

Stuart Recreation Area Native Plant Garden

2010 Accomplishments

The Monongahela National Forest joined forces with an army of volunteers to transform a 5,500 square foot fescue field into a beautiful native pollinator garden. This garden was established in one of the Forest's most visited locations, Stuart Recreation Area. This recreation area receives over 20,000 visitors each year making this an ideal location for public outreach and interpretation regarding the importance of pollinators and their ecological needs.

Thanks to a number of partners, the Stuart Pollinator Garden was created for around \$13,000. Partners from The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepared the site by treating and removing the fescue sod. And, on Saturday, June 12, the Monongahela teamed up with the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area to host a National Get Outdoors Day Event that would encourage healthy, active outdoor fun and benefit the birds and the bees. Volunteers were able to plant over 300 plugs and pots of native grasses, sedges, herbs, and shrubs. They also assisted with laying out landscaping timbers, creating bee houses, and caging plants thought to be the most appealing to deer. Several additional planting days and weeding days were hosted at the garden resulting in over 315 volunteer hours and \$15,990 in in-kind services.



Figure 3. Monarch on butterfly weed in garden.

The plant species selected and the design of the garden were created using the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign's Friendly Practices Guidelines. The final garden is a lovely place to visit and to learn!

This new pollinator garden will serve as an oasis for pollinators, outreach site for visitors, and a local native seed source for the Forest. The garden will also provide seeds of local milkweed plants that can be distributed to other interested groups within the community. By restoring milkweeds in a natural landscape and encouraging their use throughout the community, we hope to contribute to increasing populations of monarchs and other butterfly species.

Ecologists on the Monongahela hope to explore opportunities to work with local schools and scouting groups to make the garden a Monarch Waystation. Just a few steps remain to complete the garden including the production and installation of large interpretive panels to increase public awareness about native wildflowers and pollinator needs.



Figure 1. Volunteers plant over 300 native plants.



Figure 2. AmeriCorps members help at the garden.

Year Awarded: 2010

Project completion: Estimated 2011
Report number: 1 of 2

Expenditures (through 10/2010):
▪FY10 funding \$13,630, expend. \$13,480;
\$150 remaining

Partners: AmeriCorps, Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative, NRCS Alderson Plant Materials Center, Porterbrook Native Plants, Randolph County Master Gardeners, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

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