Conserving the natural beauty and wildness of the Wissahickon Valley for 95 years

Photo by Charles Uniatowski
Whether you are a neighbor, a park visitor, or a local business owner that values the quality of life the park affords, FOW invites you to be part of our anniversary gala celebration in October.

Like so many things, FOW is getting better with age. Last year was one of our most successful ever and we continue to power ahead, bolstered by our wonderful engagement with the City and people like Councilman Curtis Jones Jr. of the 4th District, who we were honored to welcome as the guest speaker at our Annual Meeting on June 4 (p. 8). He emphasized the importance of green spaces for mental health, while the article on NaturePHL (p. 11) promotes park prescriptions for preventive health, and on p. 13 a Chestnut Hill Hospital emergency department physician gives advice for healthy park use.

FOW is excited to work even more closely with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation during the park’s peak season to best serve visitors as well as neighbors, and build respect and stewardship for the park. Read about our new “carry in, carry out” messaging (p. 16) around Devil’s Pool to prevent unsightly trash in this popular area and throughout the Wissahickon.

Speaking of popular, the All Trails Challenge (ATC) is in full swing through August. The story on p. 4 about one Challenger’s experience using SEPTA to complete his mileage will hopefully inspire others to join the fun and make the ATC’s fourth year the best ever.

We are extremely excited to announce that the long-awaited Forbidden Drive Streambank Stabilization project began the week of June 17. Please follow the important safety procedures (p. 7) in place around the three collapse sites throughout the duration of construction.

Whether you are a neighbor, a park visitor, or a local business owner that values the quality of life the park affords your employees who live near or recreate in the park, FOW invites you to be part of our anniversary gala celebration in October.

Until then, there are so many ways to get involved with FOW, either by volunteering, participating in our diverse range of guided hikes (p. 14) or, of course, becoming a member.

Wissahickon Valley Park is calling! We hope to see you there this summer.

Maura McCarthy, Executive Director
2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Now Available

The 2018 Annual Report is available in hardcopy at the FOW office (40 W Evergreen Avenue, Suite 108) or for download at fow.org. Copies of the 2018-2020 Strategic Blueprint are also available in hardcopy and on the website.

NORWEGIANS LOVE FOW

A number of years ago, John Tibballs, head of the Friends of the Lysaker River in Oslo, Norway, visited Philadelphia with an eye toward daylighting and reviving connections with Oslo’s urban waterways. Maura McCarthy, FOW’s Executive Director, and Ruffian Tittman, the Deputy Director, met with him and discussed the intersections of FOW’s volunteerism, infrastructure, habitat, and community engagement programming with the Philadelphia Water Department’s “Green City, Clean Waters” and “Green Stormwater Infrastructure” initiatives. Tibballs recently sent McCarthy and Tittman a note thanking them for their encouragement and advice, and crediting FOW as the inspiration for his Friends’ group’s efforts to improve and protect Oslo’s rivers. He included a copy (in English) of the Rivers & Streams Tour Guide they produced, a digital version of which can be found online at osloelveforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Turguide-Engelsk.pdf. “I think it is nice to know that the Wissahickon—and Philadelphia—have influenced our peers as they do the same work we do, worldwide,” said McCarthy.

GIVING

There are several ways to make meaningful gifts to advance FOW’s mission.

STOCK
Consider giving a gift of stock. Our DTC # is 0062 and our Vanguard Brokerage Acct # is 23501307.

UNITED WAY DONATIONS
Friends of the Wissahickon can receive donations through the United Way. If your employer offers United Way giving, and you would like to designate Friends of the Wissahickon as your beneficiary, please use our option code #98682.

AMAZON SMILE
If you shop on Amazon.com, use AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com) and select Friends of the Wissahickon as the nonprofit organization you would like to support. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to FOW.
HE TOOK SEPTA TO TAKE THE ALL TRAILS CHALLENGE

(Adapted from an article that was posted in a recent FOW e-newsletter.)

OW Trail Ambassador Matthew Kokoszka completed FOW’s 2018 All Trails Challenge (ATC) in a creative way. Every time he visited the Wissahickon to rack up ATC mileage, he traveled entirely by public transit.

Q. How did you first come to know Wissahickon Valley Park?
A. I moved back to the Philadelphia area about 13 years ago and lived the majority of that time in South Philly. I was introduced to the park by friends, but I was only aware of the southernmost parts for a long time. I was later introduced to other areas, but I never really understood how expansive and special the park was until I did the ATC. I’m a nature lover. I love hiking . . . I’m a baby rock climber. I’ve been relearning how important and elemental it is for me to be outside.

Q. You have a unique experience having done the ATC completely by public transit. What surprised you most about having completed the challenge this way?
A. When I started thinking about how I could do it, I only had a few points in my mind of ways to access the park, but there are so many. So, I started plotting. Google maps has the majority of the trails, so that was really helpful. So is the cool pocket map you get for becoming an FOW member. I live in North Philadelphia and work in Center City, and there are so many options for getting to different trailheads via regional rail and the bus system. I didn’t really know where to start, and it felt pretty daunting at first, to be honest. But once I got started and more comfortable, it became part of the fun of the challenge.

