



Woodlands Committee “Branching Out” Q&A

Why are we doing this?

Craneridge is a one-of-a-kind community where the woods, habitat, and wildlife are one of our biggest assets. Many families move to Craneridge because of its unique character. We know that our woodlands are a high priority for many of you, and it makes sense to protect and improve the value of our neighborhood... for our human and wild residents.

Why now?

The risk of damage to our trees from invasive species is ever-increasing while the diversity of our woodlands is limited. To care for our neighborhood, we need to work together as a community to regenerate and improve the health of our woods and surrounding habitat to ensure Craneridge remains a unique and beautiful place to live for generations to come.

What are we doing?

We are partnering with external experts such as the DEC and Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper to:

1. **Offer resident educational programs.** Topics may include how to plant and care for trees and shrubs, tree and plant ID, benefits of native plants, neighborhood ecology, and more.
2. **Build a woodlands steward/volunteer corps.** Train and support a team of residents who plant and care for trees and plants in Craneridge.
3. **Work with DEC or local forester to plan for our trees.** Develop a multi-year management plan.
4. **Address Crump Creek streambed health.** Build or improve our shoreline. Use native plantings to strengthen our creek bed.
5. **Enhance our wildlife habitat.** Focus on native plants while identifying invasive species.
6. **Explore building nature trails.** With collaboration and support from our neighbors, plan for nature trails on community property.

Who are the DEC, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, and PRISM? What help can they offer?

- *Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)* is a New York State agency with a mission to protect and enhance the environment. Our local region’s forester can help us with woodlands stewardship planning and education.
- *Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper* protects clean water and restores the health of surrounding ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. Craneridge lies in important Niagara/Buffalo River headwaters. Waterkeeper can help with ecosystem education, tree planting, and guidance on native plants.
- *WNY PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management)* helps to prevent or minimize the harm caused by invasive species.

When will it happen?

What we envision is a multi-year endeavor. We'll start with small efforts and go from there. We plan to offer resident educational programs and do some community plantings starting in late spring 2021.

What is a native plant? Why are they important?

A “native” plant refers to plants indigenous to our region. They play an important role in our ecosystem. Native plants provide food for many different species, including pollinators. Because they are adapted to our local climate, they often require less water and care to keep them alive and well. Unfortunately, many plants available in nurseries today are non-native and have little-to-no-benefit to local wildlife.

Will I be forced to plant only native plants on my property?

You can continue to plant whatever you choose. Native plants are a choice for each homeowner, not a requirement. We do strongly encourage you to plant native species because of the long-term benefits they provide to wildlife. We'll provide resources for you to learn more.

What are you doing with all the dead trees on common property?

We are looking at cost-effective ways to clean-up many fallen dead trees currently on common land and residential properties while keeping some dead trees (snags) that benefit wildlife by providing a source of food and safety. We'll also continue the current process for requesting removing dead trees that are a risk to homes and property.

What about the deer who damage plants and trees?

We must continue to live with the deer. However, due to their abundance and the browsing pressure they place on many plants, we suggest “deer resistant” trees, shrubs, and perennials. Experts also recommend protective tree tubes for deciduous tree seedlings. There are also deer treatments that have been verified by horticulturists as being effective. Specifically, “Deer Scram” and “Deer Stopper II.”

Can we put up garden barriers to protect our plants from deer?

Temporary garden perimeter barriers are acceptable and are proven to protect against deer impacts. Consider products like Tenax mesh, which is visually unobtrusive. Barrier height should be at least 5'.

What will this cost us? Will it impact my assessment?

The Woodlands Committee is making every effort to maintain current expense levels—especially for the first year or two. We are actively researching various funding from outside sources. A surprising number of services and resources are currently available to us at no or low cost.

