What is Wissahickon Valley Park? This is the question we posed at a public meeting in January of this year, part of a public dialogue that helped us determine what is achievable for FOW’s Strategic Blueprint 2018-2020 (see pullout on pp. 9-12). Through this meeting and the entire process of developing the Blueprint, we learned that the Wissahickon is not simply a nature preserve, a woodland, a forest, an urban park, or a watershed park. It is all these things and more.

FOW’s Strategic Blueprint 2018-2020 confirms FOW’s commitment to preserving all that the Wissahickon is and outlines the work FOW will execute in Wissahickon Valley Park over the next three years. It took more than two years for FOW’s Board of Directors and staff to complete the strategic planning process—an undertaking characterized by actively sought community input. We invited comments at a large public meeting, held two focus groups of park stakeholders, and conducted an online survey. We also conducted dozens of interviews with park stakeholders and FOW partners.

The Blueprint presented in this issue of the newsletter shares our programmatic approach and takes you through an abbreviated version of the process FOW undertook—the topics and questions we explored—in order to arrive at our three areas of strategic priority: habitat, infrastructure, and engagement.

Prior strategic plans at FOW have focused on the growth of the organization. This strategic plan focuses more on the park and how FOW can best care for this unique asset and serve the community. After you have finished reading this issue of FOW’s newsletter, we hope you will keep the Strategic Blueprint 2018-2020 and consider how you can be a part of the effort to preserve Wissahickon Valley Park for the next three years and into the future.

Maura McCarthy
Executive Director
DON’T MISS THE PUBLIC PROJECT MEETING

Friends of the Wissahickon will host a Public Meeting on January 24, 2018, to discuss the Sustainable Trails Initiative (STI) and other FOW projects with Guest Speaker Chris Bernhardt, professional trail builder and Principal of Sentieros Consulting. One of the members of the original STI consulting team, he will share his perspectives on the successes and challenges of STI and present a first look at FOW’s ambitious plan to complete the project. Bernhardt has a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University and has worked in many locations, from China to Switzerland. He focuses on creating projects that are both economically and environmentally sustainable, bringing to bear an expertise in land use, transportation, advocacy, and public outreach. Visit fow.org for more information and updates.

SAVING THE DATE!

VALLEY TALKS
APRIL 17
MAY 15
VALLEY GREEN INN
6 PM

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YELLOW TRAIL CLOSURE

The Yellow Trail from the Blue Stone Bridge to the trailhead near Green Lane/Jannette Street is closed through February 28, 2018, due to serious safety hazards as a result of construction work on the Walnut Lane Bridge. This project is being managed by PennDOT. Please heed the informational signage in the area and avoid the trail at all times during this period. More information and a map are available at fow.org and other FOW social media outlets.

SEEING GREEN?

In the fall, environmental scientists from Temple University and the Academy of Natural Sciences conducted an investigation of the water quality of the Wissahickon Creek. Throughout the month of September, you may have noticed that the creek was a fluorescent green color. The tracer dye used is non-toxic and is commonly used in research and other situations (e.g., coloring the Chicago River green for St. Patrick’s Day). These water quality tests were conducted in consultation with the PA Department of Environmental Protection and were funded through a grant from the National Science Foundation.
DEVIL’S POOL CLEANUP

This workday on marked FOW’s largest cleanup ever in Wissahickon Valley Park! We collaborated with United By Blue, REI Conshohocken, and Honeygrow in celebration of the International Coastal Cleanup on September 16.

Before emptying into the Schuylkill River, the Wissahickon Creek runs for 23 miles through Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties. Part of the creek forms the Wissahickon Valley, a National Natural Landmark and part of the Philadelphia park system. The Wissahickon Creek is a treasure to many Philadelphians and visitors to the area who are searching for an escape to nature. It also provides recreation for hiking, biking, and fishing. Devil’s Pool, a popular destination within the park, attracts swimmers and picnickers. Due to the park’s heavy recreational activity and proximity to Philadelphia, trash collects in the creek and moves with the water.

We had 200+ volunteers come out and spend an hour cleaning up the park!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

BRUCE WAGNER

How do you volunteer with FOW?
I volunteer with FOW mostly by doing the wide variety of Trail Ambassador activities: trail shifts, guided walks, Sunday talks, mentoring, and attending TA meetings, training sessions, planning meetings, and activities.

What do you love about Wissahickon Valley Park?
I think my favorite thing about the Wissahickon is its naturalistic tranquility, but I am also constantly aware of its unique history.

What is one of your favorite moments while volunteering with FOW?
From maybe 5,000 hours of volunteering, it’s impossible to make a selection of one favorite moment. I remember a pair of British women who just wandered down Rex Avenue, and I serendipitously met them at the bridge. We spent an hour walking around the area and talking about what’s there, the history, and comparing our valley to their parks. I remember a young girl whose bicycle skidded out rounding a sharp curve along Forbidden Drive, and she ended up with a bleeding knee scrape. I offered alcohol wipes and a Band Aid; she felt so much better. I have seen several large birds close up and marveled at their beauty, and each guided walk presents a new complex group of people to guide, entertain, educate, and befriend.

How do you think FOW contributes to the Philadelphia community?
FOW is Wissahickon Valley Park. From its beginning in the 1920s when some of its founders were a force in banning automobiles from the Wissahickon Turnpike, through its years of volunteer conservation, to the amazingly significant Sustainable Trails Initiative, to its current professional trail building and ecological conservation and restoration, FOW has not only nurtured the park, but is the most vital source of volunteer engagement with Philadelphia’s great natural treasure.

What is your favorite spot in the park?
Nearly 2,000 acres, and someone would like to know my favorite spot in the park. Well, here are some favorites. I love the dense forest sense of the Yellow Trail between Valley Green Inn and Wise’s Mill Road. The “frog pond” at the Mt. Airy entrance constantly grabs my attention. I love the “rocky beach” off of the Orange Trail near Thomas Mill Run. There is a bench near the fallen magnolia on Andorra Hill that overlooks a kind of bowl. That’s a great spot for ruminating.

WORKDAY TIPS
• Wear sturdy boots or sneakers and clothing that you don’t mind getting dirty!
• Bring a reusable water bottle to help reduce waste.
• FOW usually provides refreshments, but feel free to bring your own snacks.

CANCELLATION DETAILS FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER
• Typically, we will work in light rain or snow. (We’re tough like that.)
• Workdays will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain or snow, thunder and lighting, high winds, etc. Visit FOW’s Facebook page or fow.org for updates. If the workday is cancelled it will be posted by 8 a.m.

See p. 20 for a list of FOW workdays!
CORPORATE WORKDAYS

Sponsor an FOW Corporate Workday and contribute to preserving the natural beauty and wilderness of Wissahickon Valley Park! By sponsoring a Corporate Workday, you will engage your employees in a unique team building project with tangible benefits to the park and the community.

