

Business Joins Community For Natural Causes

(NAPS)—A concerned community and a pharmaceutical company have recently joined forces to cure an ailing wetland.

The Bentley Creek, developed in the nineteenth century to float logs to local mills, runs through the middle of a manufacturing area of New London, Connecticut.

Over the years, portions of the waterway, which was home to a variety of wildlife, were filled for development and the tiny creek was squeezed into an industrial setting bordered by factories, a metal scrapyard and the city's sewage treatment plant.

"Bentley Creek is a rare example of a wetland or salt marsh environment in the middle of a city," said a spokesperson for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CDEP). Despite being a repository for runoff from the industrial sites, the creek survived and continued to attract life.

Yet, its apparent vibrancy aside, the creek and its occupants were thought by many groups to be in danger of being wiped out by their unnatural neighbors.

In 1999, Pfizer Inc., a leading pharmaceutical company agreed to restore the 1.8-acre waterway as part of its \$300 million Global Development Facility, positioned adjacent to the creek. The company worked in conjunction with the city of New London and the CDEP to make the water safer for existing wildlife and to attract more life to the area.

The groups dredged the bottom



Bentley Creek, December 2000. The environmental remediation of the creek is complete and the new Pfizer headquarters appears on the left.

of the creek, removing debris and contaminants, re-graded the creek's banks to restore tidal flow, removed invasive and harmful plants and re-seeded the creek bed with seeds harvested from a local vibrant salt marsh.

It is hoped that Bentley Creek will again flourish into a robust aquatic ecosystem, with the property being protected and used for educational and environmental research.

Pfizer environmental staff have collaborated with the Science Center of Eastern Connecticut to develop educational programs focusing on environmental remediation of the area. "If I had one thing that I'm particularly proud of," says George M. Milne, Jr., executive vice president of the pharmaceutical manufacturer, "it is this effort."

Plans for installing a boardwalk that runs along the marsh are underway. The addition is expected to let visitors enjoy the natural scenery without harming it.