

Streamlines

Fall 2015

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**GREEN VALLEYS
WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION**

*Protecting Northern Chester County's
Watersheds for 50 Years*

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 is a spectacular property which showcases our organization's Mission. Originally the home of founding members Everett and Grace Rodebaugh, the 197 acres of permanently preserved land feature a 55-acre arboretum, wetlands, riparian forest buffers, meadows and forest habitats. The property hosts many of our environmental education programs, along with a growing collection of sustainability demonstration projects. Visiting hours on [page 4](#).

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Cover Image:

Students from Owen J. Roberts high school horticulture class planted trees along the ponds at Welkinweir to expand the riparian buffer. See more images from our Watershed Restoration Program on [page 3](#). © 2014 Margot Taylor.

“Proper conservation is a continuing need; so therefore is the need for organizations such as Green Valleys Association”

Gleaned from our August 1974 newsletter, this statement is as true today as it was then. Our green valleys are home not only to our precious watersheds but also a diverse and thriving economy. With this economy often comes old *and* new threats to our watersheds. We need to bring all of our resources to addressing these threats, including the foundation upon which Green Valleys rests—you, our members.

We need you as citizen advocates, to help alert us to time sensitive issues. In this issue you'll read about how to take action when you see a pollution event. Our representatives at the local, state, and federal levels **need to hear from you** about your support for legislation that protects our land and water. In this issue, you can read about two vitally important pieces of federal legislation and how to support them.

On behalf of myself and all of the staff at Green Valleys, **thank you!** It is a privilege to work with you, and we look forward to our shared accomplishments in the years ahead.

Yours in the watersheds,



News & Notes

Annual Appeal

In the weeks ahead, look for our 2015 Annual Appeal in the mail. Please give generously to our yearly appeal, which supports the organization and our programs in pursuit of our Mission.

GVWA on TV!

We are excited to announce that our organization has been featured on public television – **not once, but twice!**

State Senator John Rafferty featured GVWA, our history, home, and our Mission, in his **Rafferty Report**, which is available online at the Senator's website. Next, we hosted Phillippe Cousteau and the crew of **Xploration Awesome Planet** as they filmed a segment on Welkinweir's beaver family. The episode will air on national TV; we will keep you updated via our website & social media when it does!

Members: Renewal reminders change

In order to streamline our membership mailing process, we are changing our renewal reminder mailings **from a monthly basis to a quarterly basis**. We will mail out renewal reminders in March, June, September, and December. This change will take effect starting this December. We appreciate your patience as we make the change to this new process. **Thank you for your membership!**



*Agriculture and housing in the Pigeon Creek watershed.
Ed F. Bacon, 2011.*



Save the Date! Holiday Open House & Member Celebration

Friday, December 11, 2015
Open House 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Members' Celebration 5:30 – 7:30 PM

The historic estate house at Welkinweir will be decked out in holiday splendor for you and your friends & family to enjoy! Our headquarters will be open to the public during the day; in the evening, enjoy an intimate members' celebration under the warm glow of candles and Christmas lights. RSVP to (610) 469-4900, or contact gva@greenvalleys.org.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Pollution events often happen outside business hours, in out-of-the-way places, and during storms. These events need to be swiftly reported to enforcement agencies so they can take action. Pollution from equipment incursions, spills or failed erosion controls may last only a few hours, yet they can have long-lasting impacts on the health and stability of the stream's ecosystem. *What should you do when you think you see a pollution issue?*

A photographic record is often the best way to report an issue and assist the authorities in determining potential violations of environmental rules and regulations. When taking pictures of pollution, note the **date, time, and location** on a "photo card" with these details to include in the first photograph you take at the site. Then, contact the particular organization concerned with regulating environmental laws (*see table below*). Contact us also and send your pictures to gva@greenvalleys.org. –Michael Bullard



Sedimentation in the Birch Run from upstream construction activities was photographed and submitted to the Chester County Conservation District, leading to official action.

Pollution Enforcement	
<u>Chester County Conservation District</u> for erosion & sedimentation issues from new construction: 610-925-4920	<u>Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection</u> for in-stream dumping, toxic spills, or equipment incursions into waterways: 484-250-5900

Next Schuylkill Water Stewards Class: Spring 2016

Due to our organization's busy fall schedule and those of our partners, we are postponing the third volunteer water quality monitor training class to Spring 2016. We have already received interest from several potential SWS volunteers, and look forward to recruiting more individuals and beginning their training!

