

Streamlines

REFLECTING ON

50

YEARS

OF
WATERSHED
PROTECTION

**GREEN VALLEYS WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION at WELKINWEIR**

The mission of Green Valleys
Watershed Association is
to protect, preserve, and restore the
natural waterways of northern Chester
County. We inspire, educate, and
involve our community to make a
difference for our generation and for
generations to come.

Welkinweir -- Our headquarters
in East Nantmeal Township, Chester
County, is a spectacular property which
showcases our organization's Mission.
Originally home of founding members
Everett and Grace Rodebaugh, the 197
acres of permanently preserved land
features a 55-acre arboretum,
ecologically diverse wetlands, forested
riparian buffers, meadows, and forest
habitats. The property hosts our many
environmental education programs and
features an ever-growing collection of
projects that demonstrate sustainable
practices.

*Weekday visiting hours and information
on page 3.*

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Cover Image:

*A trio of native sycamore trees are
reflected in the water.*
© 2012 by Ed Bacon.

Photograph of Louisiana Waterthrush
on page 2 © William H. Majoros 2011.

GVA Turns 50: Reflections on our 50th Anniversary

2014 marks the 50th anniversary of Green Valleys Watershed Association and we have a number of events and activities planned throughout the year; we hope you will join us for them. From our beginning, in 1964 as the French Creek Watershed Association, formed by members of the local community under the leadership of Everett Rodebaugh, the broad purpose of the organization has been conservation, especially of the French Creek, which Everett described in his letter as "beautiful and relatively unspoiledwe want to see that it is kept that way."

The March 1968 letter from the president lists the *four P's* for the organization which are just important today as they were then. The first is *People*, referring to our members, since we are member supported. If you are not a member but reading this we invite you to join; if you haven't renewed your membership we encourage you to do so (Membership form on Page 7 or online at www.greenvalleys.org). Volunteers are an important part of our work. We have many opportunities available and we could use your talent and enthusiasm!

The second is *Projects*, a focus of the organization since its inception. One of the first projects was to retain the Academy of Natural Sciences Department of Limnology to perform a water quality survey of the French Creek (see 50 Years of Watershed Assessments on page 3). Today implementing projects to protect, restore, and improve our waters continues to be a focus of our work.

Publicity, keeping our members, supporters and the community informed of our work is the third P. Much has changed in communications since the 60's with the internet, social media, and a plethora of electronic devices. Be sure to "like" us on Facebook!

Finally there are *Proceeds*, the funds that support the day to day operations of the organization. These funds come from membership dues, contributions, grants, and fees for services and programs. For our 50th we have two challenge grants totaling \$50,000. We need your help to meet the challenge – no gift is too small to make a difference.

Thank you for your support that has enabled us to reach this milestone; with your ongoing support we look forward to our next 50 years.

Yours in the watersheds,

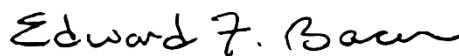


Victoria Laubach
Executive Director

50th Anniversary Challenge Fund

To celebrate 50 years of exceptional streams, we have created the *50th Anniversary Fund* – a way for our members to help us meet the two challenge grants we have received. Totaling \$50,000, these grants will match any donation, no matter how small. Your contribution will fund watershed study, education, and restoration efforts throughout the watersheds in which we work. Together we can achieve our mission of *protecting, preserving, and restoring the natural waterways of northern Chester County.*

Members like you – who have shared our vision of healthy, intact watersheds for all to enjoy over the years – make our work possible. Please join me in supporting our 50th Anniversary Fund today – your charitable gift, whether in the form of a cash donation or appreciated securities, will help ensure healthy water resources for generations to come!



Ed Bacon
Board President



We have updated our look – thanks to a generous donation from past president **David Zelinger**, we were able to hire the firm Water Words That Work to update our logo, *left*, and mission statement (*see sidebar, above*) to more accurately reflect the work the organization is doing.

50 Years of Watershed Assessment

In 1965, the newly-created French Creek Watershed Association (Green Valleys' original name) commissioned the Academy of Natural Sciences Department of Limnology to commence a survey of the French Creek main stem to determine its health in terms of aquatic life and water quality. The resulting report, "French Creek Cursory Survey for the French Creek Watershed Association", published in March 1966, summarized the survey's findings and noted the effect of human-related pollution on the stream's water quality. Below is an excerpt of the report:

From August 17 through August 20, 1965, the Limnology Department of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia made a cursory survey to estimate the condition of French Creek, Pennsylvania, in eight areas between Hopewell Lake and the Schuylkill River. In addition, four areas were visited on major tributaries. In December, 1965, two new areas were visited. This survey was made for the French Creek Watershed Association and was carried out under the direction of Dr. Ruth Patrick, Curator and Chairman of the Department of Limnology and Mr. Robert R. Grant, Jr., Survey Field Supervisor. The field work was done by Mr. Samuel Fuller and Mr. Robert R. Grant, Jr. They were aided at various times in the field or in the laboratory by Mr. David C. Knauer and Mr. M. L. Hoefle of the French Creek Watershed Association and Miss Evelyn Lake and Miss Noma Ann Roberts of the Academy staff, whose enthusiastic assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

The major macroscopic groups of aquatic organisms at each station were studied, as well as any obvious concentrations of microscopic life. In addition, data was obtained from various state agencies, such as the Pennsylvania Fish Commission, the Sanitary Water Board, etc. and incorporated in the report where appropriate.

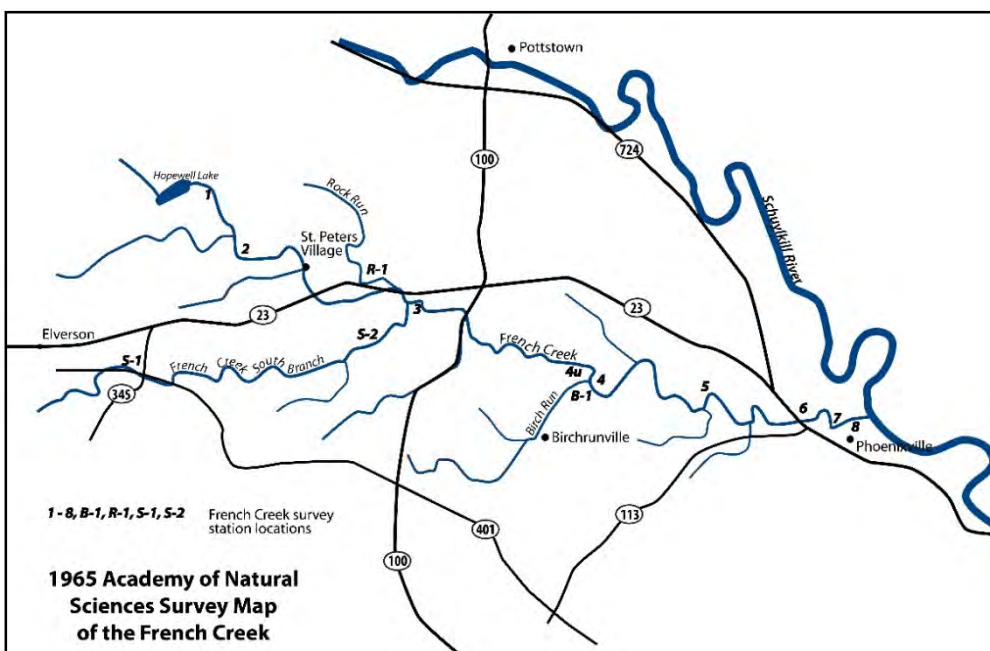
A map of the Academy's 14 survey locations is shown below. During their survey, staff found macroinvertebrate species that include two species

of mussels, and pollution-intolerant species such as caddis flies, stoneflies, and mayflies which indicate good water quality. At a few stations in Phoenixville and just downstream of Coventryville, however, Academy staff also found evidence of pollution from industrial wastes and untreated sewage. Their report categorized the French Creek in the 1960's as "an enriched eutrophic stream" and "there was no apparent deterioration in water quality until the stream reached Phoenixville".

This early initiative taken by Green Valleys' founders shows that throughout the history of our organization, we have always recognized that in order to protect a natural resource, we must first have a good assessment of it. Since that 1965 assessment, the French Creek's macroinvertebrate populations have steadily improved so that in 1995, when GVA first petitioned the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for Exceptional Value (EV) redesignation of portions of the French Creek, we did so based on our scientific understanding of the good health of those streams, and met with success. A follow-on petition also met with success, and now almost the entirety of French Creek is designated EV.

What lies ahead? In 2014 our organization is carrying out a comprehensive assessment of the French, Pigeon and Pickering Creeks. We are using new tools, such as computer modeling, as well as the standard methods and equipment which have been in use for decades. The knowledge we gain will be used to guide land conservation projects, identify special biodiversity areas in need of stronger protection, and also allow us to understand where potential sources of pollution are. We are strengthening old partnerships and making new ones to improve our monitoring program. Volunteers have played an important role in this work over the past five decades, and today, Green Valleys' Water Watchers team offers everyone a chance to take part in important citizen science work that increases our understanding of the watersheds.

- Michael Bullard and Kelsey Stanton



A map showing the locations of the Academy of Natural Sciences 1965 French Creek survey stations. Letters before station numbers indicate that the station was located on a tributary of the French Creek. For example: S-1 is the first station on the South Branch; R-1 is the station on the Rock Run, etc.

Did you know?

The Louisiana Waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*) is a warbler which spends its summers around forested streams in the eastern United States. It specializes in feeding on aquatic macroinvertebrates, which it catches on the wing or by plucking prey from stream bottoms. The waterthrush is one of many species that depends on the high quality habitat afforded by protected, forested watersheds, and is a great indicator species for assessing stream health.



Restoration Begins on Welkinweir Pipe Organ



Welkinweir possesses a rare and historic E. M. Skinner Organ Company (one of the greatest names in early 20th century American organ-building) pipe organ with a self-playing mechanism, giving us a unique window into the art and technology of the 19th and early 20th centuries. A centerpiece in Everett and Grace Rodebaugh's home, the Skinner Opus 742, an "orchestral" style of pipe organ, was originally built in 1928 for New York stockbroker Henry Towle's home on Park Avenue. When Everett and Grace planned their home with the help of architect Friedtjof

Tobiessen they wanted to include a pipe organ, gathering proposals from many firms, but settling on Skinner Opus 742, which was carefully removed, packed up, shipped on the train, and re-installed (as it was originally built) at Welkinweir. While the organ has been well-maintained, mostly by Brant Duddy from the 1970's until now, time has taken a toll. The instrument is an historic and cultural treasure, in part due to its original condition, and we are undertaking a two year process to restore the instrument, with support from the Wyncote Foundation. The restored Skinner player organ will be a central attraction to the property, allowing this treasure to be shared with future generations.



Another snow storm, another six weeks of winter, welcome to the time of the year when we are all looking forward to spring! At Welkinweir the beauty of winter is subtle – the branching structure of trees highlighted, textures and colors of conifers enhanced, or a glimpse of a bright color berry. There are even flowers that can be found blooming at this time of year.

A new favorite that we've incorporated just outside the windows of the estate house are the *Gold Collection* hellebores. Hellebores (*Helleborus* hybrids, below left) are known for their early flowering, evergreen leaves and deer resistance. The plants in this particular series were chosen for their early blooming – beginning in November and continuing through

April. To the north of the estate house is our young collection of hybrid witch hazels (*Hamamelis x intermedia* cultivars; 'Jelena' shown below center) - small, slow-growing trees with wispy, ribbon-like blooms in copper, yellow or red that pop against a white February snow and have a pleasant fragrance that permeates the garden. Snowdrops (*Galanthus sp.*, below right), whose very name conjures up the white stuff, are fall-planted bulbs that often bloom as early as December, heralding other bulbs that will soon bloom.

Come out and explore Welkinweir's winter wonderland and see what you can find in bloom!

Winter Collections



Visiting Welkinweir

The grounds are open to visitors during regular business hours (**Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**) Our large parking area is currently closed: **please park in the employee lot** east of the estate house.

While we currently allow dogs, we ask that you **respect others who are visiting by keeping dogs on a leash; please clean up after your dog (and encourage others to clean up after their dogs as well)** so that our policy of allowing dogs can continue.

We often have special programs or events occurring on weekends, and we ask, if you are a member who wants to visit on the weekend, to call during business hours so we can inform you of any upcoming events.

We offer Saturday morning walks (see calendar) that are open to all and we encourage you to come out to the property at this time. Staff will be available to answer any questions.

Is it summer yet? Register Now for Summer Nature Day Camp!

Summer may seem far away, but Green Valleys Summer Nature Day Camps are already planned! Our nature camps engage children ages 4 through 13 in fun and educational outdoor activities to help them better understand the natural world and how to preserve & protect it.

This year's weekly camp themes for children ages 4 through 11 include new educational activities and guest presenters all guaranteed to excite and educate campers of all ages!

Four weeks of outdoor adventures are offered for campers ages 12 and 13, who can choose to participate in a new offering, *Rockin' Around*, which includes visits to a cave and a rock gym; returning favorite *Expedition* offers canoeing and hiking at local natural areas. Campers can also participate in the popular optional *Thursday overnights*, held all four weeks, at Welkinweir or another local site.

Green Valleys camps also include special activities for all ages that add to the enjoyment and education of the campers:

Guest Presentations are always a hit with campers and counselors alike. One or more guest presenters are invited to organize a program that complements each week's theme. Presentations may include live animals, science demonstrations, outdoor skills, and other activities to involve campers in learning different concepts.

Every Friday is S'mores Friday! All campers enjoy gathering at the campfire to make s'mores courtesy of local grocery stores.

Parents are invited to see what their children did during the week when each group highlights their activities during the Friday afternoon **'Parent Show'**.



Dan Borkoski, of Sun Bear Apiary, teaches a group of campers about honeybees.



Clockwise, from left: CBS 3 interviews campers, "How do you beat the heat?"; Searching the stream for aquatic life; a camper and camp counselor relax in the shade by the pond; Campers relax in the shade to listen to a story.

2014 Summer Nature Day Camp

Camp registration begins **February 24th** for Green Valleys members, and **March 24th** for nonmembers.

The full camp brochure and registration forms can be found on our website at www.greenvalleys.org. Your favorite camps fill quickly, so be sure to enroll your children or grandchildren soon!

Camp Counselor Positions Open

GVA is taking applications for Senior and Junior Camp Counselors, as well as Counselors in Training. All position descriptions and applications can be found on the camp page of our website at www.greenvalleys.org. The deadline for all applications is April 30, 2014, but interested students are encouraged to submit earlier.

Camp Open Houses

Are you considering GVA's camps for your children but would like more information on what they do and where they explore and play? Visit Welkinweir at one of our **Saturday Camp Open Houses, April 5 or June 7 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.** Visit our facilities, walk the grounds, and talk with the Education Coordinator to answer your camp questions and ease any apprehensions campers may have.

If you wish to explore the grounds on your own, the property is open to the public **Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., beginning in April.** (Weekends are reserved for GVA members or by advance reservation. Please call 610-469-4900 to schedule a weekend visit.

Support a Child in Our Community Donate to the Summer Camp Scholarship Fund

Each year, many children have the opportunity to enjoy part of their summer at Nature Camp. Many other children in our community are not as fortunate. Last year, thanks to many generous donors to our Summer Camp Scholarship Fund, eight underprivileged children from the surrounding community were able to attend a week of camp of their choice.

Please consider assisting a family who cannot afford to send their child to camp. A donation of \$125 will send a younger child; and \$230 will send an older child to camp for one week; but any amount is appreciated and combined with other donations. Please send your contribution to *GVA's Summer Camp Scholarship Fund, Green Valleys Watershed Association, 1368 Prizer Road, Pottstown, PA 19465.*

Camp Needs

New or gently used:

- Small copier for camp activity planning
- Two sets of 2-way radios for counselor communication (at least a 2-mile range)
- Crayons
- Glue sticks
- Markers

Introducing our new Environmental Education Intern!

Hello, my name is Regan Dohm and I am thrilled to be joining the Green Valleys team as both the after school Nature Club educator and as the Environmental Education Intern for the 2014 Summer Camp season.

I graduated from Ursinus College in 2012 where I double majored in Biology and Environmental Studies expanding my curriculum to include a variety of coursework ranging from ecology to environmental problem solving. Since graduating, I have been traveling the country studying birds. In California, I counted and banded birds of prey on their migration south (which is where I was blessed enough to meet the impressive juvenile peregrine falcon *shown at right*). Then, I moved to Wisconsin where I interned at the International Crane Foundation studying the wild populations of sandhill cranes, and contributing to on-going research of the endangered whooping crane. My duties ranged from tracking, observing, and banding wild cranes to executing restorative prairie burns. In the fall, I will be returning to Wisconsin to pursue a master's degree from University of Wisconsin-Madison, where my thesis will explore the behavioral response of raptors to wind farms.

Although my background is heavy in field biology, I have a special place in my heart for environmental education; as an undergrad, I interned at the Academy of Natural Sciences in the Outside-In Exhibit where I helped children of all ages interact with and learn from this very hands-on exhibit. I am returning to education now as my way of giving back to the environmental community, a community that instilled in me a love and respect for nature that has followed me throughout my life.



As a child there was no greater joy in my summer than attending my local nature center's summer camp. These camps and educators helped shape me into the passionate environmentalist I am today, and I am truly indebted to them. It is now my hope to graduate into this role and spread my love of nature to the next generation.

Pottstown Middle School Nature Explorers Club offers Outdoor Fun and Education

By Dawn White, Educational Coordinator

"We get to go outside!", exclaimed a student when asked his favorite part of GVA's after school Nature Explorers Club, a 6-week pilot program held in November and December at the Pottstown Middle School.

Ten 5th grade students participated in the Club, which concluded on December 19, 2013. The Club, developed and taught by Dawn White, GVA's Education Coordinator, brought to students expanded awareness and appreciation of the natural world through a variety of hands-on activities and discussion. Among the students' favorite activities - using microscopes to observe items they found outside, making leaf rubbings, looking for and listening to songbirds, playing games, and pretending to "pollute" a lake and then trying to clean the water.

Parents were pleased with what their children learned as well. "My son was overexcited to be a part of the club. I hope they have it next year!" said one mother.

The Nature Club was provided free of charge to interested 5th graders, thanks to funding from Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, whose support has made this, and other pilot programs with the Pottstown School District, possible.

Nature Club primarily serves underprivileged students; students from low-income families make up about 74% of the student body at middle school, according to the Pottstown School District.

One mother's comment on the parent survey sums up what a satisfying experience this has been for everyone. - "I am very thankful that programs such as this gave this struggling single mom the chance to give her daughter a wonderful experience that I would not have been able to otherwise afford."



Above: Students from Pottstown Middle School Nature Explorers Club enjoy a day outside.

Green Valleys Watershed Association Community Nature Programs January - April 2014

For all program information and registration, please contact Dawn White at 610-469-8646, or e-mail at dwhite@greenvalleys.org.

Nature Programs at Welkinweir

NEW! Camping 101

Saturday, March 8, 6:00pm – Sunday, March 9, 9:00am
(Severe weather dates: March 15 – March 16).

First-time campers join us for a camp-out at Welkinweir! Learn how to pitch a tent, start a fire, and cook outdoors in a safe environment with available facilities. Enjoy a night-time walk and s'mores around the campfire before retiring under the stars. You provide your camping gear and tent. We'll provide food and expertise. *Ages 8 to adult. \$20/person GVA members; \$30 Nonmembers. Space limited. Register by Thursday, March 6.*

NEW! Night Owls

Tuesday, February 25, 6:00-7:00pm (Severe weather date: February 27).

Youngsters will delight in fun activities as they experience nature at dusk! Bundle up for a short nature walk. Then warm up inside with a snack, animal story and take-home craft. *Ages 3 to 6 with caregiver. Fees per child: \$8 GVA members, \$10 Nonmembers. Space limited. Register by Monday, February 24.*

Guided Nature Walks

Saturday mornings, rain or shine. FREE.

Join naturalists from Valley Forge Audubon Society to search for plants and wildlife. Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. *Ages 6 to adult. See our online Education calendar for more spring 2014 nature walk dates.*

March 8 – 9:00am

March 22 – 9:00am

Children's Nature Classes at Welkinweir

Little Wonders Classes (ages 2 - 3 with caregiver)

Tuesdays, 10:00-11:15am

March 25 – Fur, Feathers and Scales

April 1 – Nature Detectives

April 8 – Animals of the Night

April 15 – Bees, Butterflies and Other Bugs

Kinder Nature Classes (ages 3 - 5 with caregiver)

Wednesdays, 10:00-11:15am

March 26 – Fur, Feathers and Scales

April 2 – Nature Detectives

April 9 – Animals of the Night

April 16 – Bees, Butterflies and Other Bugs

Library Programs: Little Sprouts Nature Classes Ages 3 – 5 with caregiver

Henrietta Hankin Library: Mondays, 10:30-11:15am

January 13 – Nature's Winter Wonders

February 10 – Wildlife Detectives

March 10 – Happy Habitats

Registration required at http://www.ccls.org/cwo/Find_a_Library/HH.

