

PROJECT TITLE: Urban Wildlife Habitat Program
PROJECT MANAGER: Anne Hunt
ORGANIZATION: Saint Paul Neighborhood Energy Consortium (NEC)
ADDRESS: 475 North Cleveland Avenue #100, Saint Paul, MN 55104
LEGAL CITATION: ML 1995, Chp. 220, Sec. 19, Subd 8 (a); ML 1997, Chp. 216, Sec. 15, Subd. 26 (a)
APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$150,000.00

Statement of Objectives

There were two key objectives of this project: 1) design, promote and conduct urban wildlife habitat workshops and 2) increase urban wildlife habitat using Minnesota native plants.

Overall Project Results

The Urban Wildlife Habitat project successfully educated urban residents on the use of native plants in landscaping and greatly exceeded initial goals by presenting twice as many workshops to almost three times the number of residents and helped over twice the number of people to plant wildlife habitats as originally planned. Thirty-one workshops were presented to 833 individuals from 715 households. The workshops were designed by NEC staff and landscape design professionals. Landscaping workshops were designed to be informative and engaging. To facilitate a high level of interaction between the audience and the presenters, the number of participants was limited to 35 for each workshop. A landscape design professional created five landscape designs based on habitat types found in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The habitat types were full sun/well-drained soil (prairie), full sun/poorly-drained soil (wet prairie), partial shade (deciduous woodland), full shade (deciduous woodland) and evergreen-shaded. NEC staff created reference materials which included where to buy native plants, where to see native plant landscapes, selected reference books, how to attract wildlife and five steps to home landscaping. Three hundred fifty-seven households purchased reduced cost plant material.

The workshop and materials were designed for different learning styles to meet the needs of as many people as possible. To meet the demand for the workshop the NEC increased the number of workshops offered rather than increase the number of attendees per workshop. The NEC felt the quality of the workshop would be reduced if the participant numbers were too high. This approach was successful. Surveyed participants reported the workshop was one of the best they ever attended, the reference materials were useful and they retained important information months after attending the workshop.

Project Results and Dissemination

The educational materials developed for this project have been used in other venues. An additional ten presentations were given to approximately 200 people. One presentation was videotaped and has aired on a public access cable station numerous times. Two presentations were given at the Minnesota Horticultural Society Greening Conference. One of these presentations focused on how other organizations could establish their own native planting program. The NEC newsletter, *The Curbsider*, included a one page, double-sided insert on landscaping for wildlife and was mailed to 110,000 households in Saint Paul.

The NEC collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Metro Region to modify the landscape designs format for distribution at the Minneapolis Home and Garden Show, through the DNR information office and on the DNR web site. Over 5,000 copies have been distributed by the DNR.

Shelley Shreffler, project staff, will present the Urban Wildlife Habitat project at the 1998 Society for Ecological Restoration annual meeting in September, 1998, in Austin, Texas.

LCMR Final Work Program Update Report

I. **Project Title:** Urban Wildlife Habitat Program **Project Number:** Subd. 8. (a)
Project Manager: Anne Hunt
Agency Affiliation: Saint Paul Neighborhood Energy Consortium (NEC)
Mailing Address: 475 North Cleveland Avenue #100, Saint Paul, MN 55104
Telephone Number: (612) 644-5436
Fax Number: (612) 649-3109

Legal Citation: ML 95, Chp. 220, Sec. 19, Subd. 8 (a); ML 97, Chp. 216, Sec. 15, Subd. 26 (a)
Total biennial LCMR appropriation: \$150,000.00
Balance: \$0

Appropriation Language: This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the St. Paul neighborhood energy consortium to provide workshops and native planting materials to households for landscaping for wildlife, demonstrating plant diversity, and alternative lawn care practices in the urban environment. This project must be done in cooperation with the department of natural resources nongame wildlife and releaf programs. This appropriation must be matched by at least \$35,000 of nonstate money.

