Houston Meadow Close-up

Northern Flicker, found in Houston Meadow. Photo by Joe Durrance
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The park is also a multi-generational destination, with grandparents who grew up coming to the park during their childhoods, now sharing their sense of wonder and inspiration in these natural settings with their children and grandchildren. With the recent introduction of a more modern and organized signage system, even newcomers to the park—business travelers or permanent transplants—find it easier to acclimate and share in this wonder and inspiration.

Much of the heavy lifting that goes into preserving this beauty and wildness is done by the members and volunteers of Friends of the Wissahickon. Now more than ever, with the fragility of this beautiful park constantly challenged, we need you! There are many ways to help FOW preserve the Wissahickon: become a member; volunteer at one of our events; try a new trail; join us at one of our many outings, talks, or special events; and, last but not least, make a donation.

Rather than slowing down at the ripe old age of 93, Friends of the Wissahickon is embarking on a new and ambitious five-year strategic plan. One of our primary goals is to make the rest of Philadelphia and the world aware of what we already know: When it comes to parks with beauty, stature, natural resources, and ease of use, the Wissahickon is second to none!

Yours in the Wissahickon,

Will Whetzel, FOW President
WISSAHICKON PARK TRAIL CLOSURE

A section of the Orange Trail running beneath the Walnut Lane Bridge, between the Park Line Drive access trail and the Blue Bell Hill access trail, will be closed for an undetermined amount of time due to construction work in this area. Trail use is prohibited in this area until further notice for safety reasons.

COMING SOON:
A STREET VIEW OF THE WISSAHICKON

Philadelphia is the first major city in the United States to partner with Google to capture imagery of hundreds of miles of trails, parks, and cultural attractions to add to Google’s worldwide database of maps. Staff from Philadelphia Parks & Recreation in partnership with Fairmount Park Conservancy borrowed Google’s Trekker camera equipment, hiked around these unique and amazing locations, and shared these images for processing and inclusion as panoramic images on Street View in Google Maps. Data was gathered and then submitted to Google in October 2016 and is expected to be uploaded to Google Street View Maps by June 2017. — Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

READ THIS!

Philadelphia Magazine called City in a Park (Temple UP, 2016) “a thick and terrific compendium of everything that’s in our city’s biggest green space and how it came to be.” What green space is that? Fairmount Park. Philadelphia has more than 100 parks, squares, and green spaces totaling approximately 11,000 acres, and has one of the largest landscaped urban park systems in the world. Of that total, 1,800 acres comprises Wissahickon Valley Park. Written by James McClelland and Lynn Miller, City in a Park will take you on an exploration of the 200-year history of Philadelphia’s unique park system.

FOW SUPPORTS PA MASTER NATURALIST

The Fall 2017 Philadelphia County Master Naturalist training, coordinated by FOW, will begin on August 29, 2017. Training sessions will take place on Tuesday evenings with field trips on Saturdays. The application deadline is May 15, 2017. Pennsylvania Master Naturalist is a statewide partnership initiative that aims to connect people with their local ecosystems through intensive natural science training and local conservation service work. It is a venture directed toward developing a local corps of “master volunteers and service providers” to offer education, outreach, and service dedicated to the understanding and management of natural areas within their communities. Visit pamasternaturalist.org for more information and to apply for the program. Have questions? Contact Ellyn Nolt at enolt@pamasternaturalist.org

HIKING WITH MAURA THE EXPLORER

Join FOW’s Executive Director Maura McCarthy for a hike on the last Friday of each month. She will tour a different section of the park during each hike and talk about her experiences in the park 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! Upcoming dates: March 31, April 28, and May 26. More information at fow.org.

50+ ATTEND ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

FOW hosted its annual Public Meeting on January 25 to discuss progress on the Sustainable Trails Initiative (STI), the signage program, and other upcoming projects in 2017. The meeting, led by FOW Project Manager Peg Shaw, was held at the Chestnut Hill Friends Meetinghouse. In addition, there was an update on the new park-wide signage system and a question and answer period. STI is a multi-year project that will make the 50 miles of recreation trails in the Wissahickon a more environmentally and socially sustainable system. The project is being implemented in partnership with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation.

Friends of the Wissahickon • Spring 2017
This past fall FOW undertook two forest habitat restoration projects in connection with the trail work we accomplished earlier in the year. There was substantial planning, preparation, and organizing invested into these projects to make them a reality. As with so much of FOW’s park stewardship, volunteers provided the backbone for success. The first site was along the White Trail behind Monastery Stables and the second site was along the Sumac Street trail entrance in Roxborough. You can learn more about the White Trail site below, and visit fow.org/news to read about the Roxborough site.

**WHITE TRAIL OVERVIEW**

Habitat restoration along trail corridors is an integral component of the Sustainable Trails Initiative (STI). In the spring of 2016, FOW closed approximately 1,500 linear feet and constructed about the same quantity of new trail using sustainable design and construction methods on the White Trail between Kitchen’s Lane and Mt. Airy Avenue. In the fall, we began finishing that work by identifying an area for invasive plant removal and native plant installation.

Behind Monastery Stables is an intersection with a connector trail to Scotforth Road and Mt. Airy Avenue. It is located where the White Trail exits the woodland and traverses the lawn edge before entering the woods. At this intersection, there was approximately 7,000 square feet of degraded forest trail edge occupied by a canopy of native trees and an understory of non-native invasive plants.

**NATIVE VS. INVASIVE**

The species mix at this site represents a combination of historical Oak-Chestnut forest (now sometimes referred to as Appalachian Oak Forest) and forest edge or successional communities. While this constitutes a fairly good baseline canopy, there is limited natural regeneration occurring, and subsequently, a great deal of invasive species incursion. It has been well documented that trails create pathways for the spread of invasive species, and trail users are unwitting conduits. Therefore, we often see degraded forested conditions most intensely along trail corridors. If you are curious about the source location of these species, look no further than neighborhood yards and the plant nurseries and retail outlets that sell them.

**WHY DO WE CARE?**

Plant species have coevolved with interlocking dependencies among animal and insect species. These relationships are not completely understood, but we do understand that what binds these relationships—the survival of these species together—includes such elements as complex plant chemistry and the natural rhythm of the seasons, such as precise dates of leaf out and flowering. When plant species native to a region are replaced by species native to another region (often across oceans), the animals and insects that have evolved with those native plant species often cannot survive. It is the power of the food web in action. Therefore, removing non-native invasive plant species and replacing them with appropriate native species (either by planting, seeding, or allowing natural regeneration) is a fundamental component of habitat restoration.

**A WELL-PLANNED PLANTING DAY**

The first step in preparing this site was to remove existing invasive plants. FOW staff worked alongside Philadelphia Parks & Recreation staff to identify and remove invasive plants. Following that work, FOW contoured portions of the site, removed suspended woody debris, scattered it across the site, and spread wood chip mulch.

