

UPCOMING EVENTS

- NOV 8** **Wonderful Whitetails**
Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 4pm-5pm
- NOV 9** **HOO Done It?**
Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 1pm-2:30pm
- NOV 23** **Turkey Talk**
Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 1pm-2pm
- DEC 6** **Where Do the Animals Go When It Snows?**
Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 3:30pm-5pm
- DEC 13** **Boundin' Furbearers**
Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 1pm-2pm
- JAN-FEB** **Eagle Watch Bus Tours**
Winter Field Office, Lackawaxen, PA

Events require advance registration. Visit www.DelawareHighlands.org/events or call 570-226-3164/845-583-1010 to learn more or register for these events.

Our Events Calendar is updated regularly throughout the year.

DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

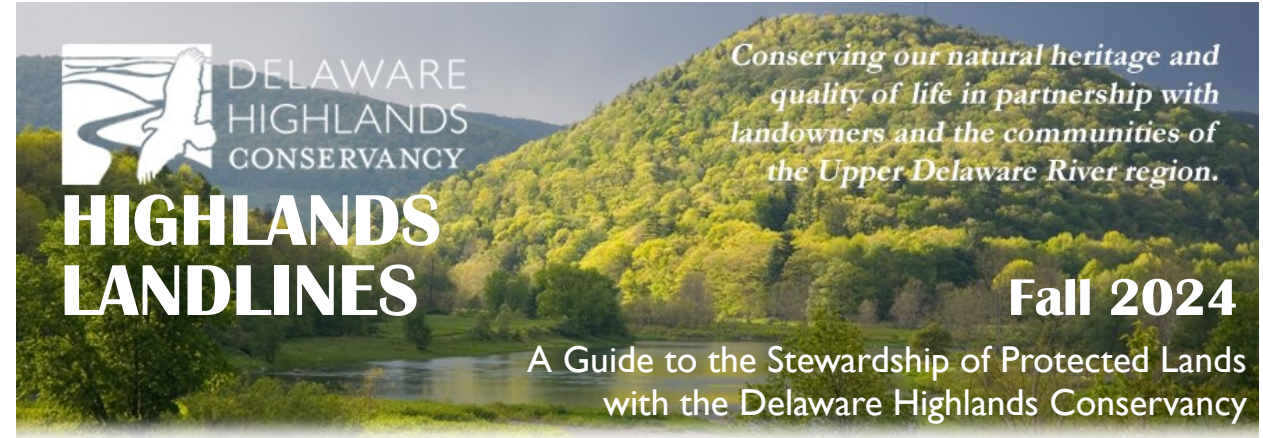


Serving New York and Pennsylvania
571 Perkins Pond Rd | Beach Lake, PA 18405

Van Scott Nature Reserve
Photo by Nicole Decarolis

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New Wildflower Meadow Planted at the Van Scott Nature Reserve

Conservancy staff are excited to announce the establishment of a new wildflower meadow at the Van Scott Nature Reserve in Beach Lake, PA. Nestled beside the Eugene and Mary Van Scott Pavilion, this vibrant habitat will support essential pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, while serving as a living classroom for those interested in enhancing biodiversity on their own properties.



The wildflower meadow was created through partnerships with organizations including Ernst Seeds, the Wayne County Conservation District, Callicoon Agway, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. These partners provided the equipment to begin preparing the land and then seeding it. The site was prepared using selective herbicides that targeted grasses but preserved important native plants such as milkweed. This approach reduced competition between the existing plants and the wildflowers that were introduced, allowing them to thrive.



The site of the wildflower meadow at the Reserve, which will be in full bloom next spring!

After the site was prepared, a diverse mix of native species was planted, including oxeye sunflower, browneyed susan, New England aster, common milkweed, wild bergamot, and gray goldenrod. This low-maintenance meadow will now provide a vital food source for pollinators, while also beautifying the Reserve for visitors.

The wildflower meadow can be seen from the Butterfly Trail at the Reserve, open daily from sunrise to sunset. For guidance on creating a pollinator-friendly habitat, contact our Reserve and Facilities Coordinator, Lucas Green, or visit DelawareHighlands.org.

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What is Highlands LandLines?

