



Prince George's County Newsletter

November 2017



Program Highlight: Tree Keepers

Town of Forest Heights Keeps Street Trees Healthy and Thriving

Trees clean the air, lower the temperature of cities during warm weather, and reduce heating bills in cold weather. Trees also act as filters to clean stormwater and slow the flow of water during heavy rains to reduce flooding. Trees planted in urban areas such as along street sidewalks and roads are called "street trees." These

street trees need the people that live and work near them to care for them, keeping the trees healthy and thriving.

TREE KEEPERS PROGRAM

The Town of Forest Heights received a Prince George's Stormwater Stewardship grant to support and maintain their existing street trees. The Town hired residents and engaged the citizens through the Tree Keepers program. With grant funds, the Town hired six high school students from Oxon Hill and Potomac High Schools, one college graduate student, and a community elder for the summer program. These new hires for the project were known as the Tree Keepers.

At the start of the project, the Tree Keepers learned about trees from two certified arborists. Then the Tree Keepers examined, watered, mulched, and pruned 150 street trees. The group also conducted research to identify and catalogue trees. The Town will use this data to create an environmental asset inventory.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The Tree Keepers engaged the Town residents using an educational campaign that focused on sharing the benefits of trees in terms of property value, stormwater collection, air quality, and energy conservation. In addition, the Tree Keepers talked with the people that lived near the street trees to share the value of the tree and a few easy tips they can use to help the tree continue to grow and thrive. They also shared a brochure with residents that they developed as part of the program.

Engagement and outreach were a focus of the project. A summary of the Tree Keeper program was provided at the Annual Forest Heights Day Family Event which was attended by over 500 residents. At the end of the summer program, the results were shared with the Town Council.



PROJECT SUCCESS!

The Town reported that the program was a success. The high school students gained job experience, some for the first time, and the guidance of the community elder and the graduate student was a successful model for mentoring and learning in the program. Building capacity within the community and building job skills was important. Another great success of this grant was that the Town hired one of the students after the program ended to provide maintenance and upkeep for plants at the

Town Hall property.

Town staff reported that their goal to educate and engage residents in the care and maintenance of trees was met. The Town staff thought that one of the greatest successes of the project included the individual conversations the Tree Keepers had with homeowners about trees in their neighborhood and the ability to share tree care tips during these conversations. Through this work, Town residents became interested and excited about their street trees.

PRINCE GEORGE'S STORMWATER STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

Tree Planting Focused Grants Awarded

The Prince George's County Department of the Environment (DoE) partners with the Chesapeake Bay Trust to offer the [Stormwater Stewardship Grant Program](#) to support clean water projects and engage citizens throughout Prince George's County.



Over the last four years, the Stormwater Stewardship Grant Program supported tree planting projects through the following awards:

- **Town of Forest Height (the project highlighted in this newsletter):** This project trained a team of high school students, a college student, and a local elder in the community to water, weed and mulch street trees in the Town of Forest Heights. Students presented findings to the Town Council and one student was hired by the Town at the project completion.
- **Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Inc.:** This project will plant 750 trees throughout the County with a focus on faith-based and community properties. Recently, the project planted 30 trees at Carolina Missionary Baptist Church (Fort Washington) and Christian Life Center (Riverdale). In addition, this project will plant another 100 trees on private individual residential property in 2017-2018.
- **Central Kenilworth Avenue Revitalization Community Development Corporation, Inc.:** Developed a pilot tree planting program for residential properties and neighborhoods that resulted in 123 trees planted. In addition, this project will plant another 100 trees on private individual residential property in 2017-2018.
- **End Time Harvest Ministries:** Provided citizen engagement using a tree planting event for the Wellness Ambassadors, students, and citizens to learn how local actions can improve community health and clean local streams.
- **Global Health and Education Projects, Inc.:** Through this project, grant funds supported the Family Tree Adoption Program that helped residents select and plant over 100 trees on private property and also provided tree maintenance education to the new tree owners. In addition, this project will plant another 100 trees on private individual residential property in 2017-2018.
- **Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission:** To plant trees, implement stormwater management practices, remove invasive species, install pet waste stations, and engage citizens in parks and community centers in the Anacostia watershed.
- **Prince George's Green:** Planted 100 trees on private individual residential properties in the County using partnerships with municipalities, citizens, and businesses to ensure success.

"When we 'treevitalize' our communities, we reap the rewards!" – DoE COPE

GET INVOLVED

Are you interested in planting a tree?

There are several options for residents interested in participating in a tree planting:

- Several of the grant programs listed above will be planting in 2018 (contact Sadie Drescher for details)
- The DoE's [Community Outreach Promoting Empowerment](#) (COPE) has several tree planting programs that focus on public spaces ([Tree ReLEAF](#)), schools ([Arbor Day Every Day](#)), and tree planting demonstrations to learn more about trees right in your neighborhood

- Trees are one of the seven [Rain Check Rebate](#) practices (contact Hannah Martin, rebate@cbtrust.org, for more information)

Want to “treevitalize” your neighborhood but don’t know how to plant and care for trees? Want to learn about tree care and maintenance? Want to host a community workshop at an upcoming meeting or event?

- The DoE has staff available to show your group how to plant 1-2 trees, explain the benefits of native trees and why staking is no longer recommended, provide resources for you to plant trees, and answer your questions
- See COPE’s website for details and fun, tree facts [here](#).

The full list of Prince George’s Stormwater Stewardship awards are online [here](#). Contact Sadie Drescher (sdrescher@cbtrust.org) to learn more about the grant program.

These Prince George’s County e-newsletters share successes of the grant projects. See previous newsletters [here](#).

ABOUT THE TRUST

The Chesapeake Bay Trust is a nonprofit, grant-making organization dedicated to improving the streams, rivers, and other natural resources of the Chesapeake region through environmental education, community outreach, and local watershed restoration.

Since 1985, the Trust has awarded more than \$90 million in grants and projects that engage hundreds of thousands of dedicated individuals in efforts that are making a difference for all of our local systems--Chesapeake, Coastal Bays, and Youghiogheny.

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