Love Where You Live

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

FRIENDS OF THE WISSAHICKON
This 2019 annual report is the reflection of an extraordinary year in Friends of the Wissahickon’s (FOW) history, but we’ve written it in the midst of another extraordinary time in all of our lives. During this global pandemic we’ve once again relied on the beauty of Wissahickon Valley Park as a source of peace, strength, and renewal, visiting our urban refuge at near record levels. Balancing both the good and bad of such significant utilization further validates our ongoing need for the park and FOW’s nearly 100-year commitment to care for it.

We began 2019 marking 95 years of stewarding the Wissahickon Valley Park and an era of organizational transformation. Since our beginnings in 1924, we have continued to flourish, even in the face of growing natural and manmade challenges. Over the past 15 years alone, FOW’s yearly revenue has grown from less than $500,000 to nearly $2 million, with more than 3,000 dedicated members, neighbors, volunteers, and corporate and civic partners. We ended 2019 well-positioned for a transition in leadership that will guide FOW into its next phase of growth, and soon into our next century of service in 2024.

Our founders would have been especially proud of our achievements this year. We exceeded projections, with a record-breaking number of volunteer hours (including the most corporate and school groups), guided walks and talks, and trails improved in one year, not to mention our most successful anniversary celebration ever. The common denominator of these noteworthy results is the simple truth that we love where we live. This passion for the Wissahickon’s many gifts goes beyond the Wissahickon Valley Park’s many gifts as an integral part of their lives.

We witnessed this powerful force at two spectacular anniversary events that engaged hundreds of both old and new friends alike in our conservation mission. On a hot June day, more than 300 FOW staff, volunteers, and community partners simultaneously turned out at 10 different park trailheads at our Super Mega Volunteer Service Day, filling bag after bag of trash and invasives, and adding dozens of flowers. And, on a picture-perfect fall evening, more than 350 guests attended FOW’s 95th Anniversary Celebration Party for a night to remember. Held at historic Erdenheim Farm (thanks to the generosity of the McCausland family), this event engaged our highest level of donor support ever, representing a deepening commitment to keeping our beloved urban wilderness and watershed strong.

The completion of the much-anticipated Forbidden Drive Streambank Stabilization Project was another source of pride, with extraordinary work that stabilized three eroded streambank sites. A prime example of FOW’s conservation-driven construction practices, this project was one of many such projects spearheaded by Maura McCarthy during her 14 years as FOW’s Executive Director. The entire FOW board, staff, members, and volunteers greatly appreciate Maura’s many contributions to the resiliency of the Wissahickon Valley Park’s infrastructure and watershed, and look forward to an ongoing partnership through her new citywide park work. Thank you Maura!

While the current pandemic has altered our plans for the immediate future, our nearly century of stewardship has prepared FOW for this challenging time. The future may look different from what we imagined, but we look forward to using the overall product of our accomplishments during our 95th celebration as a springboard to carry us forward.

WINTER
- FOW kicked off a year of celebration to mark 95 years of stewarding Wissahickon Valley Park after a group of concerned citizens came together in 1924 to raise funds for park improvements from a damaging winter storm.
- Nearly 150 volunteers brave the cold to work on a variety of grounds improvement projects at the park’s historic Thomas Mansion for the fourth consecutive Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.
- Largest class of Trail Ambassadors and Crew Leaders—46—graduate FOW’s eight-week training and hit the trails to lead hikes, co-lead service projects, assist park users, and more.

SPRING
- Super Mega Volunteer Service Day draws 313 volunteers to 10 different park trailheads where they collectively remove 20,939 square feet of invasives and 5,240 pounds of trash and recycling, improve 2,350 feet of trail, plant flowers, and paint signs.

