



## Growing Native Annual Report 2007

**G**rowing Native continues its mission of engaging citizens of the Potomac River watershed in meaningful conservation and outreach activities. In 2007, 7,300 volunteers planted 1,950 trees in the spring and collected 24,645 pounds of native tree seeds in the fall.

*Growing Native* expanded this year, with support from partners, volunteers, and ambassadors. Volunteers who take time to be active members of their community by participating in *Growing Native* make a difference in the local environment. Potomac Conservancy and partners greatly appreciate the efforts of every person who volunteered in 2007.

### Annual Highlights

#### Growing Native Events

Potomac Conservancy and partners organized events throughout the Potomac River watershed to spread the word about the project and engage the public. There were public tree-planting events, seed collection events, and ambassador trainings in every state in the Potomac River watershed.

#### Pounds Per Kids Contest in Montgomery County

*Growing Native* volunteers in Montgomery County initiated a countywide contest between seven schools to see who could collect the most seeds. Almost 3,400 pounds of seeds were collected. Rock Creek Forest Elementary School won the contest with 1,288 pounds; Chevy Chase Elementary coming in second with 912 pounds. The *Growing Native* website has a complete list of participating schools.

#### Growing Native Website

The redesigned *Growing Native* website is user friendly and has a new sharp look. The site includes information for drop-off site coordinators and ambassadors. An education page was developed to present additional resources and information about the new *Growing Native Education Guide*.

#### Growing Native Education Guide: Experience the Potomac River Watershed

This educator resource includes comprehensive lessons and stewardship activities for 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The Guide offers teachers instructions for leading three conservation opportunities: a seed collection event, a grow-out station (small onsite nursery), and a Plant-A-Seed event. The *Growing Native Education Guide* is available for downloading at [www.growingnative.org](http://www.growingnative.org).

### The Growing Season

In spring, *Growing Native* volunteers plant trees along rivers and streams that feed into the Potomac River. Establishing forest buffers along these waterways improves water quality.

- Number of plantings: 10
- Number of volunteers at plantings: Approximately 1,000

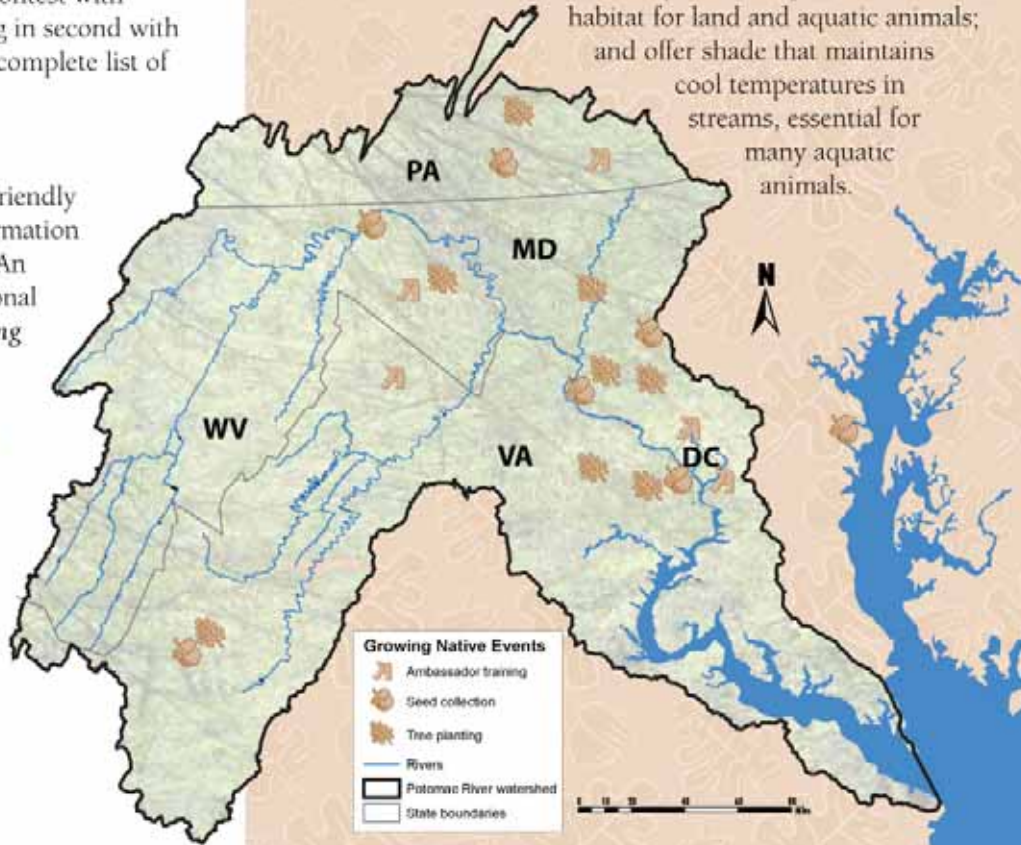
In summer, volunteers can receive training to be *Growing Native* ambassadors. These volunteers "grow" the project by coordinating events in their local communities.

