

Streamlines

SUMMER 2017

Volume 53, Issue 3

In this issue: *Clean Water vs. EPA?*

Also:

Finishing Touches on
School Stormwater Projects

Arboretum News: Motus Array Installed, National
Accreditation Updated, Welcome to New Horticultural Staff

2017 Education Program Updates: Summer Nature Day
Camp, Scouts, and Environmental Afterschool Clubs

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: A misty morning along Crabby Creek, brook trout habitat and EV tributary to Valley Creek, in Tredyffrin Township.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

MAKING THE LAND-WATER CONNECTION

Article I, section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution: *The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all of the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.*

Despite this robust statement of your environmental rights, and all of the gains made under the Clean Water Act passed 45 years ago, we still have much work ahead. New partnerships and expanding our involvement in local & regional networks is essential to this work. We are stronger from this. In recent years we have:

- Joined the *Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed*, which unites organizations working throughout the region to enhance their capacity to effectively advocate for protecting and restoring the Delaware River Basin, by coordinating communications, messages, and actions to foster accountability for success at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Supported the *Growing Greener Coalition*, an advocate for funding (which Green Valleys utilizes in support of our work) to conserve, protect and restore land, water and wildlife; to preserve farms and historic places; and to provide well-managed parks and recreational areas throughout the state.
- Worked with and supported the *Delaware Riverkeeper Network* whose works focuses on issues, actions, regulations, legislation, policies, programs and decisions that impact the health of the Delaware River Watershed's waterways.
- Partnered with *PennFuture*, whose staff provides resources and assistance to grassroots organizations; and *River Network*, an online hub for people working to strengthen local, regional and national river and watershed conservation efforts on water policy & programs across the Delaware Basin states.
- Worked with the *Schuylkill Action Network* and *Valley Creek Restoration Partnership* on green infrastructure projects in our stewardship area.

There is strength in numbers: working with other organizations gives Green Valleys strength, but without **you - our members** - we would not be here to carry out our mission to *protect, preserve, and restore the water quality and quantity of our northern Chester County streams and inspire, educate and involve our community to make a difference.*

Yours in the watersheds,

Victoria Laubach, Executive Director

Clean Water Vs. EPA?

The current EPA Administrator is moving rapidly to take away water quality protections currently in place under the 45-year-old Clean Water Act (CWA).

The move involves repealing the Clean Water Rule (CWR), and replacing it with regulations substantially reducing the extent of surface waters receiving CWA protections. There are so many well written articles describing the complexities of the situation, and explaining why this is such a genuinely bad idea, that we have compiled a list of them at www.greenvalleys.org/WOTUS for your reading. Please read a few of them. Here is a summary:

Since 1972 the US has invested nearly \$1 trillion in cleaning up the nation's water under the CWA. Much progress has been made, but we are not even close to achieving the goals of this federal law: "to make all U.S. waters fishable and swimmable" and "to have zero water pollution discharge".

Indeed, over half of US streams and rivers do not yet meet water quality standards and are listed as impaired. Most of these impairments are directly linked to stormwater, with sediments and polluted runoff entering the streams at myriad points. Headwaters and intermittent streams are key places where this is happening, and it is these features that the CWR addresses.

Green Valleys has put a lot of work into mapping and modeling just these features, and here are the facts: above and feeding laterally into each of the perennial streams in our watersheds, there are many more *ephemeral streams, springs, seeps* and *small wetlands*. In our historically rich landscape, many of these features have been captured in springhouses, or excavated to make small ponds. Modified or not, we all know these features are biodiversity refuges for many species, and adults & children alike are drawn to them for just this reason. **During stormwater events, all of these features become active parts of the hydrological network, and due to their critical location at the interface between land and water, their protection is essential.**

The CWR did not add protections for these features, but it did clarify what qualifies for CWA protection, and what does not. **Man-made stock ponds and ditches are explicitly excluded - although it is the false claim that the CWR does just this which is the rallying cry of the politicians supporting repeal.**

Repealing the CWR rejects the enormous body of scientific evidence and public support that went into its lengthy development, and it also ignores the many economic benefits from clean water. Most dangerously, it opens up the possibility of a new rule which would exclude springs, seeps, wetlands, or other features from the CWA protections they have had the past 45 years.

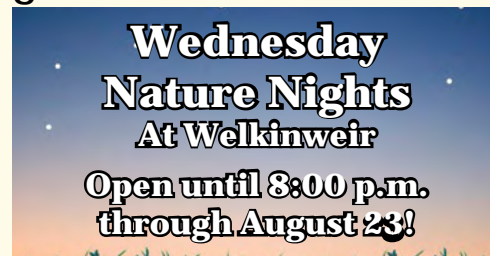
How you can help

As we mentioned in our previous issue of *Streamlines*, staying informed and in regular contact with your elected officials is one of the best ways to ensure that clean streams and healthy watersheds remain a priority at all levels of government. You can contact your representatives today and urge them to oppose the repeal of the Clean Water Rule. Visit www.usa.gov/elected-officials to find your representatives and their contact information.