Planting of the site took place on Love Your Park Day on November 5. Although the area itself is rather small, conditions at the site are

*PLANTS FOUND AT THE SITE*

**NATIVE SPECIES**

- Canopy
  - Beech
  - Sassafras
  - Tulip Poplar
  - White Pine

- Understory
  - American Euonymus
  - Black Cherry
  - Spice Bush
  - Arrowwood Viburnum
  - Herbaceous
    - Black Cohosh
    - Jewel Weed
    - Solomon’s Seal
    - Virginia Creeper

**INVASIVE SPECIES**

- Bittersweet
- Burning Bush
- Garlic Mustard
- Japanese Angelica
- Porcelain Berry
- White Mulberry

*Not a complete list.*
NATIVE SPECIES PLANTED*

**Trees**
- Basswood
- Flowering Dogwood
- Gray Birch
- Hackberry
- Persimmon

**Shrubs**
- Allegheny Serviceberry
- Black Chokeberry
- Blackhaw Viburnum
- Hazelnut
- Witch Hazel

*Not a complete list.

**v**

varied and include a ridge line, semi-shaded slopes, shaded wet forest, trail edge, and drainage areas. These conditions and the native plant community type combined to help us design a planting plan and identify the species, density, and location.

Prior to the workday, we calculated the number of plants needed based on the size of the site and the density desired, then we augered the planting holes. FOW Project Coordinator John Holback used the SK700 with an auger attachment to dig the holes in an irregular formation approximately 4’ by 6’ on center throughout the site. This approach helps to discourage the re-incursion of invasive plants and ensures a more naturalized establishment and growth pattern.

A critical limitation on the final species list was based on the availability at regional native plant nurseries. For this site, FOW sourced our plants from Octoraro Native Plant Nursery in Kirkwood, Pennsylvania. By creating a simplified color-coded planting plan map, container plants were color-coded upon delivery to match the site area where they would be installed. This proved to be tremendously helpful in coordinating the activities of the 50+ volunteers who worked with us at the Love Your Park planting event. Due to our thorough preparation and the tremendous number of enthusiastic volunteers, we accomplished not only planting 118 trees and 266 shrubs, but were able to water and mulch them all.

In addition to completing the planting, we also got a good head start on tackling the approximate 5,000 square feet of invasive plants (mostly Japanese Angelica stick and multiflora rose) along the lawn edge section of the white trail.

**FINISHING TOUCHES**

FOW and our habitat volunteers will be actively monitoring the White Trail planting site for mortality, stressors, and invasive plant resurgence. This is a vital component of successful reforestation efforts. At this particular site, we took measures to protect the young plants. Given the volume of trail traffic in that area, and the preponderance of dogs off-leash that can significantly damage habitat, we installed post and rail fencing along the trailside perimeters of the planting site. To dog-proof the planting site further, we attached black plastic net fencing to the back side of the post and rail fencing. Thank you to everyone for loving the Wissahickon by keeping your dogs on leash at all times while in the park!

We plan to continue working in this area in the Spring of 2017, so please stay tuned, as we hope you can join us with that effort.


Post and rail fencing helps protect the planting site from dogs off leash.
On January 16, 2017, an amazing volunteer crew of over 60 individuals gathered together to remove invasive plants at Thomas Mansion in Germantown, an historic property close to the Wissahickon, with a home built in 1869 by George Clifford Thomas and his wife Caroline Sheetz. The property, which once boasted beautifully landscaped gardens and a greenhouse, needs lots of routine maintenance to keep it from becoming overgrown. For each of the last two MLK Days, FOW has worked on the mansion grounds to clear the overgrown invasive plants along the driveway, a project we continued this year.

Dr. King once said, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, “What are you doing for others?” By volunteering at Thomas Mansion, FOW and our volunteers spent the holiday giving back to our park, its users, and the plants and animals that rely on it to live.

David Bower, a Parks & Recreation veteran and all-star FOW volunteer, led an intentional volunteer workday. He began the day by speaking about the significance of MLK Day and urging us to keep alive Dr. King's teachings and vision for peace and equality.

This workday was a beautiful sight to see, with volunteers from different backgrounds and ages coming together for a common goal. Several volunteers came up to me after the workday and told me how grateful they were for FOW and the sense of community we provide. Dr. King would be proud of the community coming together on this Day of Service to do such great work! Thomas Mansion is looking like it got a makeover, thanks to all the hard labor donated by community members.

As we ended the workday, I had to take a moment to compose myself, as I was overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude and pride to be part of such a positive and uplifting community. Volunteering in the park is not just about pulling weeds and cleaning graffiti. The love that we have for the Wissahickon is an extension of the love we have for our community, our land, and its people.

John Holback, FOW’s Field Coordinator, read aloud this quote from James Baldwin to end a day well spent: “The sea rises, the light falls, lovers cling to each other, and children cling to us. The moment we cease to hold each other, the moment we break faith with one another, the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.”

I thank FOW and its incredible volunteers for reminding me of all that is good and right in our community.

Volunteering with Friends of the Wissahickon is always well organized, thoughtful, and gives me a sense of purpose. Today was the first time I shared this experience with my five-year-old son. It was a special way to spend time together—giving back to the community and celebrating Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday.”

Jill Sanchez, FOW volunteer
Friends of the Wissahickon • Spring 2017

CHRISTINA ANTHONY
FOW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

by Denise Larrabee, Editor

F
OW's new volunteer coordinator, Christina Anthony, has an adventurous spirit: After an extensive trip to Asia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, she moved to Philadelphia in April of last year without securing a job or knowing anyone in the City.

“I moved here on a gut feeling,” she says. “While living in California I found that I gravitated toward people from the east coast. . . . I decided I wanted to explore what that would be like. So I packed my car up and drove here with no plans.” No plans, but lots of valuable experience working with volunteers.

Christina found her calling while studying abroad in Chile during her junior year of college. While there, she volunteered at an orphanage, a school, and on farms. “It made me want to be a part of the world of volunteering because it was a really great way to give back to the community,” she says.

After graduating from San Francisco State University with a B.A. in Communication Studies and a minor in Latin American Studies, Christina dedicated herself to working with volunteers. She served as a volunteer coordinator for AmeriCorps at a homeless shelter and a volunteer project coordinator for the Yanapuma Foundation in Ecuador, where she worked as a community liaison between local Ecuadorians and international volunteers. “We did things like grow thousands of cocoa trees and plant them, build vegetable gardens, and work with indigenous communities in daycare centers,” says Christina. “I led a group of about 20 international volunteers by myself throughout all of Ecuador for about three months.”

Upon returning to the United States, she took a position with CoachArt in Oakland, California, managing a corps of approximately 300 volunteers. “They give free lessons in the arts and athletics to kids living with chronic illnesses,” she says. “Those are two of my passions: arts and sports.”

Christina is pursuing both of those passions. When not in the Wissahickon or FOW’s office, she is taking classes in improvisational comedy, playing basketball, or paddling on the Schuylkill with her outrigger team, the Philadelphia Outrigger Canoe Club.

