

## BEAVERKILL BRIDGE AND CAMPSITE. AUGUST, 2016.

Patricia Adams

The Campsite has been very busy this summer with hundreds of day use people as well as all 52 campsites filled every weekend, even though the bridge continues to be under construction. John Roucek and Darlene Rodrequez, with their staff, Alex Serdiouk and Derek Shultis, have done a remarkable job of keeping the area safe, clean and welcome to all.

The campsite and bridge are undergoing a major renovation. With the help of individual donors working with John Adams and Erik Kulleseid from The Open Space Institute and the Alliance for New York State Parks, a Beaverkill Master Plan is being developed. This plan includes a history of the Tannery built in 1832, the bridge construction supervised by John Davidson in 1865, the establishment of the public campground in the 1920s and work by the CCC in the 1930s.

The plan highlights opportunities for restoring historic features on the site (bridge approaches and abutments, CCC and other DEC structures); interpreting four major historical themes (early industrial development; fly fishing in the Beaverkill valley; CCC campground development; and land conservation in the valley); and assessing and restoring the compromised ecology of the site.

An effort to “restore the compromised ecology” started this June. A group of young people, 10 men and one woman, with Excelsior Conservation Corp (ECC) summer program worked in the campsite. These interns are with AmeriCorps and come from as far south as New York City and as far west as Buffalo. They basically work for food and place to sleep (in a tent) and a few dollars a week.

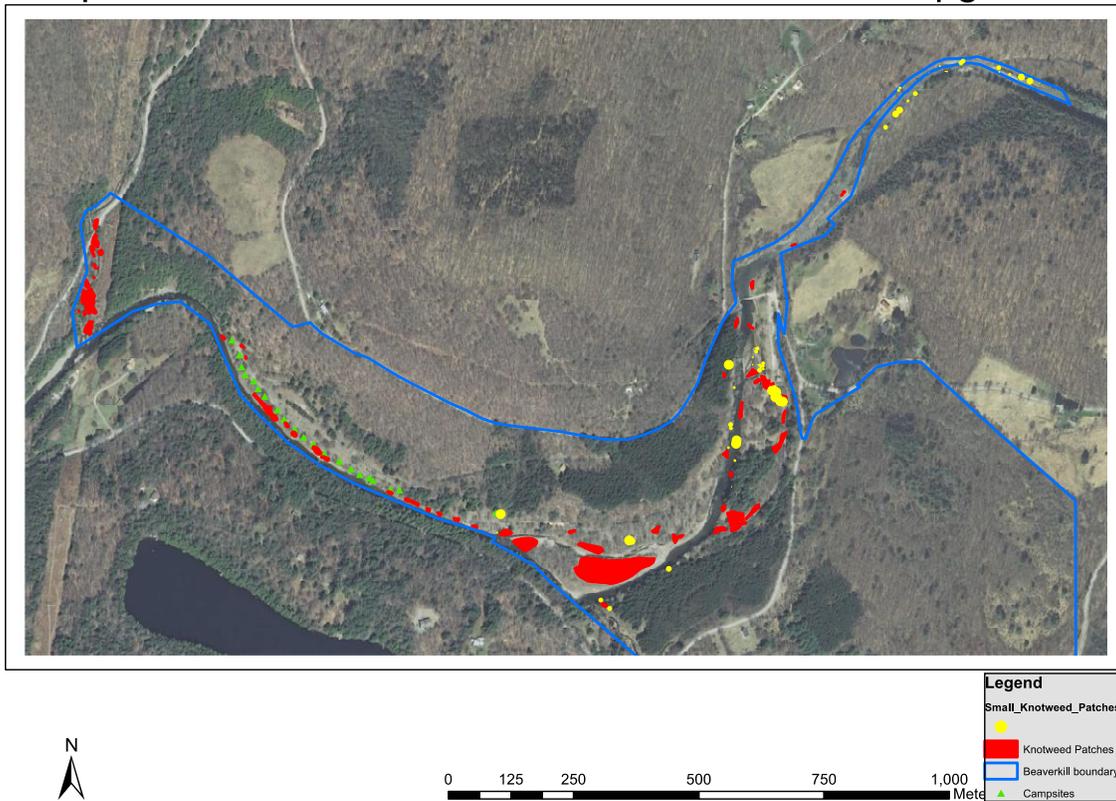
Seeing them in the campsite reminds us of the fact that in the 1930’s a very similar group of young people worked to build the campsite with the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC). Over 300 young men came to Beaverkill to work on building cabins, tent sites, laying pipes for water throughout the campground and building fireplaces.

