GRIST From the Mill

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The Heart of Newlin Grist Mill Beats Again

Water is central to activities at Newlin Grist Mill (NGM) whether it is powering the historic mill, providing fishing opportunities, or forming the diverse habitats enjoyed by wildlife and people alike. The water system is the one element that connects all of these and is the heart of the site.

The water system is often referred to as a character defining feature of a water mill because it is the physical connection between the mill and its landscape, requiring individual adaptations in its dams, gates, and canals to supply water to operate the wheel. Over the years, those connections have spread to include the fishing ponds, frog pond, wetland, and most recently the expanded wetland. All of these are directly connected to water flowing in the millrace.

Spillway restoration with new walkway was finished in September.

In June, the millrace was again flooded as part of the Rubber Duck Race during the Race For the Watershed/Sponsor a Duck event. When the sounds of water spilling over the gate and splashing down into the upper pond started, it was like the site came alive and began to breathe again. After the millrace was dewatered in 2019 due to the siltation, the site became quieter and less active. Most visitors noticed something was wrong but many inquired about what was wrong when they could not pinpoint the problem. Everyone present including staff, volunteers, and visitors, all took notice when the heart started again.

This milestone was the result of years of study and restoration in the water system to keep this intricate machine operating. The work included an engineering survey of the 210 ft-long tailrace tunnel, repair of the main dam after the center section was breached by flooding, and the thorough mapping of the millrace. The most recent accomplishments involved

Staff and volunteers setting one of the gate posts in the spillway

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Millrace Story Continued...

silt remediation throughout the system and restoration of the spillway gate.

Beginning in 2017, work on Route 322/ Conchester Highway by PennDOT and its contractors significantly impacted the waterways at NGM. The half mile-long millrace was silted closed until only a trickle of water could get through. The fishing ponds were closed after conditions made it impossible to keep trout alive. The Frog Pond and Wetland were minimally maintained as a habitat by diverting waterflow from the lower half of the millrace. After six years of negotiations and a year of permitting, the silt was finally removed at the end of 2023. Around a hundred truck loads of silt were removed from the millrace and four ponds during the mitigation work.

The Spillway restoration with new walkway was required because the gate had deteriorated and was failing. Water had been leaking around and through the gate for centuries causing significant damage including sink holes. Archaeological work had been conducted with West Chester University's Anthropology Department students in early 2020. Important information was discovered but a complete excavation was not possible because of the tonnage of soils that would have been required to excavate.

When the restoration project began, machinery made it possible to excavate the 6'- 8' depths that could not be accomplished by hand excavations. Full exposure of the gate revealed a 300-year history of leaks and attempted repairs as well as a complex mix of concrete, stone masonry, and wooden construction. We also found areas where the original gate construction and subsequent repairs could not be made watertight. Our response was to redesign our restoration. After thoroughly studying, mapping, and photographing the structure, new concrete structures were poured in front, behind, and to both sides of the gate to just below grade. The original structure was covered to protect it and encapsulated with the concrete. New

The overflow will provide additional flood protection.

Eva Mergen installing the last peg in gate beam

stone walls were constructed on top of the old walls to replace the deteriorated and often collapsed structure. Two minor changes were made to walkway over the gate by widening it and leveling the approaches to make access better.

It is anticipated that the system should be fully operational in 2025 once the waterwheel and flume restorations have been completed. Work will continue in the water system into the future so the heart of NGM can continue beating. Projects will include restoring the control gate, surveying and repairing the cast iron flume pipe running into the mill, and repairing the tailrace tunnel.

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Race for the Watershed

On June 15th, Newlin Grist Mill and Concord Township joined forces once again to protect our community watersheds with Race for the Watershed, a fund raiser to support watershed protection projects.

The day began with a 5K trail run through the park, which was followed with festivities throughout the day, including kids' games, family activities, vendors and community watershed and conservation organizations. During four separate race heats, nearly 300 rubber ducks raced down the millrace, over the spillway gate, and splashed into the upper trout pond, before crossing the finish line to the cheers of the crowd. After the races, prizes were awarded to the winning runners and sponsors of the winning ducks.

A special dedication ceremony was held to commemorate the millrace reopening, featuring remarks by Representative Craig Williams, Concord Township Council Vice President John Gillespie, and NGM Executive Director Tony Shahan. The speakers put the accomplishment into context based on their individual perspectives.

The day concluded with tours of our newly expanded wetland habitat and millwright shop to see the wooden waterwheel being built.

The event raised over $8,500 for critical water conservation initiatives. Race for the Watershed has previously funded the purchase of a YSI hand-held digital water monitoring system to make it easier, quicker, and more accurate to monitor water quality. The event also covers the costs of other calibration and testing supplies and the data plan that supports the Mayfly sensors. The funds will support a salt survey that will sample streams at various locations to get a better understanding of the impacts of salt on our waterways and pinpoint where concentrations are highest.

Thank you to our event sponsors: Boeing Helicopter Credit Union, Brinker Simpson, Concordville Subaru, David Auto, Illumanize, Lane Signs, Mahoney & Mahoney, MOR Construction, Opdenaker, Rocky Run YMCA, Sun East Credit Union, and Visit Delco, PA.

Thanks to everyone who participated as runners, duck sponsors, or participated in the festivities. Your support of Race for the Watershed made an important difference for the event's success and our community.

We hope you will join us in 2025 for our third annual Race for the Watershed on June 14th. Register to be a runner or walker in the 5K. Ducks are available for adoption at $20 each or 3 for $50. Visit our website to sign up: newlingristmill.org/race. Interested in sponsoring this event? Contact Brenda Orso at borso@newlingristmill.org.

Top – Ducks raced across the finish to cheers of the crowd.
Middle – Runners crossing the finish line of 5K Race!
Bottom – Games, displays, and vendors enjoyed by all!

