

Establish Natural Habitats

KULPVILLE (Montgomery Co.) - A growing interest in creating and maintaining natural habitats was evident at a recent day-long workshop sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension and its Montgomery County Recycling Program, and the Montgomery County Planning Commission. More than 180 people attended the Natural Habitats workshop in Kulpville that focused on converting manicured grounds into more natural landscape. Participants, a majority of

whom were commercial and public landscape professionals, came from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. "This was the first workshop of its kind," says Julianne Schieffer, the extension's urban forestry agent, "and we were overwhelmed by the positive response."

Gary San Julain, professor of Wildlife Resources at Penn State University, opened the workshop with a presentation on the basic needs of wildlife. The nine workshop speakers emphasized

the importance of promoting native plants and wildlife and discussed methods used to foster a natural environment. From the public sector, the following organizations shared their experience with the audience: Washington Crossing Historic Park, Natural Lands Trust in Ambler, Heritage Conservancy in Doylestown, Valley Forge Park, and Green Lane Reservoir Park. In addition, a representative from Robert Trent Jones Golf Club in Lake Manassas, VA and the facilities manager of

Hersey Mills in West Chester, spoke of how they incorporate natural habitat management practices into managing their facilities.

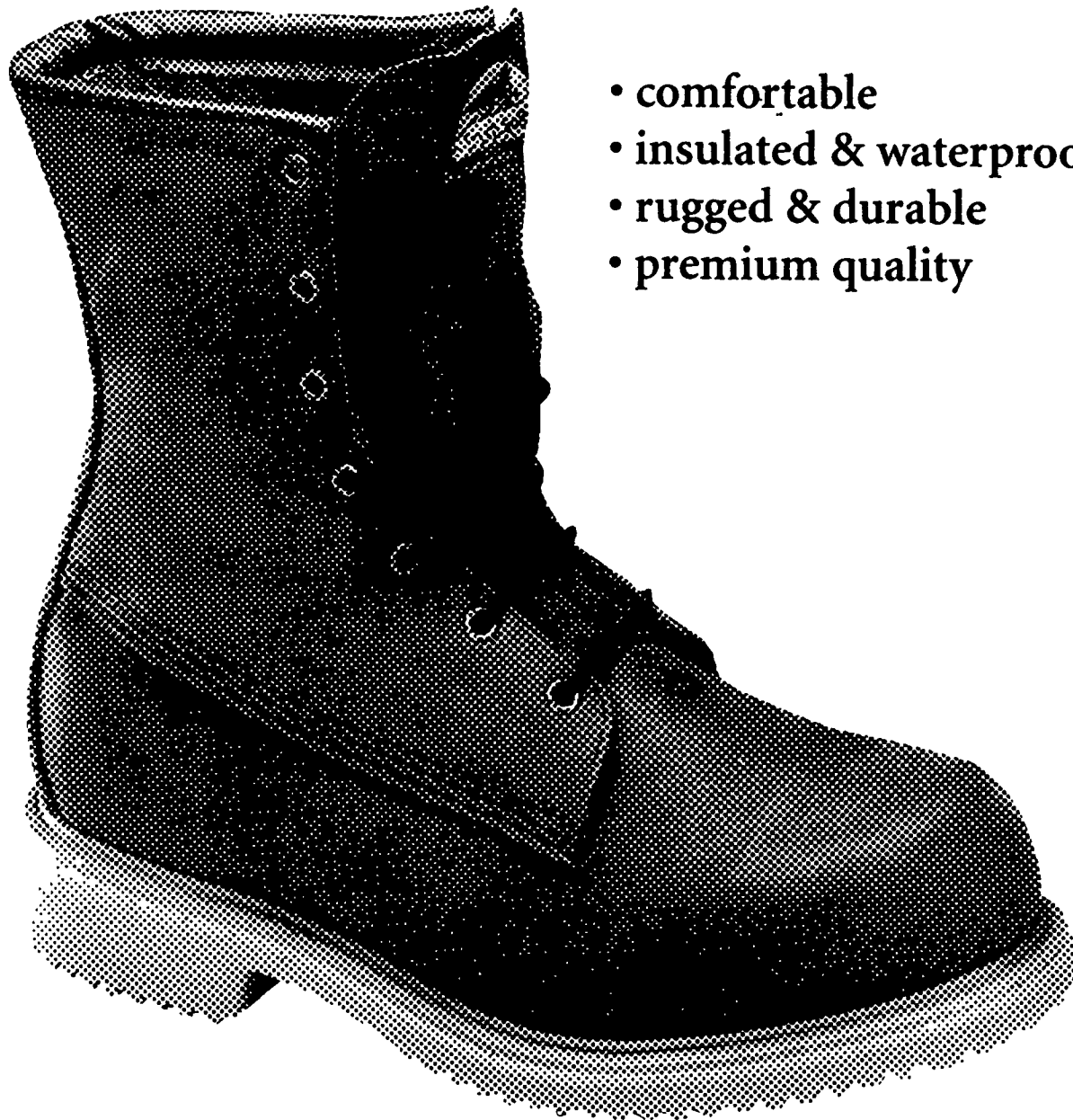
Nancy Minich of the Heritage Conservancy shared some habitat designs including how a housing development's unused open area was converted, using native grasses and plants, into a beautiful wetland with foot bridges and walking paths. The Environmental Education Specialist from Green Lane Reservoir Park, Kevin Crilley, showed how to create a butterfly

garden and described the benefits of planting it.

Flavia Rutkosky, Fish and Wildlife Biologist of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Smryna, Delaware, spoke of several financial and professional resources available to individuals and organizations to help create natural habitats.

For information about establishing a natural habitat or attending a future natural habitat workshop, contact Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office at (610) 489-4315.

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