You already receive the Delaware Highlands Conservancy's regular newsletter, *Highlands Journal*. Our newsletter is distributed to all of our landowners, members, and other like-minded folks who are interested in the Conservancy's activities, accomplishments, and conservation goals.

This publication, *Highlands LandLines*, comes to you twice a year and is dedicated to landowners who have a conservation easement with the Conservancy. *LandLines* provides you, the landowner, with useful information and tips for the stewardship of your land and conservation easement.

This publication is also available electronically.

Participate in LandLines!

We are interested in your ideas for future articles and features, or your comments on the publication in general.



www.DelawareHighlands.org
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Understanding the Importance of Current Condition Reports

As a landowner with a conservation easement on your property, you play a vital role in protecting the land's ecological and scenic features. Current Condition Reports, or CCRs, are an essential tool for maintaining the long-term impact of conservation easements. Current Condition Reports are updates to Baseline Documentation Reports, or BDRs, which document a property's condition at the time a conservation easement is established. Current Condition Reports enable the Conservancy to effectively monitor and enforce your conservation easement for generations to come.

Why Are Current Condition Reports Important?

As time passes, all properties undergo natural and man-made changes. Current Condition Reports document physical, ecological, and other changes on a conserved property that have occurred since the Baseline Documentation Report was written. This can include the addition of new structures and changes to water bodies, vegetation, or land use patterns. Current Condition Reports help the Conservancy ensure that these changes are consistent with the terms of the conservation easement.

How Are Current Condition Reports Prepared?

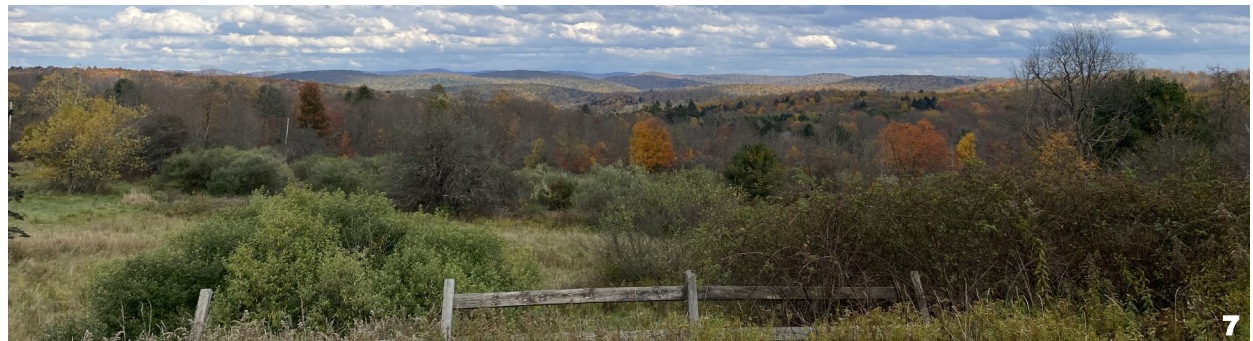
Delaware Highlands Conservancy will create or update Current Condition Reports as needed, typically every ten years following an easement's execution. This process may involve site visits, GPS mapping, and taking updated photos of your property. A Current Condition Report creates a thorough record that reflects the land's current condition, focusing on reserved rights and the conservation values that are protected by the easement, such as water resources, wildlife habitat, important soils, and scenic views.

Your Role as a Landowner

The Conservancy keeps track of which conservation easements are due for a Current Condition Report. As a steward of your land, you can take an active role in updating your property's Current Condition Report by discussing any changes or concerns with Conservancy staff, helping to ensure the report's accuracy.

Protecting the Future

Current Condition Reports are a safeguard for both landowners and the Conservancy. They ensure that the conservation values described in the conservation easement and Baseline Documentation Report remain protected, thereby helping protect the unique characteristics of your land for future generations.



Stewardship of Your Property

Stewardship staff encourage you to reach out any time you have questions or concerns about your conservation easement. There are several activities and uses that may require the Conservancy's feedback or approval, so it is always a good idea to contact us before making any significant changes, including the following:



BEFORE YOU BUILD

A conservation easement may allow for residential or agricultural structures to be built on the property. However, it is important to confirm with the Conservancy that your easement permits new structures or the expansion of existing structures, and to follow the proper process before beginning any construction.



