

New Haven Harbor Watershed Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

New Haven, Connecticut



Schoolyards, vacant lots, city parks and front yards on public and private lands in New Haven will provide habitat for migratory birds and other species as part of an Urban Oases project. The project has been taking place in the city between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Audubon Connecticut, along with other partners, and aims to use these lands to create a network of wildlife-friendly habitat oases and improvements throughout the city. The Service designated the Urban Oases project as the New Haven Harbor Watershed Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership on October 30, 2013.

The project builds on existing work by partners in New Haven to improve or create wildlife habitat in urban areas, foster environmental education and hands-on conservation with youth, and encourage community-based land stewardship.

For the initial phase of the project, efforts will focus on Beaver Pond Park and West River Memorial Park, both in close proximity to schools and active neighborhood groups. The Friends of the West River will undertake an erosion control and habitat enhancement project and the Friends of Beaver Ponds Park will remove invasive vegetation, and restore native plants for wildlife habitat in coordination with New Haven Parks, Recreation and Trees. Additionally, Audubon Connecticut and Common Ground High School, Urban Farm and

Environmental Center is supporting the expansion of the Schoolyard Habitat program to include three new elementary schools with assistance from the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. Students from Common Ground High School and Hill House High School will also help plant and maintain habitat gardens at schools, parks, vacant lots and public and private front yards.

The program will also provide training, workshops and other resources to schoolteachers to teach lessons about ecology and wildlife diversity and provide environmental education and job training to students through the New Haven Urban Resources Initiative and the Yale Peabody Museum. Service staff, students and neighborhood groups will monitor the progress and impact of

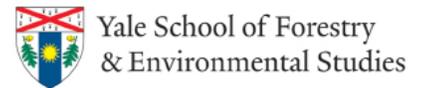
the restoration projects throughout the city by participating in citizen science surveys coordinated by Audubon Connecticut.

In May 2013, the project competed nationally to be designated as an Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. The designation of the New Haven Harbor Watershed Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership is a formal recognition of excellence under the Service's Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative. Under the initiative, the Service is striving to make the outdoors more meaningful and accessible to urban audiences. This partnership provides a cost effective, innovative way to enable urban communities to learn more about the National Wildlife Refuge System and wildlife conservation, and to gain an appreciation for the outdoors.



USFWS

The partnership aims to provide environmental education programs to students and establish wildlife-friendly habitat sites throughout New Haven.



Urban Oases sites



Partners

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Audubon Connecticut
Common Ground High School and Environmental Education Center
New Haven Department of Parks, Recreation and Trees
New Haven Parks Friends Groups
New Haven Public Schools
New Haven Urban Resources Initiative
Yale Peabody Museum
Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies