

Final Report for Quinnipiac River Fund Grant

Scope of project

Building on the momentum of the 2009-2011 NOFA Organic Land Care (OLC) Program's Homeowner Workshops which were funded by Quinnipiac River Fund as well, \$6,000 from the Quinnipiac River Fund in 2011-2012 enabled us to continue developing homeowner education in organic landscaping practices in the Quinnipiac watershed area. We accomplished this by:

- 1) Presenting two more educational organic landscaping workshops using the homeowner's course curriculum developed last year with funds from the Quinnipiac River Fund.
- 2) Initiating outreach on organic land care to inland/wetland commissions and conservation commissions
- 3) Analyzing our web data of zip codes, search terms and homeowner surveys to better understand what information homeowners are looking for and how we can serve those interested in organic land care.
- 4) Creating an online turf forum for school groundskeepers

A fifth goal which was part of our request for funding and which was not realized was:

- 5) To hold a 2-day Rain Garden Installation Workshop which would result in the creation of new rain gardens.

Monies requested from the Quinnipiac River Fund for the fifth goal were not granted and by agreement of both parties the focus groups were not pursued.

Summary Report

- 1) **Homeowners' Workshops** - Using the 1.5 hour workshop curriculum developed last year under the Quinnipiac River Fund grant, two additional workshops were presented on why and how to do organic land care – including segments on pesticide hazards, soil testing, compost, plant selection, common pest control, and proper watering, mowing and fertilization. Each hour long presentation was followed by 0.5 hour Q&A sessions. Workshops were led by accredited organic land care professionals (AOLCPs). A questionnaire was handed out to the audience at the end of each workshop.

Workshops presented:

Workshop 1 - Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at the Hamden Public Library in Hamden, CT

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Presented by Tom Barry, AOLCP, via power point

Attendance: 21

Workshop 2 - Tuesday, March 13, 2012 at Cheshire Public Library, in Cheshire, CT

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Presented by Bettylou Sandy, AOLCP, via power point

Attendance: 23

Promotion of the Events:

We advertized on ctnofa.org, organiclandcare.net, in the CT NOFA Gleanings twice-per-month e-newsletter, AOLCP monthly e-newsletter. In addition, we sent notices to CT NOFA members in Cheshire, Hamden and in surrounding towns. Press releases were posted to the local online Patches in Cheshire and Hamden. Flyers were sent to the libraries weeks prior to the workshops for promotion. We also publicized with regional land conservancies, CT Coalition for Environmental Justice, Quinnipiac River Watershed Assoc., local churches, local Rotary, local land trusts, Audubon, and Sierra Club.

Workshops Data Summary:

Number of attendees participating in 2 workshops = 44

Number of people completing workshop surveys = 21 completed survey

Number of people who attended the 2 workshops and requested the homeowner's newsletter = 5

Area under organic management: 48.9 acres

Area under transitional management: 16.94 acres

Area under conventional management: 3.69 acres

2) Initiating outreach on organic land care to inland/wetland commissions and conservation commissions

First in September of 2011, following up in January of 2012, our office began outreach to the local Quinnipiac River area commissions concerned with water quality. The following list of recipients received FREE copies of our ***Organic Land Care Guide***, the ***Farm and Food Guide and one Introduction to Organic Lawns and Yards.*** In the same mailing, CT NOFA also promoted the low cost and availability of our small, inexpensive and informative booklet, ***Introduction to Organic Lawns and Yards***, which is geared for homeowners, but still useful to commission members. Cost would be \$3 per copy when ordering more than 5 copies and is a very inexpensive way to inform decision-makers and homeowners about organic land care.

Berlin Conservation Commission

Bethany Conservation Commission

Bristol Conservation Commission

East Haven Inland Wetland Commission

Hamden Natural Resources and Open Spaces Commission

Meriden Conservation (Land) Commission
 Middlefield Conservation Commission
 Middletown Department of Planning, Conservation and Development
 New Britain Conservation Commission
 New Haven City Plan Commission
 North Branford Conservation and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency
 North Haven Conservation Commission
 Plainville Conservation Commission
 Prospect Conservation Commission
 Southington Conservation Commission
 Wallingford Conservation Commission
 Woodbridge Conservation Commission
 Southwestern Conservation District

3) Analyze our web data of zip codes and search terms of homeowner surveys to better understand what homeowners are looking for and how we can serve those interested in organic land care.

The Organic Land Care site had 158 hits from March 16, 2011 to March 16, 2012 from the Quinnipiac River region.

Town	Website Hits
Berlin	2
Cheshire	4
East Haven	24
Hamden	13
Meriden	0
New Haven	105
North Branford	0
North Haven	8
Plainville	0
Prospect	0
Southington	1
Wallingford	1
Total Hits:	158

4) Creating an online turf forum for school groundskeepers

CT NOFA worked with the Watershed Partnership to register the domain name and create the web forum at <http://www.organicturfcare.org/forum/index.php>

Unfortunately, despite our efforts to promote the forum through our connections with land care professionals, our newsletters and blogs, the forum has not attracted much attention or participation by professionals.

Some of the organizations who might help us reach relevant folks are hostile to the organic approach and hence are not channels for making more connections. We are exploring other avenues to promote the forum or make it more attractive to the target audience. The forum is still active and available for usage by professionals.

Conclusion

Funding from the Quinnipiac River Fund for our 2011-2012 workshops, outreach and data analysis has enabled CT NOFA to educate residents and property owners about sustainable organic landscaping and gardening practices. In particular, our education and outreach to homeowners who live in the Quinnipiac watershed - where it is estimated that over 50% of homes and businesses still use pesticides to maintain their grounds - has provided homeowners will access to the information and support needed to implement organic land care practices at home. We view our homeowner's workshops as part of the solution towards reducing movement of residential pesticides into watercourses and wetlands and for protecting wildlife foraging in residential habitat.

We are very grateful for the opportunity provided by the Quinnipiac River Fund to continue our work in Organic Land Care .

Financial Report

Expenses

Personnel

Salaries	\$4080.00
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OLC Program Director (100 hours at \$20/hr = \$2000.00)	
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OLC Project Coordinator (40 hours at \$16/hr = \$640.00)	
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OLC Outreach Coordinator (50 hours at \$16/hr = \$800.00)	
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OLC web analytics (40 hours at \$16/hr = \$640.00)	
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Fringe Benefits	\$ 693.00
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(17% of OLC Program Director, Project Coordinator and Consultant)	
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Stipends - 2 AOLCPS, 2 hours teaching each	\$ 400.00
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Subtotal salaries and stipends	\$ 5173.00
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Supplies

Paper, printer cartridges, coffee and snacks	\$ 200
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15 copies of Intro to Organic Lawns and Yards	\$ 75
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15 Guides to Organic Land Care	\$ 15
Printing & Xeroxing	\$ 200
Postage	\$ 60
Transportation	\$ 200
Telephone	\$ 75
Subtotal of supplies	\$ 825.00
Total Project Expenses	\$ 5998.00