

From the Natural Resources Stewardship Cm.

Bradford Pear tree removal at the Walking Track/Tennis Courts

Mary Freudenberg for the NRSC

Recently, if you heard some noise over at the tennis courts, it wasn't from our tennis players. The Connestee Falls Maintenance Staff began the removal of six large Bradford Pear trees, along the side of the walking track. You may be wondering why this was necessary. There are a number of reasons.

The Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Bradford') is widely considered one of the worst landscaping decisions in modern history. Originally imported from China and heavily promoted mid-century as the "perfect" urban tree due to its fast growth, uniform shape, and beautiful spring blooms, its massive downsides quickly caught up with it.

Today, multiple states have outright banned its sale, and arborists everywhere advocate for its removal. Here is why the Bradford pear is so universally hated:

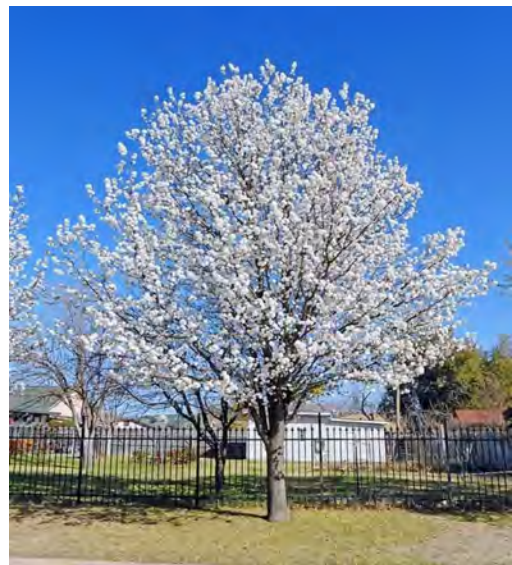
1. **They are Aggressively Invasive.** When introduced, scientists believed Bradford pears were sterile because they couldn't self-pollinate. However, as nurseries introduced other varieties of Callery pear (like 'Aristocrat' or 'Cleveland Select'), these different cultivars began cross-pollinating. The result? They started producing viable, tiny brown fruits. Birds eat these fruits and spread the seeds everywhere. In the wild, they revert to a "wild type" hybrid that: Forms dense, impenetrable, thorny thickets (with sharp spikes up to 3 inches long). Leafs out incredibly early in the spring, shading out and choking out native plants like dogwoods, redbuds, and native wildflowers. ***They provide virtually zero ecological benefit, as they do not support native insect or caterpillar populations that local birds rely on for food.***

2. **Terribly Weak Structure.** Bradford pears grow very quickly, but their wood is exceptionally soft and brittle. They possess a major design flaw: narrow crotch angles. Instead of branches growing outward gracefully, they grow tightly upward from a central point on the trunk. As the tree reaches 15 to 20 years of age, the limbs become too heavy for these weak unions. During common summer thunderstorms, ice storms, or heavy winds, the trees literally split right down the middle under their own weight, frequently damaging cars, power lines, and homes.

3. **That Awful, Rotten Odor.** While the clouds of white spring blossoms look beautiful from a distance, up close they are notoriously foul. To attract flies and other alternative pollinators, the blossoms emit an organic compound that smells intensely like rotting fish or garbage.

So, what have they been replaced with? We asked both Mountain Gardeners and EcoForesters (the non-profit that conducted the inventory of our forests) for input and we decided to plant Southern Magnolias. The Southern Magnolia (Little Gem) was selected with consideration given to maintenance, aesthetics, and the proximity to the courts and walking track. And in case you are wondering, Southern Magnolias are native to North Carolina.

Thank you for your understanding as we continue to remove invasive species from our natural environment and a special 'thank you' goes out to our Connestee Falls' Maintenance Staff.



Bradford Pear Tree

From the Natural Resources Stewardship Cm. cont...

Connestee Falls - Forest Management Plan *Mary Freudenberg for the NRSC*

In 2023, the NRSC commissioned EcoForesters, a nonprofit professional forestry organization dedicated to conserving and restoring our Appalachian forests, to develop a long-term CF Forest Management Plan (FMP). This FMP is an extension of the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) created by Equinox Environmental and conducted in 2023.

The purpose of the FMP is to further explore and define the conditions of the CF forested property to make sound forest management recommendations, and to promote ecosystem health and long-term sustainability.

The goals of the plan are to:

- Identify and minimize threats to ecosystem resilience such as fire, flooding, erosion, and invasive species
- Identify and preserve any rare, unique, or biologically important natural habitats that exist within CFPOA
- Achieve a balance between managing the natural resources of Connestee Falls and human needs

Earlier this year, the plan received board approval and was shared with several relevant permanent and management committee chairs, as well as leaders of various Connestee Falls groups for review and feedback. At this time, the FMP is being made available to the membership through the following link:

[Managing Forest Health | Connestee Falls Natural Resources](#)

A member presentation by EcoForesters (to be live streamed and recorded) will be offered in the coming months. Look for an eBlast with more information.

If you questions about the forest management plan, please visit our website <https://www.connesteefallsnrs.com/> and click the 'Contact Us' button at the bottom of the page.

Forest Management Plan for the
Connestee Falls Property Owners' Association
Transylvania County, NC



From the Natural Resources Stewardship Cm cont...

Treatment of Hemlocks on Private Property Continues

From the NRSC

In a continuing effort to preserve and protect Conneestee's Hemlocks, the Natural Resources Stewardship Committee (NRSC) is offering treatment of Hemlocks on private property. This foundational species, the "Redwoods of the East" is under threat from the invasive insect Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). The NRSC will provide volunteers to apply pesticide treatment to slow the spread of HWA at no cost to residents.

Andy McCumber from the NRSC or another volunteer will schedule a visit to assess the Hemlocks and then return to apply a chemical treatment. The treatment is generally considered effective for 5 years, so the NRSC will keep track of the retreatment schedule.

All training and education has been graciously provided by the Hemlock Restoration Initiative (HRI), a regional nonprofit from Asheville, working to protect Hemlocks throughout Western North Carolina. While treatment is provided at no cost, donation envelopes will be available at the time of service to allow continued support of this critical work.

This important initiative began with the Hemlock Friends, whose foresight and dedication is very much appreciated, as thousands of Hemlocks have been successfully treated in Conneestee.

While we encourage all to take advantage of this program to broaden our community protection, ***we ask that you please be patient.*** Since we began this initiative, over 500 hemlocks on private property have either been treated or identified for treatment.

If you are not sure you have Hemlocks on your property, use the iNaturalist Classic app to help identify them. If you have Hemlocks that need treatment, please visit our website <https://www.conneesteefallsnrs.com/> and click the 'Contact Us' button at the bottom of the page. (See the below picture of a Woolly Adelgid infested Hemlock branch)

Thank you for doing your part to protect our natural environment.

