

The Sherman Road Preserve Enhances Science Curriculum

During 2020-21, several school districts approached Gates Mills Land Conservancy for permission to access the Sherman Road Preserve as part of their science curriculum for students. These schools included Hawken, University School and Westlake. These requests are in addition to our existing relationship with the Mayfield City School District for students of the environmental services program at Excel-TECC.

Student interest in ecology, conservation, urban farming, air and water quality, and climate change, for example, is steadily increasing at all levels, K-12, and teachers are eager to augment classroom learning with field experience and opportunities to collaborate with conservation organizations. As part of the Gates Mills Land Conservancy's mission to educate, promote public awareness and preserve our scenic resources, we are excited to enhance our educational collaboration with local schools. We expect these events to occur on a regular basis.

The second of these events occurred on April 20, in 2022. Biologist Mike Byers and GMLC Board member Sandra Turner coordinated the event. Fourteen students and their advisor, Nick Fletcher from Hawken Upper School spent the day at the Sherman Road Preserve performing community service in honor of Earth Day. The group was joined by other members of GMLC and the Gates Mills Garden Club. After weeks of cold, wet, chilly weather, this was a glorious day to be outdoors.

The students assisted with the removal of invasive species, such as glossy buckthorn and multiflora rose, and they uncovered trees that were planted at the preserve in 2017. These plantings included maple trees, cherry trees, viburnum and dogwood. Six of the students were part of an exchange program from Chile. They engaged in a lively conversation about the comparison of plant and animal species in the U.S. and Chile. The exchange students had a variety of educational and cultural experiences during their three-week visit to Hawken, and they said that their day with us at Sherman Road was a highlight as well!

The effort to eradicate the spread of invasives on the Sherman Road Preserve has been ongoing since the purchase of the property in 2014. Given the interest of students in conservation, Gates Mills Land Conservancy looks forward to continuing our partnerships with area schools.