Tree for Every Delawarean Initiative
FY 2023 Annual Report
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our dedicated volunteers and committed partners in helping to make the second year of TEDI a great success. We are looking forward to working with groups and individuals in the future to continue to expand tree plantings in Delaware communities, parks, cities, rural areas and more.

Introduction

Governor John Carney launched the Tree for Every Delawarean Initiative (TEDI) on November 9, 2021. Delaware set a goal of planting one million trees by 2030, in support of its Climate Action Plan. The total number of trees recorded in the tracker since January of 2020 total 182,161, of which 83,326 trees were planted directly through TEDI funding since the launch of the program.

TEDI is a partnership between the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy (DCCE) and the Delaware Department of Agriculture's Delaware Forest Service (DFS).

TEDI works with Delaware partners to enhance and support tree planting projects throughout the state. TEDI provides financial support through grant awards, technical assistance, resources to communities and more. The program aims to involve the public in an important environmental effort, enhance tree canopy coverage in Delaware, connect partners that share a common goal and bring communities together. TEDI partners include DCCE, DFS, other state agencies, conservation districts, counties, municipalities and non-governmental organizations.

This report overviews program accomplishments to date, while detailing fiscal year 2023 plantings (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023).
Importance of Trees

Trees are natural champions, from our state forests to our city parks; they improve air, water and soil quality. They also play a critical role in helping to fight climate change. Planting and nurturing trees is a nature-based solution to reducing the greenhouse gases that drive climate change. Trees and forests reduce carbon in the atmosphere by absorbing carbon dioxide from the air and storing it in the tree, so planting more trees is one way to help curb climate change.

Types of Tree Planting Projects

TEDI focuses on three types of tree-planting projects: reforestation, afforestation and urban plantings. Approaches and methods to planting trees can vary depending on factors like the location and surrounding environment of the project. Each project type has specific considerations for implementation, as described below.

Reforestation projects involve the re-planting of trees that were previously lost to natural disasters, disease, pests and/or development. Afforestation projects establish forests in lands that were previously not forested. Both are typically large in scale (hundreds to thousands of trees) and occur in areas like parks, wildlife areas, agricultural fields and parcels of land owned by conservation partners. Such plantings are extremely vulnerable to wildlife impacts, especially trees in their early stages of growth. Deer, rodents and other pests can damage newly planted trees and lower tree survivability rates. For these reasons, protective measurements such as tree tubes and tree guards are often incorporated in reforestation and afforestation projects. These projects tend to take place on lands with little to no access to water; therefore, tree survivability is highly dependent on watering, which can occur either naturally or through manual watering practices.

Urban plantings occur in areas like municipalities, subdivisions, business complexes, urban streets and parks and schools. Urban plantings, generally smaller in scale but with higher relative costs, help to curb heat island effects driven by climate change. Urban plantings can also include the planting of street trees, which can be costly and labor intensive. Special considerations for urban plantings include routine maintenance, potential for heaving sidewalks, extreme heat stress and water stress due to high percentage of impervious surfaces (sidewalks, roadways, parking lots, etc.).
**TEDI Website and Tracker**

DNREC’s TEDI website (de.gov/tedi) features a tree planting tracker, planting tips, maintenance considerations, a list of Delaware native trees and local nurseries that carry native trees.

The TEDI Tracker appears on the website, tracking trees planted since January of 2020 from all funding sources, not just TEDI. To serve all user groups, three separate categories display on the tracker as follows:

- Orange dots show large-scale tree planting projects by conservation partners and non-governmental organizations.
- Green dots show smaller plantings voluntarily logged by homeowners and business owners using the online tracker.
- Text appearing in gray is strictly a counter for private plantings, not displaying on the map. This category totals the number of trees planted on private property where the landowner has requested that the location remain anonymous.

