

Clover Hill Residents Help Restore Tuscarora Creek

-Mike Kay
Forester, Maryland Forest Service

Members of Clover hill community are enjoying the fruits of their labor as native trees and shrubs attract wildlife, provide shade, absorb pollution, slow down storm water and add to the beauty of their park and grounds. Theirs is the first homeowner association with a certified “Bay-Wise” Landscape, a program that provides a free consultation with a team of Master Gardeners for the Bay-Wise Yardstick Landscape Management program.

During their annual tree planting/cleanup day this spring, 40 community residents helped plant about 500 seedling sized trees around the stream channels and 50 larger containerized and balled and burlapped trees throughout the park. This has been an ongoing project that witnessed a large planting of nearly 2,000 seedlings and 400 large trees last year. Community residents Greg Powell and Tom Pianta are the leaders in this restoration project and have directed these events over the last several years. Greg and Tom also helped develop a comprehensive plan for the park and applied for various grants to realize their vision. Community members intend to have another large planting next year as they implement phase II of their restoration plan.

Clover hill Park is widely utilized by residents for recreational purposes having walkways, athletic fields, playgrounds, and a swimming pool. The tree planting and beautification projects mesh well with the athletic fields providing a scenic backdrop, a place for wildlife, some privacy, noise barriers, and buffers to enhance water quality and prevent stream bank degradation.

Clover hill residents schedule an annual park clean up and tree planting day each year in April. Despite the dry conditions, it rained briefly in the morning to make planting easier.

The community has widened the “no mow” zone along the stream [a tributary of Tuscarora Creek] to help slow down and filter storm water before it reaches the stream. This natural vegetation along with the native trees and shrubs planted each year help improve water quality and increase the beauty and wildlife value of the Clover Hill common property. Plans are underway for more planting during the first Saturday in April in 2007 when the community celebrates Arbor Day by continuing to clean up, plant and mulch to improve watershed health.

For more information about Clover Hill’s plantings contact either Tom Pianta at piantat@wchsys.org or Greg Powell at ghpowell@erols.com.