Christina came to FOW from a position with the Nationalities Service Center, an immigrant and refugee service organization in Center City, where she managed 350 in-person interpretation projects and 120 independent contractors. But the position of volunteer coordinator at FOW allows her to return to working for the environment, another passion. “When I was working in Ecuador, we did a lot of manual labor outside and I loved it,” she says. “It was very gratifying and fulfilling and I didn’t find that in a lot of other office jobs that I have had in the past. . . . This job at FOW combines all of my passions and all of my skills.”

Christina would like to grow FOW’s volunteer program further and simplify some of the administrative systems currently in place, while becoming more familiar with the park and the challenges it faces. “I’ve already met some of the volunteers and board members,” she says, “and they seem like incredible people with so much knowledge and kindness and generosity. I hope to get to know all of them and exchange experiences and knowledge.” With such interesting travel and work experience, all of us at FOW expect to learn a lot from Christina, too!
**TUNED IN TO THE WISSAHICKON**

By Peg Shaw, Project Manager

Our yards are perfect opportunities to increase habitat real estate for the hundreds of birds, animals, and insects that live or travel through the Wissahickon Valley Park region. With this in mind, there are many options for managing our private landscapes. Here are a few suggestions you can practice on your own or discuss with your landscape contractor.

**LEFTOVER FALL LEAVES**

- Keep leaves on site. Leaves provide a natural nourishing mulch layer under your shrubs and trees and create marvelous microhabitat. Often, if you carefully pull back the top layer of last year’s leaf-fall, you’ll find salamanders, newts, frogs, turtles, and other critters living there.
- Mulch leaves. If you don’t like the look of whole leaves as mulch, many lawn mowers have mulching options which allow for more rapid decomposition. (Check for critters before mulching!)
- Compost them. A simple yard compost pile is all you need. Learn more at https://tinyurl.com/z4rmmz8.
- If you must remove all leaf matter, please do not dump or blow them into the Wissahickon. Though organic, deep piles of leaves will not decompose at a normal rate. Piles of leaves and woody debris tossed into the park will suffocate herbaceous plants and the root systems of shrubs and trees, leading to death. Such piles also impair natural stormwater flows and create gullies.

**PLANTING**

- Consider replacing non-native plants with native species. Seeds and shoots of these plants can spread into the park and severely degrade habitat. By and large, only native plants host the vast number and array of insects that birds rely upon to feed their young. More native plants will give you more birds to enjoy.
- Looking for more native species to choose from? Let your voice be heard at your local nursery. They will listen, and growers will too!

**RAIN GARDENS**

An excellent opportunity to control stormwater, recharge ground water and add more variety of native plants to increase wildlife habitat. Learn more at https://tinyurl.com/jl9m9pe.

**MONARCH BUTTERFLIES**

Milkweed is the only plant that hosts monarch caterpillars. These butterflies are in severe decline and we can help just by planting beautiful milkweeds. Learn more at https://tinyurl.com/kgby696.

**PROTECT MIGRATORY BIRDS**

Millions of birds are killed every year by colliding into our windows. During the spring and fall migration seasons, the problem is particularly urgent. There are several simple steps we can take to help migratory birds survive their amazing treks. There is much information available on the web. A good place to start is The Cornell Lab of Ornithology (https://tinyurl.com/yx8w5q).

You can also take a field trip to the Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum in South Philadelphia for an up close look at some collision prevention measures.

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**ONLINE CHATTER**

FOW reached over 4,500 people on January 19 with a post of an amazing video from Marc Snyder. FOW volunteers discovered an Eastern Screech Owl nesting in one of our wildlife boxes in the Wissahickon. We can’t stop watching it. Visit our Facebook page and check it out!

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**CREEK CLEANUP AND TALKIN’ TRASH PICNIC**

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

Creek CleanUp from 9 to 11 am at Historic Rittenhouse Town

Picnic from 11 am to 1 pm in Fort Washington State Park at the pavilion near the Militia Hill L-3 parking lot. Enter from the Joshua Road gate and follow the loop road. (GPS: 6036 Joshua Road, Fort Washington, PA 19034)

FOW and our partners at the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association need your help cleaning the Wissahickon Creek from top to bottom. After the CleanUp, join us for a picnic with our fellow volunteers from upstream. To register contact FOW Volunteer Coordinator Christina Anthony at anthony@fow.org.

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An example of a rain garden at Valley Green Inn.
SAFETY GUIDELINES

Exercise with a partner; if exercising alone, avoid using the park during off-peak times.

Be alert and go headphone free! Headphones leave you vulnerable to physical injury and crime.

Vary your routine. Go at different times and start from different locations.

Trust your instincts. If you sense trouble because of a person or a place, leave.

When parking your car, lock doors, carry keys with you, and do not leave valuables in plain sight in the car.

Call 911 if your car is broken into. Use the parking lot number to report the location of the car. Stay until the police arrive.

Report suspicious activity by calling 911.

Visit fow.org frequently. FOW posts crime alerts as necessary.

If you need help, call 911 or the Philadelphia Park System Rangers: 215-685-2172. If you are unable to call 911 or the Rangers, find an FOW Trail Ambassador (TA) for help.

TAs provide information to park visitors about the Wissahickon and report any problems they encounter to Park Rangers.

PARTNERS IN WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

WOODMERE ART MUSEUM

Woodmere Art Museum is in the midst of completing a stormwater improvement project that re-engineers water flow across the museum’s six-acre site. Green parking solutions, such as permeable surfaces and reinforced grass, are combined with retention basins and a bioswale system of natural purification. Ultimately, the system directs excess water that is not absorbed back into the ground, and then into Philadelphia’s storm sewer system. Works of art, like Harry Bertoia’s monumental fountain, the Free Interpretation of Plant Forms (1967), will be installed in the area. This work of art celebrates an equilibrium of nature and creative expression.

For the project, Woodmere has been consulting with the Morris Arboretum about best trees and plants. Woodmere has also been consulting with Friends of the Wissahickon and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society on some aspects of the project, as well as educational programming for Woodmere visitors to help cultivate more awareness, and hopefully inspire more action, about environmental best practices. Woodmere educators will address questions such as: How do step pools work? What’s underneath Woodmere’s parking lot and what does it do? Aside from mud in unwanted places and flooding, what are other ramifications of unchecked stormwater? —Gabrielle Turgoose, Director of Communications, Woodmere Art Museum

SEASONAL FIELD ASSISTANTS NEEDED THIS SUMMER

FOW will be hiring three Seasonal Field Assistants to carry out various tasks in Wissahickon Valley Park beginning June 16, 2017, through early September. These temporary positions are primarily field based and applicants should be comfortable with spending long periods of time outdoors performing various tasks. Ideal candidates will have experience working in park settings, be highly motivated, and able to successfully work as part of a team. Members of the seasonal field crew will be responsible for assisting FOW Field Staff. Duties include monitoring and cleaning popular destinations, trail maintenance/construction, assistance at FOW volunteer workdays, and other duties as assigned. Field Assistants will use hand tools, such as shovels, picks, pulaskis, and other tools as needed. For more information, visit fow.org beginning in early April 2017, when an application form will be posted at fow.org. Deadline for applications is May 15, 2017.
Prior to 2008, the area now known as Houston Meadow was not a well-known part of Wissahickon Valley Park. I first saw the area during the early 1970s when a neighbor named Vangy Maddox took me and several other children there to fly kites. Getting to the meadow required an arduous hike up a long, steep path that began at Bell's Mill Road and Forbidden Drive. When we arrived at our destination, we were shocked to be greeted by an area of grassy, rolling fields extending as far as the eye could see once we emerged from the forest. It was almost as if we had just entered the mysterious land of Shangri-La. Few people ventured into the area at that time, so it was a wonderfully peaceful place to visit. But the one thing that would draw me back to the meadow more than anything else over the ensuing years was the meadow’s bird life.