Adopt Your Duck Today!

Adopt a duck for a chance to win cash prizes! When we release the Quackin at the third annual Race for the Watershed on June 14th, your adopted ducks will have three chances to win cash prizes. Your rubber ducks will race downstream competing to be the first across the finish. Ducks are available for adoption at $20 each or 3 for $50. Cash prizes will be paid to the top three places in each race, including a $1,000 grand prize in the final race.

Ducks are available for adoption on our website or in person at the Visitor Center. When you adopt a duck, you will receive a certificate via email with your number(s). You do not have to be present to win, but we hope you will attend to cheer for your duck and enjoy the music, fun, and festivities. Learn more at newlingristmill.org/race. If you would like to sponsor this event, contact Brenda Orso at borso@newlingristmill.org.

Delco Gives Day

On May 8 and 9, we will once again be participating in the second year of Delco Gives Day, a 24-hour day of giving in Delaware County, hosted by the Foundation for Delaware County. This year, we will be raising funds for the Newlin Log House restoration project, which will be part of the America250th celebration in 2026 and 2027.

The Newlin Log House was given to Newlin Grist Mill by Concord Township in 2020, when they acquired a property on Beaver Valley Road. A survey of the original portions of the building revealed it to be a historic log house built between 1750 and 1775, probably by Nathaniel Newlin. The log house is historically significant with several rare surviving elements. After removing the modern additions, the original logs were mapped, tagged, and disassembled. The logs are being stored in preparation for reconstruction. Since that day, we have been preparing to reassemble the log house at Newlin Grist, by excavating and doing archaeological surveys to avoid impacting unknown resources.

The project is estimated to cost approximately $250,000 to $300,000. The funds raised during Delco Gives Day will go directly to this reconstruction project. Donations of $10 or more are welcome, and can be applied to the Delco Gives Day event even before May 8-9. If you'd like to donate to this project, you can give online through our website at newlingristmill.org or call us at 610-459-2359, just be sure to mention or tag DelcoGives with your donation. Be sure to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or through our monthly E-news to keep up to date on this and other exciting projects happening at Newlin. Thank you for your support!

In 2021 the Log House was carefully disassembled and place in storage. Your support can help us reassemble this treasure.

Welcome Society Supports Newlin Log House Donation

The Welcome Society of Pennsylvania invited Executive Director Tony Shahan to provide an update on what's new at NGM during a luncheon meeting in October. During the luncheon, Society President Andrew Webster presented a $2,000 donation to support the Newlin Log House project.

The Welcome Society was founded in 1906 as a non-profit dedicated to educating and helping others. Membership consists of descendants of passengers on William Penn's ship Welcome and those fellow Quakers who traveled across the Atlantic to America during 1682-1683. Many of the members attended an open house event at NGM in September that was co-sponsored by the Society of Colonial Wars and the Society of Colonial Dames, Chapter II and their experience left them wanting to learn more.

The organization is interested in Newlin Grist Mill because Nicholas Newlin and his son Nathaniel arrived in America on board the Liver of Liverpool on May 17, 1683. The Newlin Log House attracted their attention due to its construction date between 1750-1775, unique surviving features, and its possible use as a tavern. Thank you to the Society for their interest and generous support!

Top: Society President Andrew Webster presenting donation.

Water Wheel & Flume Update

The most anticipated project is the rebuilding of the water wheel and flume. The experimental archaeological project to build the water wheel has been very informative in understanding early water wheels and their construction. The flume construction has been a learning experience in timber construction for staff and volunteers.

The spokes are completed and ready to install. The sixteen rims are all but finished. All front buckets are completed except for final fitting and bottom buckets are also nearly complete. The final fitting and assembly will start soon. Despite the progress, we acknowledge that we misjudged our completion date in 2024 but do anticipate completion in 2025.

The project has been hampered by the tedium of repetitively making the same pieces over and over. Over 200 individual pieces are needed to complete the wheel. The repetitive nature of the work has helped us understand how proficiency was developed as each member of the team has taken on specialized tasks related to the tools they are most comfortable and proficient with. The repetitiveness has also been difficult on people who have not been using these tools since their youth. A decision was made to slow down the work to maintain quality and also to ensure the safety of the team. Other delays were caused by sequencing requirements and multiple other demands on staff and volunteers.

Thank you for everyone's patience as we continue to work and learn on this project.

Blacksmith Shop's New Old Look

Throughout 2024, work has been ongoing to restore the Blacksmith Shop. The hearth was moved from the McKinley Blacksmith Shop in 1975 but examination of the shop before it was demolished revealed the hearth originally had a backwall and chimney. It seems fitting that the blacksmith shop is being restored 50 years later on the eve of the America250 celebration.

The work of recreating an accurate early English blacksmith shop has included the construction of a back wall and a new chimney. The new construction was completed in hand-made brick to maintain appearance and delineate the addition and the original hearth. The design is based on a drawing in Joseph Moxon's Mechanical Exercises Or the Doctrine of Handy-Works from 1703. The hearth is also being returned to a side blast forge to better replicate early 18th century techniques.

The remaining work relates to creating a new set of bellows and raising it above the flood level. An attempt was made to replace the leather on the existing bellows with new leather but when removed it was discovered previous replacements left the wood riddled with holes and multiple flooding episodes caused the wood to rot. The new bellows will be constructed after the water wheel is completed. A portable forge will continue to be used until the work is completed.

This project is being funded by a grant from Stewart Huston Foundation, a bequest from James Luther, filming fees, and private donations.

New Wetland Expansion Thrives

The Wetland Expansion project was implemented in November 2023 with the purpose of expanding critical wetland habitat for indicator species like reptiles and amphibians. The work was combined with the silt mitigation project to reduce staging costs, streamline permitting, and reduce impacts on our visitors. The project has been an incredible success on many fronts – environmental impact, community participation, and funding.

