

OPEN SPACE CHRONICLES

A newsletter by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space



RESTORING VALLEY LANDS TOGETHER

2017-18 was an exciting year. We introduced FoHVOS Community Conservation and it seemed everyone wanted to partner! We were happy to facilitate land restorations throughout Hopewell Valley. We actually have a backlog of new projects to begin in 2019. We can't wait.

There's an old saying among plant geeks – "Sleeps, Creeps, Leaps!" – that refers to the blooming of perennial native wildflowers. Considering that the Hopewell Valley residents came out and planted literally thousands of native plant plugs, 2019 promises to creep to beauty. Though all of our projects are

in early stages, we've still had a decent sneak peek of blooms and butterflies. Let's take a look at some of the projects.

Restoring a Community Pond

FoHVOS stewardship director, Mike Van Clef, helped The Pennington School identify invasive species in and around one of the school's focal points, Lowellden Pond. With this information, Van Clef was able to give a detailed report of the invasive species that can be removed from the area and which native species could replace them, in order to craft a more environmentally sound space.

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2018 Annual Gala Honorees



LAND STEWARD LEADERSHIP

FoHVOS

MISSION

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space is a non-profit land trust that is dedicated to preserving the Valley's character through efforts to preserve land, protect natural resources, and inspire a new generation of conservation.

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During the period covered by this Annual Report, Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space (FoHVOS) primarily concentrated on land stewardship initiatives. FoHVOS is recognized across the state of New Jersey as an expert in land conservation, restoration, and invasive species control. As such, we are often called in to do stewardship consulting for municipalities and other nonprofits. As of 2017 the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team is no longer a standalone nonprofit. The Strike Team is a FoHVOS program. Check out page 10 to learn more.

This year we also introduced FoHVOS Community Conservation as a valley-wide community partnership “Restoring Valley Lands Together.” The concept is simple. Take any piece of land and restore it to be earth friendly.

It has really taken off and anyone can participate! A restoration can be simply converting a small plot of your residential lawn to native meadow, clearing acres of invasive plants from a public preserve, or anything in between. Current Hopewell Valley collaborators include environmentally conscious residents, companies, schools, hospitals, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations. We hope you will join too.

Since 1987, FoHVOS has been a nonprofit land trust that is dedicated to preserving Hopewell Valley’s character through efforts to preserve land, protect natural resources, and inspire a new generation of conservation. We have made our greatest impacts through partnering with others.

Our vision is that Community Conservation will go a step further. Our partnerships improve land, water, and environmental resources for future generations. Finally, Community Conservation provides quantifiable results to help Valley municipalities qualify for higher Sustainable Jersey™ certification. We hope Community Conservation will be used as a model for group efforts across the state.



The Impact

Each project has an environmental benefit, and when combined, can have a tremendous impact. Consider the small project example stated above – converting a small plot of residential lawn to native meadow.

With mowing, watering, and weeding, a lawn requires many resources. It also produces damaging environmental impacts. Rain can cause fertilizers and pesticides to run off into our water supply. Runoff is also caused by the lawn’s shallow tight roots which don’t allow water to penetrate its surface.

Simply replacing lawn with native wildflowers and grasses immediately reduces runoff and, when maintained properly, improves water absorption. Additionally, native plants attract beneficial insects, pollinators, butterflies, birds, and other animals.

Stop and think about that...

A small patch of turf can merely hold lifeless sod, -or- it can improve our water supply, reduce resource consumption, and be home to a life-initiating habitat! Multiply that impact by an endless number of Hopewell Valley projects and we have Community Conservation!

Read through this report and check out some featured projects, then go to www.fohvos.info/community-conservation to learn more and see amazing photos. Our focus for the coming year is to expand our residential Community Conservation that measure the positive environmental impact and achieves savings on maintenance.

And More

We also share the tremendous success of both our new Force of Nature initiative and our annual gala.

Watch for our annual appeal next month to learn about our new Preserves throughout the Valley. 🌳

Thank you for your support.

Lisa Wolff
Executive Director

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

(Continued from Page 1)

Restoring a Community Pond



Lowellden Pond at The Pennington School.

