



# NEWS

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**  
**COURT HOUSE, NORRISTOWN, PA., BOX 311, 19404-0311**

**Frank X. Custer, Communications Director**

**Jessica Willingham, Communications Assistant**

**PHONE (610) 278-3061 FAX (610) 278-5943**

**COMMISSIONERS: JOSH SHAPIRO, *Chair***

**VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, *Vice Chair***

**BRUCE L. CASTOR, JR., *Commissioner***



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 17, 2015**

## **Green Lane Park Partners with Pennsylvania Master Naturalist Program for Meadow Improvement Project**

**Green Lane, PA (June 17, 2015)** – When one stands and gazes at the small field in Green Lane Park, adjacent to Marlborough Elementary School, it looks just like any other field that most people may simply consider an old, abandoned field of weeds. However, one local volunteer sees much more. He sees wildflowers blooming with native grasses, fluttering and buzzing activity by colorful butterflies and bees, and students walking on trails discovering the meaning of pollination and the wonder of watching a Monarch Butterfly. He envisions a small meadow project that can become a source of community spirit and dedicated volunteers.

Randy Thoren, a volunteer with the Pennsylvania Master Naturalist Program, approached park staff in January to introduce the idea of improving the meadow in Green Lane Park and using it as an outdoor classroom. From there, things got rolling quickly.

Pennsylvania Master Naturalist is a statewide partnership initiative that aims to connect people with their local ecosystems through intensive natural science training and local conservation service work. It is a venture directed toward developing a local corps of “master volunteers and service providers” to offer education, outreach, and service dedicated to the understanding and management of natural areas within their communities. Upon graduating from training, Pennsylvania Master Naturalists are expected to complete 30 hours of volunteer service in their first year and 20 hours annually thereafter along with annual continuing education requirements. Green Lane Park is eager to put Randy to work, and help meet his annual volunteer hours.

After meeting with Kevin Crilley, the park’s Environmental Educator, to discuss the next steps, Randy recruited Marlborough Elementary School and Arche Wild Nursery and Landscape Design in Quakertown to complete the “Partnership Team.” As winter gave way to spring, a short-term plan was

drafted to get the project off the ground. With assistance from the park staff, Randy established a few key goals:

- to remove woody, invasive plants from the existing meadow
- to begin enhancing the existing meadow by planting additional native species, which will attract butterflies, bees, and other pollinators
- to develop the site as an outdoor classroom by working with Marlborough Elementary teachers to create a few lesson plans that incorporate the meadow and its insect populations
- to use the project as a recruitment tool for more park volunteers

After Randy started removing invasive plants himself, a kickoff work session, on the evening of May 28<sup>th</sup>, involved 20 volunteers planting 500 “plugs” of native meadow plants, which are attractive to pollinators. Hot temperatures and extremely dry soil conditions made planting difficult, but the tenacity of the work crew overcame all obstacles. Park staff watered the new plantings until rain arrived some four days later.

For the time being, park visitors are invited to visit the restored meadow site by parking at the Hemlock Point Trail parking lot, located behind Marlborough Elementary School. From the parking lot, follow the turf-grass trail into the meadow. A meandering path is mowed through the meadow for easy access. A few interpretive and directional signs are also planned for the project area. A second volunteer work party will be scheduled in October 2015. The exact date and time are to be announced. The staff at Green Lane Park hopes more Pennsylvania Master Naturalists will join them to continue the efforts to improve this fantastic, natural resource.

Those interested in joining the meadow improvement project should contact the Park Office at 215-234-4528. Visit Green Lane Park online at [www.montcopa.org/greenlanepark](http://www.montcopa.org/greenlanepark).



