



NJ Invasive Species  
**Strike Team**

**FoHVOS**  
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

## Saving The Environment One Plant at a Time!

Happy summer!

Our new seasonal land stewards have started to take on a host of projects across the state! We'll be tackling invasives with Essex, Mercer and Morris County Parks, Municipality of Princeton, Morristown Shade Tree Commission, and many private landowners. Our seasonals are the life blood of the Strike Team and we really appreciate their hard work. If you have younger interns or staff or are a volunteer steward, please consider joining them for a day if we're in your part of the state to learn more about invasive species control.

We're also excited to be partnering with New Jersey Audubon and Philipsburg Youth Core to develop an Invasive Species Management Plan that will be part of the larger White Lake Forest Stewardship Plan. White Lake is an amazing Warren County property located in the limestone valley that harbors globally rare plant communities and species.

We are planning our community and professional conferences – check out the Save the Date below!

This month's Live and Learn was contributed by Tina Notas from the D&R Greenway Land Trust. Tina details restoration plantings, the why and the how. It makes a great reference for volunteer tree planting!

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

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Executive Director

## Live and Learn

Proper Planting Goes a Long Way!  
By Tina Notas from the D&R Greenway Land Trust

We are seeing great success with restoration efforts at our Cedar Ridge Preserve on Stony Brook Road in Hopewell.

When I first visited this trailed portion of the preserve three years ago, I was in awe of the mature hickory trees with their shaggy bark and the white oaks towering above me, but quite frankly frightened by the lack of understory. Where were the

young trees to take the place of the majestic, mature oaks? Where were the berry-filled shrubs creating layers of habitat to sustain a diversity of birds and other wildlife? Fortunately, we received funding from the Washington Crossing Audubon Society to encourage the next generation of life on the land. I hope the lessons learned from our restoration efforts will guide others.

Our Stewardship Team decided that the focus of the restoration would be to plant trees and shrubs. Fall versus spring planting allows newly planted roots to gradually adjust to the heat of the summer. We prepared our site in the spring and summer by mechanically removing invasive plant species such as multiflora rose and stiltgrass with our dedicated volunteers and staff.

#### *Demonstrate proper planting*

An enthusiastic group of volunteers from the surrounding community was recruited to plant native species well-suited to the restoration site. Most had never planted a tree and were happy to learn!

On the day of the plantings, staff first spoke about the importance of the task at hand: conserve natural resources and create wildlife habitat. We made sure to keep planting groups no larger than a dozen people so all could see and hear instructions properly.

#### *Plant a diversity of species for resiliency*

Species diversity is key for resiliency. We planted a mix of oaks, as well as fruit trees and shrubs native to the upland site. There were a dozen different species in the restoration. We selected species based on what was present at the site plus additional species valuable to wildlife.



#### *Planting depth is significant for survival*

Potted plants need to be planted level with the ground in order to survive well. In order to demonstrate how deep plants should be placed, staff first dug a hole wider than the plant pot but not deeper. Then, the pot was placed in the hole and the heel of their boot was placed on the ground level and toe of their boot on the soil within

the plant pot. The plants were removed from their pots and roots were loosened. A soil knife or pruning shear was used to cut an “x” from the rim of the pot down to the base of the pot if plants were root bound. Using established plants in 1 to 2-gallon pots also increases survival rates. Once the plant was placed in the hole and filled with soil, the boot test was done again, and soil was added or removed underneath the plant to make sure the plant’s soil was level with the ground. Leaf mulch from the fallen leaves was added around the base of the plants to help lock in moisture. We also created a video on proper planting and emailed it along with written instructions and visuals a few days before volunteers came onto the restoration site. Planting coaches from Ernest Schwiebert Chapter Trout Unlimited, as well as staff, visited each volunteer group during the planting process to answer any questions and to encourage proper planting. Quality planting was encouraged over quantity.

### *Plant protection*

The overpopulation of deer means that restoration plantings need protection from deer. Since the restoration site has mature trees with a number of large branches falling, we decided to individually cage the restoration plantings for protection against deer. Individual cages were cut from 100-foot rolls of galvanized wire 4-feet tall and 5-feet wide for shrubs to limit browsing. Taller cages were made for trees. Metal stakes of 3/8” rebar was intertwined with the cages to secure them to the ground. If an area is prone to high rodent damage, collars can also be made to fit around the base of plants.



### *The importance of maintenance*

A final key component to ensure success of a restoration planting is checking and re-checking plantings. There were multiple days of follow up with knowledgeable, trained volunteers and staff to check trees and shrubs were properly planted and deer protection was secure. Any encroaching invasive plants were cleared off the new plantings. Importantly, moisture levels were checked until plants were established. Lucky for us, a thick layer of leaf mulch from the mature trees covered the forest

floor, and we ended up watering the plantings just once during the heat of summer. Make sure to water plantings the first year and as necessary thereafter, especially during the heat of summer.

Let's plant native trees for the next generation!

Tina

## Save the Date!

- **September 17, 1:00pm-5:00pm, 4th Annual Community Conference, South Mountain Reservation**

(Rain Date – October 15, 1:00pm-5:00pm)

- Please join Strike Team Director Mike van Clef at our 4th Annual Community Conference to celebrate and learn about the amazing contributions of Volunteer Stewardship Teams. Registration will be capped at **30 people**. We expect a mix of experienced and new volunteers to network and share their interest in protecting New Jersey's natural heritage.
- Rich Rockwell has become a leading volunteer land steward in New Jersey. He will lead a tour of the Reservation where he has done very extensive control work. He will also share his experiences through the New York / New Jersey Trail Conference and other organizations at High Point State Park, Swartswood State Park, Paterson Great Falls, Morris Canal Park, and Pyramid Mountain Natural Area. As you can see, Rich has much to teach that would benefit anyone interested in the control of invasive species toward protecting our natural heritage! Registration required. There is a \$30 registration fee, includes a meal served from 4-5pm during a one hour social.

[Register Now!](#)

## Volunteer Stewardship Teams Information

- **October 5, 9:00am-4:00pm, 14th Annual Professional Conference, Duke Farms**

Agenda under development, but will include our typical mix of presentations, panel discussions, and demonstrations. Continuing education units will be available. Registration will open in August.

## Upcoming Events

Please contact [Mike](#) if you are interested in attending any of the following scheduled events.

**June 23, 6:00pm-7:00pm, Zoom**

Duke Farms Master Ecologist Program – Invasive Species and Deer Management

**June 25, 10:00am-12:00pm, Duke Farms Visitor Center**

Duke Farms Master Ecologist Program – Invasive Species and Deer Management

**July 19, 7:00pm-8:30pm, Sea Girt Conservancy – Physical Location TBD**

Impacts of Invasive Species and Developing Stewardship Plans

**Fall 2022 -- Potluck Social (start foraging and thinking of recipes now!),  
Location TBD**

**Other great events – contact event sponsors directly.**

**September 13-15, Cold Spring, NY**

Northeast Aquatic Plant Management Society – Aquatic Plant Camp

## 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 [mvanclef@fohvos.org](mailto:mvanclef@fohvos.org) for more information.

**I'm Interested!**

## Consider a Membership Donation

**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!**

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