Q. Do you have advice for folks who are thinking of taking the challenge and, more specifically, for those who are interested in doing it by public transit?
A. As a first timer, I decided to hike all of the main trails first, and fill in the blanks later. In retrospect, I would probably recommend taking the park in loops, starting and ending at the same point, if possible, and take advantage of how many beautiful trajectories there are. Even after doing 52 miles during the challenge, I’ve since learned there’s much I missed. There are great resources on the FOW site and guided hikes throughout the challenge as well to help you along.

Q. What was it like to complete the last mile of the Challenge?
A. I felt really proud and accomplished, and equal parts tired/energized. I was kind of sad it was over. I’m really excited to do it all again this year!

Q. What was this a fulfilling experience? Were there any moments that stood out to you as special, challenging, or funny?
A. It was definitely fulfilling, and very meaningful to me. It started as a personal challenge and ended up reminding me how I’d like to move about in the world, and how I can hope to give back. I’m not sure if this is funny, or just a hot tip: doing the challenge solo, it was a mostly meditative experience, but on long hiking days, for the last mile or so, it didn’t hurt visualizing the beer and burger I would treat myself with at the end. That happened more than once.

Q. Having done all 50 miles of trails, which section was your favorite?
A. There’s so much to love. I remember loving the Cresheim Trails because I was the only one around at the time. It’s a really interesting and beautiful area, and I felt like I was discovering it. I love the diversity of the Orange Trail, the incredible rock formations, and that it winds along the Wissahickon Creek. I also had an incredible experience exploring the Andorra trails.

Q. Do you feel like you learned anything about Wissahickon Valley Park and/or FOW?
A. FOW definitely makes you feel welcome, from the meet-ups throughout the Challenge to the ATC Facebook group. Even doing the Challenge alone, I felt really supported and lifted up by the community. I met so many amazing people and learned so much about what the organization does and stands for, and was so inspired to get more involved. And then I was recruited to become a Trail Ambassador, which has already been an awesome gift and a new adventure.
ALL TRAILS
CHALLENGE 2019

Friends of the Wissahickon

There’s still plenty of time to take on the ATC, which continues through August 28. We hope you’ll spend your summer exploring every corner of the park while helping raise funds for its continued conservation. Fabulous prizes are available for top mileage, fundraisers, individuals, and teams, as well as fun goodies throughout the Challenge at events and on social media!

Tag @FOWissahickon on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and FOW will choose one photo per week to be featured in FOW’s weekly e-newsletter. Don’t forget to use #FOWAllTrails so the FOW community can share in your All Trails fun!

Thank you to our sponsors!

FOW is proud to once again welcome Univest as the ATC lead sponsor, along with the following early sponsors. Sponsorship opportunities for this popular event are available by contacting Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org.

At Univest, we’ve dedicated ourselves to supporting the communities we serve for more than 140 years, holding true to the values and principles that helped shape us. It’s why wherever you are in life or business - bank here to get there.
IT WAS A SUPER MEGA DAY

One word describes FOW’s 95th Anniversary Super Mega Volunteer Service Day on June 1: WOW.

By 9 a.m. under sunny skies, more than 300 volunteers—a mix of members, neighbors, FOW staff, community partners, and even newcomers to FOW—were ready to work. They may have been spread out across 10 different trailheads throughout Wissahickon Valley Park, but they functioned as one unit, united by a passion to keep our beloved park beautiful.

They planted flowers, painted signs, removed trash, and tackled the relentless Japanese knotweed, which the author of a May article in Slate referred to as “the invasive plant that just won’t die.” But, as one volunteer said, “we showed that knotwood who’s boss.”

All told, the mighty crews filled 43 bags of invasive plants and 18 bags of trash, and removed 15 to 20 cubic feet of sediment from the Upper Basin trap, where it was smothering aquatic life.

Tired and sweaty, but smiling from a job very well done, the volunteers gathered to eat, relax, and share their experience with fellow volunteers at a post-event celebratory picnic held at Historic Rittenhouse Town.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this special day a resounding success, including our partners Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and Historic Rittenhouse Town, and sponsors Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox LLP, The Nature Conservancy, and Green Mountain Energy, whose support we greatly appreciate.

Photos by Chuck Uniatowski, Sarah Marley, Shawn Green, Nina Hoe Gallagher, Sue Amon, Lisa Myers, Chris Richter, and Bradley Maule.
FORBIDDEN DRIVE
STREAMBANK
STABILIZATION PROJECT
GETS UNDERWAY

The long-awaited stabilization of three major streambank collapse sites along Forbidden Drive began the week of June 17, with construction expected to be completed by the end of October. The specific streambank locations, which have continued to erode since the initial collapses, are the Valley Green site (approximately 1,000 feet downstream from Valley Green Inn); the Mt. Airy site (near the Mr. Airy Avenue pedestrian bridge); and the Kitchens Lane site (immediately downstream from the Kitchens Lane Bridge).

The overall restoration project consists of three integrated components:

1. stabilizing the bank toe (especially susceptible to water erosion because of its location between the regular and low water levels), with large rock;
2. reforming and stabilizing the bank above the toe using vegetated soil lifts (similar to terraces); and
3. reforesting the upper bank slopes adjacent to Forbidden Drive with a combination of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous seeding.

To tackle this complex work, FOW has contracted with two ecologically driven restoration and land-use solutions companies. RiverLogics Solutions, based in Wellsville, Pennsylvania, is leading the project work to install rock-toe stabilization and is coordinating with Applied Ecological Services (AES) from Wisconsin for the stabilization of vegetated soil lifts on the streambanks. This summer, AES will heavily seed the soil lifts and upper banks; they will return in November or December to install dormant live stakes (woody cuttings with the branches removed, often used to stabilize streambanks) within the soil lifts, and plant potted trees and shrubs on the upper banks. This multifaceted project will also include removing trees, trenching and installing boulder walls, and grading slopes. It will be a vital contribution to the resiliency of Wissahickon Valley Park’s infrastructure and overall water quality.

CAUTION AHEAD
A staging work zone for materials and machines was set up at the bottom of the Jannette Street access trail (from the Roxborough neighborhood) near the intersection of Forbidden Drive. Construction began at the most northern site, just downstream from Valley Green Inn. During construction at each site, Forbidden Drive will be narrowed to about 12 feet to allow for temporary fencing of the work zone to contain materials and machines and maintain adequate passage for emergency vehicles. The fencing will remain in place until the construction at this site is completed, then it will be removed and relocated when the crew moves downstream to the next project site.

Throughout the construction, heavy equipment will be periodically moving along Forbidden Drive carrying materials and equipment to the project sites. All vehicles will follow the 7mph speed limit on Forbidden Drive, clearly marked with safety flagging, and use audible warning signals.

Stay alert, safety first!
When you’re in the park near the construction sites, don’t assume that equipment operators see you. At all times, give heavy equipment the right-of-way, slow your pace, and keep children, dogs, and horses under control and at a safe distance. When approaching work locations, remove audio earbuds/headphones. Under no circumstances should any park user enter work zones. During the construction period, please stay out of the work zones and heed safety signage at all times — even when crews are not working.
On a picture-perfect late spring evening, the 2019 Annual Meeting at Valley Green Inn celebrated the past year’s many accomplishments and looked ahead to FOW’s 95th anniversary year in 2019. President Jeff Harbison kicked off the business portion of the meeting by telling the packed room of members that “you are the people who keep this organization going.”

After presenting his last report before retiring as treasurer, Rich Kremnick added “It’s been a privilege to have served as FOW’s Treasurer and Chair of its Budget and Finance Committee,” relaying the committee’s debt of gratitude to the members who support the organization financially and by their continued efforts year after year.

Two new board members were elected this year, who are eligible to serve a maximum of seven years as FOW Directors (one introductory year and two, three-year terms):

Ethan Birchard has more than 15 years of leadership experience driving business development through digital technology and data analytics, financial planning, and collaborative, cross-cultural communication. Since 2013, he has been Managing Director of Technology and Operations at the Association of Executive Search and Leadership Consultants in New York, where he is responsible for growing revenue for BlueSteps, a career management service and network that connects executives with top executive search firms and positions them for the best jobs.

Joanne Dahme is the Deputy Commissioner for Communications and Engagement for the Philadelphia Water Department. With more than 35 years of engineering program management, public relations, and government affairs experience, Joanne is currently responsible for all forms of departmental communications, including production of publications, public information campaigns, and citizen advisory committees. Joanne also spent nearly a decade as the department’s Watersheds Programs Manager with the Office of Watersheds, directing the development and implementation of regional watershed partnerships.

Members at the meeting received a copy of the 2018 Annual Report, showcasing an extraordinary year whose accomplishments have continued into 2019. Executive Director Maura McCarthy credited the success of the Super Mega Volunteer Service Day (see photo spread on p. 6), to the tremendous dedication of the board, the staff, and the community, who collectively contributed more than a thousand hours of service in one day. They share a fierce love for the park and strong commitment to preserving and enhancing its daily presence in their lives.

This year will bring to fruition some of the larger capital investments for which FOW has been planning and fundraising. First in this series of projects that FOW will be making in the park over the next decade is the much-anticipated Forbidden Drive Streambank Stabilization Project (see construction and safety details on p. 7).
McCarthy emphasized that while FOW is celebrating its 95th anniversary in 2019, the organization is looking ahead to the culmination of a century of service to the Wissahickon and ensuring its continuation for generations to come. FOW will be sharpening its focus on outreach, engagement, and service to the community, and making sure the park serves the needs of its users and remains an asset that everyone in the region can enjoy.

FOW must keep the park as a sustainable, robust wilderness, but also protect it from natural threats like climate change and invasive species, as well as from its own popularity – Wissahickon Valley Park receives more visitors per acre than any park in Pennsylvania, noted McCarthy, and this love takes its toll.

“To be able to support a vibrant migratory bird population side-by-side with a dynamic, healthy human population is at the heart of FOW’s work going forward. Protecting the waterway, drinking water, and air quality in Philadelphia is all an integral part of this work, and it’s all built on a foundation of service to the community,” concluded McCarthy.

She then expressed gratitude to Univest, FOW’s presenting corporate sponsor, for its ongoing support, before introducing the keynote speaker – Councilman Curtis Jones Jr., from Philadelphia’s 4th District who she referred to as perhaps the biggest advocate for Wissahickon Valley Park and the people who live in its surrounding communities.

