

Haverford Reserve

Ecological Assessment and Stewardship Plan

Haverford Township Committee
Haverford Township, Pennsylvania

In 2006, Haverford Township acquired 124 acres of the former Haverford State Hospital for the purpose of preserving it for open space and recreational opportunities. A portion of the former hospital property is also being re-developed for residential housing. The Haverford Township obtained a grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and contracted the Natural Lands Trust (NLT) and Princeton Hydro to:

- Conduct baseline ecological surveys of the property
- Identify impacts to these resources
- Provide recommendations for stewardship issues and recreational hiking trails.

The majority of the 110-acre property is a mature mixed hardwood forest. The plant community survey identified large stands of red oak, beech and maple mix; stands of red maple, ash and hickory mix; a wetland forest of red maple, sycamore and box elder; scrub-shrub upland meadows, and a wetland marsh meadow. A small upland meadow also supports rare plants. A terrestrial wildlife survey identified a healthy wildlife community, and potentially 160 bird species utilize the forests, wetlands, riparian corridors, and meadows, along with deer, and other common mammals.

Two streams bisect the property and drain to Darby Creek, which experiences frequent flooding events further downstream. A macroinvertebrate assessment and fish survey were conducted by Princeton Hydro at several stations on each tributary. The USEPA and the PADEP rely upon macroinvertebrate surveys to help assess the aquatic biological diversity of streams, and general stream health or impairments. Based on the stream conditions and biological surveys the tributaries and their confluences with Darby Creek were determined to have some moderate impairments, sediment deposition and erosion concerns.

Based upon these ecological findings, specific stewardship recommendations were provided and prioritized, including:

- Remove debris and attractive nuisances from the property
- Utilize existing trails and minimize further fragmentation of the forested habitats
- Address areas of invasive plant species within the forests, utility corridors and wetlands
- Establish a deer management program utilizing local police marksman
- Stabilize eroded drainage features
- Implement improved mowing and stewardship practices

