UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT 12	**HOO Done It?**	Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 12pm-2pm
OCT 24	**Bat-tacular Program with Optional Bat Walk**	Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 5pm-7pm
NOV 15	**Wonderful Whitetails**	Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 1pm-2pm
NOV 22	**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 • 2pm-3pm
DEC 7	**Adapting to Change**	Van Scott Nature Reserve, Beach Lake, PA • 1pm-2:30pm

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.

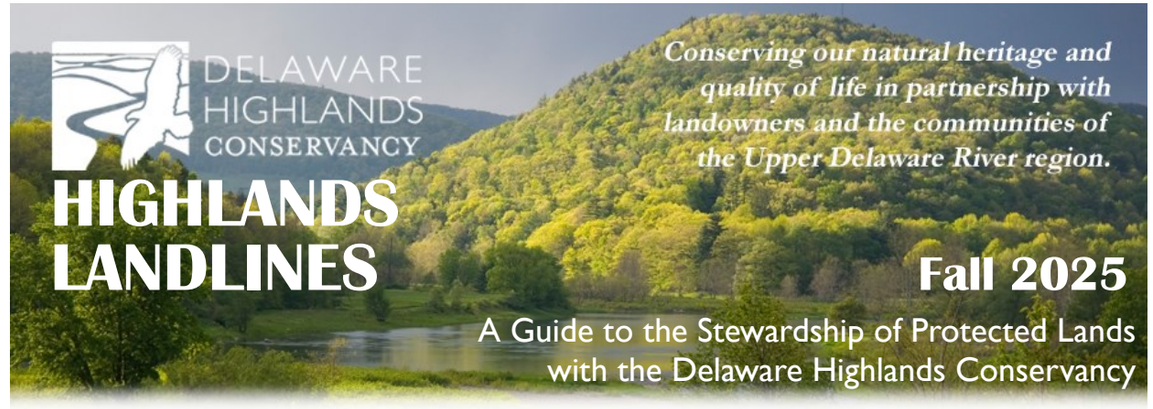
Our Events Calendar is updated regularly throughout the year.

Photo by Steve Gosch

DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

Serving New York and Pennsylvania

571 Perkins Pond Rd | Beach Lake, PA 18405



Landowner Spotlight: Restoring the Banks of the Upper Delaware River

In 1999, Tom Soja, a former New Yorker, discovered a slice of heaven in Delaware County, NY. Three years later, with help from his grandmother, he purchased a nine-acre strip of abandoned railroad with 3,200 feet of Delaware River frontage – a place now known as *Alice's Way*, named in her honor. The property lies between the river and a busy highway, where six culverts funnel stormwater directly onto the land. In 2008, Tom permanently protected the property with a conservation easement.

An area that Tom has begun clearing of Japanese knotweed to reclaim what was once a grassland along the riverbank.

For Tom, conservation of his land began with trash removal. "You can't reach the garbage unless you clear the invasives," he explains. That principle has guided his stewardship ever since: reclaiming trails, hauling out dumped debris, and battling dense stands of Japanese knotweed that have overtaken a once-thriving grassland.

Invasive plant control is a long-term effort, Tom admits, but with ongoing education and further support from the Conservancy, he remains committed. "While others see these lands as economically worthless, I see them as ecologically priceless."

Through persistent effort and an unwavering love for the land, Tom embodies the spirit of easement stewardship. His story reminds us that ecological restoration is not a quick fix but a lifelong relationship with the land.

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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.

DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

ACCREDITED LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

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Understanding Forest Management Plans

As a landowner with a conservation easement, you play a key role in maintaining the ecological health and long-term sustainability of your land. One important tool in this effort is a Forest Management Plan (FMP). A Forest Management Plan provides a long-term strategy for the care and stewardship of your forested land, helping ensure it remains healthy, resilient, and productive. These plans are essential for supporting the conservation goals outlined in your easement while also helping you meet your personal land-use goals.

Why Are Forest Management Plans Important?

