

NEW VISION FOR VISITORS

Global Headquarters for Raptor Conservation

After almost 50 years, Hawk Mountain's Visitor Center is going to get a dramatic upgrade that re-envision the building as the headquarters for global raptor conservation, accessible to people of all abilities. The renovations will have a vaulted ceiling that runs the full length of the building, creating an open and more inviting space with raptors soaring overhead, and provide a flexible space for events, an inside multi-purpose classroom, exhibit area, and/or theater.

Our new space will be accessible for people of all abilities and utilize natural light creating a brighter area with bird friendly glass. The redesigned space will be anchored by two covered spaces for visitors, one that overlooks our Native Plant Garden and a beautiful bird feeding station, and another that will create a sheltered gathering spot in front of the Visitor Center. One of our chief objectives is to create a highly functional and flexible space for larger gatherings and programs with significantly better visitor flow.

Our process began by visiting a dozen regional nature centers and similar facilities to talk with the people who work in those spaces, learning from what they liked and disliked, and where they would make changes. We went on to create a planning committee of staff and board

to facilitate discussions with stakeholders including volunteers, board, and staff; we also completed an energy audit of our existing Visitor Center. The resulting vision was presented to the board of directors at its November 2021 meeting and approved this June.

The Visitor Center will feel as though it is doubled in size once we add a floor over the downstairs gallery, creating a beautiful, light-filled space with views to the outside. The design concept addresses accessibility, enhances visitor flow, will have a more flexible store and exhibit space, and will allow for a separate entrance and exit during peak visitation.

Our collective vision will become reality. A significant upgrade to the Visitor Center is an immediate need to address aging systems and deferred maintenance and offers a chance to create flexible space that will be lighter and brighter, allow for large gatherings, and be anchored by covered outdoors areas where people can learn about and enjoy raptors. We intend to place some of our live raptor ambassadors on exhibit, relocating them closer to our visitors. Behind the scenes, we will take the opportunity to plan for future growth of staff and trainees. In short, this work will be an invaluable long-term investment.

Background and Need

Schaumbach's Cottage was the Sanctuary's first headquarters when Hawk Mountain opened in 1934, followed by the Common Room in 1954. The current Visitor Center was built in 1974, expanded with a gallery and lecture space in 1988, and with new exhibits and a remodeled entrance in 1991.

The newly redesigned Visitor Center will form the final phase of Hawk Mountain's site development, that included the addition of the Acopian Center in 2002, the Education Building renovation in 2012, and the addition of the Amphitheater and ADA trail in 2021.

The nearly 50-year-old Visitor Center building has served us well, but today we face an aged roof, inefficient heating and cooling, lack of insulation and deteriorated siding and walls. In short, the infrastructure has outlasted its reasonable lifespan. Renovating and redesigning an existing structure is often more challenging than building a structure from scratch. But the newly designed Visitor Center will look and feel new and be a "green choice" by recycling what we can, while also serving to maintain a sense of familiarity within the new build.

The concept follows a two-year-long feasibility study and with guidance from a new strategic plan. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary is committed to addressing necessary upgrades at its Visitor Center, the headquarters for global raptor conservation. Generous donors from the Stratton Foundation heard our need and funded the feasibility study that has culminated in the drawings shown here today.



Current Visitors Center Entrance



Overcrowding that occurs inside the Visitors Center



Tops Goals and Objectives

Education for All

Create an accessible and inclusive center that introduces people to the world of raptor conservation, science, and Appalachian ecology as a launching point to the Sanctuary Preserve.

Tradition

Blend modern elements seamlessly with historic materials and native and/or locally sourced stone and wood.

Promote Science

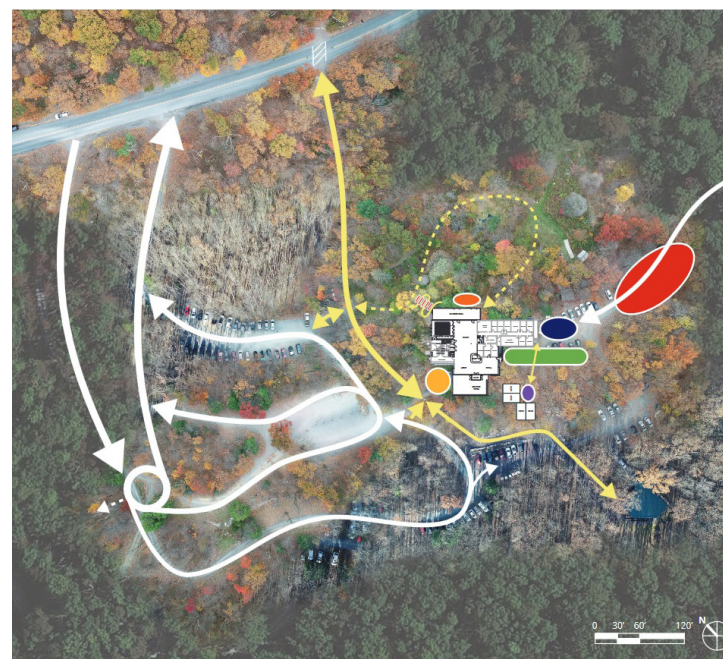
Honor our history while sharing the latest in global raptor conservation science, training, and conservation.

Keep it Green

Model sustainable building practices that will improve efficiency, reduce impact, and offer education opportunities that inspire raptor conservation through education, science, and stewardship.

Highlights

- Eliminate the downstairs gallery to open the space and remove accessibility barriers
- Create a welcoming point to learn about raptors and their amazing migrations
- Improve visitor flow, relocating the store to one distinct area
- Demonstrate best practices in sustainable and energy efficient design
- Relocate some raptor enclosures to better connect people with live raptors
- Provide an open and more flexible space with more natural light
- Model the latest bird-friendly window techniques
- Recycle and repurpose much of the current footprint and structure



Powered by Passion

Hawk Mountain has inspired global raptor conservation by connecting people through science, education, and stewardship of our incredible Sanctuary located along the Kittatinny Ridge, a superhighway for migrating raptors and other wildlife that connects us with Central and South America. All raptor count sites were ultimately inspired by our founders' shared passion, and that work continues to this day.

We continue to influence and mentor tomorrow's conservation leaders here and around the globe and hope you are moved to make donation in support of our new Visitor Center to continue the good fight... the fight for global raptor conservation.



Support this Work or Learn More Today

Sean Grace, President
grace@hawkmountain.org
 610-756-6000 x213