Councilman Jones told the audience that, although he’s involved in environmental and conservation efforts now, he wasn’t always “green.” As a child, the only green he knew was the grass that grew between the cracks in his school yard’s concrete sidewalk. Thanks to FOW, said Councilman Jones, he’s a much deeper shade of green today. He has discovered that the Wissahickon is a priceless experience for any child but especially for someone like him who didn’t grow up with nature. He described neighborhood parks, like the Wissahickon, as the outdoor classroom for learning about nature and where childhood should—and with FOW’s continued stewardship will—grow.

Thanks
TO OUR OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

TAI-MING CHANG
During his time with FOW Tai, who unfortunately was unable to attend the Annual Meeting, chaired the Joint Water Resources Committee (with the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association) and was a member of the Habitat Committee. His extensive career in federal conservation was a tremendous asset to FOW on water quality issues, and Tai has promised that he will continue to share his expertise with us. A passionate fly fisherman, he enjoys exploring the outdoors with his family and loves the Wissahickon as much as we do.

SAM FINNEY
Sam has enjoyed the Wissahickon as a park user since the mid-1960s. An FOW Board Member since 2011, Sam served on the Joint Water Resources Committee (with the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association) and the Advocacy and Valley Green Inn Oversight Committees. His oversight on the latter was a tour de force which led to broader involvement on the Infrastructure Committee. Throughout the park’s changes over the years, Sam was focused on equality of access. He was instrumental in helping FOW engage significant resources to support our work. We are grateful for his thoughtful guidance.

RICHARD KREMNICK
Rich has been a member of the FOW board since 2012 and served on the Advocacy, Conservation, Governance, and Budget and Finance Committees, where, according to Maura McCarthy, “he proved his bravery and fortitude.” As our treasurer, Rich was a valuable asset to the organization, especially during a period of intensive capital work. We are thankful for his service, and will continue to benefit from his leadership as FOW continues to grow.
Spring signaled the return of many things to Wissahickon Valley Park: the vibrant colors of wildflowers, trees filling in their green canopy, toads mating in the waterways, and birds returning from their southern sojourns. Also migrating back to the gorge, thankfully, is our trusty community of volunteers!

At the end of March, our largest classes of Trail Ambassadors (TAs) and Crew Leaders completed their training and are now out on the trails. TAs are busy patrolling the trails, leading guided hikes, and staffing outreach tables. Crew Leaders jumped right into improving trails, restoring habitat, and co-leading volunteer projects. Our volunteer Sawyer Crew has been out on most weekends, safely clearing more than 32 fallen trees from the trails so far this year. Every Tuesday morning, our dedicated Structures Crew meets to build and repair fences, gates, benches, and park signs.

Independent groups are always welcome support in the park, and this spring gifted FOW with some fantastic people. Two of these groups made a huge impact beneath the Henry Avenue Bridge. About 50 volunteers from Vertex, Inc., spent the morning removing garbage and cleaning up the Gorgas Lane Trailhead, while Toby Kessler-Cohen celebrated his Bar Mitzvah with a cleanup service project on the Yellow Trail near Hermit Lane. Several student groups from Episcopal Academy, Pennbrook Middle School, Merion Mercy Academy, and Greene Street Friends School removed more than 50 bags of litter from the forest and waterways and helped to clean up areas where trees had previously been planted. In addition, after attending FOW's volunteer workshop, young stewards from Walter B. Saul High School participated in a variety of projects on the Yellow Trail.

We have been delighted to see a small crew of regulars coming to our weekly Thursday morning Trail Service Days to help improve our 50+ miles of trails and make this cherished space safer and less muddy. FOW’s regular Saturday Volunteer Service Days swung back into action and resulted in an impressive turn-out from the community: more than 60 volunteers attended the Philly Spring Cleanup along Bell’s Mill Road, and 127 volunteers improved Harper’s Meadow at the Annual Creek Cleanup. For Love Your Park Week, volunteers help install 200 native trees and shrubs.

There’s always room—and a need—for more help. FOW’s Volunteer Service Days provide much-needed maintenance in Wissahickon Valley Park and are a lot of fun. No prior experience is needed—FOW provides the tools, work gloves, and instructions. Visit fow.org/volunteering and learn how to join us.

### TA Field Report

**Ambassadors:** Michael Kopena & Shirley Landis  
**Date:** 4/14/19  
**Start Time:** 8:30-11:30 am  
**Zones:** C (Mt. Airy Ave. to Ridge Ave.)  
**Mode of Transportation:** Hike  
**Number of Interactions:** 9  
**Dogs Off Leash:** 5  
**Dogs On Leash:** 4

Shirley and I had a great shift in the park. Started from the Park Line Drive Trailhead. This was an area of the park that I had a great deal of familiarity with, but Shirley less so, and therefore, it made for a great first TA mentor/mentee walk. After calling in to the rangers we made our way up to the Toleration statue, then took White Trail down to Kitchen’s Lane, and made the loop back on the Orange Trail. I was happy to introduce Shirley to Mom Rinker’s Rock, one of my all-time favorite park locations. Along the way we noted many spring ephemeral wildflowers, and learned some new IDs with the help of iNaturalist. We spied many interesting birds, including a ruby-crowned kinglet establishing its territory. We had the opportunity to engage a number of park visitors on a number of topics. Two folks walking their dogs stopped to inquire what we were looking at while Shirley and I were trying to spot what we think was a native bee of some kind. We had a conversation about the bees, but also about using iNaturalist and the upcoming City Nature Challenge. A second group of park visitors we encountered in the cutout beneath the Toleration statue asked us what was special about the rocks seen in the cutout in Mom Rinker’s Rock. We discussed the mind-blowing nature of the geological history we were observing, and how it all may have formed deep under the earth’s crust millions of years ago. The weather was cool and misty; the park was green and refreshing. It was a lovely day!
PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: NaturePHL

