Niagara River Riparian Restoration Program
Annual Progress Report to the Ecological Standing Committee

Prepared by: Kerri Bentkowski Li and Larry Brooks
Date: June 28, 2012

I. Summary of Activities:

From July 2009 until June 28, 2012, the NRRP team planted 21 sites in eight Greenway municipalities across Erie and Niagara counties. Of the 21, 18 sites were completed with 509 RestoreCorps volunteers. The remaining three sites were planted with contractors due to steep site conditions. The volunteer participation amounted to 1,430 hours of labor. Across these 21 sites, we have planted 5,650 linear feet of shoreline or 1.65 acres with over 5,250 plants. In addition to the plantings, we did major invasives removals at three sites including Japanese knotweed and *Ailanthus* tree cutbacks and spraying by DEC-certified applicators. Lastly, Riverkeeper applied deer protection at five sites. With the target 25 sites, the four remaining sites for 2012 have been identified and planning for those sites is now under way. We anticipate completion in September 2012.

In addition to the demonstration sites, we published the first-of-its-kind "Native and Naturalized Plant Guide for Buffalo Niagara" booklet. A tour of the sites was completed in August 2011. We published the "Caring for Your Waterfront Property" waterfront landowner stewardship guide in May 2012 and completed the stewardship trainings in March 2012.

II. Summary of Annual Accomplishments (June 24, 2011-June 28, 2012)

Personnel:
Volunteer Coordinator Emily McAndrews, an AmeriCorps member, completed her one-year term in December 2011. In January 2012, Matt Candeias, AmeriCorps member, was hired to take her place in assisting with the NRRP implementation and coordinating the Restore Corps program.

Status of Budget:
To date, 88.6% of the budget has been expended. Of the remaining amount, $16,239.58 is available to complete the remaining four plantings. Please refer to Attachment A for the summary of an accounting of expenditures.

Plantings:

1. **Eastern Park, City of Tonawanda:** 7/16/11, United Way Family Day of Caring; planted 172 plants, 19 species, covering 1500 sq. ft. of lawn. 4/26/12, Riverkeeper staff planted 36 live stakes. Due to extensive herbivory in the off-season, we replaced 42 plants—trees, shrubs, and wildflowers—on 5/25/12 with the help of employees of the Nixon Peabody law firm;
2. **Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association, 301 Ohio St., Buffalo:** 6/16, 8/3, & 8/4/11 Japanese Knotweed cutback over approximately one-quarter acre with the help of volunteers from Youth Works; 9/28/11 – spraying herbicide on Japanese Knotweed by DEC-certified

applicator; 10/24/11 planting 110 plants, four species, with the help of crew members from two member schools;

3. **Longin property, 110 Sunset Drive, Wheatfield:** 9/3/11, planted 11 trees, 13 shrubs, and two native wildflower/grass meadows of 500 square feet each;
4. **China Light Yacht Club, City Ship Canal, Buffalo:** 9/13/11, planted 300 plugs along 300 linear feet of bank with the help of volunteers from the yacht club;
5. **RCR Yachts, City Ship Canal, Buffalo:** 9/14/11, planted 10 trees and 45 shrubs across 300 linear feet of bank with the help of RestoreCorps volunteers;
6. **Winkler property, 2006 Wildwood Parkway, Wheatfield:** 10/4/11, planted 30 large container plants, including three trees, along 50 linear feet of the property's shoreline, with the help of RestoreCorps volunteers;
7. **Cayuga Creek Drive, Cayuga Creek, Niagara Falls:** 10/8/11, planted 134 container plants across 1100 linear feet of bank with the help of volunteers from River Academy and RestoreCorps; 5/5/12, planted 100 live stakes and 73 container plants with volunteers from River Academy and RestoreCorps;
8. **Noonan property, 123 Main St., Youngstown:** 10/11, 34 large container shrubs were planted on a steep slope by a professional landscaping firm;
9. **Coykendall property, 129 Main St., Youngstown:** 10/11, 33 large container plants were planted, by a professional landscaping firm, on a steep slope covering approximately 1200 square feet. Additionally, homeowner removed several invasive *Ailanthus* trees himself;
10. **McKinley High School, Scajaquada Creek, Buffalo:** 10/11, furnished plan that was done by Marie Schreckengost of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and furnished five trees and 676 plugs of wildflowers and grasses for planting by the horticulture students of the high school, on a plot of mown lawn between the school and the creek, roughly 7500 square feet in area;
11. **Gillies property, Cayuga Creek, Niagara Falls:** 4/27/12, Riverkeeper staff planted 30 live stakes and on 5/8/12, with the help of RestoreCorps, we planted 150 wildflowers and ferns, and 13 trees and shrubs;
12. **Praxair, Tonawanda, Two-Mile Creek:** 5/18/12, planted 100 large container shrubs, two species, and 420 plugs, 7 species of wildflowers and emergent grasses along the banks of the creek on Praxair's Tonawanda campus with the help of Praxair employees and RestoreCorps;
13. **FLW Fontana Boathouse, Black Rock Canal, Buffalo:** 6/16/12, planted 10 trees, plus container shrubs, ferns, wildflowers, and ground cover plus removed invasives and three dead trees and built a gravel path, with the help of employees from Citibank and RestoreCorps.

These plantings bring the total planted under this program to twenty-one. The other four have been identified and work is progressing toward completing these projects by September 30th.

In addition to the work mentioned above, we did return to two sites, mentioned in the last annual report, for additional work:

14. **Ellicott Creek Park, Tonawanda:** 4/26/12 Riverkeeper staff planted 100 live stakes along the bank adjacent to the canoe launch and on 6/9/12 we planted two trees, 23 shrubs, and wildflowers with the help of high school students, the Environmental Club of St. Joseph Collegiate Institute;
15. **Forest Lawn Cemetery, Scajaquada Creek, Buffalo:** 9/17/11, with the help of students from Villa Maria College we planted 800 barren strawberry plugs and did some maintenance work; 6/23/12 with the help of UB students we planted 89 new shrubs and some wildflowers as well as doing maintenance work on last year's plants.

In addition to all of the above, in the fall of 2011, we installed fencing and stakes or sprayed a repellent for protection from deer herbivory at five sites. We will go back to all sites in September to assess survival rates and include this data in the final report to the GESC. Please see Attachment B. for photo documentation of the sites.

Caring for Your Waterfront Property Workshops:
In March, we conducted ten workshops for waterfront property owners and the general public. Workshops took between 2-1/2 and 3 hours; we developed a PowerPoint slideshow to go along with our talk. With one exception, all venues were available for free.

- Wednesday, 2/29/12 at 7:00 PM, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper Office, 1250 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY 14213
- Wednesday, 3/07/12 at 7:00 PM, Sheridan Parkside Auditorium, 169 Sheridan Parkside Drive, Tonawanda, NY 14150
- Thursday, 3/08/12 at 7:00 PM, Niagara Falls City Hall, 745 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14302
- Thursday, 3/15/12 at 7:00 PM, Tonawanda City Hall, 200 Niagara Street, Tonawanda, NY 14150
- Monday, 3/19/12 at 7:00 PM, Grand Island Memorial Library, 1715 Bedell Road, Grand Island, NY 14072
- Wednesday, 3/21/12 at 7:00 PM, Wheatfield Community Center, 6812 Nash Road, Wheatfield, NY 14120
- Thursday, 3/22/12 at 7:00 PM, North Tonawanda Public Library, 505 Meadow Drive, North Tonawanda, NY 14120
- Saturday, 3/24/12 at 1:00 PM, Plantasia, 5820 South Park Avenue, Hamburg, NY 14075.
- Monday, 3/26/12 at 6:30 PM, Porter Town Hall, 3265 Creek Road, Youngstown, NY 14174
- Thursday, 3/29/12 at 7:00 PM, Lewiston Town Hall, 1375 Ridge Road, Lewiston, NY 14092

We sent press releases to the Buffalo News, Niagara Gazette, and various local newspapers such as the Tonawanda News and Lewiston-Porter Sentinel as well as a mass emailing to our general email list. A total of 58 participants in total attended. Please see Attachment C. for an example of press release, outreach material, and the attendee list for the 8 workshops.

Publications

In late June 2011, we printed the "Native and Naturalized Plant Guide for Buffalo Niagara". One thousand copies were printed and all have been distributed through our workshops, tabling events, at local nurseries, through River Academy, and through many of Riverkeeper's partners. In April 2012, we printed 500 copies of our booklet "Caring for Your Waterfront Property" and are in the process of distributing them to our partners and to individual landowners. Please see Attachment D. for the Caring for Your Waterfront Property publication.

RestoreCorps

As of June 28, 2012, we have had 509 different individuals participate in our plantings. Some of these individuals have participated in multiple events stretching over the last two planting seasons. Volunteer recruitment has occurred through volunteer recruitment events such as the United Way Volunteer Recruitment and Training session on February 16, 2012 and the Nixon Peabody Earth Day event on April 23, 2012. The RestoreCorps e-distribution list has grown to a substantial recruitment tool. We recruit heavily through enewsletter and mass emails. We also have volunteers promoting the program through word-of-mouth and bringing friends and family to the events. We also recruit through the River Academy program with Erie Community College students and community members. Please refer to Attachment E. for an example of a follow-up letter of gratitude from the volunteers at Praxair.

Summary of Attachments

Attachment A. Summary of Expenditures to Date

Attachment B. Examples of Site Photo Documentation

Attachment C. Documentation of workshops including press release, example of outreach materials, and Attendee List

Attachment D. *Caring for your Waterfront Property* publication

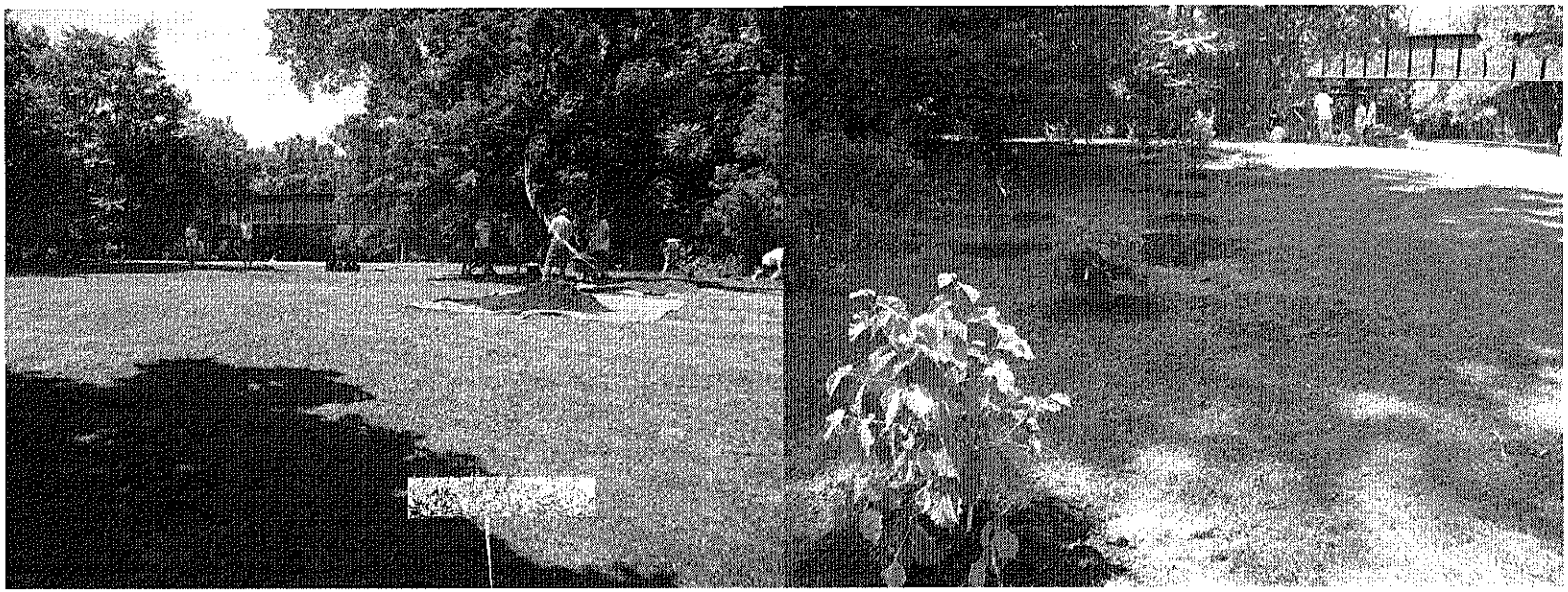
Attachment E. Letter from Praxair

Attachment A. Summary of Expenditures to Date

Grant Budget		RIVERKEEPER Budget						
