Canal Park  
Solebury Township, Bucks County

**Site Context**

The 11.9 acre Canal Park property was acquired by Solebury Township. It had previously been developed and contained five underground active gas transmission lines, a gas maintenance and venting station, and a 300 ft wide PECO easement with high tension power lines and towers. The area is located adjacent to a 34 lot housing development, the New Hope-Lambertville free bridge (US Route 202), PA State Route 32, the PA Delaware Canal State Park and historic 60-mile towpath.

**Sustainable Practices**

*Water*- Riparian buffers and wetland areas are maintained and enhanced. Groundwater infiltration is promoted by the unique underground infiltration basins that are located along the entire length of the multi-purpose athletic field on each side. Another such basin is located along the parking lot near the pedestrian bridge. Water runoff is channeled into these underground facilities, filtered and cooled by the stone, and infiltrated back into the ground. Natural stormwater flows and slopes have been maintained over the entire site.

*Natural Landscaping*- All existing stands of trees, plants and natural grass areas were preserved and protected during construction. Critical habitat and nesting areas for the red bellied turtles were preserved and protected in the identified areas of the site. Some invasive species were removed. Enhanced tree cover was accomplished by the planting of 206 trees throughout the site. In addition, site plantings includes 1266 shrubs, 470 flowering perennials, and 335 grasses – over 50 varieties – to create a diversified setting. “Lawn” area is limited to the actual playing surface on the multi-purpose field. Existing tree stands have a 10 to 20 foot butter that transitions to non-mowed field areas.

**Project Overview**

The project involved the construction of a multi-purpose athletic field, a pedestrian bridge over the Canal to access the historic 60-mile Delaware Canal Towpath, a walking trail, driveway and parking lots, and landscape plantings. All existing stands of trees and natural grass areas were preserved and protected during construction. Critical habitat and nesting areas for the red bellied turtles were preserved and protected.
Sustainable Practices Cont.

Conserve Energy- There are no buildings or other structures on the site that require energy; and night skies are protected because there is no lighting for the athletic field or site entrance.

“Design to fit” construction afforded significant protection for the existing slopes, hillsides, banks, rock outcroppings and forest areas thereby minimizing actual disturbance.

The current maintenance plan is designed to encourage the health and viability of the plant life through natural measures without the use of fertilizers. Seasonal inspection and pruning of trees and shrubs, and a mowing schedule are other parts of the maintenance plan.

Connecting People to Nature- Children have multiple opportunities for unorganized play and can often be seen in the large open field, grass areas and wooded section of the Park.

A three mile trail and bike path connects the largest developed area in Solebury of over 800 residents, past the local school district, and into the Park. In addition, the pedestrian bridge in the Park now connects walkers, hikers and bike riders to the 60-mile trail along the Delaware. The adjacent neighborhood has direct walking access to the park. All walkways and entrance areas are ADA compliant.

Information provided by: Dudley Rice, Director, Parks and Recreation, Solebury Township (2011)

http://www.soleburytwp.org/index.php/parks-recreation/township-parks-facilities