BEFORE YOU CUT

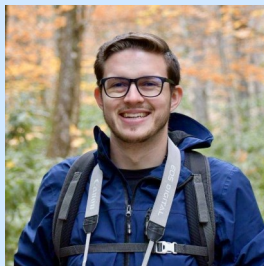
Your conservation easement may require the forest on your property to be cared for and managed in accordance with a forest management/ stewardship plan. Please contact the Conservancy before starting any forest management activities, as they must be reviewed and approved prior to any timber harvesting activities per the easement terms. We can also provide a list of natural resource professionals to help you achieve your land management goals.



BEFORE YOU SELL

Conservation easements run with the land even if you sell or transfer the conserved property, which means subsequent landowners are also bound by the terms of the easements. Informing and connecting the Conservancy with the realtor and ultimately the new landowner(s) before selling or transferring your property helps with reducing the risk of easement challenges or violations after the transition is complete.

STEWARDSHIP STAFF

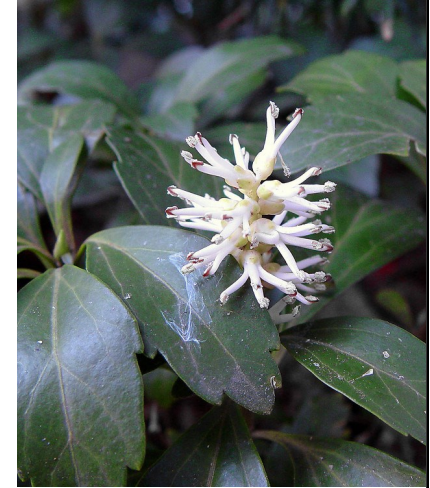


Steven Gosch
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Invasive Species Corner

Japanese pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*)

A popular evergreen commonly used in shade gardens as groundcover or to control erosion on banks and slopes, Japanese pachysandra was brought to the United States from eastern Asia due to its quick growth rate and tolerance of a variety of soil, water, and sunlight conditions.



Both deer and insect resistant, Japanese pachysandra forms a layer of leathery, dark green leaves with tall white flowers that bloom in the spring. While an easy solution for controlling erosion or adding greenery to shaded area, Japanese pachysandra can quickly become invasive, outcompeting native plants and disrupting local habitats. Spreading by underground stems, called rhizomes, the plant rapidly creates a mat of dense leaves that can be up to 4 inches thick. Its aggressive spread can prevent other plants from growing, thus reducing biodiversity and causing long-term challenges to maintaining a healthy, balanced landscape.

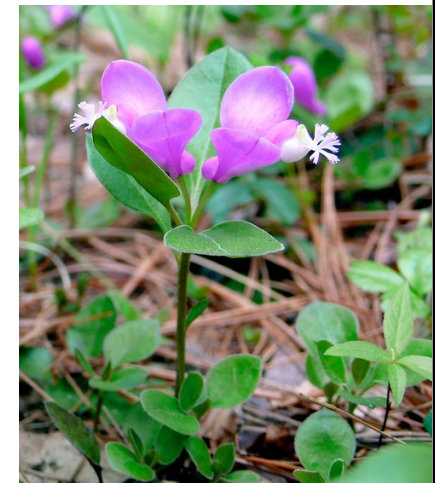
The recommended option if Japanese pachysandra is present is to remove it and replace it with Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*) or wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), both which provide similar groundcover benefits without harming the local ecosystem.

Sources: Gardenia, The Spruce, and Brandywine Conservancy. Image credit: Go Botany

Native Species Spotlight

Fringed Polygala (*Polygala paucifolia*)

If you are exploring your woods and come across a plant that looks strikingly like an orchid, it may be fringed polygala. Also known as fringed milkwort, gaywings or flowering wintergreen, this native wildflower is known for its fringed flowers which bloom from late spring to early summer. The flowers are a distinctive purple or violet, and the plant's unique petals attract a variety of pollinators.



The scientific name *polygala* is derived from the Latin 'poly' meaning many and 'gala' meaning milk due to the plants reputed ability to increase milk production in nursing mammals such as cattle. The leaves are known to be used by the Haudenosaunee as a method of treating abscesses, boils, and sores.