Your employees will love getting out of the office and strengthening their team by working together in the park. FOW workdays usually consist of projects such as trail maintenance, invasive weed removal, planting, and/or general cleanups. FOW will design a tailored project plan for your group size and desired level of rigor. Our experienced field coordinator and volunteer coordinator will provide full training, health and safety provisions, and an on-site briefing for the day's task. In addition, all work materials necessary for the project will be provided by FOW. Show your company's support for clean and sustainable parks by sponsoring an FOW Corporate Workday today!

SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES

$250: One year of print recognition as a Wissahickon Workday Sponsor in FOW's quarterly newsletter, annual report, and events brochure, plus one year of e-recognition as a Wissahickon Workday Sponsor in event e-mails, e-newsletters, social media posts, and on fow.org, and logo inclusion on the All Trails Challenge T-shirt (commitment needed by 7/15/18 for inclusion).

$500: One company sponsored workday or guided hike in Wissahickon Valley Park and all benefits at the $250 level.

$1,000: Brand recognition and presence at two large public workdays (50+ attendees) and all benefits at the $500 level.

$2,500: One curated workday for your business in Wissahickon Valley Park, including signage and refreshments. Includes ad space in the 2018 Wissahickon Valley Park calendar and all benefits at the $1,000 level.

For more information on how to sponsor a Corporate Workday, contact Volunteer Coordinator Christina Anthony at anthony@fow.org or 215-247-0417 x351.

Thank you to the following corporate groups that completed workdays in the park in September! Each group also donated $250 to FOW.

Gemalto: 15 volunteers removed invasive plants
Philadelphia Insurance Companies: 20 volunteers removed invasive plants
BBD LLP: 12 volunteers collected trash under the Henry Avenue Bridge

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Philadelphia Insurance Companies: 20 volunteers removed invasive plants
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Employees from Philadelphia Insurance Companies volunteering at a Corporate Workday.
Participants in FOW’s All Trails Challenge this fall raised $29,000. All 246 Challengers hiked, walked, biked, ran, and rode on horseback to raise funds for the continued preservation of Wissahickon Valley Park.

The All Trails Challenge was an exciting months-long event that invited park users to explore all 50 miles of its scenic trails. Challengers raised money for the Wissahickon by inviting their friends, family, and coworkers to sponsor them. The Challenge ran from September 7 to November 28, and included a fun kick-off party, mileage and fundraising incentives, lots of give-aways, and scheduled hikes and walks with great prizes, including exclusive vacations for our top mileage and fundraising participants.

“The All Trails Challenge in 2017 surpassed the success of ATC 2016 with FOW Challengers raising $4,000 more than last year,” says Executive Director Maura McCarthy, who led several hikes during the ATC, a fun way for participants to reach the 50 mile goal. “FOW is grateful to everyone who participated as a Challenger or a sponsor. We can’t care for the Wissahickon without your support.”

All funds raised by the All Trails Challenge will support the preservation of Wissahickon Valley Park by FOW as we restore historical park structures, eliminate invasive plant species, monitor watershed management issues, and restore trails. Thanks to our sponsors and everyone who participated, including FOW Trail Ambassadors who led ATC hikes and volunteers who helped at Challenge events. Make your plans now to join us for the All Trails Challenge 2018!

Challenger Dawn Ballard taking a break at the Great Beech in Andorra.

Challengers Jacqueline and Aaron Berger (also known as Team Veggie Bergers)

**CHALLENGE WINNERS**

**TOP FUNDRAISER**

(INDIVIDUAL)

Gene Bishop - $3,200

**TOP FUNDRAISER**

(TEAM)

Dolly & Her Persons - $1,130

**TOP MILEAGE**

Josh Hibbs - 470 miles

**ATC BY THE NUMBERS**

246 Challengers

$29,000 raised

*Preliminary Numbers*

Gene had been walking the trails for 35 years, but always the same ones, never venturing to the Roxborough side for example. And health problems over the last few years didn’t make it easier to go exploring. But the All Trails Challenge changed that. Gene decided to take on the Challenge to improve her health and motivate her to explore previously unfamiliar parts of the park. She’s loved exploring new trails and plans to return to all of them even after the fall to see how they look in other seasons.

—Laura Feragen, FOW Publicist

How have you explored the trails?

I’ve been running the trails almost exclusively. I would say I’ve done about 6-7 miles just doing leisurely hikes or walking my dog, but the bulk of my distance has been from running. I even bought my first pair of trail shoes just to do the Challenge!

What made you want to take the All Trails Challenge?

I’ve loved the Wissahickon and have spent a lot of time on Forbidden Drive, but the Challenge gave me an excuse to check out more of the park. I’d seen the signs for it and had a friend sign up, so I said, “Me too,” and we started a team.

What have you learned about the park?

I’ve been amazed at how many different types of terrain and scenery there is in the park. Each trail has its own unique characteristics, and it’s fun to design routes that give you a variety of things to experience. I remember discovering the Houston Meadow for the first time and being amazed by the scenery and how the rest of the park looks from up there.
CONSTRUCTION AT ANDORRA/WISSAHICKON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

FOW’s Andorra Natural Area Stormwater Management and Sediment Reduction Project is scheduled for construction from March to June 2018. FOW first announced this project in the winter 2016 newsletter. This project will decrease sediment loads in the Wissahickon Creek by capturing and infiltrating surface stormwater flows throughout the micro-watershed of the Wissahickon Environmental Center (WEC). The area of work includes the upper parking lot and adjacent Northwestern Avenue, the forested slope below the parking lot, adjacent trails, and the WEC day-use area. A.D. Marble is leading the design and construction team for this project and will be implementing a public safety plan throughout the duration of the project. Please check FOW’s website, Facebook page, and other social media outlets as more details become available. We urge the public to pay attention to and adhere to all safety signs in the vicinity during construction.

YELLOW TRAIL SUMMIT AVE. REROUTE TRAIL

In our fall 2017 newsletter, we outlined the project scope of the Summit Avenue Reroute and reported on the beginning of this project. Now, thanks to over 150 volunteers, a dozen volunteer Crew Leaders, and the professional skills of trail builder Valerie Naylor, we are happy to report that the trail is complete. FOW celebrated the opening of the trail on November 18. Park users on the Yellow Trail no longer have to leave the park and travel along Summit Avenue. Already the new route is seeing lots of traffic, with users sharing a great deal of positive feedback.

HABITAT RESTORATION

FOW was able to take advantage of the recent completion of invasive removal work by Philadelphia Parks & Recreation to begin habitat restoration along the new trail route. About a half-acre of non-native wisteria vine was treated and cleared over the past two years, creating a south-facing slope with a partial tree canopy of tulip poplar and red maple, with a scattering of oak, hickory, and American holly. For the Love Your Park Day in November, FOW staff and volunteer Crew Leaders Wendy Willard and John Cassidy led 48 community volunteers to plant 225 trees, 187 shrubs, and 250 herbaceous plugs. To protect the plantings from the high number of deer present in the area, FOW is installing deer fencing. Throughout 2018 we will be monitoring the planting area for any invasive wisteria regrowth.

