



Reforestation of Assawoman Wildlife Area, Muddy Neck Tract

Project Status:
Completed in April 2019

Twenty-seven acres of tree seedlings and pollinator meadow were planted at the Assawoman Wildlife Area, Muddy Neck Tract, to improve water quality and create a wildlife habitat.

Project Summary

Background

This project is part of the Watershed Reforestation Plan developed by the Center and the Sussex Conservation District in 2018. The plan ranked agricultural parcels in the Inland Bays watershed according to the ecological and water quality benefits that would be gained by removing the land from crop production and restoring it to native forest habitat. The Muddy Neck Tract parcel received a high ranking, and Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) Division of Fish and Wildlife was a willing partner.

Project Description

Twenty-seven acres were restored to natural habitats that benefit wildlife and water quality. A diversity of hardwood tree seedlings and a pollinator meadow seed mix were planted. Volunteers from nearby homeowner associations planted a portion of the trees, and the rest of the plantings were installed by a contractor.

Objective

This project will improve water quality in Little Assawoman Bay by reducing nutrient pollution entering nearby Branch Cut Cove. The parcel will no longer be fertilized, and the trees will capture and store nutrients as they grow. The restoration with native tree and meadow species will also provide wildlife with additional access to nesting habitat, food, and shelter.

Project Timeline

Volunteers and contractors completed the plantings in March and April 2019.

Project Contact:

Dr. Marianne Walch
Science & Restoration
Coordinator
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Project Partner:

DNREC Division of Fish and
Wildlife

Funding & Partners:

Total Project cost: \$18,347

Funding Partners:

- DNREC Nonpoint Source Program
- Arbor Day Foundation
- DNREC Community Environmental Project Fund
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Contractor:

- Tributaries, LLC





Bare root tree seedlings ready for planting.

Outcomes/Conclusions

- 322.2 pounds of total nitrogen reduction per year
- 7.6 pounds of total phosphorus reduction per year
- Over 9 million pounds of carbon sequestered over 20 years
- 13 acres reforested
- 14 acres seeded for pollinator habitat

“Volunteers from nearby HOAs planted over six acres of trees. They learned about the benefits of native plants and engaged in planting a forest that they get to see grow up!”

– Victoria Spice, Former Project Manager

CCMP Focus Area

This project fulfills objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) for the Delaware Inland Bays.

- Focus Area: Coordinating Land and Water Use Decisions
- Objective: Provide maximum protection of waterways, forested stream corridors, groundwater, natural areas, open space, tidal and non-tidal wetlands, and encourage additional acquisitions or conservation set-asides and protection
- Action: Update and implement the Inland Bays Habitat Protection Plan

Project Highlights

Over 100 volunteers assisted with the planting, donating over 210 hours of labor to the project.



Fun for all ages. Children help plant tree seedlings.



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The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a nonprofit organization established in 1994 to promote the wise use and enhancement of the Inland Bays and its watershed. With its many partners, the Center conducts public outreach and education, develops and implements restoration projects, encourages scientific inquiry and sponsors research. To learn how you can get on board with the bays, please visit www.inlandbays.org and follow us on Facebook @deinlandbays!