

Streamlines

Summer 2019

In this issue:

Green Valleys Annual Celebration

Under the Surface

Welkinweir Preserve Grows Again

Volunteer Programs

Creek Snorkeling

H2YO!

Eels!



**GREEN VALLEYS
WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION**

Annual Celebration! Save the Date: Thursday October 10, 2019 5:30 to 8:30 PM

We have an exciting evening planned for our members and friends to celebrate our work in the Watersheds!

Our Guest Speaker is Dr. Erik Silldorff. Dr. Silldorff is the Restoration Director at Delaware Riverkeeper Network. Prior to his current position, he was the aquatic biologist for the Delaware River Basin Commission, where he remains active on advisory committees. Erik received a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources, Aquatic Biology, from Cornell and his masters (Statistics) and PhD (Ecology) from UC Santa Barbara.

Erik will be talking about an amazing project recently begun in the Pickering Creek! This project, the *Experimental Return of American Eels to Control Invasive Crayfish & Restore Ecological Structure in Streams & Rivers*, is pioneering a new approach to restoring ecological balance. The details, and the potential outcomes, are truly fascinating science which will make for a memorable evening!

The evening includes a social hour featuring local cheeses, meats and homemade crackers with a cash bar followed by dinner and dessert provided by Jeffrey A. Miller Catering. We will be honoring four individuals with the Ralph Heister Service Award and the Everett and Grace Rodebaugh Support Award.

Sponsors are needed for this event – contact Vicki at 610-469-4900 or visit www.greenvalleys.org for more information.



Below the Surface is a new Streamlines recurring article featuring the amazing wildlife which lives...below the surface of our streams! Most of us experience our streams as an inseparable part of the landscapes we are all familiar with, lovely in the context of the lands around us, and a mobile surface reflecting all the beauty of our landscapes above the stream. But, what of below? We do not often get an opportunity to see under the water's surface, and view an underwater world that is colorful, dynamic and teeming with life. This new feature will highlight our local creeks and the diversity of life they contain. It is our hope that as more people learn about the wildlife that makes its home in the stream and depends on clean water that we'll all become better stewards of our local streams.

Welkinweir Preserve Grows Again! Welkinweir has expanded by another 4.8 acres thanks to the Guest family with support from Natural Lands, Chester County Open Space, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Open Space Institute. The addition shares a common property line on the west side of Welkinweir and adds to the continuous forests buffering the first order tributary stream to the Exceptional Value Beaver Run. The Horse-Shoe Trail, traversing immediately south of the property, gains an important protective buffer and a series of vernal pools, which serve as critical habitat for mating amphibians in the spring, gains additional protections with no new development taking place.

This acquisition will provide recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors when, in the future, trail connections to Welkinweir's extensive trail network are created.

GVWA Bylaws are updated! Thank you to the members who attended this important meeting!



Tribute Tree *Magnolia March Till Frost*

Tribute Trees and Benches Two programs offer ways to celebrate, recognize, or remember someone special in your life while benefitting others who enjoy Welkinweir’s peaceful setting by planting a tree or donating a bench. The arboretum office maintains a list of desired trees to be planted that donors can choose from and the cost (\$250) includes a plant label listing the genus species, common names, where the tree hails from and space for a dedication. Benches of stone (\$800) or wood (\$1,500) can also be purchased for use throughout the property. A brass plate recognizing the donor is included.

Environmental Education Building We are nearly at our current goal of \$40,000. We are still seeking donations - you can make a donation online or sending a check. Thank you for your continued support!

Buffer Planting With funding from the PA Department of Environmental Protection’s Water Quality Improvement Program (that was funded through the Mariner East 2 pipeline fine) we installed the first of three projects – a buffer planting on the south side of the large pond at Welkinweir. Crow & Berry Land Management prepared the area then installed 400 trees and 200 shrubs, selected for wildlife benefits. This buffer planting will bring the forest closer to the water’s edge and complements the work done over previous years on the north side of the pond, where a 150 foot buffer of native trees is being established.

Trail Bed & Tread Workshop

November 1 & 2 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Join us for a two-day trail workshop led by the trail gurus at Penn Trails. The workshop focuses on bed and tread planning, layout, and construction of natural surface trails like those throughout Welkinweir. Participants will experience expertly guided classroom learning for 1/2 day and hands-on site the rest of the time on Welkinweir’s trails. Breakfast and lunch are provided. Join in the fun! Limited to 12 participants. Cost \$75 per person. Pre-registration required. Contact Vicki at 610-469-4900.