PARK ZONE ASSESSMENTS UNDERWAY

FOW is embarking on a new assessment process throughout Wissahickon Valley Park to map and identify habitat and infrastructure components. By dividing the park into 15 zones, we will be able to collect data points and details to help us identify and prioritize our stewardship work and gain an overall understanding of park conditions. Over time these assessments will allow us to chart the impacts of FOW’s habitat and infrastructure efforts and hopefully reveal locational and park-wide improvements.
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 Walks may be on rocky, rugged trails that may be wet and slippery. Wear sturdy shoes or boots with socks. Long pants are recommended for protection against occasional poison ivy and possible ticks. Bring water and a snack if desired. Unless otherwise noted, children 8+ are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. Walks are cancelled in heavy rain or icy conditions. For more information or to register, visit fow.org.

Hike to Kelpius Cave with Tom Rickards
Sunday, December 10 • 10 am - Noon
Meet at Historic RittenhouseTown (208 Lincoln Dr., 19144)
Hike from Historic RittenhouseTown to the Hermit's Cave and back. During our hike we will explore some of the history of the apocalyptic group led by Johannes Kelpius called the Women of the Wilderness. Our hike will explore apocalyptic literature, notions of religious toleration, and some of the early beauty and mystique of early Philadelphia.

Holiday Stress Buster/Yoga Nidra Series with Kevin Eikov
Sunday, December 17 • 3 pm - 5 pm
Sunday, January 7 • 3 pm - 5 pm
Meet at the Wissahickon Environmental Center (300 W. Northwestern Ave., 19118)
Experiencing lots of holiday stress? Prepare yourself for deep stress relief as Kevin leads you into a stress-free zone of profound relaxation. Bring a blanket, a mat for the hard floor, and a pillow. Suitable for children age 13+ that can lie still and follow directions. Meet inside the Wissahickon Environmental Center.

Six Months in the GAME: Hiking the Appalachian Trail Georgia to Maine with Lisa Myers
Saturday, January 13 • 1 pm - 2:30 pm
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
A slideshow of Lisa’s 2010 Appalachian Trail hike: from March to October 2,176 miles, Georgia to Maine. She will discuss what a thru-hiker’s life was like day to day, the planning involved, and the lessons learned after the hike was over.

Kid Friendly Hike with Mary Schwartz
Saturday, January 13 • 1 pm - 3 pm
Saturday, February 10 • 1 pm - 3 pm
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
Learn through a slide presentation about the theories of what caused the rocks of the Wissahickon Gorge to be formed and why they are currently exposed at the earth’s surface. Then explore Wissahickon schist, with its intricate and beautiful patterns. View stream characteristics such as cut banks and deposition bars and understand how the Wissahickon Creek is still down cutting through the gorge. Learn how movement of rock particles, through erosion processes, have shaped the landscape. Ages 12+. Boots suggested. Level: easy.

Winter Wonderland in the Wissahickon with Kris Soffa
Wednesday, January 24
10 am - Noon
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
A hike and talk of signs of emerging new growth everywhere. The woods echo with birdsong, and spring ephemerals bloom. Swelling tree buds and newly opened leaves bathe our deciduous woods in a gorgeous chartreuse haze. Why not get your “dose of nature” and join us for this energizing walk? Distance: 2 miles.

Historic Roads and Bridges of the Wissahickon with Sarah West
Sunday, February 11
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
Join us for a PowerPoint presentation on the historic roads and bridges of the Wissahickon. Veteran and all-star Trail Ambassador Sarah West will be sharing her knowledge on the historic past of the Wissahickon.

Valentine’s Day Sweetheart of a Hike with Kris Soffa
Wednesday, February 14 • 10 am - Noon
Meet at front parking lot at 4900 Ridge Ave., 19127
The Wissahickon is for lovers. Here’s your invitation to put down that remote control and add nature to your Valentine’s Day celebration. Join Kris Soffa for this heart healthy walk and learn fascinating facts about the lower Wissahickon Valley. See how far Cupid’s arrow can go as we hike the paved trail from the mouth of the Wissahickon Creek. We’ll pass below Lover’s Leap and arrive at Forbidden Drive at the Ten Box ranger station. Dress in layers for cold weather hiking. Bring a snack and beverage. Fitness (or ski poles) and non-slip footwear are recommended. Distance: 2.5 miles.

Spring Stroll in the Wissahickon with Kris Soffa
Wednesday, March 14 • 10 am - Noon
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
Welcome spring with a walk in the Wissahickon. We’ll find signs of emerging new growth everywhere. The woods echo with birdsong, and spring ephemerals bloom. Swelling tree buds and newly opened leaves bathe our deciduous woods in a gorgeous chartreuse haze. Why not get your “dose of nature” and join us for this energizing walk? Distance: 2 miles.

TA Field Report
Amassadors: Shawn Green & Louise Hayes
Date: 10/4/17 Shift time: 10 am - 1 pm
Zone: B (Valley Green)
Mode of Transportation: Hike
Number of Interactions: 10
Dogs Off Leash: 6 Dogs On Leash: 10
We had a lovely hike! It was a colorful mix of autumn colors and summer humidity. We started at Rex Avenue Bridge and made a large loop to the Covered Bridge, then to the entrance by Springside School, and then back again. We ran into quite a few newcomers to the park and gave them directions and suggestions on trails and places to check out. Since we’re nature nerds, we also stopped to look at lots of plants: katsura trees, beech drops, jewel weed . . . and I showed Louise my new favorite parlor trick of turning acorn caps into whistles!
The Board of Directors of Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW) conducted a strategic planning process over two years, reviewing FOW’s internal structure and processes. They debated and discussed differing visions of Wissahickon Valley Park as a public asset, FOW’s role in stewarding the park, staffing and benefit structures, and adapting board and staff roles to new realities. They formed the Visioning Task Force in 2015 and the Strategic Planning Task Force in 2016. Dozens of interviews were conducted with park stakeholders and FOW partners, which facilitated multiple small and large group discussions with the Board and staff. FOW held one large public meeting and two focus groups to elicit public understanding of the park’s value, barriers to access, and the greatest needs that FOW could and should address.

The organizational “blueprint” created by FOW’s Board and staff members is presented here. Turn the page to learn about the stewardship priorities that FOW developed with park stakeholders and our partners that will guide our work in the Wissahickon for the next three years. We hope that you will join us as FOW demonstrates our commitment to serving our watershed, our fellow citizens, and our forest ecosystem.
WISSAHICKON VALLEY PARK

This unique wooded refuge from the city is seen by its many visitors in many different lights. But FOW recognizes that, although the Wissahickon may inspire the feeling of being in a woodland, forest, or nature preserve, the park has two core purposes:

The Wissahickon was created as a watershed park: land preserved in the drainage of a watershed for the purpose of protecting characteristics of the waterway and water quality.

It was imagined by its designers (and continues to be used) as an urban recreation park, which provides a place for people to play, exercise, recreate, and socialize.

