

Coldwater Heritage Partnership Year-End/Final Report

Year: 2021

Grant Round: 26

Organization: Heritage Conservancy

Stream Name: Cooks Creek

Project Title: Cooks Creek Riparian Buffer Restoration

Estimated physical completion (%) at year-end: 100

Estimated expenditures at year-end:

Grant Funds: \$4173 Cash Match: \$4599 In-Kind Match: \$2658

Project Update

Public Meeting:

6/24/2021 Public meeting with Cooks Creek Watershed Association at the Springtown firehouse.

Project Photos:

Before Photos



After Photos:



Project Summary

- Project began in May 2021 and ended in April 2022
- Site preparation began in the spring of 2021. Staff and volunteers removed multiple species of invasive plants including garlic mustard, barberry, and multi-flora rose which had occurred along the riparian areas where the riparian planting was planned.
- On May 22, 2021 an initial riparian planting was conducted. Staff, interns and volunteers



participate. All trees and shrubs were planted in this first planting rather than splitting the plantings up into spring and fall phases as originally planned. All tree shelters were installed on the day of the planting.

- Routine monitoring of the planting occurred throughout the summer and fall of 2021.
- Due to heavy rainfall, the site experienced multiple flooding events following the spring planting. These events resulted in multiple trees and shrubs being washed away and additional maintenance being required for the shelters.

- On April 22, 2022, staff and volunteers conducted a second planting to replace the lost trees and shrubs. Existing damaged shelters were repaired and shelters were installed surrounding the replacement trees and shrubs.
- Invasive removal in the riparian buffer has continued with a focus on garlic mustard removal over the early spring months.

Project Outcomes:

All of the project outcomes were met and the project is complete. Heritage Conservancy staff will monitor the property and repair/replace any tree shelters that are damaged.

Project sustainability:

Heritage Conservancy staff will monitor the property (10 times per year) and repair/replace any tree shelters that are damaged. Threats included over browsing/tree shelter damage by a large deer population and an increase in heavy rains that caused streambank flooding.

Next phase or future projects:

Future efforts will include staff, volunteers, and interns maintaining tree cages by cutting and removing invasive plants immediately adjacent to the cages up to 5'.

List partners and volunteers and describe their involvement in the project including number of volunteers and in-kind hours.

Heritage Conservancy's Fridays in the Forest volunteers were integral in the removal of invasives in preparation for the plantings and in support of their continued success. 10 individuals contributed 80 in-kind hours to the removal of invasive plants over the course of 10 days in 2021 and 2022.

Volunteers for the riparian buffer plantings included:

- Two from the Wildlife Conservation and Game Management Program which partners with the Conservancy to control the deer population on preserved properties. Participants in the program also contribute volunteer hours to Heritage Conservancy. These individuals contributed 6 in-kind hours.
- Three volunteers from Heritage Conservancy's Fridays in the Forest group and one from the Penn State Master Watershed Steward Program contributed a total 18 hours of in-kind services for both plantings.

Number of linear feet improved: 445'

Number of trees planted:

45 Native Trees – Oaks, maples, cottonwoods, musclewood, basswood, etc.

35 Native Shrubs – Spicebush, serviceberry, pawpaw, etc.

Number of structures placed:

80 shelters were constructed