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## **ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AT REVEREND EVERS PARK May 21, 2016 Stewardship Day**

*Camden, New Jersey* - The Delaware Riverkeeper Network, partnering with Wakefern Corporation and the Morgan Village Circle CDC, will lead volunteers May 21st in planting 80 native trees. They will also doing maintenance for additional trees and a bioswale that were installed in 2015, and will be cleaning up litter.

The new trees will grow to help re-establish a healthy woodland along Newton Creek. These trees will help filter stormwater runoff, improve native habitat, and clean the air. The bioswale installed in 2015 slows and filters stormwater runoff before it can enter Newton Creek. Additionally the park trees installed in 2014-2015 provide shade and beauty around the basketball courts, play areas, and walkways, while further enhancing the park ecology.

The May 21st event runs from 9:00 AM to 1:00 P.M. We'll meet just inside the park entrance at the end of Hunter Street, off of Morgan Boulevard. Volunteers are welcome.

“The updated Master Plan includes a blending of ‘Exercise & Ecology’ where exercise stations and trails are proposed alongside ecological educational exhibits and restored woodlands. A boardwalk is proposed along Newton Creek, and a new fishing pier is proposed to replace a long-lost pier. A multi-use trail is proposed to connect Morgan Boulevard to Mount Ephraim Ave, providing an important link between neighborhoods and businesses, completing another section of the regional trail system,” explained John Nystedt, Restoration Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

“This project will be a significant benefit for the community, providing much needed amenities and quality-of-life improvements, while managing stormwater runoff and restoring ecological function” says Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and head of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

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The planting is part of the ecological restoration included in the park's updated Master Plan, begun last year by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network with partners including the New Jersey Tree Foundation (NJTF), American Water, and the Wakefern Corporation. Together they completed planting dozens of trees and shrubs as well as hundreds of native grasses and perennials. Funding has been provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Foundation for a Better Tomorrow, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, and Wakefern Corporation. It is a multi-pronged effort that includes job training through the NJTF and educational outreach to the Saturday program at the Creative Arts Morgan Village Academy.

Students from the Academy are now creating mini-posters which will be hung on trees May 14<sup>th</sup>, describing the trees and ecology of the park. There has been a problem with vandalism of trees, and the hope is that these mini-posters by neighborhood children will help show how important the park's trees are.

Neighborhood leadership is provided by the Morgan Village Circle Community Development Corporation, led by Esther Gross, Executive Director. Her caring and consistent leadership is inspiring others to improve the neighborhood and the lives of residents.

The park project is directed and designed by John Nystedt, a landscape architect and Restoration Director at DRN. Planning concepts were developed with input from Sally Reynolds and Melissa Boffa, also landscape architects; conceptual ideas for the park were previously provided by a landscape architecture class at Philadelphia University in conjunction with Olin Partnership.

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