More photos from FOW’s 90th Anniversary Gala inside!
A MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR

This fall, the Friends of the Wissahickon hosted a Gala Celebration with our friends and supporters at Valley Green Inn to mark our 90th Anniversary. (See p. 8.) The gala was an enjoyable way to highlight the many improvements FOW and our partners made to the Inn throughout the year. It was also a fitting end to a year of special events and projects intended to highlight and celebrate our long-standing relationship with the community as stewards of Wissahickon Valley Park.

In the spring we organized a bird walk and a run on Forbidden Drive that drew 215 park users, and in the summer we hosted a Family Picnic in Roxborough’s Pachella Field. Throughout the year we continued to hold workdays in the park, at which volunteers donated their time and labor to trail maintenance, trash removal, and habitat restoration. Since 2011, over 5,100 volunteer hours have been devoted to the Andorra Natural Area alone, where restoration. Since 2011, over 5,100 volunteer hours have been devoted to the Andorra Natural Area alone, where

In the coming year, park visitors will see FOW’s logo in more places throughout the park and may notice us talking about our organization in new ways. These actions are part of a new marketing strategy we will begin implementing in 2015.

FOW has been working to renovate the Tree House (home of the Wissahickon Environmental Center), install a composting toilet, and restore the trail system. You can learn more about this project, which is close to completion, on p. 4.

In the coming year, park visitors will see FOW’s logo in more places throughout the park and may notice us talking about our organization in new ways. These actions are part of a new marketing strategy we will begin implementing in 2015. The Friends of the Wissahickon is committed to expanding our base of community support so we can meet the future needs of Wissahickon Valley Park and its visitors. To accomplish this goal, FOW will need more members to help support our advocacy positions and more revenue to fund our project work.

In 2015 we will need both membership and advocate support to move forward on repairing several trail collapses along Forbidden Drive. This project crosses the boundaries between park infrastructure and water quality, and is essential to the health of the park as a whole. As a critical corridor for the Wissahickon Valley, the Schuylkill River Trail, and other regional trail networks, Forbidden Drive must remain stable and reliable now and into the future.

The Friends of the Wissahickon looks forward to the coming year and continuing the legacy we celebrated throughout 2014 by working with you to repair Forbidden Drive and complete other projects necessary to the preservation of Wissahickon Valley Park. As you make your New Year’s resolutions, we hope you will consider becoming a member of FOW, volunteering with us in the park, or joining us at one of our many outreach events—or perhaps doing all three!

Maura McCarthy
Executive Director

Cover photos by Emily Southerton

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.
**Incredible Running Route in the Wissahickon**

Greatest.com chose Forbidden Drive as one of “15 Incredible Running Routes That Only a Local Would Know.” The healthy living website observed that the trail is more crowded on weekends and during weekday rush hours (no surprise) and noted the tree canopy that protects runners from the sun. The article also pointed out some safety guidelines very similar to FOW’s: stay aware of your surroundings; run without headphones; and run with a buddy. See p. 14 for more on safety in the Wissahickon.

**FOW Awarded Grant for Forbidden Drive Repairs**

FOW has received a grant of $93,500 from the PA-Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to fund the rehabilitation of Forbidden Drive adjacent to Mount Airy Avenue along the Wissahickon Creek. These funds will be used in tandem with last year’s DCED/Commonwealth Financing Authority to complete the restoration of one of several collapsed sections of streambank along Forbidden Drive. Matching funds are needed. To make a donation, contact Ruffian Tittmann, Development Director, at tittmann@fow.org or 215-247-0417 ext 102.

**Wissahickon Celebrates 50 Years as National Natural Landmark**

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Wissahickon Valley’s designation as a National Natural Landmark (formerly known as Registered Natural History Landmarks). The Valley was given this designation in March 1964 through the efforts of then FOW President Judge Harold D. Saylor. It was made official in May 1966 when a bronze plaque welded into a six-ton slab of stone was placed along the creek outside Valley Green Inn, where it remains today. The designation recognizes the unique role the Wissahickon plays in the natural history of the United States.

**FOW and Woodmere Team Up for Wissahickon Art**

Strangely enough, it was a deceased early-twentieth-century artist who brought FOW and the Woodmere Art Museum together for the first time with joint programming this fall. The late artist Walter Schofield (1867-1944) is featured in an exhibit at the Woodmere, Schofield: International Impressionist, that runs through January 25, 2015. The artist is best known for his English landscapes, but also painted numerous scenes of Wissahickon Valley Park when visiting his brother in Philadelphia. In conjunction with the Woodmere, FOW Trail Ambassadors May Dominic, Maureen Fanagan, Diane Garvey, Merritt Rhoad, and Bruce Wagner led three hikes related to Schofield’s work in the park. Also, the Museum hosted an FOW Members Night on November 19 that included a private tour of the exhibit by Hildy Tow, Curator of Education.

**Impact of Climate Change Explored at Valley Talks**

Frank Niepold presented an overview of The National Climate Assessment at a Valley Talk on September 16 at Valley Green Inn. The assessment is the most comprehensive report to date; it presents extensive evidence and covers climate change impacts on various regions and sectors, as well as adaptation and mitigation. Niepold’s presentation focused on findings related to the Northeast. He is the Climate Education Coordinator at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Climate Program Office and a co-chair of the U.S. Global Change Research Program’s Communications and Education Interagency Working Group. Valley Talks are sponsored by Valley Green Bank.

**Park Users Support FOW**

Two park user groups held fundraisers this fall, raising over $2,700 for FOW’s stewardship of the Wissahickon. On November 15, the Philadelphia Chapter of the Pennsylvania Equine Council held a Happy Trails Ride to benefit FOW and raised $2,248 (as of 11/30/14). Cliff Sharpe from the Old School Trail Run organized an awesome race through Wissahickon Valley Park on October 5 to raise money for the Challenged Athletes Foundation, with additional proceeds going to FOW. Their donation to FOW totaled $525.

**Become a Crew Leader for FOW!**

Do you want to learn more about FOW’s work and what goes on behind the scenes when planning projects in the Wissahickon? FOW’s Crew Leader training program will teach you all about the work FOW does as well as provide you with valuable leadership and technical skills. Volunteer Crew Leaders enable FOW to do more skilled work throughout the Wissahickon, and by joining FOW’s Crew Leader program, you will develop relationships with your fellow volunteers as well as FOW and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation staff. New Crew Leader classes are being planned for 2015 and spaces are limited. Visit www.fow.org/volunteering/crew-leaders to learn more about the program and what our crew leaders have accomplished so far. Contact Outreach Manager Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org for more information and to apply.
The restored historic paint scheme at the Tree House refreshed the building and added to the attractiveness of the structure. With the addition of the new porch, the Tree House will become a more popular destination, welcoming nature lovers from all parts of the Wissahickon. The Trust is proud to have been involved in this fantastic FOW restoration project!

–Lucy M. Strackhouse, Executive Director, Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust
The new trails take us in such beautiful areas. The view of the meadow from the forest edge is breathtaking, and being above Forbidden Drive in the treetops presents a whole new perspective! The trails are much easier to navigate, allowing people of all ages to enjoy the area.

–Trish Fries, Environmental Education Program Specialist, WEC

After years of agricultural land use and the unchecked formation of rogue trails, the area surrounding the Center had a well established dense network of old roads and footpaths, many of which were in poor condition and causing degradation of the surrounding habitat. Working with both professional trail builders and our dedicated corps of volunteers, FOW built or restored 2.77 miles of trail and closed 3.10 miles. Overall, we had a net gain of around 2.75 acres of habitat.

The map displays the new trail system and the countless trails that have been closed. A detailed map of the area is available at the WEC free of charge.

For the numbers:

- built or restored **2.77 miles** of trail
- closed **3.10 miles** of trail
- net gain of **2.75 acres** of habitat
- **5,161** Volunteer hours
TRAIL AMBASSADOR
WALKS & TALKS

Unless otherwise noted, hikes use rocky, rugged trails that may be wet, slippery, or steep. Please wear sturdy, protective shoes or boots and bring water/snacks if you want them. Children over eight years of age are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. In general, walks are canceled in the event of heavy rain or snow. Reservations are not required but are recommended for communication in the event of cancellation due to inclement weather. Visit www.fow.org for updated information.

TA Walks

 Trails Less Traveled III with Gerry Schweiger
 Friday, December 26 • 1–3 pm
 Meet in the parking area at Northwestern Ave. at the gray Toyota Corolla. The Andorra plateau contains the Andorra Natural Area with many well-worn trails, but it also contains the abandoned Bells Mill Trail. We will climb the plateau, hike to the fenced enclosure, and skirt that to the beginnings of the Old Bells Mill Trail. We will finish by re-climbing and crossing the plateau to our starting point. NOTE: There are lots of briars, brambles, fallen trees, and scree; hikers should wear leather gloves or similar non-resistant sturdy gloves.

 Varied Terrains of the Wissahickon Valley with Scott Quittel
 Saturday, January 10 • 9 am–noon
 Meet at Forbidden Drive and Bells Mill Road. We will hike up the gorge to Houston Meadow, discover where a suspension bridge from Roxborough across the gorge to Chestnut Hill was planned but never built, visit a slight barren, upon which Iedyssacung peers across the gorge, and pass a bubbling cascade that looks like a mountain stream.

 WALKS & TALKS

 TA Talks

 How the (North) West was Won
 Presented by Kris Sofia
 Sunday, January 11 • 2 pm
 Hear the legend and lore behind the creation of The Upper Roxborough Historic District. This multi-part epic has common Wild West themes: westward expansion, gorgeous scenery, abundant wildlife, and a volunteer posse. Learn how grassroots advocacy efforts paid off to protect and preserve land worth saving.

 An Artist’s View of the Wissahickon Gorge: Learning to See Water and Light from Walter Schofield
 Presented by Bruce Wagner and Maureen Flanagan
 Sunday, January 18 • 1:30 pm
 This slide show utilizes Walter Schofield paintings and Wissahickon photos by the presenters to examine setting, light, and perspective. We will discuss how artists look at a setting and respond to it with a particular evocative image. Afterward, everyone is invited outside to look differently at the Wissahickon and visit the Woodmere Art Museum to view the Schofield retrospective.

 TA Talks

 What’s Up with Wissahickon Wildlife in Winter?
 Presented by Michael Kopena
 Sunday, January 25 • 9–11 am
 Winter is not easy for our animal friends in the Wissahickon. Come get cozy in Cedars House and learn how our favorite park inhabitants manage the winter season. Weather permitting, we’ll go on a short walk to look for signs of animal activity, returning no later than 4 pm. Children welcome with a responsible adult.

 19th Century Roads and Road Houses of the Wissahickon
 Presented by Sarah West
 Sunday, February 1 • 2 pm
 A 45-minute PowerPoint presentation of historic photos compared with current views of the same location. Sarah West is the author of Rediscovering the Wissahickon (1993) as well as an FOW Trail Ambassador.

 Thinking of Spring: Building Native Garden Habitats at Home
 Presented by Michael Kopena
 Sunday, February 8 • 9:30 am–noon
 We will discuss the dangers of gardening with exotics and introduce wonderful native plants you can use at home to create a beautiful escape for your family and a sanctuary for native fauna. If time and weather allow, we’ll take a walk to examine invasive and native plants present in the Wissahickon.

