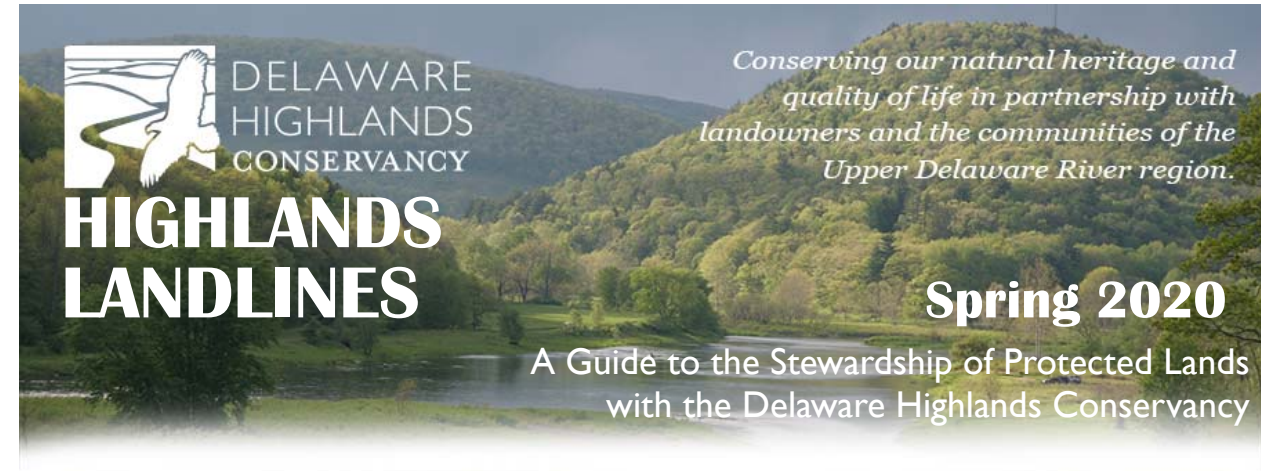


Update on Conservancy Activities

As we expand our educational opportunities virtually, Conservancy staff are actively developing videos and photos to share with our landowners and members through email and social media. Though we are not able to host events in-person at this time, we are dedicated to providing you with educational content useful for ongoing management of your lands.

During our annual property visits we often take photos and videos to help highlight the importance of our collective work to protect the forests, farms, and waters of our region. This year we're asking for your contribution of ideas, photos, or videos to share with other landowners. What are you doing on your land? Is there a project you think others would find interesting? Have you captured exciting photos of wildlife on your property?

Be sure to join in the conversation on Facebook and Instagram or let Nicole know if you have things to share! Nicole@DelawareHighlands.org



2020 Property Visits

Dear conservation easement owner,

We hope this message finds you and your family safe and healthy. As an accredited land trust, and after confirming with the national Land Trust Alliance, Delaware Highlands Conservancy is required to monitor all conservation easements within the calendar year, even during this pandemic. As you know, we have taken much pride in developing relationships with our landowners, co-holders, and partners during our in-person visits. However, in order to ensure the health and safety of the Conservancy community and to help lessen the spread of COVID-19, we will conduct this year's conservation easement property visits without landowners.

During the pandemic, we hope you are able to walk your property, observe wildlife, and plan for the future use of your property. Please remember it is always best to ask the Conservancy **before** conducting a potential site improvement on your property in order to reduce the possibility of a violation.

As always, Stewardship staff members, Nicole and Amanda, are available by phone and email if you have any questions or concerns about your conservation easement. If you have suggestions for ways we can highlight the importance of protected properties and the forests, waters, and wildlife of our regions, please let us know.

Thank you for your understanding during these uncertain times and for your continued support of Delaware Highlands Conservancy. Please stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Nicole DeCarolis
Stewardship Associate
570-226-3164 x4
Nicole@DelawareHighlands.org

Amanda Subjin
Conservation Programs Manager
570-226-3164 x2
Amanda@DelawareHighlands.org

- **INSIDE**
- 2020 Property Visits
- Recipe: Strawberry Fleeceflower Yogurt Pops
- Native and Invasive Species: Common Reed (Phragmites)
- Red-spotted Newt: An Indicator Species



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DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy is a land trust dedicated to conserving our natural heritage and quality of life in partnership with landowners and the communities of the Upper Delaware River region.

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www.DelawareHighlands.org

Highlands LandLines is a semi-annual newsletter for landowners who have a conservation easement with the Conservancy. This publication is also available electronically.



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. *LandLines* provides you, the landowner, with useful information and tips for the stewardship of your land and conservation easement.

