

FoHVOS

FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

DECEMBER 2021

YEAR-END REPORT

2021 FoHVOS Accomplishments

Report by:
FoHVOS Staff

Presented to:
Donors, Grantors, and
FoHVOS Board of Trustees



CLEAN COMMUNITIES PROGRAM UPDATE

Community volunteers track their time while collecting trash and recyclables from our streets and public places. They are "paid" by designating 501(c)3 nonprofits and clubs (shown at right) to receive donations for each hour of work.

FoHVOS has administered the program for Hopewell Township for decades by organizing volunteers, cleaning areas, and providing necessary items including vests, gloves, bags and more.

Advocacy NJ - AFEW Animal Rescue - Anchor House - Animal Allies - Bear Tavern Elementary School - Beta Alpha Psi: The College of New Jersey - Boy Scout Troop 28, 41, 44, 71, 1776 - Brownie Troop 70157, 1176, 1313, 613, 70911 - Cappella School: Project Ask Donation - Central Church Stockade: boys group - Christines Hope for Kids Foundation - Cub Scout Pack 556, 1776, 41, 44, 71 - D&R Greenway Land Trust - Daisy Troop 70123, 70076, 70187 - Delaware Riverkeeper Network - Doctors Without Borders - Easel Animal Rescue League - First Robotics Club - FoHVOS - Friends of Hopewell Public Library - General Council of the Assemblies of God - Girl Scouts - Haycock Camping Ministries - Helpful Hearts Club - Home Front - Hopewell Elementary School Garden Project - Hopewell Karoka Alliance - Hopewell Museum - Hopewell Valley Arts Council - Hopewell Valley Chorus - Hopewell Valley Lions Club - Hopewell Valley Mobile Food Pantry - Hopewell Valley Senior Foundation - Hopewell Valley Youth Chorale - Hopewell YMCA - HV Veterans Association-9/11 Memorial Fund - HVCHS - HVCHS Boys Lacrosse Team - HVCHS German Club - HVCHS Girls Basketball - HVCHS Graduating Classes - HVCHS Ice Hockey - HVCHS Media al Honor Society - HVCHS - HVCHS Robotics Club - HVCHS: MTPA - HVCHS Youth Environmental Society (YES) - HVRSD Special Education PTO - iDream (Robotics) - Liver Foundation - Infinity 4-H Infinity Club - Infinity Team B.A.D for life - Meals on Wheels of Mercer County - Mercer County Special Services Educational Foundation - Mercer County Wildlife Center - Model Who Club - Moms Club of Hopewell Valley - Moms Club of Titusville - National MS Society - Next Level Soccer Academy - Outdoor Equity Alliance - Pennington Farmers Market - Pennington First Aid Squad - Pennington Players - Pennington Presbyterian Church Confirmation Class - Planned Parenthood of Mercer County - Princeton Elks - Rain Forest Alliance - SAVE -A Friend to Homeless Animals - Save Darfur - Sierra Club NJ Chapter - South Jersey AIDS Coalition - St George Church - St James Church - St. Matthew's Episcopal Church - Student Conservation Association - Sunshine Foundation Mercer County Chapter - Susan G. Komen Foundation - Timberlane Middle School - Timberlane Middle School German Club - Titusville Presbyterian Church - Titusville United Methodist Church - Tabby's Place - Trenton Humane Law Enforcement and Animal Services - Unitarian-Universalist Church at Washington Crossing - United for Puerto Rico - USNSCC - Washington Crossing Audubon Society - Washington Crossing Park Association - Watershed Institute - Wildlife Center Friends - Womanspace - WW-P Special Services - Youth Advisory Committee



SURPASSED \$100,000 IN NONPROFIT DONATIONS

In 2021 - In addition to beautifying Hopewell Valley public spaces by literally removing tons of both recyclables and litter, Clean Communities work surpassed \$100,000 in donations to worthwhile beneficiaries!

In 2022 - We plan on revamping the program with Hopewell Township to increase the hourly "wage" to provide a larger impact for both the environment and associated nonprofits!



Scout Troop BSA41 of Pennington <Photo by Elise McCoy>

EXTENDED TRAIL SYSTEMS

2021
Hopewell-Sourland Trail

2022
Jacob's Creek Trail

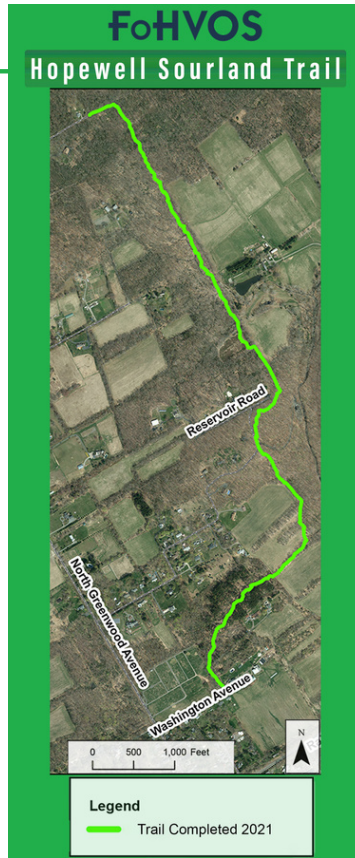
All trails shown here wind through preserved forests and private lands with public access easements held by collaborating partners NJDEP-Green Acres, Mercer County, Hopewell Township, D&R Greenway Land Trust and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. All trails were built (or are being built) by a team of committed community volunteers.

