



Dead trees, snags, and fallen trees are left for wildlife

We regularly remove dead trees along trails, but away from trails we leave dead trees because they support flying squirrels, woodpeckers, owls, squirrels, beetles, mushrooms, wild bees, and many, many more species. As they rot, they enrich the forest floor.



Native trees are planted to fill forest canopy gaps

The large deer herd in the Preserve is eating the young native trees that would normally quickly grow and fill the gaps in the forest created by a dead or fallen large tree. Therefore, we are planting native trees, such as flowering dogwood, tulip poplar, white and red oak, and basswood, to grow into the gaps and become the forest of the future.



Invasive shrubs are removed

Aggressive multiflora rose, barberry, wineberry, privet, Japanese aralia, shrub honeysuckle crowd out native trees, shrubs and wildflowers and form a “green wall” that blocks views into the forest. Deer generally avoid these non-native shrubs and birds spread their seeds, so they have become very abundant. In strategic locations, we are removing them to favor native trees, shrubs and wildflowers.



Photo Credit: Todd Cameron

FIELD GUIDE

To Land Stewardship At Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Active land management is essential to preserve character of the landscape and native biodiversity for future generations. This Field Guide explains our land management practices. As you walk the trails, be on the lookout for signs of our work.

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Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation



Tree tubes protect tree seedlings

Translucent tree tubes are placed around natural and planted oak, willow, hickory, tulip poplar, and variety of native tree seedlings to protect them from deer. The deer population is so large, most tree seedlings don't survive and now there are very few young trees - the forest of the future.



Invasive vines are cut from trees

We cut large Asiatic bittersweet, porcelain-berry vine, and Japanese honeysuckle vines that drape woodland edges and trees to protect trees. This on-going practice also opens woodland views and distant vistas.



Native wildflowers and shrubs are planted

We protect and plant native wildflowers, shrubs and trees, because so many native plants have been eradicated by large numbers of deer and outcompeted by invasive non-native plants. Blue flags mark newly planted native wildflowers and shrubs to help us track their success.



Bluebirds raise their families in bluebird boxes.

Bluebird numbers have increased thanks to bluebird boxes. Staff and volunteers monitor and maintain the boxes. Two boxes are placed side by side because tree swallows and bluebirds compete for boxes. Two boxes allow both to nest.



Mini-plots are used to monitor management results

6 by 6 foot squares of fencing coupled with unfenced quadrats are one method we are using to monitor response of tree seedlings, shrubs and wildflowers to our management practices.



Seasonal sanctuaries attract migrating Monarch butterflies.

Common milkweed is critical food plant for many species of butterflies, especially monarch butterflies. We ensure that the Preserve offers patches of milkweed for them. We are changing mowing schedules of some fields and carriage road shoulders trails to favor wildflowers and the many species of butterflies, pollinators, insects, birds, and rodents.