B. **Status of Match Requirement:**
Match Required: \$35,000.00
Amount Committed to Date: \$35,000.00
Match Spent to Date: \$35,000.00

II. **Project Summary:** This project provides 14-18 workshops and low-cost planting materials so that Saint Paul area residents will landscape for wildlife, demonstrating how plant diversity and alternative lawncare practices benefit the urban environment. According to local landscape ecologists, there has been a significant amount of scientific research on patch wildlife habitats. However, there is a lack of hands-on experience especially in urban areas. Most real-life plantings have been in prairie restorations, roadside habitat management, and similar projects. The goal of these plantings is to provide a variety of food and shelter resources for native wildlife in the urban environment.

Approximately three hundred workshop participants will gain awareness of how current landscaping and yard-care practices deter wildlife from the urban environment. They will learn how pesticides and herbicides affect the food chain and water quality and be provided proper lawn maintenance information and compost bins. At least 125-140 of the participants will use professionally designed patch plantings of native trees, shrubs and perennials plant to provide food and shelter for wildlife habitat in their yards. Native species will be used as much as possible. In addition to providing habitat, the plantings will provide shade and reduce CO₂. Lowered use of lawn chemicals will reduce nonpoint source pollution in area lakes, streams and rivers. Participants will be asked to keep a log to document the increase in wildlife at their site.

III. **Program Update Summary:**

This project was highly successful having exceeded the goals set forth at the beginning of the project. Thirty-one workshops were presented to 833 individuals from 715 households. The workshops were designed by NEC staff and landscape design professionals. Five landscape designs (patch plantings) based on habitat types found in the Twin Cities metropolitan area were created. The habitat types were full sun/well-drained soil, full sun/poorly-drained soil, partial shade, full shade, and shade from evergreens. Three hundred fifty-seven households purchased reduced cost plant material.

The project was extended one year to take advantage of two complete growing and planting seasons (the spring through the fall). The cool, wet spring of 1996 presented challenging growing conditions, delayed planting and reduced the number of people able to plant that year.

A mid-project evaluation was completed. The results were used to refine promotional material and workshops. Surveyed participants rated the workshop outstanding and reported taking three or more actions as a result of attending the workshop.

The educational materials developed for this project have been used in other venues. An additional ten presentations were given to approximately 200 people. The information given was the same as the workshop, but people were not able to purchase reduced cost plant material. One presentation was video taped and has aired on a public access cable station numerous times. Two presentations were given at the Minnesota Horticultural Society Greening Conference. One presentation focused on how other organizations could establish their own native planting program. The NEC newsletter, *The Curbsider*, included a one-page, double sided insert on landscaping for wildlife and was mailed to 72,000 households in St. Paul.

The NEC collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Metro Region to modify the landscape designs format to fit on an 8 1/2" x 11" page. The designs were distributed at the Minneapolis Home and Garden Show, through the DNR information office and on the DNR web site.

IV. **Statement of Objectives:**

Objective A: Hire Project Staff and Landscape Designer: The NEC project manager will hire project staff and contract with a local landscape professional to design five patch (miniature ecosystems) design options to be used by area residents to landscape for wildlife. Designs will use a variety of native plant species which will require less maintenance, and chemical and water usage and are applicable in an urban setting.

Objective B: Design, Promote and Conduct Urban Wildlife Habitat Workshops: Project staff will research and design workshops and design and distribute promotional material for workshops. Approximately 300 residents will attend 14-18 workshops. They will be taught the benefits of toxicity reduction, plant diversity, backyard composting, and natural landscaping as they relate to establishing and maintaining urban wildlife habitat. The advantages of specific design concepts and native plant species will be discussed.

Objective C: Plant Urban Wildlife Habitat: 125-140 residential sites will be planted using a variety of native species. This will reduce maintenance, chemical and water usage in those yards.