			2009	2010	2011	2012		
Category	Amount	Category	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Actual	TOTAL RIVERKEEPER BUDGET
Personnel	$153,792	Personnel	$21,111.55	$52,872.00	$57,232.00	$30,810.00	$18,666.00	$162,025.55
Fringe	$22,796	Fringe	$1,609.81	$4,147.83	$4,588.36	$3,081.00	$1,606.88	$13,427.00
Contractual Services:		Contractual Services:						
Site Assessment/Design	$6,000	Site Assessment/Design				$4,500.00		$4,500.00
AmeriCorps	$15,000	AmeriCorps		$5,358.58	$6,000.00	$3,641.42	$3,000.00	$15,000.00
Additional Tech/Supplies	$58,440	Additional Tech/Supplies - CONSTRUCTION	$2,867.89	$6,102.57	$27,760.05	$20,412.41	$5,469.91	$57,142.92
Travel	$760	Travel	$106.40	$382.02	$1,939.26	$1,400.00	$543.75	$3,827.68
Training Costs, Printing and Graphic Design	$8,000	Training Costs, Printing and Graphic Design	$72.00	$2,871.76	$364.61			$8,864.37
		Office Supplies				$500.00	$120.54	
		Plant Material and Supplies						
		Printing				$5,056.00	$2,400.00	
Overhead	$66,197	Overhead	$20,343.00	$22,927.00	$22,927.00	$0.00		$66,197.00
Total	$330,985	Total	$46,110.65	$94,661.76	$120,811.28	$69,400.83	$31,807.08	$330,984.52

Attachment B. Examples of Site Photos

Eastern Park



Before

After

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Before

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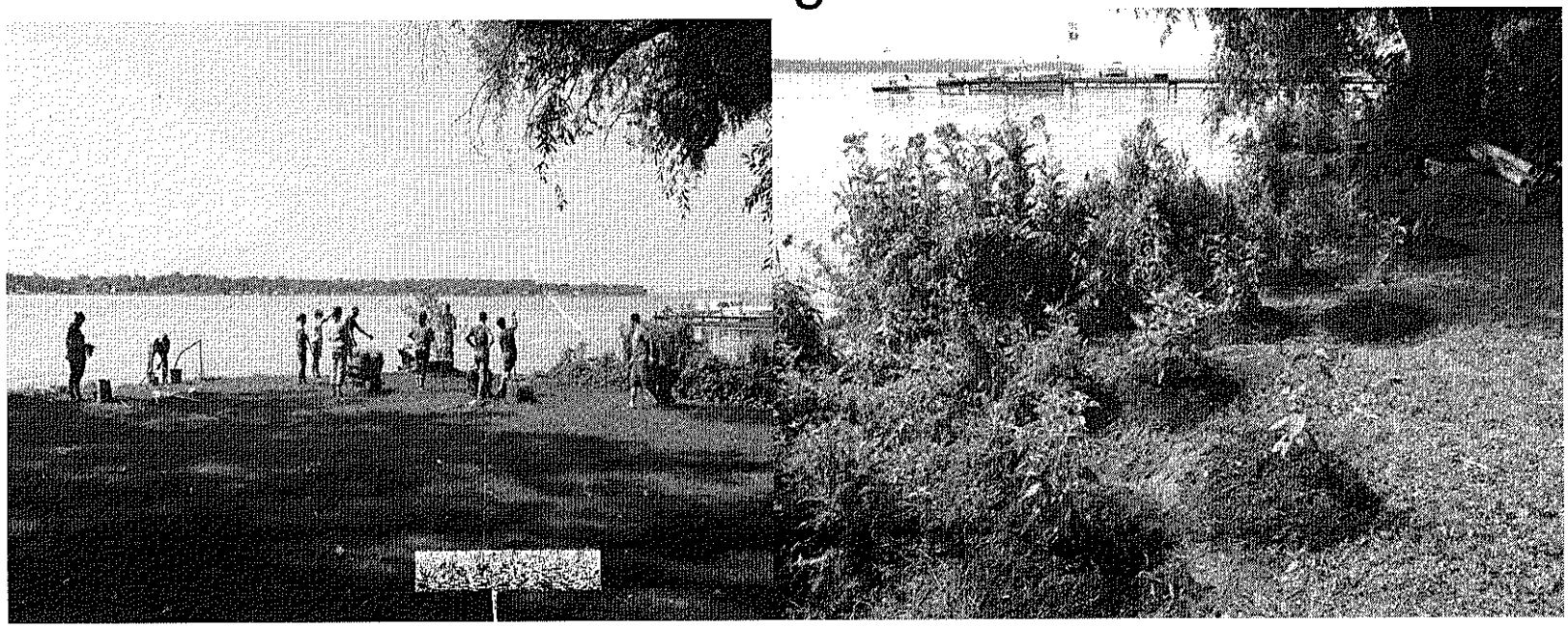

