

What is Dusty Goldenrod Preserve? And where is it?

Highland Heights Dusty Goldenrod Preserve is a 37-acre forested and meadowed land with high quality wetlands and rare plant species. The Preserve has 12% of all the plant species found in Ohio, making it a very special place. The Preserve has 5 permanent streams flowing through it and other streams that appear when the rains are heavy enough. This wetland filters the waters from upstream communities and provides a buffer to absorb large amounts of water, preventing downstream flooding.



2020 - 2021 Preserve activities since the last newsletter

- Approximately 25 non-native Austrian pines and 4 red maple trees were cut down and removed from the Preserve. These trees were removed to maintain a small portion of the Preserve as open meadow. This open meadow is where some of the rarer plants are found, mainly the Dusty Goldenrod plant. Thanks so much to the Highland Heights Service Director Brian Belfiore and the crew that chipped all the cut trees for recycling.
- Interpretative signs were installed at each end of Gaswell Drive, the grass path running along the south side of the Preserve. Be sure to have a look as you stroll into the area.
- Shoe brushes were also installed near the interpretive signs. We hope you will all take 2 minutes to clean your shoes as you enter. This prevents bringing non-native plant seeds to the area. It's a simple thing to do to protect the Preserve.
- A monthly monitoring program, comparing plants found in the 4 deer exclosures to the plants growing nearby, was begun. This program will provide data regarding the effect the deer population has on our native plants.
- In early March, six bluebird houses were installed. These native birds need our help as they have been displaced by our non-native house sparrows. Volunteers will be monitoring the boxes.

What is planned to date for 2021

- Boundary markers will be installed to clearly delineate the Preserve's boundaries. Hopefully this will help prevent some of the yard-waste dumping into the preserve that has been occurring.
- We will continue monitoring plants in and around the deer exclosures.
- Invasive weed pulling. We are starting an 'adopt a weed' program and hope some of you will be willing to put in a few hours pulling these invasives. These plants - Canada thistle, narrow leaf bittercress, and garlic mustard - all grow along Gaswell Drive making it easy to get to them. If you have interest in helping out, contact Esther at vegout5@live.com.
- Continued water quality monitoring of 3 of the 5 streams that flow through the Preserve.

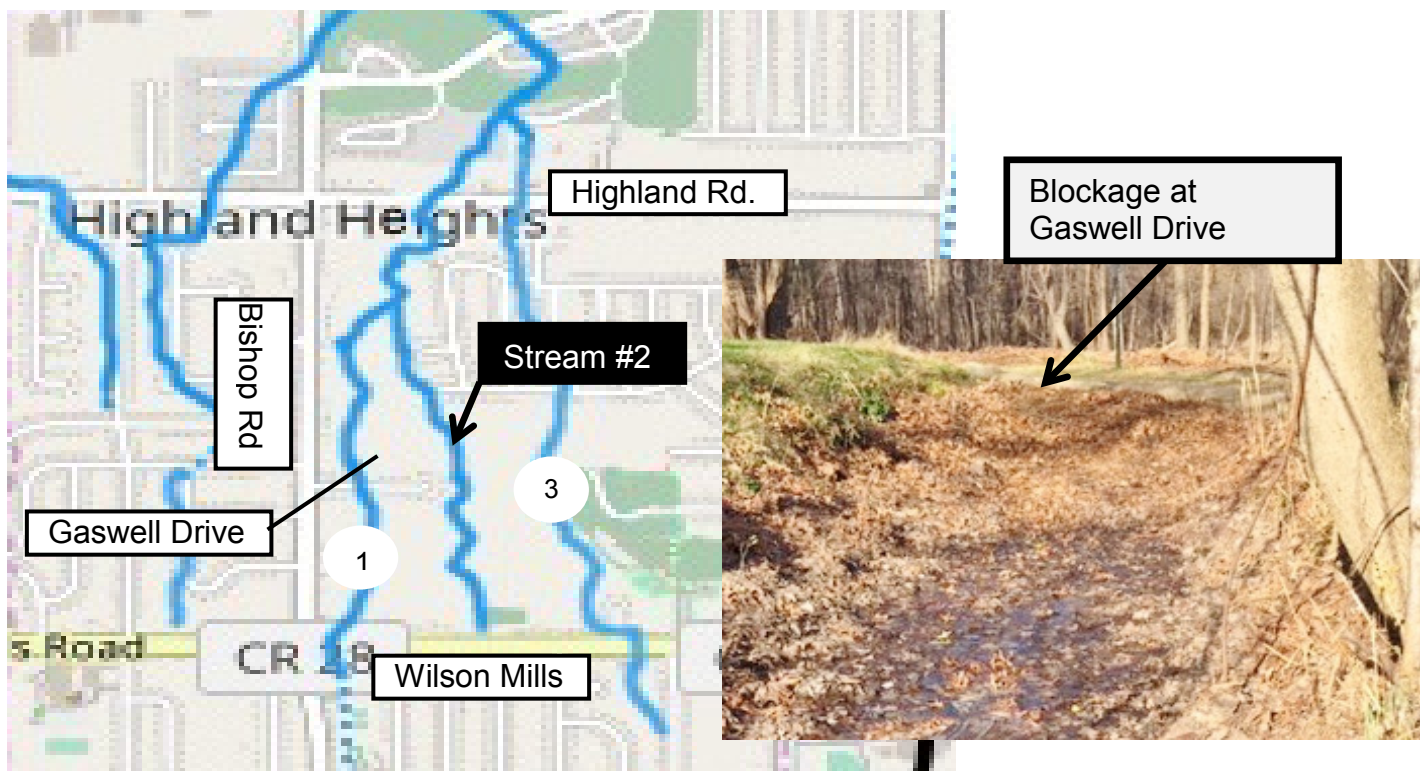
Areas of concern

One of the streams, stream #2 (see map below and note that streams 4 & 5 are not shown) is compromised. In the fall, the piping that carries the stream under Gaswell Drive was blocked by leaves piled along the top of the stream bank, which were then washed down into the stream during rain events. As a result, the stream overflowed its banks and eroded portions of Gaswell Drive. The road is not on Preserve property, but many of the neighborhood children and adults use this grassy path to get to and from Highland Heights Community Park.

What is directly affecting the Preserve are the changes to the water quality in stream #2. The water monitoring has found changes in stream #2 as compared to the other streams.

1. Oxygen content is lower in stream #2. Oxygen is vitally important to aquatic life in any stream. Excessive leaf debris is the most likely cause of this lower oxygen level.
2. High levels of ammonia, bordering on a toxic level are being measured in stream #2. Leaf debris is normally not a cause of high ammonia levels, and more investigation is being done to try to determine the cause.

What can you do? - Please inform any landscapers that piling leaves on the banks of streams is illegal. (Also dumping grass clippings into the Preserve!) You may hear that the trees drop the leaves into the stream anyway. This is true, but nature adapted to the 'normal' amount of leaf debris. When an entire yard's worth is placed into the stream, the system is overloaded.



Hopefully you find this letter informative, and it helps you feel connected to the great natural asset located right here in Highland Heights.

For more information visit our website: <https://www.friendsofeuclidcreek.com>

Sincerely Yours,
Friends of Euclid Creek