

NJ Invasive Species
Strike Team

FoHVOS
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

Annual Conference Wrap Up Save the Date for Community Stewardship Field Workshop and Potluck Social!

We had a great conference with 110 attendees at Duke Farms! The audience was composed of conservation industry professionals from state, industry, and nonprofit organizations who are among the most active environmentalists in New Jersey.

State Senator Bob Smith addressed the conference via Zoom. He spoke about his work on the very important legislation to regulate invasive species. When asked about his motivation to tackle invasive species, he responded “This important issue has been on the legislative radar for 15 years, and this time it is going to pass.” It is hoped that this will happen by the end of June and the Senator charged us with getting the word out to build support for its passage – will do!

We all learned lots from the speakers, and it was a fun day spent with colleagues! Conference speaker presentations are available [here](#). And there were goats! Duke Farms has begun utilizing them to clear dense patches of invasives to facilitate future treatments.

We hope that you’ll attend our upcoming events!

Community Stewardship Field Workshop – June 10, 2023 – FREE EVENT – [Register Here](#)

This event is perfect for private citizens performing stewardship on both public and private lands. It will be held at Ridgeview Woods, June 10th, 2-4 pm and will feature Ridgeview Conservancy Youth Stewards demonstrating how they are working to transform formerly impenetrable forests ridden with invasive species, into enchanting public trails featuring native species. All who enjoy and want to protect and restore forests are welcome - volunteer stewards, students, families, private landowners, and all ages.

Strike Team Potluck Social – October 21, 2023 – FREE EVENT – [Register Here](#)

Purely for fun, enjoy eating wild edible recipes while spending time with colleagues, private landowners, hunters, and stewardship volunteers from around the state. If you aren’t a forager, please show your shopping skills by bringing some interesting eats. The event will be held at a private residence located in Hopewell Township on October 21st from Noon to 2 pm.

This month’s Live and Learn is provided by Trish Shanley of the Ridgeview Conservancy. Trish is a champion of youth stewardship! For many years, she has led an AMAZING effort to steward Ridgeview Woods and other properties in Princeton. She will be hosting our annual Community Stewardship Field Workshop (see above).

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

Lisa Wolff
Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space
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Live and Learn

Ridgeview Conservancy's Youth Stewards - Young People Protecting Old Forests

By Dr. Patricia Shanley



Invigorated after removing invasives

Miracles do not happen overnight. However, each Sunday morning when a group of 15–18-year-old teens show up, leave their phones in their pockets, and pick up loppers and shovels to work hard in the woods -- it feels like one. The loppers are used to cut invasive barberry, burning bush, and bittersweet. Shovels are used to dig out the roots. These students are part of Ridgeview Conservancy's Youth Stewardship Program, a collaboration with Princeton High School and other local schools. Students work year-round in cold, heat, mud, and snow. During one of their first meetings the group discovered a box turtle – a species of special concern in New Jersey. With looks of reverence, the students gently took turns holding it. Since that day, the name of the forest stewards was born – *Ridgeview Turtles*.



Forest Stewards collaborate to remove barberry root



Barberry root - medicinal, but invasive

Ridgeview Turtles learn to distinguish invasive from native species and clear invasives to create trails in recently preserved forests, many of which are impenetrable thickets. The forests the students work in are part of Princeton's Emerald Necklace initiative, a ring of interconnected woodlands encircling the town to ensure the healing power of green is accessible to all. The goal is not just to remove invasive species to make trails from A to B. Trails are designed to pass by intriguing features and create enchanting "rooms" such as Wolf Hollow, Holly Haven, Triplet Tulips and Turtle Rock so that visitors can learn to "read" the landscape and boost their ecological literacy.

By working to restore

native landscapes, students are acting locally to tackle the twin global challenges of climate change and species extinction. Best of all, while restoring the forests - students are restored. Anxiety and stress wane, and a sense of purpose is instilled by working in nature towards a collective goal. Some of Princeton's last tracts



of old forests, which had been threatened by development, are now not only protected, but being carefully stewarded by teenagers. For many of the youth stewards this work has led to a strong connection to place and has inspired them to pursue research and careers linking human health, forest restoration, and climate science.

Miracles may not occur overnight. However, after a decade of being meticulously coaxed by the hands of high school students, the return of blood root, May apple, Solomon's seal, and fairy spuds – feels like one!



25 Youth Stewards after liberating a grand white oak from multi-flora rose

Ridgeview Conservancy will host the FoHVOS Community Stewardship Field Workshop on June 10th, 2-4 pm. Ridgeview Turtles will demonstrate how they are working to transform forests ridden with invasive species into public trails featuring native species. All who want to protect and restore forests are welcome – private citizens stewarding public and private lands, volunteer stewards, students, and families. Come ready to explore the upland forest and wetland trails in Ridgeview Woods. Wear boots, long pants, long sleeves, and a cap.

For more information contact: Dr. Patricia Shanley: pshanley@woods-wayside.org

Upcoming Events

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

- **May 12, 8:30am-3:00pm, Duke Farms, Co-led with Michael Bellaus**
 - Spring Invasive Plant Management Workshop – Topics include identification, prioritization, and management techniques.
[Register Here](#)
- **May 22, 7:30pm-8:30pm, Zoom**
 - East Amwell Environmental Commission, Open invasive species Q&A session
- **June 17, 9:00am-1:30pm, Duke Farms, Hillsborough (Presentation and Field Visit / Demonstrations)**
 - Master Ecologist Program - Invasive Species Threats, Identification, and Control

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 mvanclief@fohvos.org for more information.

[I'm Interested!](#)

[Volunteer Stewardship Teams Information](#)

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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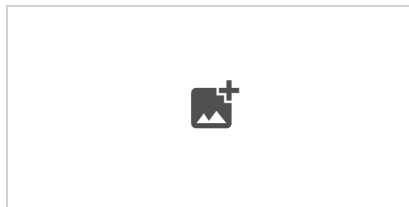
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