This year we celebrate our 90th Anniversary at Friends of the Wissahickon, founded in 1924 when the community came together to restore the park after a winter storm destroyed over 200 trees. At that time, volunteers worked together to raise funds to purchase 14,000 native trees, as well as shrubs and wildflowers, for Wissahickon Valley Park, many of which may still be thriving in the park today. This group represents the first of countless volunteers, members, and supporters FOW had the great fortune to work with over the past 90 years.

Our 90th Anniversary celebrates the work completed during the first decade of FOW and is an opportunity to reflect on how that legacy continues through our current programs, such as the Sustainable Trails Initiative. From 1924 to 1934, FOW members and volunteers did much to preserve the park and create a special place for the community, including the restoration of Valley Green Inn. But our work went well beyond the preservation of Valley Green, and FOW established the basic principles on which we operate today, setting the stage for all the projects we are currently pursuing: preserving the forest; encouraging safe and appropriate use of the park; and improving water quality.

As we celebrate 90 years of working with the community, FOW will be increasing our efforts to mobilize the public to preserve the Wissahickon for the future. The preservation of the Wissahickon requires FOW to improve our stewardship in the valley and make it a sustainable recreation resource for all park users. **We need you!** There are many ways to help FOW preserve the Wissahickon with FOW: become a member; make a donation; become a Trail Ambassador or Crew Leader; volunteer at one of our workdays; or join us at one of our special 90th Anniversary events, such as the Birding Hike on May 10, FOW's Forbidden 10K on May 18, the Family Picnic on July 12, or the Celebration on October 25 at Valley Green Inn.

No other spot in the Wissahickon is as well known or loved as Valley Green Inn, and for many years the Inn and the surrounding area were a focal point of FOW's efforts. (See "Looking Back with FOW" on p. 10.) This year, the Inn will be the focus of our 90th Anniversary Celebration, and FOW will be making improvements to the Inn facilities throughout 2014. These improvements will be showcased at our 90th Anniversary Celebration in October. We hope you will join us in celebrating our 90th Anniversary and preserving the Wissahickon as a member or volunteer, and include yourself among FOW's countless friends.

Our 90th Anniversary celebrates the work completed during the first decade of FOW and is an opportunity to reflect on how that legacy continues through our current programs, such as the Sustainable Trails Initiative.

Wissahickon Calendar 2014 Still Available

There is still time to purchase a New Wissahickon Calendar for 2014, or get one FREE by becoming a new member. Non-members can purchase the calendar for $12 at www.fow.org. Each month features a photo of the Wissahickon and an interesting fact about the park or an important safety tip. Upcoming FOW events are noted on the calendar so you won't miss any of our 90th Anniversary Celebration events!

United Way Donations

The Friends of the Wissahickon can receive membership/donations through the United Way. Our United Way number is 9882. If this is the most convenient way for you to give, please do so. Visit our website (www.fow.org) to learn about the benefits of membership in the Friends of the Wissahickon.
It’s Spring—Avoid Muddy Trails

It’s Mud Season in Wissahickon Valley Park, and FOW is urging park users to refrain from biking, hiking, or horseback riding on muddy trails. Use Forbidden Drive instead, or risk getting very dirty.

Spring is when trails are most vulnerable to erosion and long-term damage. As frost thaws, it releases water. During this period it is important to leave the soil undisturbed so it can mix with organic leaves and other organic matter and dry out naturally into trail dirt. If disturbed while muddy, the soil will be washed away leaving exposed rocks and roots.

According to Project Manager Henry Stroud, all the upper trails can become muddy in the spring and are highly susceptible to damage. When coming upon a muddy trail, FOW advises park users to ride or hike through it, rather than around it, which widens the trail and encroaches on plant and animal habitats near the trail. Park users can also consult the Map of the Wissahickon Valley Park for alternative trails. Maps are available from FOW at http://fow.org/about-park/maps.

One Man’s Trash

by Bradley Maule

As someone who’s lived here for the better part of the past 15 years, my greatest complaint about Philadelphia has always, always been the litter. It seems there’s no escaping this quality-of-life problem, unfortunately, even deep within the wooded seclusion of the Wissahickon. So as a matter of doing my part, and as a way to get to know the park intimately, I’ve devoted 2014 to picking up that problematic litter.

With the One Man’s Trash project, I plan on getting out for Wissahickon hikes at least once a week, every week, in every corner of the park, and collecting each piece of litter I encounter. If it’s too large or too disgusting, I’ll make a note of it for future retrieval. Then, with each week’s haul, I’ll sort it by type—plastic, metal, glass, clothing, etc.—then catalog it in a database, and store it in bins for the full year.

Finally, in early 2015, in a presentation and venue to be determined, I’ll present my findings, data, photos, and maps of the entire project. (The photos won’t only be of litter, but of the wonderful vistas, bridges, buildings, geology, flora, fauna, and so forth within the park.) Bookmark phillyskyline.com/onenemanstrash to follow along and see weekly reports and photos.

Bradley Maule is the founder and editor of PhillySkyline.com and is a co-editor of HiddenCityPhila.org. He grew up in the woods of Tyrone, Pennsylvania, spent many of his Shippensburg University days on the Appalachian Trail, and explored the reaches of the Pacific Northwest at every chance during his three years in Portland, Oregon. But Philly is now his home, and he lives in Mt. Airy and is training to be an FOW Trail Ambassador.

Bradley Maule’s haul from week 2, bagged up and ready to be sorted. Photo courtesy of Bradley Maule

Birding Hike with Ruth Pfeffer

Saturday, May 10 • 8 – 11 am

Meet at the intersection of Bell’s Mill Road and Forbidden Drive

Join us for a special birding hike to kick off our year-long 90th Anniversary Celebration. Ruth Pfeffer is an expert birder, photographer, and owner of Birding with Ruth. She has been leading birding expeditions in the U.S. and abroad since the 1980s. Bring binoculars, camera, and a bird book, if you have one.

FOW’s Forbidden 10K

Sunday, May 18 • 9 am

Park, Start, and Finish at Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive

A 10K/6.2 mile loop along Forbidden Drive

$40 per runner/$50 beginning May 1

Registration begins at 8 am on race day or during packet pickup only if space is available

All entrants will receive a race packet, t-shirt and goody bag.

Awards will be given for the top male and female runners in various age groups. This race will be chip-timed by Bryn Mawr Running Co.

Family Picnic

Saturday, July 12 • 3 to 8 pm

Music, Food, and Fun!

Old-fashioned picnic games

Live Music

Environmental Activities for Families

90th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, October 25

Valley Green Inn

Registration required for all events at www.fow.org.

For more information, contact Outreach Manager Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org or 215-247-0417 x109.
Ready, Willing & Able Improve Forbidden Drive

If anyone has walked down Forbidden Drive lately and seen a group of men clad in blue, diligently working and smiling emphatically, you have encountered the crew from Ready, Willing & Able (RWA). During the past few months, RWA has been recovering and reshaping the drain that runs alongside Forbidden Drive, which acts as a catchment for water running down the hillside. Controlling the flow of water in this area is essential to reduce erosion and the buildup of ice during the winter. RWA has also worked on a handful of other projects, including tree planting and invasive plant removal. FOW has seen firsthand the benefits of RWA for the people who work on its crews, from the quality of their work to their commitment to the job. FOW is happy to have them working with us in the park.

FOW Honors its Volunteers

The Friends of the Wissahickon celebrated over 8,000 work hours contributed by volunteers in 2013 and awarded Sarah West the Volunteer of the Year Award at the annual Volunteer Recognition Night at Valley Green Inn on December 19, 2013. West is a long-time FOW member, former FOW Board Member, and a current Trail Ambassador.