SUMMER
- More than 157 Challengers and donors participate in the fourth annual All Trails Challenge, raising $18,250. Challengers covered 4,657 miles of the park, with 22 of them completing all 50 miles.
- Seasonal Outreach Assistants bring a welcoming presence at Valley Green Inn, Devil’s Pool, and Marpargue Dam areas, where they engaged with park visitors about FOW’s mission and stewardship work, and responsible park use.
- Trash cans are removed and carry-in/carry out signs are added at Devil’s Pool and other heavily visited park areas. These actions, along with encouragement from Seasonal Outreach Assistants and Trail Ambassadors, resulted in decreased trash.
- Quarry Loop Project, a priority of the Sustainable Trails Initiative, is completed. Led by Crew Leaders, volunteers rerouted 385 feet of trail, established 900 feet of a new bike-skills trail, and created a new 800-foot sustainable trail entrance. FOW partnered with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and the Philadelphia Streets Department to install a new pedestrian crossing at the Rittenhouse Green/Wissahickon Avenue intersection, providing a much-needed safe access point linking the East Falls trail to the rest of the park.
- 13th Annual Ice Cream Social brings an afternoon of free ice cream and nature activities for the whole family at Historic Rittenhouse Town.
- On National Public Lands Day, 76 volunteers from FOW and Fairmount Park Conservancy join volunteers nationwide to help restore and enhance public parks, forests, and waterways. They planted 21 trees and shrubs, cleared 3,000 pounds of waste and 2,000 square feet of invasives from Thomas Mansion’s grounds.

2019 SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS
FALL

- 95th Anniversary Celebration Party at Historic Erdenheim Farm becomes FOW’s most successful ever, with more than 350 guests who honored the future of Wissahickon Valley Park with an unprecedented level of support. We honored the inspirational achievements of Cindy Affleck with our long-standing Wissahickon Award, and David Haas with FOW’s first Founders Award.

- Forbidden Drive Streambank Stabilization Project is completed. The multifaceted engineering feat stabilized three once-eroded streambank collapse sites near Valley Green Inn, the Mt. Airy Avenue pedestrian bridge, and the Kitchen’s Lane Bridge with terrace-like soil lifts, which FOW then populated with native seeds and plants. Over time, the mature plantings will naturalize and further stabilize the streambank.

- Volunteer Crew Leaders complete a park-wide assessment of trails and planting locations, which FOW used to update maps of down trees and planting locations, plan and prioritize stewardship projects. It will also allow monitoring of erosion, human impact, invasive growth, etc. at various locations over time.

- Three Fall Super Saturday Volunteer Service Days, including Fall Love Your Park Day, along with community partner organizations, recruited 210 volunteers who planted 15 trees and shrubs, removed 1,540 pounds of waste and 500 square feet of invasives, and improved approximately 2,550 feet of trails.

- On Giving Tuesday, FOW launches a new recurring membership, the Sustainer Program, as a way to continuously support FOW’s work.

| We achieved so much in 2019 with the support of our donors, members, partners, and volunteers! Here’s a snapshot of what we accomplished by the numbers: |

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Trail Improvements:**
All 50+ miles of natural surface trails improved
893 linear feet of trail built
20 feet of boardwalk repaired/replaced

**Trees Removed:**
115 fallen trees from trails

**Structures Repaired:**
216 fence rails and posts replaced/repaired
33 benches replaced/repaired

**Partner Projects:**
“Snakepit” sanctuary fence for northern water snakes installed at Livezey Dam (Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, Interpret Green Group)
Outdoor mud pit play space created at Tree House (Wissahickon Environmental Center)
Metal gates installed on Forbidden Drive (Philadelphia Parks & Recreation)

**Signage Installed:**
18 routed wood Philadelphia Parks & Recreation signs installed

**HABITAT**

**Invasive Plant Control:** 55,489 square feet
Native Plantings:
384 trees & shrubs
Bird Box Monitoring Observations:
6 Eastern Bluebirds
51 Tree Swallows
28 House Wrens
Trash & Recycling Removed:
11.6 tons of trash removed (compared to six tons in 2018, reflecting more removal efforts)