Throughout the 1970s, Houston Meadow and the adjacent forest attracted a larger number of bird species during the breeding season than any other location in Philadelphia. Over 75 species of birds could be found each summer in and around the 50+ acres of grasslands that composed the meadow at that time: unusual species such as the Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Broad-winged Hawk, American Woodcock, and others that have now become very difficult to find in our region during the summer. Ring-necked Pheasants (now probably extinct in Philadelphia) still haunted the area then, while Field Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, and Eastern Towhees were abundant breeders. During migration many other species from Northern Goshawks to American Tree Sparrows could be observed in the area.

The fields of little bluestem grasses that composed the meadow in the 1970s would often catch fire, reducing the grass stems to blackened stubs. The grass would quickly resprout, and the fires probably helped to maintain the area as a grassland by keeping trees and shrubs from taking hold. But things began to change in the late 1980s. Half of the fields, which had up until then been privately owned, were sold to a developer who erected houses. Fortunately, the remaining fields were added to Fairmount Park. That is when the fires stopped occurring, and trees and shrubs started to invade the area.

By 2008 most of the area that had not been developed had become overrun with trees and shrubs. The once dry, sandy soils that supported grasses had become more enriched with organic material and more capable of supporting woody plants. Only 15 acres of grasslands remained, and most of the unusual breeding birds were gone. This is when I began discussions with Tom Witmer, Operations Manager for Natural Lands Restoration for Fairmount Park (now Philadelphia Parks & Recreation), about the area’s history, and we created a plan to reclaim Houston Meadow once again as a grassland and meadow.

The Houston Meadow Reclamation and Management Plan was designed to expand the amount of grassland and meadow habitat dramatically by removing hundreds of young trees and shrubs, and planting native grasses and wildflowers in order to bring back the many species of breeding birds and two rare butterflies (the Dusted Skipper and Cobweb Skipper, which lay their eggs on little bluestem grass) that were declining or

If You Restore It, They Will Come

by Keith Russell, Audubon Pennsylvania

Houston Meadow today.
Photo by C. Uniatowski

If you restore it, they will come.
had already vanished from the area. And it also involved modifying the adjacent forest edge by removing some trees and planting more native shrubs because this kind of open forest habitat can attract additional bird species. The native plants added to these areas of modified forest edge were protected from deer browse by deer exclosures.

While many of the area’s declining breeding birds only breed in or along the edges of meadows, some birds that formerly bred in the forest adjacent to the meadow had also disappeared like the Cerulean, Hooded, and Kentucky Warblers. While these forest birds may have disappeared for a variety of reasons, we know that forest songbirds often move from forests into meadows once their young have fledged. So having quality meadow habitat next to quality forest habitat can make forests more attractive places for many forest birds to breed.

Although no source of funding for the project had been identified when plans for the project were created, a small grant from a regional office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service helped get the project underway. In late 2009 stimulus funds from the U.S. Forest Service became available for shovel-ready habitat restoration projects, and the City was awarded almost $2 million to conduct a number of habitat restoration projects including the Houston Meadow Reclamation and Management Plan.

Over the next few years the Houston Meadow Reclamation project was completed and a similar project was also completed at the nearby Andorra Meadow. Today the habitat in both areas has been transformed dramatically from what it was ten years ago. Thousands of trees have been removed and thousands of new native plants have been planted. Invasive non-native plant species from autumn olive to Japanese knotweed have been removed or reduced in abundance and replaced with native grasses like little bluestem, and other native wildflowers and shrubs. Both areas are now more open and new trails have been installed through both sites, allowing hikers, bikers, horseback riders, runners, birders, and other visitors new and easier access. The Philadelphia Water Department also constructed a new stormwater detention basin next to a portion of Houston Meadow along Cathedral Road. For me, the birds continue to make both meadows special places to visit.

The Houston Meadow Reclamation project was designed to create habitat that would attract more species of birds and butterflies to breed in the area, including all of the former breeding birds that had declined or disappeared by 2008. Unfortunately, the former breeders have been the hardest group to re-attract, but individuals of some of these species, including the Blue-winged Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat, have been observed in and around the meadow during the summer since the project was completed. Unfortunately, the summering birds observed are not known to have bred. Many of the former breeders have declined broadly throughout their ranges, and their populations may now be so small that it is difficult for them to expand into newly created areas of breeding habitat. But having individuals of these species reappear in the meadow after having been absent for two decades suggests that they might become reestablished at some point in the future.

The Houston Meadow Reclamation and Management Plan has been a success in stabilizing or increasing the populations of species that were declining as breeders, like the Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Black-billed Cuckoo and Common Yellowthroat. In addition, the Cobweb Skipper and Dusted Skipper (butterflies) appear to be more stable than they would have been without this project. And the project has been a great success in attracting meadow species that had never been recorded breeding or summering in the area before, including the Cooper’s Hawk, Orchard Oriole, Eastern Bluebird, Blue Grosbeak, and Tree Swallow.

As time goes by, it will be vitally important to keep trees and invasive plants from reinvading the Houston and Andorra Meadows in order to protect all of the work that has been completed and the money invested to open them up and reestablish native plant species. It will also be important to keep recreational activities from negatively impacting the meadows. The primary reason for reclaiming the meadows was to benefit birds and butterflies. While both meadows now provide excellent recreational opportunities for people, recreational users should remember that the main reason the meadows were reclaimed was for conservation.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

FOW undertook the redesign and construction of trail networks with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation in Houston and Andorra Meadows. This trail work (in 2011 and 2015) was part of the Sustainable Trails Initiative. The design and construction of trails through meadows presents some daunting challenges. In flat sections, trails easily become compacted and muddy after rain events. In wide open spaces, there are few natural cues to help users remain on the trails, and meadows attract a wide variety of park users. Thanks largely to the efforts of FOW volunteers and their leaders, in conjunction with contractors and subcontractors, the meadow trails are a success.

**BIRDS RETURNING TO HOUSTON MEADOW**

- Black-billed Cuckoo
- Blue-winged Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Cooper’s Hawk
- Eastern Bluebird
- Eastern Towhee
- Field Sparrow
- Hooded Warbler
- Kentucky Warbler
- Orchard Oriole
- Tree Swallow
- Yellow-breasted Chat

*Not a complete list.*

**READ MORE:** Wissahickon Meadow Birds at wissahickonmeadowbirds.weebly.com

Keith Russell is the Program Director for Urban Conservation for Audubon Pennsylvania. He has been recognized by the American Birding Association for his ornithological contributions to the region.
TRAIL AMBASSADOR WALKS

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.

