Impact Project Report

Master Naturalists work in unique reserve to update species inventory

Issue

Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) holds a 308-acre tract in Chatham County, the La Grange Riparian Reserve. A land assessment and species inventory was completed in 1999, followed by a land management plan in 2000. Twenty-five years later, TLC is returning to monitor changes in this unique biological community and assess management needs.

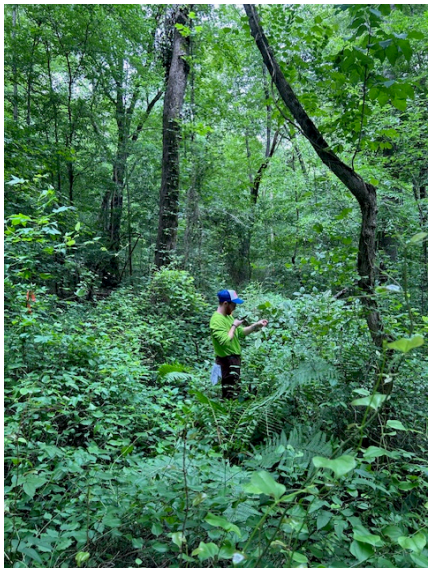
Responsible for managing over 25,000 acres across the Piedmont, the TLC staff welcomed assistance from a team of Master Naturalist students to help update the species inventory.

Project

The La Grange Riparian Reserve is former farmland bordering a bend in the Deep River. A three-person team of Master Naturalist students focused their inventory work on one section of the property, a hillside diabase seepage bog and the plants found there. This unusual geological formation creates a habitat more typically found in the NC Coastal Plain, but rarely found in the Piedmont.

The students have established three transects (5m x 20m) in the bog area and have visited these sites multiple times to record species. Interesting plants identified thus far include Magnolia virginiana, Quercus michauxii, Smilax rotundifolia, and a variety of ferns.

The students use iNaturalist, Seek, and various field guides to assist with plant identification. Additionally, they use Merlin to identify birds within the reserve. Their findings are logged into a Google Sheet, which is shared with TLC.



Master Naturalist student, Carmack Kelley examines a plant. Photo: Ashley Moyer

Students

Students working on this team include;

- Carmack Kelley
- Ashley Moyer
- Pat Ryckman

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.

Highlights

Partner Organization

Triangle Land Conservancy

Tools Used

iNaturalist, Seek, Merlin, Google Sheets, Field Guides

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