Before

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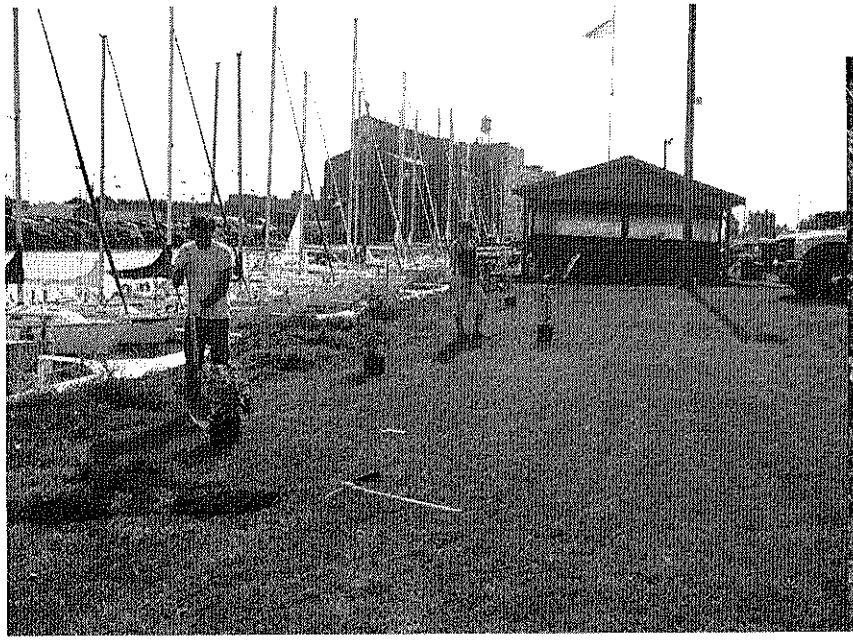
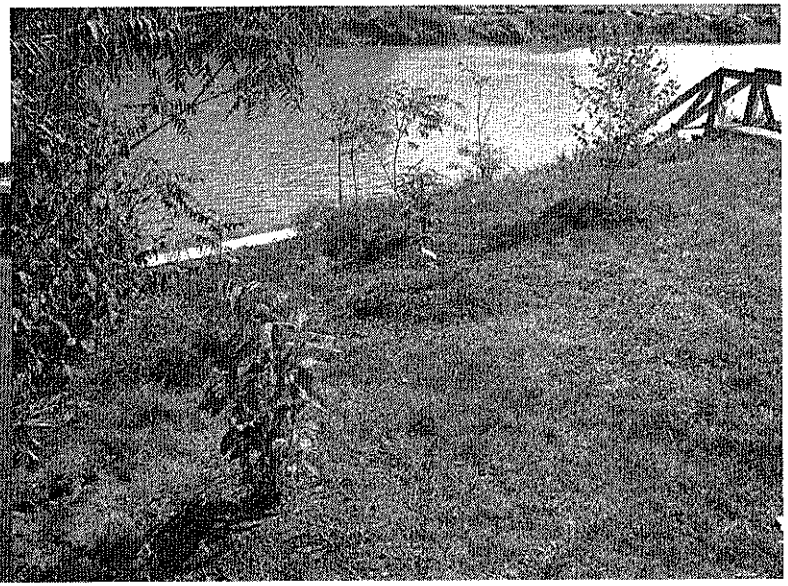
RCR Yachts





Before

After

Winkler

Cayuga Creek

Before

After