

**Newsletter from
New Haven /
Urban Resources Initiative, Inc.
and
Yale School of Forestry &
Environmental Studies**

**FALL
2001
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URBAN ISSUES



**NEW HAVEN / URBAN
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DEEPENING OUR ROOTS

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by
**John
Swansburg**

*This article was
first published
in the
New York Times
August 26, 2001*

Standing near the corner of Dixwell Avenue and Ivy Street in New Haven recently, Jeanette Thomas talked wistfully about umbrella pines, a coniferous evergreen native to Japan. Nearby, several neighbors unloaded Kwanzan cherry trees and Aristocrat pear trees from a truck and placed them in holes they had dug near the sidewalk.

Ms. Thomas looked at the trees approvingly, but she was not completely satisfied.

"We need a couple of things that go 'Pow!' " she said. That is where the umbrella pine would come in.

The lack of Japanese evergreens notwithstanding, it is hard to tell today that the lot on this corner was ever

anything but a boon to its neighborhood. Yet just two months ago, the property was empty and unkempt, the former home of an abandoned garage.

"We've had people who grew up on this street drive right past it because of this lot," said Ms. Thomas, who is 68. "They couldn't believe the change."

The dramatic difference is a result of work by Ms. Thomas and her neighbors, the recipients of a grant from the Community Greenspace Program. The program, which is in its seventh year, encourages New Haven residents to reclaim abandoned or blighted land in their neighborhoods through planting and stewardship. *(continued on page 4)*



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The nature of our work at URI is very ‘hands on’ – digging holes for planting street trees, or tilling in compost for reclaiming a vacant lot – and thus our work is driven by the seasons. The fall marks a change in the leaves as well as in our activities. As the academic year begins, our programming shifts to environmental education, and monitoring and evaluation of Greenspace. This seasonal shift in activities is not only weather driven, but also a result of a strategic planning exercise carried out by our Board members last year. The Board determined we should take advantage of the strength of the Greenspace program and develop an environmental education program that utilizes the recovered open spaces as places to learn. And, that we should capture the research opportunities present within the Greenspace sites both to learn and improve our management of open spaces, as well as to expand the body of knowledge of urban forestry. Our current Urban Issues reflects these programmatic emphases and marks these changes with our new graphic identity.

Our cover story is a re-print of an article from the New York Times that well describes the efforts of our Greenspace Program. This story coupled with the articles by interns Carrie Magee and Gregory McLaughlin depict the essence of our mission – to foster environmental stewardship and human development in New Haven by promoting citizen participation and community action through education, institutional cooperation and professional guidance.

After more than decade of working in New Haven, and as the Greenspace program matures, we are developing strategies to ensure sustainability of the greening efforts. In his article, our Greenspace Manager Chris Ozyck, conveys the importance of adding infrastructure – like water, fencing, benches - to restored open spaces. This year, with federal support, we have been more successful in providing these infrastructure elements to help ensure a lasting impact.

Last spring, Board member Susan Swensen spearheaded our environmental education pilot, "Open Spaces as Learning Places". In this issue, intern Lianne Fisman shares her experience of working with Susan in this program, which has moved beyond the pilot phase with funding from three foundations (Ardenghi Foundation, Pumpkin Foundation and the Braitmayer Foundation), to an on-going program.

Our research efforts have also taken off with student projects like the insect study conducted by Adrian Camacho. Adrian describes how he sought answers to questions of biological diversity in restored versus vacant lands. In addition, we have begun a research and design effort with a team of faculty and citizens that we will describe in our next issue.

The progress in our new programmatic endeavors, and our continuing success in the Greenspace Program, has been made possible through the incredible support we receive from many individuals and institutions. Thank you to our partners in New Haven’s neighborhoods, student interns and assistants, board members, donors, faculty advisors, volunteers, and city, state and federal partners for your generous contributions.