GREEN VALLEYS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION MISSION 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 THIS GENERATION AND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

OUR HEADQUARTERS IS LOCATED IN THE FRENCH CREEK WATERSHED IN EAST NANTMEAL TOWNSHIP AT WELKINWEIR, THE FORMER HOME OF FOUNDING MEMBERS EVERETT & GRACE RODEBAUGH. IT IS FROM HERE THAT THE ORGANIZATION FULFILLS ITS PURPOSE OF WATERSHED PROTECTION, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, AND LAND STEWARDSHIP.

OPEN FOR VISITING MONDAY TO FRIDAY
9 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

BOARD OFFICERS
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MARGE MILLER, VICE PRESIDENT
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ON THE COVER:
CREEK SNORKELING, FRENCH CREEK

BELOW THE SURFACE



Image: Erickson Smith

EELS IN THE PICKERING

American Eels are unique in our watersheds. These fish have an amazing life cycle which begins with hatching in the Sargasso Sea in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, migrating to freshwater streams where they spend a decade or more maturing, and finally returning to the ocean depths to spawn.

Eels were once abundant in their range, which stretches from Greenland to South America, but populations have been in decline for many decades. One cause for this decline is the numerous dams which have been placed across streams and rivers for various purposes, interrupting their life cycle. The dam at Pickering Creek Reservoir, which was completed in 1926, is one example of these dams and it has effectively kept young eels (and other migratory fish) out of the 40 square mile Pickering Creek Watershed since that time.

While eels are diminished or absent in our watersheds, other unwelcome species are proliferating. Invasive crayfish, transplanted here from other regions in the US accidentally, are taking over stream after stream, displacing our native crayfish. How are they out competing our natives? Scientists think there is a connection between the low numbers of eels in some streams and the success of invasive crayfish, and they have set out to test this in the Pickering!

In a project titled *Experimental Return of American Eels to Control Invasive Crayfish & Restore Ecological Structure in Streams & Rivers*, scientists from Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Academy of Natural Sciences, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and USGS will study how reintroducing eels can control invasive crayfish and restore former populations of native crayfish in the Pickering. The Pickering has a broad range of healthy habitats and good connectivity, which should allow the introduced eels to find suitable habitat and thrive.

Interested in learning more about this project? Delaware Riverkeeper Network's Dr Erik Silldorff will be providing an in depth presentation on this at our 2019 Annual Dinner!



Faxonius virilis--Invasive

VOLUNTEERING

2019 Pennsylvania Master Naturalist

Congratulations to the seventeen volunteers who participated in the spring 2019 Pennsylvania Master Naturalist class held at Welkinweir. This was our first training program in partnership with the nonprofit Pennsylvania Master Naturalist program and we are so happy at how well it went!

Our sincere thanks go out to all the speakers and field trip leaders who participated in leading classes and to Green Valleys staff member, Becca Blacketter, who pulled all the classes and field trips together. We look forward to continuing to work with the now certified Master Naturalists.



Schuylkill Water Stewards Class of 2019

With our Delaware River Watershed Initiative partners, we have trained nearly 60 volunteers in the Schuylkill Water Stewards program since 2014. These volunteers participate in regular assessments of water quality and are knowledgeable advocates on stream health in the community. We are currently collecting water quality data at over 50 sites across the watersheds; this data and much more will be available with GVWA's new Data Discovery Application, due out this fall!



Volunteers Friday May 10th was AXA XL's Global Day of Giving and local employees, led by Marty Meadows and Greg Leinweber, participated in a Pickering Creek cleanup and a French Creek trail maintenance, projects they have been leading for over twelve years! Kudos to Marty and Greg and the employees of AXA XL who have volunteered annually for local watersheds for over a decade! Also thanks to AXA XL for their support for our Environmental Education programs through their grant program.

