

# NEWS RELEASE

County of Warren, New Jersey  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Food, Music, & Fun at White Lake Natural Resource Area and Vass Farmstead

The White Lake Natural Resource Area and historic Vass Farmstead in Hardwick Township, New Jersey will be hosting Warren Preservation Day on Saturday, September 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This free event is rain or shine and visitors are invited to participate in various activities. The event features live music and other entertainment, historic displays, reenactors, informative talks, guided walks and more.

The event is sponsored by the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the county Department of Land Preservation, and is intended to highlight the open space and preservation projects that have taken place throughout the county. Previous Preservation Day events have been held at the White Lake Natural Resource Area in Hardwick Township, Rutherford Hall in Allamuchy Township, Ramsaysburg Historic Homestead in Knowlton Township, Van-Nest Hoff Vannatta Farmstead in Harmony Township, and the Roseberry House in the Town of Phillipsburg.

“White Lake is special place,” said Corey Tierney, Director of Preservation for Warren County. “The trails are great for hiking, there’s a variety of plants and animals to see, and paddling around the lake is always enjoyable.”

White Lake Natural Resource Area is a beautiful 469-acre preserve located in Hardwick Township. The park’s most notable feature, White Lake, is a deep 69-acre spring-fed water body. The lake is named after the white chalky marl bottom which is composed of freshwater mollusk shells and clay. A variety of interesting habitats surround the pristine lake, including fertile meadows, karst



*Kayakers on White Lake*

limestone exposures, sinkhole ponds, and stands of mature hemlock and hardwood forests. The shoreline is also home to various endangered or threatened plant species. In addition, the preserve is dotted with

several cultural and historical points of interest, including the stone wall remnants of an ice house/marl processing facility.

The park is managed in partnership with the Ridge and Valley Conservancy, which maintains the grounds and offers guided walks, yoga, free kayak rentals, and more throughout the year.

Susi Tilley, Executive Director of Ridge & Valley Conservancy said, “Preservation Day is a perfect day to sample the beauty of nature. We are happy it is being held at White Lake this year, so that people can engage in some of the activities that we offer year round. We believe that our work fosters opportunities for individuals to connect to the land in real and meaningful ways.”



*Inside the Vass Farmstead*

Across the street from the lake, the Vass Farmstead is a significant site that is listed on both the New Jersey State and National Registers of Historic Places. John Vass, a German immigrant and one of Hardwick’s early settlers, built the two-story stone house for his family in 1812. The house was situated on a 550-acre working farm and orchard. In addition to farming, the Vass family members were involved in local politics, ice production, and mining enterprises, and farming. The farm remained in family ownership until 1922 and changed hands from farmer to farmer until being acquired using State Green Acres funding. Now part of the 984-acre White Lake Wildlife Management Area, the historic Vass Farmstead is managed by the Hardwick Township Historical Society which hosts tours and special events for the public.

In addition to touring the historic building and grounds, visitors are invited to join the Metrotrails group for an early bird hike from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. The event will formally kickoff with opening remarks at 10 a.m. by Warren County Freeholder Deputy Director Richard D. Gardner and Hardwick Township Mayor Kevin Duffy. There will be a story time for kids, various nature walks and hikes, beginner yoga lesson, and Eazy Bubbles. Heaven's Gate Llama Farm will both have demonstrations and items for sale, and a live animal presentation by Rizzo’s Wildlife Discovery will be offered, free to the public. There will also be dozens of exhibitors, live music throughout the day by various artists (organized by Maribyrd), and food will be available for purchase from The Angry Chouriço BBQ food truck.