

Delaware Native Species Commission

Goals for 2020

1. Encourage government to lead by example

- Encourage state, county and local governments to use native plants in landscaping of all new facilities, including parks and open spaces. Meet with city, county and state government leader to discuss the issue.

2. Create educational opportunities that support Delaware's native biodiversity

- Schedule and facilitate a Native Species Conservation "Summit" to kick off the *Delaware, Naturally!* public education campaign and align efforts of Delaware conservation organizations, practitioners, and interested citizens to conserve native species.
- Flesh-out and pilot *Delaware, Naturally!* outreach programs, to promote and explain the benefits of native species and associated conservation-minded practices, as well as the negative effects of invasive species proliferation on native species. (Develop a branded public relations educational/awareness campaign to promote native species and practices.)
- Develop and launch the *Delaware, Naturally!* website.
- Explore opportunities to enhance environmental literacy in Delaware K-12 education
- Develop a "Certified Native Plant Garden Center" program for nurseries and garden centers that are trained and in the business of promoting native plant selections, along with qualifying criteria for attaining certification.

3. Support existing programs that assist the Commission in reaching its overall goals

- Advocate for adequate funding of State agencies and programs that work to conserve native species biodiversity in Delaware.
- Encourage the use of Open Space Program funds for purchasing high-quality native species habitats, especially those habitats required for species of special concern, Work to get Delaware Native Species Commission representation at the Open Space Program "table".
- Support the Master Naturalist (MN) Program through publicity and providing instructors (council members) to help with invasive plant removal in Delaware's parks and natural areas as well as other MN projects.
- Actively work with state agencies, NGOs, and other conservation partners to promote the use of the Delaware Wildlife Action Plan which provides a template for the conservation of native animal species in the state.

4. Create and implement a three-year strategic plan for the Commission.

5. Promote the development and enactment of legislation, policy or regulatory changes affecting biodiversity conservation.

- Make the sale of selected invasive plants illegal in Delaware, allowing an appropriate phase-out period after legislation passes.
- Address weaknesses in our current state endangered species law; strengthen protection and/or conservation of the species on the list including addressing the possibility of adding plant species.
- Identify ways that the Delaware Native Species Commission can encourage protection of Delaware's rarest plant communities such as Atlantic White Cedar Swamps, Bald Cypress Swamps, Coastal Plain Ponds, Interdunal Swales, Sea-level Fens, Piedmont Streamside Seepage Wetlands, and Piedmont Tuliptree Rich Woods.
- Develop a "Model Ordinance" for consideration of adoption by the Native Species Commission that would serve as a guide for local governments that would establish regulatory supports for promoting and protecting native plant species and their habitats and establishing criteria for eradication of invasive species as part of the Development Plan Review and Approval Process.
- Research native and invasive species Best Management Practices (BMPs) and develop or identify a topical BMP Guide Documents for consideration of adoption by the Commission that would provide quick reference technical assistance for permitting agencies, the development community, and the general public.

Delaware, Naturally!