

ANJEC 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Weevils vs. Mile-a-Minute Vine

A biocontrol case study from the Frenchtown Environmental Commission

 **Frenchtown, NJ**

Hunterdon County · along the Delaware River

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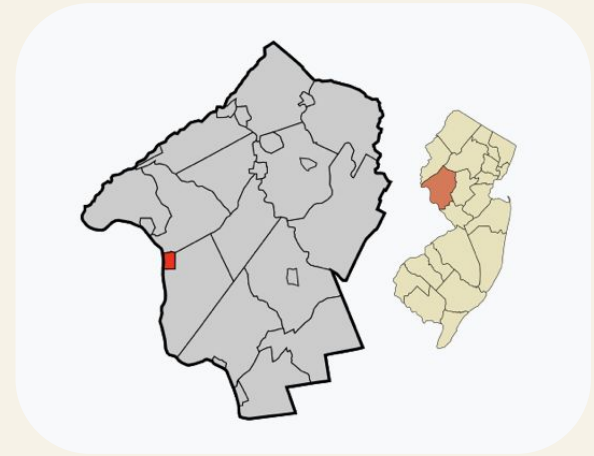
Context

The Town: Frenchtown

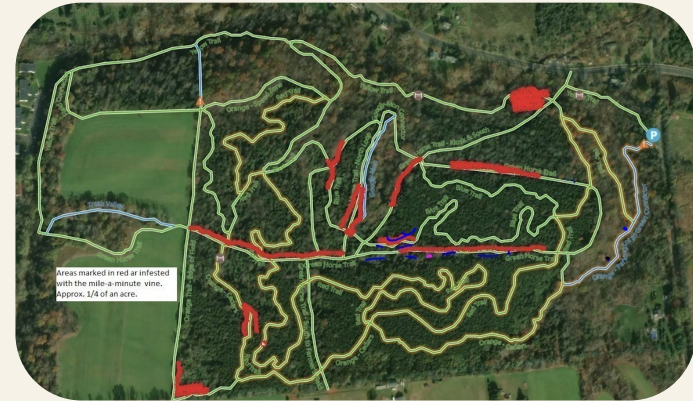
Town of approximately 1500 residents with small municipal government. Most parks and conservation projects funded by state, county and federal grants.

The Park: Frenchtown Preserve

150 acres of woods, trails and fields. Created by the Hunterdon Land Trust in 2006, it is part of D&R Canal State Park, managed by the NJ Division of Parks and Forestry and the Frenchtown Environmental Commission. Over 8 miles of hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails are available.



Little ol' frenchtown



Infested areas marked in red

The vine

The problem: mile-a-minute vine

An invasive annual from Asia with barbed, sprawling stems. It grows up to 6 inches a day, climbing over shrubs and tree seedlings until it blocks their light. Mile-a-minute greatly reduces plant diversity, out-competing native species by reducing available sunlight.



Mile-minute vine (*Persicaria perfoliata*)

The PREDATOR

The predator: *Rhinoncomimus latipes*

A small, black weevil that is host specific to Mile-a-minute weed. Weevil feeds on the weed as both juvenile and adult, causing substantial damage to the plant, lays its eggs on the leaves and stems of the weed. When the eggs hatch, the larvae burrow into the stem at the leaf nodes where they remain until fully grown. The larvae then exit the plant and drop to the soil to pupate. When the adults emerge from the soil, they begin to feed on the leaves, mate and lay eggs. As the larvae feed inside the Mile-a-minute stems, they disrupt transport of water and nutrients through the plant. Adult feeding on the leaves reduces surface area for photosynthesis. This leads to dieback of the vine and reduced seed production.



Rhinoncomimus latipes — actual size

New Jersey rears and distributes the weevil

2004

the rearing program
began

146,000

+

weevils released statewide
since 2004-2010

100%

establishment rate at NJ
release sites

\$500

per 500 weevils from the
state lab

New Jersey's Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Rearing Laboratory (NJ Dept. of Agriculture) has reared and shipped the weevil statewide since the program began — the same source Frenchtown's colony came from.

☑ Funded by ANJEC's Open Space Stewardship Grant

AWARDED TO FRENCHTOWN EC

[\$1,385]

What the grant funds

- The July 3 public weevil release at Frenchtown Preserve ("Weevilpalooza")
- Outreach materials and volunteer coordination
- Monthly post-release monitoring by FEC volunteers



Neighbors turned out for the release



A trailside crowd at Frenchtown Preserve, July 3



The cooler of weevils, shipped from the state lab

Neighbors turned out for the release



A roadside attraction



Cup of weevil



Enjoying weevils and watermelon on one of the hottest days of the year

🕒 Monthly monitoring through grant completion

01

Monthly site visits

FEC volunteers return to Frenchtown Preserve each month to check on the release site.

02

Track establishment

Each visit records weevil presence, feeding damage, and vine dieback at the site.

03

Report to ANJEC

Findings feed Frenchtown's final grant report, due June 2027.

The goal: a community science and stewardship outreach project and a documented record of the weevil's effect on the vine and help in suppressing the spread within the Preserve.