

Highstead

To inspire curiosity and build knowledge
about plants and wooded landscapes
in order to enhance life, preserve nature
and advance sound stewardship practices

Highstead's land management approach reflects a balance of the multiple priorities of the organization: research forest, nature preserve, arboretum, and a place of quiet reflection.

Land Stewardship

Protected from Development



Highstead manages its property as a microcosm of the regional Wildlands & Woodlands (W&W) conservation vision. Ninety percent of the property is managed woodland, wetland, meadow, and pond, and ten percent of the property is maintained as wildland reserve – a secluded oak forest left alone and shaped only by natural processes.



In accordance with W&W and the ecological need for large conserved areas and habitat corridors for wildlife and people, Highstead also works locally and within the Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership to ensure that our land management efforts are part of a larger collaborative conservation vision.

Habitat Conservation and Enhancement



Mowed once annually in late summer, forty acres of open field are maintained as habitat for declining grassland birds such as the bobolink, a species of special concern in Connecticut.



Removing and preventing reinvasion of the non-native grass, *Phragmites*, enhances the aesthetics of the pond and promotes native wetland plants and wildlife.



Landscapes and Collections



Highstead's native plant collections provide conservation and educational value. In addition, the natural landscapes in which they are displayed provide important visual context to help visitors understand and interpret the geological setting, environment, and land-use history of southern New England. Highstead has one of the most extensive *Kalmia* (laurel) collections in the region.



Designed and managed naturalistically, native plantings blend the Highstead Barn aesthetically into its surroundings, create habitat for wildlife, reduce maintenance and pollution, and help maintain a sense of place.

Study and Appreciation



Highstead collaborates with researchers and local, regional, and national conservation groups to monitor plants, animals, insects, and other organisms on its approximately 150 acres of diverse habitats. The gathered data provide invaluable information on species population trends at both Highstead and in the broader landscape.



Guided tours are one of many educational opportunities at Highstead through which visitors and staff explore, learn, and share discoveries that enable us to appreciate the benefits of protected landscapes.