

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy

IMPACT REPORT



2025

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends of Bull Run Mountains Conservancy,

Reflecting on this past year, I am filled with gratitude for the many accomplishments of our dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters. Together, we advanced our conservation mission of education, stewardship, and research in the Bull Run Mountains.



This impact report highlights the diverse ways we continue to engage our community. More than 1,000 participants joined us through our lecture series, naturalist-led walks, volunteer days, homeschool programs, and summer camps, each experience creating a meaningful opportunity to connect with nature and deepen our appreciation for the outdoors. Last year we also celebrated a milestone with our 25th consecutive Halloween Safari, a cherished evening of music, hiking, and lively encounters with “talking animals.”

None of this would be possible without the continued support of the foundations and patrons named in this report. Special appreciation goes to the White House Farm Foundation, our valued partner organization that graciously hosts our programs at Leopold’s Preserve.

On a personal note, after completing my first full year as Board President, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Andrea Currier for continuing to play an active role on our Board of Directors. As our past president and a founding member of the Conservancy, Andrea continues to demonstrate the vision, leadership, and tireless commitment that makes BRMC the vibrant organization it is today.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support. Your dedication makes our work possible. We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

Sandy Surabian

President of the Board

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy

EDUCATION

Bull Run Mountains Conservancy (BRMC) is committed to protecting our region through education, research, and stewardship. Fostering a deep appreciation for our region through hands-on, immersive learning experiences is at the heart of everything we do. We were thrilled to welcome **over 1,300 participants** to our diverse educational programs, hikes, and lecture series. This dedication to connecting people with the natural world resulted in **more than 2,600 impact hours** this past year.

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS



BRMC's outdoor programs are rain or shine!

A core component of our educational offerings, BRMC's Homeschool Series provides an opportunity for children and their parents to consistently engage with the natural world.

Each month, a professional field biologist leads nature hikes, focusing on a different theme, such as forest ecology, stream exploration, geology, or cultural history.

These programs not only support the curriculum of homeschooling families but also create a community of learners dedicated to understanding and caring for the Piedmont landscape.



HALLOWEEN SAFARI

October is always a fun time at Leopold's Preserve, where BRMC hosts the Annual Halloween Safari!

We were thrilled to have another year of natural history skits with unforgettable animals, live music from Peter McCorry the One-Man Band, and a roaring bonfire.

Everyone had a great time—kids and parents alike!

YOUTH OUTDOORS PROGRAMS



BRMC campers holding a Painted Turtle

Herpetology Camp

Our two-day Herpetology Camp offered campers hands-on experiences and guided field trips to sites such as Leopold's Preserve, Silver Lake, and Hopewell Sanctuary. Campers safely encountered and learned about a variety of reptiles and amphibians, including Eastern Box Turtles, Spotted Salamanders, and Timber Rattlesnakes. The program emphasized habitat identification, ethical handling practices, and conservation awareness.

Budding Naturalist Camp

Our youngest naturalists, ages 4-6, embarked on a week-long exploration of our local region, discovering the wonders of local wildlife and the outdoors. Through a series of discovery hikes, frog and salamander searches, snake viewing, and stream exploration, these budding naturalists spent the day fully immersed in nature.

Summer Naturalist Camp

Our week-long Summer Naturalist Camp serves as a cornerstone of our youth education program. The camp features a new topic each day, ranging from amphibians and reptiles to mammals and bugs. Our campers learn about the history and physiology of our local fauna found in the region. This program helps campers develop a strong foundation in natural history and fosters a lasting appreciation for the many creatures that share our world.



HIKING WITH BRMC

Our guided excursions, including our popular Hike with a Naturalist and themed Naturalist Walks, remain a cornerstone of BRMC's commitment to conservation, education, and stewardship.

This past year, BRMC led more than 30 guided hikes, connecting 650 children and adults to the natural landscape.

In total, these programs contributed 1,300 in-person education impact hours, fostering a deeper understanding of our conservation mission.

YOUTH OUTDOORS PROGRAMS



Campers netting for macroinvertebrates



Stoneflies are a good indication of healthy waters

Chesapeake Watershed Workshop

Our partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund enabled us to host a successful Chesapeake Watershed Workshop, offering hands-on experience to young people who are passionate about environmental stewardship.

This program provided a unique opportunity for six scholarship recipients, ages 15-18, to engage in the crucial work of stream and habitat preservation.

The workshop took place across several key waterways, including headwater seeps on the Bull Run Mountains and downstream on Catharpin Creek, Little Bull Run, and North Fork. At each location, participants monitored streams to assess water quality, conducted detailed vegetation analysis, and evaluated stream habitats and riparian buffers.

WHY DO WE MONITOR STREAMS?

Stream monitoring provides the data we need to ensure that our waterways meet the needs of nature and communities. Macroinvertebrate monitoring allows us to involve the community directly in these efforts with citizen science projects. By empowering the next generation of conservationists, we are actively protecting our streams and ensuring their vitality for years to come.



OH, THE THINGS YOU'LL SEE!