Today the primary goal of these workers is to get rid of Japanese Knotweed, Multiflora Rose and Barberry, invasive species that have become rampant in the campsite. Under the

supervision of John Thompson, the CRISP (Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership) coordinator and Evan Sweeny, both from the Catskill Center, they dug up Barberry and Multiflora Rose. The knotweed is more challenging. They have bent the plants over all through the campsite and in September, they will spray a mild herbicide over them. This is less labor intensive than putting herbicide down each plant root and also uses less herbicide. It is an experiment; no one has found a sure fire way to rid the riverbanks from this plague.

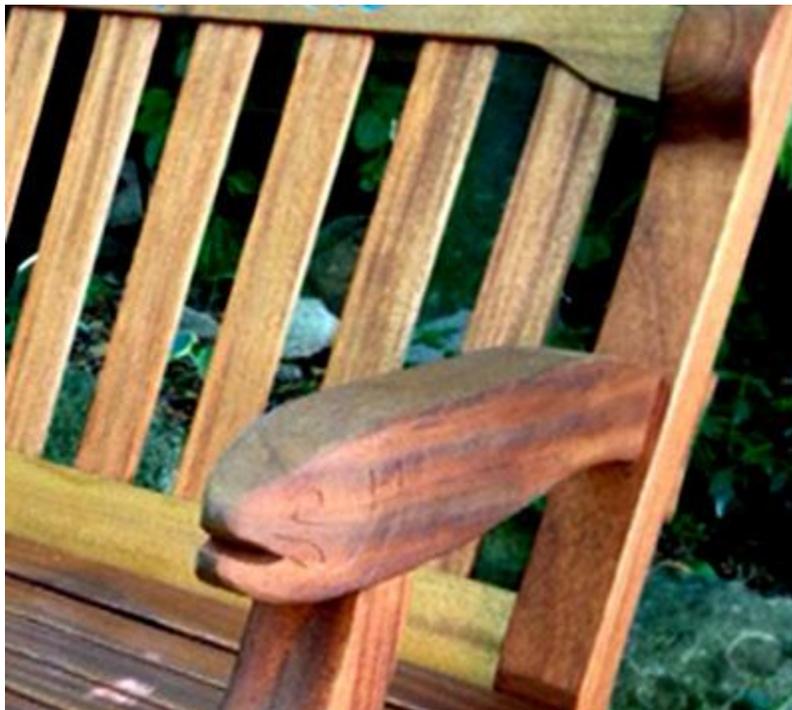
Below is a map of the knotweed infestation in the campsite. Bill Rudge, Natural Resources Supervisor for Region 3, reported that the Excelsior Conservation Corps is returning to level more knotweed from August 15- August 24. Any homeowners who have knotweed and would like to participate in this experiment, can contact John Thompson at [jthompson@catskillcenter.org](mailto:jthompson@catskillcenter.org). He may help you draw up a plan.

### Japanese Knotweed Infestation of Beaverkill Campground



The architectural firm, W Architecture and Landscape Architecture has come up with a vision document that will help guide our work to protect and enhance the site and its special resources.

As a part of enhancing the campsite, the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers, Inc. has commissioned two benches that were designed and made by Bob Batchik. His carpentry company, Sunfish Wood Works, is in Michigan. The benches will most likely be placed on the island near good fishing spots. Bob brought his daughter with him when he delivered the benches and was lucky enough to spend a day or two with Bert Darrow, President of Theodore Gordon Flyfishers, Inc. He and his daughter caught some impressive fish.



With support from the Friends of Beaverkill Community, the Beaverkill Covered Bridge was put on the Historic Register when George Pataki was Governor. Now, under Governor

Cuomo, and the support of both the DOT and the DEC, two million dollars have been allocated for renovation of the bridge. DEC has set aside an additional \$250,000 for the restoration of the old stonewalls which form the abutments on the east side of the bridge.

Joseph Boris has been contracted by the DOT to supervise the renovation of the bridge and he has consistently talked with interested residents about the progress. He also gave John Adams over 100 wooden 'pins' that were taken out of the bridge. John plans to give these historic objects to donors to the project.

This reconstruction of the bridge and campsite has been a true team effort. Bill Rudge, from DEC has been incredibly supportive from the beginning. Both state agencies the DEC and DOT have worked to maintain the integrity of the bridge and a great deal of progress has been made so far. Donors contributing to this effort to ensure that the campsite will be greatly improved and we will all be able to enjoy a living history of our section of the Beaverkill River.