

A close-up photograph of two pink roses with yellow centers. A small bee is on the left rose. The background is green foliage.

Rewilding Hidden Valley

2010 – 2019

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7376 River Road

Conestoga PA 17516

“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”

~ Albert Einstein

Hidden Valley – Reviewing the Wild Landscape



- **Evaluate site conditions & define landscape vision**
 - positives/opportunities & challenges
- **Identify plants & threats:** native, non native & invasive plants-animals
- **Develop a plan & schedule**
 - journal/photos
 - use integrated pest management (IPM) & adaptive management
 - define your goals?: more wildlife, improve habitat, native flowers, etc.
- **Establish a budget**
 - sourcing native plants & seed
 - propagation nursery
- **Action plan/phases**
 - engage family, friends & neighbors
 - track solutions worked/failed & why
- **Share slideshow & property**
 - tours & sharing plants & resources

April & June 2010 site visits
Moved to Hidden Valley August 2010

Hidden Valley

7376 River Road, Conestoga, PA 17516



stream
property line

declining evergreen trees – insect cause?
Oriental bittersweet/Japanese honeysuckle

Garlic mustard/Jap stiltgrass

old orchard area

Tree of heaven/Japanese stiltgrass

neighbors property

Garlic mustard

2nd driveway entrance

house

reduce lawn

Japanese barberry/garlic mustard

Tree of heaven/Norway maples

reduce lawn

FRONT YARD

Chinese wisteria/mile-a-minute

reduce lawn-
reforest/meadow

BACK YARD

main driveway entrance

Japanese iris/reed canary grass

shop

Oriental bittersweet/garlic mustard
Japanese honeysuckle

neighbors property

build buffer area

build buffer area

Pond

anaerobic conditions,
sedimentation,
Asian carp

Oriental bittersweet/paper bark mulberry

natural springs
34 acres runoff to wetland/pond

wetland

Reed canary grass
natural springs

erosion along stream channel

Oriental bittersweet/lesser celandine/multiflora rose/garlic mustard

Reed canary grass

honey suckle/Oriental bittersweet/Japanese barberry

neighbors property

dead trees
invasive vines

Colemanville Church Rd

7.5 acres
map not to scale

2010 Pre-property review



Hidden Valley Rewilding - FRONT



June 19, 2010

BEFORE

2nd visit to Hidden Valley



Positives

- Some existing native species/mature trees

Challenges

- Invasive species: Norway maple 'Crimson King', Japanese pachysandra, vinca, Canada thistle, Japanese stiltgrass & garlic mustard; dense shade – mostly from Norway maple
- Traditional foundation plantings: boxwood, yews