Each forested property is unique and constantly evolving due to natural processes and human activity. Forest Management Plans are designed to help you make informed decisions about your land, which balances the protection of ecological values with your own vision for the property. Whether your goals include supporting wildlife, improving water quality, maintaining scenic beauty, or harvesting timber, an FMP ensures your activities are sustainable and aligned with the terms of your conservation easement.

How Are Forest Management Plans Prepared?

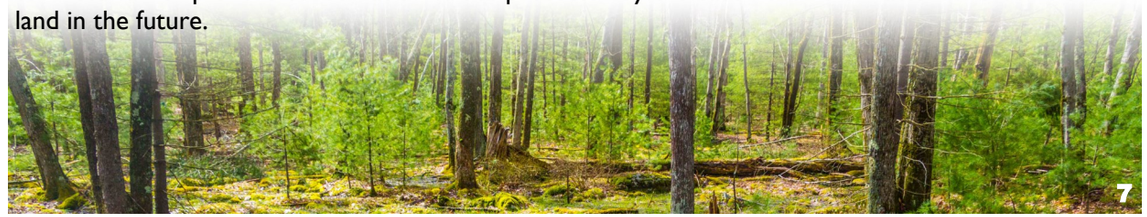
Forest Management Plans are developed in partnership with a professional forester who understands the local landscape. Your forester will assess the current condition of your forest, inventory tree species and age classes, map different forest stands, and identify key features like wetlands, streams, or wildlife habitat. Based on this assessment, the plan will outline a set of sustainable practices such selective thinning, invasive species control, or habitat restoration. An FMP often includes a 10-year strategy tailored to your property's characteristics, your goals, and the conservation values outlined in your easement.

Your Role as a Landowner

As a landowner, you are central to the successful implementation of your Forest Management Plan. By working closely with your forester and the Conservancy, you help ensure that any forest activities are consistent with best management practices and your conservation easement. Regular communication and sharing observations about your land can help keep the plan accurate and useful. If your goals shift or forest conditions change over time, the plan can be updated to reflect those changes.

Protecting the Future

Forest Management Plans are not just about today. They are about protecting your land's ecological integrity well into the future. Your forest has been shaped by years of care, and a Forest Management Plan helps you continue that stewardship, safeguarding important resources like clean water, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty. These plans also provide clarity and continuity over time, supporting long-term stewardship of the conservation values protected by the easement – no matter who owns the land in the future.



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

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Invasive Species Corner

Orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata)*

Orchardgrass, also known as Cocksfoot, is a restricted noxious weed found throughout the United States. It was introduced to North America from Europe around 1760, valued for its nitrogen-enhancing properties and used as feed for domesticated grazing animals. Orchardgrass is found in a variety of light, moisture and soil types.

This perennial grass grows between 19 to 47 inches tall with folded grass blades that are blue to light green. Orchardgrass roots are extremely dense and fibrous, which causes the grass to grow in circular bunches and clumps. It can be aggressive, with its ability to grow in cooler temperatures and withstand harsh winters giving it the ability to compete with other grass species. Orchardgrass is also difficult to remove if not grazed or mowed.

The recommended mitigation of orchardgrass includes pulling the weeds by hand, being sure to remove all roots from the soil to prevent regrowth and propagation. White vinegar can also be used to spot treat areas of orchardgrass in lawns with minimal harm to surrounding grasses. *Sources: Lawn Phix, USDA NRCS, and Gardening Know How*

Native Species Spotlight

Rattlesnake-Root *(Prenanthes alba)*

As you listen for rattlesnakes in your woods, be sure to also keep an eye out for Rattlesnake-Root! This plant is a native biennial herb that blooms in late summer to early fall. The genus *Prenanthes* is derived from the Greek words *prenes,* meaning "drooping", and *anthos,* meaning "blossom." The species name *alba* is Latin for "white," altogether giving rattlesnake root the name "white drooping blossom."

