time and again we hear from friends and neighbors how fortunate they feel to live so near the treasure that is Wissahickon Valley Park. They recall spending happy hours there as kids or with their own children and grandchildren, sharing a love of nature in this urban oasis. It’s why our 95th anniversary celebration is called Love Where You Live. We invite you to join us for this special evening on Friday, October 11, at Erdenheim Farm. See p. 2 for details.

The park was more active than usual this past summer. There are always more visitors this time of year, but several heat waves and continued growth of public awareness via social media sharing drew even more people. Subsequently, we saw a large increase in litter, open fires, and swimming— not just at Devil’s Pool (which actually saw a modest decrease in litter in 2019!), but at Magargee Dam and other places along the Wissahickon Creek that have not historically experienced intensive use. In response to this surge in visitation, FOW and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation are embracing both the opportunities and challenges of welcoming visitors, equipping the park for continued growth, and improving access and services, with an emphasis on welcoming our seasonal visitors and engaging them in our mission of stewardship.

Fortunately, the removal of trash park-wide has also increased, due in large part to greater efforts by FOW. Among the many volunteers who braved the heat and humidity—and odors—to gather and remove trash were twice as many corporate groups as in prior years. To continue engaging volunteers to help clean the watershed, and track what and where they clean up, FOW is now participating in an app and web dashboard called CleanSweep (p. 9).

Your help is always needed in ridding the park of the invasive spotted lanternflies. Fall is when they lay their eggs on any flat surface, from trees to decks. Learn how to scrape off the egg sacs on the back cover.

Great progress has been made on the Forbidden Drive Streambank Stabilization project since construction began in mid-June. The impressive RiverLogic crew has finished the stabilization of Forbidden Drive’s eroded bank edge at the creek at the Valley Green Area project site, and has begun work on the second collapse site immediately downstream from Mt. Airy Avenue and Forbidden Drive. A more detailed update about this important project is on p. 7, along with important safety reminders.

Moving up the start of the fourth annual All Trails Challenge to the spring proved to be successful, with 157 challengers and donors showing their love for the park and support for FOW as they raised $18,250 to benefit FOW’s conservation mission. All the final results are on p. 6.

Lazy summer days may be behind us (see memories from the 13th annual Ice Cream Social on p. 13), but the fall will be a special time to remember, as we close out our 95th anniversary celebration. We are deeply saddened by the loss of our great friend and a driving force behind so much of FOW’s success, Jack Kelly. His energetic spirit will be with us as we move forward toward FOW’s century mark, stronger than ever. Read a tribute to him on p. 9.

If you “love where you live,” join us. Whether you’re a volunteer, donor, or member, we accomplish what we do because of you. Together, we say a heartfelt thank you.

Maura McCarthy, Executive Director
Jeff Harbison, President
FOW is celebrating 95 years of successful stewardship of Wissahickon Valley Park with Love Where You Live, a 95th Anniversary Celebration Party at Erdenheim Farm on October 11, 2019.

There’s still time to join the party! Help FOW celebrate nearly a century of stewardship of Philadelphia’s urban oasis—our beloved Wissahickon Valley Park. At this milestone event, FOW will honor individuals who are essential to the fulfillment of FOW’s mission to “conserve the natural beauty and wildness of the Wissahickon and stimulate public interest therein,” when we present FOW past president Cindy Affleck with our long-standing Wissahickon Award, and David Haas with the organization’s first Founders Award. The event is being co-chaired by FOW past president Will Whetzel and his wife, Kim.

Erdenheim Farm is an especially fitting location for FOW’s celebration, given its significance as a green space in the heart of the Wissahickon Watershed and the critical environmental role it plays. It embraces a portion of the Wissahickon Creek and forms part of the greenway system that begins at the creek’s source in Montgomery Township and extends south through 11 municipalities ending in the Schuylkill River. The Wissahickon and its tributaries are an important source of clean water for Philadelphia, and for this reason they have been a focus for environmental protection for many years.

A working farm, Erdenheim Farm is owned and preserved by Peter and Bonnie McCausland, who granted easements for the construction of public trails on the perimeter of several tracts. This enabled completion of the Montgomery County Green Ribbon Trail linking Fort Washington State Park and Wissahickon Valley Park, as well as provided connections with the Township’s trail system.

If you “love where you live,” join FOW for a festive farm dinner of locally-sourced fare and dancing to celebrate this momentous occasion in the organization’s history.

For ticket information, visit fow.org/fow95th/ or contact Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org.
Reader Feedback

I’d like to commend Christina Moresi’s *Up at the Tree House* article (Summer 2019) about milkweed and monarch butterflies. The story about the birth stages for monarch butterflies requires careful, ongoing observation, which her article is a testament to. I have only gotten occasional glimpses of this miracle in my patch of milkweed plants. Thanks to Christina and Maris Harmon’s diaries, the process has been made clearer. The newsletter would benefit from more first-hand accounts of the wonders of nature in the Wissahickon.

Sincerely,
Bill Hengst

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“Mooving” through the park one day this summer, these special park visitors took a break from their home at W. B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences in Roxborough to enjoy the Wissahickon.

Photo Credit: Jordan Ostrum

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Surge Protection: 2019 Devil’s Pool and Wissahickon Summer Visitorship Update

Devil’s Pool and the areas of Wissahickon Valley Park around Valley Green Inn experienced another year-on-year rise in visitorship over the summer, as they have for at least the past two decades. Due to several heat waves and continued social media sharing, park use was even greater this season, with an especially large increase in people swimming in new areas, such as Magargee Dam, and lighting more open fires throughout the park.