**ENGAGEMENT**

1,451 volunteers donated 16,573 hours of time in service to Wissahickon Valley Park (a nearly 33 percent increase from 2018)
170+ students from the Philadelphia School District received a copy of Good Night Wissahickon Valley Park, a park map, and a field trip to Wissahickon Valley Park.
Guided walks and talks, outreach events, and public meetings:
5,081 park users and neighbors engaged
FOW Online:
FOW.org - 646,335 page views
Facebook - 19,920 friends
Twitter - 2,553 followers
Instagram - 13,361 followers

TREASURER’S REPORT

The financial condition of the Friends of the Wissahickon at the end of 2019 was very strong. We ended the year with $160,000 in Funds without Donor Restrictions, thanks to the generosity of our many contributors. The top fundraising highlight of 2019 was our 95th Anniversary Celebration event, held in October, which exceeded expectations and will enable future FOW projects. The multifaceted, highly-vaunted Forbidden Drive Streambank Restoration Project was completed at a total cost of over $1 million over the life of the project. While the coronavirus pandemic will have impacts on FOW’s ambitious 2020 budget, our plans for building engagement, membership, and philanthropic support continue with creative approaches that reflect our commitment to the continuation of our mission. In addition, we trust our members and donors will support FOW in 2020 so we can continue to conserve the Wissahickon Valley Park for generations to come.

Submitted by
James Walker, Treasurer

ASSETS

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<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<td>Cash</td>
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<td>Other Assets</td>
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<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
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LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

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<td>$1,216,625</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</td>
<td>$1,316,504</td>
<td>$1,380,635</td>
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REVENUE & EXPENSES

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<tr>
<th>REVENUE</th>
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<td>95th Anniversary Event Revenue</td>
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<td>Donated Services</td>
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EXPENSES

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<td>Development &amp; Marketing</td>
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<td>$1,724,913</td>
<td>$2,178,106</td>
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*Includes donated services
Note: All 2018 and 2019 figures are audited.
DONORS

Friends of the Wissahickon wishes to extend thanks to all those who financially supported our work in 2019. Many individuals, foundations, and corporations gave generously to help fund FOW’s programs and operation. We are grateful for every gift we receive and are pleased to list the following contributors whose cumulative donations were above $250.
William Mulroy Jr.
Phil Mulligan
Kim Mollo
Stacey Merkin and Richard Eden
John Mcmeekin
Wendy and Wade McDevitt
Thomas McClellan
Melissa and Michael McBride
Margot Waitz and Gordon Manin
Allyson and Greg Mandel
Jacqueline Magee
Suzanne and Kent Madden
Mandie Lyon
Irwin S. Love
Jonathan Loeb
Susan and Christopher Wogan
Elizabeth Wilson
Marian and Kevin Walsh
Christina Thistle
Robert Tarquini
William Stroever
Kathleen and Franck Skobieranda
Rudy Schenk
Joan and John Santangelo
Janice Santangelo
Kristin Salimao
Brandon Rowe
Kristin Salamone
Jancie Santangelos
Rudy Schenk
Kathleen and Franck Skobieranda
William Storrow
YHS Sunshine
Robert Tarquini
Christina Thistle
Keith Tomasselli
Suzan Unger
Dorothy Unger
Sharon and Kevin Walsh
Elizabeth Wilson
Suzan and Christopher Wogan
Cristina Muenscher
Francy and Euan Yanak
Irinn and Mitchell Yanak
William Yanuk McNellen and William McNullen
Lee and Paul Zacharia
In Memory of Dolores Batey
Mary Saccarelli
In Memory of Michael Boylan
Bette Begleiter
Rita and Wayne Morra
In Memory of Phil Brady
Rosanne Mihlethia
In Memory of Lynne Brown
Wendy Phillips
In Memory of Albert P. Caltado
Marcella and Steven Ridensaur
Miriam Tenney
In Memory of John Caltado
Agatha Unger
In Honor of Jeff and Marjor Clark
Cordon Clark
In Honor of John Debre
Bette Begleiter
In Honor of Lisa Donahue
Gerard Donahue
Annette Hunsucker
Lori Kier
In Honor of Barbara Donnini
Leah Garman
In Honor of Campbell Donovan
Scott Hartman
Thomas Piper Jr.
Lethy Piper
Thomas Piper
In Memory of Horace B. Drever
Neil Hames
Debra Manners
Donna Romano
In Memory of Jeannete Donick
Mary Allan Bums and John Schmitt
Lisa Donnego
Anna Herman and Robert Donick
Alan Jay Schwartz
Donna Vignola
In Memory of George "Bo" Durbin
Paula and Michael Dorvart
In honor of Scott Engel
Wendy and Michael Sherman
In Honor of Miriam Field
Arthur Huppert
In Honor of Friedi Flax and Rick Stephan
Sandra W. Stephan
In Honor of Supporting the Forest School Program at Project Lorne School
Chana Holtman
In Honor of Peggy Fox and Art Silver
Susan Barber
Deborah Festino
Hugh Kennedy
Patema Lauer
Candace Spalding
In Memorium of Carl and Marc Fromuth
Sandra Williamson
In Memoriam of Pamela Gabbell
Mark Anderson
Doris and David Anderson
Dalia Bryant
Howard Coxley
Mary Ann and Jim Delaplane
Anonymous
Martha Guzlin
Karen and Rob Hefteff
Mindy Menegarten and Jerry Kubick
Cary Nyberg
Barbara Epstein and Arne Petka
Lisa Pfifer
Marilyn Pfister
Roberta Sauber
Deborah Schaaf
Diane and Sigi Schell
Eileen Silver
Betty Tuchols
Natalie Vlaminck
Julia Tower
In Memoriam of Janet Gillessen
Mary Swareen
In Memory of Bobby Gourley and Robert Gourley
Susan Krug-Gourley
In Memory of Kevin Groves
John Mcmclney
In Memory of Mary Ellen Hansberry
Crystal Corley
In Memory of Silvyanne Harper
Peter Wescott