Headmaster William Hawkey of The Pennington School says he is excited about the opportunity to renew their pond and make it a healthy place where people want to spend time outdoors. The pond is not only important to the school community but also to the residents of Pennington who appreciate the space on Sunday strolls and morning dog-walks. Removing the invasive species and filling the area instead with native plants would help improve the water quality of the pond and make it an even more appealing space.

In addition to improving land and water quality, Pennington School's environmental science teacher and resident sustainability advisor, Margo Andrews, stresses the importance of exposure to the

outdoors and the observation, visual, and exploratory learning that students receive from spending time in their outdoor environment.

Adding Outdoor Classrooms

Hopewell Valley Regional School District added outdoor classrooms to both Bear Tavern and Stony Brook elementary schools. The FoHVOS Community Conservation facilitated both partnerships and worked closely with school principals and the district's facility director, Tom Quinn (see also annual gala honorees) but locations, partnerships and strategies were very different.

Most of our Community Conservation initiatives include several partners and we bring in whatever resources are necessary. FoHVOS has matched landscape architects, other professionals, volunteers, and even funders to projects.

Janssen Pharmaceutical

Companies of Johnson & Johnson provided a significant grant to FoHVOS to implement the garden meadows at Bear Tavern Elementary School. Representatives were pleased to see the Nectars Landscape and Design plan that added a pond, a stage, and mindfulness areas to the outdoor classroom as more volunteers and funders stepped up.

"Janssen funded the meadows and interpretive signage that the school designed their biodiversity and ecosystem curriculum around," said Peg Forrestel, Janssen's director of community affairs. "We liked this project because it enhanced the environment and provided interactive STEM education for the students. We also valued the Community Conservation concept, which leveraged our investment to enable others to add beauty and expanded uses for the area."

(Continued on next page)



From left to right: Stony Brook Principal Steve Wilfing, FoHVOS Executive Director Lisa Wolff, HVRSD Facilities Director Tom Quinn, HVRSD Superintendent Tom Smith, Bear Tavern Principal Chris Turnbull, FoHVOS Stewardship Director Mike Van Clef Ph.D.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

(Continued from Page 3)

An Opportunity to Educate

Mike Shevlin, Brandon Farms POA Board President shared, “The Brandon Farms Property Owners Association is excited to be a Community Conservation partner to pilot a program that not only improves environmental outcomes but also has the potential to reduce annual maintenance costs for our residents. In addition, this meadow is providing a fantastic learning environment for our young children at Stony Brook.

When Brandon Farms residents and Stony Brook Elementary School families came out to create the 10,000 square foot meadow, Van Clef told participants, “Yesterday, we removed the sod that was devoid of life. If nature could give lawns a name, it would be ‘green concrete.’ We’ll be installing over 2,000 native plants today and transforming this unused lawn area into a meadow filled with beautiful wildflowers that will attract butterflies and bees.

We’ll be giving back to nature something that we had taken years ago and, in the process, inspiring Stony Brook students to appreciate and admire nature.”

Restoring the Natural Balance of the Ecosystem

While all FoHVOS Community Conservation projects restore land and provide ecological benefit to the earth



Native wildflowers blooming at Stony Brook meadow.

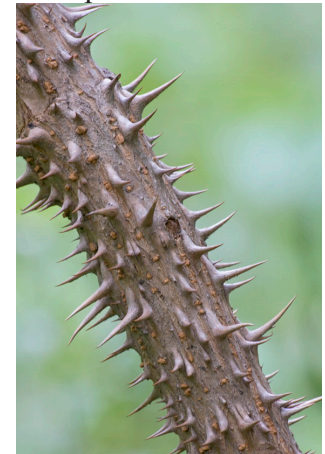
and water, most also have a human component that allow people to connect with nature. The Japanese Aralia eradication has more altruistic origins. The motivation behind the project is simply to eliminate Japanese Aralia plants whenever and wherever they come across them in the area. Our preemptive actions taken on both public and private land are keeping this invasive plant under control. Opportunities have come with help from private individuals in the community cooperating with FoHVOS and engaging in protecting the environmental health of their community by reporting sightings, allowing access to their private lands, granting permission of plant treatment, and even actually going out themselves to expunge invasives.

