

Case Study: Native Grassland at Philadelphia Electric Company Manor Road ROW

Promoting Native Habitats and Biodiversity along Transmission Corridors

Native Return®, LLC

Study Site:

PECO/Exelon Manor Road Right of Way (ROW)
Philadelphia, PA

Study Goals:

To replace maintenance-intensive invasive vegetation with low-maintenance, no-mow native vegetation that promotes biodiversity in the Right of Way transmission line corridor.

Study Summary:

Native Return®, LLC converted 28 acres of PECO/Exelon's High Capacity Right of Way to a low growing, sustainable, no-mow native grassland vegetation. The project included replacing invasive vegetation requiring regular maintenance with healthy, low-maintenance, native plants supportive of wildlife. PECO/Exelon expanded the program to other locations due to the Manor Road ROW project success. The purpose of these projects is to benefit the environment as well as to keep PECO/Exelon transmission corridors open and operating at full efficiency.

Study Conclusions:

Non-native, invasive plants were eliminated. In addition, as can be seen in the top photograph, the no-mow, deep rooted native grasses in the foreground provide a bold visual contrast to the maintenance-intensive turfgrass in the background. Native grasslands reduce maintenance costs and chemical use and effectively control erosion and stormwater runoff.

Native grasslands encourage other native plants that support wildlife. Healthy faunal communities are being restored. Quarterly monitoring revealed 52 bird species and breeding populations that include Eastern Box Turtle, Milk Snake, Eastern Blue Bird, Belted Kingfisher, and American Kestrel.

Sustainable practices improve public relations. In 2009, PECO won the National BASF Corporation Quality Vegetation Management Project Habitat Award for the grassland project. The site was again spotlighted in 2011 when it received the prestigious "Wildlife at Work" certification from the Wildlife Habitat Council in recognition of its benefit to wildlife as a valuable habitat and wildlife corridor.



Alexander Brown,
Head of PECO Vegetation
Management Transmission Team:
"This project demonstrates a great way to maintain our transmission corridors, beautify the region, benefit local wildlife AND save dollars!"

