FOW
field notes
DISPATCHES from the WISSAHICKON
FRIENDS OF THE WISSAHICKON
2022 ANNUAL REPORT

2022 was a year of building back to pre-pandemic levels of stewardship and engagement—and, in some cases, beyond.

Isn't it nice to be back together in person?

That sentiment seemed to echo throughout the Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW) universe in 2022. We were excited—and grateful—to be back out in the park enjoying activities with our friends, from cleanups to guided hikes and public meetings.

Highlights

A record 425 people attended our annual Ice Cream Social; the largest number of corporate groups in one year—17—joined us for service days; and when we and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation closed Lincoln Drive for a large-scale cleanup, more than 100 volunteers came to help. We closed out 2022 with our highest number of volunteer service days in any year (176), capturing 11,827 volunteer hours—nearly 26% more than in 2021! And we welcomed the first class of Trail Ambassadors and Crew Leaders in two years. FOW was able to hire more full-time and seasonal staff members, which increased our capacity to keep up with educational outreach to park users, host consistent cleanup days in high-use spaces, and ramp up for our largest year of large-scale restoration projects yet in 2023.

Photo credit: Krieger

Photo credit: FOW

Investing in the beauty and resilience of our beloved urban forest

2022 saw much progress on several capital trail and habitat improvement investments:

· The $2.5 million Valley Green Run Restoration and Pedestrian Bridge Project, expected to be completed by the end of 2023, will stabilize the streambank, reduce water flow, and restore an essential trailhead while the beautiful, functional bridge and viewing platform is destined to become the newest iconic feature to grace our park.

· Design on the Germantown Neighborhood Connection Project (aka the Harvey Street Project) continued with the goal of creating safe pedestrian access to the park from Wissahickon Avenue near Rittenhouse Street for neighborhood residents who currently must cross heavily trafficked Lincoln Drive. New plantings and increased stewardship will beautify the area, discourage illegal dumping, and encourage more recreation. Developed in collaboration with neighbors, contractors, and other stakeholders, the project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Councilwoman Cindy Bass, the National Recreation and Park Association, Sensodyne, and the Clean Air Council.

· The ongoing East Falls Reroute and Habitat Restoration Project will close a rapidly eroding, steep trail, then reroute it and install native plantings to mitigate stormwater runoff. This project is one of five outlined in the Sustainable Trails Completion Plan.

· We completed our Restroom Facilities Master Plan, which helped us identify up to 16 potential sites for toilets in up to seven different locations. A key goal of this major strategic project is reducing human impact in our watershed park. Many thanks to the over 1,000 people who contributed via survey and public comment to inform and help shape the plan.

Guiding FOW's work are elements from our three-year Strategic Blueprint, which began in 2018 but was extended through 2022 because of the pandemic.

Photo credit: Hunter Nichols

Building on momentum

The post-pandemic rebound of our volunteer corps and the amazing gain in financial support we saw during the pandemic are prime examples of how a broad base of ongoing support directly relates to our ability to get things done. As we move ever closer to our centennial in 2024, we are acutely aware that we need to continue gaining such momentum year after year to sustain us. Long-lasting, wide-reaching stability will cement our capacity to develop critical infrastructure in the Wissahickon, manage stormwater runoff, improve visitors' experiences, and engage with the community through education and outreach ... the possibilities are endless.

Treasuring the natural world is about more than just passing through it. It's also about stewardship and planning for the future. Join us in taking care of our very special place. Because when the Wissahickon Valley Park thrives, we all do.

Ruffian

Ruffian Tittmann
Executive Director

Alyssa

Alyssa Edwards
President

FRIENDS
OF THE
WISSAHICKON

TREASURER'S REPORT

2022 proved to be another tremendous year for Friends of the Wissahickon. We ended the year in a strong financial position with Contributed & Earned income totaling $2,200,000, marking a $245,000 increase from 2021. At year end, a total of $472,000 remained in funds without donor restrictions; this will cover a combination of personnel and operating costs in 2023 and allow us to increase operating reserves. During the last quarter of the year, we also raised $440,000 for the Valley Green Pedestrian Bridge project through donor-restricted contributions. This project is part of the larger ongoing $2.5 million restoration project of Valley Green Run. These financial and non-monetary contributions continue to exhibit strong community support and trust for the organization.

As we begin 2023, we continue to execute on our 2022 plans and pursue our fundraising goals. To start the year, we were awarded an additional $356,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

We are excited for the upcoming projects and activities on the horizon for the Wissahickon this year. Our staff and dedicated volunteers look forward to carrying out our mission of conserving the natural beauty and wildness of the park. We thank our visitors, volunteers, and donors for supporting these efforts.

