

# Eidolon Nature Preserve: a mountain ideal

A 354-acre forested property along the top and east sides of Sideling Hill west of Great Cacapon was so treasured by its owners as a wild place in the county that it was left to the Nature Conservancy after the deaths of its last owners. Since 2006, the Nature Conservancy and the Potomac Valley Audubon Society have cared for Eidolon Nature Preserve as a place for birders and nature lovers to explore.

Located at 2146 Orleans Road in Great Cacapon, the property was most recently the vacation home of Louis and Marguerite Zapolean. The couple bought it after many visits in 1945 for \$700. They named it Eidolon, taking the name from women of Greek mythology that were created by Zeus from mist and light. Eidolon means "image of the ideal."

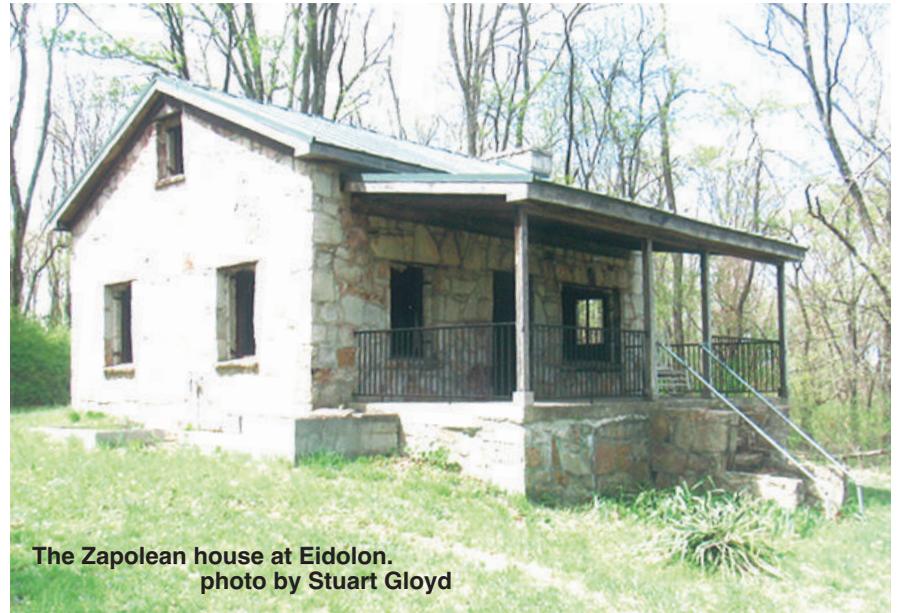
The Zapolean's built a stone cottage on the property off Orleans Road in 1951. They and friends used the cottage until an accidental fire gutted the cottage in 1962. The stone structure still stands on the property, and has

been given a new roof to protect its interior in recent years.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Zapolean continued to visit the property and helped make a listing of the plants and animals she saw regularly on the land there. She also oversaw the creation of the first trails there. Now there are several miles of marked trail that criss-cross the preserve. An old coach road there dates back to the 1780s.

The preserve is known to be the home of Cerulean warblers and many other species of birds, reptiles and special plants.

Visitors can reach the preserve by taking Route 9 west over Cacapon Mountain, through the village of Great Cacapon and further west. Turn onto Detour Road and follow 9/10 of a mile. Take a right on Orleans Road and follow 2.1 miles up Sideling Hill. The entrance to Eidolon will be on the right, marked by a green gate and two stone pillars. There is a parking area outside the gate.



The Zapolean house at Eidolon.  
photo by Stuart Gloyd

Visitors are reminded the preserve is home to wild animals, including venomous species of snakes. Deer hunting is permitted in season. ATVs and horseback riding are not permitted. Visitors should carry out what they carry in to the preserve.

For more information, call the Potomac Valley Audubon Society at 681-252-1387 or visit [www.potomacaudubon.org/preserves/eidolon/](http://www.potomacaudubon.org/preserves/eidolon/). A trail map and brochure are available for download.

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