



NJ Invasive Species
Strike Team

FoHVOS
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

Strike Team Report April 2021

Spring is in the air, finally! The promise of a productive field season is just around the corner and we are happily preparing for it. We look forward to working with our conservation partners and private landowners throughout the state.

An update to our phone app is on the way, which will make it more reliable and easily updated. Our friends at the University of Georgia have updated the EDDMapS app, which will provide an option to select New Jersey. Content updates are in progress and we hope to announce completion in May. The existing NJ Invasives app is still functioning, we'll let you know when the new app is ready, and I look forward to lots of new records for our database so we can all learn from each other!

This month's Live and Learn was contributed by Michael Bellaus, Manager of Habitat Restoration at Duke Farms. Mike provides a nice dose of stewardship wisdom toward the elimination of one of the toughest invasive species, wisteria, followed by planting of native species to restore forest habitat.

We hope that you will consider a donation to the Strike Team to support our critical work.

Mike Van Clef, Ph.D.
FoHVOS Stewardship Director
Strike Team Program Director

Lisa Wolff
Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space
Executive Director

Success In Removing Invasives

By Michael Bellaus

Let me start with a simple question... How many of you reading this have ever removed invasive plants from a landscape and replaced them with native ones? My guess is that most of you have, it's one of the most foundational functions of restoring a degraded

habitat and it is beneficial on almost any scale. It's incredibly gratifying to know that you have improved the condition of the natural world and that your efforts will have a positive impact on an untold number of species for years to come. The first native tree you plant will leave you feeling immediately proud and accomplished.

On the other side of coin, if you have ever done habitat restoration work of any kind, you know that the battles against invasive species can leave you feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. Invasive removal jobs are usually not a "one and done." It takes planning, persistence, and maintenance, to a degree, in order for restoration sites to have long term viability.

You know the old saying "Measure twice, cut once"? It basically means that proper planning on a job will lead to a more successful outcome of the finished product. What could be more true for our line of work as it relates to habitat restoration?

My name is Mike Bellaus and I am the Manager of Habitat Restoration at Duke Farms in Hillsborough, NJ. Our property is the largest privately-owned tract of land in the state totaling around 2,700 acres and is made up of many habitat types of varying quality. Some historically undisturbed forest areas have high densities of native plant populations at herbaceous, shrub and tree levels, while other forest locations with less desirable land use histories are riddled with variety of invasives.

One particular woodlot on our property had a heavy Japanese wisteria infestation in a concentrated area.

Approximately one square acre of forest understory was nearly 100% wisteria and it was beginning to establish itself in the tree canopy. It threatened an adjacent old growth, high quality woodlot and needed to be restored.

An initial herbicide treatment of the entire wisteria population in 2018 left us with



what appeared to be a permanent reduction of the unwanted vines (picture one). As herbicide treated leaves fell to the ground and open spaces in the understory began to appear, our team was excited to fill the voids with native shrubs and continue the restoration process. However, having been in this situation many times before, we knew that this was only the beginning of a "measure twice, cut once" process. We continued to hold off on restoration plantings, and instead focused on reducing the wisteria population every year to the greatest extent possible.



Each time we removed the wisteria, less and less would return until we had an overall reduction of about 90% (picture two). At the end of a three growing-season stretch, we confidently completed our final round of invasive management and in the fall of 2020, completed our installation of over 1300 native plants.

The take home message here is this... The invasive plant problems we are all managing typically didn't appear overnight, and most of the time they

can't be fixed overnight either. Habitat restoration work isn't a sprint, it's a marathon and its worth taking the time to plan carefully, asses your progress honestly, and perform

management as thoroughly as your resources will allow. As with anything, the more you invest up front, the greater your return will be in the future!

SAVE THE DATE!

13th Annual Professional Conference Duke Farms Coach Barn October 13, 2021

***As the year progresses, we'll keep tabs on COVID restrictions and set an agenda and open registration once we have confidence that we'll have an all clear by fall. We're very much hoping to see you all!*

Volunteer with us!

Looking for a volunteer opportunity?
The NJ Invasive Species Strike Team is the organization for you!
Visit our sign up genius below to share your interests with us.
Contact Ihorvath@fohvos.org for more information.

[I'm Interested!](#)

The Strike Team needs your help to fight invasive species throughout New Jersey. By making a membership donation, you directly fund our efforts to keep invasive species at bay and protect our native plants and wildlife. Donate through the link below!

[Donate](#)

[Visit our Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

Contributing Partners

CORA HARTSHORN



Steering Committee

John Cecil

New Jersey Audubon

Dr. Emile Devito

New Jersey Conservation Foundation

Keri Green

New Jersey Highlands Council

Kenneth H. Klipstein, II

New Jersey Water Supply Authority

Dr. Michael Van Clef

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space

Lisa Wolff

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space

Technical Advisory Committee

Thom Almendinger

Duke Farms

Michele Bakacs

NJ Agricultural Experiment Station

Kerry Barringer

Flora of North America Association

Jeanette Bowers-Altman

New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife

Heather Corbett

New Jersey Bureau of Marine Fisheries

Chris Doyle

SOLitude Lake Management

Art Gover

The Pennsylvania State University

Rachel Mackow

Wild Ridge Plants

Christopher Smith

New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife

Robert Somes

New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife

Carole Stanko

New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife

Rosa Yoo

New Jersey Forest Service

Staff

Lisa Wolff, Executive Director

Dr. Michael Van Clef, Stewardship Director

Beth Craighead, Land Steward

Cory Snyder, Land Steward

Brian Kubin, Land Steward

Tyler Christensen, Land Steward

Leslie Kuchinski, Operations Manager

Logan Horvath, Program Manager

FoHVOs
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE