



**The ARAMARK Tower
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Nurturing Nature & Knowledge” - Exciting Plans to Transform Grassy Field into a Healthy, Natural Ecosystem

The grassy field located on Lycoming Street between O Street and Castor Avenue will undergo an exciting transformation during the next several months, as the field is being restored to a natural landscape setting. This transformation is known as a naturalization project.

The Philadelphia Water Department's Bureau of Laboratory Services has worked with a local landscape architect to develop plans for bringing a more natural landscape to the City. Plans call for a rich tapestry of several distinct areas including a mature woodland, a cedar grove, and a meadow that will be woven throughout the site. In addition, a small woodland gathering area will be included to allow teachers and children from Juniata's local schools to visit the site, learn about the natural environment and assist the Labs in planting small trees, shrubs and wildflowers in the meadow. The children will help build birdhouses and plant flowers that attract butterflies to the area.

Environmental trends in the U.S. suggest that there are better ways to protect natural green space in an urban city such as Philadelphia. “Current trends in landscape management are moving away from individual species, known as a monoculture, such as what you have in a traditional lawn, and towards the creation of whole habitats. Doing so will directly contribute to the overall improvement of our local watershed in Juniata, known as the Tacony-Frankford Watershed,” notes Geoffrey Brock, director of PWD's Bureau of Laboratory Services.

Naturalization uses native species of vegetation to create or restore an area to a condition representative of the nature landscape. “By re-establishing plant communities such as woodlands, groves and meadows, we can restore the area to a natural ecosystem. Our ‘Nurturing Nature and Knowledge’ project is an ideal setting for local school children to learn about bio-diversity and natural habitats in their neighborhood. This project is a great learning ground to get children involved in protecting the watershed where they live,” observed Brock.

During the past week, the field was treated to remove weeds and vines. In early September, the field will be tilled and dead debris will be removed. A grassy path that will meander through the field connecting the separate areas will be staked out, and then larger trees and shrubs will be planted. By mid to late September, the field will be treated again to eliminate additional weed and vine growth. In early October, any remaining dead weeds and vines will be removed, and an area will be seeded for the meadow.

This tentative schedule will allow 10-12 weeks required for the establishment of the meadow before the onset of winter. Further weed control will continue as necessary. In early spring 2005, the meadow area will be reviewed to ensure proper establishment of the native plants.

The existing wrought-iron fence around the perimeter of the property will remain intact for security purposes to protect the developing landscape, which would be damaged by uncontrolled access.

The "Nurturing Nature and Knowledge" project is just one of several naturalization projects created by the Philadelphia Water Department at its facilities during the past five years. Other natural landscaping sites have been established at the Baxter Water Treatment Plant as well as the Southwest and Northeast Water Pollution Control Plants. The most unique project is the Somerton Tanks Farm, which has been created to demonstrate the viability of urban farms in Philadelphia.

For more information about the "Nurturing Nature and Knowledge" project at the Bureau of Laboratory Services, or about the Somerton Tanks Farm Project and purchasing organic vegetables from the farm, please call 215-685-6300.

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