By Allison Gibson, Partnerships and Programming Coordinator, NaturePHL, Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

NaturePHL is a cross-sector program that aims to improve the health and well-being of Philadelphia children and families through increased outdoor activity in local parks and green spaces. This collaboration brings together Children's Hospital of Philadelphia primary care providers (PCPs), environmental educators, public health advocates, parks and recreation leaders, and other Philadelphia community leaders in order to connect families with healthy outdoor play in their neighborhoods through education about health benefits, incentives, and resources.

In 2017, NaturePHL launched its clinical tool kit, designed to enhance provider efforts to counsel patients on the benefits of physical activity, specifically outdoor activity, in the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s Primary Care Network. Since then, we have successfully trained physicians and nurse practitioners to counsel families on the benefits of increased outdoor activity and incorporate NaturePHL into electronic health records. NaturePHL currently targets patients ages 5 to 12 and their families at annual well-child visits. A patient determined not to be spending enough time outdoors will be given a “prescription for nature” from the PCP to work with one of our Nature Navigators (a community social or behavioral health coach), over a 30-, 60-, or 90-day period to help the child’s family find ways to make nature part of their daily lives.

When we launched the clinical component of our program we also launched a health communication initiative aimed at connecting Philadelphians to outdoor spaces, activities, events, education, and resources. Health communication is provided through our website, conferences, research, and evaluation; through education services for teachers, parents, and classrooms; and through health literature and resources, which can be found on our website.

To learn more about the resources provided and our work, visit NaturePHL.org.

FOW’s guided hikes (p. 14) can be used to fill NaturePHL prescriptions.

Q. How did you decide to volunteer with FOW?
A. I was working at the Wissahickon Environmental Center as a summer educator when I was introduced to FOW, the work that they do, and the people who worked there. While I was looking for another job, I decided that I needed something to keep myself busy and out of the house. Volunteering with FOW did that, as well as give me valuable experience and skills. The work was fun and interesting, and the people I worked with gave me a sense of community.

Q. What do you love about Wissahickon Valley Park?
A. I love that it is like an oasis in the middle of the city. This large park can almost isolate you from the everyday life of a big city.

Q. What is one of your favorite moments from volunteering with FOW?
A. My favorite has to be the end of a workday, or a few days, even a week, later, when you return to a work site. Most of the time during a service project, it doesn’t seem like you are making much progress, but at the end, when you get to finally step back and take a look at what was done, you can see how much difference your work has made.

Q. How do you think FOW contributes to the Philadelphia community?
A. FOW creates a sense of community by pulling people together to do various types of work in this park that is used by so many people. They also help to educate people who often haven’t had a chance to get out into nature.

Q. What is your favorite spot in the park?
A. My favorite spot in the park would have to be Andorra Meadow. It is a diverse area where you can get away from the city noises and hear the birds instead. It is isolated enough that it feels like you are out in a large meadow, and you can possibly see or hear so many different animals that use the meadow. There are many species of songbirds you can listen to, you can see hawks and, if you are lucky, even a bald eagle! In the evening, you can see bats or maybe an owl, though you are more likely to hear one than see one.
MEADOWS, MILKWEED, & MONARCHS

Excerpted from Maris Harmon’s Monarch Diaries

By Christina Moresi, Wissahickon Environmental Center

For the past two summers at the Tree House, we’ve gathered a handful of monarch caterpillar eggs from the milkweed patch in Andorra Meadow and brought them inside for observation in a small microcosm full of milkweed plants in which they can flourish.

It has been such a pleasure getting to watch the full monarch life cycle up close, starting with the minuscule eggs glued to the underside of milkweed leaves. Within three to five days we had newly hatched caterpillars moving slowly around their leaves, munching away with tiny mouths and rapidly expanding bodies.

Caterpillars’ sole purpose is to eat. A grown caterpillar can consume an entire milkweed leaf in eight minutes, and our caterpillars had us running to the meadow to replenish their milkweed supply quite a few times.

Once the caterpillars were big, colorful creatures, with yellow, white, and black stripes, they began lifting their heads, looking for desirable spaces to hang upside down and form their jewel-like chrysalides. Watching them scoping for good locational prospects was amusing. You could almost see the thought bubbles emerging from their heads, analyzing the situation above them. When they are ready, the caterpillars hang upside down in a shape that resembles a J.

Inside the chrysalis, the chrysalis has already formed beneath the final layer of caterpillar skin. When it’s ready to enter the pupa phase of its cycle, it sheds its old skin to reveal the chrysalis hidden below. All of the old skin is gradually pushed to the top of the chrysalis. In the last step of the chrysalis reveal, it wiggles around until the skin falls off. This was one of my favorite parts, as it truly looked as if the chrysalis was dancing, adept and energetic, to the beat of its own transformation soundtrack.