When it comes to summer visitors, the primary areas of concern remain unchanged from previous years: physical dangers in the water and poor water quality, congestion in parking areas that both limit emergency access and services and negatively impact neighbors, and litter, fires, excess noise, graffiti, and other inappropriate use that can damage habitat, animals, water quality, and overall park enjoyment.

Along with problems brought by this surge in park use, new thinking has developed around addressing our stewardship goals. After more than a decade of utilizing strategies that looked primarily to enforcement and emphasis on rules and restrictions to keep the park and visitors safe, FOW and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR), together with local police, are working collaboratively to develop improved programming, infrastructure, and access to better serve visitors and include them in learning about and caring for the park. Enforcement is still critical, but it will be focused on controlling dangerous or destructive behaviors at key heavy usage locations. Going forward, the emphasis will be on accommodating, rather than limiting, use and creating the infrastructure needed to welcome all of our visitors while preserving the valley.

The most significant change implemented in 2019 was the closure of Livezey Lane as a park entrance and the restriction of parking in the area. Shifting park visitors from the surrounding neighborhoods into more public areas of the park seems to have helped take the pressure off some of the residential neighborhoods in West Mt. Airy. As seasonal crowds entered at the two more central locations (Valley Green Road and Wises Mill Road), the heavy seasonal use (primarily picnicking and swimming) that was once relatively “hidden” at Livezey Lane and Devil’s Pool has become more visible.

While congestion, noise, and litter are still significant problems, the push to more open recreation areas comes with a number of benefits. They allow better access to emergency services, trash cans and trash removal, and portable toilets. And, jumping- and diving-associated injuries are also somewhat less likely in these spots than at Devil’s Pool.

“To steward the park into the future, all partner agencies must work together to welcome and accommodate use, while protecting and caring for our natural resources and the overall Wissahickon experience,” said Maura McCarthy, FOW Executive Director.

In preparation for the 2020/21 season, a number of initiatives are already in progress with new and existing partners, including Wissahickon Valley Park’s selection as a Leave No Trace Hot Spot for 2020 from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. With this designation, which provides resources for public engagement service projects and grass roots education about Leave No Trace sustainable practices, the Wissahickon joins some of the country’s most spectacular parks, including Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming and Joshua Tree National Park in California.
Participants in FOW's All Trails Challenge (ATC) 2019 ran, hiked, rode, and biked 4,657 miles throughout Wissahickon Valley Park, with 157 challengers and donors raising $18,250 for the continued conservation of this beautiful and important asset. For the fourth year, the ATC was an exciting months-long event that encouraged people of all ages and fitness levels to explore all 50 miles of its scenic trails and invite their friends, family, and coworkers to sponsor them. This year’s Challenge took place from May 13 through August 28.

It included fun kickoff and closing parties, mileage and fundraising incentives, lots of give-aways, and scheduled hikes and walks with great prizes, including exclusive vacations for the top mileage and fundraising participants.

Thanks to all the participants and our sponsors, as well as the FOW Trail Ambassadors who led ATC hikes and volunteers who helped at Challenge events. “FOW is grateful to everyone involved in the ATC. We can't care for the Wissahickon without your support,” said Executive Director Maura McCarthy, who also led several hikes during the Challenge.

Funds raised helps FOW eliminate invasive plant species, monitor watershed management issues, and make trails sustainable, while making the park experience more enjoyable for our more than a million visitors annually.

Jack with his proud mom Michele at the ATC wrap-up party. Jack, who has participated in all four ATCs, raised more than $850 and hiked just over 50 miles.

TOP INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISER
JANET STERN - $3,400

TOP TEAM FUNDRAISER
TEAM TRAIL WALKERS - $806 (NEARLY 174 TOTAL MILES)

TOP INDIVIDUAL MILEAGE
PAT VANCE – 339 MILES
Despite the intense storms, high heat, and stifling humidity the summer of 2019 gave us, FOW’s Forbidden Drive Streambank Stabilization Project is moving steadily along. RiverLogic Solutions has completed the stabilization process at the Valley Green Area site, the first of the three locations scheduled to be remediated over the summer. Project contractor and company co-owner Jeff Boyer and his crew successfully constructed a streambank rebuilding technique called soil lifts. Using both heavy machinery and people power, materials such as stone, soil, coir logs, and erosion control matting were installed to re-establish the creek bank, and ultimately, this portion of Forbidden Drive.

In order to complete this portion of the endeavor, the RiverLogic crew first established a causeway, beginning from Forbidden Drive’s eroded bank edge down to the creek. This allowed the crew to use the heavy machinery in strategic locations along the creek bank to move large stone and soil, thereby creating a base for the cascading soil lifts. As each soil lift was completed, the team compacted and tested the soil to ensure proper stabilization. A variety of grasses, wildflowers, and native seeds were distributed on the completed soil lifts to prevent eroding soils in the future. The use of native species, which thrive in this environment, to re-establish vegetation on the creek’s banks, supports local insects, birds, and other wildlife while promoting the FOW mission. The finishing touches were completed by removing the causeway, reshaping the bank’s edge, and replacing the split rail fencing.

The crew is currently in the first stages at the second project location site immediately downstream from Mt. Airy Avenue and Forbidden Drive. Visitors to the park are welcome to watch this extraordinary project unfold and take photos from safe locations—the Mt. Airy Bridge at Forbidden Drive is a safe spot to stand for a close-up view of the construction progress.

For more information on the Forbidden Drive Streambank Stabilization Project, visit fow.org.
ARE YOUR SHOPPING LISTS KILLING BIRDS?