Most invasive species rapidly colonize and are virtually impossible to eradicate. Fortunately, in the case of Japanese Aralia, we are catching the population early and due

to a fairly small and scattered populations of Japanese Aralia in the valley, we have a special chance to entirely eradicate the invasive species.

Our work is made possible through a very generous grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb. The funding provided the ability to contract industrial equipment that enabled the treatment of Aralia plants.

Japanese Aralia, as with other invasive species, are dangerous in non-native environments because they are, as Dr. Van Clef put it, not a part of that area’s food web in a complete way. The invaded environment is new to the invasive plant, and so there are no counter-balancing sources that exist, such as pests or pathogens, that would usually keep a native plant in check. In a fully native environment, all kinds of different species balance one another out, but invasives throw off that balance. This project aims to work towards restoring the natural balance of the ecosystem by eliminating an invasive species. 🌱



Japanese Aralia

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Force of Nature

INSPIRED BY LOCAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS



Anne Nixon-Ellery

In 2017 the FOHVOS Board of Trustees brought on a new executive director and presented a plan to refocus our efforts to emphasize not only the land that we worked so hard to preserve and steward, but also to encourage our members to feel more connected and inspired by the land and mission.

In response we introduced the FoHVOS Force of Nature hikes series designed to connect women with lesser known FoHVOS preserves and the feeling of wellness gained through outdoor exploration. At the end of 2017, the first Force of Nature experience, exploring the Mount Rose Preserve, was sponsored by REI, led by RomyYoga, and featured meditation, yoga, and guided “forest bathing.” The event completely filled up within the first week it was announced and we knew we were on to something.

In 2018, we expanded FoHVOS Force of Nature to recognize locals that inspired us through their environmental contribution to Hopewell Valley and our mission. Our friends at Hopewell Valley Neighbors magazine offered to publish their stories and Benoit Cortet took many of their photos.

Our first Force of Nature was *Anne Nixon-Ellery*. She was a major contributor to improving FoHVOS branding and visibility. She designed the new FOHVOS and Force of Nature logos adorning these pages and she is responsible for many other FoHVOS artistic endeavors.

Joann Held was the founder of both our local Green Team and the Pennington Farmer’s Market. Well known throughout

the Valley, Joann is currently the President of the League of Women Voters and has a long history of environmental activism.


Carol Kleis, a Master Gardener and champion of all things FoHVOS, was the FoHVOS President through our most recent positive change and has been contributing to the Board of Trustees since the early days when Ted Stiles initiated the fight for Baldpate Mountain.

Meg Gorrie has a long history of inspiration and philanthropy throughout the Valley and local area. Through the Gorrie Butterfly House and Festival, Kate’s Trail, and other endeavors, she has left a beautiful legacy for both our Valley and to her late daughter Kate.

Gretchen Kish and her husband own Nectars Landscape and design. Her vision, design, and partnership with FoHVOS Community Conservation contributed to the overwhelming success of the Bear Tavern Outdoor classroom.

Katherine Dresdner founded the Hopewell Valley Citizens Group that led the decade long battle that culminated with a NJ Supreme Court win that resulted in the acquisition of the Mount Rose preserve.

Each Force of Nature feature has a very interesting story that reaches far beyond the summary here. Many online. Force of Nature feature articles went viral. Thousands of readers confirmed that Valley residents love being inspired by our local environmental leaders.

To learn more, check out our Force of Nature features at fohvos.org. 



Joann Held



Carol Kleis



Meg Gorrie



Gretchen Kish



Katherine Dresdner

Force of Nature Annual Gala 2018

FoHVOS Force of Nature was so popular that we chose to make it the theme for our annual gala. Sponsors and gala guests came out to meet and congratulate our Forces of Nature. The venue was decorated with sustainable materials and also included poster stories of each Force of Nature.

On September 15th, the gala took place at the historic Glenmoore Barn and featured locally sourced food and drinks. Guests enjoyed live music, a silent auction, and FoHVOS Jeopardy! Players were surprisingly well-versed in historic, Hopewell Valley, Force of Nature, FoHVOS sponsor, and environmental trivia. Everyone went home with a FoHVOS Force of Nature 2018 pin and many won exciting prizes.

