

Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA)

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Project Manager: Annette Schultz

Grant Amount: \$150,000

Lackawanna Heritage Trail Restoration, Phase I project improved 24-acres in four public parks along riverbank sections of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail. The Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA) concentrated its restoration work on key sections of the trail under public ownership to show the positive benefits the trail will bring to local residents. The restoration of highly visible and accessible areas created opportunities for community support and education. Work was completed at William Schmidt Park, City of Scranton; Robert Mellow Recreational Complex, Blakely; Laurel Street Park, Archbald, and Sarah Bratty Park, Jessup.

The projects restored forest layers with native plantings, reduced exotic species, and improved recreational access along the river. The work was done in conjunction with the LHVA's 40-mile Heritage Trail development. The trail will touch 19 communities, three counties, and be accessible to more than 225,000 residents.

In addition to this work, an ecologically sound restoration plan was developed. "*Ecological Restoration Plan for Two Sections of the Proposed Lackawanna River Heritage Trail in Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania*" proposes five modules to implement suitable plantings that will improve the diversity of the river corridor, provide representative "templates" of native communities, and create opportunities for small scale stewardship projects. This component of the project will be implemented along degraded sections of the trail as funding becomes available.

A partnership with NIEU#19 facilitated the development of "hands-on" environmental education opportunities for troubled youngsters. The LHVA worked with an education coordinator to involve several classes of "special needs" students in environmental education and

stewardship. The integration of volunteer work, classroom learning, and hands-on activities contributed to the program's recognition as a model environmental education program.

Project Value and Match

Grant Award	\$150,000
Cash Contributions	\$43,715
In-kind Contributions	\$17,864
Total Project Cost	\$211,579

Significant Revisions to the Scope of Work

Delays in environmental clearances and in development of the right-of-way plan by the engineering consultant resulted in acquisition delays. In order to bring the project to completion, the LHVA planted in four publicly owned parks adjacent to the trail.

Development of an on-line database with the National Institute for Environmental Renewal (NIER) was removed from the project scope due to the added time requirements of developing cooperative agreements with four municipalities.



Project Accomplishments

- Planted 123 canopy trees, 131 evergreen trees, 75 understory or flowering trees, 334 shrubs, and 559 herbaceous plants.
- Restored 1.19-miles (6,200-l.ft.) of Lackawanna River corridor with plantings in four communities.
- Planted along 4,000-l.ft. of trail.
- Enhanced 2-acres of existing woodland with native plantings.
- Mitigated erosion by stabilizing 2.8-acres of eroding culm-based soils.
- Removed 7,000-sq.ft. of invasive Japanese knotweed.
- Provided 75 at-risk youth with classroom and hands-on environmental education.
- Worked with 82 volunteers that committed 363 hours of service.
- Improved recreational opportunities along the Lackawanna River in 5 communities.
- Worked with 18 diverse partners.
- Used 300-cubic yards of recycled pallet mulch.
- Developed cooperative agreements to secure municipal support and long-term management of the trail.
- Constructed 3 trailside exhibits.
- Received a 1997 Environmental Partnership Award from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

Partners' Contributions

- Archbald Borough – Care for plantings in Laurel Street Park
- Blakely Borough – In-kind landscaping
- City of Scranton – Park maintenance
- Dickson Center School – Student plantings
- Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce – Technical assistance
- Heritage Trail Management Task Force – Technical assistance
- Borough of Jessup – Care of plantings at Sarah Bratty Park
- Lackawanna Recycling Center – Mulch at reduced cost
- Lackawanna Planning Commission – Technical assistance
- Lackawanna River Corridor Association – Care for plantings
- Nat'l Institute for Environmental Renewal – Building maintenance
- National Park Service – Technical assistance
- NEIU#19 Educational Unit – Curriculum development
- PA Heritage Parks Program (DCNR) – Technical assistance
- PennDOT, District 4-0 – Technical and financial assistance
- Penn State Cooperative Extension Service – Technical assistance

