

National Institute for Environmental Renewal (NIER)

Phone: (570) 842-9723
Project Manager: Patricia Acker
Grant Amount: \$103,600

Demonstration Gardens were developed on a 10-acre section of property that borders the Lackawanna River. NIER has executed a self-sustaining landscape design using native plants and porous paving systems to create gardens for environmental education and hands-on learning. The project addresses many environmental impacts created by poor development practices which included large impervious parking lots, storm water runoff piped directly to the river, and large expanses of open lawn.

This project enabled NIER to expand its Environmental SMARTS program to include interactive environmental education activities that can be performed in the gardens and along the river. Activities include teacher training workshops, an environmental fair, and plant identification and river ecology programs. This project also provided NIER with opportunities to target additional funds to develop educational programs that use the gardens, an aqua watch station, computer center, soils laboratory, and glass greenhouse.

Significant Revisions to the Scope of Work

NIER's intention to investigate and record data through site characterization at forestry demonstration sites was abandoned because technological limitation prevented accurate field readings.

Planting plan revisions were made based on maintenance concerns and adaptable species selection.

Project Value and Match

Grant Award	\$103,600
Cash Contributions	\$98,319
In-kind Contributions	\$21,460
Total Project Cost	\$223,379



Project Accomplishments

- Planted 110 canopy trees, 88 evergreen trees, 480 shrubs, and 610 herbaceous perennials.
- Developed a site to provide “hands-on” environmental education programs for local students and teachers.
- Constructed 1,160-l.ft. of pathway along the river.
- Pruned the vegetative corridor along the Lackawanna River.
- Planted 600-l.ft. along pathway.
- Constructed a handicap-accessible river overlook.
- Worked with volunteers who committed 36 hours of service.
- Developed and installed 3 interpretive signs on the ecology of the river and the use of native species.
- Devoted a section of the NIER’s Web Page to the Northeastern Pennsylvania Urban Forestry Program.
- Achieved a 1 to 1.16 cost share ratio on the grant.

Partners' Contributions

- AAI-SMI Aqua Watch – Technical assistance
- Lackawanna Regional Planning Commission – Financial assistance
- Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority – Financial assistance
- Lockheed Martin Energy Systems – Technical assistance
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory – Technical assistance
- PAR Government Systems – Technical assistance
- Synergist Incorporated – Technical assistance
- U.S. Department of Energy – Financial assistance
- Wilkes University – Technical assistance