FOW MISSION
To conserve the natural beauty and wildness of the Wissahickon Valley and stimulate public interest therein

FOW VISION
An urban oasis that promotes recreation, conservation, and the enjoyment of park history

FOW VALUES
Reliable • Responsive
Inclusive • Transparent

PARK STAKEHOLDERS

1. FOW BOARD & STAFF
Assume legal and fiduciary obligations to FOW

2. INVESTORS
Contribute their time and/or money
• FOW Members, Volunteers, Individual Donors
• Institutional Funders

3. PARTNERS
Work toward mutual mandates and goals
• City, Regional, State, and Federal Departments and Agencies
• Other Nonprofits, BIDs, CDCs
• Valley Green Inn and Other Business Partners

4. BENEFICIARIES
Enjoy the benefits of FOW’s work
• Park Users, Neighbors, Philadelphians
OPERATIONAL FOCUS AREAS

To conduct our work, we consider the operational impacts of every action through the lens of four focus areas:
1. Funding model
2. Relationships and partnerships
3. Programs and services
4. Governance and structure

PARK MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

A. Encourage a broad base of visitors to experience the park
B. Pursue sustainability
C. Recognize and promote the park’s historical importance
D. Manage and support best practices and scientific methods

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

From 2018-2020, FOW will expand the financial resource base of the organization by increasing existing income streams, identifying new income sources, and ensuring that all FOW programs and properties we oversee are realizing their full potential. This increased capacity will

Create ENGAGEMENT opportunities for the public to help build and sustain a diverse corps of park volunteers and advocates to support FOW’s vision, while monitoring and supporting staff in four interlocking programmatic areas to create engagement opportunities for the public: (1) environmental advocacy, (2) volunteer programs, communications, and (3) education and events.

2018 WORK
1. Develop one new programming opportunity with a primary focus on engaging more diverse communities
2. Increase the number of individual volunteers and/or volunteer hours by 10%
3. Proactively strengthen our advocacy and membership presence by identifying and engaging two new local and regional partners.

Provide safe, sustainable, and attractive INFRASTRUCTURE throughout Wissahickon Valley Park, monitoring and supporting staff in three interlocking programmatic areas: (1) trails, bridges, and roads; (2) Valley Green Inn and other structures; and (3) connectivity. The primary job of the committee is to provide safe, sustainable, and attractive infrastructure in the park.

2018 WORK
1. Implement the final phase of the Sustainable Trails Initiative
2. Complete the Forbidden Drive Trail Stabilization Project
3. Issue and award RFP for Valley Green Inn landscape master plan
4. Issue and award RFP and complete a restroom facility master plan

Foster ecologically diverse and functional HABITATS by stewarding Wissahickon Valley Park using scientific management principles that respect native flora and fauna, and promote stewardship that engages park users. This committee monitors and supports the work of staff in three interlocking programmatic areas: (1) watershed health, (2) land management, and (3) wildlife.

2018 WORK
1. Complete and begin implementation of the Habitat Land Management Plan developed by the Academy of Natural Sciences (Additional priority objectives will be identified in this plan.)
2. Complete the Andorra Natural Area Stormwater Management and Sediment Reduction Project
3. Complete a detailed park-wide assessment and mapping of critical habitat zones for restoration and conservation
DID YOU KNOW?

Wissahickon Valley Park comprises 1,800 acres in Philadelphia’s 10,500-acre park system. Established in 1868, the park provides 50+ multi-use natural surface trails for bikers, hikers, equestrians, and other park user groups. The Wissahickon Creek runs through the park’s entire seven-mile length, and Forbidden Drive, the primary multi-use trail, parallels the creek. The Wissahickon is on the Atlantic Flyway and was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1964. Forbidden Drive was named a National Recreation Trail in 1975. The park serves as a vital wildlife corridor for native plant and wildlife; provides a high quality outdoor recreation experience for citizens of the region; acts as an economic anchor in Northwest Philadelphia; and meets a significant public health mandate in preserving and protecting a drinking water source that serves nearly one third of all Philadelphians.

Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW), founded in 1924, is a 2,200-member nonprofit organization that works in partnership with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation to restore historical park structures, eliminate invasive plant species, monitor watershed management issues, and restore trails throughout the park. Steady growth in staff and capacity over the last decade allows FOW to execute large capital projects through the Sustainable Trails Initiative. In 2015 FOW designed and installed a signage and wayfinding system to increase user safety and make the park more accessible to all park users. Currently, FOW is developing a comprehensive plan to repair three major embankment collapses along Forbidden Drive, as well as a long-term, park-wide habitat management plan. This $1 million project will improve the water quality of the creek, the experience of 1.1 million annual visitors to the park, and the preservation of critical PWD infrastructure. Learn more at fow.org.

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(215) 247-0417 • office@fow.org • fow.org
SPRINGFIELD, where it will connect with the
Green Ribbon Trail (aka Wissahickon Trail)
in Flourtown. When completed, the Cresheim
Trail will close the loop on this important
intercounty connection of Circuit Trails, which
is the branding of a 750+ mile regional trail
system throughout the Delaware Valley,
including five counties in Pennsylvania and
four counties in New Jersey. (circuittrails.org.)

Throughout 2017, the Friends of the
Cresheim Trail (FoCT) volunteers continued
to refine the natural surface trails within
Wissahickon Valley Park, adding a loop that
includes very ambitious hand built stonework
utilizing boulders weighing in excess of 1,500
pounds.

The Philadelphia Streets Department
(PSD) installed pedestrian crossing signs at the
mid-block crossing on Cresheim Road and at the
juncture of Cresheim Valley Drive/Emlen
Drive and Cresheim Road. PSD also installed
a zebra stripe crosswalk on Cresheim Road
to alert drivers to the presence of trail users
crossing the road.

In addition to well-attended regular
workdays, FoCT hosted its first Cresheim
Trail Cider Fest on October 14. Forty people
of all ages enjoyed learning more about the
Cresheim Trail while imbibing mulled cider,
eating doughnuts and spice wafers, and taking
personal guided trail walks.

The FoCT is looking for some hard working,
enthusiastic people to round out our Board
of Directors. If you have an interest in trails
and skills that you would like to contribute
to our efforts, contact Susan Dannenberg at
susandannenberg@gmail.com or 215-715-9159.

At the Tree House, winter is a time of
preparation for spring. We spend our days
cleaning, organizing, planning, creating,
greeting adventurous winter visitors, teaching, and
dreaming of our sweet Maple Sugar season.

Sugar season begins as the winter is coming to
an end. The nights are still freezing cold, but the days
begin to warm. In Philadelphia this is around late
February into early March.

During sugar season we take visiting schools and
groups out to our sugar maple trees throughout the
Andorra Natural Area and teach them how to choose
the best tree, drill and tap the trunk with a spile,
collect the sap in a bucket, and boil the sap over the fire until it becomes sweet,
sticky syrup.

Children are always surprised to see that the sap comes out of the tree
looking more like water than syrup. The process of boiling the sap takes one
or more days depending on the amount of sap in the evaporator. We boil until
enough of the water content has evaporated, and the sap, now syrup, has
reached 219°F, and is thick, with an amber coloring.