In addition, we also recognized three honorees:

Ron Russell was named individual Volunteer of the year and was presented with a joint resolution from the NJ Senate and Assembly that detailed the tremendous value he has provided to FoHVOS and other local nonprofits.

Tom Quinn and the Hopewell Valley Regional School District also received a joint resolution for their organizational efforts to bring outdoor classrooms, environmental progress, and Sustainable Jersey recognition to our Valley.

The culmination was our presentation to former FoHVOS Board Trustee *Chris Berry* with the Jack Gleason Award for a lifetime of environmental achievement. Chris has made an important contribution to Valley lands and remains active on the FoHVOS stewardship committee.

Many guests reported that this gala was our best yet. The venue, food, entertainment and most of all the guests were all top shelf. Our success can be directly attributed to our sponsors shown on page 11, prize donors shown below, our newest staff member Logan Horvath, and the generosity and spirit of those in attendance.

Special thanks and photo credit to Benoit Cortet for helping us capture memories from the evening.



Forces of Nature (from Left to Right) Joann Held, Anne Nixon-Ellery, Carol Kleis, Meg Gorrie, Gretchen Kish, and Katherine Dresdner pose outside the 2018 Gala.



Ron Russell, Chris Berry and Tom Quinn were honored at the 2018 Gala.



Four teams playing FoHVOS Jeopardy! with onlookers playing along.

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THANK YOU TO OUR LOYAL DONORS!

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ODDS AND ENDS: DID YOU KNOW?

We have applied for Land Trust Accreditation and have spent the last couple years applying best practices in preparation. We expect to know in early 2019!

According to our Form 990, our total revenues (excluding government grants) increased 75% from 2016 to 2017!



2018 HVAC Community Partner Award

From 2016 to 2017, native plants ordered by residents increased from 3700 to 5700!

This is our first time doing an Annual Report!

From 2016 to 2017, we tripled hike participation at our preserves!

Baldpate endangered plant surveys saw an increase from 5 discovered plants to over 250!

With the help of Force of Nature Anne Nixon-Ellery, we have won the Hopewell Valley Arts Council's Community Partner Award in both 2017 and 2018!

We have been administering the Hopewell Township Clean Communities program for over 20 years!

Since we took over the Strike Team, it had its most well attended annual conference ever!

From 2016 to 2017, Summer intern hours spent on stewardship more than doubled!

MOUNT ROSE SUCCESS CONTINUES

By now you should have noticed an on-going theme throughout all of our stories. Namely, the success we have achieved through the generosity and partnership with others. Nowhere is that more obvious than on the continuing success of Mount Rose Preserve.

Mount Rose Preserve is owned and managed by New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, Hopewell Township, and Mercer County. The land was preserved by these partners along with Hopewell Valley Citizen's Group Inc., NJ Green Acres Program, Stony-Brook Millstone Watershed Association, Hopewell Borough, Pennington Borough, Friends of Princeton Open Space, D&R Greenway Land Trust, Lawrence Township, and Princeton.

For the truly harrowing story of the decade long efforts to preserve the property, read the legendary account of Force of Nature Katherine Dresdner.

While many partners helped preserve the land, the lion's share of the land trust work was led by New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Partnering with NJCF has been a pleasure as continue to improve the land. Together with partners, we have built two trails including an amazing 2-mile loop of the property. It links with the Lawrence Hopewell Trail and is quickly becoming a favorite preserve in the area. It's not surprising that our first sold out Force of Nature hike was at Mount Rose.

While the land was originally preserved in 2015, NJCF recently purchased the last 11 acres and bought what we have referred to as "the hole in the doughnut."

In addition to the trails, the site features a fantastic forest restoration. FoHVOS expects to mount interpretive signage at the site before year end. Finally, our friends at Mercer County are ripping out the oversized parking lot so we can restore that area as well.

As my teenage son with an old soul said – "Unpaved paradise – took out the parking lot." 🌳



2017 Official Mount Rose Opening



FoHVOS New Jersey
Invasive Species
Strike Team

NJ STRIKE TEAM 2018 UPDATES

The Strike Team’s mission is to “protect special places and rare species by working to prevent the spread of invasive species across New Jersey.” Over the last 10 years, the Strike Team and its 185 partners are proud to report that we have searched 750,000 acres — detecting 10,000 populations of invasive species and eradicating 2,000 of them.