Inside the chrysalis, the caterpillar turns into a sort of genetic soup, completely reconfiguring itself into a butterfly from this matter. While the caterpillar and butterfly seem to have no relation to one another—they have different diets, habitats, and styles of transportation—studies have shown that butterflies remember their lives from when they were just naive, prepubescent larva.

Inside the chrysalis, the butterfly tunes into its genetic programming that communicates where to fly in Mexico, how to get there, and what steps are necessary to ensure a successful flight.

The chrysalis we observed became more translucent as the monarch formed more fully within it, until one day we could see right through the thin walls of the chrysalis to the folded-up butterfly inside.

When the butterfly decides to emerge, it takes only a couple of minutes for it to tear open the bottom of the chrysalis and climb out, head first, to make its grand debut.

At first, its wings are wet and crumpled, so it spends its time drying, pumping fluid from its thorax into the wings to stretch and plump them. Meanwhile, the butterfly is also using its labial palps (butterfly mouth) to construct its proboscis (like a tongue) which initially hangs in two parts, then becomes one as the butterfly hangs and dries.

Butterflies that emerge after mid-August are the fourth generation of those monarchs that left Mexico that spring. This generation of eastern North American monarchs will instinctively fly thousands of miles toward the Oyamel Fir Trees in Mexico’s Sierra Madre Oriental mountain range to overwinter. Traveling up to 3,000 miles, they migrate farther than all other tropical butterflies worldwide.

Christina Moresi is an Environmental Education Planner at the Wissahickon Environmental Center. Maris Harmon was a 2017 summer educator at the Wissahickon Environmental Center. Her original Monarch Diaries series can be found at wectreehouse.wixsite.com/findyourpath/single-post/Monarchs1.
Q. What are the main problems that bring Wissahickon Valley Park visitors to the Emergency Department (ED)?
A. Dehydration and the use of over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers. First, patients are often admitted to the hospital because they didn’t keep up with hydration. Most people need 64 ounces of water a day—about eight ounces every two hours while they’re awake—and more if they’re sweating and during warm weather. During vigorous exercise, additional water is lost not just in the form of sweat, but also in exhaled water vapors from heavier breathing. And Philadelphia’s high summer humidity makes it even harder to cool down. Working muscles too hard without adequate hydration can be serious business, potentially leading to a condition called rhabdomyolysis and a week-long hospital stay and risk of kidney damage. Prevention is simple: hydration and pacing your exercise.

Second, patients often come to the ED after mild overexertion, or a relatively minor injury. We would generally administer a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAIDs) by injection. Truthfully, it works the same as the OTC NSAID, such as ibuprofen, you could have taken on your own. Keep this medicine with you and try it first before heading to the ED. Rule of thumb: if the pain doesn’t improve in an hour or gets worse, seek medical attention. Tell the ED caregivers what pain medication you took and when. Note: Avoid NSAIDS if you have kidney or heart disease, diabetes, or bleeding issues.

Q. What is a common mishap in the Wissahickon and how can people avoid it?
A. If you’re running on the trails, you tend to focus your vision straight ahead, so it’s easy to lose sight of what’s under your feet, like tree roots, branches, and uneven surfaces. It’s the reason we see a lot of FOOSH—fall on outstretched hand—injuries from people instinctively reaching out their arms to catch themselves after tripping and falling forward. It’s the most common of the so-called defensive injuries and results in a break at the end of the forearm just before the wrist bone.

Also, remember to protect your head. When riding a bike or climbing, please wear a helmet at all times. That goes for horseback riding too. A fall from an animal that stands 15 feet high (three times the height of a child) can land someone at a Level 1 trauma center. Even ground falls can cause serious head injury. If you take any sort of blood thinner, any bump, even from a seemingly minor fall, should be evaluated in the ED.

Q. What are a couple of common first aid mistakes that people make?
A. A big one is using hydrogen peroxide for minor cuts and scrapes. Patients say they think peroxide’s bubbling action means it’s working, but it actually impairs natural wound healing. All you need is plain soap and water. To control more serious bleeding, the first line of defense is to press a single fingertip very hard against the wound. This distributes more force directly to the area and compresses it with more pounds per square inch than using additional fingers or the palm, which diffuse the pressure.

Another one is tick removal. We live in a heavily endemic area for Lyme ticks, so it’s not unusual to find that one has hitchhiked a ride home with you from the park. The best way to remove the entire tick is not with tweezers, which can leave pieces behind, but by wetting a sponge with soapy water and making small circles for about 60 seconds, then larger circles for about four or five minutes. Although it takes about 36 hours for a tick to attach itself, bite, and transmit the Lyme pathogen, it’s best to shower soon after being in heavily wooded areas. Then do a body check (or have someone do it for you)—ticks like to hide in moist, dark areas such as armpits, groin, behind ears, etc.
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 ticks. Bring water and a snack if desired. Unless otherwise noted, children over six are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. Walks are canceled in heavy rain. For more information, contact Shawn Green at green@fow.org. Visit fow.org for updates.

**TRAIL AMBASSADOR**

**WOODS & MEADOW WALK**
*With Kimberly Quinn*

**Saturday, June 29 • 11 am-1 pm**
Meet at Cedars House Café.

On this hike through woods to the Andorra Meadow and the Wissahickon Environmental Center, we’ll learn about the former Andorra Nursery, visit the Tree House, and see the Great Beech and Fallen Magnolia. Level: moderate. $2.5 miles.