The EPA has filed their proposed repeal in the Federal Register (www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA_FR-DOC_0001-21030), which starts a 30-day public comment period. **Comments must be received on or before August 28, 2017 in order to be considered by the EPA.**

Want to help even more? Talk to a friend, family member, co-worker, or neighbor: the more voices are raised the more we can keep the health of our streams-and our communities-at the forefront of public concern. - *Michael Bullard and Kelsey Stanton*

Upcoming Events



WATERSHED RESTORATION

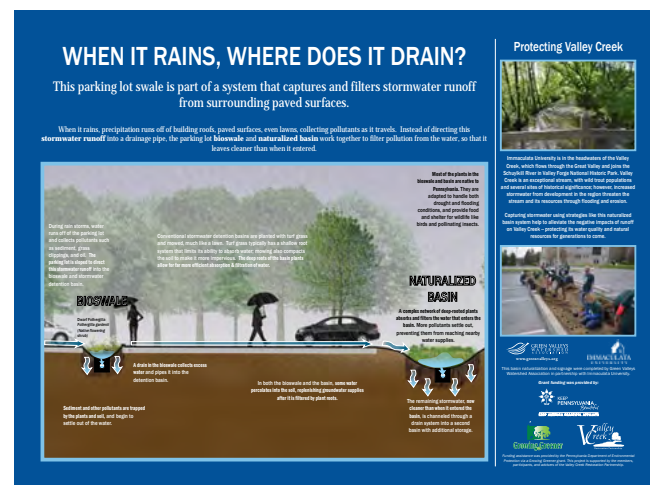
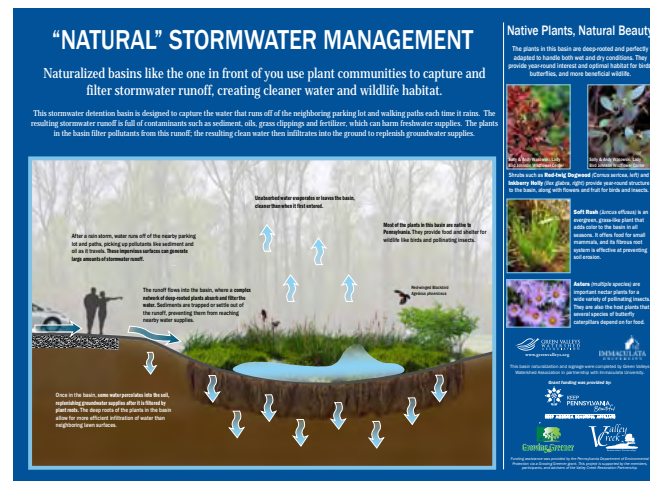
Finishing Touches on School Stormwater Basins

We are excited to announce that two stormwater projects at local schools are almost complete! Students at the Phoenixville Area Middle School assisted Watershed Restoration Coordinator Margot Taylor and [GreenWeaver Landscapes, Inc.](#) in planting a new rain garden next to their gymnasium in early May. GVWA-designed signage (*top right*) will educate visitors about the rain garden's function in helping to protect the Pickering Creek from stormwater runoff, and will be installed before the start of the new school year. This garden is visible from the new Manavon Elementary School and Early Learning Center - and is already supporting wildlife like the Killdeer that built its nest (*below*) within the protected space!

Educational signage will also be installed at two basins planted by Immaculata University students and GreenWeaver Landscapes on the school's campus. The signs focus on the importance of capturing stormwater from pavement and other surfaces using nature-based infrastructure, as well as the benefits of using native plants to absorb precipitation and support wildlife (*middle and bottom right*).

These projects were completed with funding from [Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful](#); the [Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative](#), part of Pennsylvania DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program and administered by Natural Lands; and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's [Growing Greener Grant Program](#). We would like to thank [Immaculata University](#), the [Phoenixville Area School District](#), the [Schuylkill Action Network](#), and the [Valley Creek Restoration Partnership](#) for helping to make these projects possible.

- Kelsey Stanton



WELKINWEIR Arboretum News

We are another step closer to participating in an international collaborative research network!

[Motus](#) (Latin for "movement") is a program of [Bird Studies Canada](#) in partnership with [Arcadia University](#) and collaborating researchers and organizations, that uses coordinated radio telemetry arrays to study the movements of small animals. Thanks to the generous support of our members during our 2016 annual appeal we are partnering with [Willistown Conservation Trust](#), [Project OwlNet](#), and the [Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art](#) in the creation of the Northeast Motus Collaboration. This inland network, covering the mid-Atlantic and Northeast, fills a critical geographic gap in understanding migration and habitat use by hundreds of migratory species (including birds, bats, and even dragonflies!).