In Memory of Margaret “Peggy” Hayes
Elizabeth and James Edson
Ruth and Klaus Fuehnelborn
Stephanie Hayes
Belinda Heidenreich
Jane Johnston
Mark Mauro
Victoria Miller
Michael Nelson

In Honor of Bettina Hoerlin
David Bradley

In Honor of Glen Hoffman
Joseph Sivaligam and Glen Hoffman

In Honor of Sarah Hummel
Nicholas Schoenberger

In Honor of Tim Jones
Charles London

In Honor of Marja Kaisla and Danny Gospireau
Melissa Stout-Greiner

In Honor of Miss Johanna Keil
Mary Beth Whitman

In Memory of John Kelly
Diran Alamanian
Anita and Jeff Beck
Sam Blake
Craig Celle
Drew Cameron
Mike Concanon
Bayard Feichter
Graeme Frazier
Alan Good
Joseph Grasso
Steve Harrington
Dorothy & Raymond E. lx

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Joseph Grasso
Alan Good
Graeme Frazier
Bayard Feichter
Mike Concanon
Anita and Jeff Beck

In Honor of Carolyn Wright
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In Honor of Timothy Stubbine
Robert Kopf

In Honor of Trees
Lori and Marcos Salganicoff

In Honor of TooTice Troiani
Rich Shewds

In Memory of Bill Vaughan
Lizanne Vaughan

In Memory of John Vescio
Pauline Gray and Edward Bernard
Judith and Fred Barsam
Mary Ellen Bradley
Lauren Finoc
Marcia and Frank Gervasio
Caroline Goberman
Bob Gumaer
Edward Muller

In Honor of Rikah Walton
Ellen Franken

In Memory of Edward Wasser
Janet and Don Falkenstein

In Honor of Sarah West
Gerald Whelen

In Honor of Pat Westebat
Paul Westebat

In Honor of Kim Whetzel
William Cary

In Honor of William Whetzel
Caroline Coleman

In Honor of Carolyn Wright
Carolyn Wright

So grateful for these trees and rushing water that green my pain, joy, irritations, questions, and peace every time I come. I always leave these woods a different person than when I entered.

- Park User