

WANTED:

INVASIVE SPECIES

Individuals were last seen on Bluffside Farm, slowly entering the natural ecosystem and causing disruption!

We have held public trainings to practice the skills to identify and remove these culprits. In addition, VLT has created a management plan for treating these threats. However, it is important that our visitors stay vigilant!

The known suspects are as follows:

SHRUB HONEYSUCKLE



There are four invasive species of bush honeysuckle that invade Vermont forests. These include Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*), Morrow's honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii*), Tartarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), and Bell's honeysuckle (*Lonicera bella*). All of them are woody shrubs with opposite, egg-shaped leaves, fragrant flowers, and red or red-orange berries, and a hollow pith (stem). They can grow to be 15 feet high.

Honeysuckle has negative impacts on both wildlife and plants. Because honeysuckle stems are sturdier and closer to the ground than some native species, songbirds build their nests in the bush. However, raccoons, skunks, and other predators can easily scramble up and access the nests, stealing the eggs and decreasing songbird population growth. The shrubs tend to form dense populations in forest understory, and outcompete native shrubs and trees. In turn, sunlight can no longer reach the forest floor in areas with dense honeysuckle, reducing the diversity and abundance of native wildflower and fern populations.

JAPANESE BARBERRY



Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) is a shrub that can be identified by its spatula-shaped leaves, red fruit, yellow flowers, and a single spine at the end of each leaf base. The plant can quickly colonize forests. Birds and mammals transport the seeds and fruit; the plant also spread its roots and create new sprouts. Like other invasive plants, it outcompetes native shrubs and tree seedlings, negatively impacting plant biodiversity. Infestations can also lead to an increased incidence of Lyme disease because mice thrive in thorny barberry stands, thus supporting higher populations of ticks, leading to higher disease rates.

COMMON BUCKTHORN



Common buckthorn is a deciduous shrub or small tree that can grow to be about 25 feet tall. The bark is dark gray and the inner bark is orange. The dark green leaves are usually sub-opposite, oval, slightly serrate with three to four pairs of curving veins and a somewhat folded tip. Buckthorn can impact both native plants and animals. The berries contain emodin, a natural laxative that prevents mammals and birds from digesting the sugars in the berries. Plants also increase the amount of nitrogen in the soil, impacting native plant growth and habitat composition.

COMMON REED



Common reed is a tall, perennial grass that can grow to be 15 feet tall in riparian habitats. The flower heads are dense, fluffy, and gray or purple in color. The species is usually found in dense thickets growing in shallow water, particularly wetlands. Common reed outcompetes native grasses, sedges, and herbaceous plants, particularly in wetlands and shallow waters. The plant provides poor quality habitat for insects, birds and amphibians. Its roots release allelopathic that cause root death in nearby native plants.

STARRY STONEWORT



This species is a grass-like algae that grows in bodies of water. They can develop large, dense stands, crowd out other aquatic plants, and can tolerate low or high nutrient conditions. Although it resembles a plant, it is technically a macroalgae. This population is the first confirmed population in a Vermont waterbody. It will be monitored and managed by the State Department of Environmental Conservation