



**Ivy Narrow
Bird
Preserve
New Haven,
Conneticut**

In the 1990s, a residential building was demolished at the corner of Ivy Street and Dixwell Avenue, thus creating a vacant lot. The lot is located in the center of Newhallville, a working-class black neighborhood in New Haven. The city mowed the lot, but a particular neighbor with the support of family and neighboring friends wanted to significantly improve the lot. In 2000, this group of private citizens applied for an Urban Resources Initiative (URI) Community Greenspace Program grant to work on the vacant lot. URI is a community nonprofit and its Greenspace Program is a partnership with the City of New Haven and the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.





In initial meetings with the neighborhood alderperson, the group was advised to limit its improvements to the perimeter of the lot. However, the group envisioned more than a "side yard." After the perimeter of the lot had been planted including street trees on the south-side of the lot, the group held another design meeting and articulated their desire to create an urban bird habitat. The group developed a restoration plan with the help of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Urban Wildlife Habitat Program. The restoration plan was implemented over the course of two years, transforming the weedy lot into a bird sanctuary. (The habitat/preserve is located 1 mile east of the Beaver Ponds ecosystem.)

Since I left New Haven in 2001, the landscape and site programming have matured well. For example, the Ivy Narrow group has installed a solar panel to operate the pond's pump. The site has achieved "backyard habitat" status through National Wildlife Refuge. Finally, the preserve is one of several neighborhood open spaces in the Open Spaces and Learning Places Program, an environmental education program for public elementary school students.

Read more about the [Urban Resources Initiative Greenspaces](#) program.

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