By Sandra Folzer, Weavers Way Co-op, Environment Committee

Birds give us so much, from singing delightful songs to being important natural insect killers. Yet, I recently read with dismay in a 2016 report from the North American Bird Conservation Initiative that one-third of North American bird species “need urgent conservation action.”

There are certainly many factors that harm birds, such as glass windows, cars and trucks, power electric power lines, and windmills. However, there is another, lesser-known danger, over which we have considerable control.

In her *New York Times* opinion piece “Did Your Shopping List Kill a Songbird?” Bridget Stutchbury claimed that “the imported fruits and vegetables found in our shopping carts in winter and early spring are grown with types and amounts of pesticides that would often be illegal in the United States.” Migratory birds, like bobolinks, winter in Latin America, where pesticide use is five times greater than it was in 1980. As a result, bobolink numbers have decreased by 50 percent.

What we buy does make a difference. Mass-produced coffee is grown in open fields which are sprayed with enormous amounts of pesticides and fertilizers. Organic fair-trade coffee needs no pesticides or fertilizers, and the shade trees on which it’s grown provide shelter and preserve the winter habitat of many migrating birds. Nonorganic, out-of-season fruits and vegetables are grown with numerous pesticides, which ensures that fewer and fewer songbirds will return.

Another action worth considering is preventing cats from killing birds. This is a tough one. I have friends who love letting their cats go outside, but given the amount of birds killed, it is worth a serious try. According to The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, there are about 50 million owned cats in this country that are allowed outside (excluding feral cats). If each cat kills just one bird a year, that is 50 million birds. A controlled study in Kansas found the average cat studied each killed at least four birds each. If we can generalize from that, our estimate of birds killed rises to more than 240 million annually. Another study in Wisconsin found that cats killed an estimated 39 million birds each year in that state alone. If we multiply that number by all the states, the number is staggering.

The American Bird Conservancy suggests keeping all cats indoors, which keeps them healthier and less susceptible to cars and parasites. At a minimum, keeping cats indoors at night during the spring and summer can help reduce bird kills. Collars with bells have been shown to be useless, and being well fed does not deter a cat from hunting.

To help protect birds, buy organic coffee, fruits, and vegetables whenever possible. And keep your cats inside. If you’re brave enough, you could ask your neighbors to keep their cats inside as well.

*Adapted from an article that originally appeared in the Weavers Way Co-op’s newspaper, The Shuttle.*
**FOW WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBERS**

Maeve Pollack is FOW’s new Development and Database Manager, responsible for coordinating the organization’s many event logistics and database tracking and management. She also assists with social media. Before joining the FOW staff, she worked at Population Connection in San Diego, where she held the roles of Membership Relations Coordinator and Senior Membership Relations Coordinator. Maeve earned dual bachelor’s degrees in psychology and sociology from Penn State University. She will receive a master’s degree in public policy from Northwestern University with a specialization in domestic public policy in June 2020. She likes to garden, read, sit on the beach, travel, and hike with her dog, Lola.

FOW’s new Development Assistant, William Ricker, is responsible for gift and volunteer data processing to ensure accurate and timely recording, reporting, and acknowledgment of donations and volunteer contributions. Previously, he worked in administrative roles at Vermont Public Radio and Vermont PBS in his home state. A graduate of Bard College, where he studied music and literature, Will spends his free time tinkering with technology, reading, and playing dissonant chords on the piano.

**REMEMBERING JACK KELLY**

The FOW family mourns the loss of Jack Kelly, who passed away suddenly in July. An FOW Board Member from 2011 to 2018, his expertise as a financial services and media executive helped guide the organization’s finances and long-term planning. He helped develop the Investment Committee in order to bring in additional funds on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee on which he served along with the Sustainable Trails Initiative Oversight Committee.

FOW Executive Director Maura McCarthy noted that “Jack put an urgency into FOW’s thinking about the future and was an amazing booster in our community, as well as bringing our message to the city at large.” He left an enduring legacy of spirit to FOW’s development outreach, frequently chairing fundraising parties for the organization, often in his home.

Known for his zest, style, and infectious sense of humor, Jack gathered friends with his contagious energy. His love of sports, especially cycling and running, enabled him to give back to the Chestnut Hill community’s sports programs as a coach. Besides FOW, Jack served as a lector and Sunday schoolteacher at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. He and his family spent much time travelling the world.

“Jack’s unexpected departure has left a real hole in the fabric of the Chestnut Hill community,” said McCarthy. “The enthusiasm and joy that Jack brought to all of his efforts—his philanthropy, his advocacy, his parenting—will be remembered and will continue to influence people into the future.” Jack was well-loved and will be deeply missed.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to Ann, Virginia, Philip Jr., Henry, and the rest of the extended Kelly family. Contributions in Jack’s name may be made to the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields (8000 St. Martin’s Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19118) and the JCK Foundation (205 Clinton Avenue, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522), which aims to empower generations to authentically address mental health. Jckfoundation.org.

**TRACKING TRASH IN ONE CLEANSWEEP**

FOW is now participating in CleanSweep, a new smartphone app and website dashboard that engages volunteers in cleaning up the Schuylkill River Watershed. FOW will use the app to promote cleanup events, which are displayed on a map, so volunteers can find and join an event by location. FOW will also use the app to report results of individual cleanups from event locations in Wissahickon Valley Park. Anyone can download it (Google Play and Apple Store) and register for local cleanups or track any trash you might be clearing on your own. The reported data and photos are aggregated and displayed on the CleanSweep website dashboard. Visit SchuylkillCleanSweep.org to learn more and download the app.

FOW’s newest staff members: Maeve Pollack and Will Ricker.

