

Bethlehem Backyards for Wildlife (BBFW) - Overview 2021

Our mission: to work with the City of Bethlehem to support biodiversity and minimize negative environmental impacts by encouraging city residents, schools, businesses, and other organizations to implement wildlife friendly and sustainable garden practices.

Bethlehem is a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Community Wildlife Habitat

Bethlehem registered in 2009 and became certified in 2012. BBFW fulfills requirements to recertify every year. Requirements for recertification: Maintain website (facebook page), conduct educational events, participate in community service, increase NWF certified spaces.

More than **250 Bethlehem residences** are registered as NWF wildlife habitats.

Schools: Calypso, Buchanan, East Hills, Freedom, Lehigh University

Public spaces certified by BBFW or in partnership with other organizations:

Sand Island Native Plant Preserve, Meadow on the Southside Greenway, ArtsQuest Butterfly Garden, Millers House Garden, Illick's Mill Native Garden

Parks certified by the city:

Friendship, Sand Island Children's Garden, Bethlehem Sculpture Garden, Bethlehem Public Library Garden, Illick's Mill Nature Area and Trail, Saucon Park

NWF Wildlife Habitat Certification requires: Habitat providing food, water, shelter, place to raise young, sustainable gardening practices. We will be reapplying for certification in 2022.

Native Plant Demonstration Gardens maintained by BBFW committee volunteers:

Meadow on the Southside Greenway, Hoover-Mason Trestle, Rose Garden Pollinator Garden

2021 Highlights:

Rose Garden Pollinator Garden – expanded and maintained by irrigating and weeding the two native perennial gardens on 8th Ave that BBFW designed and planted in 2019

Rose Garden Redevelopment – assisted with planting the areas of the Rose Garden

On-going projects:

In 2021, with the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions lifted by the City, we were able to work on maintaining the Hoover-Mason Trestle on a regular basis, which was a huge improvement over 2020. Our routine debris removal, weeding and pruning during the spring and summer months were aided greatly by the City work crew, who met us after each cleanup event and loaded up the piles of debris, hauling it to the Recycling Center. Ongoing restrictions from other volunteer groups who have assisted us in the past, prior to COVID, meant we had lots of maintenance to do with a limited number of volunteers. We are hopeful that in 2022 we will return to a full complement of volunteers to maintain the Hoover Mason Trestle and the other native garden areas, all of which are such a valuable asset to the City of Bethlehem.