Natives for Reclamation of Oil & Gas Sites

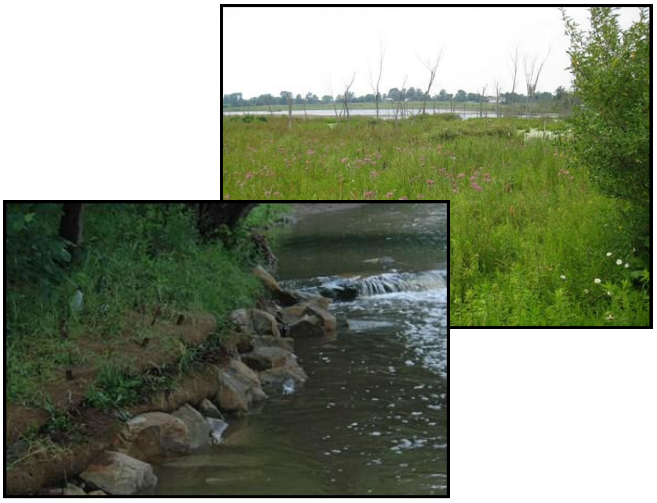
Development of the Marcellus and Utica Shale Plays in Pennsylvania and surrounding states has created a great opportunity for our region and our country. Landowners have the ability to determine, to a large extent, how their lands are reclaimed after drilling or associated activity takes place on their land. Certain reclamation practices are mandated by government agencies, but others offer an opportunity for the landowner to ensure that diversity and habitat are improved, agricultural benefits are realized and ecological resources are protected.

Wildlife and Pollinator Habitat

Reclaiming sites and right-of-ways associated with oil & gas activity is an opportunity to minimize wildlife fragmentation by using native species. Native vegetation provides sustainable food and cover for all types of wildlife. Species diversity provides year-round habitat and encourages native pollinators.

Livestock Forage

Switchgrass and big bluestem can provide high-quality forage. These native, warm season grasses used in a system of rotational grazing allow for robust growth during the hot, summer months. University of Tennessee findings suggest the nutrient content of this forage can be as high as 16%-17% crude protein if harvested correctly. Ground switchgrass straw is experiencing increased use as a **forage extender** in livestock feed. It works to increase bulk and dilute protein in operations with sources of high protein feed.



Ecological Restoration

Oil & gas activity frequently impacts sensitive areas, such as wetlands, streams and the watersheds into which they feed. Access roads and areas susceptible to erosion and sediment runoff must also be reclaimed in a manner that mitigates their negative effects. The reclamation of many of these areas is closely monitored and guided by government agencies. Landowners should still be aware of instances such as these on their property, especially where their voice in the process can ensure that reclamation supports land stewardship conservation practices through the use of native species.