- Number of ambassador trainings: 6
- Ambassadors trained: 58

Every fall volunteers of all backgrounds and ages come together to collect seeds from native trees such as black walnuts, oaks, and other hardwoods. These seeds are donated to state nurseries where they are propagated and grown into small trees. The young trees are then planted in restoration projects throughout the watershed.

- Number of pounds collected: 24,645
- Number of collection volunteers: 6,300

In every season, trees filter pollutants, such as phosphorous and nitrogen, before they enter waterways; prevent soil erosion and stabilize stream banks; sequester carbon and filter other air pollutants; provide essential habitat for land and aquatic animals; and offer shade that maintains cool temperatures in streams, essential for many aquatic animals.



## Annual Highlights (con't)

### Teacher Trainings and Grow-out Stations

In May 2007, Potomac Conservancy and partners trained teachers in Fairfax County, Virginia, on the *Growing Native* project and how to establish grow-out stations at schools. The Conservancy organized a workshop, led by Virginia Tech's Northern Virginia Center, to train teachers and partners on a simple and innovative approach to setting up a grow-out station.

### Expanding *Growing Native* throughout the Chesapeake Bay

- Potomac Conservancy presented *Growing Native* at the Virginia Association for Science Teachers and the North American Association for Environmental Education conferences.
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay piloted *Growing Native* in Baltimore, Maryland. The Alliance staff set up a drop-off location, worked with local foresters, and organized a collection event.



## 2007 Volunteer and Partner Highlights:

- Potomac Conservancy worked closely with the Izaak Walton League in Maryland to organize seed collection events and give away trees for Earth Day. Also, a *Growing Native* ambassador held a successful collection event at Brookside Nature Center. State foresters also helped with tree planting events in Frederick, Maryland.
- *Growing Native* expanded in Fairfax County, Virginia, by setting up three new drop-off locations. Also, more than 200 students from the Thomas Harrison Middle School in Harrisonburg participated in a collection event and tour of the Virginia State Nursery. Additionally, Potomac Conservancy collaborated with the Children's Discovery Museum in Winchester, Virginia, to expand the project in the Shenandoah Valley.
- Partners in Pennsylvania are using innovative techniques such as tree cuttings to set up grow-out stations and replant streamside areas. Students from Chambersburg High School, working with state foresters and the Franklin Conservation District, gathered tree cuttings at Wilson College and nurtured the cuttings for three months before planting them along a degraded stream.
- Twenty-one West Virginia Girl Scouts, including the Shawnee Girl Scout Council, attended ambassador trainings. Afterward, the scouts led a large collection event. State foresters and the Cacapon Institute continue creating grow-out stations at high schools to provide local trees for restoration.

## Looking Ahead to 2008

*Growing Native* in 2008 will pursue the following objectives:

- Engage local citizens and increase adult participation focusing on Potomac Conservancy's target watershed areas. We will continue to organize public tree planting events and seed collection events in priority areas in the Potomac River watershed and reach out to corporations, community service clubs, and special volunteer groups and will instruct more ambassadors to promote *Growing Native*.
- Advance public awareness via the *Growing Native* website and media placements.
- Replenish seedling stock by bringing high-quality, low-cost seeds to state nurseries and trees to streamside forests. We will continue to build relationships with state foresters, nursery staff, and other drop-off site coordinators.
- Enhance streamside habitats through restored riparian forest buffers and grow-out stations that provide native trees for local small-scale restoration projects. Potomac Conservancy and partners will provide technical assistance to community groups involved with grow-out stations.



*Growing Native* is a project of the Potomac Watershed Partnership, which is managed by Potomac Conservancy, and made possible by the generous support of its partners and sponsors.

## 2007 Supporters:



## 2007 Partners:

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Since 1993, Potomac Conservancy has protected the health, beauty, and enjoyment of the Potomac River and its tributaries.

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