

# Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: Watershed Coalition of the  
Lehigh Valley  
[www.watershedcoalitionlv.org](http://www.watershedcoalitionlv.org)

## Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Steward Implementation Projects (2013)

### SUMMARY

As part of their volunteer training, Master Watershed Stewards carry out group projects aimed at on-the-ground impact and public outreach and education. The 2014 group projects were: 5 educational signs in Lower Macungie Township parks on Best Management Practices; a demonstration rain garden, rain barrel and educational signage at Upper Saucon Township Water Authority; educational displays on groundwater and aquaponics available for use at public events and in schools; a demonstration rain garden and signage at the Bushkill Township Building; Fry's Run stream restoration; and riparian planting at the ATLAS dam removal site.



### CHALLENGE

To meet the increasing need for trained volunteers to carry out on-the-ground and educational natural resource projects, the Master Watershed Steward program was created by Lehigh Valley project partners in 2013. With an educated volunteer workforce, conservation projects in the region can be completed much more efficiently and more work can be accomplished. The group projects detailed here helped jump start our Stewards' volunteer work with local project partners in addition to helping educate the public. The program's group projects focus on visible demonstration projects at facilities like public parks and municipal buildings, to maximize the audience for conservation projects, under the belief that the more people encounter conservation work in public places, the more likely they are to replicate such practices on their own property, and become involved in such work themselves. The challenge is two-fold: first are the environmental problems themselves - stormwater runoff, dams impacting stream health, invasive species reducing biodiversity in our forests and meadows, streams and rivers polluted by fertilizers and pesticides. But the secondary problem is a lack of public knowledge about the problems, and uncertainty about the correct things to do in response. The group projects carried out under this grant addressed both issues: in creating on-the-ground demonstration projects with signs, problems are improved while the public is informed. And, by creating educational displays and curriculums to use them, tools are available for education and outreach at fairs, schools, and workshops.

### FUNDING

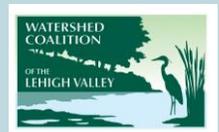
**Grant Award:**  
**\$10,000.00**

**Match:**  
**\$ 19,712.73**

**Total Project Cost:**  
**\$ 29,712.73**

### PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

**Group projects were completed in cooperation with Penn State Extension, Northampton County Conservation District, Upper Saucon Water Authority, Bushkill Township, the Martins-Jacoby Watershed Association, and Lower Macungie Township.**



PENNSTATE



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## SOLUTION

Long-term, environmental challenges can only be effectively addressed by a knowledgeable, engaged public and by educated community leaders. The Master Watershed Steward program was created to meet both aims. The group projects provide new trainees with the opportunity to engage in real-world projects in a structured setting, allowing them to encounter, first-hand, the complexities of conservation work. Volunteers on the 2014 projects dealt with common problems such as the difficulties of getting new plants established, the frustration of invasive plant removal from rain gardens, and the different viewpoints required to work with community groups, municipal staff, and the public. They were able to learn from experienced professionals and see, first hand, how projects move from concept to implementation and through maintenance. Our class members have gone on to take on leadership roles in watershed associations, in their own municipalities, and the natural resource community in the Lehigh Valley.

## RESULTS

Apart from the completed rain gardens (3) the signs put in place (8) and the lengths of riparian buffer installed (150 feet), our volunteers contributed 1,122 hours to the community during the grant period.

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