 Wissahickon Industries of the 18th & 19th Centuries
 Presented by Sarah West
 Sunday, February 15 • 9:30 am–noon
 A 45-minute PowerPoint presentation that includes early photographs of the Wissahickon Mills and their surrounding communities and a brief history of the Andorra Nurseries.

 Understanding Horses
 Presented by Cynthia Turecki
 Sunday, March 8 • 2 pm
 Have you ever wondered how a horse thinks and communicates? This presentation will help you understand the horse’s point of view. If the weather is suitable, Ms. Turecki will bring her horse for a demonstration.

 Historical Geology of the Wissahickon Gorge
 Presented by Sarah West
 Sunday, March 22 • 2 pm
 A 45-minute PowerPoint presentation followed by a short, easy geology walk along Forbidden Drive between Northwestern Ave. and Bells Mill Rd. (If weather conditions are suitable).

 Art and the Wissahickon
 Sunday, March 29 • 2 pm
 Presented by Diane Garvey & Hildy Tow of the Woodmere Art Museum
 A 45-minute presentation of old photographs and artwork of scenes of the Wissahickon. Learn what art tells us about people, culture, and history in the Wissahickon.
Become an FOW TRAIL AMBASSADOR

Join the Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW) and become a Trail Ambassador this Spring. FOW is offering a winter training session for this popular volunteer program. The application deadline is Tuesday, February 3, 2015.

Trail Ambassadors are park volunteers who assist and educate people in the park with anything from directions to safety needs to park history, flora, and fauna. Ambassadors perform their service in the park and participate in ongoing education. They become experts in the Wissahickon and have the opportunity to delve deeply into their particular topics of interest while providing a valuable public service. Trail Ambassadors share their knowledge by:

• interacting with and providing assistance to park users while walking the trails;
• staffing information tables at FOW volunteer days and events;
• leading walks in the Wissahickon Valley; and
• conducting surveys of park users and wildlife.

Training will be held on Wednesday evenings, 6 to 8 p.m., from February 11 through April 1, 2015. There will also be one Saturday First Aid training session on March 28. Applicants accepted into the program are required to pay a $100 registration fee, sign a one-time volunteer release form, and obtain their criminal background check and child-abuse clearance.

Ambassadors must be FOW members or willing to join the organization. The number of open positions is limited. For more information, program requirements, and an application form visit www.fow.org/volunteering/trail-ambassadors. Contact FOW Outreach Manager Sarah Marley with questions and to schedule an interview at marley@fow.org or 215-247-0417 x109.

Martin Luther King Day of Service

January 19 • 9am - 12pm

Join FOW and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation as we remove invasive vines and trees. We may perform other tasks if weather permits. Meet at Thomas Mansion, 6245 Wissahickon Ave in Germantown. Register with Volunteer Coordinator John Holback at holback@fow.org to be notified of cancellation or postponement due to poor weather conditions.

A beautiful fall has followed a beautiful summer in the Wissahickon Valley. The leaves are falling, the birds are migrating, and the volunteers are busy working before the weather turns sour.

On September 13, FOW volunteers hiked to Devil’s Pool to do the last cleanup of the season. In addition to covering and removing lots of graffiti on trees and rocks, volunteers collected and removed dozens of bags of trash, helping to ensure the area was cleaned up for winter.

A group of hardworking, dedicated Crefeld School students have been working on various projects every Wednesday afternoon. Working with FOW and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) Volunteer Coordinator David Bower, these students have been cleaning up trails still littered with fallen tree debris from last winter’s heavy snows. They have also hauled the last of the season’s trash from Devil’s Pool, and spent one afternoon removing invasive species at Thomas Mansion. Look for the Crefeld Crew on Wednesday afternoons for the rest of the school year.

FOW volunteers have gotten their boots dirty planting 300 native trees and shrubs this fall. The plantings, for the most part, are the final stage of trail closures around the park. Thanks to all the individual volunteers who came out to work, and a special thanks to the Pennsylvania Equine Council, St. Catherine Alumni, the Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy, and the Friends Select School.

The family of former FOW Volunteer Coordinator Kevin Groves and many other volunteers and friends participated in a memorial planting in his honor on October 4.

Kevin’s cousin, graciously volunteered his time as a landscape architect to design the planting, which features native trees and shrubs, all symbolic and representative of Kevin’s life and work. A beautiful handmade wooden bench made from local black locust was built by Steve O’Kula and Rich Berman, and now sits in the middle of the planting for all to enjoy. A special thanks to the volunteers, including AIM Academy students, who worked to clear the site and prepare it for the planting. Next time you are in the Andorra area, take a moment to enjoy the area and remember the importance of people like Kevin Groves, who cared deeply for the Wissahickon.

On November 15, Love Your Park Day saw about 35 FOW volunteers come out on a cold morning to put the finishing touches on a shiny new trail reroute in the Andorra Natural Area. Volunteers worked to build a natural stone retaining wall and a set of huge stone stairs, while others worked to hand-finish the trail by smoothing the back slope, cutting roots from the trail bed, and tossing brush on the old trail nearby. A remarkable amount of work was accomplished!
Over 250 guests joined FOW at Valley Green Inn for their 90th Anniversary Gala Celebration, Cabinet of Curiosities. The whimsical event logo and invitation designed by Leslie Newbold set the tone for the evening, which began with a Benefactor Preview Reception, followed by hors d’oeuvres, cocktails, music, and conversation—much of which centered on the fascinating natural history items on display from the Academy of Natural Sciences and the private collection of FOW Trail Ambassador Nick Bucci and other generous lenders. Guests also had the opportunity to tour the Inn and admire the improvements made over the past year, which include new furniture, paint, and lighting by the talented Ann Kelly, Jane Good, Amie Cafiero, and Rebecca Paul—a lasting legacy of the event. A bounty of fall splendor graced the Inn and tables thanks to the inspired floral design talents of Bibby Crane Loring.