**TRAILS LESS TRAVELED WITH GERRY SCHWEIGER**
*Sundays • 1-3 pm*

This series explores the many out-of-the-way places that make Wissahickon Valley Park unique, from a never-seen 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. Visit forw.org for more details about each hike.

**July 7 • Tolerating Obscure Trailheads**
Meet at the corner of Mt. Pleasant Place and N. Mt. Pleasant Rd. (Park on N. Mt. Pleasant between Wissahickon Ave. and Mt. Pleasant Place.) 2.75 miles.

**August 11 • Henry Avenue Bridge**
Meet at the corner of parking lot on Gypsy Lane near the NORTHBOUND Lincoln Dr. intersection with Gypsy Lane, opposite Wissahickon Hall. 2.25 miles.

**August 18 • Fingerspan Bridge**
Meet at Mt. Pleasant Place and N. Mt. Pleasant Rd. (Park on N. Mt. Pleasant between Wissahickon Ave. and Mt. Pleasant Place.) 1.25 miles.

**September 15 • Houston Statue and Monoshone Trail**
Meet at Johnson St. between Lincoln Dr. and Wissahickon Ave. (Johnson is one-way between Wissahickon Ave. and Lincoln Dr. Enter Johnson from Wissahickon.) 2.25 miles.

**FOW’S GUIDED HIKES CAN BE USED TO FILL NaturePHL PRESCRIPTIONS.**

**NaturePHL**

**July 9, Tuesday • 9-11:30 am**
Meet at Wissahickon Environmental Center. We will hike on a brick path but please see if you have appropriate shoes. Hiking shoes or boots recommended. We will find all kinds of plants, birds, and butterflies. Level: easy. 2.5 miles.

**July 11, Thursday • 10-12:30 pm**
Meet at the Mt. Airy Ave. Trailhead. This park entrance assures us of several kinds of photo opportunities—trees, stone walls and arches, and some interesting plant species. Wear sturdy footwear for possibly rocky trails, and clothes you won’t mind getting dirty if you choose to lie on the ground. Bring a camera. No dogs please. Level: moderate. 1.75 miles.

**July 13, Saturday • 10 am**
Meet at the lower parking lot at Historic Rittenhouse Town. We will discuss the history of the Toleration statue and do a brief meditation at the statue. Some elevation on the Orange Trail and some difficulty in climbing to the site. Level: moderate. 2.5 miles.

**August 18, Thursday • 6:30-8 pm**
Meet at the Hermit’s Cave Parking Lot. We will hike along the Orange Trail past the Toleration statue. Level: moderate. 2.5 miles.

**August 25, Thursday • 6:30-8 pm**
Meet at the corner of Mt. Pleasant Place and Wissahickon Ave. (Johnson is a one-way between the two.) 2.25 miles.

**August 28, Sunday • 10-12 pm**
Meet at Cedars House Café.

This hike takes us through woods to Andorra Meadow (near the famous Andorra Nursery). Level: easy. 2.5 miles.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE WISSAHICKON

VOLOONTEER 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 drains and grade reversals, repairing stone work, narrowing widened trails, and emergency trail repair. Meeting at different locations each week. Check FOW's Events webpage for location details: fow.org/events.

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/volunteer for more information.

THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
Join Friends of Cresheim Trail to improve the trail 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 and Tox. Gloves provided and coffee and donuts will be served. For more information or to volunteer, contact Friends of Cresheim Trail at info@cresheimtrail.org or 215-715-9159.

WISSAHICKON VALLEY WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
WWA 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 70 Morris Road in Ambler. More info. at www.wva.org.

RUNNING CLUBS

EVERY THURSDAY
Wissahickon Wanderers Trail Run. 4-5 miles. Starts 6:30 p.m. sharp 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 wanderersrunningclub.org.

EVERY SATURDAY
Shawmont Running Club. Starts at Northwestern Ave. & Andorra Rd. (north end of Forbidden Drive). From the 2nd Saturday in May through the 2nd Saturday in October, start 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.

HISTORIC RITENHOUSE TOWN

FUTURE EVENTS

MAY 20 | 8:30 AM
Join us and FOW Trail Ambassador Kris Soffa for this hike to Andorra Meadow. We'll hike on the last Friday of each month. She will tour a fast-paced hike through the Wissahickon woods. Registration is a must for this walk. Join us at the Tree House after the walk. Adults only.

WISSAHICKON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

SUMMER SOLSTICE HIKE
THURSDAY, JUNE 20 | 5:30 AM
Rise and shine! It's summertime! Celebrate the longest day of the year by joining us on this fast-paced hike through the Wissahickon woods. Registration is a must for this walk. Join us at the Tree House after the walk. Adults only.

NESTING BIRDS OF THE ANDORRA NATURAL AREA
SATURDAY, JUNE 22 | 8:00 AM
Meet local bird expert Martin Satter at Hoxton Playground (900 Grakyn Lane, 19129) to observe nesting birds in Houston Meadow. All ages.

FIRELY FIREWORKS
MONDAY/TUESDAY, JULY 1 & 2 | 8:30-9:30 PM
Begin the holiday celebration with an evening at the Andorra Meadow and enjoy an explosive display brought to us by our state insect...the firefly. These fascinating creatures light up the meadow with bioluminescence. Bring a blanket and bug spray! We will also listen for night singing insects, and use our bat detector to identify any bats. All ages.