The environmental impact is astonishing considering that the entire project area was overgrown thickets when we started and a few short months later there were five breeding species of frogs and toads utilizing the new habitat. Later in the year, we found a species of fish never before seen at NGM. The habitat is already a favorite for wildlife and people alike.

The Wetland Expansion project has been a community project from start to finish. While the brain child of Naturalist Jessica Shahan, she worked with Kevin Magerr and his senior engineering students to design the catch basin, braided channels, deep pools, boardwalks, and diverse plantings for wildlife and insects that have caused the wetland to thrive. The list of volunteers who helped with the project include Williamson College of the Trades, Penn State Master Watershed Stewards, Wegman's 126 – Concordville, Girl Scout Troop 5952, Boy Scout Troop 93, and Temple University Engineering Department. Four separate Eagle Scout projects (Andrew Yu, Jacob Kostrubiec, Patrick Corrigan, and Greg Guron) were part of the project. NGM grounds volunteers Bryan Ersek, Dave Collins, Dave Turner, Chuck Demaio, Kim DeWoody, Harry Dowdall, and Glen Butterfoss played critical roles throughout the project.

Funding for this project came from equally diverse sources including the Marshall-Reynolds Foundation, Thompson Family donation in honor of Henry Thompson, Sr., Concord Elementary Students Coin for a Cause, Concord Elementary teachers, and Girl Scout Troop 565. We just received a grant from the Dupont Clear Into the Future Grant program that will finish the final details in 2025 by connecting boardwalks, improving access with a ramp and set of stairs, and additional plantings.

Top - Wetland thriving months after completion.
Middle – Kevin Magerr examines the wetland spillway.
Bottom – The wetland this fall with forebay and plantings

Chocolate Frogs For Helping Wetland

Make a donation for a wetland plant and get a chocolate frog as a thank you! We have found a way to combine making an impact on the environment and chocolate. The new wetland will require additional plantings over the next few years. You can help the wetland continue to grow by sponsoring a plant with a $5 donation. For each wetland plant you sponsor, you will receive a Belgian chocolate frog. Help the environment and enjoy a treat.

Plants are key to the wetland and its role in filtering water. A healthy wetland has diverse plant life adapted to deep water, water's edge, and dryer upland locations. The new plants will be chosen for each of these locations but also for wildlife food value, attractiveness to insects, and usefulness as perches and hiding places for frogs. Plants will also be selected for color seasonality for the enjoyment and education of our guests.

This is an opportunity to help us strengthen the environment while building an amazing habitat and enjoying chocolate.

Visitor Center to Get A Lift

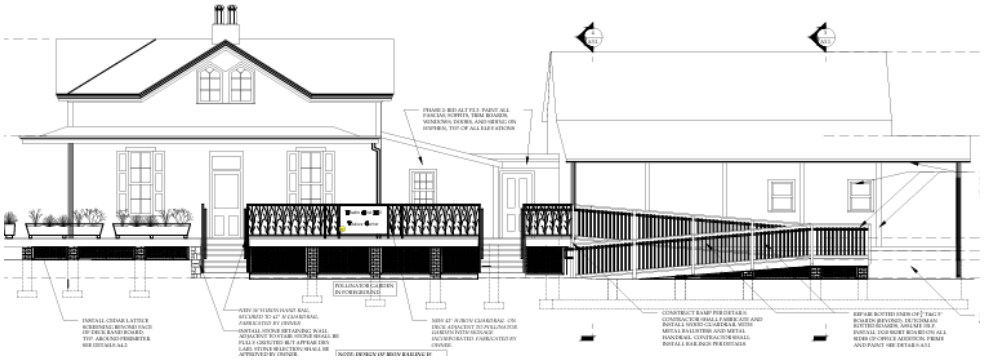
The long-awaited project to elevate the Visitor Center is finally going to be implemented in 2025. Since the flooding in 2020 closed the building and administrative center for thirteen months, NGM has been planning how to protect the Visitor Center from future flooding. A PHMC Keystone Preservation Planning Grant helped to develop a plan to elevate the entire Visitor Center by two feet to raise it out of the flood plain. The past two years have been spent fundraising for the project.

Phase I of the project will entail supporting the entire building with cribbing, disconnecting the utilities, and lifting the structure. The foundations will be extended, the building lowered onto them, and the utilities reconnected. The area around the building will be regraded, new decks will be installed, and new accessibility ramp will be installed. Phase II of the project will include exterior repairs to soffits and roof, interior repairs to plaster, and interior repainting.

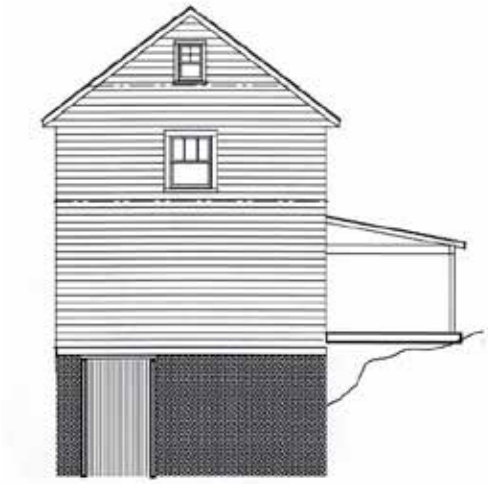
The schedule for the project has yet to be determined. We will attempt to reduce impacts and interruptions in service but the Visitor Center will be closed for several months while the work is being completed. We will keep everyone informed as the project moves forward.

This project is being funded with a PHMC Keystone Preservation Implementation Grant, a Marshall-Reynolds Foundation grant, Concord Township grant, and NGM emergency funds.

Repeated flooding threats make it necessary to elevate the Visitor Center.



