

Joy in Our Watershed





Heron Rookery

So often we are reminded of the neglected and damaged state of Plaster Creek, but every once in a while we stumble across hidden areas that haven't experienced this and remain healthy and intact. Moments like these send our hearts over the moon with joy and vision. We want to share them with you: hidden ravines lush with threatened woodland ephemeral flowers, Pawpaw trees laden with blossoms, and a rookery of Blue Herons with 25 nests in a few strong streamside Sycamores.





Spring Event 2021

Each year we host a Fall and Spring Event, when we combine education and restoration around a focus in our watershed. This Spring, our focus was **Trees to Heal the Plaster Creek Watershed**. 90 volunteers from our community came out to plant over 100 native trees at 3 sites in our watershed. The trees will catch, absorb, and help clean polluted runoff that was otherwise destined for Plaster Creek.

Education on Cedar

To highlight and explain the importance of the tree plantings, we partnered with Next Step of West Michigan to create and install permanent cedar signs. We're grateful and excited for these engraved cedar works of art in our community!

These projects are funded in part by a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This institution, EPA, and the Forest Service are equal opportunity providers.



We had the joy of collaborating with 15 community partners for learning and working together this spring! Together we shared in watershed education, transplanting, tree planting, translation work, and watershed cleanups.

Among our partners this spring are:

At-Tawheed Islamic Center

Baker Publishing House

Bates Place Neighbors

Church of the Servant

First Christian Reformed Church

Fredrick Meijer Gardens &

Holy Spirit Episcopal Church

Individual community volunteers

Kiwanas



Spring Interns

Grand Rapids Christian High School
Yara Miguel - Lighthouse Academy
Sagey White-Jamies - Grand Rapids Community College

Our spring interns joined us at the greenhouses to help us lay the foundation of our restoration work: transplanting native plant seedlings from smaller to larger containers. These plants will continue to grow in the safety of our greenhouses until they are ready to be used in garden projects throughout our watershed to capture and clean runoff.

Watershed Support - Grant Awarded

The Michigan Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy awarded PCS with funding to support water quality improvements.

This grant will help us provide:

10

site assessments for potential green infrastructure (GI) projects

28

youth hired & equipped with knowledge, skills & experience in GI installation and maintenance

5

site designs for native landscapes and rain gardens

Cultural Intelligence

training modules created for all PCS staff, interns, researchers, and Green Team

New Relationships

with new partners in new neighborhoods

Looking Forward

Summer is just getting started, and we're excited for all it entails!

Keep your eyes open for our Summer Newsletter, where we're excited to share things like:

- Summer Supercrew (22+ students!)
- Curb Cut Bonanza 2021
- Green Team Graduates



Thanks for reading!

Being in community is one of our favorite aspects of what we do. Thanks for sharing in storytelling with us!

For more anecdotes like these, you can follow us on social media at:

@PlasterCreekStewards



The Plaster Creek Watershed occupies a portion of the ancestral home of the Hopewell people (Goodall Focus), and more recently the Anishinaabe Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations. We are grateful for the way these people cared for the land and loved it. We are informed by their teachings and strive to honor their example through ongoing education and restoration work.



Plaster Creek Stewards is a collaboration of Calvin University, community partners, and residents focusing on education, research, and restoration in an effort to return health and beauty to the Plaster Creek Watershed.



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