The Cabinet of Curiosities theme continued through the gala dinner menu, designed by Talula’s restaurateur Aimee Olexy, and brought to life by Valley Green Chef Helen Kang. Many of the ingredients were sourced from local and regional purveyors for the dinner.

The menu was designed as a Feast of the Senses, from the beginning course of pumpkin spice soup, which appealed to the olfactory senses, to the main course dishes, which were designed to represent touch and equilibrium. Main courses included Barnegat Light seafood en papillote, an autumn barley vegetable ragout, butternut and honey gastrique-roasted pears, and local beer-braised short ribs. Desserts were designed to bring an auditory experience to diners, and included locally-made whiskey crème brulee, fig macaroons, and fried mini rice krispie bars.

Other menu items were locally sourced, with produce from the Lancaster Farm Fresh Co-op and Blue Moon Acres in New Jersey, cheese from Calkins Creamery in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, apple cider from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, mushrooms from Kennett Square, and breads from Chestnut Hill’s Baker Street Bread.

A Live Auction led by Lu Ann Cahn, author and Emmy award-winning journalist at NBC10 News in Philadelphia, followed dinner, with many exciting items: a Luxury Safari in Namibia, vacations in Spain and Scotland, a Mural Arts Trolley Tour, fishing at the Pocono Fishing Club, and two wine baskets with selections by FOW’s Executive Director Maura McCarthy and FOW Board Member David Pope and his wife, Myrna.

After the Auction, guests enjoyed dancing under the stars with the Scott Romig Band.

Thanks to many generous contributions, funds raised netted over $70,000 and will directly support FOW’s stewardship of Valley Green Inn and other operations and educational programs. Such a successful fundraiser would not have been possible without our generous 90th Anniversary Sponsors and Donors and the help of many dedicated FOW volunteers and Anniversary Committee members, led by Co-Chairs Christine Bamberger and Christopher Bentley. A special thanks also goes to Valley Green Inn restaurant owner Jack Ott and his staff; this special evening went seamlessly because of their efforts.
a Magical Evening

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terrain

Selections from the Cabinet of Curiosities FOW Board Member Sam Finney with Julia Finney
Dancing to the Scott Romig Band

Photos by Emily Southerton
No other spot in the Wissahickon is as well known or loved as Valley Green Inn. For that reason, FOW made design improvements at the Inn throughout 2014 that were showcased at the 90th Anniversary Gala, “Cabinet of Curiosities,” in October. Led by Interior Designer Ann Kelly, a renovation team of local designers—Amie Cafiero, Jane Good, and Rebecca Paul—worked with FOW and generously donated their skills to the project. The Inn benefited from some key new design elements, including: new tile floors in the back hallway bar; plaster repairs, painting, new chairs, and refinished wood floors in the main dining rooms and foyer; new lighting and light fixtures throughout; and renovation of the bathrooms.

These interior design improvements are in addition to major repairs and improvements recently made to help prevent water damage such as occurred during previous storms. These improvements include: a backflow preventer, sump pumps in the basement, and new generator.

Others also contributed to the improvement of Valley Green Inn. Restaurant Proprietor Jack Ott financed the repainting of the building’s exterior and masonry repairs to the porch steps, and John Duffy of Stable Tables refinished the wooden bars in the rear room. The Fairmount Park Historic Trust restored the windows in the dining rooms, installed new shingles to the archway of the old rose garden formally on the left side of the Inn, and repainted this small structure.

Thanks to Our 90th Anniversary & Valley Green Inn Restoration Donors

Cindy and John Affleck
Susan and Steve Albert
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Joanne Utkus
Kathy and Emory Van Cleve
Peter Walsh
Amanda West

There’s Still Time—to light a candle on our birthday cake!

There are only a few days left to light a candle on our 90th Anniversary Cake! Each $100 donation lights a new candle. As of December 1, 51 FOW supporters have lit candles. Help us reach our goal of 90 candles by December 31!

Thank you to our 90th Anniversary Candle Donors

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In Honor of Bettina Hoerlin
In Honor of Sandra and Howard Moody
In Memory of Koey Rivinus
Friends of Carpenter’s Woods

by Linda Goschke, Friends of Carpenter’s Woods

Members of Friends of Carpenter’s Woods have been busy this year. In the spring, we hosted three weekends of activities for a Spring Fest, part of Love Your Park Day in May. This included a successful, well-attended bird walk led by Audubon Outreach Coordinator Keith Russell. Many colorful migrant and resident birds were spotted, including one of our popular resident Screech-Owls. The following week was devoted to tree planting, with volunteers planting saplings on the edges of Carpenter’s Woods. Spring Fest concluded on May 18 with a fascinating day of trail walks led by nature experts, including Master Arborists Jason Lubar from the Morris Arboretum and Ken LeRoy of John B. Ward & Co., botanists and ecology experts Alfred E. “Ernie” Schyuler, Ph.D., and David Hewitt, Ph.D., of the Academy of Natural Sciences, and Grove artist Louise Barteau-Chodoff.

Over the summer, volunteers repaired fantasy fences, removed the deteriorated meadow fence, repaired some eroded trails, repaired and replaced an owl box, collected trash, and removed fallen trees from trails. We joined Tree Tenders on November 15 to plant 30 trees along Sedgwick Street as replacements for older trees lost here over the past decade.

As part of our meadow restoration and enhancement project, plans have been approved for an enlarged meadow, with additional, pollinator-friendly plants. Plans include rerouted, improved, lower trail connections around the meadow, with stream and meadow viewing areas built for nature lovers of all types.