Trails Less Traveled III: Bushwhacking in Andorra with Gerry Schweiger
Sunday, March 26 • 1 – 3:30 pm
Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive (cannot locate with GPS).
We will visit some of the Andorra Meadow's many attractions, including the highest elevation in the park, the Andorra Run watershed, the deer exclosure, and the old Bell's Mill Trail. This trail provides an educational view of the park prevalent in the 1980s. NOTE: Many brambles and thorny plants border the trails. Leather gloves should be worn. Level: challenging. Distance: 3 miles.

Trails Less Traveled IV: Icons of the Lower Wissahickon with Gerry Schweiger
Sunday, April 9 • 1 – 3:45 pm
Meet at the parking lot on Gypsy Lane near northbound Lincoln Drive, opposite Wissahickon Hall.
Most park visits are to the points of interest along Forbidden Drive. We will visit less well-known places in the lower valley, including Historic Rittenhouse Town, the 100 Steps, Hermit's Cave, and Lover's Leap. There will be several strenuous climbs. Distance: 4.25 miles.

Toleration Statue Hike with Kevin Eikov & Kris Soffa
Thursday, April 13 • 10 - 12 pm
Meet at the upper parking lot at Historic Rittenhouse Town, 208 Lincoln Drive (For GPS use: 6034 Wissahickon Ave.).
We will walk down to the Ten Box guard shelter along Forbidden Drive, cross the Kitchen's Lane Bridge, then follow the Orange Trail to the Toleration Statue. Some elevation on the Orange Trail and some difficulty in climbing to the statue. Distance: 2.5 miles.

Kid Friendly Hike with Marv Schwartz
Saturday, April 15 • 10 - 12 pm
Saturday, June 24 • 10 - 12 pm
Meet at Valley Green Inn.
This hike takes participants along Forbidden Drive to visit the Livezey Dam and Gorgas Creek cave. After crossing the Mt. Airy Bridge, we will take the hillside trail upstream past interesting rock formations and then traverse Fingerspan Bridge. We will stop to enjoy our snacks and continue on to Devil's Pool and Pee Wee Rock on return to the Inn. Level: moderate on some rocky trails. Distance: 2.5 miles.

Earth Day Walkabout with Kris Soffa
Wednesday, April 19 • 10 am - 12 pm
Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive (cannot locate with GPS).
In celebration of Earth Day, come out and hike in the Wissahickon, a National Natural Landmark. You will visit many of FOW’s Sustainable Trails Initiative projects and learn about fun ways to participate in FOW’s work. We will hike a loop from The Cedars House to the Covered Bridge and back, along the Orange Trail and Forbidden Drive. Level: moderate. Distance: 2 miles.

Woodland Wildflower Walk with Don Simon, Susan Simon, & Lisa Kolker
Saturday, April 22 • 10 am
Meet at Valley Green Inn.
Explore spring wildflowers such as Jack-in-the-pulpit and trout lilies. Wear footwear suitable for walking on rough and uneven trail surfaces. Absolutely no dogs permitted. Level: easy to moderate on trails suitable for all ages. Distance: 2.5 miles.

Woods and Meadow Hike with Kimberly Quinn
Sunday, April 30 • 12 - 2 pm
Sunday, May 21 • 12 - 2 pm
Sunday, June 25 • 12 - 2 pm
Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive (cannot locate with GPS).
Hike through woods to the Andorra Meadow and then to the Wissahickon Environmental Center on return. Learn about the former Andorra Nursery, visit the Tree House, and see the Great Beech and Fallen Magnolia. Level: moderate. Distance: 3 miles.

Fishing the Wissahickon with Tony DeFazio
Saturday, May 6 • 9 - 11 am
Meet at Valley Green Inn.
An experienced fisherman, DeFazio will share his knowledge about the fish living in the Wissahickon Creek. The talk will have interactive elements, including a close look at the stream ecosystem and a hands-on fishing lesson.
Participants are encouraged to bring waterproof boots and a lightweight fishing rod and reel if they want to fish. Those without fishing rods may use one courtesy of the Wissahickon Environmental Center (limited number available). Children of all ages welcome with a responsible adult. Level: easy to moderate.

**Mother Earth Walk with Kris Soffa**
Wednesday, May 10 • 10 am - 12 pm
Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive (cannot locate with GPS).

Mother’s Day was every day for the Lenni-Lenape, who respected the land as their sacred “Mother Earth” and believed they and the entire natural world were interconnected. We will learn some Lenape lore and legend and discuss examples of our modern-day connections to nature on our hike from The Cedars House Café to the Covered Bridge and back, along the Orange Trail and Forbidden Drive. Level: moderate. Distance: 2 miles.

**Yoga Nidra: Progressive Relaxation with Kevin Eikov**
Thursday, May 25 • 10 - 11:30 am
Meet on the back porch of the Wissahickon Environmental Center, located off Northwestern Ave.

Prepare yourself for rebirth and renewal as Kevin Eikov leads you into a stress-free zone of profound relaxation. Bring two blankets and a pillow. Be prepared to experience deep relaxation and rejuvenation. Suitable for children 13+ who can lie still and follow directions.

**Floods, Fish, & Ferries in the Lower Valley with Kris Soffa**
Wednesday, June 7 • 10 am - 12 pm
Meet at front parking lot at 4900 Ridge Ave., Phila., 19127.

Get your daily dose of nature while we hike and learn about the Philadelphia Canoe Club and the floods, fish, and ferries that shaped the lower valley. We will start at the mouth of the Wissahickon Creek and hike an upstream loop to the Ten Box guard shelter and back. Level: easy to moderate. Distance: 2.5 miles.

**Baptismal Pool Hike and Meditations with Kevin Eikov**
Thursday, June 8 • 10 am - 12 pm
Meet at the upper parking lot at Historic Rittenhouse Town, 208 Lincoln Drive
(For GPS use: 6034 Wissahickon Ave.)

This hike begins with a short meditation at Historic Rittenhouse Town, followed by a walk down to Forbidden Drive to the Baptismal Pool. We will do a second meditation at the Baptismal site and walk back on the Orange Trail past the Toleration Statue. Level: mild to moderate difficulty. Distance: 2.5 miles.

**Contemplative Forest Walk at the Full Moon with Sarah Gabriel**
Friday, June 9 • 7:30 - 10 pm
Location to be determined and provided to those who register.

Slow down, get quiet, activate all your senses, and reap the proven benefits of spending time in the woods with Shinrin-Yoku or Forest Bathing. (Learn more at academyofnaturalrhythms.org.) Bring a flashlight, an open mind, a playful spirit, a journal or notebook, and something to sit on. Be prepared to turn your phone off for a few hours and experience dusk and the night air. Participants on previous walks have reported better sleep and a sense of calm that lasted for days. Registration is required for this hike.

