

Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape **SUCCESS STORY**

By: Northern Lehigh
Recreation Authority:
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Outdoor Recreation Food Truck Festival (Awarded 2018)

SUMMARY

Our food truck festival celebrated the beauty of the great outdoors across the Lehigh Valley. This inaugural event took place on Saturday, July 28, 2018 with the theme of "Everything Outdoors." The free festival featured over 20 vendors, 5 food trucks and had a steady flow of participants all day! The event was a true success and furthered our goal of encouraging the community to celebrate the outdoors. Northern Lehigh is the perfect spot for outdoor enthusiasts as it contains the D&L Trail, the Appalachian Trail, the Lehigh River trail, the Slate Heritage Trail, and has an array of parks and open space. It was great having a variety of vendors such as the local Lehigh Gap Nature Center to nationally known LL Bean.

FUNDING

Grant Award:
\$1,500.00

Match:
\$3,317.01

Total Project Cost:
\$4,817.01

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

The Northern Lehigh Recreation Planning Committee met monthly and started to plan this event 8 months prior to the actual event. All vendors who partnered to share their 'outdoor' information made it a true success including: Lehigh Gap Nature Center, Northampton County Open Space, Blue Mountain Fish & Game, Girl Scouts of Eastern Pa, and many more!



CHALLENGE

Throughout the past 2 years the Northern Lehigh Recreation Authority (NLRA) has made an enormous impact on the community by creating new wellness opportunities, programs, special events and employment opportunities. The programs offered are constantly changing and growing to fill programming gaps and to allow residents in this economically challenged area to explore new experiences and develop new interests. This event filled yet another program gap by offering a family friendly event full of educational opportunities for residents to learn about all of the great outdoor wellness opportunities available across the Lehigh Valley. Northern Lehigh also faces many economic challenges wherein operating a festival such as our food truck event aims to counteract. While extremely difficult to monitor, our inaugural Everything Outdoors Food Truck Festival stimulated growth, promoted tourism and brought new customers to local businesses in our region. Simply having families fill up with gas, stop at the local diner or visit one of our local shops on their way in or out of town can provide a big boost to an area such as Northern Lehigh.



SOLUTION

The solution for these challenges is simply having the financial resources, time and effort required with coordinating this large scale family-friendly, educational event. The event provided an opportunity to help foster a sense of pride within the community, helped the local economy and engaged residents and tourists alike. Many of the large events that have traditionally taken place throughout the Northern Lehigh area have not been focused on family-friendly and/or healthy educational opportunities. This event provided instructional opportunities in which visitors were bound to learn. Of course, education (including greater awareness of opportunities and new knowledge of outdoor vendors) is yet just another social benefit which took place during the event...hands-on, face-to-face learning offered in the fun context!

RESULTS

Every vendor and food truck at the event has stated that they would like to come back next year. One vendor, the Backwoods Outdoor Center, stated "this was the best event and most foot traffic we've ever seen at an event like this. We'll be back next year!" They are a small local business in Walnutport and their testimonial speaks volumes to the success that our first year event was. While many of the event benefits such as the social benefits, educational benefits and boost to the local economy are unmeasurable, there is no doubt that they all played a major role in making this first year event a true success.

Contact



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