Plans for the Visitor Center elevation



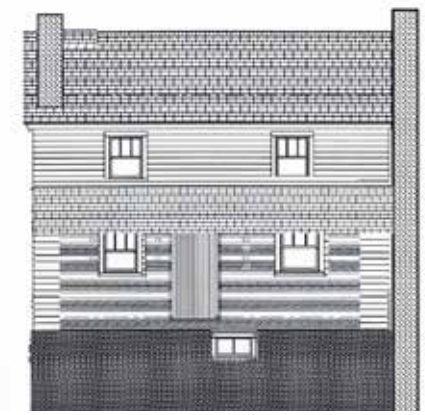
NORTH ELEVATION

Plans for the Newlin Log House Underway

In 2021, the Newlin Log House was obtained in a move that saved it from demolition. In the wake of devastating flooding, the building was disassembled after being thoroughly studied and documented. Each log was mapped and tagged for later reconstruction and then they were placed in storage.

Plans are now being developed for reassembling the log house in the next couple of years. The project will entail constructing a basement, reassembling the log structure, replacing and repairing damaged logs, constructing a new roof, and replacing the siding. Once construction drawings are complete, cost estimates can be finalized.

The goal is to make the log house a central project during the America250 commemoration. The project will be a focal point for talking about trades and trades people who built America.



Collections Intern

Steven Murray, an Archaeology student at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA, completed a collections care internship in August. The goal was to provide a wide range of collection management opportunities to broaden his experience. To accomplish this, he worked in the archive, object, and archaeological collections. In the archive, he assisted with the Pennsylvania Mills project by sorting, identifying, and digitizing mill photographs and creating files for individual mills. Steven stated, "It was a fun challenge to uncover these mills." In the archaeology laboratory, he cleaned and preserved artifacts, including a 19th century ax recovered in the mill. He learned about how electrolysis is used to conserve iron objects recovered from dam environments. Steven stated that, "Some of my favorite artifacts that I cleaned included small porcelain pieces with intricate details." For the object collections portion of his internship, he cleaned the miller's house collections. He stated, "For this internship, I wanted to gain practical experiences in these three fields, and I believe I got the best experience I could have gotten."

Habitat Stewards

The Habitat Stewards program began in 2022 to address conservation and habitat management challenges in the park while also meeting the community demand for nature-based service opportunities. In 2024, participants have worked on a variety of projects. Broad habitat restoration tasks have included invasive plant removal and cleaning 97 tree cages from previous years' planting projects, while smaller-scale projects included building monarch butterfly habitat and restoring movement corridors for wood frogs trying to reach their vernal pool breeding areas. Each workday makes it possible for NGM staff and volunteers to have an oversized impact on habitat and species conservation within the park's boundaries. Habitat Stewards meets the last Saturday each month from January-April and September-December. Scouts, students, and families are welcome but younger children should be accompanied by an adult!

Nature Rangers

Nature Rangers meets on weekdays once a month to focus on care and maintenance of long-term habitat restoration projects. In 2024, volunteers weeded the Meadow Outdoor Classroom and added wildflower species to support nocturnal pollinators! In the wetland, they removed aggressive species that smother young plantings. Long-time volunteer Kim DeWoody and Agilent Technologies employees removed invasive Japanese Stiltgrass from the bird habitat patch sponsored by Wild Birds Unlimited- Glen Mills. They then installed sedges, wildflowers, and shrubs to increase the seed available for birds! Thanks to their hard work, the park's wildlife and visitors have healthy, diverse habitats to enjoy.

Volunteer Impact

When discussing volunteer impacts, it is easy to focus on numbers. The Fall Festival required 93 volunteers to run in September. Thirty-three student, community, and corporate groups volunteered in 2024. Eight volunteers completed archaeological excavations of the Trimble House barn ruins. Volunteers planted over 1,700 wildflowers between April and October. While impressive, these numbers obscure the true impact of the volunteer program. Quite simply, NGM could not function as a museum, park, and educational center without these dedicated individuals and groups.

Employees from Celanese help pull invasive Garlic Mustard plants from along the Industrial Trail

Volunteers impact every aspect of operations, education, maintenance, conservation, and preservation.

Volunteers allow our organization to do so much more than is expected from a non-profit of this size. This is illustrated by the Buildings & Grounds crew, who works hard to keep the site looking good and safe for the public (among many other things). In 2024, they spent over 270 hours on mowing and weed trimming, which is the equivalent of a full time position doing nothing else for over 33 days! This freed up full time staff and other volunteers to work on projects, planning, and programs.

Volunteers bring new perspectives to projects and programs and serve as vocal support in the greater community. They help our mission to reach a broader audience and ensure that visitors understand the special nature of the park's habitats and its historic buildings. They also coalesce around the organization, its mission, and areas of interest and tasks. A number of groups have formed around archaeology, the millwright shop, buildings and grounds

Buildings & Grounds crew volunteers plant a 16 foot tall bald cypress tree in the new wetland

maintenance, environmental projects, and the archive. Others are forming into volunteer ambassadors and hearth cooks. They are all making significant contributions as part of the Newlin team.

We thought it would be best to let the volunteers share their thoughts about the volunteer program directly! If you are interested in joining the volunteer program, please reach out to Volunteer Coordinator Jessica Shahan at jshahan@newlingristmill.org

Gina DeMaio is the official event photographer for the Fall Festival (Photo by Jan Myers Knight)

"Volunteering there has given me an opportunity to support a valuable community resource." –Frank H.

"I volunteer at NGM for two reasons. I support both the historical and environmental parts of the mission and I enjoy working with the people – both other volunteers and "paid help. There is definitely a feeling of 'family' when at NGM." -Dave T.

"I am most grateful for how the staff appreciates my efforts. I enjoy my work here because [the staff] are so supportive and I feel that my time is valued." –Jane S.

