

August 2024 North Haven News article: Speckled Alder

Speckled alder *Alnus incana* is a common shrub found throughout Maine, including North Haven and is usually associated with wet areas and old field sites. Thick stands of alder form an alder shrub thicket natural community type. Though the speckled alder has no commercial value and is often considered a nuisance species by land managers, alder shrub thickets do provide numerous ecological benefits. These benefits include habitat for numerous bird species such as the common yellowthroat and alder flycatcher, rare animals such as the Blanding's turtle and the Wood turtle, and rare plants including Bog bedstraw and Northern bog sedge. Alder thickets also provide critical habitat for woodcock, a migratory game species showing decline throughout much of its range. Alders are an important riparian species that help stabilize riverbanks and wetland edges. NHCP is actively managing and promoting speckled alder on its North Shore Preserve where it is well established but encountering competition from the invasive species glossy buckthorn.

NHCP has begun mowing some of its open fields early this summer as part of its effort to control invasive species. Some of these fields will be mowed again this fall as part of that effort. NHCP's Invasive Species Management Plan prescribed this practice. By early July ground nesting birds will have hatched eliminating the issue of disturbing nests. By cutting fields twice, grasses and other native species should out-compete invasives such as glossy buckthorn, while creating better grassland bird habitat. In theory, as a more native habitat is improved, it will also be better habitat for pollinators which do better when fields are mowed later in the season. NHCP has worked hard to have thoughtful, comprehensive plans that guide the organization in making complicated and at times conflicting management decisions.

In an effort to improve access to Narrow Place Beach, NHCP had an aluminum handrail fabricated at Lyman Morse Fabrication and installed by Aaron Cabot. This project was made possible by the generosity of our supporters.

NHCP will be hosting a series of events in August that include:

On Tuesday August 6 at 5:00 pm NHCP will be hosting its Annual Meeting at Peter Allen's Barn on Crabtree Point. Appetizers and refreshments will be served prior to a brief discussion of NHCP activities followed by a panel discussion about "Building Climate Ready Communities" examining the issue of sea level rise and what our community can do to prepare for its effects. The panel will include Gabe McPhail, Resilient Communities Manager and Coordinator of the Collaborative for Community Resilience Partners, Gayle Bowness from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and Hannah Pingree from the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future. Parking is limited so please carpool if possible.

Other programs include a Candlelit Hike at the Peleg Thomas Preserve on August 7 between 8 and 10 pm. On Tuesday August 13 NHCP will be leading a hike to Burnt Island for a picnic on the beach. Bring your own picnic and something to sit on. Meet at the parking area on Coopers Lane at 11:45 and return around 1:00.

Please contact NHCP at nhcp@northhavenconservation.org or 207 867 2113 with any questions.