

# Trees & Greenscape Reduce Stormwater Runoff in Connecticut River Watershed

## The Challenge:

Storms can drop a lot of rain on communities. Sometimes so much rain falls in a single weather event that stormwater runoff and the combined outflow from local sewers can cause flooding, soil erosion, pollution, property damage, and worse.

## The Solution:

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) in western Massachusetts set out to reduce stormwater runoff and sewer outflows in the Connecticut River Watershed. They used a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service to leverage a new State initiative to plant thousands of urban trees and make improvements to streetscape designs. This work focused on three cities that contribute the largest combined sewer outflows into the Connecticut River Watershed in Massachusetts: Holyoke, Chicopee, and Springfield.

In addition to planting trees, project personnel designed improvements for ongoing street infrastructure construction projects to help capture more stormwater. These changes would help reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff and be used to demonstrate stormwater reduction techniques for other New England mill cities.

The Forest Service provided \$239,900 in Landscape Scale Restoration funds for the project.

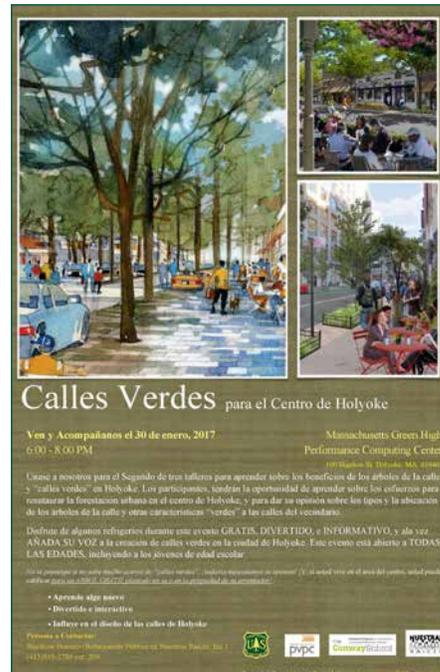
## Resulting Benefits:

Matching the Forest Service grant, project participants planted a total of 1,245 trees in Holyoke and Chicopee, MA. They also designed tree box filters to filter stormwater and conducted extensive outreach about how valuable trees are in reducing stormwater runoff.

PVPC held a series of public meetings in Holyoke and Chicopee in 2017 and 2018. These meetings were widely publicized with the assistance of outreach subcontractors Valley Opportunity Council for Chicopee, ReGreen Springfield, and Nuestras Raices for Holyoke. Nuestras Raices conducted outreach in both English and Spanish.

These public meetings focused on these topics:

- Tree planting and tree care by residents,
- Gathering public input from residents on neighborhood goals for green streets,
- Presenting draft Conway School of Design students' landscape design plans for green streets,



Spanish version of a promotional poster courtesy of PVPC.

- Presenting engineering design plans for streetscape improvements, and
- Hosting a demonstration event to showcase the benefits of using green infrastructure to reduce stormwater flow.

The Conway School of Design developed new stormwater streetscape designs, based on proposed street reconstruction projects, to be used by public works departments in the three cities.

## Sharing Success:

The project team conducted broad outreach in the cities. In Chicopee, for example, this included advertising public meetings by posting flyers in neighborhoods directly surrounding the proposed project areas. The team also directed invitations to business owners who were either located in, or invested in, the area; posted events on Craigslist, local bulletins, and Facebook; and placed notifications on local TV and MassLive.com.

*“Green designs” and extensive public outreach were made possible through a Forest Service grant.*

Federal Award: 15-DG-11420004-091



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June 2019