Linda Goschke is President of Friends of Carpenter’s Woods. Volunteers are welcome to join FoCW. For more information, visit www.focw.org or email info@focw.org.
PPR Prepares for Emerald Ash Borer Infestation

by Curtis Helm, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

Pennsylvania has an estimated 300 million ash trees, which are at risk of being killed by the emerald ash borer (EAB), a tiny Asian insect that began destroying ash trees in Pennsylvania in 2007. Here is an update on Philadelphia Parks & Recreation’s plan for dealing with this problem.

Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR) prepared an Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan for the City of Philadelphia (EAB Management Plan), dated February 2012, which is available online.* This management plan was developed in anticipation of the arrival of the emerald ash borer (EAB), an insect pest that is expected to kill ash (Fraxinus spp.) trees in the City of Philadelphia. The EAB Management Plan is intended as a planning tool for the City and an educational document for the general public.

PPR INVENTORY

In accordance with the EAB Management Plan, an inventory was conducted by trained interns during the summer of 2013. The inventory evaluated all ash trees growing on PPR properties which were located within 100 feet of roads, trails, utilities, structures, etc. The inventory also collected data on any hazard trees of any species encountered during the field work. PPR’s Geospatial Analyst Nora Dougherty customized the Arc GIS “collector” application in order to collect and manage all of the tree inventory data. Data was collected on tablets (Apple iPad) and included location, species, diameter, target, and defect (if present). A recommendation for removal or treatment was also included. Each tree was individually tagged and located/mapped. These tags are visible; they are numbered aluminum discs (1” diameter), mounted near the base of each tree. Ash trees in excellent condition, with no structural defects, have been identified for treatment. All other ash trees will be recommended for removal since these trees have other problems that may cause them to fail or die. The 2013 inventory collected data on over 7,700 trees throughout the Philadelphia Park System.

INSECT ARRIVAL

The EAB has been found nearby in Bucks and Montgomery Counties, about 20 miles from Center City, and 10 to 15 miles from the northern city limits and the Wissahickon. It is very likely that it will arrive in the greater Philadelphia area by the summer of 2015 and that all ash trees that are not treated with an insecticide will be soon killed. The “death curve” for ash peaks approximately three to five years following the arrival of the insect. This means that the City will be threatened with numerous dead/dying trees, and this will occur over a relatively short period of time. Based on the known location of the EAB, PPR estimates that the peak ash tree mortality will occur beginning about the year 2019 or shortly thereafter. Dead ash trees decay quickly, and begin to shed large limbs within one to two years following their death. It is worth noting that it is much safer for arborists, and thus less costly, to remove a living tree rather than a dead tree.

TREE REMOVALS

PPR has recently prepared a contract to begin removing some of the trees identified during the inventory. This contract includes the initial removal of approximately 250 trees, about half of which are in the Wissahickon, many along Forbidden Drive. The work began this past summer and should be completed by the winter of this year. The Arc GIS “collector” application has been further customized by PPR and provided to the tree removal contractor in order to help the contractor locate trees and track the progress of this initial tree removal effort. This “pilot” tree removal project will help PPR streamline and manage any future efforts. Pending receipt of funding, PPR plans to continue the tree removal contract and to begin treatment of approximately 1,000 ash trees during the summer of 2015.

Curtis Helm is a Project Manager in Urban Forestry & Ecosystem Management at Philadelphia Parks & Recreation.

READ MORE: http://chestnuthilllocal.com/2014/06/03/emerald-ash-borer-threatens-ash-trees-north-america/


Naturalist Training Program Seeks Participants in the Philadelphia area

by Andrea Stevens, Pennsylvania Master Naturalist

In the Spring of 2015, the volunteer training program of Pennsylvania Master Naturalist is partnering with Friends of the Wissahickon to prepare citizens to become volunteer leaders in their communities through natural resource conservation education, citizen science, and stewardship. Pennsylvania Master Naturalist is a citizen volunteer initiative with three key components: an initial 55-hour volunteer training, annual volunteer service, and continuing education in the natural sciences.

Building volunteer leadership for community-based conservation, Master Naturalist volunteers design and pursue a wide variety of service projects from habitat restoration and native plantings, to nature walks and interpretative displays or publications on natural history, to water quality monitoring and supporting the natural resource conservation efforts of partnering organizations. Since 2010, Pennsylvania Master Naturalist volunteers in Southeastern Pennsylvania have:

• engaged in more than 6,300 hours of conservation service
• contributed $140,700 in conservation value and impact to numerous regional partners
• reached over 9,000 people through education and outreach initiatives
• improved 330 acres of habitat through stewardship service
• dedicated themselves to 2,300 hours of continuing education in the natural sciences

Seeking New Applicants for Spring 2015

The Pennsylvania Master Naturalist natural history training includes 55 hours of classroom (weekday evenings) and field (Saturday) sessions and will be coordinated by the Friends of the Wissahickon in the spring of 2015.

The training will begin on April 6, 2015, and end on May 28, 2015. Classroom sessions will take place on most Monday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education. Field trips are scheduled on four Saturdays (4/11/15, 4/25/15, 5/9/15, 5/16/15) beginning at 9:00 a.m. and continuing through most of the day.

Individuals interested in the Pennsylvania Master Naturalist Program in Philadelphia are invited to apply by Friday, May 17, 2015. Applications can be found on Pennsylvania Master Naturalist’s website at www.pamasternaturalist.org under “Become a Master Naturalist” and “2015 Training.” Andrea Stevens is Program Coordinator for Pennsylvania Master Naturalist. For more information, contact her at progcoord@pamasternaturalist.org or (570) 764-7628.
This year, FOW asked our Biennial Photo Contest participants to document A Day in the Life of the Wissahickon. Photographers were asked to submit a photo taken in the Wissahickon on May 10, 2014, on a subject of their choosing. Prizes were awarded for Best in Show, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, as well as a People’s Choice Award conducted on Facebook.