Volunteer Trainings, Spring 2020

Schuylkill Water Stewards

Participate in fun and engaging training sessions, through which you will learn about the science of healthy watersheds, threats to our local streams, water sampling techniques, and more. Following your training, you can work in monitoring and protecting area streams. Reach out for details, victoria@greenvalleys.org or 610-469-4900. www.schuylkillwaterstewards.org

Pennsylvania Master Naturalist

Become a volunteer leader in your community through natural resource conservation education, citizen science, and stewardship. Attend the initial training, complete an annual volunteer service, and continue your education in the natural sciences. Reach out for details, rebecca@greenvalleys.org or 610-469-4900. www.pamasternaturalist.org

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

H2YO! Summer Camp

The first H2YO! Summer Camp launched this August. A partnership between staff at Green Valleys Watershed Association, Schuylkill River Greenways, and the west campus of the Montgomery County Community College designed the program, for middle school girls which focuses on the Schuylkill River watershed and how different factors affect the health of the watershed. Activities combine real world science utilizing the college's instructors and lab space with the fun of getting outside – doing water quality monitoring, kayaking, creek snorkeling, journaling followed by a final presentation for the campers parents. The camp filled, with a waiting list – we are **so** excited about this program and of the partnership! Our deepest appreciation to the Landis family for their support.



Summer Nature Camp 2019



August brings another great Summer Nature Camp season to a close. This eight-week summer program for children ages 4 to 14 held at our headquarters Welkinweir has just passed the twenty-year mark. This year saw 420 class enrollments!

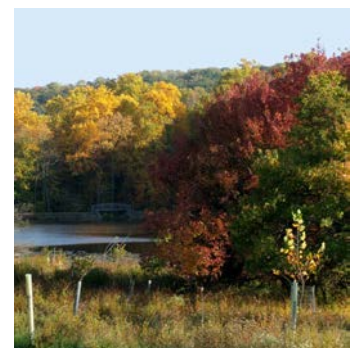
Thank you to the Camp Counselors, volunteers, and families for another great summer of Nature Day Camp! We welcomed 250 campers, who enjoyed adventures such as discovery nature walks, games, fort-building, stream stompng, s'mores on Fridays, catching toads and butterflies, visits from our awesome guest presenters, making new friends, and more!

OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

Fall Naturalist Walks--Mondays 9:30–10:30 a.m.

September 16th Pond Discovery
October 21st Fall Colors Walk
November 18th Habitat Hike

Grab your binoculars and join local naturalists to view the wealth of birds and other wildlife that Welkinweir has to offer. Bring your own Binoculars or borrow one of ours! Free, no registration required. Meet in visitor's parking lot. Ages 6 to adult welcome. Any questions, please contact: rebecca@greenvalleys.org or 610-469-4900.



OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

Fall Bird Migration Hike Saturday, September 14th 8:30-10:00 a.m.

As cold weather approaches, birds are beginning to travel south for the winter. Bring your own Binoculars or borrow one of ours! Ages 6 to adult welcome. Free, no registration required. Any questions contact: rebecca@greenvalleys.org or 610-469-4900.



Walk in Penn's Woods Hike Sunday, October 6th 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Join us for the 3rd annual Walk in Penn's Woods at Welkinweir. Celebrate what Penn's Woods can do for you! From Natural Neighbors, Breath of Fresh Air, and From Forest to Faucet, learn all about the benefits that our forests provide while enjoying a hike at Welkinweir to explore some of the new additions we've made to the preserve. We will be hiking on natural trails, please wear appropriate footwear. Rain or shine. Event is free. Questions please contact Vicki at 610-469-7543.

Bats! Saturday, October 19th 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Explore the secret world of bats during an informative talk from members of Pennsylvania Bat Rescue, whose mission is the rescue, rehabilitation and conservation of our native bat species. We'll then head outside to search for bats and their homes.

For ages 6 to adult. To register contact: dwhite@greenvalleys.org or 610-469-8646.

Owl Prowl Friday, November 1 Ages 6 to adult Friday November 8 Adults only All dates - 7:30-9:00pm

Visits with live owls will highlight the habits and adaptations of these amazing nocturnal predators. Then walk the trails, listening and looking for local owl species. To register contact: dwhite@greenvalleys.org or 610-469-8646.



Welkinweir Easement Anniversary Saturday, November 16th 11:00-1:00 p.m.

Welkinweir Estate has a great history. Come learn all about the estate and the surrounding arboretum. The house will be available for touring with staff/volunteer.

Adult Only Event. Free, no registration required. Any questions contact: rebecca@greenvalleys.org or 610-469-4900.

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.

JOIN US!

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

Membership levels:

- 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:

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 any other 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.