Photo Credit: Charles Uniatowski
Another summer is now behind us. While the fall is beautiful, there’s nothing quite like summertime in the Wissahickon, with its thick canopy of green and meadows buzzing with life-forms that swim, crawl, hop, and fly. As always, the warm temperatures brought thousands of people to the park to submerge themselves in the leafed-out beauty of the valley and escape the heat of the city for the wonderful shade and cool breezes blowing along the creek.

FOW’s reliable stewards were an active presence, making the park cleaner, safer, and more beautiful for all. On most Saturdays we ran Volunteer Service Days, which unite Crew Leaders, Trail Ambassadors, Sawyers, and other volunteers for a variety of projects throughout the park. From trash cleanups, to trail improvements, to invasive plant removal, these Saturdays make a large, positive impact in the park and are always my most fun day of the week! On Thursday mornings we ran our usual trail work service days, opening the corridor and improving the drainage and tread on the Orange and Yellow Trails. While this work can be especially tiresome during the warm days of summer, I was delighted to see so many volunteers coming, week after week, to give back to the place they love so much.

Thursday afternoons have been dedicated to cleaning up litter in some of the most heavily visited sections of the park, especially at Devil’s Pool. This year, FOW removed the trash cans from this location and strongly encouraged a carry-in, carry-out philosophy through our Trail Ambassadors and Seasonal Outreach Assistants. While the process of making this location trash-free will require a lot more outreach and education, it’s been wonderful to see many volunteers and park users helping by carrying out trash. One regular park user, who goes by the moniker “The Unofficial Custodian of Devil’s Pool,” frequently came on his own to remove litter from this heavily visited location and single-handedly carried out over 1,300 pounds of trash. That’s dedication!

There’s always more to be done in the park and FOW is only able to accomplish it with our volunteers. If you love the Wissahickon and want to give back, please consider joining a public Volunteer Service Day. No experience is needed—FOW provides the tools, gloves, and instruction. Visit fow.org/volunteering to learn how you can help.
SEASONAL OUTREACH ASSISTANTS

FOW’s 2019 Seasonal Outreach Assistants were a welcoming and valuable presence this summer at Valley Green Inn and Devil’s Pool, where they educated and engaged with park visitors about FOW’s mission and stewardship work, as well as responsible park use and Leave No Trace principles. They also conducted visitor experience surveys. Pictured (from left) are Benjamin Kuss, Jordan Ostrum, and Lyle Mullen. Not pictured: Asher Hancock and Thea Volpp.

DEBBIE HOELLEIN

How did you decide to volunteer with FOW?
I had been leading hikes for my bike club for several years and a friend of mine told me that FOW was a good organization to join because of the way it supported the park. I joined FOW because I liked hiking in the Wissahickon, but I never volunteered. A fellow cyclist became a trail ambassador and when I learned what the role entailed, I decided I wanted to become one someday. Someday was last year and I love being a trail ambassador!

What do you love about Wissahickon Valley Park?
I love walking in the park and seeing new things. Before becoming a trail ambassador, I liked the feeling of moving quickly through the woods. Someone told me the sparkly rock throughout the Wissahickon was schist and that the Tedyuscung statue looks west, but I was moving too fast to notice much else. When I took the trail ambassador training last year, geology and history interested me the most. As I saw spring evolve this year, plants fascinated me. And I also like hearing the birds. Now, I love walking in the woods and taking everything in with all my senses.

What is one of your favorite moments from volunteering with FOW?
I like leading students on hikes in the park. One of my favorite hikes was with a group of 12-year-old girls last summer, many of whom had never been in the park. It was a lot of fun talking with them and seeing what interested them the most - bugs, turtles, fish, and birds. I hope a lot of them came back to the Wissahickon.

How do you think FOW contributes to the Philadelphia community?
I think FOW contributes exactly what it set out to do: “To preserve the natural beauty and wilderness of the Wissahickon Valley Park and stimulate public interest therein.” FOW does this through its work on trails, watershed, and habitat, and with its many outreach activities. So many people who visit cannot believe that such a beautiful place is within the city limits.

What is your favorite spot in the park?
One of my favorite spots in the park (I have many) is the wet stream crossing area on the Summit Avenue re-route. It is so beautiful in the summer when the trees have all their leaves and you feel like you are in the middle of nowhere.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

FALL SUPER SATURDAYS!

FOW is looking for extra hands to help beautify the park at these specially designated service days:

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY
Planting at Thomas Mansion. Meet at the Wissahickon Environmental Center at 9 am.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9
FALL LOVE YOUR PARK DAY
Two planting locations: Mt. Airy Avenue and Summit Avenue Trails. Both start at 9 am. Meet at the Wissahickon Environmental Center.

Visit fow.org for more information and to register to volunteer.
THE GREAT BEECH

By Christina Moresi, Wissahickon Environmental Center

In 2006, I was new to teaching in the Wissahickon and learning the trails of Andorra. As I was shown the key trail sites—Andorra Meadow, Cucumber Meadow, The Great Beech—I was taken by it all, but especially by The Great Beech. It was the biggest tree that I had ever seen. Its history sparked my imagination about the land long ago, and how to connect children with it today.

The Great Beech’s existence dates back as far as the mid-nineteenth century. Theories have circulated for generations, however there is no known documentation of the exact planting date, origins, or structure—whether it is one multi-stemmed tree or five closely planted trees.

What we do know is that The Great Beech is a European Beech, *Fagus sylvatica*, and was planted between 1853 and 1862 by Richard Wistar as part of a larger beech planting for his anticipated estate. Wistar died before the estate was built, and the land transitioned many times over the next 157 years to Andorra Farm, Andorra Nursery, unused estate land, and, eventually, Fairmount Park. Through it all, The Great Beech stood strong, and grew.