Rattlesnake-root varies in height from 1-5ft tall with slender and smooth stems where small clusters of pink or white bell-shaped flowers droop and attract an array of pollinators. When the stem of the Rattlesnake-Root is crushed, a milky-white juice is seen. It was believed in the 19th century that this juice could be used to treat many ailments such as dysentery and, as the name implies, rattlesnake bites.

Rattlesnake-root is found in many temperate regions of North America and thrives in environments with partial sun. It prefers well -drained soil and can be found in hillsides, thickets, dry banks and wooded areas. Watch for this hidden gem on your next hike!

Sources: The Friends of the Wildflower Garden, Inc., and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Eat Your Invasives: Garlic Mustard Pesto

Are you a pasta lover with invasives growing in your yard? This garlic mustard pesto recipe may be for you! This recipe uses the leaves and roots of the garlic mustard plant, an invasive species found in many parts of North America, to make a delicious and creamy pesto. In addition to pesto, fresh or dried garlic mustard leaves can also be used in soups, marinades, and as dry rubs for various vegetables and meats.

To prepare, harvest young (<1ft tall) garlic mustard plants and leaves in early spring. Younger plants tend to have a milder mustard-garlic flavor while older plants with developed flowers tend to have a stronger, almost bitter taste. Be sure to harvest garlic mustard plants away from roads, areas with poison ivy, or areas that could have been treated with pesticides or herbicides. Remove the entire plant, including the roots, to control its spread and be careful not to disperse any seeds. Cut the leaves from the stalk and roots and soak them in water to wash them. Dry before cooking.

Garlic Mustard Pesto

Servings: Makes 4 cups
Prep Time: 15 min | Cook Time: 20 min

Ingredients

- 4 cloves of garlic
- 3 tablespoons garlic mustard taproots
- ¾ cups parsley
- 1 cup garlic mustard leaves
- 1 cup basil
- 2 cups walnuts or pine nuts (optional)
- ½ cup mellow miso
- 1 ¼ cup olive oil or as needed

Instructions

Chop the garlic and garlic mustard roots in a food processor.
Add the parsley, garlic, garlic mustard and basil and chop.
Optional: Add the nuts and chop coarsely.
Add the olive oil and miso and process until you've created a coarse paste.
Mix pesto with any cooked pasta of your choice, serve and enjoy!

Source: Eat The Invaders

A Note from Our Stewardship Intern, Lydia Freethy

Over these past few summer months, I have had the incredible opportunity to step into the role of Stewardship Intern with Delaware Highlands Conservancy. As Stewardship Intern, my position has centered on connecting with landowners during monitoring visits, discussing the conservation of their land, and completing annual monitoring reports.

During my internship, I explored over 30 different conserved properties with many wonderful and intelligent volunteers. These visits have been so rewarding and enjoyable, and I have learned about native plant and animal species of the Northeast region, mitigation and control of invasive species, as well as finding some time to work with my dear mapping friend from college - ArcGIS.

As a Hawley, PA native, I've always had a love for my hometown and the nature I grew up in. I knew that after college I wanted to take some time to explore both music and ecology and see where my love for nature and the arts could lead me when searching for a career. In the summer of 2024, I volunteered with Delaware Highlands Conservancy on a few annual monitoring visits, and I really enjoyed learning about the goals of the Conservancy. When the opportunity for this internship came about and I was fortunate to step into this role, I was elated to have the chance to work with this organization again.

Exploring the beautiful areas of the Upper Delaware River region through this internship has been a great and very insightful experience in my post-college journey, and it has been such a joy to work with this amazing group of people who are conserving the beautiful Upper Delaware River Region.

Thank you so much to the staff, board, volunteers and friends at the Conservancy for allowing me to experience this wonderful opportunity and work with so many amazing people. Thank you so much to Steve for being an incredible mentor and for being so informative and helpful throughout my internship. Not to mention our many close-up views of the wildlife of the Pennsylvania and New York forests. I am excited to see what my next steps will be on this journey and where ecology and conservation will lead me.

Live long and prosper,

Lydia