Fringed polygala is typically found in non-wetland areas within mixed and coniferous forests, swamps and bogs. The plant prefers sunny to partially shaded environments and is also a popular choice for wildflower gardens and natural landscapes. Growing close to the forest floor at no taller than six inches, be sure to look out for its vibrant colors this spring.

Sources: United States Forest Service and Native Plant Trust.

Eat Your Invasives: Dandy Knotweed Muffins

If you're looking for a creative way to use invasive plants this spring, try Dandy Knotweed Muffins! This recipe combines the tangy, rhubarb-like flavor of Japanese knotweed with the subtle sweetness of dandelion petals, both which have become common sights in yards.

To prepare, harvest young Japanese knotweed shoots (under 8 inches tall) in early spring (large plants can be too tough and stringy). Be sure to gather from clean areas away from roadsides and remove the entire plant to help control its spread. For dandelions, pick fully open, vibrant flowers in late morning or early afternoon, but avoid overharvesting to leave some for pollinators.

Dandy Knotweed Muffins

Servings: 16 muffins | Prep Time: 30min | Cook Time: 20min

Ingredients

- 2 cups of Japanese knotweed stalks, minced
- 1.5 cups flour
- ½ cup dandelion flower petals, stripped from base (no green pieces)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ cup softened butter
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup sour cream or yogurt

Instructions

1. Remove the pointed tips and any leaves of the Japanese knotweed stalks and mince.
2. Combine flour, dandelion flower petals, baking powder, and baking soda in a small bowl.
3. Mix ½ cup butter with 1 cup light brown sugar until fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time and then add vanilla. To this mix, alternately fold in the 1 cup sour cream and dry ingredients until blended. Fold in the knotweed pieces.
4. Divide the batter into greased muffin trays.
5. Bake at 350°F for 15 to 20 minutes until the muffins test done in the center.
6. Remove from tray, allow to cool, and enjoy!

Note: This recipe can be adapted to use ½ rhubarb and ½ knotweed. If dandelion petals aren't available, red clover flower heads are a great substitute.

Recipe from *Eat The Invaders*; image credits: *The 3 Foragers*.



Spotted Lanternflies and Their Achilles' Heel: Vibration

In Greek mythology, the mighty warrior Achilles was nearly invincible – except for one fatal flaw: his heel. This vulnerability became his downfall, giving rise to the expression “Achilles’ heel” used to describe a weakness in an otherwise strong opponent. Just as Achilles had his heel, certain invasive species have their own hidden weaknesses. For the invasive spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) – a pest that has been wreaking havoc on trees, crops, and landscapes across the country – that weakness comes in an unexpected form: their attraction to vibration.

The spotted lanternfly is native to China, but since its introduction to the United States has spread to at least 17 states, including both Pennsylvania and New York. As new infestations continue to emerge, this pest poses an increasing threat, particularly to the grape, orchard, and logging industries. Spotted lanternflies feed on the sap of plants and trees, weakening their hosts and leaving them vulnerable to disease and stress, which can eventually lead to the plant's death altogether.

In addition to direct damage, spotted lanternflies excrete a sugary substance called honeydew as they feed. This honeydew encourages the growth of black sooty mold on the host plant, blocking sunlight and even further weakening the plant. In vineyards, orchards, and forests, this combination of sap loss and mold growth can lead to significant economic damage, reducing both yields and the overall health of plants.

Despite the spotted lanternfly's destructive behavior, researchers have uncovered a surprising vulnerability that was tested entirely on a rumor. The rumor suggested that these insects are attracted to the vibrations of power lines, and this curiosity led entomologist Richard Mankin of the USDA Agricultural Research Service to investigate its validity. In his laboratory study, Mankin exposed both nymphs and adult spotted lanternflies to 60Hz vibrations, which are the same as those produced by power lines in North America.

The results confirmed that, in fact, the rumors were true. The insects consistently moved toward the vibrations, suggesting that they might use vibrations to communicate, and also revealing a potential weakness that can be exploited to control their populations. Now, Mankin and fellow researchers are diving deeper into the specific vibrations the lanternflies themselves produce. Their goal is to disrupt behaviors, such as mating or movement patterns, potentially tricking them into leaving an area or preventing them from reproducing. If successful at scale, this discovery could be a new method of managing this destructive pest.

Source: *USDA and Scientific American*. Image credits: *Steven Gosch and USDA*.