In 2006, the grandeur of The Great Beech reached Champion status thanks to the Pennsylvania Forestry Association’s Champion Tree Program.

With a circumference of 257 inches, a spread of 105 feet, and a height of 102.5 feet, The Great Beech’s measurements made it the largest European Beech tree in Pennsylvania, and the third largest tree in Philadelphia. (The largest, a katsura tree, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, is at Morris Arboretum.)

As of 2017, when The Great Beech was reassessed with the preceding measurements, it still held its title. But 157 years has not been easy on our Champion, which is part of what makes it great.

The Great Beech’s health has been quickly declining over the past few years. In any urban park or area, the stress of human use can take its toll. Around The Great Beech, soil has been compacted, roots trampled, and its trunk carved. It has been climbed on and spray painted. Heat, poor air quality, and disease may also be contributing to its decline.

A European Beech has the potential to live about 250 years, so what seems like an old tree, is actually in its youth. Thinking back to life in its early days, then to the years we spent visiting with kids, measuring it with our hugs and admiring its beauty, I’m sad that the next generation will miss out knowing The Great Beech.

To celebrate the life of this extraordinary tree, we invite you to stop by Sunday, October 27, from 1-3 p.m. to create art, see its modern life in photos, write love letters to the tree, and more. (See WEC calendar on p. 15, for registration information.)

Christina Moresi is an Environmental Education Planner at the Wissahickon Environmental Center.

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Christina Moresi is an Environmental Education Planner at the Wissahickon Environmental Center.
WREATH-MAKING WORKSHOP
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
TWO SESSIONS:
10 AM–NOON OR 1–3 PM
VALLEY GREEN INN

Celebrate the fun and beauty of the holiday season at FOW’s annual wreath-making workshop. Enjoy roasted chestnuts, hot apple cider, and a light breakfast or lunch buffet at Valley Green Inn. Decorate your holiday wreath with fresh western juniper with blueberries, incense cedar with yellow tips, holly with red berries, and assorted pine cones and ornaments. Children can make nature gifts for animals and enjoy a winter woods hike. Tickets will be sold on a first come, first served basis to FOW members.

TICKETS
FOW Members:
Family: $100
(2 adults, 2 children, 1 wreath, breakfast/lunch)
Adult: $45
(1 adult, 1 wreath, breakfast/lunch)
Child: $2 (1 child, breakfast/lunch)

If space allows, tickets will be offered to non-FOW members, and include a one-year membership:
Family: $145
Adult: $90
Child: $20

TO BUY TICKETS AND FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT FOW.ORG.

FOW celebrated its 13th Annual Ice Cream Social on August 21 at Historic Rittenhouse Town, where kids, adults, and even a few dogs enjoyed the cold relief of free ice cream (thanks to Bredenbeck’s Bakery) on a hot, muggy summer afternoon. They played games, made summer memory books with friends from Let’s Go Outdoors, and visited with FOW and Wissahickon Environmental Center staff. This event was also supported by Univest and Green Mountain Energy.

Photo Credit: Charles Uniatowski
Registration is recommended for all walks (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 licks. Bring water and a snack if desired. Unless otherwise noted, children over six are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. Walks are cancelled in heavy rain or icy conditions. For more information, contact Shawn Green at green@fow.org. Visit fow.org for updates.

Sketching Along the Wissahickon with Jane Klein
Wednesday, September 25 • 1–3:30 pm
Meet at Valley Green Inn
Whether you’re a beginner or seasoned artist, all you need is an appreciation for the beauty of the Wissahickon, along with a sketchbook, favorite pencil, and something to sit on. A finished work is not expected. Practical guidance is available. Level: moderate.

Fitness Hikes with Andi Wingert and Debbie Hoellein
10 am–1 pm
Tuesday, September 25—Meet at Walnut Lane Golf Club
Tuesday, October 29—Meet at Walnut Lane Golf Club
Tuesday, November 19—Meet at Valley Green Inn
Tuesday, December 17—Meet at Cedars House Café
We will hike at a brisk pace but pause to enjoy points of interest. Hiking shoes or boots are recommended—there will be some hills. Bring water, snacks, insect repellent, and sunscreen. Ages 12+ with adult. Level: moderate. Distance: 4 miles.

Pokémon Go Hike with Kevin Eikov
Friday, September 27 • 10–12 pm
Meet at Historic Rittenhouse Town Lower Lot
Pokémon Go is a fun game that gets you out of the house. Join Kevin in hunting and catching Pokémon in the park. Share Pokémon stories, battle a gym or possibly in a road, and just enjoy the park as you walk and talk. Bring your own smart device with Pokémon Go game. Level: moderate. Distance: 2.5 miles.

Hotels, Cabins, Inns, and Bridges with Kimberly Quinn
Sunday, September 29 • 12–2 pm
Meet at Cedars Street Trailhead
Beginning at the Lawrader Trail, we will connect to the White Trail to visit the Telyscopia Statue, cross over the River Avenue Bridge onto Forbidden Drive, and then take the LOVE Covered Bridge to the Orange Trail. Learn about the history of the bridges, Depression Era trails, and hotels that once stood in this area. Amazing views. Children are welcome. Level: moderate. Distance: 3 miles.