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**TA Field Report**

Ambassadors: Carol Beam & Jeff Clark
Date: 1/10/17
Shift time: 10 am - 12:45 pm
Zones: B (Valley Green)
Mode of Transportation: Hike
Number of Interactions: 6
Dogs Off Leash: 3

We departed from Valley Green Inn and decided to walk downstream along Forbidden Drive because of the possibility the trails might be hazardous to navigate in places with some remaining snow cover. Before we begin our walk we watched as two flocks of geese flew overhead, circled, and in batches descended to the creek by the Inn. Very cool to observe how they navigated the mass landings. We walked down to and over Kitchen’s Lane Bridge and returned via Forbidden Drive. Below and just downstream of the Kitchen’s Lane Bridge we saw a very interesting and beautiful ice formation in the creek. We think the formation looks like an “ice amoeba.” Otherwise, an uneventful walk. Few people on the Drive on this cold weekday morning. Really amazing to see how much more of the park you can see in winter!
HEALTH CARE FOR HEMLOCKS IN THE WISSAHICKON

by William Hengst, Ph.D., Former FOW Board Member

The Wissahickon forest was once distinguished by the presence of eastern hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*)—Pennsylvania’s state tree—a stately, graceful evergreen renown for tall groves extending up the steep slopes of the gorge.

Today these old-growth hemlocks have disappeared; most were removed for lumber. Construction of the new bridge at Walnut Lane, completed in 1908, destroyed part of the Hemlock Glen, described as containing the largest hemlocks in the Valley. (*Metropolitan Paradise*, p. 274) The overall health of the younger hemlocks has declined due, in part, to a non-native insect species known as hemlock woolly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*), an aphid-like, tiny insect that sucks the fluids from the base of the needles, and also injects toxins into the tree.

Infested hemlocks usually show dieback in the upper canopy, and some may die within four years, however, weakened trees often persist for many years. These trees often have a greenish-gray appearance, whereas the needles of healthy hemlocks have a shiny, dark green color.

Hemlock woolly adelgid, accidentally introduced from Japan, was first reported in 1951 in Richmond, Virginia. Over time it has spread to 20 states in the Eastern United States, with widespread mortality reported in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and all southeastern states that have hemlocks. First recognized in Pennsylvania in 1967, it currently is found in 60 of 67 counties in the state.

Hemlock woolly adelgid has been present in the Wissahickon for over 20 years, and today many hemlocks are heavily infested, in part because the insect reproduces rapidly and can spread fast. According to Peg Shaw, FOW’s Project Manager, the hemlocks in the park today are already stressed by climate change, acid rain, the loss of organic forest floor due to invasive earthworms, and the diversion of normal hydrological conditions in the forest. This is caused by impervious ground cover surrounding the park and the consequent rapid conveyance of stormwater through pipes. “The forest is much dryer than it once was,” she says. “Such stressors make the hemlocks more likely to succumb to the impact of the woolly adelgid.”
Sarah Johnson, Forest Ecologist with the Pennsylvania Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), offers some hope. “Cold winters will slow down its increase,” she says. “The two recent harsh winters we experienced have given us a window of opportunity to save hemlocks.”

In 2016 Johnson met with Tom Dougherty, Park Projects Technician at Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR), to discuss the possibility of introducing a hemlock treatment program in the Wissahickon, building on TNC’s experience in the Allegheny National Forest and at its Woodbourne Preserve in northeastern Pennsylvania. With the help of interns from PPR and FOW Summer Field Assistants, they proceeded with a survey of several stands of hemlocks in the park. “The survey evaluated the size and coverage of hemlocks and identified those trees that might be suitable for a hemlock treatment program,” Dougherty explained in an interview.

According to Shaw, “The conditions that most favor hemlocks are northern-facing, cool, moist slopes. In these locations, hemlocks are most resilient and thus most able to survive the presence of woolly adelgid.”

Dougherty, Johnson, and Shaw met later in the year to review the survey’s findings and decided to proceed with a treatment program starting in May of this year that will treat up to 350 hemlock trees. PPR will cover the cost of the insecticides, TNC will direct the treatment protocols, and FOW will be responsible for collecting data and assisting with the treatment program, as well as ongoing monitoring.

Johnson maintains that the treatment program will combine a mixture of two systemic chemical insecticides (active ingredients dinotefuran and imidacloprid). TNC has used both before in Pennsylvania and found them effective in destroying the woolly adelgid and helping hemlocks recover from prior stress and dieback. “The chemicals will be applied by backpack as a basal bark spray, which is taken up by the tree’s vascular system,” she says. “This method of application helps to ensure that these chemicals do not get into the soil.”

This method of application also keeps the chemicals from becoming air-born, says FOW Executive Director Maura McCarthy. “We are being extra cautious,” she adds, “because these insecticides are neonicotinoids—a class of chemicals that are toxic to bees and other insects. Fortunately, Johnson says, “Hemlocks are wind-pollinated, not bee-pollinated. Bark sprays are absorbed into the bark quickly, and will be much safer in the Wissahickon than other means of application because of the presence of the steep slopes and the shallow, rocky soils.” Other methods of application include soil drenches, soil injections, and trunk injections.

Johnson says she is “excited to bring TNC’s technical experience to our partners in Philadelphia to keep hemlocks alive for all the people who care about the Wissahickon.” Shaw is too. “I’m excited to be working with TNC and Parks & Recreation on this project. It is an important expansion of FOW’s habitat restoration efforts.”

William Hengst, Ph.D., was the editor of FOW’s newsletter from 1992 to 2003 and served on the Board of Directors during that period.

Cornelius Weygandt, a local resident who walked the Wissahickon from his boyhood in the 1880s to his death in the 1950s, wrote, The Wissahickon Hills (1930):

“You were never out of sight of hemlocks then in any hundred yards of the [Forbidden] Drive.”

He also mentions a number of places you could still find large stands of hemlocks: along the east bank of the creek from RittenhouseTown to Bell’s Mill Road; along the west bank above Valley Green to Hartwell Lane; and above Thomas Mill Road where “the hemlocks stand so thick above the water that little light can filter through them.”

—Metropolitan Paradise, p. 47
A

adults and children of all ages are sure to enjoy the 96th annual Wissahickon Day Parade on Sunday, April 23, 2017. Bring your cameras and be ready to show appreciation for the four-legged animals that kept the four-wheeled motor vehicles out of the park!

Each year folks come together in the Wissahickon to celebrate Forbidden Drive’s successful closure to automobiles in 1921. A turnpike through the park had been proposed, but equestrian park users protested with a parade of carriages and riders. Fortunately the initiative was defeated, and park users celebrate not only with the traditional parade, but with a horse show preceding the parade.

The horse show begins at 10 a.m. at Northwestern Stables and features English and Western riders as well as carriage classes. After the show, the parade proceeds along Forbidden Drive, passing The Cedars House at noon and Valley Green Inn between 12:30 and 1 p.m.

Volunteers are needed to help set up for the Parade at Northwestern Stables across from Bruno’s on Saturday, April 22, from 10 a.m to noon, as well as the day of the event, to guard traffic barriers, register participants, and more. To volunteer contact Jo Catanzaro at jocat11@verizon.net.