Submitted by

Darium K Poke

Darium Poke, Treasurer

**Includes donated services.
Note: All 2021 and 2022 figures are audited.

ASSETS

ASSETS	2021	2022
Cash	$852,781	$646,554
Investments	$1,238,129	$1,245,497
Contributions & Grants Receivable, Net	$95,376	$577,154
Operating Lease Right-of-Use Asset	N/A	$141,877
Other Assets	$84,255	$103,807
TOTAL ASSETS	$2,270,541	$2,714,889

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES	2021	2022
Valley Green Inn Reserve	$25,000	$25,000
Accounts Payable	$133,707	$174,802
Operating Lease Liability	N/A	$141,877
EIDL COVID Loan Payable	$500,000	$522,525
TOTAL LIABILITIES	$658,707	$864,204
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	$767,145	$472,331
With Donor Restrictions	$844,689	$1,378,354
TOTAL NET ASSETS	$1,611,834	$1,850,685
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	$2,270,541	$2,714,889

REVENUE & EXPENSES

REVENUE	2021	2022
COVID Relief Funding	$268,677	N/A
Membership	$301,438	$324,794
Contributions & Grants	$1,256,193	$1,835,789
Donated Services	$9,678	N/A
Other Income	$153,617	$74,379
TOTAL REVENUE	$1,989,603	$2,234,962
EXPENSES		
Programs	$1,112,801	$1,342,741
Development & Marketing	$268,114	$330,146
Management	$212,201**	$323,224**
TOTAL EXPENSES	$1,593,116	$1,996,111

Volunteers are the engine that drives our stewardship. The Wissahickon Valley Park would not be the same without them.

Engagement

VOLUNTEER SERVICE:

- **1,367 individual volunteers**
- **176 service days**—most ever in one year!
- **11,827 hours**—nearly 26% more than in 2021!
- **87 Wissahero shifts**—our solo stewards collected 2,160 pounds of litter in over 200 hours

TRAIL AMBASSADORS:

- **275 outreach shifts** with 67 Walks & Talks—over 600 attendees
- **15 new TAs**—the first class in 2 years

GROUP ENGAGEMENT:

Youth

- **Nine school groups** from The Episcopal Academy, Friends Select, and Woodlynde School
- **16 seniors** from W.B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences natural resource management class met each week, plus 2 summer interns for five weeks
- **Eagle Scouts**
  - One Scout's project repaired the boardwalk and built a turnpike on the trail in Carpenter's Woods
  - Another helped cut back invasives and clean out storm drains
- **Nearly 200 people attended Let's Go Outdoors** community programming centered around the partnership with FOW's Little Friends of the Wissahickon program

Corporate

17 corporate groups – the most in one year!

- Baker Tilly (twice)
- Boston Consulting Group
- Deloitte Green
- DPS
- Green Mountain Energy
- Hamilton Lane
- hMetrix
- IPS
- NewRez
- Penn Beer
- Univest
- Vertex
- Victrex
- WTW
- Xylem
- ZS Associates

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Lectures, virtual events & public meetings—**1,895 attendees**

Park users and neighbors engaged with FOW online:

- FOW.org – **783,586 page visits**
- Facebook – **23,069 friends**
- Twitter – **3166 followers**
- Instagram – **28,653 followers**

Photo credit: Brad Maule

Photo credit: FOW

Whether it's school groups or Scouts fulfilling Eagle projects, we love when young people help steward the Wissahickon.

Photo credit: FOW

Photo credit: FOW

Infrastructure

- 20+ miles of trail improved, rerouted, and/or cleared from the corridor, mostly by Crew Leaders who also:
  - Conducted a large planting along the Monster Trail
  - Rock armored a large swale at Blue Bell Park
  - Repaired a gully on the Lavender Trail and installed logs on the hillside to slow stormwater flow
  - Removed a collapsing bridge near the Summit Ave. trailhead
- 17 new Crew Leaders, the first in 2 years
- 64 downed trees removed from the trails
- 475+ fence rails and posts were repaired by the Structures Crew

We also worked with the Eastern Pennsylvania Alliance of Climbers to remove graffiti from the rocks on the paved bike path

Photo credit: Brad Maule

Habitat

- Nearly four acres of invasive plants removed
- 740 native trees and shrubs planted
- 1,206 herbaceous plants installed, many of which were used to create a pollinator garden, turning a stormwater pond into a healthy habitat
- 20+ tons of litter removed
- Habitat boxes (young fledged):
  - 14 Eastern Bluebirds
  - Three Carolina Chickadees
  - 85 House Wrens
  - 85 Tree Swallows

Bluebirds are taking wing! We fledged 14 from our habitat boxes, up from eight in 2021. A sure sign that our Andorra and Houston Meadows are thriving.

