Impact Project Report

Master Naturalist joins Bird-Friendly Habitat Certification team

Issue

As land is increasingly developed in the Triangle region, it is destroying much of the native habitat on which birds and other wildlife depend. Typical developments include large areas of lawn and non-native plants. Some of these non-native plants are invasive; they escape cultivation and take over the few remaining natural areas. The result is a decrease in natural areas that can support diverse plant and animal life.

The New Hope Bird Alliance is trying to restore native habitats and reduce the pressure from invasive plants through education and direct intervention. Through site visits, they are educating people about the benefits of using native plants and teaching them how to identify and remove invasive plants. Homeowners and others in the Triangle area can request a visit from the Bird Friendly Habitat (BFH) Team.



Lauterbach with homeowners progressing through the certification process

Project

Master Naturalist Karen Lauterbach joined the New Hope Bird Alliance BFH team as a Recorder-Trainee. To date, she has made seven site visits (4 in Durham, 2 in Hillsborough, and 1 in Apex). During the first two visits, she was an observer. During the next three visits, she drafted a list of all the plants the Plant ID expert identified, and the Recorder drafted the final report. For the last two visits, she wrote the reports, which were reviewed by the Recorder and the Plant ID expert. After their input, she finalized the reports, sent them to the homeowners, and shared them with the BFH team. Lauterbach says she has learned a lot from this activity through the site visits and through the email discussions about native plants. She plans to continue her work with the BFH team in 2026.

Student

This project is the work of Karen Lauterbach

Impact Projects

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

Highlights

Partner Organization

New Hope Bird Alliance

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