

STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT

2018-2020

PARK RULES

-  Dogs on designated trails. Do not leash-free them.
-  Canine/pacer speed & respect other trail users.
-  Dogs must be on a leash to go onto the 6-foot dog.
-  Where may not be left or disposed of property.
-  Smoking is prohibited.
-  Alcohol/drug use is prohibited.
-  Each user must use proper trail use.

LEGEND

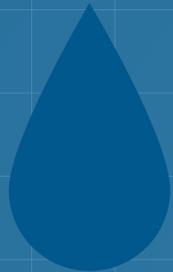
- | | | | |
|---|----------|---|----------------------|
|  | BOUNDARY |  | Subsistence Boundary |
|  | BOUNDARY |  | Subsistence Boundary |
|  | TRAIL |  | Subsistence Boundary |
|  | TRAIL |  | Subsistence Boundary |
|  | TRAIL |  | Subsistence Boundary |

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

VISION

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

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

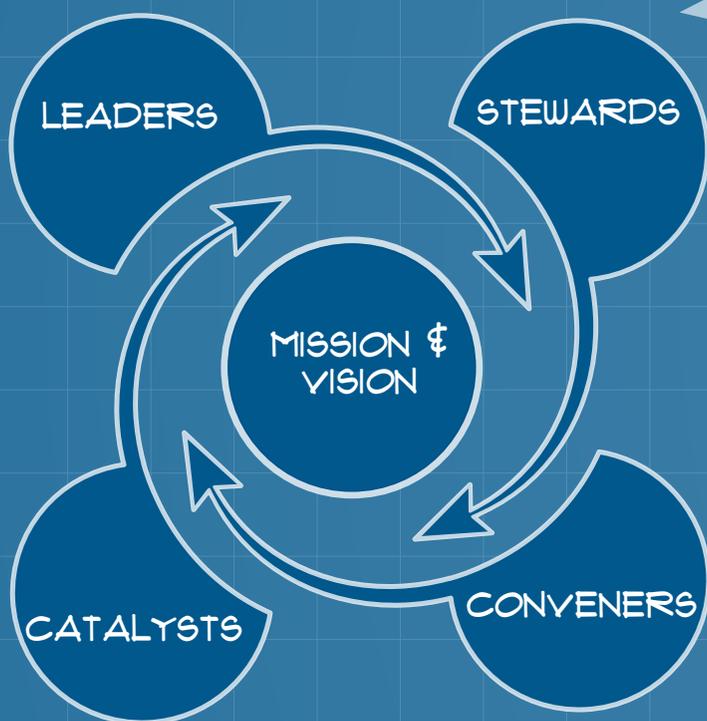
Work toward mutual mandates and goals

- City, Regional, State, and Federal Departments and Agencies
- Other Nonprofits, BIDs, CDCs
- Valley Green Inn and Other Business Partners

4. BENEFICIARIES

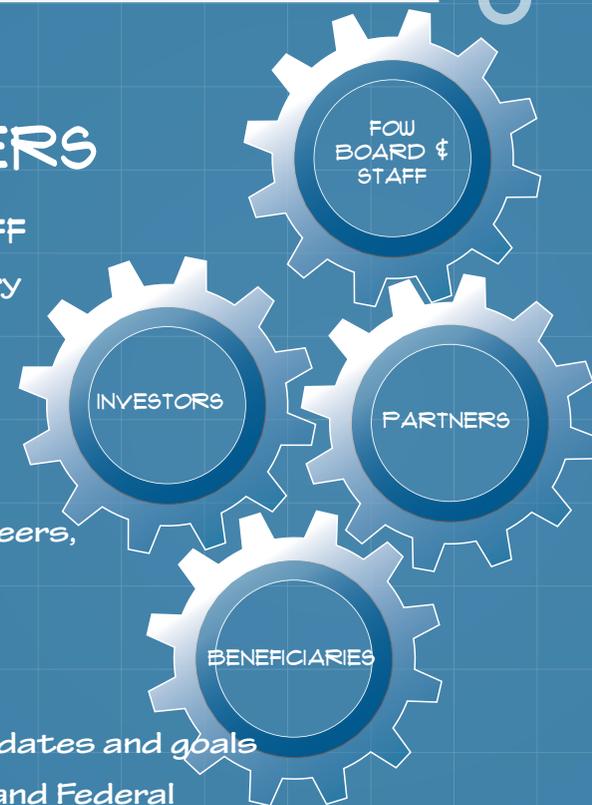
Enjoy the benefits of FOW's work

- Park Users, Neighbors, Philadelphians



FOW ROLES

To fulfill our mission and achieve our vision, FOW takes on many roles in the community.

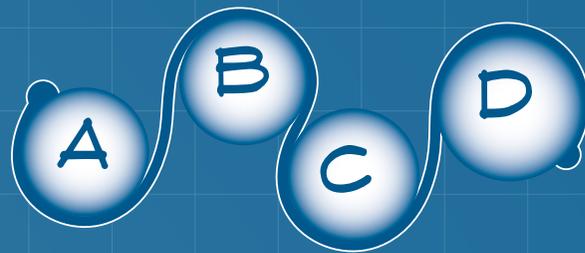


OPERATIONAL FOCUS AREAS

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.

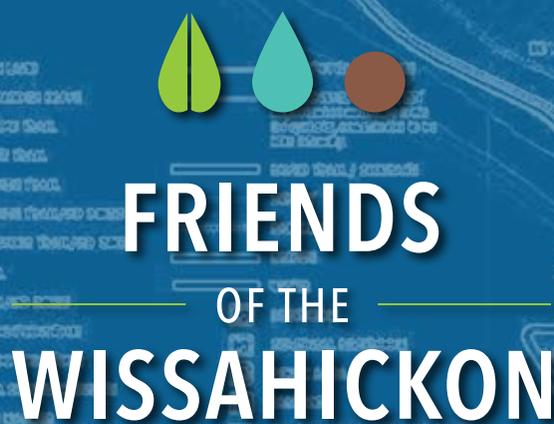
2018 WORK

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.



40 W. Evergreen Ave., Suite 108,
Philadelphia, PA 19118-3324
(215) 247-0417 • office@fow.org • fow.org