

David Library E-Newsletter  
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## **David Library Property Will Become a State Park**

Earlier this week, the David Library issued an announcement to the Bucks County/Philadelphia-area media about the fate of Buckstone Farm, the 118-acre property in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania that has been home to the David Library since 1974. The announcement was jointly issued by DLAR with Heritage Conservancy, the non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve and protect the natural and historic heritage of Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

The news is good: Heritage and DCNR have signed an Agreement of Sale to acquire all 118 acres from DLAR. DLAR's choice riverfront property will remain open space, available to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as part of the Delaware Canal State Park with public accessibility for everyone to enjoy.

As subscribers to this mailing list, you know that the David Library closed its Washington Crossing campus at the end of last year after entering into a partnership agreement with the American Philosophical Society (APS) in Philadelphia to create the David Center for the American Revolution at the American Philosophical Society. That collaboration and the move of the David Library's collection to Philadelphia has already expanded the reach of DLAR's resources and programs.

Anyone who has ever visited the David Library campus in Bucks County knows it's a special place. With historical roots dating back to William Penn, the property was first acquired by the David Library's founder Sol Feinstone in 1945. Situated on the banks of the Delaware River, just a mile from the embarkation site of George Washington's Christmas night river crossing in 1776, Library patrons have enjoyed the bucolic setting, and residential research fellows have enjoyed living in the gracious stone farmhouse that is the centerpiece of the property.

Tasked with selling the property once the library was no longer operating in Bucks County, the Board hoped for a solution that would fulfill its fiduciary responsibility to the institution, but also honor the legacy of the site and its role as a cultural landmark.

"We could not have been more pleased when we were approached by the DCNR and Heritage Conservancy," said David Library President James Linksz.

John Hallas, Director of the Bureau of State Parks, noted, "The site is a perfect location for a canal interpretive center as well as an administrative and maintenance center for the Park."

Heritage Conservancy agreed to include the transfer of its Sol & Rose Nature Center in the acquisition. The Sol & Rose Nature Center is a wooded 25-acre site north of the Library, between the canal and River Road, that Sol Feinstone and his wife Rose Feinstone donated to Heritage Conservancy prior to Sol Feinstone's death in 1980.

“With this acquisition, we are assuring that this key access point to the Delaware Canal does not fall into private hands that would have almost assuredly prohibited public access to both the canal and the river,” said Jeffrey Marshall, President of Heritage Conservancy. “This is why we are receiving additional support for the project from the William Penn Foundation. Providing key access points to waterways and promoting connection to the water are key goals in our work with the William Penn Foundation.”

The DLAR partnership with APS will be fully executed upon sale of its real estate holdings. DCNR and Heritage Conservancy plan to close on the sale by the end of October 2020.

“Buckstone Farm was the first home I ever knew,” said Francine Stone, Vice President of the Board of Trustees, and granddaughter of Sol Feinstone. “Of course I never wanted to see it sold to developers. But as a trustee of non-profit organization, I had to be practical, and that meant keeping an open mind to every possible scenario. The sale to DCNR, facilitated by Heritage Conservancy, insures the land will remain open and undeveloped. Not only is this farm where my family lived for a long time, and where the David Library provided useful knowledge about American history for 45 meaningful years, it is the location of my grandparents’ final resting place. I’m grateful that the DCNR has agreed to preserve the burial site on the property. I will like imagining Sol and Rose, out there under the magnificent copper beech tree in front of their former home, welcoming and blessing every visitor who comes to enjoy this new section of the Delaware Canal State Park.”