



KEEP PENNSYLVANIA BEAUTIFUL - NISOURCE FINAL REPORT (FEB-DEC 2025)

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful partnered with Columbia Gas - Nisource Charitable Foundation to:



1. Support the Young Ambassadors of Pennsylvania program by providing job shadowing opportunities for up to four students and lead a sustainability focused webinar led by the company's Environmental Department.
2. Provide mini grants totaling \$20,000 to eight community greening and beautification projects.

Young Ambassadors Gain Hands-On Experience through Pennsylvania Job Shadowing

The Young Ambassador program builds community stewards and civic leaders by inspiring, engaging, and empowering young Pennsylvanians to keep their communities beautiful. In celebration of Earth Day, two Young Ambassadors job-shadowed in the Columbia Gas, Monaca and York facilities, to experience a day in the life of an Environmental Coordinator. The students began their day with a brief introduction of how the Environmental Coordinators' role supports the broader Columbia Gas operation.

Ambassadors met with engineers to learn about current projects and the ways in which the Environmental Department contributes to each stage. After being outfitted with the appropriate safety gear, the students visited active job sites, where they observed firsthand why environmental permitting, specialized procedures, and compliance measures are essential prior to excavation and stream crossings.



"The NiSource team made me feel included, and engaged with all of my questions throughout the day. It was exciting for me to learn about a day in the life of an Environmental Coordinator and their part of the natural gas distribution process." Anna Oslikova, KPBY Young Ambassador

MINI GRANTS

Allegheny CleanWays Leads Volunteer Effort to Clean the Ohio River

Allegheny CleanWays (ACW) Dumpbuster Crew, Water Program Crew and Education programs strive to improve ecosystem health by educating and removing illegally dumped materials from both land and water. ACW held a three-day intensive cleanup that removed the trash that collects along the shoreline beneath the Emsworth lock and dam. Trash from the Allegheny and the Monongahela rivers dump into the Ohio River and is often released over the dam. When the water levels are low, the trash collects along the riverbanks around Kilbuck. Over three days, a crew of four worked alongside **20 volunteers**. They picked up **6,748 pounds** of trash from the river and riverbank.



Tri-County CleanWays Hosts Composting and Waste-Reduction Workshops in Butler County

Yard waste is an often overlooked waste stream. Many residents do not have access to a curbside program and frequently dump leaves, branches, and other natural materials along roadways in remote areas. Although it may seem insignificant, this is a form of illegal dumping. The major problem with illegally dumped yard waste is that it has a tendency to attract dumping of other materials such as E-waste, tires, and household trash because it gives the appearance that this is a safe place to dump. A total of **65 compost bins** were purchased, and to date, 29 have been distributed to community members who also received composting education. According to the PA Department of Environmental Protection, an active residential compost bin can process nearly half a ton of yard waste, food scraps, and other organic materials each year.

"There was overwhelming praise for the content, including the connection between backyard composting and good waste management practices and appreciation for the compost bins the participants received."
Jerry Zona, Executive Director, Tri-County CleanWays

Tree-Planting Effort at Millbrook Marsh, Centre County, Led by ClearWater Conservancy

Over 1,000 trees and shrubs were planted as a riparian buffer at Millbrook Marsh, improving eroding streambanks and aquatic habitat. This work will have long-lasting benefits to the environment by improving water quality, providing carbon storage, and creating wildlife habitat. The education potential for this project is far-reaching. ClearWater recently hosted its Annual Meeting for members at the nature center and gave members a tour of the restoration work. In addition, Millbrook Marsh hosts many summer camps, an outdoor nature-based preschool, and community recreation programming, whose participants will all learn and benefit from this project.



Coatesville 2nd Century Alliance and Coatesville Library Team Up for Community Beautification in Chester County

The Coatesville Library Landscape Revitalization Project transformed an underutilized stretch of lawn at the Coatesville Area Public Library into a vibrant, welcoming, and environmentally sustainable public space. **Twenty-eight volunteers planted 48 native shrubs and trees, over 200 bulbs, and mulched the buildings perimeter, supporting pollinators and improving stormwater infiltration and soil structure.** Prior to this project, the grounds contained mostly open green space with scattered, aging plantings that offered little ecological benefit. This project aligns with environmental justice principles by restoring beauty, accessibility, and ecological value to a public space in an underserved community.



Keep Fayette County Green Partnered with Youth Recycling Ambassador on Illegal Dump Cleanup

A dedicated group of 17 volunteers, including Dunbar and Franklin Township supervisors, and their Youth Recycling Ambassador, Luke Hamaker participated in a large cleanup effort. They removed **635 tires** and 2.38 tons of trash from a one-mile stretch of Barron Road and **374 tires** from Mountain View Road in Dunbar Township, bringing the **total number of tires removed from area roadways to 1,009**. Through teamwork, they efficiently and safely helped mitigate environmental risks and enhanced the beauty of shared public spaces. This initiative showcased their collective commitment to maintaining a clean and healthy environment for everyone.



Tri-County CleanWays Partnered with the South Side Community Garden Improvement Project in Lawrence County

This project focused on major improvements and **ongoing maintenance at the Southside Community Garden, which serves approximately 60 families**. Fifteen volunteers from the local community, Holistic Industries, and DON Enterprises worked together to remove old garden beds, debris, and extensive weeds. The original 15 beds had severely rotted, so volunteers dismantled the old lumber and rebuilt eleven new beds using soil recovered from the existing structures.

The team's weeding and trimming efforts alone filled nearly 40 bags of debris, which were disposed of by DON Enterprises. Additional work included repairing site signage and winterizing the garden beds to prepare the space for spring planting.



PA CleanWays of Venango County Enhances and Expands Pollinator Garden

The Venango Conservation District (VCD) completed construction of a natives and pollinator garden in 2023. Building on that, this year they planted **46 additional native perennials and 19 native shrubs**, increasing the variety of nectar and host plants available to pollinators throughout the growing season. By **adding 462 square feet of habitat**, they enhanced the ecological value of the garden, creating a more resilient and supportive environment for bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. They also hosted two "planting parties" providing hands-on learning about stormwater management, native plants, pollinator needs, and sustainable landscaping practices. Approximately 40 students and staff from the Venango Technology Centers' Natural Resource Program contributed time, skills, and enthusiasm, fostering a sense of ownership and stewardship.



Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling Expands Community Pollinator Garden

To be completed in spring 2026: Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling will expand their community pollinator garden to include a pavilion and picnic tables that will be used for education events and public use.