Ride and Walk Treasure Hunt with Gerry Schweiger
Saturday, September 29 • 1–2:30 pm (including car-ride portion)
Meet at Mr. Pleasant Place and Mr. Pleasant Road
This hike is for kids learning their numbers and how to count. NOTE: Participants need a car to cover long distances between the statues and their trailheads. Starting from Mr. Pleasant Place, we will ride to each of the three park statues, take information from the statue, and turn into a numbers. A certificate for a free ice cream cone awarded for correct totals. One winner per cat. Ages 4+ with adult. Level: easy. Distance: 175 miles (all three hikes, the loneliest individual hike is 35 miles.)

A Holiday Alphabet Hunt with Bruce Wagner and Cathy Fassbender Marks
Monday, September 30 • 1:30–3:30 pm
Meet at Valley Green Inn
In this scavenger hunt, we will use the Wissahickon woods to provide the tools for any story you want to tell. Participants will scour the woods to find and photograph as many letters of the alphabet as they can, made from shapes in trees, rocks, and winding trails. Whoever finds the most letters hiking in the forest gets a special prize! Bring your imagination and a smartphone camera to take pictures. Families welcome.

Kid Friendly Hikes with Marv Schwartz
Saturday, October 5, November 9, December 14 • 10 am–12 pm
Meet at Valley Green Inn
This hike takes participants along Forbidden Drive and an rocky, wooded trail, with interesting geologic formations. Find the Lovers Den, Grape Creek Coal, and Ferguson Bridge, and continue to Love’s Peak and the Wissahickon Bridge. Level: moderate. Distance: 12 miles.

Fabulous Fungus with Faith Watson
Sunday, October 6, November 3, December 1 • 10 am–12 pm
Meet at Lower Rally’s Mill Parking Lot (East Side of Creek)
Explore the other side of the creek this fall, looking for the Orange and White Trails to find evidence of fungus. Fruiting bodies (aka mushrooms) that we can photograph, identify, and ponder. Please, stop on the hike, but bring cameras, curiousity, and humor. Level: moderate.

Bone Health Yoga in Action with Kris Sofia, PA Master Naturalist, & Esther Wyss-Flamm, Ph.D., Med, E-RYT
Thursday, October 10, October 17 • 10–11:30 am
Meet at Cedars House Café
Esther Wyss-Flamm of White Flame Yoga will teach two powerful bone health postures that support strength in standing and walking. We’ll walk to Andorra Meadow and practice adjusting our everyday movements to strengthen bones and prevent injury. No yoga experience necessary. Level: moderate.

Trails Less Traveled with Gerry Schweiger
This series explores the many not-so-obvious places that make Wissahickon Valley Park unique, from a seven-visited statue and former baptismal site, to a work of art that doubles as a bridge and little-used trails that lead to spectacular views. Level: moderate–hard. For new hikers for more details about each hike.
Monday, October 14 • 1:30 pm–Meet at kiosk at Blue Bell Hill Park (800 W Walnut Lane)
Sunday, October 27 • 9:30 am–Meet at Cherrywood Parking Lot by Hartwell Lane Trailhead
Monday, November 11 • 1:45 pm–Meet at Cathedral Road & Glencore Street
Friday, November 29 • 1:45 pm–Meet at Gypsy Lane Parking Lot (opposite Wissahickon Hall)
Sunday, December 8 • 1:45 pm–Meet at Cedars House Café

Apocalyptic Wanderings with Tom Rickards
Saturday, October 19 • 10 am–12 pm
Meet at Historic Rittenhouse Town Lower Lot
On this hike into Herman’s Cave, explore the history of the apocalyptic group led by Johannes Rupel, the Women of the Wilderness. We will experience apocalyptic literature, notions of religious toleration, and some of the early beauty and mystique of early Philadelphia. Level: moderate. Distance: 2 miles.

Weeds & Woodland Hikes with Kimberly Quinn
Sunday, October 20, November 17 • 12–2 pm
Meet at Cedars House Café
On this hike through woods to Andorra Meadow and the Wissahickon Environmental Center, learn about the former Adena Nursery, visit the tree house, and see The Great Brook and Felton Magnolia. Level: moderate. Distance: 3 miles.

Shrinin-yoku Forest Therapy with Margaret Kinneyne
Sunday, October 20, November 27, December 15 • 10 am–1 pm
Meet at the Chestnut Hill Avenue Trailhead
Studies have shown that spending time near trees restores cognitive functioning, improves mood, and decreases stress. This practice is an opportunity to practice observing the environment and the trees around us. Level: moderate. Distance: 3 miles.

Hiking the Andorra Natural Area Mindfully with Irene Lotka
Thursday, October 24 • 6–7:15 pm
Meet at Cedars House Café
Practice moving mindfully while hiking through the woods and around the meandering giving attention to the beauty of the living world in the crisp fall air. We’ll end with a short group reflection. Level: moderate.

Meanderings in the Wissahickon with Shelly Brick
Fridays, 1–3 pm
October 25—Meet at Hartwell Lane Trailhead
November 22—Meet at Kitchen’s Lane Parking Lot
Explore a variety of locations in the beautiful park and “talk story,” a Hawaiian tradition. Pace, distance, and difficulty to be determined by the group.

Halloween Hikes to the Lost Cave of the Wissahickon with Kevin Eikov, Tim Rickards, & Kris Sofia, PA Master Naturalist
Sunday, October 27 • 4:30–6:30 pm
Meet at the Ridge Avenue Trailhead Kiosk
Join The Wild Woman of the Wissahickon on this spooky hike to the “Lost Cave” of America’s first Quaker settlement. Will we encounter Edgar Allan Poe’s raven, bats, elves, and perhaps even an apparition of The Hermit himself? Costumes suggested but not required. Ages 12+ with adult. Level: moderate. Distance: 5 miles.