Colleen Murphy Dunning

Open Spaces as Learning Places

by
**Lianne
Fisman**

Last year, URI launched a new environmental education initiative at the primary school level called Open Spaces as Learning Places. This program has several features that make it a unique. First, rather than using traditional examples of large-scale, distant environmental phenomena such as “the hole in the ozone layer” or “the rain-forests in Brazil” as curricular material, the program aims to connect urban youth to their local environment. Another distinctive aspect of this program is to foster the development of environmental leadership not only in the student participants, but also in graduate student interns, and public school teachers.

The Open Spaces as Learning Places program redefines the neighborhood as an important learning resource. The program is separated into four two-week units, each of which focuses on a progressively larger geographic scale. Specifically, students examine “nature” in the schoolyard, a vacant lot, a local park and finally, a river. Each unit is comprised of an indoor and outdoor component that is led by Susan Swenson (a Yale FES alumni and an experienced environmental educator) and an intern. The Yale staff provides the teacher with extension activities that he or she leads in the classroom. These activities reinforce the fundamental concepts that are being addressed in each unit as well as giving the teacher the opportunity to get comfortable with the material.

The structure of the program fosters learning at a variety of levels. The most obvious educational impact occurs at the student level. The pupils learn about ecological processes within the context of their immediate environment. The program really expands their understanding of the role that both humans and nature play in shaping the landscape. Through this learning process students are made aware of what they, as residents of their

neighborhood, can do to improve the quality of their environment.

While the children certainly benefit from the Outdoor Spaces as Learning Places initiative, the program also provides a wonderful learning opportunity for Yale FES graduate students. These individuals work along side Susan Swenson, who is one of the most innovative and experienced environmental educators in the region. Ms. Swenson encourages the students to transfer the “hard” scientific knowledge that they gain in their lectures into a format that is useful and intelligible to the students and their teachers. Under Susan’s guidance, the interns develop their skills in lesson planning, preparation, and delivery. This component of the program enriches the Yale FES curriculum by providing an opportunity for experiential learning.

The school teachers who are involved in this program learn about the educational assets that are available within the neighborhood. For example, some of the teachers who participated in last year’s pilot project were not aware of the existence of the

community garden on Nash Street nor the diversity of plant and animal species found on the Mill River. The level of energy and enthusiasm that was displayed by the teachers on these excursions is striking. Part of this excitement comes from the realization that they now have a whole new set of educational resources right in their “backyard”!

The Open Spaces as Learning Places program provides a wonderful learning experience for everyone involved. The focus on the immediate environment promotes a sense of stewardship for the natural world that cannot be gained from books. David Sobel expresses this view in his book, *Ecophobia*, in which he states: “Authentic environmental commitment emerges out of firsthand experiences with real places on a small, manageable scale.” The Open Spaces program is nurturing this vital connection to the natural world right here in New Haven!

Lianne interned in Spring ‘01. She is now pursuing doctoral studies at MIT. Current interns are Shalini Gupta ‘02, William Finnegan ‘03, and Alexandria Dimizas ‘02



Photo: David DeFusco

A Hooker School student with Susan at the Nash Street Greenspace

Stamping Out Blight a Garden at a Time



Intern Georgia Silvera with members of the Ivy Dixwell Group

(continued from page 1)

Community Greenspace is run jointly by New Haven's Livable City Initiative, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, and the Urban Resources Initiative, a nonprofit organization with ties to the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Blight is an acute problem in New Haven, a city that lost some 7,600 residents between 1990 and 1995. City officials estimate that there are over 780 vacant buildings and some 1,000 vacant lots here.

The Greenspace Program provides both the raw materials and the training needed to plant and maintain sites as small as a traffic island and as large as a vacant lot. The training comes primarily from the program's interns, this year a group of four Yale undergraduates and five students from the forestry school.

Each spring, interns take a class at the forestry school called the Restoration

Agenda to prepare for 14 weeks in the field during the summer.

A study last year found that 85 percent of the trees planted through the Greenspace Program during the previous five years were still alive and well. But as Colleen Murphy-Dunning, the Urban Resources Initiative director, said: "It's hard to measure the success of this program in how many trees survive. The real success you see is in the human connections that form."

Before a single tree is planted, the program fosters human connections at the neighborhood level. To participate in the program, a group of residents must ask for a grant. Individuals are not permitted to apply.

Usually this group will be an existing block watch, but often neighbors get together specifically to apply for a grant.

"This program gives them a reason to knock on doors," Ana D. Arroyo, a

program officer at the Community Foundation, said.

Groups whose grant proposals are accepted then consult with the program's staff about their goals for the space. Each year, about 50 of the nearly 70 proposals are accepted. About half of the 50 approved applications are from repeat applicants eager either to continue working on an existing project or to undertake a more ambitious one.

The Arch Street block watch, for instance, first applied for a Greenspace grant in 1995, for help with a modest streetscape project. Six years later, they have converted three adjoining vacant lots into a park teeming with perennials and young trees.

The Arch Street site has entered a phase where planting is no longer the priority. The neighborhood's volunteers now concentrate on stewardship and what Ms. Murphy-Dunning calls "infrastructure," which includes practical matters like lights, as well as less practical additions, like labels identifying the wide array of plant life thriving in the park. The success of the Greenspace Program relies, in part, on the symbiotic relationship the program has established between itself and the neighborhoods.

Ms. Murphy-Dunning said the program's three sponsors had been upfront with residents about their own goals for the program. "We tell the neighborhoods we are getting something out of this too," she said.

For the Yale students, the program provides an opportunity to apply social forestry theory. Although many of the neighborhoods they work in are only a few miles from the classrooms where they studied their theory, Ms. Murphy-Dunning said the Greenspace sites can be as foreign and challenging for the interns as anything they might encounter

in the developing world. Interns can therefore apply their experience in the Greenspace Program almost anywhere in the world.

"They can take this skill base and work for USAID in a developing country, or in the U.S. Northwest with timber issues, or in the Southwest with water resources," Ms. Murphy-Dunning said.

For the city, the program offers an ideal solution to one of its most persistent problems: how to deal with urban blight. Many of the sites the program has helped to rejuvenate have been vacant lots owned by the city.

Doreen Larson-Oboyski, the greenspace and community gardens project manager at the Livable City Initiative, said that while other projects have failed because residents did not take an interest in stewardship, this program has helped the city find people who want to make lasting changes.

"This gives the city the opportunity to work with people who want to make their neighborhood a better place," she said.

Ms. Arroyo said that the Community Foundation has found that participants in the Greenspace Program improve their abilities to voice their concerns – which is the goal the Community Foundation strives for in all the programs it sponsors.

"We want to find out what people want and give them the resources to do it," she said. "The Greenspace Program gives residents an ability to articulate the issues."

To be sure, not all of the projects are a success. Ms. Murphy-Dunning said that there were sites where preservation has been zero percent

after only one year. After unloading trees at Dixwell and Ivy Street recently, Georgia Silvera and Carrie Magee, two interns, drove to another site with more trees to plant, only to find no one there to plant them.

The program's successes seem to far exceed its failures, however. At the Nash Street site, residents have been particularly energetic. On one recent Saturday afternoon, a Yale graduate student was starting a fire in the barbecue pit, just one of the park's many special touches (a man-made pond is another). Nearby, Paul Woolfork, a resident, was building a low wall out of rock salvaged from the foundation of the building that once stood on this lot. Though he appeared

to work with an expert's hand, Mr. Woolfork had only recently learned the skill from Ron Oster, a neighbor and professional mason.

Nash Street's achievements inspired the residents of Mechanic Street, around the corner, to apply for a grant of their own.

Ms. Thomas was inspired by the work at Nash Street, too. If she cannot get her umbrella pine, she is willing to settle for her second choice.

"I'd like to get some of those rocks from Nash Street," she said. "To get some of that energy."



The Reality of Participatory Tools:

A look at transects

by
**Carrie
Magee**

The "tool box" of participatory appraisal techniques is as important to any URI intern as a shovel and root ball carrier. Before any shovels hit the dirt and any ball carriers are loaded with trees, we first reach for the participatory toolbox to help create a neighborhood vision and explore the community groups' goals for the season.

