



NJ Invasive Species  
Strike Team

**FoHVOS**  
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

## In the Heat of the Fight against Invasives

We reached the heart of the summer! Our seasonal land stewards are literally and figuratively knocking them dead out there!

Some more good news has come our way as we received a US Forest Service grant to continue nibbling away at Kudzu. NJ Audubon and USFWS will be treating a few populations in south Jersey and I will be updating the database and checking on the status of all known populations in the state (just over 40 of them). The F.M. Kirby Foundation has also provided funding to assist with this work and we'd like to thank them!

And while I don't really want to think about fall, we have three great events coming up and hope to see all of you at one or more of them! Check out the "Save the Date" announcements below.

This month's Live and Learn was contributed by Chris Hepburn, a private landowner in the Ridge & Valley section of New Jersey. We met Chris as part of our last USFS grant, she is a powerhouse of restoration! Please read about her trials, tribulations, and great successes!

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

Lisa Wolff  
Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space  
Executive Director

## Save the Date!

- **October 22, 12:00p-4:00pm, Private residence on Lambertville-Hopewell Road, Hopewell**
- **Potluck Social!** Bring your favorite wild collected foods. If you are new to foraging, please bring your favorite non-foraged dish and enjoy all the great food!

**Register For the Potluck Social!**

- **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 For the Community Conference!](#)

[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.

## Live and Learn

### A Restoration Journey By Chris Hepburn

I knew that I would enjoy the forests, fields, and ponds when my husband and I bought our house in 'the country' (Hardwick, NJ). I never imagined that I was about to begin an arduous, and endless, journey toward improving wildlife habitat, one that has enriched my life.

I've been assisted by organizations including the Ridge and Valley Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and the NJ Invasive Species Strike Team, and I've needed a LOT of assistance!

First, I was taught to simply identify my three worst invasive plants - Multiflora rose, Japanese Barberry, and Autumn Olive. Next, I learned to recognize a large number of plants as Terrible, Not Good, Okay, and

Good (Native). That was sufficient to decide whether to kill, ignore, or spray deer repellent. Years later, I can identify a host of native as well as invasive plants - too bad that there have been so many to learn - and have worked on a variety of projects. Mostly it seems that I rework areas again and again since the banished invasives won't stay away.

I passed through a rough phase of angst due to invasive intransigence but have come through to a 'good place' where, though I note the invasives that reappear or arrive, I focus on appreciating the many different native plants in the mix. I get satisfaction from the diverse native plants that greatly outnumber the invasive plants where once hardly any native plants could be seen (in select areas; there is still much more to do!). **I am a life-long partner with my natives in the battle with the invasives.** Among other native plants, a favorite partner is Goldenrod - *Solidago gigantea*.

Here's the beginning of my journey:



In 2008, the slope that is seen from my house and deck, shown above, was impassably dense with multiflora rose and barberry.



A forest mower mowed down the rose and barberry and the Division of Fish and Wildlife planted small saplings - very small and without tubes so I did a lot of deer-repellant spraying! (I recommend the stinky kind)

The slope went through an herbaceous phase, shown below, with lots of beautiful yellow Goldenrod.



A few years later, shown below, the planted trees were growing up along with many more that volunteered, such as Staghorn Sumac and



The slope is now a mix of diverse native trees and shrubs. Among my favorite volunteers are Elderberry, now constantly expanding, and Meadowsweet. Goldenrod is around the edges along with milkweed and, it must be said, Mugwort.

With help from me (I cut or break the Mugwort, or spray it if it's alone), the Goldenrod holds its own and even out competes the mugwort in places. AND it spreads to areas far afield! Below, goldenrod is seen lakeside where we just need to cut down a bit of Multiflora Rose and Autumn Olive each year.



Finally, shown below is one area where we simply stopped mowing the lawn abutting the forest. Goldenrod, and other natives, have been moving in. Invasive plants jump in also, but it isn't hard to 'address' them each year.



Goldenrod is one tough competitor and its blooms lift my spirit sky-high. My other favorite invasive-fighting partners are Jewelweed, Elderberry, and Red Twig Dogwood.

# Upcoming Events

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

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

Learn about the amazing contributions of Volunteer Stewardship Teams

**September 19, 8:00am-9:00pm, Pennington School, Pennington**  
Washington Crossing Audubon Society - Invasive Species for Homeowners

**October 22, 12:00p-4:00pm, Private residence on Lambertville-Hopewell Road, Hopewell**

Strike Team Potluck Social -- [Register Now!](#)

**November 3, 9:00am-1:00pm, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County, Ewing**

Mercer County Master Gardeners - Invasive Species Identification and Control

**November 12, 8:30am-2:30pm, Lord Stirling Park, Basking Ridge**  
PA/NJ Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation Annual Conference -  
Invasive Species Identification and Control

**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 [mvanclaf@fohvos.org](mailto:mvanclaf@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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Our website

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