Before we indulge in pancakes and real maple syrup, we give the children
a taste test to see if they can tell the difference between real maple syrup and
pancake syrup. The children often think the corn syrup is the real maple syrup,
which does have a strong maple flavor. Adults are usually surprised to learn
there is no maple syrup in pancake syrups. Despite the long list of ingredients,
the word “maple” isn’t even on the bottle. Although the children’s
lessons aren’t long enough for them to witness the entire process
of sap turning into syrup, sampling syrup we made the previous
year on pancakes tastes just as sweet.

Often when I think about sugar season, I think about the children bundled up and hiking through the forest.
They are happy to be out of school, and I am happy they are outside. I also think of our annual Maple Sugar Day on
Forbidden Drive. A full day of tapping trees, tasting syrups, sipping hot sap, snacking on pancakes, and
sampling candy!

Christina Moresi, M.Ed., is the Environmental Education
Planner at the Wissahickon Environmental Center. For more
information about sugaring at the Tree House, visit the WEC blog
at wectreehouse.wixsite.com/findyourpath.
FOW board and staff celebrated the contributions of FOW volunteers on November 16 at Valley Green Inn. Jack Ott and the staff of Valley Green Inn generously contributed to a lovely dinner that everyone enjoyed. Afterward, Field Coordinator John Holback and Volunteer Coordinator Christina Anthony spoke on the accomplishments of the Structures Crew, Crew Leaders, Trail Ambassadors, and other volunteers throughout the year. Below are highlights from their presentations.

- The Summit Avenue Trail Reroute was FOW’s largest volunteer effort of the year. From discussions, flag lines, and cutting trail, to stacking stones and planting trees, volunteers were key in every aspect of this project.
- Volunteers were essential in completing many trail maintenance projects at Cathedral Run, the Yellow Trail from Wises Mill Road to the bridge, and the White Trail near the Indian Statue, as well as other projects such as new fencing, trail closures, repairs to the Livezey Lane steps, and litter, graffiti, and invasive species removal.
- We began removing bamboo on a cold March day and finished in the July heat. Dozens of volunteers were involved in clearing this half-acre patch of dense, tall bamboo.
- The Philly Spring Cleanup was one of the best volunteer workdays ever. With help from Philly Police, Rich Giordano at the Upper Roxborough Civic Association, and a road crew, volunteers cleaned along Bell’s Mill Road and the adjacent woods, removing 2,000 pounds of trash and recycling!
- This was the first year that FOW formalized our volunteer bluebird box monitoring. Ten volunteers checked all the bluebird boxes in both Andorra and Houston Meadows throughout the breeding season.
- FOW’s Crew Leaders help plan and lead volunteer workdays and in 2017 they have so far worked 823 hours. This year their contributions were essential at the Summit Avenue Trail Reroute and the spring Love Your Park workday at Cathedral Run. They also helped clear 46 trees and remove over 4,000 pounds of trash.
- The Structures Crew has worked over 800 hours so far this year. We are grateful for their work in maintaining and building benches, gates, fences, bridges, signs, and the new pole barn.
- Trail Ambassadors (TAs) assist and educate people in the park with everything from directions and safety needs to park history, flora and fauna. So far this year TAs have worked 3,811 hours, completing 766 patrol shifts, staffing 41 outreach events, and leading 61 guided hikes. Once again, TA Bruce Wagner worked the most volunteer hours in 2017 with 270 hours!

This year Board member Shirley Gracie was honored for her work in the preservation of Valley Green Inn, making this FOW Volunteer Recognition Night the first event in the newly named “Shirley Gracie Pavilion.” Several people paid tribute to Shirley: FOW President Emeritus Bob Lukens, TA Shelly Brick, Board member Martha Kennedy, and Executive Director Maura McCarthy. All attested to the fact that the preservation and improvement of Valley Green Inn is directly due to her hard work, grit, dedication, leadership, and passion. Said Shelly Brick, “I am in awe of and applaud Shirley’s perseverance in her service to our beloved Inn. Shirley’s commitment to achieving the best for the Valley Green Inn in the face of countless challenges is amazing.”

Outreach Manager Sarah Marley was honored for her enthusiastic support of FOW volunteers over her past seven years as an FOW staff member. Paying tribute to her were TAs Shelly Brick, Michael Kopena, Kim Quinn, Bruce Wagner, and Sarah West. All of these volunteers spoke fondly of Sarah’s dedication, enthusiasm, kindness, resourcefulness, and exceptional leadership skills, and all shared stories of Sarah going above and beyond in support of their volunteer efforts, from tracking down power cords and collecting enormous amounts of litter to hauling boxes of rocks up and down stairs. All of this made Sarah West declare, “I count Sarah among the gems of the Wissahickon!”

FOW fondly remembered two dedicated volunteers who passed away this year: Carmella Clark and Bill Thompson. “Carmella was the first volunteer I ever met on my very first workday at FOW,” said Executive Director Maura McCarthy. “She had a huge impact on FOW and the community.” Carmella was a passionate volunteer who served as a Trail Ambassador and attended countless workdays. She was also a spirited proponent of quality-of-life issues in the park and worked to make the park accessible and safe for equestrians and all park users. Bill Thompson served on the Structures Crew for fifteen years, working countless hours for the benefit of the park. According to his fellow volunteer Merritt Rhoad, Bill “was one of our great volunteers—a hard worker with a great sense of humor.” A plaque in his honor has been placed by his family on a bridge along the White Trail, one of many structures Bill worked on during his many years as a dedicated FOW volunteer.
Volunteer of the Year

**MARC SNYDER**

Marc is the definition of a perfect volunteer. He came to every workday with a smile, enthusiasm, and a willingness to do whatever had to be done—even if that meant carrying out 30+ bags of soggy Devil’s Pool trash, cutting mountains of thorny invasive plants, or carrying lumber, a generator, and tools half a mile uphill to a work site that I told him was “just around the corner.” As a Crew Leader, he has led volunteer workdays, greatly increasing our workday capacity. He is currently leading volunteers with a project he started at the Livezey Mill site. Sometimes it’s easy to forget what a beautiful and magical place the Wissahickon is. If you’re feeling frustrated or tired from the work, I suggest working with Marc to be reminded of how great it is to do anything in the Wissahickon.—John Holback, Field Coordinator

Trail Ambassador of the Year

**KRIS SOFFA**

I don’t have the words to say how much we appreciate Kris Soffa. I have been working with volunteers for five years and she is one of the most inspiring, passionate, kind, generous, volunteers I have ever met. Kris is so inspiring with everything that she does for FOW and the Wissahickon. She has led so many guided hikes and most recently she has started to lead monthly guided hikes targeting communities that are not really exposed to the Wissahickon. They are meeting at places that are accessible by public transportation, and that is something that is needed for FOW and for people who are not exposed to this park. I want to thank Kris for everything that she has done for FOW, for the Trail Ambassador program, and the park.—Christina Anthony, Volunteer Coordinator