"I always enjoy volunteering at NGM. The staff…make me feel part of a larger community. I enjoy being in nature and learning about the various ecosystems in the park." –Kim D.

"I enjoy working with the diverse people who may think differently than I do, but share my goals of preserving history. Also, I get a chance to use my skills in woodworking, landscaping and general building maintenance to further historical preservation." -Chuck D.

"[The staff] encourage the volunteers and keep them interested in the different aspects of the entire mill." –Mike C.

"I volunteer at NGM because it provides an opportunity to be outside and stay active. I also believe the Buildings & Grounds crew contributes to the site in a meaningful way which adds a sense of purpose." –Dave C.

Around the Mill

Volunteers welcoming runners to the 5K trail run.

One of NGM many snapping turtle residents.

Staff and volunteers during a fieldtrip to NGM partner Tri-State Bird Rescue.

Film makers capture a carefully choreographed crash and explosion in the park.

Dave Collins and Eva Mergen put a new coat of paint on the mill after siding repairs.

Painter enjoys a Plein Air Day at NGM.

Bird walk participants finding species outside the Visitor Center

Beautiful Sunset and inviting bench in the Bird Habitat Patch.

Filming the work of making a water wheel.

Bee Balm blooming in the Native Pollinator Garden in front of the Visitor Center.

Around the Mill

The heirloom apple orchard in bloom.

Kitchen Encounters provide opportunities to explore ingredients, cooking techniques, and historical receipts like these pies.

Installing the top beam on the spillway gate.

Monthly Gathering where volunteers exchange ideas, needs, and discuss projects.

Andy Williams making parts for new hood in the Blacksmith Shop.

Carpenter Eva Mergen installing a window in the Archive.

Beverlee Barnes proudly displays the golden duck trophy, a prize for the winner of a special race for trustees and sponsors.

Cicada emerges from its skin during molting.

LaFrance Company working on invasive species removal.

Eagle Scouts Contribute to the Wetland

While the initial phase of Wetland construction and planting was completed in April 2024, we have been working hard on additional improvements to control erosion, expand the diversity of plantings, and install the final details. The entire Wetland-Frog Pond Outdoor Classroom complex received a huge helping hand from four Eagle Scouts that impacted all areas of the wetland with their projects.

Eagle Scout candidate **Patrick Corrigan** and scouts from Troop 93 started by weeding to protect the new plantings from being overcrowded while they get established and make sure invasive plant species can't take over following construction disturbance. After weeding, the scouts planted Tussock Sedge, Swamp Milkweed, Marsh Marigold, Cardinal Flower, and Swamp Goldenrod. These plants will increase both structural and insect diversity in the habitat to support frogs, fish, turtles, birds, and other wildlife.

Eagle Scout candidate **Andrew Yu's** project consisted of assisting with construction of the wooden spillway gate and building the bridge over the spillway into the Wetland. He learned the basics of mortise and tenon construction as part of his project and helped manufacture and assemble the large beams and gate of the spillway. He also took the lead on planning and executing the bridge over the spillway. After drawing schematics, he created a parts list, acquired the materials, and pre-cut the parts in preparation for assembly. Then he and a large group of volunteers braved a cold rainy day to assemble the bridge, but they did a fantastic job!

Eagle Scout candidate **Jacob Kostrubiec** supported the wetland project by making the redwood bench that overlooks the area. The wood was milled from a Giant Sequoia tree that had been planted by NGM's founder. He sanded the wood and then went through the painstaking process of adding layers of marine varnish to each side to protect the wood from weather and other damage. He worked with a group of volunteers to attach premade iron legs to the bench. They then dug holes and poured concrete footers for the legs to sit on. Once those were cured, he again worked with his volunteers to install the bench on the Wetland's Island.

Eagle Scout candidate **Greg Guron's** project consisted of multiple tasks in the Wetland. First his team of volunteers cleared invasive grasses from the millrace berm above the Wetland to prepare the area for planting and cleaned the boardwalk. The main focus of the project was to stabilize the forebay basin from erosion. Water comes into the basin from the new spillway gate and then overflows the basin into the wetland habitat. Greg's task was to pump out the water, relocate any wildlife in the basin, and remove sediment from the bottom. Once complete his team placed a layer of gravel on the bottom and lined the walls with stacked stones.

The contributions of these Eagle Scouts and their projects have added to the success of the Wetland Expansion project. We are grateful they chose to incorporate their projects into the betterment of the wetland. Scouts regularly complete projects at Newlin Mill that provide significant value by improving habitats or installing features that improve safety and make the visitor experience more pleasant. If you know of a scout looking for a place to work on a project, have them contact info@newlingristmill.org. We are always willing to discuss ideas about improving the park but also maintain a list of possible projects.

Treasures in the Archive

The H. Dabbs Woodfin Archive contains a marvelous collection of historical documents, photographs, artwork, and organizational materials. Occasionally, while processing items or conducting research we come across a treasure. They can be a document that contains unknown or unexpected evidence, a photograph that reveals previously unknown details, or a piece of evidence that provides insight into an event or person.

Recently, we came across such a document. Tucked into correspondence from foundation co-founder Elizabeth Battles Newlin to trustee Ginny DeNenno was a note. The note was a typed copy of a piece from Monday Morning titled "A Shared Thought." The document is a list of comparisons between what makes a living museum and dying museum.

It is rare to find a document that gives insight into what an individual thought. The choice to type a copy and pass this document along shows that Elizabeth Newlin considered it significant enough to share with a fellow trustee. It reveals what she thought a museum should be like. A museum should have parking problems because it is busy, be noisy because it is active, stretch its resources, attract and welcome new people, and be innovative. These are concepts that remain relevant today.

A Shared Thought

Living museums have parking problems; dying museums don't.

Living museums have lots of noisy activities; dying museums are peaceful as a tomb.