“The growth and popularity of FOW’s Trail Ambassador hikes and talks is due in large part to her dedication,” said Outreach Manager Sarah Marley. “Sarah West was nominated by her peers for tirelessly contributing her time and expertise to FOW and the park, and for serving as an inspiration and mentor to her fellow volunteers.”

Sarah West was presented with a hand-carved hiking stick, created by local artisan Isaac Maefield from locally-sourced wood. Maefield incorporated Wissahickon schist into its design especially for West, who leads geology hikes in the Wissahickon as a Trail Ambassador. She developed her expertise in geology while teaching science at the secondary and college level for 40 years, 25 of those years at Germantown Friends School.

FOW volunteers serve on various committees, participate in workdays in the park, or serve as Trail Ambassadors or Crew Leaders. These hardworking individuals help build structures in the park, repair trails, assist with fundraising, write for the newsletter, patrol the park, lead hikes, and countless other tasks.

Over 50 Volunteers Come Out for MLK Day

The first workday of the year was a huge success! Our Martin Luther King Day of Service was attended by more than 50 dedicated individuals. One day before the big snowstorm, volunteers were fortunate to have fairly mild weather, which provided perfect working conditions for the day. The group started at Historic RittenhouseTown and removed debris from alongside the Lincoln Drive Trail and within the Monoshone Creek area. Volunteers continued along the Wissahickon Creek, removing debris and making a valiant effort to remove an old tire from the middle of the stream. A few volunteers made it to the SEPTA Transfer Station at Ridge Avenue, where the amount of trash was too overwhelming to tackle; they decided to live and fight another day. When all was said and done, FOW volunteers removed almost 40 bags of trash, several large car parts, and some heavy pieces of crunched guardrail.

Rory Erlich got lucky on MLK Day and found a dollar amidst all the trash he and his father, Mike, collected along the creek near Lincoln Drive.
Meanderings in the Wissahickon with Shelly Brick Saturday, March 29 • 2 pm Meet at Kitchen’s Lane parking lot off Wissahickon Ave.

Sunday, April 20 • 2 pm Meet at intersection of Wayne Ave. and Allen’s Lane.

Saturday, May 10 • 2 pm Meet at Chestnut Hill Ave. entrance to the park at Seminole St.

Saturday, June 7 • 3 pm Meet at Rex Ave. entrance to the park.

Enjoy our park and “talk story,” a Hawaiian tradition. Pace will be set by the group. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water.

Trails Less Traveled III: Bushwhacking on the Andorra Plateau with Gerry Schweiger Sunday March 30 • 1 pm Meet in parking area at Northwesest Ave. on the Chestnut Hill side of the park. Look for the gray Toyota Corolla. The Andorra plateau contains the Andorra Natural Area with many well worn trails, but it also contains the abandoned Bell’s Mill Trail. We will climb the plateau, hike to the fenced exclosure, and skirt that to the beginnings of the Old Bell’s Mill Trail. We will finish by re-climbing and crossing the plateau to our starting point. NOTE: There are lots of briers, brambles, fallen trees, and scree; hikers should wear leather gloves or similar thorn-resistant sturdy gloves.

A Bird Walk with Mary Phalan Saturday, April 5 • 9 am Meet at stone tables where Forbidden Drive crosses Bell’s Mill Rd. Duration: 2 hours. We will hike along Forbidden Drive listening and looking for spring birds. Bring binoculars and a bird book if you have one. Children 12 and over, who enjoy bird walks, are welcome with a supervising adult. Bird watching requires slow and silent walking. Rain will cancel hike.

Trails Less Traveled II: The Creshmier Valley South Trails with Gerry Schweiger Sunday April 6 • 1 pm Meet at intersection of Huron Ave. and St. Martin’s Lane (parking available) on Chestnut Hill side of Creshmier Creek, which is accessible from Mermaid Lane (7500 St. Martin’s Lane, Philadelphia, 19118). Storms and lack of maintenance funds have limited main trail usage on the north side trail of Creshmier Creek. But there are actually several trails at different levels covering the hillside along the south (Mt. Airy) side of the Creek. We will hike two of these less-used trails and visit Climber’s Rock. NOTE: These trails cross several steep draws/tavens.

Spring Awakening in the Park with Scott Quitel Saturday, April 12 • 9 am Meet at Bell’s Mill Rd. and Forbidden Drive. Hike some mildly rigorous trails in search of tulip poplar flowers, trout lily, bloodroot, spring beauty, and other spring ephemerals. Smell the fresh spicebush. Pass by lush skunk cabbage wetlands. Listen for toads, bullfrogs, snakes, redback salamanders, and other critters. Cross and be sprayed by frothy brooks. Experience the park springing to life. Bring your senses.

Everyone Lives in a Watershed with Peg Shaw Sunday April 13 • 10 am Meet at Bell’s Mill Rd. and Forbidden Drive. Join us on this 3 hour hike thorough exploration of the Bell’s Mill watershed to discuss the ecology of this critical landscape and what we can do to restore them. Distance: 2+ miles over rugged terrain and neighborhood streets without sidewalks. Wear hiking shoes and pants, and bring water and a snack. Feel free to bring cameras, identification books, binoculars, field notebooks, and backpacks.

Lower Forbidden Drive with Sarah West Saturday April 19 • 2 pm Meet at the small parking lot where Forbidden Drive meets Lincoln Drive, a short distance downstream from Rittenhouse Town. Duration: 1.75 hours. Distance: 1 mile along lower Forbidden Drive on level ground as far as Walnut Lane Bridge. We will see: two historical sites connected to the Revolutionary War era, including the Henry Rittenhouse mill foundation, the Blue Stone Bridge, and the foundation of the Lotus Inn. We will discuss the history of the Wissahickon Tumpike, Forbidden Drive, and the construction of the Walnut Lane Bridge.

Wildflower Walk with Susan and Donald Simon Saturday April 26 • 10 am Meet at Valley Green Inn. Wear footwear suitable for hiking. Duration: 2-3 hours. Bring a wildflower guide if you wish.

Identifying and Drawing Wildflowers in Nature with Lisa Kolker Sunday, April 27 • 10 am - Meet at the Cedars House Saturday, May 17 • 10 am - Meet at the Valley Green Inn Sunday, June 8 • 10 am - Meet at the Cedars House Duration: 2 hours. Join Lisa Kolker and guest artist Meri Adelman on a leisurely walk and discover which wildflowers are in bloom. We will stop periodically and learn how to draw what we see. Children 12 or older are welcome with a responsible adult. Easy moderate walking. Bring a sketch book or paper, clip board, a drawing implement, and a cushion to sit on (optional). Wear comfortable shoes.

The Power of Geology with Scott Quitel Saturday, May 10 • 9 am Meet near the Battle of Germantown Tablet, in the parking area where Forbidden and Lincoln Drives meet. After flowing south for about 5 miles, the Wissahickon Creek takes a sharp turn to the west, near where Monoshone Creek comes in, and then continues west to its confluence with the Schuylkill. Why? Much of the answer has to do with the surrounding rock. This hike will focus on a noteworthy large rock formation that preserves millions of years of geologic history. Difficulty: mildly strenuous.

Geology Hike with Sarah West Saturday, May 17 • 3 pm Meet at Valley Green Inn. Length: 1.5 miles along a rough, steep trail on the east side of the creek, upstream from Valley Green. It can be slippery or muddy in places. Duration: 1.75 hours. We will discuss the likely formation of Wissahickon rocks as the result of plate tectonics and identify several different rock types. This hike is suitable for children over 10 accompanied by a responsible adult.

Invasive and Native Plant Safari Michael Kopena Saturday, May 24 • 1 pm Meet at Kitchen’s Lane. Difficulty: Moderate. Duration: 1.5 hours. See firsthand the effects of aggressive alien monocultures. Learn about the dangers of decreased biodiversity in our ecosystems and discover the origins of some of the valley’s most tenacious invaders. Meet some of our treasured native species. Find out what you can do in your own garden to create beautiful native habitats. Sturdy comfortable footwear recommended. Return to Kitchen’s Lane expected around 2:30 pm.

Kid-Friendly Hike to Prominent Wissahickon Sites with Marc Schwartz Saturday, June 7 • 1 pm Meet at Valley Green Inn. This family-friendly hike will take in many of the most interesting Wissahickon sites. Duration: 2 hours. We will hike along Forbidden Drive and visit the Liecey Dam and Gorgas Creek cave. Crossing the Mt. Airy Bridge, we will hike the hillside trail upstream and pass through the Fingerspan Bridge. We will enjoy our snacks and continue on to Devil’s Pool and Pee Wee Rock on our return to the Inn. Hiking shoes or sneakers are required for this hike of moderate difficulty on some rocky trails.

Escape to the Wissahickon and Take a Breather with Michael Kopena Friday, June 13 • 6 pm Meet at Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive. Difficulty: Easy. Duration: 1.5 hours. Discover soothing relief and respite in quiet glades of the Andorra Natural Area. Take time to unwind and take in the sensory feast our woods and meadows have to offer. Practice simple breath and meditation exercises great for relaxation and stress management every day. We will spend some time sitting so bring a mat, blanket, or cushion if you wish. Sturdy, comfortable footwear recommended.

FOW & WWVA — Training Together

FOW's new class of Trail Ambassadors (TAs) is completing some of their training with Trail Stewards from the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association. Together, these volunteers have covered several Wissahickon-related topics: geology, history, and current FOW projects. This year’s winter Trail Ambassador class is 13 strong and includes: Katherine Bevans; Amanda Childs; John Deckop; Mark Denys; Alissa Eberle; James Kohler; Erica Lynes; Bradley Maule; John McAdams; Sally Nista; Mary Rooney; Kris Soffa; and Anthony Woods.
What’s Happening in the Wissahickon

1. **Andorran Natural Area Improvements (FOW)**—Rehabilitate and redesign 18,000 linear feet of trail to mitigate stormwater runoff and reduce sedimentation into Wissahickon Creek; install a public, ADA accessible composting restroom; and build a new back porch for Wissahickon Environmental Center. (STI Stage 4—Wissahickon Environmental Center Stormwater Management).

2. **Trail Reroute (FOW)**—Rerouting trail that leads from the intersection of Bell’s Mill Road and Forbidden Drive to the Andorra Meadow.

3. **Trail Closure/Reroute—Roxborough Ave. (FOW)**—Closure and restoration of two heavily eroded trail segments (totaling 1,600 ft). This will result in reduced stormwater runoff, reduce sedimentation in Wissahickon Creek, and mitigate damage from stormwater to Forbidden Drive. See Project Update for a complete description.

4. **Trail Improvements (FOW)**—Improvements to the Orange Trail between Kitchen’s Lane and Mt. Airy Avenue.

5. **Tread Stabilization (FOW)**—A tread stabilization project in Blue Bell Park that will make the trail more resistant to erosion and damage.

6. **Roxborough Reservoir (PPR)**—Invasive vegetation to be removed in a 3.2-acre area. Planted approximately 300 trees and 300 shrubs in the cleared area along Eva Street. Ongoing invasive control work on the site, especially in the “dry” basin (partially filled with soil from the PWD project).

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**Creek Clean Up and Talkin’ Trash Picnic**

**Creek Clean Up • Saturday, April 26 • 9 to 11 am**

**Talkin’ Trash Picnic • 11 am to 1 pm • Flourtown Pavilion on Mill Road in Fort Washington State Park**

**In Philadelphia**

Join FOW and our partners at the Wissahickon East Project as we clean this new area of the park. Meet at the corner of Woodbrook Lane and Anderson Street in East Mt. Airy. Register at www.fow.org and indicate if you plan to attend the picnic. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Eric Falk with questions at 215-247-0417 x107 or falk@fow.org.

**In Montgomery County**

Join our partners at the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association to clean the Wissahickon Creek. All volunteers must be pre-assigned a section of the Wissahickon Creek or a tributary to clean. Register at www.wwa.org/creekcleanup. Please indicate the name, size, age range of your group, and if you plan to stay for the picnic.

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Grace Garrett and Charlotte Nadel of Abington at last year’s Creek Clean Up.
FOW Project Update
by Henry Stroud, Project Manager

The Signs They Are A-Changin’

In December 2013, FOW received $250,000 from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Commonwealth Financing Authority’s Marcellus Legacy Fund for the completion of a new wayfinding and signage system for Wissahickon Valley Park. (Wow! That was a mouthful.) The key thing to remember is this: FOW now has the funds available to fabricate and install a new sign system for the park. New signs will start appearing in the early part of 2015.

What you will see:

- New and refurbished trailhead kiosks with standardized messaging, interpretive panels, and an updated park map. Larger “primary trailheads” will have more panels with more in-depth information, including descriptions of the local environment, park history, and more.
- New trail markers will replace the existing “tombstone” markers and are designed to convey more information with a smaller footprint, including distances to key attractions and clearly marked permitted trail uses. The new trail markers will also be four-sided (4x4 wooden posts with interchangeable wooden blocks), allowing trail intersections to be signed from all directions.

FOW has been planning for the new sign system since the Sustainable Trails Initiative first took shape in 2006. A visually consistent, easily understandable sign system will provide vital wayfinding information to park users. The ability to accurately identify designated trail uses and orient users in the park will reduce trail conflicts, promote responsible park use, and enhance the overall park experience. This will be especially useful for new visitors to the park, as the 50 miles of upper trails can be easily overlooked for hiking and other activities.

Trails, Trails, Trails!

Another trail building season approaches, and FOW is gearing up for several large trail projects. Another round of funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Commonwealth Financing Authority’s Marcellus Legacy Fund will pay for two large guilty restoration projects on the western edge of the park near Roxborough Avenue and Gorgas Lane.

At Roxborough Avenue, ~1,000 ft of old trail will be closed and restored to forest habitat. This particular trail segment channels stormwater to Forbidden Drive and is partly responsible for the washout just south of the Kitchen’s Lane Bridge. At Gorgas Lane, a shorter but much more deeply incised portion of trail will receive similar treatment. On both projects, FOW volunteers will work alongside environmental engineers to plan and design new trail segments. Like all of our trail closures, these projects are designed to reclaim forest habitat, promote ground water recharge, and reduce sedimentation in the Wissahickon Creek.

Other trail projects planned include rerouting the trail that leads from the intersection of Bell’s Mill Road and Forbidden Drive to the Andorra Meadow, improvements to the Orange Trail between Kitchen’s Lane and Mt. Airy Avenue, and a tread stabilization project in Blue Bell Park, that will make the trail more resistant to erosion and damage.

WISSAHICKON VALLEY PARK SIGNAGE PROJECT

Complete
- Inventory of Existing Signage Infrastructure
- FOW hired MERJE Design to create new graphic guidelines
- Stakeholder input was solicited through a series of workshops and a public forum
- Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Approved Signature

Coming in 2014-2015

- Programming of signage system
- Fabrication of signs
- Kiosk Construction & Refurbishment
- Installation

Mt. Airy Art Garage Rain Barrel Project
by Linda Slodki, President and Co-founder of MAAG

In May 2012, the Mt. Airy Business Improvement District (MABID) became the first Philadelphia neighborhood association to receive 15 rain barrels from the Philadelphia Water Department to be used for sustainable practice of water conservation within our community. MABID reached out to the Mt. Airy Art Garage (MAAG) and we, in partnership with them, turned it into both sustainability and art.

