



INMATES PLANT 400 TREES TO HELP WATER QUALITY

Job training program in Pennsylvania benefits newly released inmates and the environment.

PROJECT GOALS

Increase the size and strength of the workforce that is needed to maintain forest buffers while providing inmates with vocational training to successfully re-enter society. The State Correctional Institution in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania participated in a newly established correctional conservation collaboration effort.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Providing vocational training to inmates helps prepare them to find jobs when they transfer back into society.
- Research shows that helping inmates find employment reduces the chance that they will end up back in prison, reducing the costs of incarceration.
- Increases the available workforce that has knowledge of buffer planting and maintenance.
- Additional trees cool the land and the water, reducing energy costs.
- Trees lessen the risk of streambank erosion and flooding, reducing costs associated with these impacts.
- Program provides environmental education to participants.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Planting forested riparian buffers along the streambank reduces stormwater runoff and erosion in the stream corridor.
- New trees improve air and water quality by serving as both a natural filter for excess nutrients and a carbon sink.
- Planting trees decrease nutrient pollution flowing into local waterways.
- Planting native trees decreases nutrient pollution in the stream, which ultimately reduces the amount of pollutants entering the Bay.
- Planting trees along the streamside creates upland wildlife habitat and provides shade and cooler water temperatures for aquatic life.
- Riparian forest buffers help soils absorb and retain nutrients.
- Converting agricultural land to natural forest land filters out excess nutrients flowing into local waterways.
- Planting trees along a stream, which increases soil stabilization, reduces streambank erosion locally and downstream, and decreases the impact of flooding waters.
- Increased education creates more environmental stewards.



Photos by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program

“ We’re trying to figure out where are the gaps for meeting our conservation goals that would be suitable for folks who don’t really have much background, to give them the background so that they can join the fight and make a living.”

- **Ryan Davis**

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

CONSERVATION PROJECTS INSTALLED

- Riparian forest buffer

PROJECT SUMMARY

Twenty inmates from the Huntingdon State Correctional Institution are the first graduates of the Correctional Conservation Collaborative, established in 2019. Inmates planted 400 tree seedlings on farmland owned by the institution following a 14-week vocational training program. Inmates designed the riparian forest buffers along a tributary to the Juniata River and were taught basic tree identification and ecological benefits. This program is part of an even bigger effort led by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to plant 86,000 acres of riparian buffers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Not only are the inmates contributing to conservation practices, but they are also learning skill sets that may be beneficial to them as they re-enter society and become part of the workforce.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Maintenance is needed in the forested buffer while the native trees become established.
- Knowledge of appropriate planting techniques is needed.

THE PARTNERS AND FUNDING SOURCES

- Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

CONTACTS

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Green job training can help inmates prepare for life as they re-enter society and become part of the workforce.



400 tree seedlings were planted on farmland through the Correctional Conservation Collaborative. Nearby waterways will benefit from reduced runoff from the farms.



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