In theory, participatory tools have clear procedures to ensure democratic participation between the interns and group members as well as to gather qualitative information

about the area. However, the reality of working in a group setting often requires adjusting these procedures to fit the situation. Community group composition, community group dynamics, and the intern's facilitation abilities all affect the use of participatory tools. Consequently, these tools can be manipulated to fit the specific dynamics of particular community group.

A great example of a participatory tool is the urban transect, an adaptation of the traditional point transect used in field ecology. In an urban setting, the

transect is used to collect qualitative information about an area such as the condition of the urban greenspaces, urban trees, the presence and abundance of trash and graffiti, the existence and state of infrastructure, and various socioeconomic indicators such as urban abandonment and ethnicity. The account that follows is an example of how the transect can be adapted from being a purely qualitative inventory of neighborhood resources to a lively exchange of ideas which helped to recruit new group members.

The Edgewood/Ellsworth/Pendelton Transect

The first meeting for the Edgewood/Ellsworth/Pendelton Greenspace Group was intended to establish the season's goals. Traditionally, the focus of the group had been placed on the aesthetic improvement of the traffic triangle where Edgewood Avenue and Pendelton Street meet, supplemented by additional street plantings in the neighborhood.

Initially, the only person available for the meeting was the group leader. We decided to "take a walk" through the mixed-income neighborhood to see the greenspace plantings from previous years and to locate potential new sites for street tree plantings. This walk turned into an informal urban transect. For an ideal urban transect, more group members would have been present, and each participant would have focused on a particular aspect of the neighborhood such as infrastructure, tree and shrub species, or socioeconomic indicators. Nonetheless, as this participatory tool was adapted to the actual situation, its implementation resulted in greater outcomes than would have been expected in the theoretical situation.

As we began the transect, we were immediately joined in conversation with a second group member whose



Gathering data is not the only outcome of performing a transect

empty curb strips showed potential for street tree plantings. As the three of us began to discuss potential goals for the neighborhood, she soon became eager to join us. It became apparent that this year's projects would likely include street tree, front yard, and curb strip plantings, extending the group's focus well beyond the traffic circle. The second group member was so excited about the potential change in focus that she went to see if a third neighbor was home. Luckily, he was, and after a similar discussion he also decided to join the urban transect.

At each point in the transect where we stopped to survey the trees, shrubs, and neighborhood conditions, we also garnered the interest of other community members. Although reluctant at first, the group leader

eventually agreed to knock on a few doors. For example, at the corner of Edgewood Avenue and E.T. Grasso Boulevard, we noticed that a pin oak (*Quercus palustris*) planted by the city had been damaged and was now producing unsightly sprout growth. The adjacent homeowner proved to be very excited about the program, and eager to become involved. Together we decided it might be best to replace the damaged oak.

By the end of the transect not only did we have a good idea about the condition of the neighborhood's urban forest, but we also recruited new group members who, in time, would infuse a new vitality, more diversity, and a commitment to lead the group in a new direction.

The urban transect is a useful participatory tool for focusing the direction of community group activities. However, when using such a tool it is important to remain open minded and to realize that individual group characteristics can change the tool's implementation and outcomes.

In this particular case, we set out to complete an urban transect in order to find out more about the urban forest. In the end, the tool not only gave us a better indication about the structure, services, and maintenance requirements of this greenspace, but also facilitated the recruitment of new group members and formed a foundation for achieving neighborhood goals.

Carrie Magee '02 interned with URI last summer.

Continuing the Exploration of the American Lawn



Bormann, Balmore and Geballe's second edition of *Redesigning the American Lawn*

The lawn is the most familiar greenspace for most Americans. An exploration into new avenues for environmental education has resulted in *Redesigning the American Lawn: A Search for Environmental Harmony*, which has recently been released in its second edition. This visually appealing and extremely readable book discusses many aspects of lawns, including their history, their ecological cycles, their uses, their role in the American life, and environmental consequences arising from how they are designed and maintained.