B.2. Urban Wildlife Habitat Workshops

B.2.a. Context of the project: The project staff will conduct 4-6 initial workshops during the spring of 1996; 6-8 workshops during the late summer and early fall of 1996; 4-6 workshops in the spring of 1997; and 4-6 workshops during the late summer and early fall of 1997. We anticipate 20-30 people will attend each workshop. Residents will be taught the benefits of toxicity reduction, plant diversity, back yard composting and natural landscaping techniques.

B.2.b. Methods: Saint Paul area residents will be mailed a direct marketing piece announcing workshop and location. Locations of workshops will rotate around the city and will feature professional speakers and childcare. Composting bins and informational material will be distributed to all participants.

B.2.c. Materials: Expenses associated with the workshops will include speaker, child care and room rental fees. Compost bins, plantings and informational material will be distributed to all participants.

B.2.d. Budget:
Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$15,000.00 for the first series of workshops; \$18,000 for the second and ~~\$11,000~~ \$9,000 for the third.
LCMR Balance: \$0.00; \$0.00 & \$0.00
MATCH: \$4,000, \$5,000 & \$5,000
MATCH BALANCE: \$0.00, \$0.00 & \$0.00

B.2.e. Timeline:
Timeline: 7/95 1/96 6/96 11/96 1/97 6/97 10/97
Conduct workshops *****

B.2.f. Workprogram Update:
Thirty-one, 2 hour long workshops were completed during the project at 17 locations throughout St. Paul. Eight hundred thirty three individuals representing 715 households attended the workshops. Informational material and a native plant (first year) or a coupon for a native plant (second year) were distributed to each household. In year one households needing a compost bin were provided with one and referred to a follow-up one hour composting workshop provided by the City of Saint Paul. During the design phase of this project we felt we would need an inducement for people to attend the workshop. We chose to offer free compost bins. However, we found that the content of the workshop itself was enough. Because the compost bins were not the value-added item envisioned, we no longer provided compost bins to workshop participants. We continued to refer people to the one hour long composting workshop.

The NEC and the DNR nongame wildlife program expanded the educational aspect of this project. We distributed material covering much of the information presented in the workshops to a broader audience than the relatively small number attending workshops. A one page, double sided insert on landscaping for wildlife using native plants was included in the NEC *Curbsider* newsletter and distributed to 72,000 households.

Fact sheets covering much of the information presented in the workshop were developed and distributed to approximately 500 households in the Twin Cities area.

Ten, one-hour presentations on landscaping for wildlife using native plants were given. Information on appropriate plants, where to purchase plants, where to see landscaped areas and how to attract wildlife was distributed.

B.3. Evaluate Project Effectiveness

B.3.a. Context within the project: It will be important to evaluate the initial marketing material, patch designs, workshop content and workshop participation. Additional modifications will be made to the project based on information gathered.

B.3.b. Methods: The project staff will conduct some evaluation mechanism such as focus groups, interviews or mail/phone surveys of participants.

B.3.c. Materials: The project staff will contract with an evaluator.

B.3.d. Budget:
Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$11,150.00
LCMR Balance: \$0.00
MATCH: \$500.00
MATCH BALANCE: \$0.00

B.3.e. Timeline:
Timeline: 7/95 1/96 6/96 10/96 1/97 6/97
Evaluate Project *****

B.3.f. Workprogram Update:
Project staff contracted with Will Pipkin of Future Now to conduct focus groups and mail/phone surveys of participants. The mid-project evaluation was completed by Future Now. Results were discussed with project and DNR staff. Two focus groups with 21 people (8 and 13) were held and surveys were mailed to 318 households. The survey was returned by 60% of the households (researchers usually consider 10% an acceptable response rate). Key findings included: The workshops were very effective. Over 60% of the respondents had incorporated native plants into their yards and 23% indicated they intended to plant in the spring. Nearly 80% of the respondents took three or more actions as a result of attending a workshop and only 5% had taken no action at all. 64% of the respondents remembered three or more concepts from the workshop that were important to them. The materials provided by the program were also very effective. 89% of the respondents found the detailed plant list useful or very useful and 66% found the landscaping site designs to be useful or extremely useful. Participants appreciated the opportunity to buy native plants through the NEC. The vast majority of the individuals who had purchased plants from the NEC said that the reduced prices were an important or critical factor in their decision to order plants. People who attended the workshop were enthusiastic about it. 65% encouraged someone else to attend a workshop and 68% encouraged friends, family, neighbors and co-workers to plant native plants in their yards.