Living museums have the annoying habit of often out spending their income; dying museums take in more money than they ever dream of spending.

Living museums seem to change so frequently you can forget a lot of names; dying museums are where everyone has known everybody's name for years.

Living museums support events even if it hurts a little; dying museums keep it all at home.

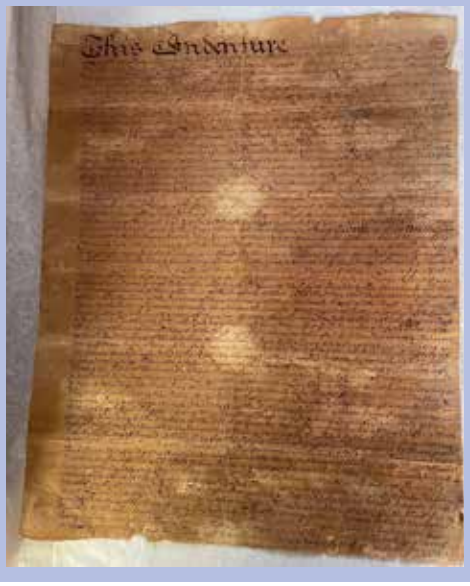
Living museums dream great dreams; dying museums are content to relive old nightmares.

Living museums won't find "can't" in their dictionary; dying museums won't find much else.

Living museums create! Dying museums fossilize!

-From Monday Morning (with apologies for editing!)

"The Hand-typed copy of "A Shared Thought" shows what co-founder Elizabeth Battles Newlin felt made a living museum."



New Acquisition

The H. Dabbs Woodfin Archive does not actively collect items but does accept donations that align with its goals. Those collection goals include the history of Newlin Mill, the Nicholas Newlin Foundation and its buildings and lands, and the history of milling and milling related trades. On rare occasions, the organization acquires items that add to the collection.

Recently, NGM was pleased to receive the donation of an historical deed from Michael and Jan Knight. The deed was dated 1729 and was an agreement between Nicholas Newlin and Richard Eavenson. It was obtained from an online auction and presented to the Archive after NGM staff were given a chance to review the document.

The document is an important piece because it contains details of land ownership back to the Free Society of Traders, a joint-stock company founded by a group of English Quakers in 1681 with the intention of directing and dominating economic life in colonial Pennsylvania.

Program Experience at Newlin Grist Mill

While many people visit the Newlin Grist Mill on an informal, self-directed basis – hiking the trails, picnicking, walking their dogs – the number of visitors who participate in one or more of our formal programs continues to grow. Our daily guided Grist Mill tours draw in those who want to know more about the history of the Mill, how it works, and how we are continuing to preserve and restore it; and we anticipate those regular tours will experience a spike in the coming year once the Mill is once again operational. But we also host an increasing number of groups who book tours and special programs in advance. Earlier this year, we hosted an open-house style event for the Society for Colonial Wars, and we have also run similar events for other organizations and for family reunions. These programs have allowed us to reach a wider audience and make new connections in the greater community.

We've continued to increase our educational field trips and group programs onsite, as well. In 2024, we had 37 groups visit over 44 days, with over 1800 total participants. These groups ranged in age from preschool to college students and beyond to senior citizens, with a mix of public schools, private schools, homeschool families, scout troops, summer camps, retirement communities, and more. The focus of these programs varied, with some groups focusing primarily on history and some on nature. But many groups opted for a program that combined both history and nature activities, taking advantage of NGM's dual-mission and unique historical and environmental resources.

This year our environmental programming was elevated by the addition of our new wetland area. The Frog Pond has long been a favorite spot on field trips, and the expanded wetland has quickly joined it. In fact, one elementary school student on a field trip in the spring excitedly dubbed the wetland "Tadpole Town" because of how active the habitat was during their observation.

On the history end of the spectrum, the 1739 Trimble House Kitchen & Pantry have been increasingly integrated into our educational programs. In addition to utilizing it for a popular hearth cooking activity option during field trips, this fall we also hosted a day-long cooking program by foodways expert Jerome Bias for a class from the University of Delaware's museum studies program.

While the spring season (especially mid-April through early June) is still our busiest time of year for field trips, we saw an increase in fall bookings in 2024. This is a welcome development, since we want to increase visitation, but there are only so many days in the calendar to work with. Speaking of scheduling, we have already started to book programs for spring 2025, so if you know of any teachers, scout troops, or other groups who are looking for field trip opportunities, tell them to contact us now before the calendar fills up! The new facilities for both history and nature programs, together with our quality programs, are causing greater demand for field trips. While the spring season (especially mid-April through early June) is still our busiest time of year for field trips, we saw an increase in fall bookings in 2024. This is a welcome development because we want to increase visitation. However, there is a limit to the number of days available and the calendar is filling up quickly.

Speaking of scheduling, we have already started to book programs for spring 2025, so if you know of any teachers, scout troops, home schoolers, or other groups who are looking for engaging field trip opportunities, tell them to contact us now before the calendar fills up! We anticipate the demand will lead to a very full program calendar in 2025. If you are interested in scheduling a group program, contact Laura Adie at info@newlingristmill.org.

NGM programs benefit from having a collection of historical spaces and outdoor classrooms to enhance educational experiences.

Newly integrated Trimble Kitchen and Wetland Expansion areas provide quality educational spaces and experiences.

Program Highlights

In April, NGM offered Earth Month activities over multiple weekends. Twenty-two different community groups participated, including scout troops, youth & student organizations, and corporate groups. They helped to expand and improve the Park's habitats, installing plantings in the new wetland, planting native trees & shrubs that had been started from seed in our greenhouse, moving forward with the new bird habitat patch sponsored by Wild Birds Unlimited of Glen Mills, and removing invasive plants. The latter included pulling at least 140 gallons of garlic mustard!