Veteran’s Day Hike to the Toleration Statue with Kevin Eikov
Monday, November 11 • 10 am–12 pm
Meet at Historic Rittenhouse Town Lower Lot
Join veteran Kevin Eikov in a hike to the Toleration Statue. Enjoy the beautiful fall foliage as we walk to Ten Box along Forbidden Drive, cross Kicherer’s Lane Bridge, and then follow the Orange Trail to the Toleration Statue. Some elevation on the Orange Trail and some difficulty in climbing to the statue. Level: moderate. Distance: 2.5 miles.

Name that Naked Tree with Wendy Willard
Sunday, November 24 • 10 am–12 pm
Meet at Cedars House Café
Can you identify a tree once the leaves are gone? By examining bark, persistent leaves and fruit, and tree structure—and keeping your eyes wide open! We’ll find some of your favorite huge splendor trees, standing tall or lying down, and observe some lowland trees that prefer damp feet, perhaps even standing in the water. Level: easy–moderate.

Drumstick Roll with Ted Apple
Thursday, November 28 • 9 am–12 pm
Meet Historic Rittenhouse Town Lower Lot
Join us for an Thanksgiving morning exercise walk to work up an appetite for Thanksgiving dinner. Trails followed will depend on weather and trail conditions. Sturdy shoes/hiking boots strongly recommended. Drop-off opportunities if you leave early. Pace and distance will be based on the group. Ages 12+ with adult, and well-behaved dogs on leashes. Level: moderate–easy.

Tapping Along the Wissahickon with Kevin Eikov
Friday, December 13 • 10 am–12 pm
Meet at Historic Rittenhouse Town Lower Lot
Learn how to release accumulated and outdated emotions using the wonderful technique known as tapping (or Emotional Freedom Technique). After brief instruction, we’ll hike to kitchen’s Lane Bridge and back. Level: moderate. Distance: 2 miles.

Let’s Hike! with Lisa Myers, PA Master Naturalist
Saturday, December 14 • 9 am–12:30 pm
Meet at Parkside Drive and Haster Street
This hike showcases some favorite points of interest: Toleration Statue, Fingerpore Bridge, Glen Fern, Devil’s Pool, and Cliders Rock. Along the way, we will discuss geology, trees, and wildlife; face will be medium to find with several ups and downs that may be rocky and steep. The hike may not be suitable for young children. No dogs, please. Level: strenuous. Distance: 5.5 miles.

FOW’S GUIDED HIKES CAN BE USED TO FILL NaturePHL PRESCRIPTIONS.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE WISSAHICKON

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

THURSDAYS
Join FOW on Thursdays for a morning of trail maintenance in the park. Work will consist of regular trail maintenance projects including repairing drainage, grading trails, and stone work, narrow widening trails, and making emergency trail repairs. Meet at different locations each week. Visit fow.org/events for location details.

SATURDAYS
There’s no better way to be friends than to help us in the park with trail maintenance, invasive weed removal, planting, and general cleanups from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Visit fow.org/volunteering for more information.

THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
Join Friends of Cresheim Trail to improve the trails in the Cresheim Creek area. Meet at the entrance of Lincoln Drive and Allen’s Lane at 10 a.m. Wear sturdy shoes, long pants, and long sleeves to protect against poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. Tools and gloves provided and coffee and snacks will be served. For more information or to volunteer, contact Friends of Cresheim Trail at info@friendsofcresheim.org or 215-712-9793.

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 7920 Goshen Road in Ambler. More info. at www.wwva.org.

RUNNING CLUBS

EVERY THURSDAY
Wissahickon Wanderers Trail Run. 4-5 miles. Starts 6:30 p.m. drop at Valley Green Inn. No Fees. All runners, speeds, skill levels welcome! Fun food and cash bar afterwards courtesy of the Valley Green Inn. For updates and more info visit wissahickonrunningclub.com.

EVERY SATURDAY
Shawmont Running Club. Starts at Northwestern Ave. & Andorra Rd. (north end of Forbidden Forest). From the 2nd Saturday in May through the 2nd Saturday in October. Meet at 7:30 a.m. From 3rd Saturday in October through 1st Saturday in May, start at 8 a.m. Distances are at the discretion of runners. All levels welcome. Emphasis is on fun! More info. at shawmontrunningclub.com.

WISSAHICKON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
All programs are FREE, REQUIRE REGISTRATION, and begin at the Tree House (300 W. Northwestern Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19118) unless otherwise noted. Please register at WEC.Eventbrite.com.

APPLE PRESSING ON FORBIDDEN DRIVE
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 11 AM-3 PM
Join us on Forbidden Drive (across from Cedars House Café) for this annual celebration of apples. Help make apple cider using an old-fashioned cider press. Enjoy a taste of the finished cider and homemade apple butter, and vote on your favorite apple variety. NO REGISTRATION. All ages.

AUNTIE ADVENTURES: SIP & PAINT
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11 1-3 PM
Aunties and uncles bring your nieces and nephews (of any relation) on an outdoor art adventure. Together we will sip on Juice and paint nature-themed masterpieces "en plein air." All ages. Space is limited. $7 per person.

CELEBRATION OF THE GREAT BEECH
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27 11-3 PM
Stop by the Great Beech as we celebrate our Champion Tree in its last seasons of life with crafts, art, box lessons, and more. NO REGISTRATION. All ages.

LOVE YOUR PARK, NOT THE LANTERNFLY
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 9-11 AM
The invasive Spotted Lanternfly is in our area and is rapidly spreading. Join us to learn to identify all stages of its life, the destruction it’s capable of, and then hike with us to remove them. All ages.