C. Plant Urban Wildlife Habitat:

C.1. Plant Native Habitat
C.1.a. Context within the project: 125-140 residential sites will be planted using a variety of native species. NEC will work to secure a discount on the cost of the planting materials. However, participants will be asked to contribute to the cost based on their ability to pay.

C.1.b. Methods: Patch designs will be distributed to participants. Staff will be available to answer questions and assist participants. Professionals will be used for technical questions.

C.1.c. Materials: Plantings will distributed at a sliding scale cost.

C.1.d. Budget:
Total Biennial LCMR Budget: ~~\$43,850.00~~ \$45,850.00
LCMR Balance: \$0.00
MATCH: \$15,500.00
MATCH BALANCE: \$0.00

C.1.e. Timeline:

Timeline:	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97	10/97
Plant sites		*****	*****		*****	*****

C.1.f. Workprogram Update:
 Project staff secured planting materials at wholesale prices. Patch designs were distributed to all workshop participants. A total of 357 residential sites were planted using a variety of native plants. The match in this category was increased because participants were more able to contribute towards the cost of the plants than originally projected. Additional contributions by some participants helped offset the greater discount given to other participants. No one was denied plant material due to an inability to pay.

VI. Evaluation: The NEC will work with the DNR staff and other resources to evaluate the continue success of the project. We will measure number of participants and response rate to marketing material and receive feedback on workshop design and content. Participants will document the increase in wildlife at their site.

VII. Context within field: Initial research during the preparation of the project proposal indicated that there was a significant amount of scientific research on patch wildlife habitats. However, there is a lack of hands-on-experience especially in urban areas. We will coordinate our findings with the staff of the DNR.

VIII. Budget Context: The City of Saint Paul has agreed to \$35,000 match for the total project. The city will contribute towards design, layout and printing of materials and conducting of workshops. They will contribute contracted labor, evaluator and composting bins.

IX. Dissemination: The NEC plans to coordinate the project with the nineteen member organization and other community-based organizations (i.e. garden clubs, block clubs, community development organizations). The data will be shared with the City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works, Saint Paul Water Utility, Department of Parks and Recreation and the Phalen Wetland Restoration Project. Information will also be disseminated to Ramsey County Department of Environmental Health - Solid Waste Division, Minnesota Extension Service - Ramsey County, Ramsey County Soil and Water Conservation District and state agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, Office of Environmental Assistance, Pollution Control Agency, Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Horticulture Society. The NEC will issue press releases for local media, draft opinion pages, and explore distributing information through various publications including the *Minnesota Horticulturist*, the Minnesota Green newsletter, the Science Museum of Minnesota's "Green Streets" environmental computer database and developing material for the local cable television.

X. Time: The proposed project will not exceed three years.

XI. Cooperation: The City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works
 Richard Person
 800 City Hall Annex, 25 West Fourth St., Saint Paul, MN 55102

Rick Person is responsible for the implementation of all solid waste programs for the City of Saint Paul. Mr. Person will particularly oversee the distribution of the lawn maintenance information and compost bins to area residents. He will assist with the evaluation of the project and dissemination of project results and information.

XII. Reporting Requirements: Semiannual six-month work program update reports will be submitted not later than January, 1, 1996; July 1, 1996; January 1, 1997; July 1, 1997; January 1, 1998, and a final six-month work program update and final report by June 30, 1998.