Additional trail spurs, beyond these 2022 plans, are being developed by D&R Greenway Land Trust and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space.

It has taken over 20 years to acquire all of the properties and easements necessary to complete this expansive trail network.

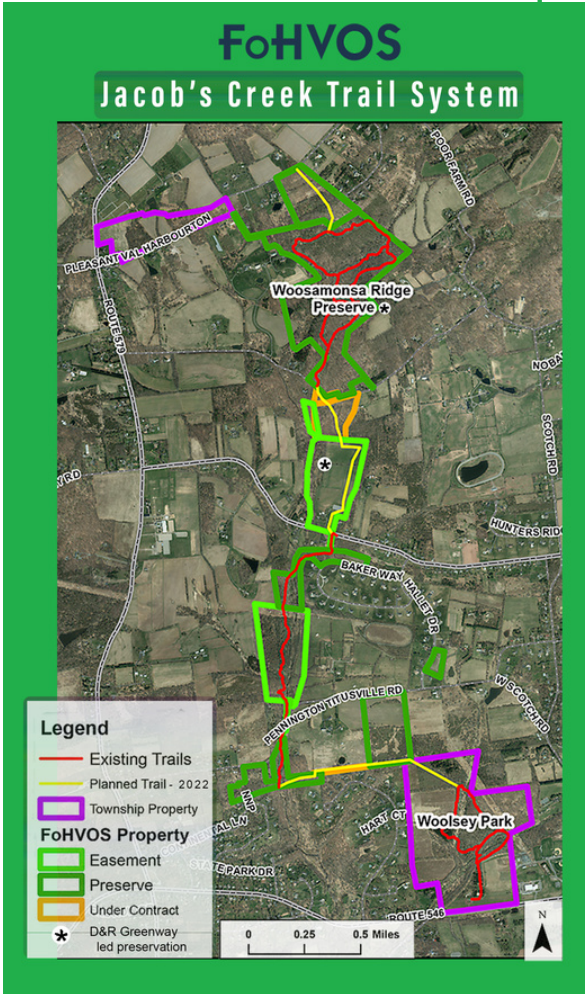
2022

Completing Jacob's Creek Trail System - a 6+ mile one-way hike connecting Woolsey Park with Woosamonsa Ridge Preserve. Please do not attempt to walk planned trails until they are built and announced.



2021

Highland Cemetery Association granted the final easement to FoHVOS, providing access to the 1.7-mile one-way (or 3.4 miles roundtrip) Hopewell-Sourland Trail that includes scenic views of forest and waterfalls and skirts alongside sheep and farm fields.



FoHVOS has partnered with each of the six HVRSD public schools to install outdoor learning areas replete with native plantings. Our Community Conservation projects began in 2018 primarily to provide an outdoor respite and a place to teach students about ecology, biodiversity, ecosystem, and habitat information.

FoHVOS worked with the schools to create unique environments best suited for integration into their current landscape, while also taking ease of access to the space into account. Schools received Sustainable Jersey certification.

In 2022, we will finalize and install interpretive signage at all school locations to educate students, staff, and the greater community.



Hopewell Elementary "Nature Harmony Project"
<Photo by David Friedrich>

"Outdoor learning spaces contributed to our school district's ability to bring students safely back to school during the pandemic."

Dr. Rosetta Treece
HVRSD Superintendent of Schools

PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2021

3 elementary schools installed 3,500 native plants & wildflowers from Xerces grants

All 6 schools received Watershed "River Friendly" recognition

Long Term Impact

In addition to COVID-related health and wellness benefits, these projects have notable, and measurable positive environmental impacts, including:

- Increased native wildlife, pollinator, insect, and bird populations.
- 1.2 acres of meadows planted with native species store 2400 pounds carbon per year in soil.
- 35 trees planted remove 1750 pounds carbon per year.
- Timberlane Middle School rain garden and Central High School detention basin reduce runoff by collecting 168,511 gallons rainwater per storm

These native plantings are not only beautiful, but also are self-sustaining and help promote efficient drainage around the buildings.



Kestrel Update
10 successful nesting boxes,
including 46 banded chicks

ONGOING STEWARDSHIP SUCCESS STORIES

STEWARDSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE NUMBERS

We expanded residential Community Conservation through additional native plantings and wildlife habitat protection that includes kestrel, pollinators, and other rare species.

