

# SUGARLAND RUN'S SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING PROJECT

## Abstract

Sugarland Run is a community in Loudoun County, Virginia located north of State Route 7 and south of the Potomac River. The community has approximately 2,000 residents living in single-family homes and townhouses with many amenities that include a community center, pools, and a walking trail. After a homeowner outreach event that educated the community about sustainable landscaping practices, the community was inspired to implement these practices and work with Piedmont Environmental Council for assistance. Three entities were present at the event including a county representative, master gardener and a native plant landscaper. This project placed an emphasis on soil sampling, tree and shrub planting in the neighborhood.

## Partners and Funding

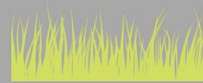
- The organization was unable to account for individual project funds. However, the total funding for several sustainable community landscaping projects was approximately \$200,000.
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Loudoun County
- Master gardeners
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- Fairfax Water
  - Provided plants and helped with Piedmont Environmental Council's outreach event

## Planning

- Two years after the outreach event
  - Piedmont Environmental Council secured funding and asked Sugarland Run community if they were interested in a sustainable landscaping project.
- County involvement
  - Piedmont Environmental Council contacted the county about tree planting. They also offered soil studies to the homeowners associations (HOA) and community residents.
- Management
  - A nutrient management plan was developed for 45 acres of turf. The HOA listened to their landscaper and his recommendation for liming in the area.

Landscape : Suburban

Tree information



Total acreage covered by trees: ~1.4 acres



367 total trees planted

Co-benefits



Improved water recharge



Improved aesthetics



Habitat restoration

Map



A map of Loudoun County, Va.

Source: Google images

## BMP Information

Completed Soil Samples

Created a nutrient management plan

Planted native trees

Planted shrubs

- Tree decisions
  - Two tree planting days were planned – one in the spring and fall.
  - 3 out of 5 areas were designated as ‘no mow.’
- Spring planning
  - The spring planting was publicized so individuals not residing in Sugarland Run could participate. More than 80 people volunteered.
  - Planting was completed around Sugarland Run’s existing stormwater pond and drainage swale. This ran through a large turf area per the design and plant selection developed for the site by the Loudoun County arborist.
- Fall planning
  - Not as many people showed up but the HOAs landscaper had his crew with him. Holes were dug the same day the trees were planted.
  - Volunteers planted 200 trees in three areas.
  - The trees helped expand existing forested areas, improve the landscape and improve absorption of rainfall and nutrients.
- Maintenance
  - The Mastergardeners tree steward group committed to check on the trees to make sure they were healthy.
- Special note
  - The trees were planted mostly in five gallon pots. They ranged 4-5 feet in height.
  - The project was completed once the nutrient management plan was finished in spring 2016

## Maintenance

Piedmont Environmental Council had no written agreement with the HOA. The HOA was responsible for tree watering and maintenance. However, Loudoun County helped with tree watering the first fall and provided watering bags.

## Outcome

This project was successful and had many awareness impacts. The community is very interested in continuing their sustainable landscaping practices. Gem Bingol, the contact person for this project, provided advice to others saying that it takes a lot of time as this is a process. Also, it is very helpful to have the HOA landscaper involved throughout the entire project.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**GEM BINGOL, PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL**  
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## A BRIEF TIMELINE

### 2012

Piedmont Environment Council held its homeowner outreach event.

### SPRING 2014

Planning for the project began.

### APRIL 25, 2015

Volunteers planted 167 trees and shrubs for the first tree planting day.

### OCTOBER 10, 2015

Volunteers planted 200 native trees for the second tree planting day.

### 2015 TO NOW

Sugarland Run continues to maintain and monitor the sites.



A before picture of the tree planting area.

Source: Gem Bingol, Piedmont Environmental Council



An after group picture during the spring tree planting.

Source: Gem Bingol, Piedmont Environmental Council