

# Streamlines

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***Enclosed: Summer 2017 Program Calendar***

About Green Valleys  
Watershed Association

**Our Mission: to protect, preserve, and restore the natural waterways of northern Chester County. We inspire, educate, and involve our community to make a difference for this generation and for generations to come.**

Welkinweir: "where sky meets water"

Our headquarters in East Nantmeal Township is a spectacular property which showcases our organization's mission. Originally the home of founding members Everett & Grace Rodebaugh, the 197 acres of permanently preserved land feature a 55-acre arboretum, wetlands, meadows, and forest habitats. The property hosts many of our environmental education programs, along with a growing collection of sustainability demonstration projects.

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Cover Image: The Valley Creek running high after a storm.  
© Margot Taylor, 2016.



# FROM THE DIRECTOR

## Weekend Programs at Welkinweir!



**Spring, with all its natural beauty, has arrived and this is a wonderful time to re-connect with nature.** Based on your survey feedback we are adding more nature-based topics to our weekend walks - from native tree ID and wildflower walks, to pollinator & butterfly workshops and walks.

Bird walks, our longest-running weekend program, are led by naturalists from Valley Forge Audubon Society. Nearly 150 bird species have been spotted here - so far - and the list keeps growing. You don't have to be an expert to attend, but binoculars are recommended! Walk leaders are very knowledgeable and will help you sharpen your visual identification and birding-by-ear skills. Or, try out one of our species ID walks: it is a great way to learn more about our local biodiversity and treat yourself to a

much-deserved walk through Welkinweir's meadows and woods. You might see *Painted Turtles* like the one below, or even rarities like the *Cranefly Orchid* pictured above! See our online Programs Calendar for dates and topics: [www.greenvalleys.org/events/](http://www.greenvalleys.org/events/).



Yours in the watersheds,

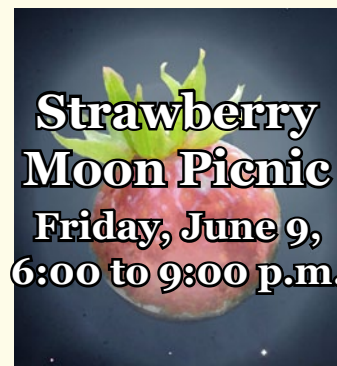
Victoria Laubach  
Executive Director

### Upcoming Events



Join us for a Mother's Day celebration featuring an organ concert, guided house & garden tours, and a light Afternoon Tea.

Pre-registration only by May 7: visit [www.welkinweir.org/special-events.html](http://www.welkinweir.org/special-events.html)



Pack a picnic and watch the moon rise over Welkinweir! Explore the mysteries of the "Strawberry Moon" through educational programs open to all ages.

Free and open to all; donations welcome.



Welkinweir will be open to the public for extended hours this summer! Guided nature walk starts each Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m.

Free and open to all; donations welcome.

# MAKING THE LAND-WATER CONNECTION

## Advocacy Tips for Concerned Citizens

### You can help keep momentum going for watersheds & water quality protection!

Northern Chester County's streams are healthier today than they have been in the past. Over forty years of water quality monitoring data show improving trends in aquatic insect populations; birds of prey like Bald Eagle and Osprey are becoming increasingly common sights in areas they were formerly absent from; and conservation of lands critical to protecting water quality is accelerating throughout the region. **Let's keep this positive momentum going!**

It is especially important now for citizens to contact their elected officials and urge them to make clean water a priority. Protecting and restoring local rivers and streams ensures that families, farms, businesses, and generations to come can rely on safe drinking water supplies and places to enjoy fishing, boating, wildlife watching, and reflection in nature.

**Green Valleys' founding is proof of the power of citizen action.** In 1964, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed to dam the French Creek, concerned citizens mobilized quickly and effectively to prevent construction of the dam and resulting reservoir, protecting the community and habitats along the creek.

**Your voice makes an impact on the decisions that officials make. We have assembled the following tips from former Capitol Hill staffers that will help you best make your voice heard by your representative. Not sure whom to call? Visit [www.usa.gov/elected-officials](http://www.usa.gov/elected-officials) to find your representatives at the federal, state, and local levels and how to reach them.**

- 1. Keep in touch with your representatives.** You can follow the actions taken by your elected officials on issues important to you by subscribing to their newsletters or e-mails. Most municipalities also provide news and notices to residents via email or on their websites.
- 2. Phone calls make the most impact, followed by e-mails, then social media.** Officials do use Facebook and Twitter to "take the pulse" of where their constituents stand on a given issue; and e-mails provide a quick and convenient way to state your position. However, brief, sincere phone calls or voicemail messages create a far more personal connection.
  - a. Bonus: Face-to-face meetings with your elected official make an even greater impact!** Personal visits to a politician's office, or attendance at a town hall meeting, are one of the most effective ways to influence your representatives.
- 3. When calling, confirm that you are a constituent.** Staffers will only record your position on a given issue if they can confirm that you are a resident of the area their official represents. Give your name, city, and zip code; some officials like House Representatives may require a street address to confirm that you live within their congressional district.
- 4. Keep your statement simple and direct: state the issue and your position on it.** Federal staffers field hundreds of calls each day; they may not be able to record any more detail than who is in favor of an issue and who is against.
- 5. Don't forget your state and local representatives!** Much emphasis is placed on our representatives in Washington, D.C.; at the same time, connecting with state and local officials can ensure that positive changes are made right in our communities. Plus, constituents often have the opportunity for more in-depth conversations with these representatives.
- 6. Please be courteous!** Without the hard work of the staffers answering phone calls and tallying our voices, our elected officials could not represent us.

**What does this sound like? "Hi, my name is J. Smith, and I'm a resident of Phoenixville, zip code 19460. I am opposed to the proposed spending cuts to the Land & Water Conservation Fund, and I urge the Senator to please oppose any measures that would eliminate funding for programs that restore and protect water quality. Thank you for your time!"**

**You can make a difference!** GVWA contacts our supporters through email Action Alerts when there are issues that directly affect the health of northern Chester County's streams. You can sign up to receive these Action Alerts and be a clean streams advocate: please visit [www.greenvalleys.org/stay-connected/](http://www.greenvalleys.org/stay-connected/) and check the "Action Alerts" box when entering your current email address!

**By staying informed and in regular contact with your local, state, and federal elected officials, you can make your voice heard. And the more we make our voices heard, the better we can ensure that our streams, communities, and open spaces will remain protected and healthy for generations to come. --Kelsey Stanton, Communications Coordinator**

# WATERSHED RESTORATION

## Working with Communities to Capture Stormwater

### Managing Runoff & Creating Habitat on Campuses

Green Valleys is working with several institutions throughout our stewardship area to improve how they manage stormwater on their facilities. Each “green stormwater infrastructure” project will not only capture and filter runoff to protect downstream water supplies; they will also provide wildlife habitat and educational opportunities for students and visitors.

#### Phoenixville Area Middle School

Our work with Phoenixville Area Middle School will continue this year, when we convert a mostly turf-covered mini-basin into a rain garden and outdoor classroom. The rain garden will capture and filter precipitation from the school’s gymnasium roof, and will include educational signage about stormwater.

#### West Vincent Elementary School

We are partnering with West Vincent Elementary School to

naturalize their stormwater detention basin, transforming it from lawn to a meadow-like haven for wildlife.

#### Penn State University at Great Valley

Basin naturalization planning is ongoing for 3 basins at Penn State’s Great Valley campus. These naturalizations are funded by a PADEP Growing Greener grant.

### Homeowners Association Outreach

Together with support from the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, we are working with the **WeatherStone Community Association** in West Vincent Township to create an open space management plan that will guide best practices to help protect the nearby Birch Run. We have contracted Princeton Hydro to write the plan. In addition, we are working with WeatherStone to naturalize one of the development’s stormwater basins; this project will demonstrate the water quality, habitat, and aesthetic benefits of naturalized basins.

## AmeriCorps Members “Get Things Done” at Birch Run

Maintenance work at the Griffith Farm restoration site in West Vincent Township at the headwaters to the Birch Run got a big boost in March when we were the grant recipients of a Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) grant for a group of eight young adults from AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps, *photo at right*). Using the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s as a model, AmeriCorps NCCC is built on the belief that civic responsibility is an inherent duty of all citizens and that national service programs work effectively with local communities to address pressing needs.



Arriving promptly at 9 a.m., they picked up additional supplies and headed out to the field to reset tree tubes, remove invasive plants, and pick up any trash, putting in well over eight hours to have the site ready for the upcoming growing season.

Our appreciation to Bob Adams, TreeVitalize Watersheds Regional Manager for PHS, Nat Giraud, crew leader for the AmeriCorps team, and Margot Taylor, Watershed Restoration Coordinator for Green Valleys for a successful day. --Victoria Laubach

# WATERSHED SCIENCE

## Schuylkill Water Stewards: Citizen Science in Action

The SWS program is now in its fourth year. To date, we and our partner organizations have recruited and deployed 48 volunteers who collect water quality data in the French and Pickering Creeks, data which is enabling us to understand how nutrients, sediments, bacteria, and other contaminants are affecting the health of our streams. Data collection this year will also include habitat assessments and macroinvertebrates.

Volunteers are equipped with sampling equipment and pre-cleaned, certified sample containers to ensure sample integrity. We also recently upgraded to wireless in-stream probes to improve the data we are collecting streamside.

### Citizen Scientists are Transforming Field Data Collection

We look forward to continuing the Schuylkill Water Stewards program through 2017 and beyond. We will expand use of wireless and remote data collection technologies, as well as increase the frequency of volunteer data collection. Some SWS volunteers with streamside properties will be given the opportunity to host remote data collection stations on their

properties; these stations will collect continuous in-stream data to give us a “real-time” picture of water quality.

The Schuylkill Water Stewards program is just one example of how volunteers are contributing to scientific studies worldwide. “Citizen scientists” - everyone from elementary school students to retired scientists - are expanding the reach of initiatives that deepen understanding of the natural world by recording their observations of air & water quality, wildlife populations, weather, and much more. From the comfort of home, during a walk in the woods, all the way to multi-day expeditions...**there are limitless opportunities to participate in citizen science!**



## Stormwater “Performance Landscapes” Workshop

Green Valleys held a well-attended workshop in February for professionals and concerned citizens on monitoring and improving how landscapes manage stormwater. Each of the workshop’s 13 presenters shared their unique insight on evaluation and management strategies that ensure that these “stormwater performance landscapes” effectively capture and filter precipitation while supporting biodiversity.

We see a need to increase monitoring of these landscapes, also called green infrastructure or stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), in order to ensure that they adequately capture and filter rainwater runoff throughout their lifetime. We look forward to continuing to share knowledge about green infrastructure through similar workshops and eventually, through online webinars.

We are grateful to each of the workshop participants for

spending the evening with us; to Lavender Cat Creative for filming the workshop; and to the William Penn Foundation for their support of the program!

We would also like to thank each of our presenters for contributing to a fascinating and informative program: Zach Stepan from Chester County Conservation District, Maggie Dunn on behalf of Philadelphia Water Department, Andrea Welker from Villanova University, Clay Emerson from Princeton Hydro, Mark Gutshall from LandStudies, Inc., Eric Grindrod from the SSM Group, Inc., Jennifer Nichols from GreenWeaver Landscapes, LLC, Brian O’Neil from Weeds Inc., Dan Barringer from Natural Lands Trust, Chris Roche from Normandeau Associates, Inc., Michael Barcus from PMA Sustainable Solutions Group, and our own Michael Bullard and Margot Taylor! --Kelsey Stanton

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

## Choose Your Adventure at Summer Nature Day Camp!

New adventures and returning favorites start June 19!

Spaces are still available in many of our summer camp weeks. Camps run weekly, **June 19th through August 11th**. Each week has its own outdoors-based theme, so campers can choose their favorite weeks to attend.

**Campers of all ages** will enjoy nature walks to explore the numerous habitats at Welkinweir; educational games as well as free play; and hands-on activities such as examination of plant and animal biofacts, art projects, and water study. **New programs this year** include the 'Animal Engineers Mini Camp' on July 3rd, for all grade levels; and 'Nature Camp at Night', on Thursdays, for campers in 4th to 7th grades.

**For those families new to Nature Day Camp**, we invite you to visit Welkinweir to experience the beautiful setting that campers enjoy exploring each week! The next **Open House is Sunday, May 21st, 2:30-4:30 p.m.** at the Education Building next to the visitor's parking lot. Or, visit at your leisure during regular hours of 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., weekdays.

The Summer Nature Day Camp brochure, with fees, registration forms, and other details can be found at [www.greenvalleys.org/summer-nature-day-camp/](http://www.greenvalleys.org/summer-nature-day-camp/) or by contacting 610-469-8646 or [dwhite@greenvalleys.org](mailto:dwhite@greenvalleys.org).

### Support a Local Family in Need: Donate to the Summer Camp Scholarship Fund!

**There are children from Pottstown and surrounding communities waiting for scholarships in order to attend camp. Can you help give them a week of outdoor education and fun?**

Camp fees range from \$125 for a Kindergarten-aged child, to \$270 for a 7th grader. However, donations in any amount are appreciated. **Please visit [www.greenvalleys.org/summer-nature-day-camp/](http://www.greenvalleys.org/summer-nature-day-camp/) to contribute via credit card; or mail your donation to Green Valleys, attention "Scholarship Fund".** -- Dawn White, Education Coordinator

## After School Nature Explorers Clubs engage students in outdoor learning

Thanks to funding from the **Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation** and **The Claneil Foundation**, elementary and middle school students in the Pottstown School District can participate in Green Valleys' Nature Explorers Clubs free of charge.

During these after-school programs, students learn about the environment and the importance of protecting it through a variety of hands-on activities: from comparing animal adaptations through the examination of artifacts, to the importance of preventing water pollution through exercises that simulate cleaning "polluted" waterways (*right*).

Green Valleys also conducts after-school nature programs for students in Owen J. Roberts and Phoenixville Area School Districts. For more information, please contact 610-469-8646 or [dwhite@greenvalleys.org](mailto:dwhite@greenvalleys.org). --Dawn White



# WELKINWEIR

National Public Gardens Day is Friday, May 12  
We will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A 1-hour tour will start  
at 2:00 p.m.

Welkinweir, as a public garden, is joining with other public gardens to celebrate National Public Gardens Day to raise awareness of public gardens and the important role they play in their communities: gardens committed to community enrichment and environmental responsibility through community engagement, sustainable practices, and conservation.

## So, what's the difference between a park and an arboretum / botanical garden?

Susan Crane at Morris Arboretum put together the following, edited as it applies to Welkinweir:

- Parks are intended for recreation while arboreta / botanical gardens focus on plant science, education, conservation, and horticultural display.
- Parks have functional landscapes and plantings such as playing fields or picnic groves, versus gardens which have curated, labeled "living collections" and managed habitat areas.
- Parks are typically funded by taxes, while an arboretum like Welkinweir is community-supported by gifts, community events, and use fees. We receive no tax dollars!
- Parks encourage sports and dog walking, while arboreta / botanical gardens do not. No sports are allowed at Welkinweir; we do permit dogs on leashes only, and their owners must clean up after them. Only if everyone follows the rules can this privilege be enjoyed.
- Parks tend toward monocultures, with very little biodiversity, while arboreta / botanical gardens like Welkinweir are high in biodiversity! --Victoria Laubach



Join us for a Mother's Day celebration featuring an organ concert, guided house & garden tours, followed by tea on the terrace prepared by Ludwig's Village Market Catering and Winsome Tea.

Pre-registration only: visit [www.welkinweir.org/special-events.html](http://www.welkinweir.org/special-events.html)

## Volunteers Needed!

We need volunteers to help with guest check-in and tours for our Mother's Day event. Please contact Kelsey Stanton with your interest at 610-469-4900 or [kelsey@greenvalleys.org](mailto:kelsey@greenvalleys.org).



## Historic Railing Restored

The "southern cross" style railing original to the estate house (*archive photo, top left*) has been restored with support from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission's Keystone Preservation grant. The new reproduction railing (*bottom left*) was site-built by carpenter Justin Cannon, out of black locust (the "wood that built America") harvested from standing dead trees on site. The railing, as designed, has no roof penetrations, using instead a stainless steel frame that the wood posts and railing panels attach to, meaning that there will be no leaks in the rebuilt (2016) roof; also, should any wooden parts fail, they can be easily replaced without impacting the entire railing.

--Victoria Laubach

# The health of our watersheds has been our focus for over 50 years.

Green Valleys Watershed Association is located in northern Chester County, Pennsylvania, where our scenic watersheds are comprised primarily of Exceptional Value (EV) and High Quality (HQ) waters. These streams are in the top tier in Pennsylvania. They are a precious resource.



1368 Prizer Road  
Pottstown, PA 19465

[www.greenvalleys.org](http://www.greenvalleys.org)

610-469-4900

*Already renewed your membership? Share with a friend!*

## Please join us!

Your membership is an investment in clean water and healthy watersheds, for now and for future generations.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer to pay with:  Check (payable to GVWA)

Visa  MasterCard  Discover  American Express

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. \_\_\_/\_\_\_ CID \_\_\_\_\_ Phone\* \_\_\_\_\_

Email address\* \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Phone & email needed to process credit card payments. We do not share your information with other charitable organizations.*

Detach this form and mail with payment to:

**Green Valleys Watershed Association**  
1368 Prizer Road, Pottstown, PA 19465

Online membership also available at  
[www.greenvalleys.org/support](http://www.greenvalleys.org/support)

*Dues and contributions are tax-deductible. Green Valleys is a registered charitable organization. Copies of registration/financial information is available by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.*

**MEMBERSHIP** includes newsletter subscription, notice of special events and programs, and reduced rate to special programs, workshops, and Summer Nature Day Camp.

### Membership levels (please check one):

- Individual.....\$45
- Family.....\$60
- Naturalist.....\$100
- Environmentalist.....\$250
- Protector.....\$500
- Preservationist.....\$750
- Steward.....\$1,000

I am a:  New Member  Renewing Member

I am interested in including GVWA in my legacy planning.

Please notify me of GVWA volunteer opportunities:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_