**Overview of TEDI to Date**

**FY 2022**

TEDI funding in FY 2022 totaled $100,000, where $30,000 directly supplemented DFS’s Urban and Community Grant (UCF) Program to enhance tree plantings in communities and urban areas. DCCE distributed the remaining $70,000 to partner organizations including: DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife; Delaware Center for Horticulture; Delaware Center for the Inland Bays; Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve; Delaware Wild Lands; and the Delaware Nature Society. Projects occurred in all three counties in the form of reforestation, afforestation and urban tree plantings. Project details are available in the FY2022 annual report found on the TEDI website. In FY 2022, a total of 72,483 trees were planted on approximately 120 acres using TEDI funding alone. DCCE provided supplemental funding to plant an additional 867 trees that year.
FY 2023

TEDI funding in FY 2023 totaled $100,000, where $40,000 directly supplemented DFS's UCF Program to enhance tree plantings in communities and urban areas. DCCE distributed the remaining $60,000 via a competitive grant geared toward large-scale restoration projects. Organizations eligible to apply included non-governmental organizations; municipalities; counties; tribes and state agencies including DNREC divisions. The following were awarded TEDI funding in FY 2023: DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation; Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve; The Nature Conservancy; Seigel Jewish Community Center; and Delaware Botanic Gardens. Planting projects occurred in all three counties in the form of reforestation, afforestation and urban tree plantings. In FY 2023, a total of 10,845 trees were planted on approximately 27 acres using TEDI funding alone. The projects are described in detail below.

FY 2023 PROJECTS

The table below shows TEDI funding provided to each organization in FY 2023 and number of trees planted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>FUNDING</th>
<th>TREES PLANTED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DFS's Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>152</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner Organizations</td>
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<td>DNREC Parks and Recreation</td>
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<td>Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Nature Conservancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siegel Jewish Community Center</td>
<td>$17,500</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Botanic Gardens</td>
<td>$17,500</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$100,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,845</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation

Brandywine Creek State Park Planting near Wilmington

DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation celebrated the Tulip Tree Woods Nature Preserve’s 40th Birthday by hosting a tree planting event at the Brandywine Creek State Park in the Fall of 2022. Key members of the Natural Areas Preservation Program and members of the public planted 270 native trees. The newly planted trees will expand the Brandywine Creek Natural Area while providing additional wildlife habitat. Located adjacent to the old-growth forest network, this project will provide a wildlife corridor into the Brandywine Creek State Park. A variety of tree species were planted including shagbark hickory, American holly, service berry and chestnut oak.

Attendees of the Nature Preserve’s 40th Birthday Celebration assist in the planting of trees in a field.
Delaware Seashore State Park Planting

As part of a coastal resiliency project, DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation staff and 11 volunteers planted 150 trees at the Delaware Seashore State Park. Newly planted trees will improve coastal storm resistance and replenish previously lost forest understory.

Fork Branch Nature Preserve Planting in Dover

Staff from the DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation planted 3,000 native trees at the Fork Branch Nature Preserve in the Spring of 2023. The plantings expand wildlife habitat within the preserve. The plantings are located adjacent to the old-growth forest network, providing for habitat diversity for years to come. Species planted include pin oak, black oak, tulip poplar and American beech.
In the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023, 345 native trees were planted under a larger reforestation effort at the Blackbird Creek Reserve, part of Delaware’s National Estuarine Research Reserve. Volunteers from a local Boy Scouts of America volunteers planted trees with the help of DCCE staff. A variety of tree species were planted such as serviceberry, fringetree, river birch, red maple and swamp white oak. Tree plantings will enhance wildlife habitat, reduce surface water run-off and improve water quality of the nearby Blackbird Creek.
St. Jones Reserve Planting in Dover

The St. Jones Reserve is also part of Delaware's National Estuarine Research Reserve, where 30 native trees were planted by DCCE staff in May of 2023. New trees were planted along the existing tree line to enhance the vegetative buffer, reduce surface water run-off and improve wildlife habitat. Species planted include red cedar, pin oak, service berry and fringetree.
The Nature Conservancy

Bullseye-Ferry Landing Preserve Planting near Millsboro

The Nature Conservancy enhanced existing mature forest in Sussex County by planting 6,600 trees on 22 acres in March of 2023. Volunteers from Chesapeake Utilities assisted in the planting of a portion of those trees. This land supports a special habitat type known as the inland dune ridge forest community. This rare forest type in Delaware thrives on dry, sandy soils. For this reason, shortleaf pine, white oak, black oak and persimmon were planted, all representative of this unique forest community. Tree plantings at this site will help enhance and restore this rare woodland community and support wildlife and local biodiversity. Plantings will also help improve water quality for the nearby Indian River Bay.
Siegel Jewish Community Center Planting near Wilmington

Volunteers from the Siegel Jewish Community Center planted 147 native trees around their community campus in the fall of 2022. The newly planted trees add beauty to the campus, enhance wildlife habitat and provide shade around a fitness trail. Educational signage helps to support the outdoor classroom, and provides information for community members as well. Species planted include red maple, river birch, willow oak and American holly.
The Delaware Botanic Gardens restored a portion of their woodland forest trail bordering the Pepper Creek in the spring of 2023. A total of 15 volunteers assisted in the planting of 151 native trees. Species planted include serviceberry, river birch, eastern redbud, fringetree and swamp white oak. The newly planted trees help with stormwater management, increase tree canopy coverage and enhance wildlife habitat.
Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program

DFS’s UCF Grant Program provides cities, towns and communities grants toward the management, care and enhancement of urban forestry resources. In FY 2023, this program received $40,000 of the TEDI funding to increase tree canopy in urban and community settings within Delaware. DFS awarded grants for 10 urban and community tree plantings, resulting in 152 newly planted trees. Each of the 10 projects is described below.

Barley Mill Planting

In the Barley Mill Community, 10 trees were planted to restore previously lost tree canopy, also increasing wildlife habitat. Species planted include river birch, bald cypress and eastern redbud.

Garden Gate Gardening Club Planting

Volunteers from Garden Gate Gardening Club planted eight trees in their community open space. Newly planted trees will increase tree canopy and shade, while providing educational opportunities to schools and surrounding communities. Species planted include American holly and eastern redbud.

Little Falls Village Planting

Volunteers planted 22 trees in community open space within Little Falls Village. Increased tree canopy will provide shade within the community open space. Tree roots will improve drainage in select areas through water absorption.

Willow Lake Planting

The Willow Lake Community planted six trees in community open space to increase vegetative diversity and enhance tree canopy.
Kent County Browns Branch Park Planting

As part of Earth Day in 2023, Kent County Parks and Recreation hosted a tree planting, where 30 public volunteers planted five large trees. Tree species planted include red maple and eastern redbud. Newly planted trees will provide for shade and wildlife habitat.

Reserves at Lewes Landing Planting

A total of 13 trees were planted at the Reserves at Lewes Landing. New plantings will address soil erosion concerns and add beauty to the community.

Bayshore Planting

Volunteers from the Bayshore Community planted a total of 17 trees to mitigate greenhouse gases and enhance the vegetative buffer near the roadway. Species planted include American holly and eastern redbud.

Shoreview Woods Planting

In the Shoreview Woods Community, 23 trees were planted to enhance the vegetative buffer and improve stormwater management.

Chaddwyck Maintenance Corporation Planting

Volunteers from the Chaddwyck Maintenance Corporation planted 25 trees in community open space. Tree species planted include eastern red cedar and American holly. Trees were planted to improve the vegetative buffer around the community, increase species diversity and provide more habitat for wildlife.

Tavistock Civic Association Planting

To help increase species diversity, shade and wildlife habitat, volunteers from the Tavistock Civic Association planted a total of 23 trees in their community. Species planted include cockspur hawthorn, eastern hop-hornbeam and eastern shadbush.
Conclusion

In its second year, TEDI continued to build upon the previous year's success progressing toward the goal of planting at least one million trees by 2030. With TEDI funding alone, six partner organizations planted 10,845 trees in Delaware. As of November 2023, more than 180,000 trees have been planted since the program began in 2020.