

# Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape **SUCCESS STORY**

By: The Watershed Coalition  
of the Lehigh Valley

## 2015 Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference

### **SUMMARY**

Over 250 watershed stakeholders came together on October 13, 2015 at Lehigh University's STEPs building to engage with speakers in nineteen different sessions exploring water resource topics from green infrastructure to amphibian ecology to riparian buffers and drinking water. A landscape track provided continuing education for landscape professionals, and a student networking session ended the day, connecting current college students with area environmental firms.



### **CHALLENGE**

The Lehigh Valley is a leader in Pennsylvania in the conservation, protection, and restoration of water and environmental resources. Although the conservation community in the Valley is busy, and full of talented environmental professionals, seasoned volunteers, and engaged elected officials, there are few opportunities for everyone to come together and learn, network, and brainstorm in one place. For the past ten years, the Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference has provided that chance, and the Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley was fortunate enough to be able to coordinate the event once again in the fall of 2015.

### **FUNDING**

**Grant Award:**  
**\$5000.00**

**Match:**  
**\$19507.96**

**Total Project Cost:**  
**\$24507.96**

### **PARTNERSHIP IS KEY**

The Watershed Conference was the collaborative effort of conservation partners: Lehigh University's Earth and Environmental Sciences Department; the Lehigh Environmental Initiative; the Wildlands Conservancy; Nurture Nature Center; Lehigh Gap Nature Center; Penn State Cooperative Extension; and the Northampton County Conservation District.



## SOLUTION

The Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference provides a forum for water resource and environmental professionals and interested citizens to come together to network and learn about pressing issues facing the resource. The day is an opportunity for people to connect with the latest information, and with each other, fostering a greater sense of “watershed community” and providing everyone, from students, to volunteers, to professionals, with timely knowledge that is relevant to them. The steering committee begins planning nearly a year ahead of time, and, working as group focuses in on the topics and presenters that will be the most timely to the attendees. This year, Dorothy Merritts of Franklin and Marshall College provided a great kick-off to the conference discussing what the scientific community thinks about the evolution of streams in Pennsylvania over the past 400+ years.

## RESULTS

The conference provided attendees with training on a wide variety of natural resource topics chosen to address identified education needs by the conference steering committee. This year, 19 college students from a variety of colleges attended the conference, and also were the key participants in a networking reception set up to connect students with future employers. Colleges represented were West Chester University, Lehigh University, Drexel University, Moravian College, and Delaware Valley College. One of the most important, and most difficult to quantify results of the Watershed Conference is the opportunity for Lehigh Valley natural resource stakeholders and partners to meet and network, sharing information on current and potential future projects.

### Contact

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