May 25, 2016

AFTER



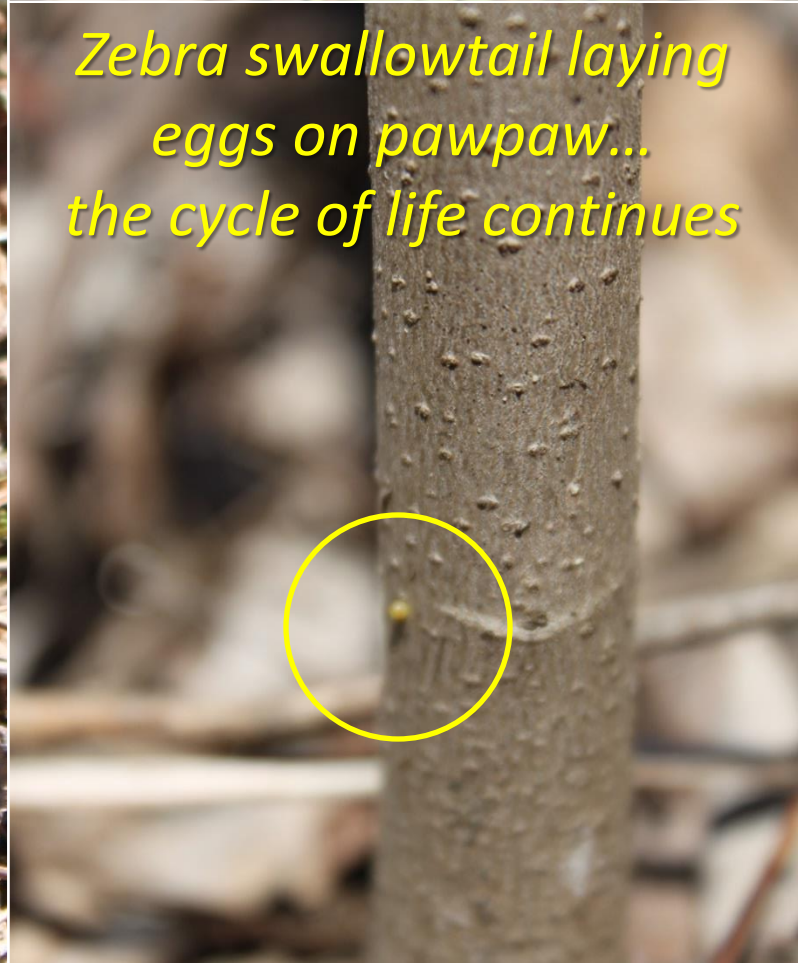
Management

- Expanded bed lines; sheet mulched – cardboard, leaves & wood chips
- Reduced lawn & planted dense native species to compete & add diversity
- Removal and/or pruning trees for improved lighting; removal of invasives as observed

April 17, 2016



*Zebra swallowtail laying
eggs on pawpaw...
the cycle of life continues*



April 30



Observing the beauty of nature



June 19, 2010

BEFORE

2nd visit to Hidden Valley



White pine

Hemlock

Norway
maple

Ash

Cherry

Positives

- Existing native species/mature trees

Challenges

- Invasive species: Norway maple 'Crimson King', Japanese pachysandra, vinca, Canada thistle, Japanese stiltgrass & garlic mustard; dense shade – mostly from Norway maple & native hemlock
- Other: weedy species; overhanging branches over old roof

June 30, 2015



Management

- Removed Norway maple & leaning hemlock; used for firewood; kept white pine & dead spruce
- Hand pulled/smothered invasive species with cardboard, mulch/wood chips
- Planted native species by seed or plants to compete & grow in densely
- Hired tree service to selectively remove large branches from hanging over roof; our own chainsaw work

May 1, 2016



AFTER



May 15, 2011

IN PROGRESS



Positives

- Minimal competing vegetation
- New, young plantings: redbud, arrowwood viburnum & chestnut oak

Challenges

- Invasive species: Star-of-Bethlehem
- Excessive lawn on slope limiting diversity & mowing challenge

120 length x 40 width

October 8, 2012



IN PROGRESS

SHEET MULCHING SLOPE & PLANTING

- Sheet-mulching the slope with cardboard, leaves & wood chips
- Propagate native plantings to landscape this area over the next few years to fill in; 1) native trees & shrubs 2) herbaceous plants
- Adjust bed lines for ease of mowing pathways; decrease lawn slowly to reduce maintenance/manage in phases

November 10, 2012



May 10, 2016

AFTER



Management

- Sheet mulch – cardboard, leaves & wood chips
- Hand dig star-of-Bethlehem & manage invasive species seasonally
- Phase project – propagate & plant dense native species; seed ephemerals in stages; track competition
- Prune tree limbs to manage light levels

May 25, 2019



Spring Visitors on Redbud

October 20, 2016

AFTER



Management

- Edging only to cleanup bed lines
- Manage invasive species seasonally
- Late season natives add interest, suppress weeds & provide wildlife benefits

