

The Talking Forest

Holmes Educational State Forest

Spring/Summer 2022

Celebrating Forest Volunteers, 2022 Edition

Volunteers are one of our biggest assets and this newsletter is dedicated to the people who took the time to help improve the forest, create new spaces and present educational programs. Our volunteers are one of the reasons this forest is so successful. We can't thank them enough!

From July 2021 through May 2022, volunteers logged **181 hours** while helping to improve areas such as the bluebird labyrinth, forestry center, forest trails, bluebird houses and the pollinator garden.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the office and we'll get you started! Projects include but are not limited to, working in the pollinator garden, trail maintenance, teaching and landscaped area improvements. This is a great way to get outside and enjoy a beautiful forest while improving areas for everyone to enjoy.

Three top photos by EJ Dwigans,
last one by Susan Fay



Holmes Educational State Forest

1299 Crab Creek Road

Hendersonville, NC 28739

828-692-0100

holmesesf.ncfs@ncagr.gov

Forest Hours:

March 1—Oct. 31

Closed Mondays

Tuesday—Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday—Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Nov. 1— end of February

Closed Mondays

Tuesday—Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Closed Saturday—Sunday

Closed State Holidays

Youth Group Campground:

March 1 — Oct. 31

Visit our website for more

Information.

www.ncesf.org/holmes.html

Susan Fay, ESF Supervisor

EJ Dwigans, Educational Ranger



Visit all of North Carolina's State Forests. From the coast to the mountains, we have nine state forests across this great land. See the NCFS website for more information, www.ncforestservation.gov.



DSRF Helps HESF With Forest Improvements!

With the help of DuPont's Bob, Jimmy, and Sammy, forest roads are much smoother.
Photo taken by Susan Fay.



New fencing has been added in the shelter area to replace areas of rot. Sammy with DuPont Maintenance Branch helped HESF install the new fencing.



Sammy and Bob also installed a new spigot on the right-hand side of the picnic area.

Photos taken by Susan Fay.

Holmes Educational State Forest Finishes the Year Strong

Photo by Susan Fay.



Programming at HESF has picked up again this year with an increase in program offerings and forest visitation. HESF tracks visitation numbers and records them in a database for each fiscal year. Fiscal years run from July through June of the following year. We not only record the number of on-site students, but also daily public visitors, youth-group campers, off-site students and visiting groups who use the forest to host their events.

This year, schools from Transylvania, Henderson, Rutherford, Swain and Buncombe counties visited our forest. We conducted several classes for **1,438 on-site students**. A special thanks to Katelyn Keller, DuPont's Education & Outreach

Coordinator, who helped teach some of our school programs.

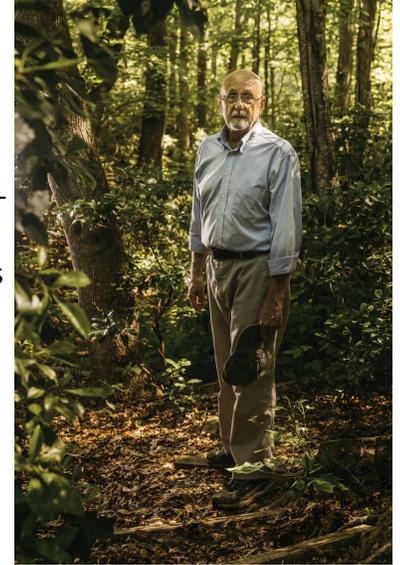
Staff facilitated off-site programs in Haywood, Polk, Henderson, Buncombe and Transylvania counties, reaching **578 off-site students**. This included the Area 1 Envirothon, Transylvania County's Science Night, and Black Mountain Elementary Field Days.

Staff and volunteers conducted **17 programs** for the general public, totaling **165 participants**. Programs included subjects covering mushrooms, wildflowers, trees, ecology, birds, labyrinths and lichen. A special thanks to Tom, Keith, Ron, Joni and Kevin for their vast knowledge and enhancing HESF programming.

The forest saw a total of **48,408 visitors**. The youth group campground was used **35 days** and the forest hosted **20 different special events**.

Tom Baugh

HESF rangers were pleased to offer a three-part environmental lecture series by Tom Baugh in October 2021. Tom is a retired conservation biologist with more than 40 years of experience in conservation biology at the university and federal level. Most recently, he served as steward at the Bat Fork Bog Plant Conservation Preserve in Hendersonville and worked in a variety of habitats from wetlands to deserts. He is a member of several professional organizations and is published in scientific, technical and 'popular' literature.