The book develops the idea of the Industrial Lawn versus the Freedom Lawn: an Industrial Lawn is a high-maintenance, high-input grass

monoculture, whereas a Freedom Lawn is a more natural, less-maintained system. The authors detail the many economic, ecological, and health benefits arising from Freedom Lawns as opposed to the more common Industrial Lawn, and show how a small, individual lawn is part of larger natural systems.

The second edition adds an optimistic chapter focusing on positive examples that individuals, universities, and corporations have used to create Freedom Lawns. These intriguing examples show how all Americans can transform their lawns into sustainable ecological systems, thus improving the state of the global environment one lawn at a time.

Snapshots and Legacies:

How one New Haven community's current actions make history

by
**Greg
McLaughlin**

In late July, Josh Schachter arrived at Orchard Street for a Friday evening photo shoot of the Henry Parker Park Greenspace Group. Josh, a photographer, sought to capture some pieces of the URI Greenspace Program with a few dozen frozen frames. As his camera clicked unobtrusively in the background, stories – past, present, and future – came to life.

* SNAP *

A padlocked, wrought-iron gate has supported a sign lettered “Henry Parker Park” for many years. Friends and neighbors created this park in honor of the Parker family’s historic achievements. Henry Parker was a New Haven politician over much of the last fifty years; he became Connecticut’s first African-American to win a state-level cabinet position. Additionally, his wife has served in the Connecticut General Assembly for the past few decades. The park’s original founders had either moved or have grown too old to be actively involved with the park’s maintenance. As a result, overgrown weeds cover the remnants of paths and planted areas within the park, and two abandoned cars along the back of the lot collect rust and dust.



* SNAP *

Up the street from the park, Vaughn Collins, the Greenspace group’s leader, worked with Rose, Carl, Raymond, and a URI intern to position a small dogwood tree in Rose’s front yard. The decades-old sidewalk along the curb in front of the house had been built without leaving areas for planting near the street, creating a gap in street vegetation. Therefore, in addition to accenting Rose’s freshly painted house, the dogwood would add much needed continuity to the streetscape.

* SNAP *

Next to Vaughn’s house, one found an abandoned house with a “foreclosure sale” sign riveted prominently on the front wall. In the past, this building had served as a residency as well as a community historical society. A month previously, however, it was best defined by its large pile of leaves and mosquito-infested garbage. The group’s first three-hour workday of the summer transformed this foreboding lot into an inviting piece of the neighborhood.

* SNAP *

Along the front of this house ran the foundation for what would soon be a new sidewalk. Just a few days earlier, residents had won a battle in the street with city officials: they had successfully lobbied against the city’s original plans to pave the entire stretch of curb, leaving no room for planting. Today, a walk along this section of Orchard Street reveals thriving curb strips, living testament to the rewards of a community taking charge of their neighborhood.

* SNAP *

A group of adolescent boys approached Vaughn to talk basketball. “Are you coming on Saturday?” he asked. Mr. Collins and a few others group members manage and coach a highly successful community youth basketball program. In only their second year, they have built a league of over one hundred teenage boys and almost a dozen teams. Vaughn continually emphasized the importance of giving these young men something positive to do. By the end of the summer, the adolescents had been given another activity: planting shrubs and perennials along the freshly laid curbstrips.

* SNAP *

Moving back down the street, Henry Parker Park has been seen once again on the landscape; the presence of this park inspired this group to come together. This summer, the group concentrated on front yard and curb strip improvement, which helped them to develop a stronger community. Building on these relationships, they intend to restore Henry Parker Park next summer.

As Josh packed up his camera and left for the day, perhaps his parting shot was that padlocked, wrought-iron gate. Down the street from this legacy of the past, the Orchard Street group continued work on the present. In due time, they will unlock that gate, bridging the glory of the past with the hope of the future.

Greg McLaughlin '02 hopes to use his URI summer experience in the rural West.

