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Natural Lands Takes Action To Protect Stoneleigh: *a natural garden*

MEDIA, Pa., May 10, 2018 – Natural Lands today announced the launch of Save Stoneleigh, an awareness and education campaign aimed at fending off the condemnation of Stoneleigh: *a natural garden* in Villanova.

Perhaps best known for the iconic hare sculpture located near the intersection of Spring Mill and County Line Roads in Villanova, Stoneleigh was the beloved home of the Haas family. Following the deaths of John and Chara Haas—whose ashes are scattered on the property—in an extraordinary act of generosity the estate of John Haas donated all of Stoneleigh to Natural Lands in 2016. The donation had a singular purpose: to open Stoneleigh up to the general public, so that everyone could enjoy this natural treasure free of charge.

The Lower Merion School District has indicated its interest in condemning a 6.9-acre portion of Stoneleigh so that it can build new ball fields. On April 18, the district sent a letter to Natural Lands stating that it wants to inspect the rest of the 42-acre Stoneleigh garden “in anticipation of a potential condemnation of all or part of the property.” Natural Lands has told the District it will fight vigorously any attempt at a taking.

“Unfortunately, saying ‘no’ to the School District has not been enough,” said Natural Lands President Molly Morrison. “We need the community to help send a clear message to the School District that taking Stoneleigh would rob the residents of Lower Merion and the broader region of a one-of-a-kind community treasure.”

Stoneleigh opens its gates for a grand opening event this Sunday. Beginning May 15, Stoneleigh will be open to visitors—free of charge—Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Save Stoneleigh campaign asks the community to contact Lower Merion School Board members, sign the Save Stoneleigh petition, and share their support on social media. More information is available at www.SaveStoneleigh.org.

Natural Lands is dedicated to preserving and nurturing nature’s wonders while creating opportunities for joy and discovery in the outdoors for everyone. As the Greater Philadelphia region’s oldest and largest land conservation organization, Natural Lands has preserved more than 125,000 acres, including 44 nature preserves totaling more than 23,000 acres. Some 2.5 million people live within five miles of land under the organization’s protection. Land for life, nature for all. natlands.org.

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