Today, these barrels are being used to water planters on Germantown Avenue in Mt. Airy, beautifying and revitalizing our community. The barrels were painted by students, artist members of MAAG, educators, and family members.

For the artists at MAAG, what had been missing at MAAG was a concerted effort to reach out to the area schools and elder communities. We wanted to include more children, embrace our elders, and integrate themes representative of the Wissahickon Watershed and our community. This vision resulted in Phase 2 of MAAG’s Rain Barrel Project with artists ranging in age from 10 to 85.

MAAG artist teachers enlisted the enthusiastic participation of elders, children, teachers, physical therapists, and art therapists at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, Springside Chestnut Hill Academy, the Germantown High School Stained Glass Project, Homelink, and the C.W. Henry School.

So it began, with ten barrels from PWD—one per group. Five went back to the institutions, and five into the community in publicly accessible spaces. MAAG initiated teacher training sessions designed to acquaint teachers with construction of preparatory drawings, compositional devices, and general guidelines based on specific themes integral to the northwest section of Philadelphia and its relationship to the Wissahickon Watershed.

The completed barrels, with images centering on Earth Day, were exhibited at MAAG on May 31, 2013. We were honored to have these barrels on display at the EPA Public Information Center in Center City throughout June of last year.

We at MAAG realize that our responsibility to the community is to increase awareness of the restorative and educational power that art can provide. We are conscious that MAAG, located in the heart of the Wissahickon Watershed, gives us a unique opportunity to combine art with an awareness of the fragility of our natural environment. We are pleased we could marry creative impulse with civic awareness through community participation.

MAAG Rain Barrel Project Sponsors: Chestnut Hill Community Fund; Chestnut Hill Rotary Club; Dick Blick Art Supplies; The Flying Horse Center; Martin Elfant, Inc.; Philadelphia Activities Fund (Hon. Cindy Bass); Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority; PhillyOfficeRetail.com; SmithHouston, Inc.

NEWSLETTER CORRECTION:

Readers of our winter newsletter may have noticed a special feature in the Project Update on p. 5 explaining how FOW put sustainability practices to use in our Valley Green Road Stream Stabilization and Parking Lot Improvement Project. The newsletter editor inadvertently omitted the word “instead,” and stated that FOW took soil to a landfill. WE DID NOT. In fact, as our Project Manager Henry Stroud explained in his article, FOW took the soil excavated from the stream channel and used it to create stormwater berms at Historic RittenhouseTown, resurface a vehicle road in the Andorra Natural Area, and more. The editor apologizes for any confusion.

Friends of the Wissahickon • Spring 2014
After a storm destroyed over 200 trees, members of the community surrounding the Wissahickon Valley met in 1924 to develop methods to preserve the park. Many of these neighbors had been involved in the campaign to close the trail that is now known as Forbidden Drive to automobiles. These volunteers committed themselves not only to caring for the Wissahickon, but educating others on the need for environmental conservation. The Friends of the Wissahickon was born.

have preserved the history of the Wissahickon Valley by maintaining and restoring fences, stone walls, and structures, such as the WPA shelters along Forbidden Drive, the Warming Shed at Valley Green, and the Inn itself. They have advocated for appropriate use of the park, adequate zoning to prevent development of park land, and other policy issues to protect the Wissahickon. And they have provided environmental education through guided hikes, workshops, lectures, publications, and an active online presence.

Financial support for FOW’s work comes from foundations, government agencies, and individual donors. Most recently, FOW has received over $1 million in grant awards from the William Penn Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA-DEP). (Read more on p. 11.) Equally important to FOW’s successful stewardship of Wissahickon Valley Park is its growing membership and volunteer corps, along with key partnerships and innovative volunteer opportunities, such as the Trail Ambassadors and Crew Leaders programs.

Trail Ambassadors

The Trail Ambassador program, launched in 2008 with a class of 12 volunteers, has expanded to a corps of 78 Trail Ambassadors (TAs). According to Outreach Manager Sarah Marley, TAs learn about a variety of topics, including the history of Wissahickon Valley Park, the science of the Wissahickon watershed, the geologic history of the park, and plant and wildlife identification. Additionally, they are briefed about ongoing projects and current rules and regulations of the park and certified in First Aid and CPR. This extensive training allows them to become experts on the Wissahickon, which provides a valuable public service to all park users they encounter.

Financial support for FOW’s work comes from foundations, government agencies, and individual donors. Most recently, FOW has received over $1 million in grant awards from the William Penn Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA-DEP). (Read more on p. 11.) Equally important to FOW’s successful stewardship of Wissahickon Valley Park is its growing membership and volunteer corps, along with key partnerships and innovative volunteer opportunities, such as the Trail Ambassadors and Crew Leaders programs.

Trail Ambassadors are the eyes and ears of FOW in the park.

- Patrol the park
- Answer questions from park visitors
- Assist park users with safety or first aid needs
- Staff FOW information tables at community events
- Lead hikes in the Wissahickon

Every year has seen increased coordination between TAs and the Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) Ranger Corps. TAs check in with the Rangers when they begin and end their shifts in the park and file field reports for every shift with the FOW office and the PPR Ranger Supervisor. The information collected by the Trail Ambassadors is useful in showing trends in park usage and regulation compliance in the Wissahickon.

At FOW and community events, TAs are able to share their knowledge of the Wissahickon and

90 Years—Countless Friends

by Denise Larrabee, Editor
expertise with others. According to Outreach Manager Sarah Marley, Crew Leaders gain valuable skills they can apply both within the park and in the local community. They share these skills with their fellow volunteers and neighbors, thus improving the Wissahickon as well as any other locations they volunteer or work. “It’s a great program,” says McCarthy, “and we are very excited about the caliber of people who are drawn to it.”

Partners

The key to FOW’s success has been its commitment to working with the community. FOW not only counts members and volunteers among its friends, but includes local agencies and organizations, such as Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR). “Philadelphia Parks & Recreation greatly values our working partnership with the Friends,” notes Mark A. Focht, First Deputy Commissioner at PPR. “For decades we have worked together to restore and preserve the environmental and cultural features of the Wissahickon Valley.”

According to McCarthy, PPR remains FOW’s premier partner. “It is the defining partnership of FOW,” she says. “It has taught us how to be a good partner with other organizations.”

Those other organizations include the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, Philadelphia Water Department, the Chestnut Hill Historical Society, members of the equestrian, running, and biking communities, and many more. “Our partners bring resources to projects, help amplify FOW’s voice in advocacy, support our missions, and provide financial support,” says McCarthy. “Together with our volunteers and members, they help us continue the work started by those concerned community members 90 years ago.”

**FOW Partners (a short list)**

**Philadelphia Parks & Recreation**
FOW partners with PPR on all stewardship initiatives affecting Wissahickon Valley Park.

**Philadelphia Water Department**
FOW partners with PWD on capital and infrastructure projects in the park that directly benefit water quality in the Wissahickon.

**Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association**
FOW works with WWA on issues that bring the watershed and water quality to public attention and supports their water testing initiatives.

**Chestnut Hill Historical Society**
FOW works with CHHS to retain open space in the lower Wissahickon Valley.

**Did you know?**

FOW will be making improvements to Valley Green Inn throughout the coming year and holding its 90th Anniversary Celebration there on October 25, 2014. FOW is the leaseholder for Valley Green Inn and is responsible for and oversees the physical condition of the building and its immediate surroundings, under the auspices of the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust. Valley Green Inn is the ideal place to celebrate FOW’s 90th Anniversary, says Executive Director Maura McCarthy. “It has become the central gathering place in the Wissahickon because of its history, its significance in people’s lives, and its enduring symbolism of community engagement and stewardship.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1924</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 members</td>
<td>1,600 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised $9,000</td>
<td>raised over $1 million in 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planted 14,000 natives</td>
<td>planted over 31,500 trees and shrubs in the last decade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>built shelters and masonry structures</td>
<td>Structures Crew has worked over 18,000 hours over the last 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintained trails</td>
<td>Built or restored 9.87 miles of trails through STI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 volunteers</td>
<td>762 volunteers in 2013</td>
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</table>
The Friends of the Wissahickon was a volunteer-operated organization when Ella Torrey joined its Board of Directors in the 1980s. Only a few years later, in 1989, she became co-president of FOW with F. Markoe “Koey” Rivinus. Their partnership lasted until 1992.

