

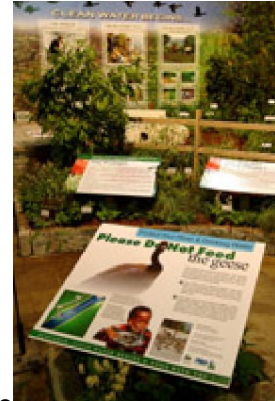


**The ARAMARK Tower
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Water Department Awarded for Flower Show Exhibit: Keeping America's Waterways Beautiful:

Sunday, March 13 marked the end of a successful 2005 Philadelphia Flower Show, and with its ending comes the fruits of labor. The Philadelphia Water Department received the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Award of Merit for a Nonacademic Educational Exhibit and the Special Achievement Award of the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania for Conservation.



This year's theme was "Keeping America's Waterways Beautiful." The Water Department, along with the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, presented an exhibit on a landscaping project in Fairmount Park.

Nearly seven years ago a gaggle of Canadian geese took up year-round residence in Fairmount Park along a section of West River Drive. People flocked to the geese, bringing an endless and abundant supply of food, giving the geese no reason to leave, resulting in environmental changes.

The geese trounced about, tore up the landscape and caused significant erosion to the stream bank. When it rained the stormwater runoff carried sediment along with pollutants into the river. More than 150 geese, producing nearly 82 tons of droppings annually, posed a risk to drinking water quality since their new home was very close to an intake for one of Philadelphia's water treatment plants.

A humane solution was needed, and one was quickly found. Geese feel insecure in areas where the natural ground cover obstructs their line of vision. Following this logic, volunteers from the Water Department, Fairmount Park Commission and citizens restored the barren stream bank with native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers that grow higher than the line of vision for the geese.

The project proved to be a success, and the geese moved on to less environmentally sensitive areas in the park. The flourishing native plants are effectively protecting the source water by absorbing and filtering much of the stormwater runoff before it enters the river. The graceful meadow, dotted with colorful wildflowers, now provides a visual retreat for the thousands of Philadelphians who recreate in that area of Fairmount Park. The native plants used to restore the river bank have yielded additional benefits by increasing habitat for small animals, insects, and even for the fish.

Using best management practices, as demonstrated in this modest project, can add up to make a significant improvement in the quality of America's water resources – from the Schuylkill River, to the Delaware Estuary to the shining Atlantic!



(Photos Courtesy of Philadelphia Department of Records)

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