From April through October, we hosted speakers for Newlin Series programs in the Log Cabin, each focused on the theme of restoration. A screening of the American Chestnut Society's documentary film, Clear Day Thunder kicked off the series. In September, we were joined by Pennsylvania Furbearer Biologist Thomas Keller for a presentation on reintroducing native species to the state. The program series wrapped up in October with NGM's Executive Director Tony Shahan, who recounted the organization's efforts and strategies involved in the restoration of the site's historic water system.

In May, June, September, and October, we once again partnered with Deer Creek Malthouse to offer weekly Happy Hours each Thursday and Saturday. Deer Creek offered a selection of regional beers, wines, and their non-alcoholic barley teas. NGM staff and volunteers were regularly on hand to chat with attendees about what was happening onsite. Some evenings also featured special guests, like local musician JP McGrath, to add to the atmosphere as folks talked and sipped beverages along the creek.

July and August saw the return of Summer Discovery Camp, which ran for three week-long sessions. Week One's theme was "Habitat Helpers," where campers learned how they could contribute to conservation efforts. In Week Two's "Early American Kids," campers were given a chance to experience colonial life. Finally, campers in Week Three explored all things flying with "Wings & Things." A total of 140 children ages 4 to 12 participated in Summer Discovery in 2024.

Throughout the year, NGM hosted monthly Bird Walks in partnership with Wild Birds Unlimited of Glen Mills. These walks drew a mix of both new and returning bird enthusiasts. The mixture has been positive as we are seeing some of our long-time participants start to become birding leaders themselves, helping to get new birders started. This season's walks also benefitted from the new wetland and the bird habitat patch. It was rewarding for everyone to observe how the different bird species responded to the habitat improvements!

Making A Difference One Plate At A Time

NGM began presenting historic dinners to educate about flavors and raise funds to support programs and projects in 2010. Food is a great method to connect people with the past, because everyone has some point of reference. You don't even have to like the food to enter into a conversation about it taste, aroma, presentation, or even the food memory it evokes. In 2024, we offered three historic dinners – Tasting Through Time, Meet the Makers Whiskey Dinner, and Tavern Night.

Each historic dinner follows a common pattern with five plates. Each plate is served with one or two historic beverages that complement the dish being served. While the food and beverages are sample sized, there are five plates and eight or nine beverages so it is a full meal. The idea is to allow attendees to sample several flavors. Each menu is based on a theme focused on an event, person, or time period in history with each menu chosen to tell a story. The receipts are taken from historic cookbooks, manuscripts, and other trusted sources to ensure the food is as accurate as possible.

The oldest running dinner is the Tavern Night, a tribute to the Newlin Nine Tun Tavern. The dishes represent the

A historic dinner with each plate based on historic recipes.

kinds of food found in the taverns and inns of the 18th century. Beverages consist of a combination of beers, cider, and punches chosen to complement the food and the story. Tavern Night supports the Internship Program which provides hands-on opportunities for students to gain practical experience in their chosen fields. Since 2010, the internship program has supported students in environmental studies, public history, historic preservation, biology, entomology, archaeology, museum studies, and natural resource management. This fundraiser supports two interns each year.

Tasting Through Time provides an opportunity to explore culinary history outside of the 18th century. Some of the recent themes have included dishes from James II's coronation dinner and "Digging For Dinner" with a menu based on food related archaeological finds. These dinners are more far reaching and have included food from Tudor England, Native American plains, 16th and 17th centuries, ancient Rome, Greece, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. These dinners financially support the Trimble Kitchen program, the experimental 1739 kitchen used to explore historic foodways.

Meet the Makers was added in 2024 specifically to raise funds for the Newlin Log House project. The dinner paired historic food with locally made whiskeys. Distillers from Painted Stave Distilling, Blue Bird Distilling Co., Stoll & Wolf Distilling, Spring House Spirits, and special guest George Washington's Distillery at Mt. Vernon participated. Each distiller presented their whiskey and led a tasting of the spirit. A beverage made with that whiskey was also served. A reception prior to the dinner allowed people to meet, ask questions of these spirit makers, sample their products, and make purchases to take home.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our historic dinners in 2025. These dinners are great ways to experience culinary history, try new flavors, and have an enjoyable evening all while you make a difference by supporting educational opportunities and programs. If you have a preference for the 4:30 or 7:00 seating, be sure to get your tickets early since they fill up quickly! Tasting Through Time tickets are on sale now for May 10th .

Top - Our bartender Carol, pours beverages to accompany one of the plates.

Below - Mike Rasmussen of Painted Stave Distillery discusses his products during the Meet the Makers Whiskey Dinner.

Each Dinner is a shared experience of good food and drink, learning moments, and lots of fun!

Fall Festival

In past years, NGM hosted two separate festivals – the Archaeology Festival and the Fall Harvest Festival. In 2024, we combined them into one bigger event that consolidated resources. The Fall Festival fell on a gorgeous September day and was attended by 1200 visitors.

The Fall Festival featured a variety of demonstrations, displays, performances, and hands-on activities including woodworking, textile arts, silhouette artistry, Scherenschnitte paper-cutting, open-hearth cooking, a cider making display, early American horticulture, chair caning, ropemaking, knot-tying, and navigation. Visitors learned English country dancing with the Heritage Dancers and enjoyed performances of the Colonial Revelers singers. Professional archaeologists continued the ongoing excavation of the Trimble Barn, and visitors helped with screening soils and cleaning artifacts. West Chester University's Anthropology department demonstrated ground-penetrating radar in the Historic Area.

Throughout the event, vendors in the Colonial Market offered handcrafted goods for sale – including freshly-baked bread from Half-Crown Bakehouse's wood-fired oven. Local businesses and organizations were featured in the Community Corner, and adult visitors enjoyed libations at the Tavern from Deer Creek Malthouse and Penns Woods Winery. Our younger festival attendees enjoyed historic toys and games, excavated in the Kids' Dig, reconstructed ceramic artifacts, and had their faces painted by the Garnet Valley High School Art Honors Society.