A special thanks goes to our judge, Brian Peterson, who has over 35 years of experience as a curator, critic, artist, and arts administrator in the Philadelphia area. As a practicing artist, Peterson has had more than 30 solo exhibitions of his photographs since 1980 at galleries and museums throughout the country. His work is in many collections, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Library of Congress, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Denver Art Museum, the Michener Art Museum, and the Free Library of Philadelphia. You can learn more about Brian Peterson and view his photographs at www.brianhpetersonwordimage.com.
Brainstorming on Safety

by Denise Larrabee, Editor

When a crime is reported in Wissahickon Valley Park, the first response of many park users is to scale back their activities in the Wissahickon. But not FOW member Jeni Howe. Soon after the assault of a woman in the park near Gatehouse Lane on September 26, 2014, Howe contacted FOW Executive Director Maura McCarthy and offered to host a meeting at her home in Chestnut Hill for area residents interested in park safety issues and building public presence in the park.

“I am in the park everyday with my kids or the dog,” said Howe. “But there are times on upper trails during the week I don’t feel safe, and it seems the upper trails are underused due to fear.” She suggested the meeting with the goal of exploring how to get more families in the park, increase use and safety, and improve communication within the community.

According to McCarthy, the meeting was useful in “building engagement with the Wissahickon on every front. Safety was part of the discussion, but the primary goal was to brainstorm on how to get the community even more involved, more engaged, and more productive on behalf of the park.”

Sixteen people attended the meeting and shared a variety of insights and ideas, including:

• Many women feel they want to have a partner with whom to run or walk in the park. An organized group would help them find partners.
• An app that would indicate where people are in the park could be useful (although some park users prefer not to use technology in the park).
• If attacked on the street, it is likely someone will hear you. Consequences feel greater because of the sense of isolation in the park.
• People who are walking their dog are rarely attacked. Dog walkers seem to elicit a sense of safety in the park.
• Taking too many precautions can hinder one’s experience of the park.
• More activities in the park—family events, classes, hikes, etc.—would draw more park users to the Wissahickon.
• Volunteers welcoming people to the park at entry points lessons fear.
• Encourage senior citizens who need exercise and have time to use the park to walk in the Wissahickon.

Looking forward, FOW views this group as a sounding board for community building, and Howe has agreed to help convene another such meeting in the future. “It was very heartening to see so many members of the community come together to help us think through how we can get more people involved in the Wissahickon,” said McCarthy. “Ultimately, the more people who use the park, the safer it is.”

Tece Tract Update

In July 2014, Springfield Township Board of Commissioners voted 4-3 to deny the rezoning of about seven acres of land adjacent to Ridge Pike, known as the Tece Tract, to institutional zoning. In the front of the forty-one-acre property, a senior living facility called Atria was to be constructed. Several of the board members cited the density of housing in the thirty-one-acre rear section of the property as a reason they were rejecting the plan. Below is the statement FOW Executive Director Maura McCarthy presented to the Springfield Township Board of Commissioners on June 11, 2014.

The Friends of the Wissahickon has previously raised questions regarding the watershed and ecosystem impacts of development on the property known as the Tece Tract. More specifically, we voiced our concerns about impacts on the portion of the property that adjoins Northwestern Avenue, contingent to the northern boundaries of the Wissahickon Valley Park.

Although there was some initial responsiveness to these questions and additional concerns articulated by other groups, it seems that the latest proposal for development of the tract harkens back to the high-density plan originally submitted. Accordingly, with new urgency, we again ask the Springfield Township Board of Commissioners to take into account the following ramifications:

1. The loss of ever-diminishing open space and the disruption of wildlife in that space. The lower Wissahickon watershed has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society; and
2. The effects of stormwater runoff that increasingly (as in the recent storms during the week of April 28) erode stream banks and cause costly flooding in Montgomery County. Undoubtedly, the extensive development of the Tece Tract will affect not only water quantity, but also the water quality of what serves as drinking water for 350,000 Philadelphians. These are not trivial issues, as I am sure the citizens of Springfield and Whitemarsh Townships and the City of Philadelphia are all aware. It is the hope of FOW that the Commissioners here today, who treasure the unique natural beauty of the Wissahickon and its recreational and ecological importance, will take this into account.

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Trout in the Classroom—and the Creek

by Erin Mooney, Publicist

This past fall, students from the Springside Chestnut Hill Academy (SCH) Lower Schools began a project that will culminate in the release of over 230 brook trout into their new home in the Wissahickon Creek. The students will release the fish into the stream in April, after raising them from eggs as part of the annual Pennsylvania Trout in the Classroom program at SCH.

From November to April, the students raise the fish in classroom tanks while learning about the life cycle of trout and their habitat. The project is a collaboration between the school’s science department and its outdoor program. The curriculum includes information about watersheds, food webs, and conservation topics, while at the same time reinforcing the school’s longtime commitment to stewardship of the Wissahickon.

“The Trout in the Classroom program has allowed my students to make a deeper connection to the local watershed,” said Marianne Maloy, the teacher who leads the girls’ program. “By caring for and learning about the trout, they have a better understanding about the importance of freshwater conservation here in Philadelphia.”

“What I have enjoyed the most about Trout in the Classroom is witnessing my students taking ownership over the project,” said Sarah Hendrickson, the teacher who oversees the boys’ program. “From testing the water quality, to feeding, to releasing the trout in the Wissahickon, the students not only learned how to be responsible and patient but also developed a great appreciation for all aquatic life.”
ONE MAN’S TRASH

An Update from Bradley Maule

When I set out on my first hike to collect litter in the Wissahickon in January, I wondered what doing so for a year would teach me. I learned quickly that people who are okay with leaving trash in the woods are okay with drinking bad beer. I don’t think there’s even a six-pack’s worth of local craft beers in all the litter I’ve collected this year, but the Natural Light, Milwaukee’s Best, Bud Ice . . . these are plentiful.