Whether you're on a BRMC naturalist hike, attending summer camp, or participating in an education program, we always encourage you to look around and observe your surroundings. You might be surprised at the things you see!



Fowler's toad (*Anaxyrus fowleri*)



Timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*)



green frog (*Lithobates clamitans*)



Snapping turtle
(*Chelydra serpentina*)



Eastern box turtle
(*Terrapene carolina carolina*)



Eastern newt
(*Notophthalmus viridescens*)

Mole Kingsnake
(*Lampropeltis calligaster*)



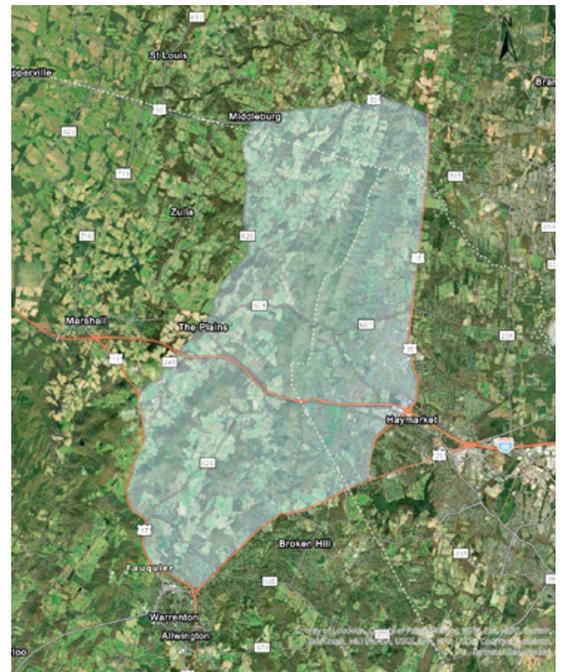
RESEARCH

For over 30 years, BRMC's commitment to education has been supported by our research initiative. We have proudly sponsored and contributed to numerous baseline studies, providing crucial data that deepens our collective understanding of the landscape.

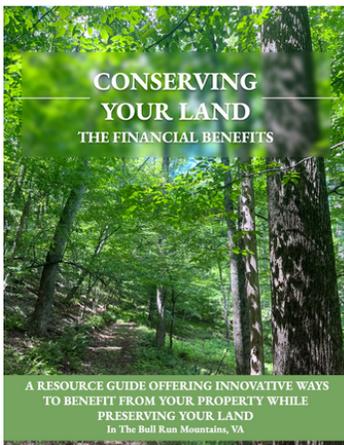
CARBON SEQUESTRATION

BRMC partnered with the Institute for Integrative Conservation at William & Mary for a research project focused on environmental conservation and community engagement.

The main goal of the collaboration was to explore the potential of carbon markets as a way to incentivize conservation-focused land management in the Bull Run Mountains region. As part of this effort, William & Mary student researchers developed a toolkit to help local landowners understand various conservation strategies and quantify carbon storage on their property. This project supports BRMC's efforts to show communities and policymakers the value of the mountains' ecosystems and landscapes.



Our study area encompasses about 66,700 acres



As part of our study, student researchers developed a toolkit to help landowners understand various conservation strategies. The toolkit walks landowners through the basic steps and provides helpful insight into the various approaches an individual can take to help preserve the Bull Run Mountain Region.

STEWARDSHIP

BRMC's dedicated volunteer base continues to be essential in supporting our region's conservation efforts. We are always looking for new ways to help, whether it's through invasive species removal, trash cleanup, bluebird monitoring, or assisting with scout projects. We look forward to another year of stewardship!



The Friday crew after a morning of hard work

Friday Conservation Corps

The Friday Conservation Corps is a collaborative volunteer program offered by Leopold's Preserve in partnership with Bull Run Mountains Conservancy. This weekly event provides opportunities for community members to engage in hands-on environmental stewardship. This year, we had over 1,500 volunteer hours! Some activities include invasive removal, trash removal, and trail maintenance.

Citizen Science

In 2025, our dedicated team of volunteers managed 12 nesting boxes across several key locations, including Leopold's Preserve, Wakefield School, and our Mountain House Headquarters.

Despite the challenges of an intense summer—including extreme heat and persistent pests like ticks—the hard work and commitment paid off. We are thrilled to report a total of 81 young birds successfully fledged from our boxes this year. The insights we gain are invaluable for understanding local ecosystems. We extend our deepest gratitude to all our volunteers for their tireless efforts!



One of our bird boxes with healthy eggs inside

12 NEST BOXES
3 LOCATIONS
81 FLEDGLINGS



BRMC MEMBER EVENTS

Town & Country Nature Walks

Our Town & Country Nature Walks program is designed to meet people where they are. We believe that access to nature shouldn't be limited to remote preserves or mountain trails. Our walks bring the expertise of a naturalist directly into urban green spaces, neighborhood parks, and local trails, empowering individuals and families to discover the rich biodiversity and local history right in their own backyards.