Thankfully, the technology forces were on our side this year! New Jersey Conservation Foundation helped us update our app, making it more user friendly to report sightings and updating species information following annual review from our Technical Advisory Committee. In addition, FoHVOS summer intern, Lauren Matthews, updated our webpage to improve navigation and access to the latest invasive species content. If you haven’t already, be sure to download the Strike Team app and check out our new webpage at njisst.org.

In April, we held our 10th annual conference. Fourteen expert speakers provided an incredible amount of conservation knowledge to appreciative attendees. Thanks to support from our sponsors — Arborchem Products, Bash Contracting, Duke Farms, Ernst Seeds, Gracie & Harrigan, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Princeton Hydro, SOLitude Lake Management, Sourland Conservancy, and Zanfel — we were able to attract 180 attendees, more than double our 2017 number! Duke Farms generously donated the meeting space.

Education and outreach are also

key to success — just this year, we’ve held over 12 events reaching 700 people. Importantly, local Strike Teams are beginning to appear! With Union County Parks, we’ve helped launch the Watchung Reservation Invasive Plant (WRIP) Strike Force — they’ll be protecting a fantastic 2,000-acre forest.

Our team has been incredibly busy with exciting field work this year! We continue to work with Morris County Parks — protecting incredible Highlands forests from invasive species such as Oriental photinia and Japanese Aralia. Montville Township granted us permission to treat Black Swallow-wort, which threatens Monarch butterflies. With funding from the Municipality of Princeton, we partnered with Friends of Princeton Open Space and Friends of Herrontown Woods. As in Hopewell, we’ve focused on Japanese Aralia control to prevent it from becoming widespread in Central Jersey. New Jersey Conservation Foundation has provided funding to control kudzu populations on private lands in southern New Jersey to assist our partners, the US Fish & Wildlife Service and NJ Audubon. With partners, we’ll ultimately assure that kudzu is eradicated from New Jersey.

Through support from our partners and grantors, we look forward to another productive year in 2019! United States Forest Service has generously granted us funding through 2021 to develop and begin implementing long term plans for invasive species management throughout New Jersey, including 7 nature preserves and 50 private forest lands. The Victoria

Foundation, in addition to assisting with development of management plans through 2019, has provided funding for educational workshops for students in Newark area high schools to encourage the next generation of conservationists. And we’ll continue our work with the Ridge and Valley Conservancy to protect rare plants by controlling invasive species such as Tree-of-Heaven and the state’s first known escaped population of Japanese Spirea and Sickleweed.

In 2019, you can also expect us to be striking invasives at Morristown National Historic Park and seeking additional contracts with our partners. Educational workshops and outreach events will be provided across the state throughout the year.

We are incredibly thankful to our grantors and partners that allow us to work towards our mission, but we cannot completely address our mission without donations from our community. Individual donations allow us to draft future grant proposals, maintain and update our website, provide educational workshops and encourage the public to join us in our mission to protect New Jersey’s flora and fauna.

To donate to the NJ Strike Team, visit <https://www.fohvos.info/invasive-species-strike-team/>.

Thanks for all your support!

Michael Van Clef, Ph.D.
Stewardship Director

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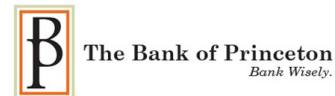
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*Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) land trust
 dedicated to preserving the Valley's character.*

Mark Your Calendars! November 27th 2018

i GAVE TO #GIVINGTUESDAY™
FoHVOS Visit: fohvos.org
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MAKE YOUR DONATION GO FURTHER!

 The Bank of Princeton and FoHVOS Board of Trustees are generously
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2018 Projects:

- Bear Tavern Outdoor Classroom
- Hopewell Township Basin Meadow
- Pennington School Pond Restoration
- Capital Health Auxiliary Tree of Lights
- Valley-Wide Japanese Aralia Eradication
- Brandon Farms/ Stony Brook Elementary Meadow
- Pennington Environmental Commission Howe's Arboretum



Thank you to our Partners in Preservation

