



Rehabilitation of Matthews Park *served by Walton County Extension and MGEVs*

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Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program

Walton County Soil and Water District; UGA Extension, Walton County; and Master Gardener Extension Volunteers (MGEVs) have collaborated to rehabilitate a local park in Walton County. This park, Matthews Park, in Monroe, GA, was targeted for rehabilitation as it is a beneficial community park that functions as a wildlife habitat and a natural outdoor classroom.

At Matthews Park, Walton County MGEVs hosted public educational programs funded by Walton County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2017. Through these programs, they reached 33 community members.



100 volunteer service
hours in 2017

They planned and hosted a hands-on educational program that demonstrated proper food plot planting techniques to provide a food source for various wildlife in fall and winter months. Julia Gaskin, UGA Extension's Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator, was the guest speaker for this program, and she educated attendees on the types of cover crops to be used for farming practices and wildlife food plots. MGEVs and program participants worked together to plant food plots in Matthews Park with a mixture of clover, rye, and brassica. MGEVs also educated participants on what forage items are best for wildlife during the winter grazing season.

Master Gardeners have also assisted in planning a program on how to build bat houses. Katrina Morris, a biologist with the Department of Natural Resources, educated program attendees on the importance of bats in Georgia as well as some of the threats to bats. MGEVs demonstrated how to construct a bat house and provided instruction on where to place them in the landscape. Following the program, bat houses were installed throughout the park.

Lastly, MGEVs held an educational program on Arbor Day. They taught attendees the importance of native trees.

Then, MGEVs and program attendees planted trees and small shrubs throughout the park. Some examples were redbud, buckeye, and American beautyberry. These trees and shrubs are identified throughout the park with labels. MGEVs return to the park periodically to maintain these trees and shrubs. They plan to continue to conduct educational programming at Matthews Park.



Informational signage addressing wildlife habitats is displayed at Matthews Park.



Trees and shrubs were added to the park as part of the rehab efforts.

The Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program prepares volunteers to support UGA Cooperative Extension in delivering gardening information to Georgia's citizens and communities. Since 1979, Master Gardeners and UGA Extension have helped Georgians become healthier, more productive, financially independent and environmentally responsible.

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