

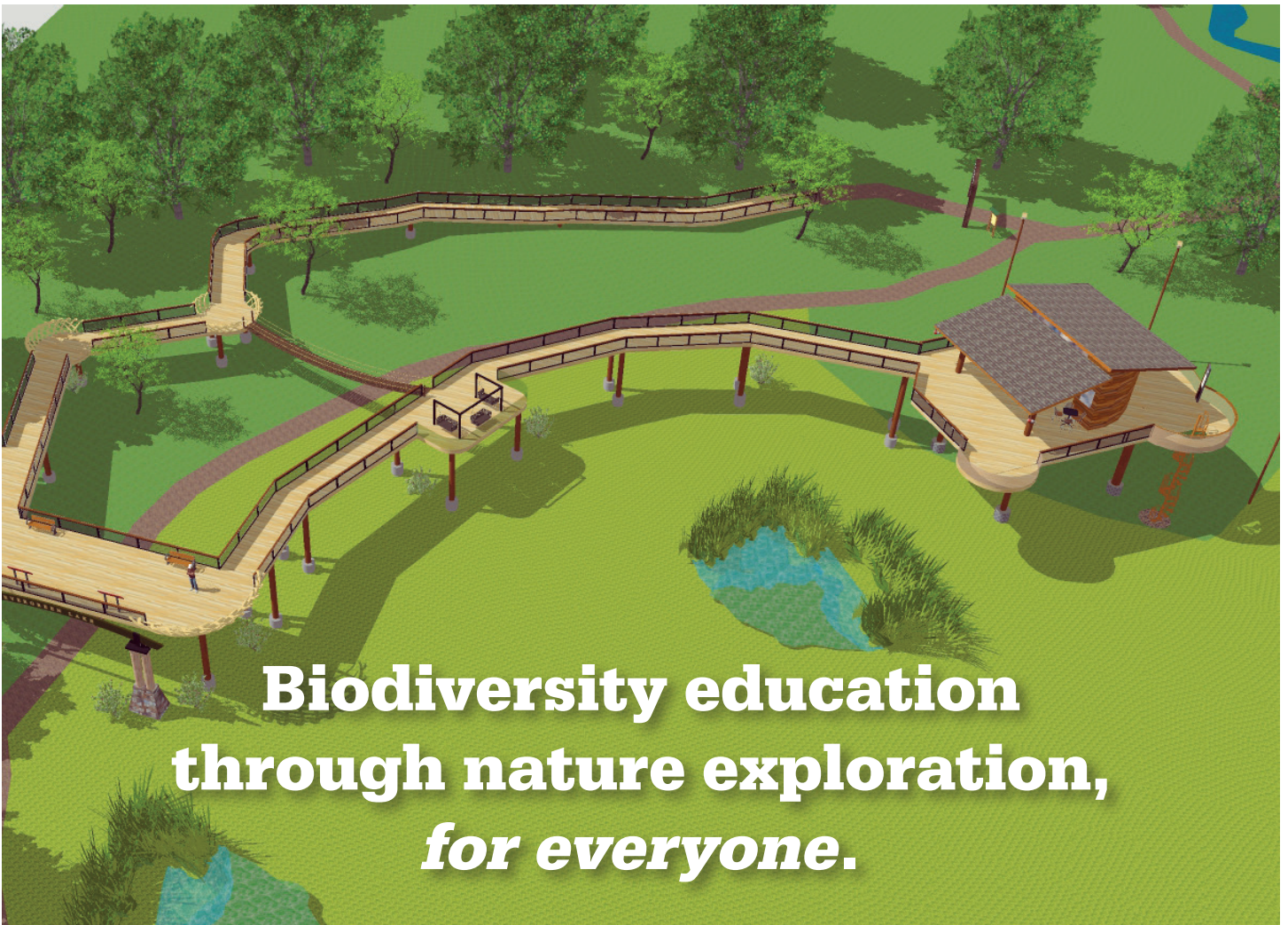


PennState

Shaver's Creek
ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

HAWKS VIEW TREEHOUSE PROPOSAL

Presented to the Hamer Foundation
Q1 2021





PROJECT PROPOSAL

The educational mission of Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center (SCEC) is to connect people to the natural world while building a deeper awareness of the importance of biodiversity. **A multi-partner, multi-faceted project in Hawks View Meadow will improve pollinator and wetland habitat and develop a fun, engaging, and accessible “destination” place in the landscape.** This destination will draw visitors and learners of all ages away from the built environment and deeper into nature to build new connections through play and exploration.