Jesse Wright and Aaron Paula Thompson



In November 2021, Ranger Dwigans led a team of volunteers for a day of service that was organized for Aaron Paula Thompson's birthday. Aaron Paula was Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Museum in Richmond, Virginia, and her passion for the CCC led the group to HESF. In the mid-1930's, the CCC worked to develop HESF into a tree nursery before becoming an educational state forest. The day of service was a huge success with the removal of more than five trash barrels of invasive plants including Multiflora rose, Oriental bittersweet, Autumn olive, Japanese honeysuckle and Chinese privet! The group also donated a new bench for the deck at the forestry center. Stop by the forest sometime and sit a spell!

Will Garvey and Robin Hoofnagle

Also in November 2021, Ranger Dwigans and friend of the forest Will Garvey, planted American pawpaw and American persimmon trees around the pollinator garden and bluebird labyrinth. The seedlings were graciously donated to the forest by Will Garvey and Robin Hoofnagle, beginning as seeds from their home. We are looking forward to watching these trees grow over the next few years.



Duane Bowker

Native to East Asia, the Multiflora rose shrub is one of the more prevalent invasive plant species at HESF. It can be found on almost any trail, growing in large impenetrable thickets. Originally introduced for erosion control, broken off bits of the plant can easily re-root and grow into a new thicket. Last year, rangers at HESF were approached by a local citizen who was concerned about the growth and spread of Multiflora rose along the Forest Demonstration Trail. Duane Bowker and his wife Ellen have been regular visitors to HESF since they moved to the area from Jersey Shore in 2015. Duane began his career studying the basics of the visual system (Ph.D. from The Center For Visual Science, University of Rochester, 1980), before beginning a career with AT&T Bell Laboratories as an engineer. During his time there, he received 15 patents related to voice and data communications and digital signal processing. Since retiring in 2012, Duane spends his time backpacking, hiking, traveling and volunteering. Over the last several years, Duane has accumulated 103 volunteer workdays with Conserving Carolina to remove invasive and non-native plants in our area.



Holmes Staff would love to recognize Duane with an extra gold star for the large number of hours spent pulling these plants. Duane has racked up 126 hours since last July.



Joni Pavlik

Shoutout to all the volunteers who have worked, or are working on improvements to our bluebird labyrinth. Under the guidance of Joni Pavlik, others help weed, move rocks and mulch the area located near the pollinator garden. Carrie Blair, Charlotte Broyles, Ray Pavlik and Jessica Rivers are a few of Joni's friends who dedicated their time to improve the area for others to visit and meditate. Joni also organized a small gathering for World Labyrinth Day, which was held May 7, 2022. A group of 20 met at the labyrinth at 1 p.m. to walk as one, as others did the same across the globe.



Photo by Susan Fay

Kevin Burke

In April 2022, professional birder Kevin Burke led a birding exploration of HESF. This was the second time Kevin has led a birding hike over the last couple of years. Kevin has turned his love for birds into a full-time career and has traveled all over the world to lead birding trips. Learn more about Kevin's trips through Ventures Birding Tours at www.birdventures.com.

During Kevin's first hike in May 2019, participants saw a variety of birds that included Louisiana waterthrush, Ovenbird, Northern parula, Blue-headed vireo, Scarlet tanager and Yellow-billed cuckoo.

During this year's hike, participants spent two hours looking and listening for the birds previously mentioned while also seeing Barn swallows, a Red shouldered hawk and Sharp-shinned hawk.

Keith Bamberger

In May 2022, Keith gave an introductory presentation on lichens to 11 participants. Keith works for the N. C. Division of Air Quality as an education & outreach specialist in their Swannanoa office. HESF staff has worked with Keith on various educational programs in and around the Asheville area.

The introduction to lichens was a success as all who attended enjoyed learning about the different species of lichen, some of their ecosystem companions and their relation to healthy air.

Anyone who is working on their environmental education certification, look for Keith and the numerous programs he presents throughout the year. It will be your chance to obtain credits toward your certification while attending a program from a great presenter.

Adelaide Dimeglio

Adelaide Dimeglio, a junior at Hendersonville High School, has been volunteering after school to help forest staff remove invasive plants along the Crab Creek Trail. After high school, Adelaide plans to attend either the University of South Carolina or the University of North Carolina to focus on environmental science or ma-

rine science. Next time you walk the Crab Creek Trail, be sure to take notice of all the invasive rose bushes and choking vines Adelaide has removed from the creek bank and surrounding trees!

"Coming to Holmes is a nice outdoor break to my week since most of my time is spent either in school or in the pool swimming for the WNC YMCA Piranhas swim team. Invasive species removal at Holmes is super rewarding for me since it feels so good to look at a pile of the multiflora that has been removed or a clear patch of land that used to be covered in the multiflora. I am very excited to continue volunteering here!"