Structures Crew Member of the Year

**KEVIN EIKOV**

Kevin started his volunteer career with FOW as a Trail Ambassador, but this year he began coming out to our Tuesday Structures Crew workdays. He fit in immediately with the Crew and was able to offer his experience as a plumber, carpenter, handyman, and general fix-it guy. This spring Kevin expressed interest in having a second Structures Crew workday, which we have been able to start hosting every week thanks to his leadership. He is funny, hardworking, and eager to take on any project. With help, he rebuilt our gator trailer (proactively replacing the bearings and bushings), built wooded sides for the big dump trailer, and was instrumental in rebuilding the Wises Mill trail bridge.—J. Holback

Crew Leader of the Year

**DAN MERCER**

I bet Dan has been volunteering in the park longer than I’ve been alive. I’m sure there isn’t a trail here that Dan hasn’t worked on and I know that he has played a huge role in the organization, construction, and maintenance of trails inside and outside of the Wissahickon proper (such as Cresheim and Belmont Plateau). He is a proactive volunteer who once contacted me to let me know he had a few “extra” hours one day (who has extra hours?) and went to the park to clear some drains. Dan played a huge role in the Summit Avenue Reroute this year, using his expertise and his ability to lead and teach volunteers. He also reached out to some key members in the mountain biking community to get them re-involved in our projects and for that we are really thankful.—J. Holback
Friends of the Wissahickon hosted the popular fall celebration Whispers Along the Wissahickon on October 27. Held at the Wissahickon Environmental Center (WEC) in the Andorra Natural Area and presented by Best Nest, Whispers Along the Wissahickon has become a fall tradition for many Philadelphia families. The event would not be so successful without the help of the staff from the Wissahickon Environmental Center, PPR Groundskeeper Verland Wayns, and many enthusiastic volunteers. FOW is also grateful to all our sponsors and local merchants who donate goods for the event.

Whispers Along the Wissahickon is presented by

best nest

---

1. Finley and Richie Paul
2. Lucy Hertzog gets her face painted
3. PJ and Alex Horos on a hayride
4. The Torrisi Family: John, Juliette, and Hudson
5. Harry and Christa Hughes with Miles and Jennifer Brusca
6. Matthew Gallagher, Amelia Gallagher, Alexa Edwards, and DJ Marc “Spiderman” Snyder
7. The Rutt Family: Megan, Owen, Caly, and Madeline
8. Hadley Hughes and Flora Brusca enjoy a hayride
9. Urban Drawl entertains the crowd at Whispers
10. Christopher Boccella, Joe Monahan, Kyle Nelson, and Jeff Klein

Photos by Charles Uniatowski
American Holly (*Ilex opaca*)

The American holly is an evergreen that bears showy fruit and a truly deer resistant holly, found in moist, well-drained soils, frequently in shaded woods. The trees are densely pyramidal when young, but become more open with age.

The leaves are dull, dark green, not shiny like English holly, and yellow-green beneath. The spiny-toothed, stiff, and leathery leaves are an easy identification.

The female fruits are red berries that appear in the fall. Many songbirds and mammals eat the bitter berries, and a flock of robins can strip all the berries in a day. *Ilex opaca* requires both male and female trees for fruit set, but one male holly will do for an entire neighborhood.

Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

This familiar pine once blanketed the country, and some claim that a squirrel could travel on their branches from coast to coast without ever touching the ground. This fast growing tree, often found in clumps, can grow from 50-80+ ft. in rich, moist soil with lots of sun. When young, the white pine forms a symmetrical pyramid. As it ages, the crown grows several horizontal and ascending branches. They can be susceptible to wind and snow damage.

The leaves (bluish green needles) form in bundles of five. They are long and soft to the touch, and remain only two years. Like you and your dog, the needles shed—one-third of the tree every year, resulting in brown needles in the interior and on the ground, plus many worried homeowners. The bark is dark gray with furrows, and the cylindrical, often curved cones extend to three to seven inches.

The white pine is valuable for construction, leaving mostly second growth trees. The extremely straight trunks were once prized for ship masts.

Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)

This handsome fern has substantial fronds in a vase-shaped whorl. It holds its glossy, dark green fronds through snow, ice, and bitter cold. Sometimes it is confused with the Boston fern, which is not evergreen.

Christmas ferns are extremely easy to grow in the seasonally moist soil of woodlands and wooded slopes with shade. Many are found around the Valley Green Inn. They are strongly clumping, spreading with offshoots.

The fronds may appear tattered and hug the ground after a hard winter, but leave them alone. Silvery new leaves will appear in the spring. These ferns attract ruffed grouse and provide cover for wildlife.

Eastern Redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

The eastern redcedar (aka red juniper), an evergreen, is an aromatic tree, buttressed at the base with a narrow columnar crown reaching 40-60 ft. They are found in dry uplands and meadows. The cedars tend to bronze in winter.

The green, opposite leaves are scale-like, arranged in four ranks, and closely pressed and overlapping, but not toothed or needle. The bark is reddish brown, thin and shreddy. The female cones are one-quarter inch, dark blueberry-like, containing one to two seeds. The juicy “berries” are consumed by numerous wildlife, including the cedar waxwing.

The aromatic wood is used for moth-proof cedar chests, fence posts, and outdoor structures, and was once the almost exclusive wood for pencils.

Redcedars and apple orchards should NOT be planted near each other. They are alternate hosts for cedar apple rust, a fungal disease that causes twig or tip dieback on the cedars and defoliates the apple trees.

Wendy Willard is an FOW Crew Leader and Trail Ambassador, Horticulturist, and Landscape Designer of Hort.Landscape. You can reach her at mhbMBH@aol.com

Friends of the Wissahickon • Winter 2017
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy has been awarded the Green Flag by the National Wildlife Federation’s (NWF) Eco-Schools USA program for the school’s successful approach to greening critical aspects of its campus, from water and waste management to energy consumption. The Green Flag is the highest recognition NWF bestows, and SCH is the first and only independent school in Pennsylvania to earn the distinction. The school joins the ranks of only 150 schools in the country to receive this recognition. The flag will be hung in a main corridor of the school as a reminder to the community of the school’s significant green footprint.

SCH’s green footprint has been purposeful and intentional over the past two decades. The school’s initiatives have extended from the classroom to the roofs and from the cafeterias to the Wissahickon Watershed. In 2012, the U. S. Department of Education recognized SCH as a Green Ribbon School. Subsequently, the school enrolled in the Eco-Schools USA program in order to have additional benchmarks and goals to help accelerate progress.

Among the significant greening initiatives SCH has undertaken that awarded the school the Green Flag are the following:

- SCH has the largest solar array in Philadelphia (232 Kw across multiple panels on campus buildings).
- The Rorer Center for Science and Technology is LEED-certified at the gold level, with a wind turbine and solar panels.
- SCH has multiple rain gardens with native plants that reduce runoff and pollution into the Wissahickon Creek, as well as ten stormwater recharge beds that reduce runoff and flooding.
- SCH has recycling programs to enable it to recycle paper, plastic, glass, aluminum, cardboard, ink cartridges, and more.
- SCH has sorting and composting systems in cafeterias which make it easy to collect material, reducing the amount that goes to landfill and providing rich materials for groundskeeping and gardens on campus.

For the Eco-Schools USA program, SCH leaned on its Green Task Force (teachers, staff, and students) to do audits and create action plans around the three chosen “pathway” themes of Healthy Living, Water Conservation, and Energy. The team tailored curriculum and activities as part of the action plans and set their sights on bronze and silver award recognition on the way to applying for Green Flag designation.

SCH encourages learning and activities around sustainability from Pre-K through 12th grade. The Lower School students help plant and maintain herb and vegetable gardens. Middle School students help manage the recycling program, and Upper School students help with trail restoration in the Wissahickon. Each division has an Eco Club with members who discuss and identify environmental issues they want to tackle through education and action.

We are so excited to have a high performing partner like SCH Academy manage their property, located on the periphery of Wissahickon Valley Park, in a way that preserves the integrity of the ecosystems in the park.

—Maura McCarthy, FOW Executive Director

Holly Shields, NWF’s director of the Eco-Schools USA program, spent a day touring the school, learning more about SCH’s activities across the campus from students. At the end of the day, Shields presented the Green Flag to representatives from the Lower School for Girls and Boys, Head of School Steve Druggan, and Ellen Kruger, faculty chair of the school’s robust Green Task Force.

October ends.
I have not carved a pumpkin;
my knives are edged with rust.
The trees begin to hibernate.
Leaves choke the roads.
The sun ignites the maples and the oaks.
The hill will soon be burned to blackened branches.
Mud thickens.
Ten thousand turkeys hear the grinding stone.
Leaves flutter down in silence
to the street—victims of cold.

A skein of ice congeals the pond’s reflections.
The frogs,
the spastic flutters of my memory,
sensing the slicing coming of the cold shut down.

—Jon Rossman
HIKES IN THE WISSAHICKON

Trail Ambassador Walks & Talks

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 Walks may be on rocky, rugged trails that may be wet and slippery. Wear sturdy shoes or boots with socks. Long pants are recommended for protection against occasional poison ivy and possible ticks. Bring water and a snack if desired. Unless otherwise noted, children 8+ are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. Walks are cancelled in heavy rain or icy conditions. For more information or to register, visit fow.org.

More Information on P. 8 and at FOW.org

Hike to Kelpius Cave with Tom Rickards
Saturday, December 10 • 10 am - Noon
Meet at Historic Rittenhouse Town (208 Lincoln Dr., 19144)
Hike from Historic Rittenhouse Town to the Hermit’s Cave and back.

Holiday Stress Buster/Yoga Nidra Series with Kevin Elkov
Sunday, December 17 • 3 pm - 5 pm
Meet at the Wissahickon Environmental Center
Bring a blanket, a mat for the hard floor, and a pillow. Suitable for children ages 8+ that can lie still and follow directions. Meet inside the WEC.

Six Months in the GAME: Hiking the Appalachian Trail Georgia to Maine with Lisa Myers
Saturday, January 13 • 1 pm - 2:30 pm
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
A slideshow of Lisa’s 2010 Appalachian Trail hike: from March to October 2, 176 miles, Georgia to Maine. She will discuss what a thru-hiker’s life was like day to day, the planning involved, and the lessons learned after the hike was over.

Kid Friendly Hike with Marv Schwartz
Saturday, January 13 • 1 pm - 3 pm
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
Learn through a slide presentation about the theories of what caused the rocks of the Wissahickon Gorge to be formed and why they are currently exposed at the earth’s surface. Then explore Wissahickon schist, with its intricate and beautiful patterns. Ages 12+. Boots suggested. Level: easy.

Winter Wonderland in the Wissahickon with Kris Soffa
Wednesday, January 24 • 10 am - Noon
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
We’ll hike from The Cedar’s House to the Covered Bridge and back. Dress in layers for cold weather hiking. Bring a snack and beverage. Fitness (or ski poles) and non-slip footwear are recommended. Distance: 2 miles.

Valentine’s Day Sweetheart of a Hike with Kris Soffa
Wednesday, February 14 • 10 am - Noon
Meet at front parking lot at 4900 Ridge Ave., 19127
We’ll pass below Lover’s Leap and arrive at Forbidden Drive at the Ten Box ranger station. Dress in layers for cold weather hiking. Bring a snack and beverage. Fitness (or ski poles) and non-slip footwear are recommended. Distance: 2.5 miles.

Spring Stroll in the Wissahickon with Kris Soffa
Wednesday, March 14 • 10 am - Noon
Meet at The Cedars House (one block south of intersection of Northwestern Ave., Thomas, and Andorra Rds. GPS not accurate for this location)
Welcome spring with a walk in the Wissahickon. We’ll find signs of emerging new growth everywhere. Distance: 2 miles.

Appalachian Mountain Club Delaware Valley Chapter amcdcv.org

Mondays
Wissahickon Wanderings. Join us for a hike of 5 miles on various trails throughout the beautiful Wissahickon Gorge.
The distance of the hike will be dependent on conditions and speed of the group. Meet at 5:30 pm by the Valley Green Inn. Bring water, snacks, and a flashlight. Bad weather may cancel. If doubtful, check the status of the hike before 5:30 pm.

Sundays
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 ups and downs and uneven paths are found along the way, so wear proper footwear and be ready to hike. Meet at 2:00 pm at Cosimo’s Pizza, 8624 Germantown Ave. at Bethlehem Pike (the top of Chestnut Hill). Registration with the hike leader is required: Bert G. at bert12345@comcast.net.

Philaventures waygay40.org

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Hiking with Maura the Explorer
Last Friday of every month • 10 am
Join FOW Executive Director Maura McCarthy for a hike on the last Friday of each month. She will tour a different section of the Wissahickon during each hike and talk about her park experiences, as well as point out any recent improvements by FOW. Bring your hiking shoes and be ready to share your favorite Wissahickon stories with her! Registration is recommended. For more information and to register, visit fow.org.

So I went down to Devil’s Pool in early August to see a cleanup crew at work. It’s hard to keep your eyes on trash when, as you get close to the stream, you see a fallen tree with little candy yellow sprouts forming on top.

Flashback to days at the movies when I was a kid, sharing a box of Juicy Fruits with my sister. I really liked the yellow ones. After a couple of chews, if I took it out to look at it (a thing kids will do), it looked just like these fungi, though I’m guessing it tasted better.

I don’t know if I’ll ever know the name of this fungus, but I know its plan. Like so many of the little growths and creatures that live below our knee-level, it will slowly take what it needs out of the tree stumps, make a life for itself until it gets dried or iced or washed away, and lay the seeds of a new life some time next spring.