WINEBERRY WILD
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10 | 4-6:30 PM
In this summer edition of Kids Explore, we will head out for a special expedition to find and eat wineberries - a raspberry-like fruit that is highly invasive in the Wissahickon but delicious to eat. Ages 5-12 with adult.

BUG & BAT TWILIGHT WALK
MONDAY, JULY 15 | 7-8:30 PM
Join us and FOW Trail Ambassador Kris Soffa for the hike to Andorra Meadow. We'll look for fireflies and listen to the chirping of our bat echolocator devices as we watch bats swooping above us catching insects for their supper. No pets please. Ages 5+ with adult.

HIKING WITH MAURA THE EXPLORER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 | 7:30 PM
Meet local bird expert Martin Satter at Hoxton Playground (900 Grakyn Lane, 19129) to catch another early wave of fall migration in Houston Meadow. All ages.

PRIMUS SOLO HIKING WITH MAURA THE EXPLORER
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 | 7:30 PM
This program will take the adventurers into the forest at night. Hunt for animal signs, listen for nighttime sounds, and enjoy marshmallows and s'mores around a campfire. Adults 6+. Campfire. All ages.

HISTORIC RITENHOUSE TOWN

FUTURE EVENTS

MONDAY, JULY 8 | 1 PM
Meet local bird expert Martin Satter to observe nesting birds in Andorra and Harpers Meadows. All ages.

NESTING BIRDS OF THE ANDORRA NATURAL AREA
SATURDAY, JULY 21 | 8 AM
Meet local bird expert Martin Satter to observe nesting birds in Andorra and Harpers Meadows. All ages.

STOP BY TO MEET WITH FRIENDS OF THE WISSAHICKON

MONDAY, AUGUST 13 | 7 PM
Visit our FREE membership event and enjoy a tour of the natural area with FOW Executive Director Maura McCarthy.

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

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER, AND INSTAGRAM

Future calendar listings for the newsletter may be placed by contacting Friends of the Wissahickon at 215-247-0417 or office@fow.org. The Calendar of Events in the Wissahickon may also be viewed at fow.org, which updates on various events, including cancellations.

Membership level

Friends of the Wissahickon • Summer 2019

q $20 Limited Income/Students
q $54 Basic
q $75 Family*
q $100 Contributing*
q $230 Sponsor*
q $500 Patron*
q Society of Generous Friends* $1000
q $5000
q $10,000 or above

q Choice of:
q Hat
q Good Night Wissahickon Valley Park T-shirt
q Please keep the premium and use the entire membership fee for the Park.

Name______________________________
Street_______________________________
City ___________________ State ______ Zip Code ______
Phone (Home) ___________________ (Work) _______ E-mail ________________________

Signature ________________________
Method of Payment
q Check Enclosed (payable to Friends of the Wissahickon)
q Charge my:
q VISA [ ] Mastercard [ ] AmX [ ] Discover [ ]
q Auto-renew my membership annually (credit card info. required)
q Card Number ____________________________
q Expiration Date ____________________________
q Signature ____________________________

Please return to: 40 W. Evergreen Ave., Suite 108, Philadelphia, PA 19138-3324 • tel 215-247-0417 • office@fow.org • fow.org

Contributions to Friends are tax deductible as permitted by current law.
The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll free, within Pennsylvania (800) 732-0999.
JOIN US FOR OUR
ICE CREAM
SOCIAL.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14
3PM-5PM
HISTORIC RITTENHOUSE TOWN
For GPS directions, use 6034 Wissahickon Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144

Join us for a lovely afternoon of free ice cream, live music, and nature activities for the whole family with FOW staff and volunteers and the staff from the Wissahickon Environmental Center.

Sponsored by:

UNIVEST
BANKING | INSURANCE | INVESTMENTS

Wissahickon Valley Park stays clean thanks to park visitors and Friends of the Wissahickon volunteers. To get involved visit fow.org/volunteering. If you’d like to get involved in the conservation of Wissahickon Valley Park, check out our Upcoming Volunteer Service Days page at fow.org/volunteering.

LEAVE NO TRACE OF TRASH

OW is always striving for a cleaner and litter-free Wissahickon. This not only looks nicer, but also helps to protect the water quality of the Wissahickon Creek, a source of drinking water for one in three Philadelphians, and the habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife that live in the park. In an effort to encourage more park users to adopt a “carry-in, carry-out” philosophy, we have removed the unsightly and often inaccessible trash cans at Devil’s Pool and put up more signage to ask visitors to carry their trash out with them. Devil’s Pool is one of the most beautiful and heavily visited sections of the park, so we hope that this change in messaging will help keep this treasured area more beautiful.

But change doesn’t happen overnight. We need you to help us keep the Wissahickon beautiful and litter-free. Along with continued outreach and messaging on our “carry-out” philosophy, we will be running weekly cleanups on Thursday afternoons in Devil’s Pool, Magargee Dam, and other popular locations in the Valley Green area. If you’d like to get involved in the conservation of Wissahickon Valley Park, check out our Upcoming Volunteer Service Days page at fow.org/volunteering.