Throughout the 1980s and under the presidency of Ella and Koey, major problems in the Wissahickon that had existed for decades began to be addressed. Board member Joe Dlugach, recognizing problems such as trail deterioration, stormwater mismanagement, and invasive vegetation, organized a trails committee. This committee metamorphosed into a powerful and comprehensive Conservation Committee under which there were five subcommittees for trail repair, storm damage, invasive plant control, trash and vandalism, and wildlife. FOW’s conservation work is still in force today, managed by paid staff and overseen by the Board of Directors.

During their tenure, Ella and Koey oversaw the renovation and expansion of Valley Green Inn. “I was appalled at seeing that the undersized kitchen at the Inn had a dirt floor,” recalls Ella. FOW’s Board of Directors was willing to undertake funding for renovations, but only on the condition that it obtain a long-term lease from the City for management of the Inn. It took six years to acquire a 25-year renewable lease with the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust, which had responsibility for all structures in Fairmount Park. Handicap accessibility at the Inn and a liquor license, crucial to the Inn’s financial success, were negotiated by Ella.

FOW raised $500,000 for the Inn in good part from the efforts of President Rivinus, who Ella describes as “marvelous,” but also from city and private foundations. The money made possible not only structural improvements to the 150-year old original building, but the addition of a bright new kitchen with a solid floor, bathrooms, and a large, roofed patio with an adjoining bar, suitable for social events.

Ella brought diplomatic skills to her role as co-president of FOW, skills she acquired during her 40-year career in international relations. She recalls with pride that as a member of the United States mission to the United Nations, her first assignment was as a public information officer for Eleanor Roosevelt. The highlight of her experience with FOW, however, was working closely with Koey Rivinus and his wife, Anne, as well as FOW’s hard-working and dedicated Board of Directors.

After Ella stepped down as co-president, she remained on FOW’s Board of Directors through 1999 and served on an executive committee created by David Pope, who succeeded Ella and Koey as FOW president. This committee also included Charlie Dilks, William Hengst, Robert Lukens, Edward Stainton, and Robert Wallis. It was responsible for transforming FOW into a large, well-funded, professionally run organization capable of undertaking major projects throughout the Wissahickon.

Currently a resident of Cathedral Village, a retirement home in Roxborough, Ella walks weekly in the Wissahickon. She is impressed by the large and more diverse numbers of users in the park as compared to the time of her involvement with FOW.

New Wissahickon Mural Uplifting for Patients at Einstein in East Norriton

by Dena Sher, Associate Editor

When the architect of the Einstein Montgomery Medical Arts Building in East Norriton requested a mural, he asked for a work of art that was “colorful, inspiring, and uplifting for staff and patients passing through the space,” says artist Michael Adams. That is what Adams and his partner Susannah Hart Thomer gave them with their 10’ x 15’ mural of the Wissahickon Creek.

Hanging on the large white wall of the entrance lobby of the Medical Arts Building, the painting depicts the Wissahickon Creek as it flows through Gwynedd Township. With a foreground of cool blue water flowing over a shallow dam, and lush forest on the bank reflected in the water, the scene fulfills the objective of calm tranquility.

More Wissahickon Murals

Philadelphia Marriott Hotel in Center City: A 15’ x 20’ mural by Diane Burko encircles the lobby at this hotel on Market Street.

Brendenbeck’s Bakery: A mural painted by Mural Arts in 2012 can be seen on the side of the building at 8009 Germantown Avenue.

Wissahickon Environmental Center: A mural depicting Wissahickon wildlife can be viewed inside the building located at the Andorra Natural Area in Wissahickon Valley Park.


Executed in acrylics, the mural was based on a watercolor by Thomer, who has a solid reputation as a painter in that medium, is a member of the American Watercolor Society, and has exhibited in numerous galleries. The scene depicted in the mural is a favorite painting site for her, and she has visited it many times. Her collaborator, Adams, is not familiar with the Wissahickon. “The Skippack Creek is my favorite hangout when I want to commune with nature,” he says.

Together, Adams and Thomer have established a great working relationship, each extolling the other’s abilities. In addition to the Wissahickon mural, they have completed five other murals which include two at the East Norriton Firehouse, one at a retirement home, and one at a private residence.

To meet a deadline, the artists created the Wissahickon mural in panels, approximately 5’ x 5’, which they painted in a nearby art store space. The panels were then transported to the Medical Arts Building in time for a reception that was held for artists from the Greater Norristown Art League whose work had been hung in a hallway in the building. (Adams and Thomer are both members of the Art League.)

Coordinating the colors in the separate panels was achieved by working on three panels at a time, mixing enough paint to cover the water section or the forest section. Susan pointed out the even edges of the canvases were painted as a continuation of the scenes.

Hospital staff and patients have responded positively to the beautiful mural, so very visible in the lobby, and even more so as one mounts stairs in the lobby. As Adams says, “There’s something about reflected images in water that is very soothing.”

Recent Grant Awards to FOW

- $440,000 from the William Penn Foundation to support the continued growth of FOW’s community engagement and stewardship initiatives in Wissahickon Valley Park
- $271,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority under the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to support tributary and stormwater channel remediation
- $250,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority under the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to support the implementation of a park-wide trail signage program
- $100,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority under the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to support the restoration of a collapsed stream bank failure along Forbidden Drive.
- $330,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA-DEP) for work on the highly eroded tributary that flows from the Wissahickon Environmental Center toward Forbidden Drive and for additional completion work in the Andorra Natural Area.

Celebrate FOW’s 90th and Support STI

Light a candle on our birthday cake! Then join us at our 90th Anniversary events. (See p. 3.) Each $100 donation lights a new candle on our 90th birthday cake. As of March 4, 45 FOW supporters have lit candles.
Wissahickon Day Q & A

Q: What do the Mummers’, Macy’s, and the Wissahickon have in common?

A: An annual parade to celebrate a tradition! Each year, on the last Sunday in April, folks gather in the Wissahickon to celebrate that “Forbidden Drive” was successfully closed to automobiles in 1921. Around that time, a turnpike through the park was proposed, but equestrian park users protested with a parade of carriages and riders. Hundreds of horses and their riders turned out for this original protest. Fortunately, the turnpike initiative was defeated in City Council.

If you are a hiker, biker, rider, stroller, ambler, bird-watcher, or other park user, be sure to come out on Sunday, April 27, 2014, to join in this year’s festivities. Can you imagine how different your park experience would be if the events of 1921 had turned out differently? Forbidden Drive would be a roadway!

Of course, Wissahickon Day includes traditional equestrian events, too. A horseshow at Northwestern Stables will start at 10 a.m., featuring English and Western riders as well as carriages. After the show, parade line-up begins and the parade will proceed along Forbidden Drive starting at noon. Bring your cameras and show your appreciation for the four-legged animals that kept the four-wheeled motor vehicles at bay! The parade will end at Valley Green Inn. —Sue Landers and Josephine Catanzaro

For more information and photos of past parades, visit us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/WissahickonDayParade or www.wissahickonday.org.

