

My proposal for use of the Stokes School of Conservation is to coordinate with the NJ Department of Corrections and allow nonviolent offenders or people who must complete community service hours to learn new skills on the job at Stokes that would be helpful in maintaining the property and buildings. It would obviously require someone to teach them and supervise them, but I suspect most inmates would prefer to be outdoors in a beautiful setting, doing meaningful work and learning new skills that might help them in their future after they leave prison, rather than sitting in a cell all day. In lieu of payment for their services, they can instead be working off their sentences, thus decreasing the cost of housing and feeding prisoners, keeping the cost of maintenance at Stokes down, and giving inmates a sense of purpose and new skills while experiencing the healing forces of nature. I would also love to see the site used once again as a camp for children to learn to appreciate nature. Perhaps inner city kids could experience the joys of nature for the first time. Or the children of the inmates who provide the maintenance of the buildings and land could get free tuition to the camp as an added incentive.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Brancheau