



NJ Invasive Species
Strike Team

FoHIVOS
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

We Need Your Support!

We are thankful for another productive year of protecting our flora and fauna from the impacts of invasive species! With a host of amazing partners, we've eliminated thousands of invasive populations through our US Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Grant and completion of fourteen contracts across the state. Outreach and training included our annual professional conference, community field workshop, and two dozen other outreach events reaching 1,100 people.

Our work could not be accomplished without the support of partners and individuals like you. Please consider donating to help us accomplish even more in 2024!



Click or Scan above to Donate!

Special Updates from 2023

Legislation -- We were an active participant in engaging with conservation partners, the nursery trade, and legislature to improve proposed legislation to regulate the sale of invasive species and form an NJ Invasive Species Council to coordinate statewide action. We are hopeful that legislation will pass this year!

Kudzu -- Along with NJ Audubon and US Fish & Wildlife Service, we finalized a statewide assessment. We have confirmed 32 populations -- 4 of them are now considered eliminated and we're closing in on another 8 populations!

You can read more about our 2023 progress [here](#).

Michael Van Clef

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

Thank You for an Amazing Potluck!

In October, our annual potluck including 30 people was another fun and delicious event - thank you to Richele and Craig Lieboff for being such gracious hosts!



Check out [photos](#) of the event/food, maybe you'll find an interesting dish to serve at your holiday gatherings!

Live and Learn

This month's Live and Learn is provided by David Alexander from the [Essex County Environmental Center](#). He does a fantastic job engaging youth with the natural world! Anyone that's been practicing land stewardship is fully aware that our efforts must cross generations and David's work assures that we have backup coming soon!

Nurturing a Connection with Nature Through Native Plant Education

By David Alexander

*Senior Naturalist
Essex County Environmental
Center*



The Essex County Environmental Center (ECEC) works to foster a connection between the community and the natural world. Through a diverse range of hands-on, interactive programs designed to engage individuals of all ages, the center is on a mission to share the wonders of nature. A pillar of their educational efforts revolves around native plants, which play a central role in programs catered to audiences spanning from PreK to adults.

At the lower elementary level, ECEC places a particular emphasis on programs centered around butterflies that are not only entertaining but also educational, providing students with a unique opportunity to delve deeper into the relationships within their local ecosystem. A key topic under discussion is the connection between butterflies and their host plants, facilitating a heightened appreciation for the natural world.

An illustrative example of this educational approach lies in the revelation of the Monarch butterfly's close association with Milkweed, the Painted Ladies' fondness for Mallow, and the Tiger Swallowtails' preference for native cherries, tulip trees, and ashes. By imparting this knowledge, ECEC strives to nurture a sense of environmental stewardship in young minds, enabling them to better comprehend the complex web of life, the significance of native plants, and the necessity of preserving these relationships.

An engaging component of these programs is the "butterfly dress-up" activity, where a child is dressed in butterfly-themed attire. This interactive experience not only captivates the children's imaginations but also serves as a tactile and visual aid in comprehending the intricate interplay between butterflies and flowers. Through this activity, students come to understand how butterflies rely on flowers as their primary food source and, simultaneously, how they play a crucial role in the essential process of pollination.



The children also act out the life cycle, act as the playing pieces in a Monarch migration game and make and take seed balls made from a mix of locally sourced native pollinator seeds, sand, soil and clay.

Furthermore, ECEC hosts a captivating butterfly tent in July, thoughtfully planted with native plants and teeming with native butterflies. This immersive experience is designed to educate the public on the best choices for native plants that not only attract pollinators but also earn compliments from neighbors and friends.



As of September 2023, the native grass mix and the native seedbank have emerged to form a beautiful meadow with significantly fewer invasives. The Parks System will continue to mow annually, spot treat invasives, and fence naturally regenerating native trees to encourage a controlled, natural succession.

Upcoming Events

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

Stay Tuned for upcoming events in 2024 !

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 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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