

# Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: The Watershed Coalition  
of the Lehigh Valley  
[www.watershedcoalitionlv.org](http://www.watershedcoalitionlv.org)  
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## Gracedale Livestake Nursery & Buffer (Awarded 2020)

### SUMMARY

The Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley (WCLV) worked with project partners to plant a demonstration multifunctional riparian buffer that also serves as a nursery for harvesting live-stakes. Live-stakes are a low-cost option for planting appropriate species in riparian buffer and wetland areas. In addition, the WCLV worked with local partners to host live-stake training workshops and planting events along the Monacocy Creek.



### CHALLENGE

Planting traditional riparian buffers, with seedling stock often has challenges, both with funding and maintenance concerns. Even using bare-root seedlings, the cost of planting tree or shrub species with a shelter (tree-tube, etc.) adds up. Additionally, ongoing maintenance of these plantings takes time and often funds. These costs, both in time and materials, can be a barrier for some riparian buffer projects.

Riparian buffer projects are often, unfortunately seen by some as “wasted space”. Especially when dealing with property owners who are farming or otherwise using streamside property for income, putting that land into forested riparian buffer can be seen as taking away from their business. The challenge with these landowners is to offer the possibility of retaining some income or material-producing functions of a riparian buffer.

### FUNDING

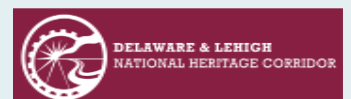
**Grant Award:**  
**\$3500**

**Match:**  
**\$3702.14**

**Total Project Cost:**  
**\$7202.14**

### PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

The WCLV partnered with the Northampton County Conservation District, Northampton County Parks, The Penn State Master Watershed Steward Program, The Monacocy Farm Project, and the Monacocy Creek Watershed Association. These organizations provided volunteer time, equipment and materials, and the site itself.



## SOLUTION

Live-stakes are a great and low cost way to establish basic riparian buffers and offer basic streambank protection. Although per-stem success rates for live-stakes plantings may seem low, this is offset by their very low cost, often less than \$1/stem. The multifunctional buffer planted at Gracedale can bring this cost down even lower for local volunteers. Since live-stakes are harvested as cuttings from shrubs, providing a ready source of plants to harvest from on an annual basis could bring the cost of such plantings down to essentially zero. The WCLV also worked with partners on a series of live-stake planting events to spread awareness of the method. Finally, the buffer also acts as a local example of the multi-functional buffer concept. The Gracedale nursery uses species such as pussy-willow and red-osier dogwood which can be harvested for floral arrangements. Elderberry was also included, which can provide a harvest of berries.

## RESULTS

The project resulted in a successful planting of the live stake nursery, with a total of 54 shrubs installed at the main buffer at Gracedale. In addition to the shrubs, approximately 150 ft. of native herbaceous/perennial buffer was installed along the Monocacy Creek. In a year or two, the shrubs at this site will hopefully be of size to begin annual live-stake harvesting, providing a convenient and free source of live-stake material for watershed association volunteers and other residents.

In addition the multifunctional buffer at the main project site, 750 live-stakes were planted at multiple sites along the Monocacy Creek. The WCLV was also able to partner with the Monocacy Farm Project, and MWS volunteers to repot and mature over 600 native grass and sedge plugs. These plants, along with direct seeding, were used to renovate many previous native plantings. This will provide additional ground cover in between flowering perennials, inhibiting invasive species growth.

### Contact



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