I’ve discovered that, by and large, cyclists are cleaner than hikers. The multi-use (mountain bike) trails are always less littered than the hike-only trails. In covering every corner of the park, I’ve determined that, aside from Devil’s Pool and under large bridges, no section of the park is especially worse than others. The Chestnut Hill side is no cleaner than the Roxborough side; Germantown no worse than Andorra.

Most of all, I’ve realized just how prevalent disposable water bottles are in our community. Of all the items I’ve found—beer cans, potato chip bags, tennis balls, pregnancy tests—the one that surpasses all others, easily, is plastic water bottles. Deer Park, Poland Spring, Nestlé Pure Life, 7-Eleven, Shop Rite, Crystal Geyser, Dasani, Aquafina, Pur Aqua . . . so many brands sell life’s essential element that we all have easy access to, packaged in flimsy plastic bottles not meant to withstand more than a couple of uses. It’s a topic I will explore at the One Man’s Trash exhibition, coming this spring. And you’re invited!

In March and April, I’ll present it all—plastic, glass, metal, paper, cardboard, Styrofoam, cigarettes, sporting goods, clothing, miscellaneous—as well as the data taken from it, maps, and photos of the park. It will be held, appropriately enough, at the Fairmount Water Works, which in 2015 celebrates its 200th anniversary of protecting and providing Philadelphia’s water supply. After all, the Wissahickon is first and foremost a watershed, one that empties into the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, which flow through our taps and spigots, and into our lives.

Keep an eye out for FOW’s weekly email newsletter and FOW’s Facebook page for specific dates and details.

Bradley Maule is the founder and editor of Philly Skyline and is a co-editor of HiddenCityPhila.org. He lives in Mt. Airy and is training to be an FOW Trail Ambassador.

Visit phillys skyline.com/onemantrash to follow him as he collects litter in the Wissahickon throughout 2014. You can view the miscellaneous items and follow the Wissahickon’s litter in numbers, as well as photos and maps, from every corner of the park.
WISSAHICKON VALLEY WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
WWVA offers many public programs as part of its mission to protect the quality and beauty of the Wissahickon Creek and to enhance life in the Wissahickon Watershed. Located at 12 Morris Road in Ambler. More info. at www.wwva.org.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 • 8:30 AM–3:30 PM
Wissahickon Excursions: Winter Birding at Mannington Marsh

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22
Volunteer Recognition Party

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24 • 1–3 PM
Four Mills Reserve Hike

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 • 7 PM
Bird Watching at Crossways Preserve

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20 • 2–5 PM
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21 • 9 AM–NOON
Winter Bird Seed Sale Pick Up. Seed MUST be pre-ordered by February 17.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1 • 12–3 PM
Maple Sugar Festival

Friends of the Wissahickon

3rd Sunday of Every Month
Wissahickon Restoration Volunteers (WRV) lead a service project from 10 am–12 pm as part of their on-going restoration activities. Project details and directions to the worksite will be posted on the WRV website at least one week prior to the event: www.wissahickonrestorationvolunteers.org. For info. and to RSVP, contact WRV at 215-951-0120 or wrv.info@rhd.org.

Volunteer opportunities

Third Sunday of Every Month
Wissahickon Restoration Volunteers (WRV) lead a service project from 10 am–12 pm as part of their on-going restoration activities. Project details and directions to the worksite will be posted on the WRV website at least one week prior to the event: www.wissahickonrestorationvolunteers.org. For info. and to RSVP, contact WRV at 215-951-0120 or wrv.info@rhd.org.

Every Saturday
Friends of the Wissahickon workdays in the park are held most Saturdays from 9 am–12 pm, unless it is a holiday or there is inclement weather. Projects include trail maintenance, invasive weed removal, planting, and clean-ups. Visit www.fow.org/volunteering/upcoming-workdays for updates and info on future projects. To register, contact Volunteer Coordinator John Holbach at holbach@fow.org or 215-247-0417 x107.

First Saturday of Every Month
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Third Saturday of Every Month
Friends of Cresheim Trail conducts ongoing workdays in order to enhance the evoking trail system in the Cresheim Creek area. Meet at the entrance at Lincoln Drive and Allegheny Lane at 10 am. Participants should wear long pants, long sleeves, sturdy shoes; poison ivy conduct is ongoing, workdays in order to enhance the evoking trail system in the Cresheim Creek area. Meet at the entrance at Lincoln Drive and Allegheny 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 215-715-0159.

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Contact: info@cresheimtrail.org or 215-715-0159.
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Wissahickon Excursion: Winter Birding at Mannington Marsh
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Volunteer Recognition Party
SATURDAY, JANUARY 24 • 1–3 PM
Por Mills Reserve Hike
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 • 7 PM
Lecture - What’s the Buzz. Presented by Scott Bartow, local beekeeper.
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14 • 9–11 AM
Bird Watching at Crossways Preserve
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20 • 2–5 PM
Saturday, FEBRUARY 21 • 9 AM–NOON
Winter Bird Seed Sale Pick Up. Seed MUST be pre-owned by February 17.
SUNDAY, MARCH 1 • 12–3 PM
Maple Sugar Festival

WISSAHICKON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

Registration is required for all programs unless otherwise noted. The Tree House is open the second Saturday of every month, 10 am–4 pm. For information or to register, call 215-685-9285 or email WISE@RRIA.org.

THURSDAY TOTS
Bring your preschooler 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. $5 & child per lesson. Please register in advance.