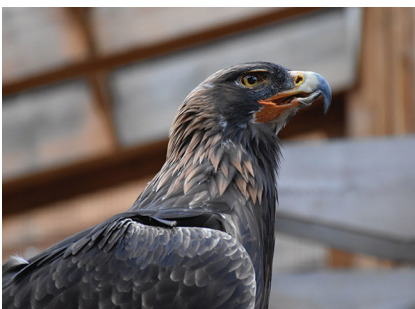
Shaver’s Creek seeks to partner with the Hamer Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and private donors to create an educational habitat and “Hawks View Treehouse” in Hawks View Meadow to the northwest of the SCEC visitor center. **We respectfully ask for a commitment of \$250,000 to this project from the Hamer Foundation.**

3
partners already committed

5
habitats explored through interpretation

\$250,000
amount sought from the Hamer Foundation

\$750,000
estimated project cost



A HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIP

From Don Hamer’s initial support of Shaver’s Creek interns in the 1980s, to the Foundation’s lead gift toward our 2016 renovation and expansion project, the Hamer Foundation has been **a vital partner of Shaver’s Creek’s mission for over three decades.** The Foundation’s recent support fulfilled Phase I of our expansion and allowed the Creek to move directly into Phase II, building a second classroom and completing a renovation to our Klingsberg Aviary that has **become a national model** for animal training and enrichment.

PROJECT SCOPE

PGC and USFWS have agreed to fund and install a demonstration wetland in the meadow and expand pollinator habitat by a half-acre in 2021. Following this, we hope to develop a multi-layered educational space at the vibrant nexus of forest, field, creek, lake, and wetland habitats.

Highlighting special places in the landscape **motivates visitors** to explore further, engage their imaginations, and forge deeper connections to place. We find inspiration from the treehouses at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, PA and canopy walk at the Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia.

The Hawks View Treehouse, constructed at the edge of the expanded meadow habitat, aside the existing Lake Trail, will be a **free-standing structure nestled against the forest**, raised twenty feet into the canopy, with fun, kid-friendly access points from below and an accessible trail and ramp built into the natural slope to the west. It will have a covered space for groups and an observation deck that overlooks the wetland, creek, meadow, and lake to the southeast.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT & A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

The Hawks View Treehouse Project will reach learners from grade school to grad school, connecting emerging professionals in the outdoor education field to children and families in surrounding communities. Already, we have engaged a Penn State graduate-level engineering class (EDSGN 581) to explore canopy walks and treehouses as educational destinations across the Stone Valley Forest.

We will **highlight habitats** through interpretive panels that weave together the stories of a biodiverse landscape. The wetland and meadow improvements will **serve as a role model** for landowners looking to improve wildlife habitat on their properties. Interactive exhibits will **engage learners of all ages and learning styles**.

This project will provide Summer Camp, school programs, and guided tours a **valuable teaching space** and will serve as a unique stop for public workshops such as Migration Morning bird walks.

With bluebird and bat boxes and pollinator habitats, this project will also become a hub for our Citizen Science efforts that **empower the community** to monitor and report on local biodiversity trends.





A safe space to seek health, fresh air, and *respite*.

CONFRONTING A NEW CHALLENGE

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have been wide-ranging, but one silver lining Shaver’s Creek witnessed in 2020 was **the increase of families exploring the natural world** for both pleasure and education. The miles of trails encircling the Center continue to **provide a safe space to get out of the house and seek health, fresh air, and respite** from Zoom-fatigue and isolation. The Hawks View Treehouse project will be a fun and welcoming destination for these families out for a hike, as well as others less accustomed to exploring farther than the landscaped lawns and pathways around the Center.

18,000

annual drop-in visitors

3,000

annual public program and festival participants

2,200

youth engaged annually through on-site programs

A LEGACY OF IMPACT

A commitment to the Hawks View Treehouse project will leave a **resounding legacy on our community’s health, wellness, and connection** to the natural world. We are grateful for the Hamer Foundation’s thoughtful consideration of our request for partnership.