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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Annual Property Visit Questionnaire

Please help the Conservancy prepare for our annual property visits by completing the below survey and mailing to:

Delaware Highlands Conservancy Attn: Nicole DeCarolis
PO Box 218, Hawley, PA 18428

Or email: nicole@delawarehighlands.org

You may also complete the survey online at
<https://delawarehighlands.org/landowner/caring-for-your-land/monitoring-form>

Contact: _____ Email: _____

Annual property visits allow the Conservancy to uphold the terms of the conservation easement for each property. These visits allow the Conservancy to determine whether the conservation values outlined in the conservation easement are intact. In addition, the visit is a fundamental part of relationship building between the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, its members, and landowners.

Would you like to attend the property visit? Yes No

Do you have plans to sell, subdivide or lease the property?..... Yes No

Do you plan to build or replace any structures (houses, sheds, barns, gazebos, garage, pole barn) within the boundaries of the conservation easement?..... Yes No

Has there been or do you plan for there to be any land disturbance as a result of road/trail construction, digging/filling, planting, fencing or other construction?..... Yes No

In the last year, has the protected property been affected by any of the following:

Insect damage.....	Yes	No
Storm damage.....	Yes	No
Fire.....	Yes	No
Vandalism; trespassing, dumping, abusive use of ATVs or other vehicles....	Yes	No
Property line violations from neighboring parcels.....	Yes	No

Do you plan for or has there been any timber harvesting on the property?..... Yes No
If so, is this a result of a recommendation by a current Forest Management Plan?.... Yes No

Have you noticed any of the following affecting wetlands or waterways on the property?

Encroachment of invasive vegetation or animals.....	Yes	No
Change in flow, quality or quantity of water	Yes	No
Livestock in or near waterways or wetlands.....	Yes	No
Erosion along banks or channels.....	Yes	No

Have you signed a lease for use of the land? (ie. gas lease, agricultural)..... Yes No

Have you noticed new populations or an increase in existing populations of invasive vegetation?..... Yes No

Clean Water & Wildlife: The Red-spotted Newt

One of the most common salamanders in our region is the Red-spotted Newt. These charismatic critters are easily identifiable by their bright orange color, which characterizes their red eft stage. During this phase of life, these salamanders spend most of their time on land, roaming the forest floor and seeking shelter under leaves and fallen logs.

Unlike most amphibians which have a two-stage lifecycle, the Red-spotted Newt has three stages. They begin their life in the water, emerging from their eggs in their larval form. As larvae, newts have gills and look more like a small fish or tadpole. This larval stage generally lasts between two to five months. As they undergo metamorphosis, their limbs develop, they lose their gills, and their skin changes color.

Once they enter into the red eft stage, Red-spotted Newts will spend the next several years on land. Their final metamorphosis into their adult form prepares them for returning to the water. Their tails become flatter and broader to act as a rudder, and their skin becomes an olive-green hue to help them blend into their aquatic environment. Red-spotted newts can live for 12-15 years.

Like all salamanders, the Red-Spotted Newt is poisonous—it produces tetrodotoxin, which makes it unpalatable to predators. While humans generally have little to worry about, as the effects of the toxin are most potent when ingested, handling salamanders can cause irritation to the skin and eyes if contact occurs. We can also transfer oils and other chemical from our skin to the salamanders. Because their skin is moist and permeable, this can actually make them very sick. For these reasons, it is best to limit or avoid handling salamanders with your bare hands.

Newts are carnivorous, with a diet consisting mainly of insects, worms, frog eggs, and even other smaller amphibians. **Salamanders like the Red-spotted Newt are known as indicator species, because of their high sensitivity to environmental pollutants.**

Keeping our waterways free of pollutants is vital to the survival of Red-Spotted Newts and other salamander species. Because of their delicate nature and their ability to breathe through their skin (cutaneous respiration) these and other amphibians cannot thrive in contaminated environments. By avoiding the use of fertilizers and pesticides near waterways on your property, you can help to protect these crawling critters. **Finding lots of salamanders on your property is a good sign that the ecosystem is healthy and robust.**



Invasive Species Corner

Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), also known as Phragmites, has varieties both native and non-native to North America. The European strand was introduced in the late 1700s to early 1800s along the Atlantic coast and became widely spread across the continent in the 1900s.

Phragmites is incredibly invasive and flourishes in diverse habitats ranging from edges of rivers and streams, shores of lakes and ponds, to roadsides and ditches. It can grow up to 15 feet high and forms dense monotypic stands, which degrade wildlife habitat and can be a fire hazard. It spreads mostly by rhizomes and rhizome fragments, but can also spread by seed. The plant has golden or purple seed heads that are prominent and plume-like, visible between August and September.

Mixing management methods is the best option to control and prevent the spread of common reed, such as cut-stem and chemical usage for small infestations.