—Barbara Sherf, CommunicationsPro.com.

READ MORE:
https://www.facebook.com/WissahickonDayParade

WOOD DUCK & WARBLER FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, MAY 13 • 7 AM TO 8 PM

Start your celebration of Love Your Park Week by joining FOW and the Wissahickon Environmental Center as we explore the world of the wonderful birds that breed and migrate through our park. Family bird-themed activities include morning bird walks, a wood duck count by bicycle, and a picnic supper with music. Visit fow.org/events in April for more details.

Make plans now to attend a bird walk with local bird expert Ruth Pfeffer, part of the Wood Duck & Warbler Festival. Meet at Bell’s Mill Road and Forbidden Drive at 8 am. Registration is required. Visit fow.org/events to register.

Owner of Birding with Ruth, Pfeffer is credited with creating the birding program at the Morris Arboretum where she is an instructor. She has led birding expeditions throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and abroad since the 1990s, contributed to the Breeding Bird Atlas project in the 1980s, and is a member of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, The Academy of Natural Sciences, and Wyncote’s Audubon Society.
WHERE DO ALL THE ANTLERS GO?

by Tony Croasdale, Wissahickon Environmental Center

Many folks mistakenly refer to deer antlers as horns, but there are many differences. Horns consist of a bone core with a keratin sheath. (Keratin is a structural protein that is also found in humans and is responsible for the growth of hair and fingernails.) Antlers are made of bone, and unlike horns, they are shed every winter and start growing from bases on the skull in the spring.

Antlers are initially cartilage covered in blood-filled skin called velvet. The cartilage is replaced by bone and the deer shed the velvet in the fall. Bucks rub their antlers on small trees to peel off the velvet. This damages the trees and is why FOW and other park stewards often cover small trees with plastic tubes.

After the rut (breeding season), the cells at the base of the antlers start to break down, and bucks shed their antlers around January. The timing of antler shedding can vary depending on the condition of the buck and its testosterone level which, along with day length, determine when the cells start to break down.

If bucks shed their antlers every year, where are all the antlers? I work in the woods and spend much of my free time in the woods. I have only found a handful of shed antlers over decades spent in the field. In the past, I found many moose and caribou antlers while conducting field work in Alaska and Arctic Canada. With so many white-tailed deer in the Wissahickon and surrounding area, why are sheds scarce? Small mammals, like squirrels, chipmunks, and voles, eat them. Antlers are an important source of calcium and other minerals for these creatures. Calcium and minerals are hot commodities in the woods, and any shed antler is quickly gnawed down to nothing. In the far north, there is not the density of small mammals to eat all of the moose and caribou antlers. But in the Wissahickon, there are plenty of rodents to eat all the antlers that have been shed.

Tony Croasdale is an Environmental Education Planner for Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and works at the Wissahickon Environmental Center.
Every year, friends and family gather with FOW staff to start the holidays right by enjoying what nature has to offer us during winter. Winter in the Wissahickon is a holiday tradition for many families who wish to decorate their own holiday wreath, and where children are invited to make nature crafts that can be left for wildlife to feed on during the winter. Everyone has a chance to enjoy chestnuts roasting on an open fire, hot apple cider, and a light lunch/breakfast buffet. What better way to welcome winter!

FOW members are invited to gather to review the past year, elect members to the Board of Directors, learn about upcoming projects, and enjoy a presentation from Guest Speaker Chris Bernhardt, professional trail builder and Principal of Sentieros Consulting. One of the members of the original Sustainable Trails Initiative (STI) consulting team, he will share his perspectives on the successes and challenges of the project and present a first look at FOW’s ambitious plan to complete STI. 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.

FOW members who attend the annual meeting will receive a printed copy of the Annual Report for 2016, in addition to the digital version (pdf). Space is limited. Register to attend at fow.org.
HIKES IN THE WISSAHICKON

Trail Ambassador Walks

Registration is recommended for all hikes (required if indicated) so that participants can be informed of weather or other emergency cancellations. Unless otherwise specified, Trail Ambassador Hikes may be on rocky, rugged trails that may be wet and slippery. Wear sturdy shoes or boots with 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 PP. 12-13 AND AT FOW.ORG.

**Trails Less Traveled III: Bushwhacking in Andorra**
with Gerry Schweiger
Sunday, March 26 • 1 • 3:30 pm
Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive. (cannot locate with GPS).
Many brambles and thorny plants border the trails. Leather gloves should be worn. Distance: 3 miles. Level: challenging.

**Trails Less Traveled IV: Icons of the Lower Wissahickon**
with Gerry Schweiger
Sunday, April 9 • 1 • 3:45 pm
Meet at the parking lot on Gypsy Lane near northbound Lincoln Drive, opposite Wissahickon Hall.
There will be several strenuous climbs. Distance: 4.25 miles.

**Toleration Statue Hike with Kevin Elkov & Kris Soffa**
Thursday, April 13 • 10 – 12 pm
Meet at the upper parking lot at Historic RittenhouseTown, 208 Lincoln Drive (For GPS use: 6034 Wissahickon Ave.)
Some elevation on the Orange Trail and some difficulty in climbing to the statue. Distance: 2.5 miles.

**Kid Friendly Hike with Marv Schwartz**
Saturday, April 15 • 10 – 12 pm
Saturday, June 24 • 10 – 12 pm
Meet at Valley Green Inn.
Level: moderate on some rocky trails. Distance: 2.5 miles.

**Earth Day Walkabout with Kris Soffa**
Wednesday, April 19 • 10 am – 12 pm
Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive (cannot locate with GPS).
Level: moderate. Distance: 2 miles.

**Woodland Wildflower Walk with Don Simon**
Saturday, April 22 • 10 am
Meet at Valley Green Inn.
Wear footwear suitable for walking on rough and uneven trail surfaces. Absolutely no dogs permitted. Level: easy to moderate on trails suitable for all ages. Distance: 2.5 miles.

**Woods and Meadow Hike with Kimberly Quinn**
Sunday, April 30 • 12 – 2 pm
Sunday, May 21 • 12 – 2 pm
Sunday, June 25 • 12 – 2 pm
Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive (cannot locate with GPS).
Level: moderate. Distance: 3 miles.

**Fishing the Wissahickon with Tony DeFazio**
Saturday, May 6 • 9 – 11 am
Meet at Valley Green Inn.
Participants are encouraged to bring waterproof boots and a lightweight fishing rod and reel if they want to fish. Those without fishing rods may use one courtesy of the Wissahickon Environmental Center (limited number available).
Children of all ages welcome with a responsible adult. Level: easy to moderate.

**Mother Earth Walk with Kris Soffa**
Wednesday, May 10 • 10 am – 12 pm
Meet at The Cedars House, Northwestern Ave. and Forbidden Drive (cannot locate with GPS).
Level: moderate. Distance: 2 miles.

