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Environmentally friendly 'meadow park' comes to Caln Township



Jim Lewis looks over Caln Township's newest park. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

By **MEDIANEWS GROUP** |

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CALN TOWNSHIP—The Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards of Chester & Delaware Counties and Caln Township are collaborating to replace mowed turf in an inaccessible open space with a new park featuring a native meadow and public engagement.

Meadows using native plants are a recognized best management practice that is increasing in popularity as municipalities look for effective stormwater management strategies, beautification and habitat creation, public engagement spaces, and ways to save municipal resources through decreased mowing.

By replacing the short-rooted turf grass with native plants which have much longer root systems, stormwater infiltration will be greatly improved onsite thus reducing stormwater runoff. This will indirectly reduce the amount of pollutants entering our waterways and lessen the damage to streambanks from stormwater runoff. The larger leaf surfaces of native plants provide more evapotranspiration than turf and the meadow will naturally improve the onsite soil through the addition of organic matter when they decompose. Rich, organic soils play a vital role in climate resiliency as they hold both more moisture and carbon than poor soils. The additional biodiversity of plants will create native habitat, attracting butterflies, birds, and other beneficial wildlife.

Caln Township will create nearby parking spaces and an entryway to the new park. Master Watershed Stewards will provide an educational sign about meadows and a drawing bench with materials to encourage reflection and sketches.

An initial workshop will be provided by Caln Township and Master Watershed Stewards on Oct. 22 with additional workshops and outreach provided by Caln Township, Master Watershed Stewards of Chester & Delaware Counties, and Master Gardeners of Chester County.

The Lawn-to-Meadow conversion workshop and wildflower seeding volunteer opportunity will be jointly led by Caln Township and the Master Watershed Stewards on Oct. 22, from 1p.m. to 3 p.m. Participants will meet at the Caln Township Building to learn about the environmental importance of meadows and how to convert turf grass areas into beautiful, beneficial meadows. The workshop will finish as participants seed the first acre of the future Caln Meadow Park. To sign up, visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4eadae2ea4facf8-caln3>.

This project is made possible by funding from the Pennsylvania American Water grant which was awarded to the Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley, in partnership with the Penn State Extension Master Watershed Steward program. The meadow conversion project and educational outreach is a collaboration between Master Watershed Stewards of Chester and Delaware Counties, Master Gardeners of Chester County, Caln Township, and DCNR. Additional funding for the project and outreach is from a DEP Environmental Education grant received by Penn State Extension to support four projects across the state, including Caln Meadow Park.



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