FAMILY FULL MOON HIKE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12 10:15 PM
Try out your night vision, listen for nighttime sounds, and watch the full moon rise over the meadow. Optional campfire at 4:30 PM. Enjoy marshmallows and bring your own hot dogs. This hike is geared for families. Ages 6+

HIKING WITH MAURA THE EXPLORER
LAST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH • 10 AM
Join FOW Executive Director Maura Sutphin 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. Wear your hiking shoes and be ready to share your favorite Wissahickon stories! Her registration is recommended. For more information and to register, visit fow.org.

WINTER IN THE WISSAHICKON
DECEMBER • P. 13

HISTORIC RITTENHOUSE TOWN
Historic Rittenhouse Town 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 in Rittenhouse St. Info. at 215-438-5711, programs@rittenhousetown.org, or rittenhousetown.org.

FRIENDS OF THE WISSAHICKON

FOR A LISTING OF MORE EVENTS, VISIT FOW.ORG/EVENTS.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 8 AM | HOUSTON MEADOW
MORNING BIRD WALKS WITH MARTIN SELZER
Join us at the Tree House for a different hike each week throughout the Andorra Natural Area and beyond. We split into two pace groups—moderate and easy. NO REGISTRATION. All ages. Check Facebook or contact us at westphila各异og.org or 215-799-4003 before coming out Thursday mornings.

MORNING BIRD WALKS WITH MARTIN SELZER
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 8 AM | HOUSTON MEADOW
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17 | 11 AM | TREE HOUSE
Meet local naturalist Martin Selzer to catch a peak wave of fall migration in Andorra and Harpers Meadows. All ages.

KIDS EXPLORE: MEADOW
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 11-12 PM
Ready for your kids just to be kids in the woods? Led by our staff, equipped with a few Band-Aids, the kids will climb over fallen trees, scramble over rocks, rod through a field, play in the leaves, and more. Ages 6-12. Drop-off optional.

CANDLE DIPPING
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 1-3 PM
Candle play is a lot more fun in the spirit of the winter holidays. Make your own candles to use during this darker season or give them away as gifts in the spirit of the season. This is an outdoor program. Ages 6 & up. $2 per candle.

GOODNIGHT MOON-ADULT HIKE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12 6:30-7:30 PM
Begin your clay with a hike in the forest under the light of the full moon. Then enjoy watching the moon set and the sun rise in the meadows. Adults.

WINTER WOODLAND SALE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19 9 AM & 10 AM
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19 10 AM & 11 AM
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19 1 PM & 2 PM
Join us in a woodland celebration of the Winter Solstice and Santa. Meet at the Tree House and then hike through the forest to find woodland Santa and his woodland crew. There, children will hear a story and make bird feeders to hang as each child visits our woodland Santa. All ages. Hiking. Outdoors/all weather.

THURSDAY TOTS
Bring your little one for an hour of discovery (1-2 pm) at the Tree House. Each month we will explore a new topic that celebrates the season. Ages 3-5. Parents stay with their child. $5.00 per child before/after.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12 | 5 PM
FAMILY FULL MOON HIKE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 | 10-12 PM
BAND-AIDS, the kids will climb over fallen trees, scramble over rocks, run through a field, play in the leaves, and more! Ages 6-12. Drop-off optional.

AUNTIE ADVENTURES: SIP & PAINT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 11 AM

Stop by The Great Beech as we celebrate our Champion Tree in its last seasons of life with crafts, art, box lessons, and more. NO REGISTRATION. All ages.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5–DECEMBER 19 | 7:30 AM
THURSDAY TREKS
Join us at the Tree House for a different hike each week throughout the Andorra Natural Area and beyond. We split into two pace groups—moderate and easy. NO REGISTRATION. All ages. Check Facebook or contact us at westphila各异og.org or 215-799-4003 before coming out Thursday mornings.

MORNING BIRD WALKS WITH MARTIN SELZER

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17 | 11 AM | TREE HOUSE
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Friends of the Wissahickon • Fall 2019
LANTERNFLIES LAY EGGS IN THE FALL – SCRAPE THEIR EGG MASSES

The females lay their eggs on any flat, hard surface—on their choice trees but also on rocks, houses, fences, outdoor furniture, cars, etc.—and protect them with a mud-like covering. Each egg mass contains 30 to 50 eggs.

EGG SCRAPING DIRECTIONS

If you see a lanternfly egg mass, scrape it off with a credit card, an official scraping card—available at the Wissahickon Environmental Center’s (WEC) Tree House—or anything that will smash ALL the eggs. The best way to ensure that all of the eggs are destroyed is to scrape the eggs into a plastic ziplock bag filled with rubbing alcohol, then throw it in the trash. Scrape the egg mass until all of the eggs are off and you can see bark. Of course, kill any adults seen.

Click on this video link to see how to scrape egg masses: http://bit.ly/2M39TgR.

For any questions related to spotted lanternflies, contact WEC at 215-685-9285 or the Penn State Extension at extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly or 1-888-4-BADFLY.

HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF LANTERNFLIES

As you may be aware, the invasive spotted lanternfly is threatening the northeastern United States, especially southeastern Pennsylvania. Native to Asia, this invasive, destructive pest is attracted to and feeds on tree sap, especially on trees of heaven and willows, but can be found on some 70 other tree species. They leave raw wounds on the trees that attract mold and fungus, ultimately killing them. The insects pose a major threat to Pennsylvania’s industries dependent on fruit and timber crops.

JOIN WEC

LOVE YOUR PARK, NOT THE LANTERNFLY

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9
9-11 AM

Learn to identify all stages of this pest’s life and the destruction it’s capable of, then hike with us to remove them. All ages.

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