Each Schuylkill Water Steward will complete training in water quality issues specific to our area, and must commit to at least 20 volunteer hours of monitoring. This may include taking quarterly stream samples for chemical and microbiological analysis; surveying streams for macroinvertebrate species; conducting annual assessments of a stream's physical habitat; or tracking stormwater nonpoint source pollution.

If you are interested in learning more about the Schuylkill Water Stewards program, contact us at gva@greenvalleys.org; or visit www.schuylkillwaterstewards.org. Training for a third class of volunteers will begin in the spring – look for an opportunity to sign up in the coming months! –Kelsey Stanton

Coming Together to Protect the Delaware River Basin

The Delaware River is an extraordinary waterway: at 330 miles long, it is the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi. Winding from the Catskills Mountains in New York, the river gradually widens as it passes through geologic marvels such as the Delaware Water Gap; it gains volume and flow through Pennsylvania with the confluences of its largest tributaries, the Schuylkill and Lehigh Rivers; and it travels over 130 miles more before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean at the Delaware Bay. Throughout its length, the Delaware and all of its tributaries support the daily needs of people, businesses, and wildlife within the Basin.

For all its significance, however, the Delaware River Basin lacks unified, federally funded protection other major watersheds like the Chesapeake Bay receive. Supporters of the Basin are looking to change that in Congress with the **Delaware River Basin Conservation Act (DRBCA) of 2015**. This bipartisan legislation, introduced in April, would dedicate funds for a competitive grant program to support restoration and preservation activities throughout the Basin by state & local governments, NPOs, and universities.

Another strategy to support protection of the Delaware is to reactivate the **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**, which for the past 50 years provided state and local governments funding to protect and improve critical lands as public open space. Pennsylvania state recipients of LWCF support include Valley Forge National Historic Park and the John Heinz Wildlife Refuge; local examples of LWCF-funding projects include public open space in East Coventry, Pottstown, and Birdsboro. In all, Pennsylvania received approximately \$295 million in LWCF grants over the Fund's lifetime. The Fund was allowed to expire in Congress this September. However, proponents of the LWCF continue to push for reactivation of the Fund.

Each of these measures depends on unified support across the Delaware River Basin: from homeowners to entrepreneurs, farmers to fishermen, kayakers to birdwatchers, and everyone in between. **We all stand to benefit from a unified vision of a cleaner and healthier Delaware River.**

Encourage your elected officials to support both the DRBCA and the reactivation of the LWCF! Please visit www.usa.gov/elected-officials for your representatives' contact information. –Kelsey Stanton

Did you know?

- Nearly **16 million people** depend on the Delaware River Basin for their water supply.
- The Delaware River is **home to over 200 resident and migrant fish species**, as well as oyster, blue crab, and the world's largest spawning population of Horseshoe Crabs, whose eggs fuel the yearly migration of millions of shorebirds.
- The Delaware River Basin brings an estimated **\$25 billion in economic activity each year**, through its fisheries, ports, and outdoor recreation.

Fall 2015 Watershed Restoration Progress!

This fall, volunteers from across the community helped clean up, plant, and maintain restoration sites in three watersheds.



Birch Run – French Creek Watershed



French Creek



Beaver Run – French Creek Watershed

Phoenixville Area High School students (top) conducted tree inventory and maintenance along the Birch Run, in West Vincent Township.

XL Group employees (middle, left) improved trails in West Vincent Land Trust open space along French Creek for their Global Day of Giving.

Employees of Siemens (middle right) planted trees along the ponds at Welkinweir, which is within the Beaver Run watershed (a tributary to French Creek).

West Pikeland Parks & Recreation and GVWA Board members (bottom, left) planted trees at Pine Creek Park along the Pickering Creek tributary.

Vanguard employees joined GVWA and Valley Forge Trout Unlimited to remove litter and invasive plants from Vanguard's corporate campus along Valley Creek (bottom, right).



Pine Creek – Pickering Creek Watershed



Valley Creek – Valley Creek Watershed

Biodiversity Management at Welkinweir

Welkinweir is a property filled with natural beauty and abundant in wildlife. Surrounded by nature, we often find ourselves asking questions about the environment that are not simple to answer. Many times, these questions will go unanswered. More recently, however, we encountered a question that was too fascinating not to answer.

