

Roots of Renewal

Cultivating Biodiversity and Habitat Enhancement in Community Spaces
(BHE) Project

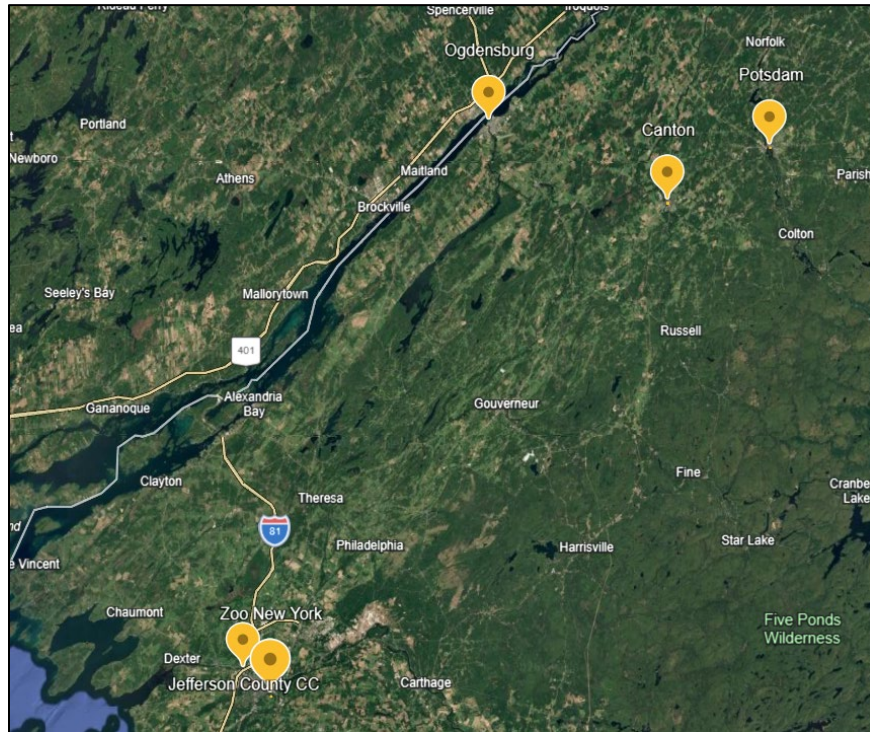
FINAL REPORT

SCOPE OF WORK:

Enhancing biodiversity through invasive species management and restoration in community spaces. The Cultivating Biodiversity and Habitat Enhancement in Community Spaces (BHE) Project seeks to manage invasive species infestations and establish at least five populations of climate-smart native plants in urban areas across the counties in SLELO PRISM. These efforts aim to support native pollinators and wildlife while reducing the susceptibility of urban green spaces against invasive species encroachment and the impacts of a changing climate through effective management and restoration.

OUTCOMES:

- Created 5 BHE sites in public community spaces within the SLELO region (Watertown, Ogdensburg, Canton, Potsdam).
- An additional planting occurred on 6/2/26 at the Carthage Highschool with 12 students and 1 teacher.
- Surveyed for invasive species during project planning phase. Installed native plants to enhance biodiversity, support pollinators, and other wildlife, while also reducing the susceptibility of sites to invasive species encroachment, and improving resiliency to a changing climate.
- Increased knowledge of both native and invasive species in communities through volunteer engagement and the creation of interpretive panels.



SLELO region map indicating the location of the five BHE project locations.

COMPLETED TASKS (MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES):

1. Initial kickoff meeting with TNC staff

2. Identified 5 BHE Project Sites:

- i. All locations are public spaces in a community or urban area that will be maintained either by volunteers or by a groundskeeper at the associated organization.
- ii. Each location is at least a 10X10m/30X30-foot planting site with more than 30 different species with a dense planting plan.

3. Purchase plants/Species specifications:

- a. CCE selected and purchased plants for the project (each site).
 - i. All plants listed and purchased were submitted and approved by TNC SLELO PRISM staff.
 - ii. Preference was given to climate-smart, native plants that are native to the Northern New York region.
 1. Species were selected using the Northeast Regional Invasive Species and Climate Change (RISCC) [climate-smart gardening plant list](#), the [NY Flora Atlas](#), and other relevant resources.

4. Development and installation of an information panel:



Project sign installed in Potsdam BHE location

- a. Five informational signs (24"x 36") were created, one for each BHE location.
 - b. Signs were used to signify the project and provide a general overview of invasive species, the PRISM, and the importance of biodiversity
 - c. Signs include a QR code linked to a SLELO webpage providing further information and resources for communities to stay engaged in the program and encourage them to implement similar work on their own properties.
 - d. Signs include all required funding logos and acknowledgements and are approved by SLELO PRISM.
5. **Recruitment and Planting** - Recruited and coordinated 65 volunteers, CCE Master Gardener and Master Naturalist, who were/are responsible for the following:
 - a. Planting at BHE sites.
 - b. Assisting in the creation of a 2- year maintenance plan, with the goal of plant survival.
 6. **Collaboration with TNC SLELO Team in hosting plantings and presentations:**

- a. 5 plantings were held in collaboration with SLELO staff and the assistance of 65 unique volunteers.
- b. Participated in two webinars discussing the value of native plants species, benefits of the planting projects like the BHE initiative, and education on regional invasive species and strategies for management by private landowners and volunteers.
- c. Presentations were made in partnership with SLELO PRISM and CCE Natural Resource Staff. These presentations (2) were attended by a total of 32 participants.
- d. Below is a table outlining the plantings and webinars. Note that Attendees are not representative of unique volunteers as volunteers attended multiple events.

Date	Event Title/Name	Event Category	Location	Attendees
4/30/2026	Roots of Renewal: BHE Project Webinar 1	Volunteer		17
5/11/2026	Roots of Renewal: BHE Project Planting	Volunteer	Zoo NY	9
5/12/2026	Roots of Renewal: BHE Project Planting	Volunteer	JCC Watertown	7
5/15/2026	Roots of Renewal: BHE Project Planting	Volunteer	Potsdam	14
5/18/2026	Roots of Renewal: BHE Project Planting	Volunteer	Ogdensburg	15
5/19/2026	Roots of Renewal: BHE Project Planting	Volunteer	Canton	7
5/28/2026	Roots of Renewal: BHE Project Webinar 2	Volunteer		15
6/2/2026	Roots of Renewal: BHE Project Planting	Volunteer	Carthage Central School	13

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COMPREHENSIVE SPECIES LIST:

Botanical	Common	Family	Form
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big bluestem	Poaceae	Graminoid
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Wild columbine	Ranunculaceae	Forb
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp Milkweed	Apocynaceae	Forb
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	common milkweed	Apocynaceae	Forb
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Sideoats Grama	Poaceae	Graminoid
<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>	Fox Sedge	Cyperaceae	Graminoid

<i>Cornus sericea</i>	red-osier dogwood	Cornaceae	Shrub
<i>Deschampsia cepituousa</i>	Tufted Hair Grass	Poaceae	Graminoid
<i>Doellingeria umbellate</i>	Flat-top White Aster	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	purple love grass	Poaceae	Graminoid
<i>Eurybia divaricate</i>	White wood Aster	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Eurybia macrophylla</i>	Big-leaved Aster	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Euthamia graminifolia</i>	Common flat-topped goldenrod	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Eutorchium maculatum</i>	Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Eutrochium perfoliatum</i>	Boneset	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	common sneezeweed	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Heuchera americana</i>	Alumroot	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	common winterberry	Aquifoliaceae	Shrub
<i>Iris versicolor</i>	blue-flag Iris	Iridaceae	Forb
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	common soft rush	Juncaceae	Graminoid
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal flower	Campanulaceae	Forb
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i> var. <i>siphilitica</i>	Great blue lobelia	Campanulaceae	Forb
<i>Mimulus ringens</i>	Allegheny monkey flower	Phrymaceae	Forb
<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Oswego tea	Lamiaceae	Forb
<i>Penstemon hirsutus</i>	Hairy Bear-tongue	Plantagaceae	Forb
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	Ninebark	Rosaceae	Shrub
<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	Virginia Mountain mint	Lamiaceae	Forb
<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i> var. <i>laciniata</i>	Green-headed coneflower	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	common elderberry	Viburnaceae	Shrub
<i>Schoenoplectus pungens</i>	three-square bulrush	Cyperaceae	Graminoid
<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	Gray goldenrod	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	Common Wrinkle-leaved Goldenrod	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Symphyotrichum cordifolium</i>	Blue-wood Aster	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>	New England Aster	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Symphyotrichum novi-belgii</i>	New York Aster	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Symphyotrichum patens</i>	Later Purple Aster	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Symphyotrichum puniceum</i>	Purple-stemmed Aster	Asteraceae	Forb
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden Alexanders	Apiaceae	Forb