Mayapples: Umbrellas of the Forest

by Trish Fries, Wissahickon Environmental Center

During the spring and early summer in the woods of the Andorra Natural Area, you can find large patches of mayapple (Podophyllum peltatum), a wildflower. Growing in areas of rich soil under the beech and oak trees that dominate the eastern slope, mayapples have large, beautiful leaves that form a twelve-inch-high blanket across the ground, creating a canopy for toads, turtles, and other forest floor dwellers.

The mayapple leaves emerge from the ground like an umbrella. Turning a leaf over might reveal a large, creamy white flower, attached below the two leaves. Stems with a single leaf do not flower. The flower appears in May and will last about two weeks. If pollinated, that flower gives way to a small one-inch green fruit that ripens into a soft, yellow “apple.”

Colonies of mayapples are formed by underground rhizomes. A large patch of mayapples can be started from one seed and live for decades. The germinated seed may not produce blooms until the plant is 12 years old.

Unlike many of our native plants, the leaves are not eaten by white-tailed deer. They have been known to eat the fruit while it is still green. However, it is the Eastern box turtle that eats most of the apples, helping to spread the mayapple seeds. Without the box turtle, the seeds seldom germinate. The digestive juices of the box turtle break down the thick seed coating and raise the germination rate from 8.5% to 38%. But the Eastern box turtle is scarce in our woods, making the appearance of a mayapple patch an uncommon treat.

All parts of the mayapple plant are poisonous except the yellow, ripened fruit. Usually by the time the fruit is ripe, it has been eaten. After waiting years to find a ripened fruit, I cautiously tasted one, quickly remembering that I should not eat the seeds; even on a ripe fruit the seeds are still considered toxic. After trying one, I have decided I will leave them for the box turtles; it wasn’t tasty enough for the trouble!

Trish Fries is an Environmental Education Program Specialist at the Wissahickon Environmental Center.

Biennial Photo Contest

A Day in the Life of the Wissahickon

Saturday, May 10

(rain date May 17)

Photographers are asked to submit a photo taken in the Wissahickon on May 10 on a subject of their choosing. Deadline for submissions: May 31, 2014. Prizes will be awarded for Best in Show, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, as well as a People’s Choice Award conducted on Facebook.

Entries should be sent electronically to Outreach Manager Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org. For complete submission guidelines, rules, and an official entry form, visit www.fow.org or visit FOW’s office. For more information, contact Sarah Marley by email or 215-247-0417 x109.
Safety Guidelines

- Park users should exercise with a partner whenever possible; if exercising alone, try to avoid using the park during off-peak times.
- Be alert! Go headphone free! It’s not only unsafe from the perspective of crime prevention, but you won’t hear bicyclists behind you or other potential problems.
- Vary your routine. If you always start your run at Valley Green at 6 a.m., try going to Bell’s Mill Road or Kitchen’s Lane once or twice a week.
- Trust your instincts. There is a sense of isolation from the city in the park that has a lot of appeal. If you sense trouble because of a person or a place, leave.
- Swimming in any of Philadelphia’s rivers and streams is illegal and dangerous. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health states that swimming and wading are not permitted due to risks of drowning, injury from submerged objects, strong currents, and other hazards.
- Swimming in Philadelphia creeks and rivers is also a serious health hazard because of bacterial contamination and pollution of the water.
- When you park your car, lock your doors, carry your keys with you, and do not leave wallets, cell phones, or other valuables in plain sight in your car. The major area of crime in the Wissahickon is in the parking lots.
- Please report suspicious activity by calling 911.
- Visit www.fow.org frequently. FOW posts crime alerts as necessary.

Important Numbers to Know

- If your car is broken into, call 911. Report the location of your car (the number of the parking lot will help). Stay until the police arrive.
- The Fairmount Park Rangers can be reached at 215-685-2172.
- FOW Trail Ambassadors are often in the park. Their primary role is to provide information to park visitors about the Wissahickon and report any problems they see to Fairmount Park Rangers. If you are unable to call 911 or the Rangers yourself, a Trail Ambassador can help.

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The Battle of Germantown & the Revolutionary War in the Wissahickon

by Jack Coleman, Trail Ambassador

The Battle of Germantown on October 4, 1777, was shaped by several factors, not least of which was local topography. General Armstrong’s Pennsylvania militia was stationed along the steep western side of the lower Wissahickon, as far as the Schuylkill River. There, they faced vastly superior Hessian forces on the heights across the stream and on Manatawny Road (Ridge Pike) below. Armstrong effectively used artillery to prevent a Hessian crossing of the bridge near the mouth of the Wissahickon Creek. The superior range and accurate plunging fire of his militia’s long Pennsylvania rifles also prevented the Hessians from fording the stream elsewhere above its junction with the Schuylkill River.

Both sides in the battle used local informers as well as their own reconnaissance units. The limited number of rough roads into the middle and lower Wissahickon gorge at the time were located at sites where water power and terrain had led to construction of important mills. Livezey Lane wound up into Allen’s Lane, one mile from the point on Germantown Road where the opening skirmish of the Battle took place.

The Livezey site included a mill, a house, a barn, and other structures, and a bridge over the stream that provided access up to Manatawny Road. It would have been a site of great interest to the British, as it was to two American officers, Colonel Reed and General Cadwalader, who appeared at Thomas Livezey’s door. Disguised in the scarlet uniforms of British generals, they were seeking information about British positions a mile away. Livezey, incidentally, had reputedly hidden his wine barrels in nearby Devil’s Pool to keep them away from British soldiers.

There may also be some basis of truth in the famous tale of Mom Rinker, who would daily watch movements along the Wissahickon Creek from her favorite rock, reporting her observations via notes dropped to messengers waiting below, who would forward them to the American army. The valley was far more open then, and her observations were feasible.

Finally, an unconfirmed but highly plausible tale has it that in 1918, a cannon ball was found in the trunk of an ancient tree being removed from the future site of the William Penn Charter School on School House Lane. If so, it may well have originated from those now long obscured heights, a mile away across the Wissahickon Gorge.

Sources:
Wissahickon Gateway Update

by Sarah Clark Stuart, Bicycle Coalition

The Wissahickon Gateway is the Schuylkill River Trail’s (SRT) most critical gap. It is the name for the section that lies in between Kelly Drive and the Pencoyd Bridge on Main Street in East Falls and Manayunk, a distance of about one mile.

Currently, most recreational riders bicycling from Center City turn around where the path on Kelly Drive ends at Ridge Avenue. Beyond that corner is an inhospitable set of barriers that deter a significant portion of riders who might otherwise be willing to ride further. These barriers include: a narrow sidewalk along Ridge Avenue over the Wissahickon Creek; a SEPTA transportation center with buses pulling in and out of driveways; many transit riders standing on the sidewalk; and constant bus, truck, and other motor vehicle traffic driving inbound and in and out of driveways along Ridge Avenue. The area is considered one of the City’s most dangerous intersections for crashes. It also has numerous privately and publicly held land parcels that make weaving a trail extremely difficult.

This section of the SRT has befuddled many concerned stakeholders, including the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, Manayunk Development Corporation, East Falls Development Corporation, and the Friends of Wissahickon for years, and closing the gap has been slow going.

In 2010, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR) has settled on a short-term and long-term trail alignment. A new bike/pedestrian bridge (below Ridge Avenue) will be built as part of this new segment of the SRT. The short-term alignment needs to weave in between the SEPTA and PECO properties. Since Spring 2013, PPR has been negotiating with SEPTA and PECO on moving their fence lines in order to design the short-term alignment. As of this writing, those negotiations are still ongoing. The long-term alignment will be pursued when the Steinberg property (old paint store and Restaurant Depot) is developed in the future.