What I haven’t a clue about is why it does it in such an eye-popping color. When so many of its cousins are pale or camouflaged, what a happy sight these shining “flubbery” bits are. They are one of the many pleasures of going slowly through the park.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE WISSAHICKON

WISSAHICKON VALLEY WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Volunteer opportunities are being offered by the Wissahickon Watershed Association. Located at 12 Morris Road in Ambler. More information is available at cresheimtrail.org or 215-715-9159.

THURSDAYS
Join CVW on Thursdays for a morning of trail maintenance in the park. Work will consist of regular trail maintenance projects including repairing drains and grade reversals, repairing stone work, raking widened trails, and emergency trail repairs. Meet at Pachella Field (6751 Henry Ave.) at 9:15am and plan on being on the trails starting at 9:30 and back at Pachella by 9pm. For more information or to volunteer, contact Volunteer Coordinator, Christina Anthony at anthony@fow.org.

SATURDAYS
There is no better way to be friends than to help CVW in the park with trail maintenance. Invasive wet removal, planting, and general cleanups from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Visit cresheimvalleynatureorg or 215-715-9159 for more information.

THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
Join Friends of Cresheim Trail to improve the trails in the Cresheim Creek Watershed. Meet at Pachella Field (6751 Henry Ave.) at 9:15am and grade reversals, repairing stone work, narrowing widened trails, and emergency trail repairs. Meet at Pachella Field (6751 Henry Ave.) at 9:15am and plan on being on the trails starting at 9:30 and back at Pachella by 9pm. For more information or to volunteer, contact Volunteer Coordinator, Christina Anthony at anthony@fow.org.

FULL MOON HIKE NIGHT
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31
Hike by the light of the full moon and discover the tree silhouettes against the moonlight sky. Maybe hear the hoot of an owl and warm up around the campfire. Registration required.

FAMILY HIKE • 6 – 7:30 PM
Families with toddlers join us for a short right hike around the Tree House; families with children ages 5 and above join us for a longer hike.

ADULT FULL MOON HIKE • 8 – 9:30 PM
Adult only hike through the woods to the meadow.

KIDS EXPLORE
WINTER WANDERLAND
SATURDAY, JANUARY 20 • 10 AM – NOON
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10 • 10 AM – NOON
Bring the kids out into the forest this winter to discover what is still active during the cold winter months. Bundle up– it's an outdoor program!

FEATURING KIM SOLES
Ages 6-12. Registration required. Drop-off optional.

WEATHER FOLKLORE
FRIENDS OF THE WISSAHICKON
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3 • 1 PM
Can a groundhog really predict the end of winter? Join us for this indoor/outdoor program to learn how people looked to the natural world to predict weather for centuries before computer models. We'll go outdoors, look at the clouds, and learn how observing insects and animal behavior can give us a clue to the weather. "In your neck of the woods." All ages. Indoor space is limited. Registration is required.

WINTER BIRDS I
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9 • 8:30 AM
Meet local bird-rider Martin Seiber at the Tree House. The morning will begin by enjoying the activity at the Tree House’s feeders before exploring Ardmore Meadow and Forbidden Drive as the conditions permit. All ages. Registration Suggested.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE WONDER OF THE WINTER WOODS
SATURDAY, JANUARY 20 • 1 PM
Join Kim Soles for a brief indoor presentation of her nature work that spans 25+ years, before bundling up to photograph the winter woods. Kim's dreamlike and intimate depictions of nature will inspire you to hunt for anthropomorphic shapes and capture the beauty of the leafless forest. Adults and children 12 & older. Free to attend. $10.00 to take home a jar of salve. Space is limited. Registration required.

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Hike by the light of the full moon and discover the tree silhouettes against the moonlight sky. Maybe hear the hoot of an owl and warm up around the campfire. Registration required.

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MAPLE SUGAR DAY
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 • 11 AM - 3 PM
Join us on Forbidden Drive (near Northwestern Ave.) for our annual Maple Sugar Day. There will be ongoing maple sugaring demonstrations, pancakes with real maple syrup, a taste test of different pancake toppings, and freshly made maple candy to taste. Pennsylvania maple syrup products will be available for purchase. All ages. NO registration necessary. FREE.

WOODCOCK WALKS AT HOUSTON MEADOW
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25 • 5:30 PM
Meet local bird-rider Martin Seiber at Houston Playground (900 Grays Ave) to experience the sounds and sights of the timberdoodle. Join us for one or both walks. There will be no rain date. All ages. Registration suggested.

LESSONS ON LYMIE
SATURDAY, MARCH 10 • 10 AM
Has the fear of contracting Lyme disease hampered your outdoor plans? Before the tick season begins in full force, join us and get the latest information and a protection plan to put in place. Indoor/outdoor program with a walk. Adults. Registration required.

FIRST DAY OF SPRING HIKE
TUESDAY, MARCH 20 • 1-2:30 PM
It’s spring! Get out, stretch those legs and wake up your brain while learning a few things about the forest around you. We’ll hike at a clip pace while stopping occasionally to look for the very first signs of spring. All ages. Registration suggested.

THURSDAY TOTS
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 • 10 AM
Families with tots ages 3-5. Parents stay with their child. Registration required. $5 per child, per lesson.

SNOWFLAKES • JANUARY 25
MAPLE TREES & TREATS • FEBRUARY 22
SPRING SENSES • MARCH 22

FOR A LISTING OF MORE EVENTS, VISIT FOW.ORG/EVENTS.
JOIN US ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER, AND INSTAGRAM

— Friends of the Wissahickon Membership Form —

YES, I/We want to help preserve and protect the Wissahickon.

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

$20 Limited Income/Students
$100 Contributing*
$250 Sponsor*
$750 Family*
$500 Patron*
$2500
$5000
$10,000 or above

*Choice of:
Hat
Good Night Wissahickon Valley Park
Additional membership fee for the Park

T-Shirt (circle size) $45 Basic
Children: S M L
Map (black): S M L XL
Devils Pool (green): S M L XL

Society of Generous Friends*
$1000
$2500
$5000
$10,000 or above

Name ____________________________________________
Street ______________________________________________
City __________________________________ State ______ Zip Code ______
Phone (Home) ___________________ (Work)  ______________________ E-mail _____________________________

I also want to help Friends of the Wissahickon with:

Membership
Community Outreach
Trail Repair
Cleanup
Wildlife
Fundraising
Reforestation
Structures Repair
Education
Vine Removal

I also want to help Friends of the Wissahickon Valley. Limited Income/Student members receive invitations to all events and quarterly newsletters. Basic members receive invitations to all events, quarterly newsletter, calendar, and membership card with discounts for meals at Valley Green Inn (in the park) and FOW merchandise. Family members receive all benefits of Basic membership plus choice of two kids’ freeパス OR one child’s book. Contributing members and above ($100 or more) receive all benefits of Basic membership plus choice of hat OR T-shirt OR one child’s book.

Method of Payment

Check Enclosed (payable to Friends of the Wissahickon)
Charge my VISA Mastercard AmX Discover
Auto-renew my membership annually (email info required)

Card Number____________________________
Signature________________________________
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