Most of us enjoy observing nature in a variety of ways. Some of us travel vast distances to see new plants or animals in the wild, and many of us enjoy traveling to local parks to simply go for a walk and enjoy the wildlife. Perhaps the easiest location to observe nature, though, is from our own homes. Even if your home does not have extensive tracts of private land, simply looking through a window to the surrounding outdoors can yield a number of different birds or mammals. At Welkinweir, we enjoy keeping track of the different species of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and plants (and just about everything else) that have been seen on our 197-acre sanctuary. There are many species that we can see relatively easily and that are fairly common on the property. That being said, we have a limited number of observers to cover a large expanse of land – surely there are species that we have not seen. This idea is what raised our key question: what all is *really* here? Are there animals using the grounds of Welkinweir as a home (or even just passing through) that we have never before recorded on the property?

In order to answer these questions, we have developed a plan that involves the use of some unusual yet intriguing equipment: trail cameras. Trail cameras are a relatively new technology in the realm of biology and conservation, however their value is beginning to attract attention; even the National Parks Service now uses trail cameras in some of its parks! They provide the much-desired capability to gather quantitative data while at the same time engaging the public in the natural world. The cameras, typically used by hunters to watch deer or other game in an area, are the perfect set of “eyes” that can be set nearly anywhere in order to see all of the wildlife that passes through that area. Strategically placed in locations of high traffic, our cameras have already yielded pictures of animals that are elusive to humans, most notably the beaver (see photo). Once we begin to utilize these cameras in larger numbers in more remote areas, we expect to find species never before identified within the boundaries of Welkinweir. –Eric Hughes, intern



Top: A great look at one of the resident beavers of Welkinweir, as recorded by one of our trail cameras

Bottom: Eric (left) and Philippe Cousteau (right) were captured on one of our cameras during the recent filming of an episode of *Xploration Awesome Planet!*

Eric is our newest Welkinweir intern. A junior at Owen J. Roberts high school, Eric helps monitor resident and transient wildlife in our nature sanctuary via the trail camera system. He is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable birder.

Visiting Welkinweir

The grounds are open **Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.** Parking is available in the large lot near the pavilion. We may have programs or private events occurring on weekends and we ask members who want to visit then to **inquire during business hours** about availability. We thank visitors bringing dogs for keeping them leashed and cleanig up after them.

Outdoor Adventures Enjoyed by All at Summer Nature Day Camp

Thank you to our counselors, volunteers, and families for another great summer of Nature Day Camp! Based on the many comments and stories I have heard, it sounds like we're accomplishing our goal of engaging children in memorable outdoor exploration, study, and adventures:

"I had such a positive, memorable experience; and, surprising to me, **I learned a lot from the children themselves.**" *Kristyn Kleman, Environmental Education Intern and Senior Camp Counselor. Kristyn graduated from Millersville University in 2012 with a B.S. in Biology. She is pursuing her Masters in Marine Biology at Nova Southeastern University.*

"**I very much enjoyed teaching the campers about the environment in a fun way!** By providing us with all of the curriculum materials and many options for crafts, lessons, and other activities, the camp had a lot of variety..." *Chris Travis, Junior Counselor. Chris is a freshman at the College of William & Mary.*

"**Can I tell you how pleased we are with your camp program.** Zachary has been there all summer and looks forward to each week. I appreciate your hard work and dedication to putting together such an excellent program. Thank you." *Christy, mother of 3rd grader Zach. The family discovered camp when Zach participated in GVWA's 2015 After School Nature Explorers Club at East Coventry Elementary School.*

"Thanks again for such a wonderful camp program...Sebastian enjoyed it tremendously! **Made lots of new friends and best of all it was completely unplugged! Kudos to the staff.**" *Fiona, mother of 3rd grader Sebastian, a returning camper who attended 6 weeks of camp this year.*

"Thank you so much again for giving Ozlyn the opportunity to experience camp, she **absolutely loved it!!!** It was very kind of you, and means so very much!...**Hopefully she'll be able to return next year.**" *Amanda, mother of 2nd grader Ozlyn, who received a one-week scholarship to camp.*

"Thank you for giving our child such a great nature experience! He has had so much fun and also **came home every day excited to tell us what he had learned!**" *Parent of 1st grader.*

Children ages 4 to 12 enjoyed the many different activities camp offers, including these favorites:

- **Visiting the creek**
- **Bob the Critter guy and his animals**
- **Camouflage games and shelter building**
- **Canoeing (older children)**
- **Making s'mores**
- **Water games**
- **Making new friends**



Nature Awareness Clubs

"Club is where we can change kids' minds and develop a passion for nature!" exclaims Franklin Elementary Principal, Mr. Kevin Downes. This fall, Green Valleys' Nature Explorers Clubs came to Franklin, with a warm welcome and enthusiastic children. Within one week of the Club promotion to the entire 2nd grade, Green Valleys received 12 applications, our maximum, for this pilot season. These student members are taking part in 6 sessions of Club, learning about nature in their communities.