The Michael Baker 2013 study and appendices detail the advantages and challenges of each of the alternatives studied. As of Spring 2013, PPR has settled on a short-term and long-term trail alignment. A new bike/pedestrian bridge (below Ridge Avenue) will be built as part of this new segment of the SRT. The short-term alignment needs to weave in between the SEPTA and PECO properties. Since Spring 2013, PPR has been negotiating with SEPTA and PECO on moving their fence lines in order to design the short-term alignment. As of this writing, those negotiations are still ongoing. The long-term alignment will be pursued when the Steinberg property (old paint store and Restaurant Depot) is developed in the future.

Sarah Clark Stuart is Policy Director for the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. For more information visit www.bicyclecoalition.org.

Despite terrible winter weather, 18 FOW supporters attended Strike a Tree Pose for the Trees at Yoga Garden Philly on February 15. One couple left their four children at home so they could have a date that would help support FOW. Yoga Garden Philly has raised $415 for the Friends of the Wissahickon at this event and an earlier yoga class in October 2013. FOW is grateful to Yoga Garden Philly for their support and the support of all who attended the yoga classes. More information at www.yogagardenphilly.com
**NEW Members**

FOW is pleased to welcome the following new members, who joined the Friends of the Wissahickon from December 2013 through February 2014.

Pete Angevine  
Mr. Bryan Artheimer  
Mr. and Mrs. William Benzing  
Mr. I. G. Blyk  
Ms. Brighid Blake  
Ms. Danielle Bower  
Mrs. Colleen Bracken  
Ms. Margaret Brannan  
Dr. Mike Bronner  
Ms. Sabrina Cellarosi  
Ms. Danielle Bower  
Mrs. Colleen Bracken  
Ms. Margaret Brannan  
Dr. Mike Bronner  
Ms. Sabrina Cellarosi  
Ms. Stacy Charles  
Mr. Hal Tausig and Ms. Susan Cole  
Mrs. Beth Collins  
Mr. Stephen Copeland  
Ms. Bibby D. Crain Loring and  
Mr. Tom Loring  
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony D'Aulerio  
Mr. Peter Day  
Mr. Chris Diehl  
Ms. Emily Enmutat-Lustine  
Ms. Eilesha Faber  
Ms. Marie Flail  
Mr. Harry Garber  
Mr. Daniel Gergel  
Mr. Steven Gentles  
Mr. Jonathon Glassman  
Ms. Allison Golden  
Mr. Arcangelo Guida  
Ms. Marion Halliburton  
Mr. and Ms. Jim Harkins  
Mr. Paul Higgins  
Mr. Allen Hickey  
Ms. Arlene Kelly

**Ms. Julia Kilduff**  
Dr. Joan North-Bradley  
Mr. Bernard Langer  
Mrs. Erica Lynes  
Ms. Mary Mable  
Mrs. Georgia Matranga  
Dr. Susana Mayer  
Mr. John McAdams  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen McCarter  
Mr. Robert McDavitt  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas McCreary  
Ms. Sandra Meier  
Mr. Oliver Mellet  
Neysa Nevins  
Ms. Diane O'Brien  
Mr. Sean O'Dell  
Ms. Sue Osthoff  
Mr. Charles Peters  
Mr. Richard Pluk  
Ms. Marjorie Reagan  
Mr. Charles Rhodes  
Mr. George Schuler  
Mr. James Scechowicz  
Mr. Clif Sharpe  
Dr. Mitchell Shuwall  
Ms. Lonnie Simonin  
Ms. Kristine Sofia  
Mrs. Elizabeth Ten Hae  
Mr. Sandy Tilney  
Mr. Peter Walsh  
Ms. Rivah Walton  
Mr. Anthony Woods  
Ms. Linda Zobrowski

**IN THE WISSAHIICON**

**Trail Ambassador Hikes**

Registration is recommended for all hikes (required if indicated) so that participants can be informed of weather or other emergency cancellations. Unless otherwise specified, Trail Ambassador Hikes may be on rocky, rugged trails that may be wet and slippery. Wear sturdy shoes or boots with laces. Long pants are recommended for protection against occasional poison ivy and possible ticks. Bring water and a snack if desired. Unless otherwise noted, children over six are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. Raincoats are canceled in heavy rain or icy conditions. Find more details on p. 5. To register, contact Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org. Visit www.fow.org for updates.

**Meanderings in the Wissahickon with Shelly Brick**

- **Sunday, March 29 • 2 pm** Meet at Kitchen’s Lane parking lot off Wissahickon Ave.
- **Sunday, April 20 • 2 pm** Meet at intersection of Wayne Ave. and Allen’s Lane.
- **Sunday, May 10 • 2 pm** Meet at Chestnut Hill Ave. entrance to the park at Seminole St.
- **Sunday, June 7 • 3 pm** Meet at Fen Ave. entrance to the park.

Enjoy our park and “talk story,” a Hawaiian tradition. Pace will be set by the group. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water.

**Trails Less Traveled III: Bushwhacking on the Andorra Plateau with Gerry Schweiger**

- **Sunday March 30 • 5 pm** Meet in parking area at Northwesterly Ave. on the Chestnut Hill side of the park. Look for the gray Toyota Corolla. There are lots of trunks, branches, fallen trees, and acorn trees. Hikers should wear leather gloves or similar thorn-resistant sturdy gloves.

**A Bird Walk with Mary Phalan**

- **Saturday, April 5 • 9 am** Meet at store shingles where Forbidden Drive crosses Bell’s Mill Rd. Duration: 2 hours. Bring binoculars and a bird book if you have one. Children 12 and over, who enjoy bird walks, are welcome with a supervising adult. Rain will cancel hike.

**Trails Less Traveled II: The Cresheim Valley South Trails with Gerry Schweiger**

- **Sunday April 6 • 1 pm** Meet at intersection of Huron Ave. and St. Martin’s Lane (parking available) on Chestnut Hill side of Cresheim Creek, which are accessible from Mermaid Lane (1500 St. Martin’s Lane, Philadelphia, 19118). We will hike two of these less-used trails and visit Climber’s Rock. NOICE: These trails cross several steep drainage/streams.

**Spring Awakening in the Park with Scott Quettel**

- **Saturday, April 12 • 2 pm** Meet at Bell’s Mill Rd. and Forbidden Drive. Experience the park sprouting its life. Bring your senses.

**Everyone Lives in a Watershed with Peg Shaw**

- **Sunday April 13 • 10 am** Meet at Forbidden Drive and Forbidden Drive. Duration: 3 hours. Distance: 2 miles over rugged terrain and neighborhood streets without sidewalks. Wear hiking shoes and pants, and bring a water and a snack. Feel free to bring cameras, identification books, binoculars, field notebooks, and backpacs.

**Lower Forbidden Drive with Sarah West**

- **Saturday April 19 • 2 pm** Meet in the small parking lot where Forbidden Drive meets Lincoln Drive, a short distance downstream from Rittenhouse/Rittenhouse. Duration: 1.75 hours. Distance: 1 mile along lower Forbidden Drive on level ground as far as Walnut Lane Bridge.

**Wildflower Walk with Susan and Donald Simon**

- **Saturday April 26 • 10 am** Meet at Valley Green Inn. Wear footwear suitable for hiking. Duration: 2-3 hours. Bring a wildflower guide if you wish.

**Identifying and Drawing Wildflowers in Nature with Lisa Kolker**

- **Saturday, April 27 • 10 am** Meet at the Cedars House.
- **Saturday, May 17 • 10 am** Meet at the Valley Green Inn.
- **Sunday, June 8 • 10 am** Meet at the Cedars House.

Duration: 2 hours. We will stop periodically and learn how to draw what we see. Children 12 or older are welcome with a responsible adult. Difficulty: Easy. Bring a sketch book or paper, clip board, a drawing implement, and a cushion to sit on (optional). Wear comfortable shoes.