Phoenixville Public Library: Fridays, 10:00-10:45 am

January 10 – Winter Wildlife

February 14 – Creature Coats and Coverings

March 14 – Animal Tales

Online registration required at www.phoenixvillelibrary.org.

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 _____

Township _____

I would prefer to pay by:

Check (made payable to GVA) Visa MasterCard
 Discover American Express

Credit Card # _____

Exp. ___ / ___ CID _____ Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Phone & e-mail 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

MEMBERSHIP includes newsletter subscription, notice of special events and programs, and reduced rate to special programs, workshops, and summer environmental camp.

Membership levels (please check one):

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

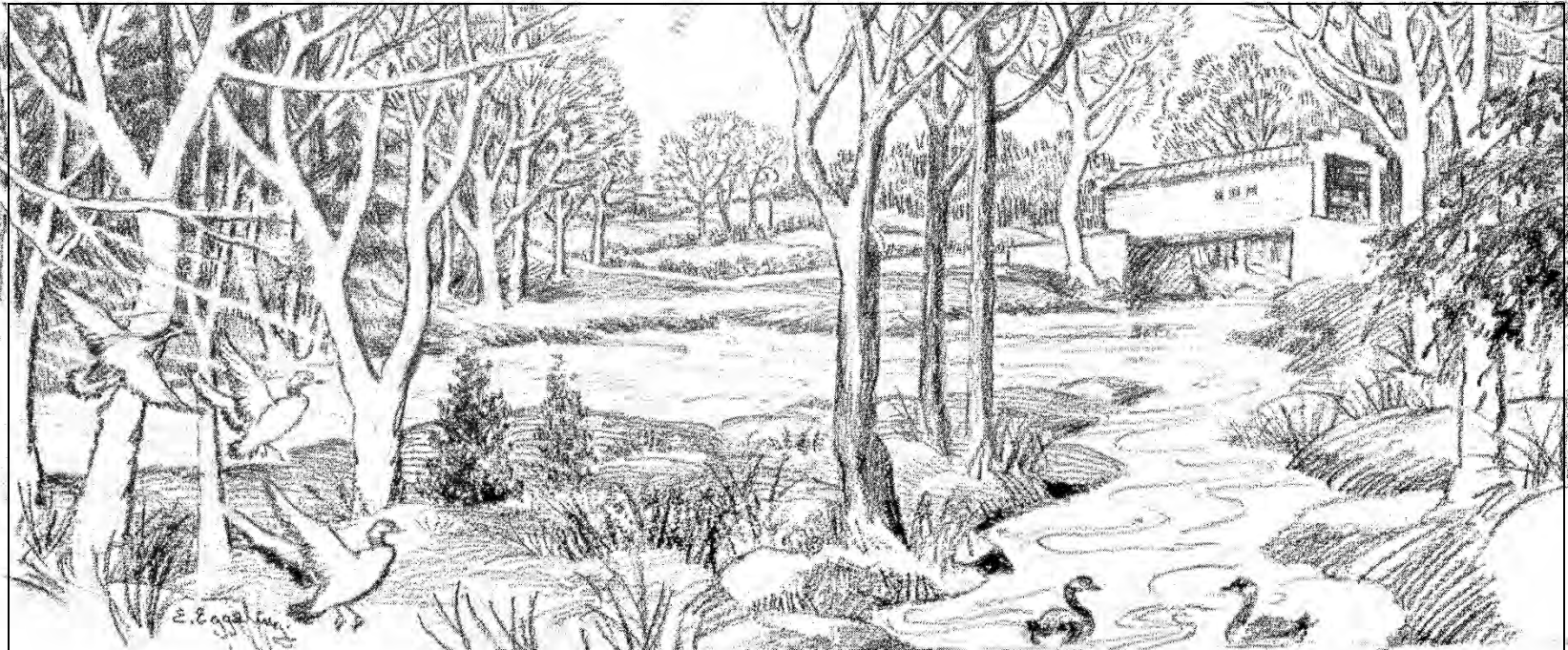
I am a: New Member Renewing Member

Become a "Friend" with an additional contribution: \$ _____
tax-deductible, non-membership support

Please notify me of GVA volunteer opportunities.

E-mail: _____

Dues and contributions are tax-deductible. Green Valleys Watershed Association is a registered charitable organization. A copy of the registration and financial information is available by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



50 YEARS AND COUNTING...

Visit our website at www.greenvalleys.org

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*Address correction(s)
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