

Bucks County Historical Society Continues Multi-Phase Arbor Work at Fonthill Castle Property

Fonthill Castle, operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS), announces the next phase of ongoing environmental initiatives on its 69-acre property.

Fifty hazardous trees identified in a forestry assessment plan will be removed in the interest of public service, with additional work to be done in the future.

The Fonthill Castle property features the National Historic Landmark home of archaeologist and tile maker Henry Chapman Mercer. The castle sits on an estate cultivated as an arboretum and boasts multiple forested regions of mature trees.

Known for its extensive trail system and natural features, the property is beloved by the community and provides environmental and social benefits to many in the region.

While Fonthill Castle's grounds are privately owned by BCHS and located in the Doylestown Township, some of the trees requiring urgent removal are located along Doylestown Borough's streets, and BCHS is working in partnership with both Doylestown Township and Doylestown Borough on this effort.

The hazardous tree removal continues planned initiatives to care for the 69-acres that surround Henry Mercer's Fonthill Castle, which was named one of the most beautiful castles in the U.S. by Architectural Digest.

Since 2023, the Bucks County Historical Society has been convening experts to explore a range of conservation and enhancement possibilities to the woodlands and open spaces surrounding Fonthill Castle. The goal is to realize Henry Mercer's vision to foster education and enjoyment of both the arts and nature for the public year-round.

BCHS contracted Brandywine Urban Forestry in the spring of 2024 for a comprehensive urban forest assessment and management plan for all 69 acres of the Fonthill Castle property. This assessment reviewed the forest's overall health and classified the status of the trees, cataloging all of the major trees in the maintained landscape, as well as trees of concern throughout the property.

During this upcoming phase, the tree work will be led by Michael Dunn, Associate Director of Urban Forestry at the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania.

"The removal of these trees is difficult, but it allows us to plan for a healthier, more sustainable forest that will support the estate for generations," said Dunn. "Removing them is a critical step in protecting visitors, staff, and historic structures, while paving the way for a long-term forest restoration initiative."

The tree removal will be conducted by arborists from Shreiner Tree Care and will include trees along East Court Street, North Street, East Street, as well as areas around the Welcome Center at Fonthill Castle and throughout the Fonthill Woodlands.

In recent years, many ash trees along the trails have died from Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation. This tree work aims to remove those and other hazardous trees, and restore forest health.

This work is being funded by a grant supported by State Senator Steve Santarsiero

(D-10) and State Representative Tim Brennan (HD-29), as well as by leadership-level donations from George Ball, CEO of W. Altee Burpee Company, Doylestown, PA; The Family of William J. Jr. and Geraldine Happ, Doylestown, PA; Linda Butzier Hodgdon, Lahaska, PA; Jim and Kathy Morrison, New Bern, NC; and The Sigety Family, Pipersville,

PA, and Gayle Goodman and Jim Searing, New Hope, PA.

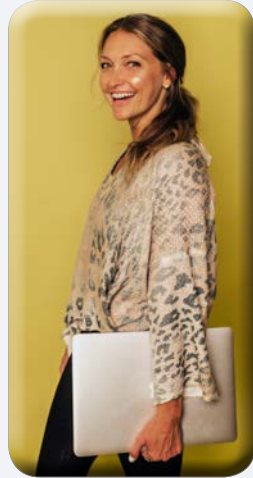
"As stewards of Henry Mercer's legacy, the Bucks County Historical Society is not only responsible for caring for the buildings and objects he left behind, but for fulfilling Mercer's vision of keeping the privately-owned grounds open to the public so

everyone can enjoy the region's native trees and plant species for generations to come," said Kyle McKoy, BCHS President and CEO.

Fonthill Castle is operated by the Bucks County Historical Society as a historic house museum and community cultural gathering place, and is located at 525 East Court Street in Doylestown.

Local Spotlight with Danielle: Rocking Horse Acres: Where Peaceful Surroundings Meet Connections

By Danielle Gannon
The Cardinal Contributing Writer



Some evenings remind us why Bucks County is such a special place to live — the kind of nights where the food tastes better, the conversations run deeper, and the setting itself feels like a character in the story. That was exactly the experience at Rocking Horse Acres this past month, when a group of local creators gathered for a five-course tasting dinner designed to showcase one of the region's most charming farm stays.

Nestled quietly in the countryside, Rocking Horse Acres is the creation of Steve and Amy Servis, who have poured both vision and heart into transforming their property into a luxury Airbnb that reflects the warmth of Bucks County living. Their goal has always been simple: create a place where people can slow down, reconnect, and feel at home. As anyone who has set foot there can tell you, the real magic happens inside.

To introduce more locals to the space, we brought together a curated group of Bucks County influencers — women and men who know this region intimately and share it proudly with the audiences who trust them. And in true Servis fashion, the evening centered around food. Not just any food — but a five-course menu crafted by The Servis Brothers themselves, featuring fresh seasonal ingredients from local farms like Castle Valley Mill, Blue Moon Acres, Fresh Start Farm, and more. Each dish told its own story, and each wine pairing from Rienzi Vineyards felt like a thoughtful handshake between land and table.

Between courses, guests toured the property, exploring the restored bedrooms, the gathering spaces, and the details that make the house feel both refined and deeply comforting. What struck everyone most was not just the beauty of the space, but the versatility — a stay for visiting family, a retreat for women's groups, a peaceful weekend reset, a wedding-week home base, or even an intimate private dinner venue.



Amy and Steve Servis with Danielle Gannon (center)

But beyond the food and the aesthetics, the heartbeat of the evening was connection. Creators swapped ideas. Stories were shared. Plans for future collaborations were whispered over dessert. It was the kind of night that reminds you how much this Bucks County community thrives on relationships — and how many people here genuinely want to see one another succeed.

For anyone curious to explore the space themselves, Rocking Horse Acres welcomes you to learn more at rockinghorseacrespa.com and on Instagram @rockinghorseacres. Whether you're looking for a quiet retreat, a gathering place, or simply a new corner of Bucks County to love, it's a place worth knowing.

And as for me? I left that night feeling grateful — for this county, for its creators, for the small businesses who pour everything into their work, and for the chance to tell their stories.

Rocking Horse Acres, and its owners, are every bit of what feels good in this world — honest, hardworking, and grounded in all the right intentions. They're the kind of people who make Bucks County feel like home.

Danielle Gannon is a local Bucks County entrepreneur. She is Founder & Creative Director of Local Spotlight with Danielle. Find her on IG @localspotlightwithdanielle www.localspotlightwithdanielle.com





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