

Wetland Conservation/Restoration Project at Schapiro Reserve:

Summary:

The Schapiro Reserve is part of the generally forested watershed of the Chenango River in the upper Susquehanna River watershed. After the recent 100 years or so in farming, this parcel is now, part old farmed meadow, part wetland and the remainder mostly honeysuckle, an invasive species. SMHT engaged in a restoration project with the [Upper Susquehanna Coalition](#), an organization aimed at improving the general water quality of streams feeding into the Susquehanna River watershed, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. See USC's mission statement below.

This USC restoration project was aimed at restoring the Schapiro Reserve to something like its historical character, with a mix of native trees and shrubs, reducing runoff and improving overall water quality of Payne Brook, which becomes part of the Chenango River a few miles downstream.

Background

Payne Creek, which runs adjacent to the Schapiro Reserve, is part of the Upper Susquehanna River Watershed, and the USC has received funding to restore a canopy of trees to the floodplains and wetlands of this watershed. The wetlands next to Payne Creek and an adjacent parcel of land were identified as degraded due to past agricultural use and the presence of invasive species such as reed canary grass. In the spring of 2023, a plan was executed to restore the native wildlife and stabilize the landscape. Native tree species were planted by hand to increase their odds of survival.



Typical View of "Before"

This project is recent, and therefore, it is hard to determine the success of the tree planting. As this reforestation project takes shape, the trails of the Schapiro Reserve are still open to the public for the enjoyment of the land and promotion of the conservation work that has been done (Upper Susquehanna Coalition).

The areas targeted at the Schapiro Reserve for this project include 14 acres of bottomland adjacent to Payne Brook, 1 acre north of the feeder canal and 5 acres of the mapped monoculture of honeysuckle. In spring 2022, honeysuckle was cleared by shredding in place. A total of 4300 trees and

shrubs planted in the designated areas. SMHT made sure several open viewsapes were preserved for visitors. It will take a few years for the growth to be apparent.

Eventually, the trees will overshadow any honeysuckle which returns to the planted area and prevent growth. Photos show a typical area of honeysuckle and open area, protective tubes around seedlings, and one of the 16 migrant workers hired by USC. Shredded honeysuckle shrubs that were in this area cover the ground as mulch. Greg Owens managed the project and participated in the selection of the shrubs and trees.



After Planting



One of 16 Migrant Workers Who Did the Planting

USC Mission Statement:

To protect and improve water quality and natural resources in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin with the involvement of citizens and agencies through planning, education, coordination, funding, project implementation and advocating for our water resources.

We strive to accomplish our mission through a team approach, with teams focused on key watershed-wide efforts working both independently and collaboratively to meet our goals.