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Preservation Haddonfield

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to enthusiastically encourage the preservation of the property once owned by the grandfather and aunts of Samuel N. Rhoads and served as the childhood nature education center for this very important naturalist. Many in the Haddonfield region will know of Mr. Rhoads in the context of his wonderful regional historic work in New Jersey, but his scientific endeavors are truly international in significance. Herein, I would like to outline his work and in doing so hope to provide a more global perspective to the life and research of Mr. Rhoads.

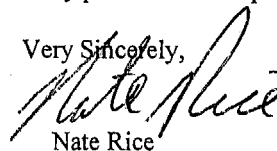
The Academy of Natural Sciences is home to one of the largest scientific collections of bird specimens in the world. With nearly 200,000 specimens, our collection represents nearly every known bird species in the world. Of great historical import, the Academy's bird collection dates from the late 1700's with many early American specimens housed in our collection from the early 1800's. One of the many important bird collections curated at the Academy is that assembled by Mr. Samuel N. Rhoads.

Included in our "Rhoads collection" are nearly 4500 bird specimens collected throughout the western hemisphere. Samuel Rhoads collected birds on four major expeditions for the ANSP; Canada in 1892-3, Ecuador in 1911, Guatemala in 1915, and various locations in the United States from 1870 to 1925. Specimens from these collections were used to identify six species of birds that were new to science! While all of the specimens are important in their own right, the bird skins from Guatemala and Ecuador represent some of the first modern specimens collected from these regions. In fact, they formed the core of our early collections for these regions and helped to establish the ANSP as the pre-eminent institution of South American bird research.

Over 200 bird specimens were collected on the former Rhoads property between 1875 and 1925. Like all of his scientific material, these study skins form an irreplaceable series that forms the benchmark of our understanding of the environmental conditions from this region during this time period. We will never be able to "go back" to the late 1800's to collect birds in Haddonfield. Likewise, if this property is developed we will never be able to bring it back to its original biological importance. Mr. Rhoads had the foresight to document the avifauna of his property during his time in Haddonfield and I certainly hope that this spectacular old collecting locality can be preserved for posterity.

Preserving the Rhoads property, any property, as community green space is the environmentally responsible thing to do. In the case of this particular property there is enormous local, regional, and international interest and history wrapped up in the personal history and research life of its youthful explorer, Samuel N. Rhoads. I strongly urge the local governing body to permanently preserve this important green space.

Very Sincerely,



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