



Native Return®

Project Description: PHILADELPHIA ELECTRIC COMPANY (PECO) RIGHT OF WAY NATIVE GRASSLAND PROJECT

Native Return, LLC and Weeds, Inc. converted 24 acres of PECO's High Capacity Right of Way to low growing, sustainable native vegetation. The project included replacing invasive vegetation blanketing the site with healthy, native plant material supportive of local wildlife. This venture is ongoing and expanding due to PECO's dedication to fund sustainable habitat improvement projects that benefit the environment as well as keep their transmission corridors open and operating at full efficiency. According to Alexander Brown, head of PECO's Vegetation Management Transmission Team, "This project demonstrates a great way to maintain our transmission corridors, beautify the region, benefit local wildlife AND save dollars."



Benefits:

- Eliminates invasive, non-native plants
- Encourages native plants that support wildlife
- Creates an important wildlife corridor
- Controls erosion and stormwater runoff
- Reduces maintenance costs and chemical use
- Improves public relations



Before conversion

The Right of Way was mowed and sprayed with herbicide to destroy existing vegetation, scarified and ultimately seeded June 6, 2007 with native warm and cool season grasses. Continued occasional spot spraying of invasive vegetation is ongoing. The project won the prestigious 2009 National BASF Corporation Quality Vegetation Management 'Project Habitat' Award as well as the 2009 PA Horticultural Society Community Greening Award. Bird and bat boxes were installed to enhance the site based on the Wildlife Plan recommendations. PECO continues to work with Native Return, LLC and Weeds, Inc. to manage the site for invasive growth, planting both the riparian zone and the upland areas with appropriate native plant species to infiltrate stormwater onsite and reduce erosion.



After conversion

References: Alexander Brown, PECO senior project manager (215-841-5594) and Stephanie Everett-Johnson, senior environmental specialist (215-841-5239)