Photo credit: Carol Beam

Photo credit: Charles Uniatowski

Members are vital advocates for our conservation mission in the Wissahickon Valley Park and a powerful voice for the watershed.

With special recognition to our national, state, and city partners:

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation
Philadelphia Streets Department
Philadelphia Water Department
The Cedars House Café
Fairmount Park Conservancy
The Friends of Cresheim Trail
Historic Rittenhouse Town
Let's Go Outdoors
PAPERtrail Bike Cafe
PowerCorpsPHL
Wissahickon Restoration Volunteers

PowerCorpsPHL to the rescue. We were lucky to have a crew from the City's workforce development initiative to help us clear downed trees from the trails.

Photo credit: Brad Maule

DONORS

Friends of the Wissahickon wishes to extend thanks to all those who financially supported our work in 2022. 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 $500.

- ♦ Current members of FOW's Board of Directors
- ♦ Current members of the Society of Generous Friends who have contributed $1,000 or more. These major gifts are unrestricted and support the mission of Friends of the Wissahickon.
- ● Donors who supported the Lower Valley Green Run Restoration and Pedestrian Bridge Project
- ♦ Deceased

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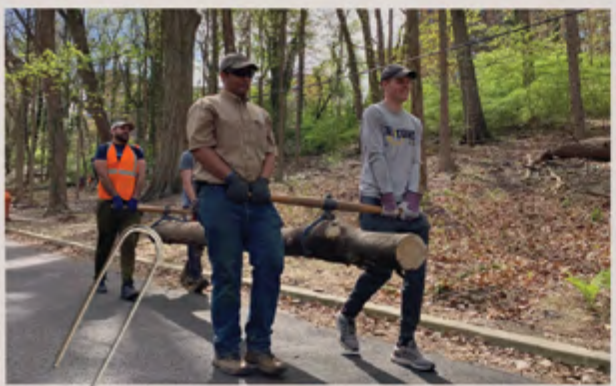

Photo credit: FOW

Our pilot Zone Steward Program is working! Dividing the park into 18 mini zones is helping Crew Leaders better monitor and steward the park by focusing on areas needing repair and other trail work.

The Biennial Wissahickon Photo Contest 2022 we hosted with the Woodmere Art Museum and Wissahickon Trails captured the park's beauty in all seasons. Our team of skilled nature and wildlife judges chose this Best in Show winner by Daniel Kalamarides for his amazing shot of a male northern flicker spitting wood chips out of a nest cavity near Houston Meadow.

Photo credit: Daniel Kalamarides

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Cynthia and Martin Heckscher

In memory of The One and Only Maggie!
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Anonymous

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Andrea Michel

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Abigail Lederman

In memory of Mitchell Michalak
Jonathan Weiner

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Patricia Kozo
Tanya Olszewski

In honor of Samantha Morse, who loved trees and Valley Green
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In honor of Timothy Moyer
Myriam Exume

In honor of My Volunteer Recognition
Amy Yuter

In memory of David Nation
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In memory or Betty White
Lauren Malinowski
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Susan Henick

In honor of The Wilmerding Family
Daniel Rosenak

In memory of Stanley Woodward
Marie Woodward

In memory of Charles Zimmerman
Free Library of Springfield Township Employees

While great care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of these lists, mistakes can occur. Please accept our sincere apologies for any discrepancies, and let us know if you are listed incorrectly.

FOW would like to recognize the following organizations for their support:

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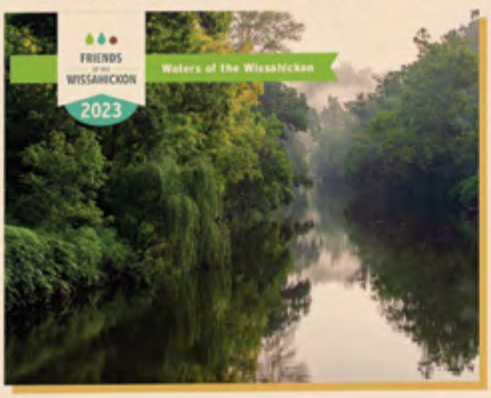

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