WINTER SLEEPERS, JANUARY 10 • 1–2 PM
Learn about chipmunks and groundhogs and play in a kids-sized chipmunk home.

MAPLE TREES AND TREATS, FEBRUARY 20 • 1–2 PM
Search for the special Sugar Maple tree and taste its fresh sap. Watch how the sap turns into Maple Syrup and taste our home made maple syrup on pancakes.

SOIL & SEEDS, MARCH 19 • 1–2 PM
Celebrate spring by getting dirty in the soil, discovering worms as they wake, and planting seeds to nurture at home with soil, sunlight, water, patience and love.

KIDS GONE WILD: WINTER EXPLORATION, SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 • 1–3 PM
Hike the forest in the winter looking for signs of animals—footprints, scat, and homes. Bundle up and explore; off the beaten path. Ages 6 & up. Drop-in. Registration is required. FREE

WHAT A Hoot, SATURDAY, JANUARY 31 • 3–5 PM
In this indoor/ outdoor program, learn about the special adaptations of owls. Dissect an owl pellet, and once evening falls, take a short hike to listen for owls. Ages 6 & up. Parents invited to stay. Registration is required. $3.00/person.

ADULT FULL MOON Hike, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 • 7–8:30 PM
Hike by the light of the full moon and enjoy the peaceful sounds of the quiet winter forest. Warm up around the camp fire with hot chocolate and marshmallows. Adults Only. Registration Required. $5.00/person

FOR THE LOVE OF NATURE, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14 • 10 AM–NOON
Love is everywhere in nature! Kids will search for heart shapes on a hike, and then show their love for nature by creating gifts to help the animals through the winter. All ages. Registration is required. FREE

MAPLE SUGAR DAY, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 • 11 AM–3 PM
Join us on Fort Indiantown Gap Road (near Fort Indiantown Gap) for our annual MAPLE SUGAR DAY Maple sugaring demonstrations, mini pancakes with real maple syrup, a pancake hopping and taste test and freshly made maple candy. Pennsylvania Maple Syrup products available for purchase. NO registration necessary. Visit anytime between 11 am and 3 pm. All ages. FREE

MARCH MUD, SATURDAY, MARCH 14 • 1–2:30 PM
The magic of mud will be explored as kids get dirty in different types of soils—sand, silt and clay—both while taking through the forest and while planting seeds at the Tree House. All Ages. Registration is required. FREE

HIBERNATION Hike, SATURDAY, MARCH 21 • 1–2:30 PM
Get out, stretch those legs after a long winter, and wake up your brain while learning a few things about the forest around you. We’ll hike at a quick pace while stopping occasionally to look for the very first signs of spring. Ages 6 & up. Registration is required. FREE

For a listing of more events this fall, visit http://www.fow.org/calendar.

HISTORIC RITTENHOUSETOWN

Historic RittenhouseTown offers classes, workshops, and events for individuals and families to learn about the craft of hand papermaking and other aspects of Colonial Life at the original Rittenhouse Family Homestead. Located on Lincoln Drive at Rittenhouse Street. Info. at 215-438-5711, program@rittenhousestown.org, or www.rittenhousestown.org

Friends of the Wissahickon

Every Saturday, Friends of the Wissahickon volunteers repair and build structures in the Wissahickon. From 9am to 1pm, unless it is a holiday or there is inclement weather. Projects include trail maintenance, invasive weed removal, planting, and clean-ups. Visit www.fow.org/wrvedays for updates and info on future projects. To register, contact Volunteer Coordinator John Holback at holback@fow.org or 215-247-0417 x107.

Friends of Cresheim Trail

Every Third Saturday of Every Month
Volunteers for the Friends of Cresheim Trail will lead a service project from 10 am–12 pm as part of their on-going reforestation activities. Project details and directions to the worksite will be posted on the FCT website at least one week prior to the event: www.fctrestorationvolunteers.org. For info. and to RSVP, contact WRV at 215-951-0330, ext. 2101 or wrv.info@rhd.org.

Friends of the Wissahickon

Every Saturday
Drills in the Park are held most Saturdays from 9am-1pm, unless it is a holiday or there is inclement weather. Projects include trail maintenance, invasive weed removal, planting, and clean-ups. Visit www.fow.org/wrvedays for updates and info on future projects. For info. and to RSVP, contact WRV at 215-951-0330, ext. 2101 or wrv.info@rhd.org.

Friends of the Wissahickon

Every Wednesday
Wissahickon Service Projects (September through May) 1pm to 3pm. Join Cresfield School, FOW, and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation. Something new every week. Call David Bower at 215-865-0120 for info.

Friends of the Wissahickon

Every Thursday
Volunteers for the Friends of Cresheim Trail will lead a service project from 10 am–12 pm as part of their on-going reforestation activities. Project details and directions to the worksite will be posted on the FCT website at least one week prior to the event: www.fctrestorationvolunteers.org. For info. and to RSVP, contact WRV at 215-951-0330, ext. 2101 or wrv.info@rhd.org.

Friends of Cresheim Trail

South Park to Frick Park. For more info. and to register, contact Volunteer Coordinator John Holback at holback@fow.org or 215-247-0417 x107.

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RUNNING CLUBS

EVERY THURSDAY
Wissahickon Wanderers Trail Run 3-5 miles. Starts 6:30pm sharp at Valley Green Inn. For updates and more info visit www.wissahickonrunningclub.com.

EVERY SATURDAY
Shawmont Running Club. Starts at Northeast Avenue, & Andorra Rd (north end of Fort Indiantown Drive). From 2nd Saturday in May thru 2nd Saturday in Oct. in Oct. start at 7:30am. From 3rd Saturday in Oct, thru 1st Saturday in May start at 8am. Distances are at the discretion of runners. All levels welcome. Emphasis is on fun! www.shawmontrunningclub.com.