Source: <https://www.invasive.org/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf>, <https://wisconsinwetlands.org/updates/invasive-plant-profile-phragmites/>, <https://www.invasive.org/gist/esadocs/documnts/phraaus.pdf>



Native Species Spotlight

Common Reed (*Phragmites australis americanus*)

The native common reed (*Phragmites australis americanus*), although it still has a strong presence in western parts United States, was historically more widespread throughout North America. Native Americans used the grass for musical instruments, arrow shafts, cigarettes, woven mats, and ceremonial objects.

The native plant leaves are more yellow-green in color compared to the invasive which are a darker blue-green. In low density, native Phragmites stands tend to be incorporated within a diverse plant community and are not as dense as their non-native counterpart. However, the native plant can form very thick stands, similar to the invasive species. Native Phragmites stems often have a red to chestnut color towards the base, particularly where the leaf covers have opened up or fallen away, which exposes the enclosed stem to direct sunlight.

Source: <https://www.greatlakesphragmites.net/blog/native-vs-invasive-phragmites/>, https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_PLANTMATERIALS/publications/idpmctn11494.pdf, <https://www.invasive.org/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf>



Eat the Invasives: Strawberry Fleeceflower Yogurt Pops

Recipe by Janet Pesaturo

Fleeceflower is one of the more appealing names for that detested invasive plant, **Japanese knotweed**. It might seem unwise to go with a less common name, but tell me, which sounds more appetizing, a fleeceflower pop, or a knotweed pop? Exactly. If you are new to foraging, these easy and refreshing strawberry fleeceflower yogurt pops are a great foray into cooking with wild edibles.

The flavor of fleeceflower juice is quite tart, and similar to that of rhubarb, so it's a natural with strawberries. In this recipe, the strawberry flavor is dominant, with a hint of that rhubarb like flavor.

Overall, the pops are sweet-tart. The yogurt and bit of cream cheese lend smoothness, but the texture is more like an ice pop than ice cream.



About fleeceflower, a.k.a. Japanese knotweed

The bad news is that Japanese knotweed is so abundant and aggressive that it is a serious threat to other species. The good news is that fleeceflower is so abundant and aggressive that it's easy to find and can be gathered in huge quantities. Note that you will need young stalks for this recipe, which means stalks from plants less than 3 feet tall.

Make fleeceflower (Japanese knotweed) juice

Makes a little more than 1 cup of juice

- ◆ 3 cups chopped young Japanese knotweed stalks (chopped into half inch lengths)
- ◆ 1 and 1/2 cups water

1. Simmer the chopped stalks in the water in a medium saucepan for 10-15 minutes.
2. Strain out stalks and discard. You should have a little more than a cup of pink, tart juice. But if you have less, fear not. You need only 2/3 cup for the next step.

Note: The strained out chopped stalks can go into compost, but be sure to burn, boil, or microwave any unused plant debris before composting, because Japanese knotweed can take root from just a piece of stem. It is a serious ecological problem, so please take pains to avoid spreading it.



Make fleeceflower syrup

If you do not have Japanese knotweed in your area, please do not plant it! It becomes a noxious weed pretty much anywhere outside of its native range in Asia. You can use another kind of juice, or plain water instead of the juice, to make the syrup. You'll still get an excellent strawberry yogurt pop.

Makes about 1 cup of syrup

- ◆ 2/3 cup fleeceflower juice
- ◆ 2/3 cup sugar

1. In a small saucepan, bring the juice and sugar to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring until sugar dissolves.
2. Remove from heat and let cool, uncovered, to room temperature.

Strawberry fleeceflower yogurt pops

Makes ten 3-ounce pops

- ◆ 3 cups hulled berries (a little more than 3/4 lb)
- ◆ 2 tbsp softened cream cheese
- ◆ 1 tbsp sugar
- ◆ 1 cup whole milk yogurt
- ◆ 1 cup of cooled fleeceflower (Japanese knotweed) syrup

1. Puree the berries in a food processor until smooth.
2. In a small bowl, whisk the sugar into the softened cream cheese until smooth, then whisk a few tbsp of the yogurt into that. (If you skip this step and just throw everything in the food processor together, the cream cheese doesn't blend in well.)
3. Add the cream cheese mixture and the rest of the yogurt into the food processor, and process with the strawberry puree until smooth.
4. Add the syrup and process to blend.
5. Pour into 10 3-ounce popsicle molds.
6. Freeze for several hours before eating.

Source: <https://ouroneacrefarm.com/2014/05/23/strawberry-fleeceflower-yogurt-pops/>



Did you make this recipe? Let us know how it went, and share your photos!

Do you plan on walking your property boundary this summer? Let us know if you need new signs!

We have 4x4" boundary signs or 9x12" no trespassing signs available for you.

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