Insect Communities:

Summer research investigates insect populations in urban spaces

It is commonly assumed that abandoned lots only support “pest” species such as weeds and mice. However, very little information is actually known about how wildlife utilizes city spaces. In order to explore this question, I decided to investigate differences in biological communities found in different urban locations, using URI Greenspace sites for comparison against abandoned lots.

My summer research focused on using insect communities to explore the differences of biological communities in abandoned lots compared to improved pocket parks. I chose insects as a representative of biological communities for three reasons. First, unlike birds or mammals, they can be rapidly and reliably sampled without bothering neighborhood families. Second, insects live in relatively small areas so they are much more sensitive to site conditions than birds. Finally, in urban environments, insect communities tend not to be controlled as intensively as plant communities, which are frequently mown, weeded, and planted.

Insects were hand collected from six URI Greenspace Program sites: Nash Street, Arch Street, Shepard Street, Blake Street, the New Haven Animal Shelter, and Mechanic Street. For comparison, I also collected insects from three abandoned lots as well as East Rock and West River Memorial Parks. Analysis of the data is still underway; however, some characteristics of insect communities can already be seen.

As I collected data, I quickly realized that insect communities might be more dependent on adjacent or nearby conditions rather than the lots themselves. For example, large populations of insects can be found in a very poor habitat if the habitat is adjacent to insect populations that reside in a richer habitat. Similar discoveries lead to more questions

regarding how specific characteristics such as canopy cover, vegetation structure, and plant composition of urban habitats relate to insect species’ richness.

Early indications show that that urban insect communities are biologically unique. They are not poorer versions of more natural habitats like forests or meadows, nor are they entirely composed of pests; in fact, common household pests were rarely ever seen. This implies that urban settings foster different constellations of species that carry on ecosystem processes such as cleaning air, cleaning water, and building soil.

Full analysis of the data will demonstrate more clearly how improvements to abandoned lots affect insect communities, and consequently, how Greenspace program groups might influence the ecosystems in which they live, including the resident human, plant, and animal communities.

Adrian Camacho '02 is a 2001 Hixon Fellow and interned last summer with URI.

by
**Adrian
Camacho**



Finding diverse wildlife in greenspaces

Greenspace Sites Receive Infrastructure Support

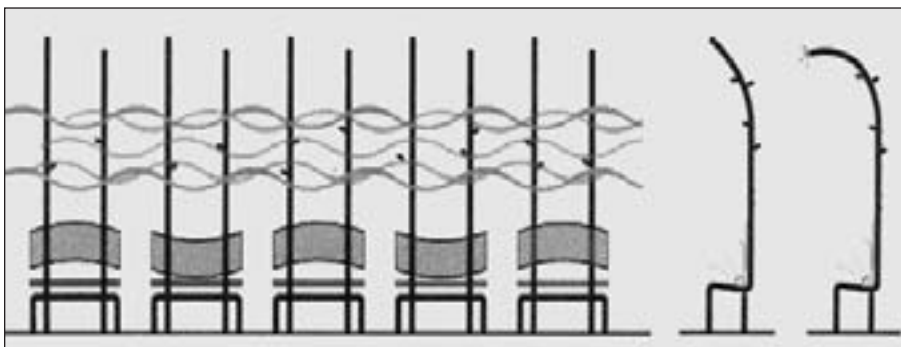
by
**Chris
Ozyck**

The City of New Haven awarded URI federal funds through the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program for Greenspace project infrastructure. The Department of Housing and Urban Development allocates CDBG grant money to cities to use in a variety of community and economic development activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and the provision of improved community facilities and services.

URI sought the CDBG funds to augment ongoing support from our partners, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and the Livable Cities Initiative. These monies will be utilized for permanent infrastructure to strengthen and support communities' efforts to improve vacant lots. Physical infrastructure is a defining point in a garden's evolution: infrastructural improvements can change a garden from a tenuous collection of plant materials into a place of permanence and definition. Infrastructural improvements have dramatic effects on open spaces: water availability sustains plants, fencing protects and defines areas, and landscaping architecture inspires visitors.

