

Lake Owassa Celebrates 66 New Trees Planted on 15 Properties
December 1, 2023

In continuing efforts to slow down heavy flows of stormwater that bring excess phosphorus into Lake Owassa, the Sussex County Municipal Utilities Authority (SCMUA) Wallkill River Watershed Management Group provided LOCA homeowners with free trees and labor (where needed) to replace those lost to the Emerald Ash Borer blight. Twelve Lake Owassa resident properties and two more owned by LOCA (West Shore Boat Launch and the Island), and the Pond Lily access area provided space for 66 trees of more than a dozen different water tolerant species.

Where homeowners needed assistance with digging ground for the smaller 5-7' tall containerized trees, Kristine Rogers, a SCMUA watershed management scientist came out with shovel in hand to get them into the ground herself before winter. Sixteen of the total 66 trees



were of sufficient size to need to be balled and burlapped for transport and were delivered and planted for free by Cerbo's Nursery team using a mechanical excavator.

A single mature tree can soak up as much as 20,000 gallons of water a year to reduce the volume of polluted stormwater runoff flowing into Lake Owassa during storm events. Please consider where you can plant trees on your property!

Cerbo's Hampton Nursery staff plants two ironwood trees between the Seider and Healy properties. Note the stormwater protection rip rap channel alongside the planting area, in foreground.

There will be a second round of funding next spring without any specific requirement to replace Emerald Ash Borer diseased trees, with 150 containerized trees made available for the Paulinskill Watershed region. This funding comes to us from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection through the SCMUA Paulinskill Watershed Management Group.

All residents should keep a close eye on storm events and if you have open grassy areas, sloped driveways, or culverts that act as funnels to bring stormwater or mud into the lake, consider planting trees through this program. If you would like to be a tree recipient in the next round in Spring 2024, or just to discuss the possibility, please reach out to LOCA Partnerships Chair Carey Weiss at careyweiss1@gmail.com.