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Smedley Park is “TreeVitalized!”

County Council and volunteers plant streamside buffer along Crum Creek

Dozens of small trees and shrubs now line a buffer zone along Crum Creek thanks to a TreeVitalize project that was completed over three days in Smedley Park.

Delaware County Council, the county’s Conservation District, Parks and Recreation and Community Corrections workers joined community volunteers in planting 192 native trees and shrubs as part of the TreeVitalize Watersheds project.

The project is designed to improve water quality, restore tree canopy and enhance wildlife habitat along the Crum Creek through planting and establishing a one-acre streamside (or “riparian”) buffer throughout various portions of the park. The project was completed on Saturday, October 23.

The Delaware County Conservation District, in partnership with the County Department of Parks and Recreation, organized the project. Several community organizations, including the Chester Ridley Crum Watersheds Association, Penn State Master Gardeners, Haverford High School’s “Aware” program and Strath Haven High School’s “Green Haven” program provided volunteer assistance with watering activities, as well as placing protective wire deer fencing around the newly planted and mulched material.

Funding for the project was provided by Aqua Pennsylvania, through the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s TreeVitalize Watersheds program. Aqua Pennsylvania’s Lower Crum Reservoir is

located within the Crum Creek watershed, and supplies drinking water for approximately 200,000 Delaware County residents. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection also provides funding toward the TreeVitalize program, in which the program's goal is restore tree canopy throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania.

"This is a project that benefits our watershed, our park and our overall environment in Delaware County," said County Council Chairman Jack Whelan, shovel in hand. "It's also great to see so many volunteers, including students, come out and work side by side to complete the plantings."

Signage will be installed on the site to explain and illustrate the multiple benefits of riparian buffers. These benefits include but are not limited to reduced erosion, improved water and air quality, enhanced aquatic and wildlife habitat, improved aesthetics and enhanced recreational opportunities. The Department of Parks and Recreation will also implement a "less frequent mowing" strategy within these newly created buffer areas, in order to filter sediment and further protect water quality.

Smedley Park is named after Samuel Smedley, the founder of the County Parks and Recreation Board. Two years ago, the park was expanded to include picnic, sports, playground and hiking areas. The park is comprised of 120 acres in Springfield and Nether Providence Townships.

