Impact Project Report

Master Naturalist creates educational events

Issue

Homeowner Assocation (HOAs) managed neighborhoods are the largest and fastest-growing segment of North Carolina's residential sector. Helping HOAs understand the value of removing exotic invasive species and incorporating native plants in their communities can improve biodiversity and expand wildlife habitat. But change can come slowly in these communities.

Master Naturalist student Janet Stevens began the process in Fearrington Village by organizing a series of educational events. These events have set the stage to work with the developer to remove invasive plants and encourage native plantings.

Project

Working with the community's garden club, Stevens organized three events — introducing homeowners to the risks invasive plants pose, the role native plants play supporting wildlife, and how to select and install keystone plants.

Johnny Randall (former Director of Conservation at the NC Botanical Gardens) presented on invasive plants. This event was attended by homeowners and landscape representatives of Fearrington Village sub-HOAs prompting plans to assess invasives on Fearrington Village Homeowners Association (FHA) property and plan for their removal.

At the next event, Barbara Driscoll of New Hope Bird Alliance, presented "Landscaping with Native plants". Attendees were surprised to learn how changes they make to their landscape impacts the area's bird population and biodiversity. This event set the stage for Jerilyn McClean, of Jerilyn's Native Plants, to present on native plants for the fall. Bringing Keystone native plants for the Piedmont, as well as pictures of what they would look like in bloom McClean explained what insects and birds benefited from specific plants.

These events prompted the Fearrington Village Garden club to invite Stevens to participate in their Octoberfest event. She talked to community members and provided handouts on How to Landscape with Native Plants, The North Carolina Botanical Gardens, and a list of ornamental plants that are invasive.

These events have prompted questions throughout the community and help set the stage for future activities.



The iconic cows of Fearrington Village Photo: FHA

Student

This project is the work of Janet Stevens.

Impact Projects

Beyond classwork, a key feature of the Master Naturalist Volunteer program are the Impact Projects students develop. These projects integrate course concepts and benefit a Partner Organization.

Highlight

Partner Organization

New Hope Bird Alliance

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