerto reminiscent of bird songs, moment of peace and mindfulness, strenuous hike, work of visual art, greater understanding of ecological processes, or scenic view.

The Berkshires has been identified as a hot spot for outdoor recreation and is being developed as a destination for those looking to enjoy time in nature. Pleasant Valley is positioned to be an important hub of information and resources for these visitors.

Opening Doors to Nature will allow Pleasant Valley to meet the needs of a larger and more diverse audience at the sanctuary year-round, and maintain our standing as the leading destination for high-quality public nature programming, outdoor recreation, and nature-based education in Berkshire County.



Governance and Funding

Mass Audubon is governed by a board of directors that oversees a statewide wildlife sanctuary system. Many sanctuaries, including Pleasant Valley, have a Sanctuary Advisory Committee that provides guidance and expertise to sanctuary leadership and staff. Mass Audubon's structure is autonomous, providing independence and flexibility for wildlife sanctuaries to conduct work in ways best-suited to their local communities. Sanctuaries are largely financially independent. Our revenue is generated locally and comprised of gifts and grants, followed by program revenue, endowment, and to a lesser extent, membership dues.

The Need

The aged facilities at Pleasant Valley lack the accessibility and amenities needed to support collaboration, creativity, and expansion. We have reached capacity for many programs, particularly for children, and existing facilities prevent further growth. Groups have declined visiting the sanctuary because it did not adequately meet their accessibility needs. We regularly have visitors, including students and summer campers, who use mobility aids. Some can navigate with minor difficulties; others experience many challenges. We know of individuals in the community that never visit Pleasant Valley because of the lack of accessibility.

Residents and tourists are increasingly looking to put aside technology and spend time in nature in the Berkshires. They appreciate Pleasant Valley's outstanding scenic beauty and varied trail system. Pleasant Valley's knowledgeable front desk staff welcome and orient visitors to help them feel comfortable



exploring the trails. Our diverse nature-based programming is seen as a vital community resource that supports curiosity, scientific exploration, and self-discovery.

As we plan strategically for the future of Pleasant Valley and the Berkshire region strives to become an outdoor recreation destination, it is essential that our facility welcomes and accommodates the diverse needs of modern visitors. The facility upgrades will allow us to meet the growing demand for visitation, programs, and partnerships and welcome all to find their connection to nature.

Project Overview

Opening Doors to Nature

This project will strengthen our capacity and ability to serve all who want to connect with nature in the Berkshires.

Our goal of \$1.125M will finance:

- » **a new lobby area** where visitors can view interpretive maps of Pleasant Valley and other conserved properties; gather for group programs, talks, and walks; and view educational displays;
- » **extensive decking** that creates a space for accessible, outdoor programming; birdwatching and wildlife viewing; and sitting and relaxing in nature;
- » **a small kitchen** that allows for refreshments to be served at rental functions, programs, community gatherings, and fundraisers;
- » **modern restrooms** on the same level as the barn, including those that are gender neutral, fully accessible, and family-friendly;
- » **storage space** that protects conservation and education equipment, including snowshoes, life jackets, and trail maintenance tools, utilized by our program participants and volunteers.

This energy-efficient addition is sized to fit our strategic plans for growth, the tradition of our historic barn, and modest budget. We will incorporate all-person accessibility and outdoor education spaces, as well as create the facilities to support a revenue-generating program and event space.

“The partnership between CATA and Mass Audubon has allowed our artists with disabilities to explore and express their connection to nature. This capital project will enable more of CATA’s artists to visit Pleasant Valley, engage in this process, and create more beautiful and nature-inspired artwork to hang on the walls of the historic barn.”

–Margaret Keller, Executive Director
Community Access to the Arts (CATA)



Project Objectives

With the successful completion of the Opening Doors to Nature Campaign, Pleasant Valley will secure its spot as the leading destination for high-quality public nature programming, outdoor recreation, and nature-based education in Berkshire County. Our enhanced facilities, coupled with the outstanding scenic beauty and habitat value of Pleasant Valley, will support this vision and our role as an important resource for the local community and visitors to the region.



This project will increase our facility’s space and functionality allowing us to:

- » provide a more welcoming experience to all individuals looking to participate in outdoor recreation and environmental education programs;
- » better serve visiting school participants, including students with physical disabilities;
- » expand our popular Berkshire Nature Camp;
- » properly host large public events, like our hugely successful Family Fun Day and Tanglewood Takes Flight bird walks and concerts;
- » expand programming with local organizations, including the Tanglewood Music Center, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Kripalu, Community Access to the Arts, and Canyon Ranch;
- » host revenue-generating weddings, events, and meetings in our barn;
- » accommodate special events, trainings, music concerts, and meetings of community groups.

PROJECT BUDGET

Professional design + engineering services	\$185,000
Building construction + permits	\$818,800
Furniture + equipment	\$55,200
Permanent building endowment	\$66,000
Grand Total	\$1,125,000

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

This comprehensive campaign will raise necessary funds from foundations, grants, corporate supporters, and individuals. Design work will be completed during winter 2019/2020. Construction will be begin August 2020.

Our goal is to open the new facility for Summer 2021.

A resource for the Berkshire Community



A destination
for Berkshire
visitors

Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary

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