

Lackawanna County Regional Planning Commission

Phone: (570) 963-6400

Project Manager: Harry Lindsay

Grant Award: \$500,000

The McDade Park Arboretum project directly impacted 105-acres of a 126-acre recreation facility constructed on reclaimed strip-mined land owned and maintained by Lackawanna County. The Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum, Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour and Scranton Public Theater are located in the park and attract visitors from all over the country. In addition to the new arboretum, visitors enjoy picnic groves, and hiking trails, ball fields, tennis courts, a swimming pool and fishing pond. The park serves 200,000 visitors a year and provides four-season recreational opportunities for the 500,000 residents who live within a 30-mile radius.

The project objective was to develop a regional arboretum that combines ecological conservation and restoration goals with tourism and recreation needs. The mission of McDade Park Arboretum is *“to provide a wholesome family environment where park visitors of all ages may find beauty, relaxation, inspiration, renewal, and a better understanding of the living environment... a place where recreation and relaxation are merged as one.”* This comprehensive approach enabled the integration of arboretum exhibits and displays with existing facilities at the park. The arboretum was designed as a self-guided walking tour. Attention was placed on accessibility so that botanical exhibits and educational demonstrations can be admired close-up.

Arboretum components supported by this grant include: arboretum exhibit and display areas; a stewardship plan and woodland improvements; handicap-accessible edge planting demonstrations; entrance, parking lot, and active park core plantings; pond edge restoration; and rehabilitated bituminous- and gravel-base trails.

Project Value and Match

Grant Award	\$500,000
Cash Contributions	\$860,000
Total Project Cost	\$1,360,000

Significant Revisions to Scope of Work

The project received three extensions because the initial master-planning phase was more extensive than initially anticipated. Issues that needed to be resolved prior to construction were infrastructure rehabilitation, electric system extensions, Americans with Disability Act accessible walkway improvements and coordination with improvements to the Coal Mine Tour funded by PA Heritage Parks. Once resolved, a contracting strategy was developed to divide the work into manageable bid packages that promoted the use of smaller, local companies and more efficient project management.



Project Accomplishments

- Planted 147 canopy trees, 135 evergreen trees, 1,332 shrubs, 443 herbaceous plants, 1,200 seedlings, and 19,273 groundcovers.
- Improved 1,320-l.ft. of woodland trail.
- Planted 600-l.ft. of existing woodland edge with native species.
- Documented 96 plant species growing in the park.
- Reduced 60-acres of heavily mowed lawn area through tree and shrub planting.
- Developed a self-guided ¼-mile forest stewardship trail that educates visitors about hardwood forests, riparian corridors, ecology, silviculture, and other forestry-related topics.
- Worked with Fleet Bank volunteers who donated 72 volunteer hours to plant 1,200 white pine, hemlock, and viburnum seedlings in the woodland adjacent to Lucky Run Creek.
- Developed a Forest Stewardship Plan for 25-acres of wooded park and implemented Phase I of the plan with the selective removal of small caliper trees to promote timber growth and diversity.
- Removed invasive greenbriar and multiflora rose from approximately 12-acres of woodland.
- Remediated 800-l.ft. of slumping pond bank with plantings and stone edging.
- Improved existing Coal Mine Tour parking lot with grass pavers and porous pavement.
- Worked with the PA Game Commission to relocate approximately 70 undernourished ducks inhabiting the pond.
- Coordinated a Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation stream restoration project with a complimentary Phase II Forestry grant adapting concepts from Rosgen's Stream Restoration Methods.
- Labeled 350 native and ornamental trees for educational purposes.
- Built alpine, evergreen, azalea, rose, and winter garden displays.
- Constructed a 24-ft. gazebo and 160-ft. trellis as the central feature for the arboretum.
- Improved an existing playground by planting canopy trees for shade.
- Designed, constructed, and installed 12 interpretive signs, 2 entrance signs, a park guide book, brochure, and illustrative park map.
- Constructed 3,490-l.ft. of handicap-accessible arboretum trails.
- Celebrated Manny Gordon, retired District Forester, by dedicating the pond and gazebo improvements to his efforts to promote Pennsylvania's forests.
- Gained knowledge of ecological enhancement techniques for scarred lands that can be disseminated for public use.
- Achieved a 1 to 1.72 cost share ratio on the grant.

Partners' Contributions

Fleet Bank Volunteers – Planted seedlings
 Lackawanna County Bureau of Corrections – Removed greenbriar
 Lackawanna County Conservation District – Donated tree seedlings
 Lackawanna County Parks & Recreation – Labor
 Lackawanna County Recycling Center – Donated mulch
 Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority – Administration
 NE Cancer Survivors Institute – Memorial garden commitment
 PA DCNR, Bureau of Abandoned Mines – Financial assistance
 PA DCNR, Bureau of Parks & Recreation – Financial assistance
 Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program – Financial assistance
 Pennsylvania Power & Light Company – Located utilities
 US Dept. of Urban Development – Financial assistance