Greenspace sites benefiting from these funds were chosen using criteria developed by our student interns. The criteria for selecting projects was based on the site's location, Greenspace group capacity, and infrastructure needs. Based on these criteria, five sites were selected for support; the results of this new infusion of resources have been impressive.

The Park on Nash Greenspace group received support to build a long awaited gazebo and fencing. This well established group purchased



The bench design creates an inviting gathering place

materials, choosing to build the structure themselves. The gazebo, an icon of town centers, will be the gathering space of this tightly knit community. Its placement is the culminating project for a site that experienced thirty years of illegal dumping and neglect. Additionally, members of Park on Nash built a mortar and stone wall and purchased an old iron fence in order to create a visually stronger front edge to the garden. As a result of these improvements, the Park on Nash site is an eclectic mix of rich plantings and uncommon landscaping architecture.

Over the past three years, residents transformed the Shepard Street Garden from a barren lot into an intriguing area. The group wanted a stone bench placed at the rear of the site in order to create an inviting space for people to relax and enjoy the garden. Funds were used to purchase Pennsylvania wall stone, which can be readily handled by residents, and a handsome bluestone cap was also applied.

The Ivy Narrow Bird Sanctuary at the corner of Dixwell and Ivy Streets is a first year Greenspace group motivated to reclaim the weedy, garbage collecting lot at the head of their one way street. Neighbors were inspired by a lecture by Peter Picone, a state wildlife biologist, and a visit to Lockwood Farms's butterfly and bird gardens, to create a site that would attract birds. CDBG funds helped them to create an patio, as well as structures for creating a marsh.

The remaining funds will be distributed between two long-term Greenspace groups this spring. A previously abandoned lot on Blake Street will receive help to erect fencing and a front edge wall to reduce erosion, vandalism, and illegal dumping. On Arch Street monies will be used to help pay for the construction of a gathering place with bench designed by Yale Architecture students and community members. These infrastructural improvements has helped provide a sense of permanence not usually achieved by typical restoration efforts; this creates a truly unique sense of place.

Chris Ozyck is URI's Community Greenspace Manager.

A Generous Gift

The New Haven Garden Club designated \$9,000 of their 'Millennium Fund' to support URI. Their gift will be used to support Greenspace plantings and infrastructural improvements including water establishment and bench placements. Greenspace sites supported will include Lenzi Park, Arch Street, Ivy Narrow Bird Sanctuary and the Mechanic Street Mavens. The Regional Water Authority matched this gift, in part, by establishing water lines for the Mechanic Street Mavens' native plant site.

Notes & News from URI

Patron Profile

Louis Polk, Jr. (Yale '54) has a keen interest in sound land management, as evidenced by his strong cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management in managing his own Wyoming ranch. Managing land so that it is wild and yet productive, has been his great interest in the recent past. To this end he has set up a foundation in Wyoming, the Breteche Creek Ranch, where family and friends groups can gather in a remote valley for a week or more at a time to learn from nature. Educators, scientists, and artists guide and educate; wild and domestic animals roam freely; the forest is managed and grass lands continue to grow in productivity to feed the herds.

His interest in education and fostering environmental stewardship led to his giving two significant contributions to URI, one for research, and the other for the Arch Street Greenspace. Polk's gifts helped URI to leverage additional funds from the U.S. Forest Service for our research effort to redesign Lenzi Memorial Park with greater ecological integrity (learn more in our Spring issue). The Natural History Museum of Wymoiing, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Phillips Academy Andover, McAlester College and Outward Bound have also been recipients of gifts from his foundation.



Louis Polk, Jr.

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Support Needed

The Arch Street Blockwatch is continuing to strengthen their reclaimed open space through the creation of a community meeting place. The meeting place, a cluster of artistic benches, can be used for picnics, neighborhood meetings, or to simply relax and enjoy the greenspace.

Support from the Lion's Pride Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service has made it possible for URI to work with a team of scientists and neighbors to redesign the Lenzi Memorial Park. The new design calls for the demolition of some existing park features (an asphalt court and two handball walls), and the installation of an improved war memorial and walkway. Please join us to help make these projects a shared success.