SITE INFORMATION:

Zoo New York

1 Thompson Park, Watertown, NY



This location is roughly 1100 sq. ft. with plants spaced 12 " apart, and is comprised of shade-tolerant and full-sun species. The Zoo New York BHE project will be maintained by the Jefferson County Master Gardener Volunteers and other supervised zoo volunteers. This location was prepared by Zoo New York volunteers by hand-removing the sod and carefully leaving excess soil on site to maximize the organic material available to the newly installed plants. This plot was an initial phase, with further extensions to the bed being prepared shortly after BHE project completion. Zoo New York intends to add native plant species to much of the grounds in order to create a more cohesive experience between the native animals and the landscaping.

Jefferson County Community College

1220 Coffeen Street, Watertown, NY



This location is roughly 950 sq. ft. with plants spaced 12” and is comprised of full-sun, medium- to wet-adapted plants due to an adjacent slope that may lead to rainwater filling this area. The Jefferson County Community College BHE project will be overseen and managed by groundskeeping staff with assistance from the students and staff within the Environmental Science Department of JCC who also executed the site preparation by mechanically removing the sod and providing mulch to the exposed soil prior to planting. This location was strategically selected to be in close proximity to a popular walking trail so that passersby could stop to learn and appreciate the beauty and utility of native plant species. It also happens to be downslope of a nearby soccer field so JCC hopes to see the planting act as a runoff catchment area that can absorb excess rainwater that comes from the sport fields.

Frederic Remington Art Museum

303 Washington Street, Ogdensburg, NY



This location is roughly 1260 sq. ft. with plants spaced 12 " apart, and is comprised of shade-tolerant and full-sun species. The Frederic Remington Art Museum BHE project will be managed by the Ogdensburg Youth Garden Club along with St. Lawrence County Master Gardener Volunteers. This project was directed with the assistance of Loni Recker, the president of CCE St. Lawrence County, who was inspired to install an educational space that could serve the Ogdensburg community and to add a new living exhibit to the art museum. Much of the existing garden plants were removed or relocated to make space for the planting, which replaced an entire lawn outside the museum. Following project mature, the museum hopes to expand this project into other areas of the property.

Downtown Canton

64 Main Street, Canton, NY



This location is roughly 1000 sq. ft. with 5 different beds making up the project. Plants were spaced 12" and are made up of full-sun, dry-tolerant species. The Downtown Canton BHE project will be overseen and managed by the Canton Sustainability Committee along with St. Lawrence County Master Gardener Volunteers. Project preparation was done by community volunteers who hand removed a variety of non-native weeds, smothered the beds, and applied hardwood mulch prior to planting. This site was purchased by the village of Canton to hopefully improve it considering it remained vacant and unkempt for many years. With the hard work from volunteers, the intention to use it not only for pollinator habitat but to also add additional space for other gardening to attract community members to come and learn about the possibilities of utilizing residential space for ecological restoration.

Ives Park

3 Riverview Drive, Potsdam, NY



This location is roughly 900 sq. ft. with plants spaced 10” and is comprised of part shade to full sun, medium- to wet-adapted plants. The Ives Park BHE project will be managed by the Village of Potsdam Parks and Recreation staff, along with assistance from the local Potsdam Garden Club. Preparation was accomplished by the Village Parks and Recreation department who mechanically removed the sod and applied mulch prior to planting. The park has several smaller planting projects that have served as inspiration for the local residence to use more native species. This project is the first official all-native planting in Ives park and comes on the heels for a new policy by the village to use all native plants for any new planting projects going forward. We hope with the successful maturation of this project that we can plan larger expansion within the park to create a larger impact for the residence and the wildlife that depend on this species.

Carthage Central School

36500 NYS Route 26. CARTHAGE, NY 13619



An unplanned sixth site was added to the project as a result of interest from an enthusiastic teacher and interested high school students. Remaining plant material from the BHE projects was used to plant a native planting on the campus of Carthage Central School in Jefferson County. This was done with the assistance of the Earth Stewards and Sustainability Service Center. Approximately 500 plants were installed in the raised bed near the auxiliary gym. The plants should be fully established by the fall. Since we planted natives, they should thrive, and the bed should require minimal maintenance. This location can now be used by students to learn about the native species but also practice ongoing management on a small scale. The school hopes to expand and add new native plantings around the campus as new funding opportunities arise.

