

# Franklin County Watershed Association SUCCESS STORY

By: Franklin County  
Government

## Eco Park Improvements and Visitor Promotion

### SUMMARY

The Franklin County Eco Park highlights a five acre forested riparian buffer along the Falling Spring Branch, a constructed wetland area, and a warm season grass planting of approximately three acres. The riparian buffer was planted approximately 10 years ago.

Improvements to the park through this project include new interpretive signage, replacement tree identification signs, extension of the walking path and planting 125 new seedlings. Two educational events will help draw visitors to the park and provide an overview on forest management and watershed resources.



### CHALLENGE

The Franklin County Eco Park is one of Guilford Township and the Greater Chambersburg Area's best kept secrets. It presents many opportunities for wildlife watching and passive recreation in a beautiful streamside setting, but not many local residents know about the park. It was once used by local elementary schools and educators, but has become less used over the years. The tree identification signs that were once instructive for landowners have become faded over the past ten years. Invasive species have grown in many areas throughout the woodland, and were in need of removal.

The Eco Park was clearly in need of an image makeover, and a renewed management plan to bolster the riparian forest and grassland ecosystems supported by the landscape. Events to draw in and engage visitors could help towards the long term sustainability of the park.

### FUNDING

Grant Award: \$5,545

Total Project Cost: \$13,895.67

### PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

The Franklin County Watershed Association is a partnership of individuals from the general public, Franklin County Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pheasants Forever, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Franklin County Government. The Rotary Club and Bartlett Tree Experts also assisted in this project through participating in tree plantings, contributing plant materials and woodchips for the walkway. Penn State Mont Alto students and Forestry professor assisted with maintenance tasks and the fall foliage walk.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN  
PARTNERSHIP



## SOLUTION

DCNR's Service Forester developed a Forest Management Plan for the Eco Park, which included removal of invasive species, creation of downed woody debris areas for wildlife habitat and planting of native seedlings to support increased biodiversity at the site. Volunteers began implementing this plan through the project.

The Franklin County Watershed Association planned and executed two events to highlight the forestry demonstration aspects of the park, and to engage the public in interpretive activities that made use of the new signage that was provided through this project.

## RESULTS

Attendees at the fall foliage walk remarked at how relaxing it was to spend a late afternoon among the trees, and how knowledgeable professor Craig Houghton was about all the different species of trees. Some said they had no idea the park existed. The Franklin County Watershed Association members conducted many of the maintenance and planting activities at the park, and it was a great team building experience to work incrementally toward the vision of the project.

Volunteer teams from Rotary Club of Chambersburg, the 11/30 Network of Franklin County Young Professionals, and Penn State Mont Alto forestry students conducted additional planting and maintenance activities at the park, and these presented opportunities for further public awareness about the park and its trail. The Franklin County Watershed Association was contacted recently about hosting a 2020 Earth Day Celebration at the Eco Park, and the use of the park for that event could further support ongoing sustainability of the park for years to come.

Our goal is to let more members of the community in on the secret.

### Contact

Franklin County Watershed  
Association

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