The Fall Festival was made possible by the efforts of nearly 150 volunteers, vendors, and demonstrators. It was sponsored by Team Toyota of Glen Mills & Univest Insurance, with additional support from Amerihealth Caritas, Chandler Funeral Home, H&H Heating and Air Conditioning, IT Edge, John Milner Architects, Visit Delco PA, Wegmans, and WSFS Bank.

This year's Fall Festival is scheduled for Saturday, September 20, 2025. Mark your calendars now!

Impact the Future with Your Planned Gift

Planned giving provides donors with the satisfaction of supporting Newlin Grist Mill with either a general gift to the endowment or a more focused gift to support a specific program or project that you care about. These gifts extend your impact beyond your lifetime while managing your financial planning.

Legacy gifts are normally made through wills, trusts, and life insurance policies which allow donors to customize their giving based on their financial situation and philanthropic goals. Charitable gift annuities can provide income to the donor during their lifetime while still contributing to their favorite cause. Ask your financial advisor what makes the most sense for you.

Planned giving offers several benefits for donors, including the ability to make larger charitable contributions than might be possible during your lifetime, significant tax advantages like reducing income, estate, and gift taxes, avoiding capital gains taxes, and providing the opportunity to create a lasting legacy by directing how your assets are used in the future.

Please consider making a legacy gift to ensure your lasting impact on the future of Newlin Grist Mill.

2024 Archaeology Update

The 2024 archaeological investigations at NGM have achieved important milestones including the completion of the excavation in the Mill and the completion of the excavation in the Trimble House Barn. The completion of these excavations allowed us to return to the archaeological investigation of the Trimble House outbuildings.

The excavations in the Mill were undertaken after flooding damaged the floor with the goal to identify any surviving evidence of the 1704 Mill. The results were far beyond expectations when the original wheel pit was discovered. The pit measured 5 ft. wide and extended to a depth of 7.5 ft. below the floor stopping at bedrock. The wheel pit had been filled with large quarried stones, some weighing up to 200 lbs. The depth of the feature went 2 feet below the water table requiring continuous pumping during excavations. A hatchet from the last half of the 19th century was recovered directly above the bedrock.

The hatchet was in a remarkable state of preservation with its wooden handle still intact. Once excavations were complete, the pit was measured, mapped, and photographed before the unit was filled with gravel, topped with sand, and the brick floor was put back in place.

Excavations at the Trimble House Barn were undertaken before the Newlin Log House site could be determined. Work consisted of 4 trenches and 12 test units that identified the four exterior and one interior wall. A cobble floor was uncovered in the stable area. The excavation of the Trimble House barn was the result of two years of excavations during Public Archaeology Days, festivals, and volunteer workdays. The project has resulted in regular archaeology volunteer days on Wednesdays.

The Public Archaeology Program continues to improve and contribute to our understanding of NGM. It also provided crucial support for projects in the Mill, the spillway gate, and the Newlin Log House project. The lab equipment obtained through a grant from Ethel Sergeant Clark Smith Memorial Fund is allowing for better processing and analysis of artifacts, meaning more can be learned from each excavation.

The program has supported two interns in 2024. Isabella Campese, a graduate of the Anthropology/Sociology Department of West Chester University, researched Public Archaeology programs to determine how NGM's program can be improved. Steven Murry, an archaeology student at Dickinson College, assisted with archaeological artifact collections care.

In 2025, a ten-week archaeology training course will be taught for interested volunteers on Wednesdays from January into March to continue providing quality work.

Archaeology volunteers excavating in the Trimble Barn.

The 19th century hatched found in the wheel pit as it was found and after electrolysis.

The wheel pit excavation was finished in 2024 and filled in after completion. Excavations help us confirm details not found in the written record.

Sponsorship Page

Our generous sponsors make the programs, events, and activities at Newlin Grist Mill possible. Thank you for supporting NGM, its mission, and our community!

Nicholas Newlin Foundation

Newlin Grist Mill
219 South Cheyney Road
Glen Mills PA 19342

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VISIT US!

Park Hours:
Changes seasonally –
check website for times

Visitor Center Hours:
9am-4pm daily

Mill Tours:
Monday-Friday:
11am & 2pm
Saturday & Sunday:
10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm

Phone: 610-459-2359
Email: info@newlingristmill.org
Web: www.newlingristmill.org

Find us on Facebook & Instagram!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March
15: Public Archaeology (*10am-3pm*)
29: Bird Walk (*9-11am*)
Habitat Stewards (*1-3pm*)

April
5: PA Trout Fishing Opening Day
19: Public Archaeology (*10am-3pm*)
26: Bird Walk (*8-10am*)
Habitat Stewards (*1-3pm*)

May
3: Earth Day (*9am-12pm & 1-4pm*)
7-8: Delco Gives Day (*7pm-7pm*)
10: Tasting Through Time (*4:30-6:30pm & 7:30-9:30pm*)
17: Public Archaeology (*10am-3pm*)
31: Bird Walk (*8-10am*)
Habitat Stewards (*1-3pm*)

June
14: Race for the Watershed Duck Derby & 5K (*9am-1pm*)
21: Public Archaeology (*10am-3pm*)
23-27: Summer Discovery: "Nature Quest" (*8:30am-12:30pm*)
29: Bird Walk (*8-10am*)

July
14-18: Summer Discovery: "Time Travelers" *(8:30am-4:30pm)*
19: Public Archaeology *(10am-3pm)*
Newlin at Night: "Moth Mania!" *(8-10pm)*
26: Bird Walk *(8am)*
7/28-8/1: Summer Discovery: "Water Wizardry"
(8:30am-4:30pm)