FoHVOS staff are recognized as among the most experienced and skilled land stewards throughout the state. As such, we are sought after for federal, statewide, and regional land use planning, protection, and educational opportunities.

CC members ————— **250**
Acres restored ————— **3,500+**
2021 native plants added — **10,000+**



10-year Invasive Species management plans ————— **56**
Residential dense infestations acres cleared ————— **110**



FoHVOS rare plant stewardship led to MILLIONS of new seeds!

In 2021, we provided training to conservation professionals across the state that included professional and community conferences, 15 webinars and field workshops, that educated over 500 people.

Over 120 people attended our conferences and received almost 300 Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

We led seasonal intern training for Sourland Conservancy and D&R Greenway to facilitate greater impact through partnered conservation.

NRCS grantwork completed by Mercer County Parks Commission & FoHVOS at Baldpate Mountain.

2021 Rare Species stewardship, research & monitoring staff hours **1,659**
Acres - Meadow Restoration ————— **5.6**
Acres - Shrub land Restoration ————— **2.3**
Acres - Improved rare species habitat **28.1**



OUTDOOR EQUITY ALLIANCE

Educational, recreational, and career opportunities for ALL people to enjoy nature and become stewards of the outdoors

In 2019, FoHVOS and Mercer County Park Commission united various sectors across Mercer County toward a common purpose of creating inclusive and accessible public open spaces.

Today the OEA includes over 30 public, private and nonprofit organizations sharing knowledge and resources to remove barriers to access, participation, and engagement for underserved communities.

In 2021, FoHVOS signed a fiscal sponsorship agreement with the OEA and confirmed OEA board leadership.



2019 Original Members of the OEA

MEMBERS

Nonprofit - Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space - Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed - Boys and Girls Clubs of Mercer County - Capital Area YMCA - Friends of Princeton Open Space - Grounds For Sculpture - Hopewell Valley YMCA ISLES - Lawrence Hopewell Trail - NAACP - New Jersey Conservation Foundation - New Jersey Future - Sourland Conservancy - Trenton African American Cultural Collaborative Washington Crossing Audubon Society - Watershed Institute

Public Sector & Education - Mercer County Park Commission - City of Trenton - Foundation Collegiate Academy - Hopewell Valley Regional School District - Lawrence Twp Environmental Ed. Foundation - Legislative District 15 - Mercer County Commissioners - Mercer County School Board Association - MC Technical Schools - Painted Oak Nature School - Pennington School - Timbuk2 Academy - Trenton Central High School

Private Sector - Bristol Myers Squibb - Janssen - MercerMe - Princeton Hydro - RomYoga - Wildflower Farm



In 2021, OEA advisors developed a strategic plan that led to securing \$50,000 in new funding from the PACF Bunbury Fund.

In 2020, FoHVOS introduced a paid internship program that partnered students from Hopewell Valley Central High School and the Mercer County Boys and Girls Club to address land stewardship and climate change issues in diverse teams. While we pivoted to Zoom and outdoor field trips, project work was cancelled due to COVID.

In 2021, the COVID-friendly paid internship program focussed on declining bird populations. Our successful high school avian internship allowed students to learn about nesting, diets, and migration, and use research and data gathering techniques including bird banding. Interns completed a final project and survey.

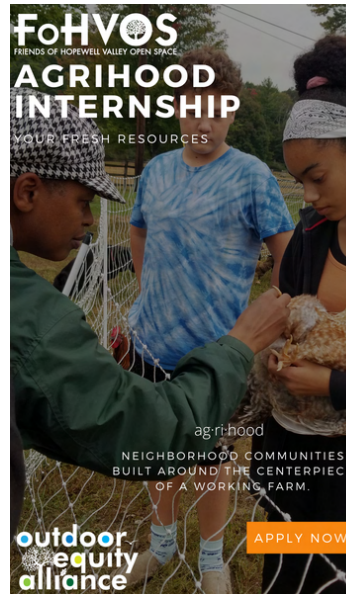
Our 2022 Agrihood internship engages local farmers to teach urban farming techniques, history, and sustainable gardening.

FOHVOS-OEA PAID INTERNSHIPS

Expert partners offer training and job experience to Mercer County high school students.



We have 74 applicants for 20 intern spots for our 2022 Agrihood internship.



Internship Photographs provided by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space

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 Mercer County (Open Space Fund)
 New Jersey Conservation Foundation
 Franklin Parker Grant
 NJ DEP Green Acres
 Princeton Area Community Foundation
 Bunbury Fund (Outdoor Equity Alliance)
 PSE&G
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
 US Forest Service
 Washington Crossing Audubon Society

Partnering with you* to
PRESERVE land,
PROTECT natural resources,
 and
INSPIRE the next generation
 of conservation.

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*A complete list of 2021 donors will be shared in our April 2022 newsletter