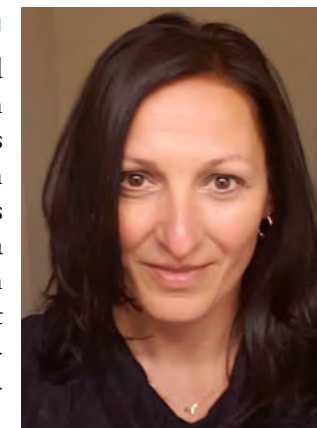
On a recent sunny, hot Friday a team from Bird Canada, [Powdermill Avian Research Center](#), Willistown Conservation Trust, along with Green Valleys staff and members installed the receiver array that will detect the transmitters (nanotags) deployed. An extra treat was seeing turkey families enjoying a dust bath in the mulch pile! *Stay tuned for more!* - Victoria Laubach

Clockwise from top right: The Motus array is installed in the meadow west of the visitor parking lot; setting up the array; Field naturalist Eric Hughes leads the Herons camp group on a bird walk after introducing them to the bio-acoustic project he is leading here.



Level II Accredited Arboretum

Welkinweir's accreditation was renewed in early July. This ongoing recognition of professional standards and capabilities bears significance for our organization and for tree-focused public gardens. As part of the Morton Register of Arboreta ([ArbNet](#)), we have an important role in our shared purpose to plant & protect trees, and accreditation in this work acknowledges our commitment to and fulfillment of professional criteria.



Welcome New Horticultural Staff!

We are pleased to welcome **Nena Sall** as our seasonal horticulturist. Nena has a degree in horticulture from the Heilbronn Agriculture College in Germany and has experience in public gardens in the US including Dumbarton Oaks in Washington DC and Powell Gardens at the Kansas City Botanical Garden in Missouri. Moving to this area after living for the past six years overseas with her family, she began volunteering here as a way to rediscover her horticultural knowledge and skills. We are pleased to have her as part of the team keeping the gardens here beautiful.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Outdoor Adventures Enjoyed by All at Summer Nature Day Camp!

Looking Back: Spring 2017 Education Programs



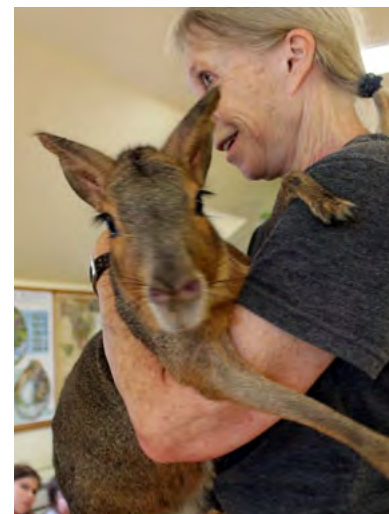
"I love that they are outside, active all day, and learning about nature."

Trish Leh, parent

Thank you to the Camp Counselors, guest presenters, volunteers, and families for another great summer of Nature Day Camp! We all had a blast as we welcomed **over 255 campers from over 175 families** to camp!

Campers enjoyed shelter-building, stream stomping, s'mores on Fridays, fishing, catching toads, crayfish and bugs, visits with live animals from our awesome guest presenters, nature hikes, games, and making new friends! **Summer Nature Day Camp 2017 will continue through Friday, August 11.**

If you missed it this year, please join us next year for another adventurous summer of Nature Day Camp! Look for the brochure online and in mailboxes in late January 2018. - Dawn White



Field Trip Studies

Students from Elizabeth Barth Elementary School visited Welkinweir this spring to enhance their classes' studies of local ecosystems.

After School Environmental Clubs

Second through seventh grade students enjoyed the popular After School Environmental Clubs this year: Elementary school students join the **Nature Explorers Club** to learn about nature in their own schoolyards through educational activities and journaling.

At the Middle School level, **Environmental Awareness Club** connected students with their freshwater resources by engaging them in activities that focus on water pollution sources and indicators, water use, and advocacy. Students explored stream biological, chemical and physical parameters in the field; visited a water treatment plant; helped with rain garden and tree planting service projects; and helped Valley Forge National Historic Park staff remove invasive rusty crayfish from Valley Creek.



"I joined this Club because it's very hands-on learning about what affects the environment. I enjoy being outdoors and hope to study wildlife in the future."

Andrew, 6th grade Club member at Phoenixville Area Middle School



Boy and Girl Scout Programs at Welkinweir

Scout leaders, do you have badges to complete that relate to the natural environment and conservation? Consider booking a program with Green Valleys Watershed Association. From water study to bugs to owls and forest ecology, we provide fun and creative educational programs that are designed to assist girl and boy Scouts fulfill requirements needed to earn various badges.

For details, please visit our website for the **Girl and Boy Scout Nature Programs flyer**; or contact Dawn White at dwhite@greenvalleys.org or 610-469-8646.

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.



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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

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: _____