Bluebell Walk at Bonnybrook Farm



Great Blue Heron Rookery



Galemont Farms



Getting Involved: BRMC's Black Plastic Initiative

After attending a Town & Country Nature Walk, participants can begin conserving a piece of their own land through our black plastic initiative. By covering a section of their lawn with a sheet of plastic, they can trap the sun's heat, which smothers existing vegetation and weed seeds. After 4 to 6 weeks, the soil is ready for planting native seeds, creating a clean slate for beautiful native wildflowers.

BRMC MEMBER EVENTS

Annual Fundraiser

Every year, BRMC hosts its annual fundraising event to celebrate another year of successful stewardship of the region.

For our 31st anniversary as an organization, Laura Greenleaf, leader of the Virginia Chapter of Darksky International, was our keynote speaker. She delivered a fascinating presentation: *Lighting Matters: An Introduction to Light Pollution and Night Sky/Nightscape Conservation*. Thank you to everyone who came out for this event.



INTERNATIONAL DARK-SKY ASSOCIATION



Laura Greenleaf presenting on *Why Lighting Matters*



Why Lighting Matters

After attending our 31st Annual Event, members came away with a deeper understanding of the negative impacts of light pollution, or "artificial light at night" (ALAN), on people and wildlife. Greenleaf explained that excessive and poorly designed lighting can disrupt human circadian rhythms and wildlife behavior, leading to increased mortality for animals like insects and birds.

BRMC MOUNTAIN HOUSE EVENTS



Bull Run Mountains Conservancy's Mountain House Headquarters is a communal hub for community engagement and environmental education. Throughout the year, it serves as the welcoming venue for our Speaker Series and Winter Lecture Series, which is in collaboration with our partners at Leopold's Preserve.

Speaker Series

Our Speaker Series is designed to showcase the valuable work being done by organizations in our community. BRMC has welcomed a variety of speakers, including authors, historians, and environmentalists like our friends at Bird in the Hand Conservancy who showcased our region's owls!



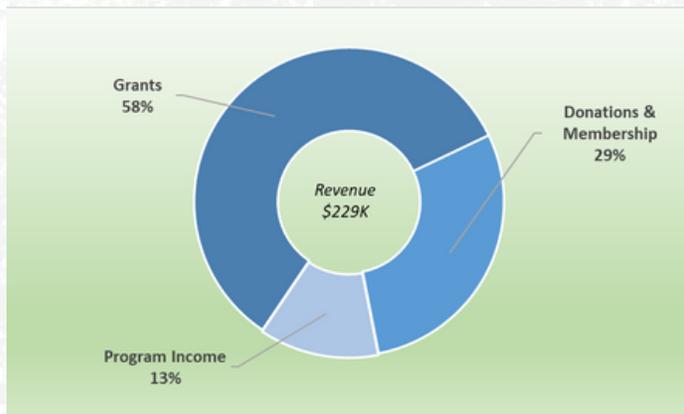
Winter Lecture Series

In partnership with Leopold's Preserve, BRMC hosts a Winter Lecture Series from December to March. This series covers an array of fascinating subjects, from controlling invasive plants to the lives of local vultures. Pictured here is Bill Crisp from K2C wildlife encounters teaching us about snakes of Virginia.

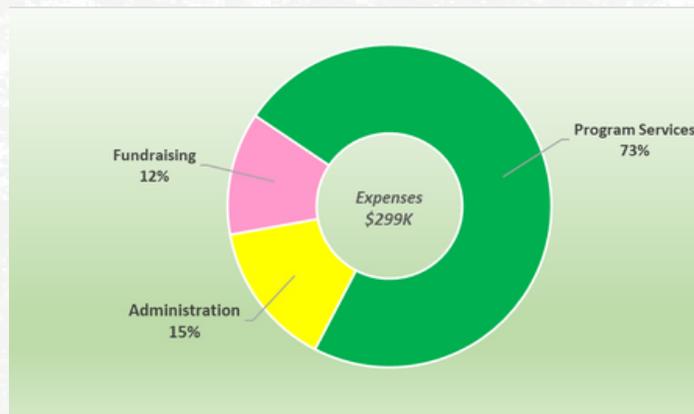
Thank you for your support!

The charts below display the donor support we received between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, and how we allocated this funding. Thank you for supporting our work!

Total Support and Revenue: \$229,000



Total Expenses: \$299,000



\$5,000+

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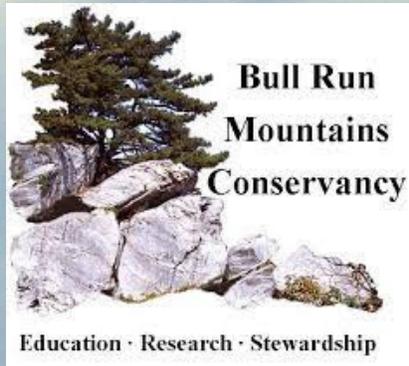
Ms. Jo W. Finch

THANK YOU!

BRMC is deeply grateful to all our supporters.



Common Five-lined skink at the BRMC Mountain House.



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