Ron Brenneman

After noticing the lack of attention being paid to the bluebird boxes here at HESF, Ron Brenneman approached forest staff to inquire about volunteering his time to helping get the boxes back to working order. Since March, Ron has cleaned, repaired and collected data on our bluebird boxes each week with exciting results. Almost every box is currently being used by some species of bird.

Ron, a Pennsylvania native, received a degree in biology in 1973 and a M.S. in wildlife ecology in 1975 from Pennsylvania State University. He is a certified wildlife biologist and has authored or co-authored more than 60 technical publications and popular articles.

From 1975 to 1978, Ron worked with Baruch Forest Science Institute in Georgetown, South Carolina, where he conducted research on feral hogs, white-tailed deer, songbirds, red-cockaded woodpeckers, wild turkeys, and their relationships to southern pine management.

From 1978 to 1989, Ron was a forest ecologist with International Paper Company, where he was responsible for forest and wildlife management and research on 185,000 acres of forest land. He also managed their fee-hunting program in Pennsylvania and New York.

From 1989 to 1997, Ron was employed by the National Wild Turkey Federation in Edgefield, South Carolina, where he was Director of Conservation Projects. During that time, he evaluated turkey habitat in 47 states as well as parts of Mexico.

In 1997, Ron and his wife Dori opened Birds & Butterflies of Aiken, a retail store specializing in wild bird products, unique nature and garden accents and gifts. They conducted a series of seminars on various wildlife and outdoor related topics and were frequent speakers at local garden clubs and schools. After owning Birds & Butterflies for 20 years, they retired in 2018. Ron is co-founder of the South Carolina Bluebird Society (SCBS), an affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society and serves on its board of directors. In 2020, they moved to the mountains of South Carolina. Ron and Dori have two children and two grandchildren.

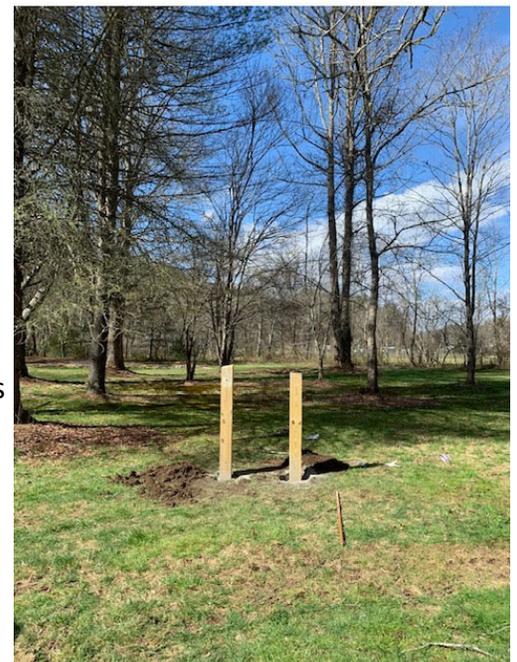
Check out our bluebird boxes next time you visit, and you'll likely see bluebirds and white-breasted nuthatches!

Local High School Group

So far in 2022, staff at HESF have twice had the pleasure of working with local high school students on the pollinator garden and landscaping common areas. During their first trip, the group helped install animal boxes in the garden as well as a bluebird box along the outside of the labyrinth. They also pulled weeds and spread mulch. During their second trip, they helped pick up woody debris and clear a large area for easier mowing.



The group worked extremely hard and we are grateful for their help.



Free Educational Offerings At HESF

Inclement Weather Policy

Hikes may be canceled in the event of inclement weather such as thunder and lightning. Notifications will be sent out via phone and email. Due to the unpredictability of weather patterns in our area, cancellations may occur as late as the morning of the scheduled meeting date.

Liability Wavier Forms

Individuals or groups participating in activities and/or programs at HESF will need to sign a liability wavier before or upon arrival.

Call HESF at 828-692-0100 or email holmesesf.ncfs@ncagr.gov to sign up.

Guided Mushroom Hikes

Come explore our temperate forests for a guided mushroom hike with Ranger Dwigans. Our guided mushroom hikes are an introduction to the world of fungi. There will be a discussion about the history, toxicity, ecology, biology, medicinal uses and edibility of mushrooms that are common to our area followed by a moderate hike into the forest! While the program is limited to 12 participants, other hikes will be scheduled if there is enough interest. We will meet near the kiosk in the main parking area. It is recommended that you bring comfortable shoes, a water bottle, a camera, and a mushroom field guide if you have one. NCEE and CEU credit available upon request.

July 23: 2-4 p.m.

August 6: 2-4 p.m.

Photos by EJ Dwigans



Gymnopuys ioccephalus



Craterellus fallax



Stereum species



Omphalotus illudens



Mycena leaiana

Look for our next newsletter in Summer/Fall 2022.



The North Carolina Forest Service is a division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
Steve Troxler, Commissioner