MAINTENANCE PLAN:

Each of the 5 locations has an associated volunteer group of the groundskeeping program that will be overseeing its BHE projects for the foreseeable future. For the first two years,

as the plants mature, CCE Jefferson staff will communicate with the groups to ensure the following tasks are accomplished:

1. Weekly Irrigation, if needed (Summer 2026, Summer 2027 as needed)
2. Monitoring and management of weeds (Summer 2026 – 2028)
3. Annual vegetation cutbacks (Early Spring 2027, 2028)
4. Annual mulching, if needed (Early Spring 2027, 2028)
5. Notification of any significant losses (Spring 2027)
6. Suggested additions or alterations to species composition (As needed)

These tasks are to be done to ensure the successful growth of the species planted and to assist with community engagement by providing opportunities for others to participate in the project work, with the hope of increasing the knowledge and appreciation for native plants in the SLELO region.

Project Planting Data

Botanical	Common	ZooNY	JCC	Odgersburg	Potsdam	Canton	TOTAL
Andropogon gerardii	Big Bluestem	40	50	0	40	0	130
Aquilegia canadensis	Wild columbine	30	30	30	30	30	150
Asclepias incarnata	Swamp Milkweed	30	40	30	40	10	150
Eutorchium maculatum	Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed	0	32	0	0	0	32
Asclepias syriaca	Common Milkweed	20	20	20	20	20	100
Bouteloua curtipendula	Sideoats Grama	50		50	0	50	150
Carex vulpinoidea	Fox Sedge	40	60	40	50		190
Doellingeria umbellata	Flat-top White Aster	25	25	25	25		100
Eragrostis spectabilis	purple love grass	40	40	40	40	40	200
Eurybia divaricata	Flat-top White Aster	20	20	20	20	20	100
Lobelia cardinalis	Cardinal flower		36		36		72
Eurybia macrophylla	Big-leaved Aster	100	150	50	100	0	400
Euthamia graminifolia	Common flat-topped goldenrod	20	0	20	10	50	100
Helenium autumnale	common sneezeweed	20		20	20	40	100
Heuchera americana	Alumroot	32		32	32		96
Iris versicolor	blue-flag Iris	20	20	20	20	20	100
Cornus sericea	red-osier dogwood	3	3				6
Juncus effusus	common soft rush	10	20	0	20	0	50
Eutrochium perfoliatum	Boneset	0	40	0	30	10	80
Lobelia siphilitica var. siphilitica	Great blue lobelia	10	10	10	10	10	50
Ilex verticillata	common winterberry	3					3
Mimulus ringens	Allegheny monkey flower	10	10	10	10	10	50
Monarda didyma	Oswego tea	10	20	10	10	0	50
Penstemon hirsutus	Hairy Bear-tongue	40	40	40	40	40	200
Penstemon hirsutus	Hairy Bear-tongue	40	40	40	40	40	200
Pycnanthemum virginianum	Virginia Mountain mint	30	0	40	20	60	150
Physocarpus opulifolius	Ninebark	3		3			6
Rudbeckia laciniata var. laciniata	Green-headed coneflower	10	20	10	10		50
Sambucus canadensis	common elderberry	3	1		1	1	6
Schoenoplectus pungens	three-square bulrush	0	20	10	20		50
Solidago nemoralis	Gray goldenrod	30	10	30	30	50	150
Solidago rugosa	Common Wrinkle-leaved Goldenrod	10	10	10	10	10	50

Symphotrichum cordifolium	Blue Wood Aster	40	40	40	40	40	200
Symphotrichum novae-angliae	New England Aster	20	20	20	20	20	100
Symphotrichum novi-belgii	New York Aster	30	30	30	30	30	150
Symphotrichum patens	Late Purple Aster	40	40	40	40	40	200
Symphotrichum puniceum	Purple-stemmed Aster	10	10	10	10	10	50
Helenium autumnale	common sneezeweed		25	25	25	25	100
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted Hair Grass	0	0	25	25	100	150
Zizia aurea	Golden Alexanders	50	25	25	25	25	150
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