

Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: Nurture Nature Center
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Nurturing Nature Journaling: Creating Outdoor Immersive, Educational Experiences (Awarded 2018) SUMMARY

To expand the reach of Nurture Nature Center's nature journal program and engage visitors outside in the local environment, 4 journaling benches were created at riverside locations for anyone to sit, reflect, journal, and positively experience the outdoors, including along the Lehigh River at Hugh Moore Park; the Delaware River at Scott Park, and the Bushkill Creek along the KSAT trail. Journaling benches were designed, built, painted, and installed at each site and include journaling instructions and supplies. 3 journaling workshops were held to introduce the benches and one workshop held in the fall introduced journaling to teachers.



CHALLENGE

NNC has regularly conducted nature journaling workshops in the past where participants are provided with materials to construct a journal and guided through a series of exploration and thought exercises, including observing differences in leaves and guessing what plant is in a brown paper bag by feel alone. The program is popular with kids and adults and used as an educational exercise that builds observation skills, sustained long after the participant has left NNC. The program was contained to an indoor environment and limited by time constraints on both staff and participants. Furthermore, visitors to the local parks don't often stop and reflect on the local environment, missing out on a key opportunity to learn about, understand, and feel a part of their surroundings. NNC identified a need to expand the opportunity to learn about and participate in nature journaling and engage visitors outside in their local environment by providing accessible spaces to reflect and observe.

FUNDING

Grant Award:
\$4,800.00

Match:
\$5,515.88

Total Project Cost:
\$10,315.88

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

City of Easton (installation of journal benches and advised on site locations)

Evan Yannuzzi (built and painted benches as Eagle Scout project)

KSAT (Jim Toia spoke at workshop and supported site location/installation)

Bushkill Stream Conservancy (help promote project/events)

Jim Wilson, Natural Resource and Conservation Specialist, Northampton County Parks (presented at workshops)



SOLUTION

"Nurturing Nature Journaling," seeks to create immersive outdoor educational experiences through the design, development, creation and installation of journaling benches at riverside locations throughout Easton. The journaling benches consist of a bench and library box with extended roof made of a durable instructional sign about how to do nature journaling. Journaling supplies (notebooks/pencils) are included in the library box. Visitors learn about nature journaling and participate in journaling exercises on their own at any time they are at the park sites, which include Hugh Moore Park, the KSAT, and Scott Park. The project extends the reach of the nature journaling program and provides greater accessibility to diverse audiences.

RESULTS

The project was a resounding success in concept, design and implementation. Through collaboration with a local boy scout needing to complete an Eagle Scout project the benches were built in the fall of 2018. Design of instructional signage and painting were finalized in early spring 2019 and the City of Easton advised on site location and installed the benches. 3 workshops were held at the bench sites in April. Attendance at the spring journaling workshops was as follows: Apr 6th - KSAT (11); Hugh Moore Park (10); Apr 13th - Scott Park (4 kids, 6 adults, 1 opossum). Jim Wilson and Keri Maxfield (NNC Art Director) presented on the local environment and how to participate in nature journaling. All participants were enthusiastic about the project and intended to utilize the materials and benches in the future. Northampton County Parks expressed interest in boy scouts building more of the journaling stations for their parks and requested materials lists and blueprints for the design. Further, on Sept 20 2018, a 2-hour nature journaling workshop was held at NNC for formal and informal educators (8 attended) which was very well received, and we have received requests to hold more such workshops. With summer ahead we anticipate the positive impact will only grow.

Contact



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Painted journaling benches ready for installation



Flyer promoting workshops



Instructional signage on benches



Visitors being introduced to new bench during workshop at Hugh Moore Park