**The Power of Geology with Scott Quettel**

- **Saturday, May 30 • 9 am** Meet near the Battle of Germantown Tablet, in the parking area where Forbidden and Lincoln Drives meet. This hike will focus on a noteworthy large rock formation that preserves millions of years of geologic history. Difficulty: mildly strenuous.

**Geology Hike with Sarah West**

- **Saturday, May 17 • 1 pm** Meet at Valley Green Inn. Length: 1.5 miles along a rough, steep trail on the east side of the creek, upstream from Valley Green. It can be slippery or muddy in places. Duration: 1.75 hours. This hike is suitable for children over 10 accompanied by a responsible adult.

**Invasive and Native Plant Safari Michael Kopena**

- **Saturday, May 24 • 1 pm** Meet at Kitchen’s Lane. Difficulty: Moderate. Duration: 1.5 hours. Sturdy comfortable footwear recommended. Return to Kitchen’s Lane expected around 2:30 pm.

**Kid-Friendly Hike to Prominent Wissahickon Siles with Marv Schwartz**

- **Saturday, June 7 • 1 pm** Meet at the Valley Green Inn. Duration: 2 hours. We will hike along Forbidden Drive and visit various sites. Hiking shoes or sneakers are required for this hike for moderate difficulty on some rocky trails.

**Escape to the Wissahickon and Take a Breather with Michael Kopena**

- **Friday, June 26 • 6 pm** Meet at Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive. Difficulty: Easy. Duration: 1.5 hours. We will spend some time sitting so bring a mat, blanket or cushion if you wish. Sturdy, comfortable footwear recommended.

**CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES • WWW.FOW.ORG**

**Appalachian Mountain Club Delaware Valley Chapter**

- **www.amcdv.org**

**Mondays — Wissahickon Gorge Wandering:** Brick-paved hike; distance is dependent on the conditions and speed of the group. Meet at 6:30pm by Valley Green Inn. Bring water and a flashlight. Bad weather cancels. Leaders: Christina Lawless (215-530-3883 or lawlessw@maine.net); Mike Lawless (215-636-2270). Meet at the Cedars House (215-636-5915 or dstein0857@yahoo.com). Mar. 31 - Apr. 28.

**Tuesdays — Tuesday Nights in the Wissahickon:** Casual social hike through hills of Wissahickon Gorge. Bring water and a flashlight or headlamp. Always an option for dinner following the hike. Meet at the Cedars House. Duration: 2 hours. Bring binoculars, field notebooks, sketchbook, clip boards, and a cushion to sit on (optional). Wear comfortable shoes. Meet at the Cedars House.

**Appalachian Mountain Club Delaware Valley Chapter — www.amcdv.org**

**Saturdays — South Wissahickon Creek Gorge Loop:** Hills of the Wissahickon. 9 miles. Depart from Henry Ave. & Walnut Lane parking lot at 9:30 am (SEPTA 32 or 65 busses both stop at Henry Ave. & Walnut Lane). The parking lot is at Walnut Lane & Magdalena St., one block east of Henry Ave. (traffic light on the left coming from Henry Ave.). Wear sturdy footwear for rocky terrain. Bring lunch and water. Cost: $10. Leader: Jerry Goldstein, 609-859-8133, jerryhyker@yahoo.com.

**Batona Hiking Club**

- **www.batona hikingclub.org**

**Saturdays, May 3 — South Wissahickon Creek Gorge Loop:** Hills of the Wissahickon. 9 miles. Depart from Henry Ave. & Walnut Lane parking lot at 9:30 am (SEPTA 32 or 65 busses both stop at Henry Ave. & Walnut Lane). The parking lot is at Walnut Lane & Magdalena St., one block east of Henry Ave. (traffic light on the left coming from Henry Ave.). Wear sturdy footwear for rocky terrain. Bring lunch and water. Cost: $10. Leader: Jerry Goldstein, 609-859-8133, jerryhyker@yahoo.com.

**PhilaVentures**

- **www.philaventures.org**

**Last Sunday of Month — Wissahickon Hike:** An opportunity to walk at a moderate pace with a talkative group of LGBT folks who like fresh air and exercise! Some up and downs and uneven paths are found along the way, so wear proper footwear and be ready to hike. This group meets at 2pm at Cosimo’s Pizza, 8624 Germantown Ave. at Bethlehem Pike (the top of Chestnut Hill). RVPs are required to the hike leader, Bert G. at bert13345@gmail.com.
SUNDAY, MAY 10 (RAIN DATE MAY 17)

VALLEY TALKS (P 10) • SPONSORED BY VALLEY GREEN BANK
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23 • WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

FOW ANNUAL MEETING (P 10) • TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2014

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY (P 4) • SATURDAY, JUNE 7

Friends of Cresheim Trail conducts ongoing workdays in order to enhance the evolving trail system in the Cresheim Creek area. Meet at the entrance at Lincoln Drive and Allen Lane at 10 am. Participants should wear long pants, long sleeves, sturdy shoes; poison ivy is present. All tools, including gloves, are provided. Coffee and snacks served. Contact: info@cresheimtrail.org or 215-715-9159 of 5+ email and call to confirm.

The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll free, within Pennsylvania (800) 732-0999.

For more information about WISSAHHICKON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER, call 215-685-9285 or email WEC@fowphiladelphia.org to register. The Tree House is Open the 2nd Saturday of Every Month, 10 am – 4 pm.

THURSDAY TOTS • THURSDAY, 1 - 2 PM

Bring your little one for an hour of discovery at the Tree House. Each month we will explore a new topic that celebrates the season. Ages 3 - 5 Parents stay with their child. Please register in advance. $15/child per lesson.

CANDLE DIPPING • APRIL 17

HONEY BEES • MAY 15

MOO PIES AND FAIRY DUST • JUNE 19

CANDLE DIPPING • SATURDAY, APRIL 5 1 – 3 PM

Make colorful, hand dipped candles to take home and use. Easy and fun for everyone!

All ages. Free. Free.

FAMILY COOKOUT & NIGHT HIKE • SATURDAY, MAY 6 – 9 PM

Spend an evening around the fire at the Tree House. Bring some snacks that will go well with a light, fire cooked, dinner that will provide: Explore Kestrons by moonlight! All ages. $5/person. Free. FREE.

CHAMPION TREE HIKE • SATURDAY, MAY 31 9 AM – 1 PM

Discover the Wissahickon’s PA Champion Trees. Learn what makes a tree a champ and help try to crown a new champion tree! Several miles of walking. Space is limited. All ages. $5/person. Free.

FATHER’S DAY FISHING • SUNDAY, JUNE 15 8 – 10 AM

Dads, bring your children fishing on Wissahickon Creek, Poles and bait provided. No experience necessary. Participants ages 10 – need a PA fishing license if they will be actively fishing. Children ages 1 and above. Free.

BATS ARE BACK! • FRIDAY, JUNE 20 8 – 9 PM

Learn about the benefits of Pennsylvania’s bat species and the cause of their alarming drop in numbers. Then take a hike to the creek to search for brown bats in action. All ages. Free.

SUMMER CAMP

TREE HOUSE ADVENTURE CAMP • JUNE 23-27 and JULY 7-11 • 9 AM TO 3 PM

Ages 6-10 $185 for one week

OUT-OF-ABOUT CAMP • AUGUST 18-22 9 AM TO 3 PM

Ages 11-14 $250 for one week

Online registration begins Sunday, April 1, 2013, at 12 am. Space is limited to the first 25 registrants. Sibling discount: $25.00 discount is offered for each additional sibling registering for the same week. Each child may only attend one week of summer camp at WEC. If registration is full and you are interested in being on a wait list or receiving emails about WEC camp and programs in 2014, email WEC@fowphiladelphia.org. More info at 215-685-9285.

Check our website for updates www.fow.org

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