May 23, 2016

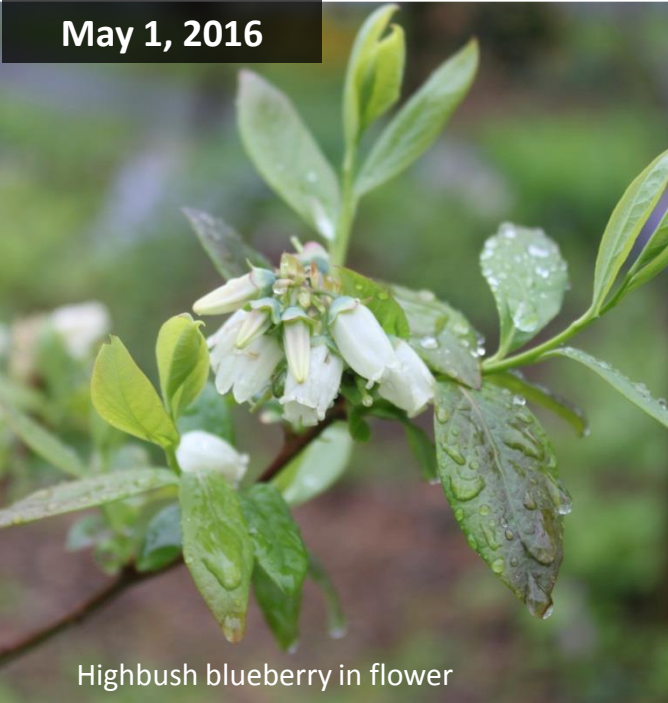


May 1, 2016



American beech – new leaves emerging with old

May 1, 2016



Highbush blueberry in flower



American
beech

July 29, 2011

BEFORE

Russian
mulberry



May 1, 2016

PROGRESS



May 10, 2016



May 25, 2019

AFTER

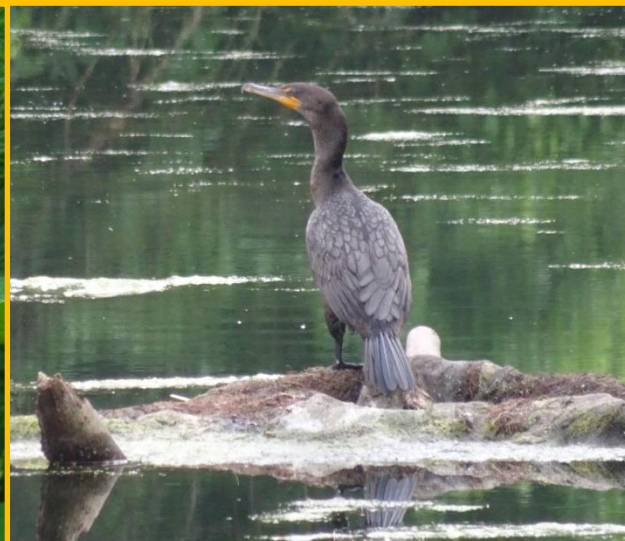


September 1, 2019





Hidden Valley Rewilding - BACK



June 19, 2010

BEFORE

2nd visit to Hidden Valley

Asian wisteria & bittersweet



Positives

- Existing native species, pond & riparian zones attractive to wildlife

Challenges

- Invasive species: Oriental bittersweet, canary reed grass, Japanese iris & Chinese wisteria
- Minimal vegetation along pond edges—mown or trimmed edges on 3 sides; flocks of Canada geese
- 34 acres of farmlands draining into valley – runoff a significant challenge

June 28, 2015



Management

- Removed Japanese iris, cut & treat invasive vines
- Planted dense stands of native species along open pond edges
- Sheltered young trees to prevent deer pressure

August 14, 2010

BEFORE

Tree of heaven

Oriental bittersweet

Reed canary grass

Japanese iris

Positives

- Existing native species/attractive to wildlife

Challenges

- Invasive species: Oriental bittersweet, reed canary grass, tree of heaven, multiflora rose, Japanese iris
- Shallow pond depth & Asian carp prolific – fish kills in high summer temps

June 28, 2015

PROGRESS



Management

- Repeat cut & treat invasive species with herbicide; manage canary reed grass
- Plant dense stands of native species along open edges (easy access to edibles: elderberry, serviceberry, black chokeberry, pawpaws, chokecherry, etc.
- Added more wood duck boxes (three nesting pairs this year!)

August 11, 2019

AFTER





Willow oak
Quercus phellos

Pussy willow
Salix discolor

View to the Back of the House:

Positives

- Planted native species/attractive to wildlife along pond & to enhance buffer

Challenges

- Invasive species: reed canary grass, Japanese iris, Japanese stiltgrass, etc.

Young black locust grove

Willow oak
Quercus phellos

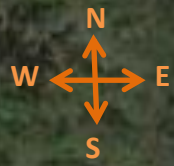
Pussy willow
Salix discolor

Management

- Native plantings along riparian buffer; screening of pond with layering
- Increase in understory native competition; invasive management
- Reduction in lawn to mow & high vegetation a Canada geese deterrent

Hidden Valley

7376 River Road, Conestoga, PA 17516



trail / access - - - -
stream
property line - - - -



2010-2019 property assessment/action plan

- 1) manage invasive species & disturbance
- 2) increase biodiversity/native plant competition
- 3) reduce lawn/property maintenance

7.5 acres
Added 1.7 acres, north side
map not to scale

Hidden Valley - Rewilding Model



- **Monitor site conditions**
 - acknowledge successes/failures
 - celebrate the positive & opportunities often; recognize a livable landscape changes over time
- **Increase diversity:** native flora & fauna
- **Research & apply Integrated pest management (IPM)**
- **Document process**
 - journal/photos/sketches
 - adapt management techniques when needed
- **Track costs/budget**
- **Acknowledge management plans change over time**
- **Share vision & changes with others**
- **Exercise tolerance & commitment to ongoing learning & action oriented solutions to restoring & conserving natural areas**
- **Have fun – enjoy the beauty of nature!**