

# Restoration of Idlewood Environmental Station along the Neshaminy Creek

Growing Greener Grant Contract #C990002458

Neshaminy School District – James Maloney and Jim Murray

## Summary Project Description

Due to an infestation of emerald ash borers through a mixed deciduous forest, the 125-acre forested parcel at Neshaminy High School, known as Idlewood Environmental Station, was closed due to hazards to the students and community. The land has been mismanaged and that fact coupled with the loss of 7-10% of the total tree population, erosional loss of soil and nutrients could further pollute the bordering Neshaminy Creek. The project was completed December 2023.

## Project Goals

The primary goal of this project is to make Idlewood accessible to the students and community. In order to accomplish that we are felling the ash and other hazardous trees and restoratively planting areas heavily impacted to prevent erosion. Secondary goals included creation of a 1-acre deer proof parcel, trail grading and water management, and continued water quality monitoring.

## Project Results

We are proud to say we not only accomplished all of our goals but we exceeded them while remaining on budget. We set out to plant 705 trees predominantly ranging in size from 2'-4' in Idlewood and we planted 832 trees most of which had a caliper diameter over 1" and were over 6' tall. We also planted nearly 600 bare root wildflowers and seeded thousands of feet of disturbed land with native seed mix. We have graded miles of the network of trails and have established functional water diversions and water breaks along the way to prevent further channelization of our terrain. We have also established a deer enclosure which is already being used by our environmental science students for long term studies on rates of growth and diversity studies.

## Pictures



## Project Costs

Total expenditures for this project was \$98,369.99 with in-kind match value of \$36,333.78 from volunteer labor and administrative work.

## Lessons Learned

This was by far the biggest collective project we have ever undertaken and although there were many stressful and anxiety inducing moments we are proud to say everything worked out. When we would have 100+ rooted trees delivered and having to organize and sort them then figuring out how to move them to the woods, students and the community just jumped in to help out. There is a lot of

## Partners

The biggest group of volunteers for this project came from Neshaminy High School; we cannot praise the students and staff that continuously stepped up to help make this dream a reality. We also received a lot of help from Transue Lawn and Tree, The Tree Authority, and Octoraro Native Plant Nursery. Joining our volunteer ranks also included Neshaminy Creek Watershed alliance, Middletown Township Environmental Advisory Council, Neshaminy Alumni, and a very invested community member, Mr. Joe Franks.

## Contact Information

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