**Yoga Nidra: Progressive Relaxation with Kevin Elkov**
Thursday, May 25 • 10 – 11:30 am
Meet on the back porch of the Wissahickon Environmental Center, located off Northwestern Ave.
Bring two blankets and a pillow. Suitable for children 13 years or older, who can lie still and follow directions.

**Baptismal Pool Hike and Meditations with Kevin Elkov**
Thursday, June 8 • 10 am – 12 pm
Meet at the upper parking lot at Historic RittenhouseTown, 208 Lincoln Drive (For GPS use: 6034 Wissahickon Ave.)
Distance: 2.5 miles. Level: mild to moderate difficulty.

**Contemplative Forest Walk at the Full Moon with Sarah Gabriel**
Friday, June 9 • 7:30 – 10 pm
Location to be determined and provided to those who register.
Bring a flashlight, an open mind, a playful spirit, a journal or notebook, and something to sit on. Registration is required for this hike.

Appalachian Mountain Club
Delaware Valley Chapter
amcdv.org

**Mondays**

-Wissahickon Gorge Wandering.
A brisk-paced hike of 5-7 miles on various trails throughout the Wissahickon Gorge. The distance of the hike will be dependent on conditions and speed of the group. Meet at 6:30 pm by Valley Green Inn. Bring water, snacks, and a flashlight. Bad weather cancels. If doubtful, please check the status of the hike before 5:30 pm at amcdv.org/AMCCalendar.php or contact the leader: David Stein, 215-508-5915. Mar. 20, 27, Apr. 3, 10, 17, 24

-Tuesdays

-Tuesday Nights in the Wissahickon.
Casual social hike through hills of Wissahickon Gorge. Bring water and a flashlight or headlamp. Always an option for dinner following the hike. Meet at Bruno’s, at the corner of Germantown and Northwestern Aves. at 6:30 pm. Nasty weather will cancel the hike. If doubtful check the status of the hike at amcdv.org/AMCCalendar.php or contact a Leader: David Stein, 215-508-5915; Pat Naismith, 610-639-3670. Mar. 21, 28, Apr. 4, 11, 18, 25

-Philaventures waygay40.org

-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 bertl2345@comcast.net.

Batona Hiking Club
batonahikingclub.org

-Sunday, March 19

-City Hall to Chestnut Hill. 16 - 17 miles.
Depart from corner of 16th & JFK Blvd. outside Suburban Station at 8:30 am. Return to Philadelphia by train at the end of the day. Hikers may take the Chestnut Hill West train into the city to start the hike. A classic Batona hike on the last day of winter. We traverse Fairmount Park and find good hiking on remote trails within the largest city park in the world. Terrain is level to hilly and rocky. For those who are interested there will be a stop at a local Chestnut Hill brew pub following the hike. Ice or heavily accumulating snow cancels. Cost: $1.00 plus train fare. Leader: Bruce Melgary, 215-498-0472, bruce.mel@verizon.net.

Friends of the Wissahickon • Spring 2017
CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE WISSAHICKON

WISSAHPICKON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
Programs are FREE unless otherwise noted. Registration strongly recommended or required for most programs. Register early. WEC is located at 300 W. Northwestern Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19118. More info at 215-685-9825 or WEC@phila.gov.

THURSDAY TOTS
Bring your little one for an hour of discovery at the Tree House. Each month we will explore a new topic that celebrates the season. Ages 3-5. Parents stay with their child. Registration required. $5.00 per child per session.

STICKS AND STONES • APRIL 20 • 1-2 PM
We will be searching for that special stick and rockie with great shapes and textures, and create a stick parking spot in front of the tree house.

WEATHER WONDERS • MAY 18 • 1-2 PM
We will look at clouds, make wind wands, and create sun prints depending on the weather that day!

METAMORPHOSIS • JUNE 15 • 1-2PM
What will our caterpillars, calendronums, and toadlets change into? Let’s find out.

AMPHIBIAN ADVENTURES • SATURDAY, MAY 21 • 8:30 PM
Do you enjoy searching for frogs, toads, and salamanders? Then join us for an introduction to amphibians. We will listen to the strange and often beautiful songs of these night-singing amphibians. All ages. Space is limited. Registration required. FREE.

METAMORPHOSIS • JUNE 15 • 1-2PM
What will our caterpillars, calendronums, and toadlets change into? Let’s find out.

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

FAMILY FULL MOON HIKE • MONDAY, APRIL 10 • 7:30 PM
Get your feet wet and explore life in the Wissahickon Creek. Using the creek as a laboratory, we will walk up to the meadow to the telescope, listening for owls on the way. We will use our bat detector.

ASTRONOMY • THURSDAY, MAY 25 • 8:30 PM
We will walk up to the meadow to the telescope, listening for owls on the way. We will use our bat detector.

RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
WVWA offers many public programs as part of its mission to protect the quality and beauty of the Wissahickon Watershed. Located at 12 Morris Road in Ardmore. More info at wissahickonvalley.org.

WISSAHPICKON VALLEY WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
WVWA offers many public programs as part of its mission to protect the quality and beauty of the Wissahickon Creek and to enhance the health of the Wissahickon Watershed. Located at 12 Morris Road in Ardmore. More info at wissahickonvalley.org.

Friends of the Wissahickon Membership Form -

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

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

- $20 Limited Income/Students
- $250 Contributing*
- $500 Patron*
- $1000

*Choice of:
- Hat
- Good Night Wissahickon Valley Park T-shirt (circle size):
  - Kids: S M L
  - Adult: S M L XL
- Devil's Pool (green) S M L XL
- $2500
- $5000
- $10,000 or above

All new members receive a map of the Wissahickon Valley. Limited Income/Student members receive invitations to all events and our quarterly newsletter. Basic members receive invitations to all events, our 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' t-shirts OR one children's book. Contributing members and above ($100 or more) receive all benefits of Basic membership plus choice of hat OR T-shirt OR one children's book.

Method of Payment

- Check Enclosed (payable to Friends of the Wissahickon)
- Charge my:
  - Visa
  - Mastercard
  - AmEx
  - Discover
- Card Number ____________________________
- Expiration Date ____________________________
- Signature ____________________________

Please return to: 40 W. Evergreen Ave., Suite 108, Philadelphia, PA 19118-3324 • 215-247-0417 • office@fow.org • fow.org

Contributions to Friends are tax deductible as permitted by current laws.

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

Running Clubs

EVERY THURSDAY
Wissahickon Wanderers Trail Run
4-5 miles. Starts 6:30 pm sharp at Valley Green Inn. No Fees. All runners, spends, skill levels welcome! Fun food and Cash Bar afterwards courtesy of the Valley Green Inn. For updates and more info visit wanderersrunningclub.org.

EVERY SATURDAY
Shaunmont Running Club
Starts at Northwest Ave. & Anders Rd. (north end of Forbidden Drive). From 3rd Saturday in Oct. thru 1st Saturday in May start at 8 am. Distances are at the discretion of runners. All levels welcome. Emphasis is on fun! More info at shaunmontrunningclub.com.

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

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER, AND INSTAGRAM

Friends of the Wissahickon