The goal of the program at Franklin and the other schools in Pottstown, as well as at Owen J. Roberts School District, is to connect young children with nature in their neighborhoods and develop a healthy attitudes of respect for, and stewardship towards the natural world. Club members take part in educational games, activities, exploration, study of wildlife biofacts, and drawing and data recording in journals.

Additionally, in the Pottstown schools, Club helps close a gap in service to families in this underserved district. Club is offered free of charge to families thanks to continuous funding, through Green Valleys, from the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation. Green Valleys continues the After School Nature Explorers Club in the Pottstown Middle and Elizabeth Barth Elementary Schools as well, and is currently seeking additional funds in order to extend the Club to the remaining two Pottstown elementary schools in the near future. *-Dawn White*

It's never too early to plan for summer! Look for our 2016 Nature Day Camp brochure in January.

Community Nature Programs Calendar

November 2015 – February 2016

Nature Programs at Welkinweir

Guided Bird Walks

Saturday mornings, rain or shine. Free!

Enjoy guided walks with naturalists to search for birds at Welkinweir. Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. A great opportunity to enjoy Welkinweir on the weekends! Contact kelsey@greenvalleys.org for more information.

Nov. 21 – 9 a.m. Dec. 12 – 9 a.m.

Nature at Night Hike & Campfire

Friday, January 29 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Severe weather date: Friday, February 5

Search for nocturnal animals and test your own senses in the darkness during a leisurely walk in our nature sanctuary. Listen for Great Horned Owls, look for the elusive beaver family, and discover the wonders of nature in wintertime. Following the walk, warm up by the campfire with refreshments and stories. Refreshments provided. Ages 6 to adult. Fees per person: \$6 GVWA Members, \$8 Nonmembers. Spaces limited, pre-registration required.

Children's Program Series will return in March 2016!

Little Wonders (2-3 years), **Kinder Nature** (3-5 years), and **Night Owls** classes (3-6 years) will return in March. Please visit our online Education Events Calendar in February for program dates and details.

To learn more about upcoming education programs and to register for specific classes, please contact Education Coordinator Dawn White by calling 610-469-8646, or email dwhite@greenvalleys.org.

Library Programs: Little Sprouts Nature Classes



Ages 3-5 with caregiver. **Free.** Register online at www.ccls.org.

Our continued partnerships with four Chester County libraries provide an outlet for young children to learn more about the natural world in their own neighborhoods. Since January 2015, Little Sprouts has served over 260 children ages 3 to 5 and their parents. Many of these children attend multiple classes, and some join the children's classes at Welkinweir.

Henrietta Hankin Library Mondays, 10:30-11:15 a.m.	Phoenixville Public Library Fridays, 10:00-10:45 a.m.
November 16 <i>Happy Habitats</i>	November 20 <i>Winter Wonders</i>
December 14 <i>Animals in Winter</i>	December 18 <i>Art in Nature</i>
January 11, 2016 <i>Subject TBD</i>	January 15, 2016 <i>Subject TBD</i>
February 8, 2016 <i>Subject TBD</i>	February 19, 2016 <i>Subject TBD</i>

For upcoming classes, please see the Calendar of Events in our winter newsletter or online at www.greenvalleys.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 _____

I would prefer to pay by:

Check (*made payable to Green Valleys*) 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

Dues and contributions are tax-deductible. Green Valleys is a registered charitable organization. A copy of registration and 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 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

Please send me information about including GVWA in my legacy planning.

Please notify me of Green Valleys volunteer opportunities.

E-mail: _____

I prefer to receive my copy of *Streamlines* via: Mail E-mail

Visit our website at www.greenvalleys.org

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*WATERSHED ASSOCIATION FOR 50 YEARS
NORTHERN CHESTER COUNTY*

1368 PRIZER ROAD | POTTSTOWN, PA 19465

**GREEN VALLEYS
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