

# Streamlines

FALL 2019

In This Issue:

Local Agriculture & Implementing Best Practices

2019 Annual Appeal--New Educational Programs

Welkinweir Trail Network

Under the Surface

Water Quality Data App

Volunteer Programs for 2020



GREEN VALLEYS  
WATERSHED  
ASSOCIATION



## *GVWA Supporting Local Agriculture*

With essential financial support from our funders, GVWA continues to expand our Best Management Practices (BMPs) program. BMPs are effective and practical means of preventing or reducing non-point source (NPS) pollution. NPS pollution comes from a wide number of sources – water runoff from roads and buildings, farm fields, construction sites, pipelines, to name a few--and are the main type of pollution in our local watersheds. Recognizing that our streams are designated Exceptional Value or High Quality, Pennsylvania's highest quality waters, and that these streams are characterized by healthy populations of many pollution-sensitive species, we are scaling up our efforts to address NPS wherever possible.

Over the past several years we have ramped up the work we are doing with farmers and equestrians to implement Agricultural BMPs. Ag BMPs are often more complicated than riparian buffer installations, and we are working with consultants who are experts in design and implementation. These BMPs can include everything from land management such as buffers, grassed waterways, crop rotation, soil testing, nutrient management, manure application, animal lots, and manure storage areas. We have expanded our funding base as well. There are currently eight projects underway with funding from the William Penn Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, PA DEP's Water Quality Improvement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the many private donors supporting GVWA.

## *Thank You 2019 Annual Celebration Dinner Sponsors!*

Beautiful blue skies, mild temperatures, and early fall color provided the perfect setting for our guests to enjoy an excellent speaker, Dr. Erik Silldorf, followed by an awards presentation recognizing Greg Leinweber and Marty Meadows from AXAXL for their decades-long volunteer efforts and Carl and Sylvia Landis for their ongoing financial support.

Special thanks to our sponsors - our Board of Directors: Chris Orzechowski, Rob Blumenthal, Sue Hughes, Don Hans, Glen Hill, Jim Kerr, Carl Landis, Marjorie Miller, Jo-an Rechten, and Victoria Laubach; past Board members George Martin, John & Mary Ellen Eldridge, Harriet Stone, Caroline Amidon, Ed Bacon, Glenn Wenger, local businesses Theurkauf Planning & Design, Bartlett Tree Experts, Kenneth Carroll Real Estate, French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, and members Jim and Joan Moore, Carol Armstrong, Kate & Kell Damsgaard for helping to make this year's event a success. Thanks also to the East Nantmeal Township Board of Supervisors David Frame, Ed Loomis, Tyler Wren and township secretary Kathy Brumfeld for their support. Last but not least thanks to Jeffrey A Miller Catering for providing the excellent food and service.

## *2019 Annual Appeal -- Watershed Science Education*

In recent years we have been able to fund innovative Watershed Science educational programs, such as the H2YO! program which was launched this summer. These programs are a perfect "fit" for our organization, and the potential for growth is large. Our 2019 Annual Appeal proceeds will go directly to fund and implement new Watershed Science educational programs for 7-12 grades. Engaging these age groups in environmental topics is crucial to our future. Look for the Appeal letter which will be going out later this month.

**Our 2018 Annual Appeal was a resounding success!** We now have the funds required to create the construction ready plans, and we are proceeding with that as well as designing the capital campaign for the new watershed science education center. Special thanks to Ed Bacon for the kick-off gift and to the Miller Foundation for the funding to bring this campaign to a close.



## Welkinweir Trail Network

With over 4 miles of trails, Welkinweir is a great local hiking destination-- and we want to make it even better.

With funding from DCNR and DEP we conducted a trail assessment which was completed in late 2018 by Penn Trails LLC. Under the same grants we are proceeding with a "Conceptual Corridor Alignment" which will identify upgrades to our existing trail system. Expected improvements will better utilize the Horse-Shoe Trail where it crosses our lands; address problem-prone areas such as stream crossings and steep slopes; link with recent land acquisitions; and provide for a variety of terrains and difficulty.

Difficulty will range from easy, relatively flat with few natural obstacles to those with grades, stream crossings, and possible natural obstacles.

Amy Lutsko from Penn Trails led a 2-day trail workshop for interested volunteers in early November. Most of the workshop was spent outside, during two exceptionally beautiful days, walking Welkinweir's trails, learning about and using trail equipment-- McClouds and Rogues-- and implementing techniques such as grade dips for drainage and bench cuts that make a trail that cuts across a slope easier to walk on.

We are looking forward to the completed conceptual corridor alignment report and implementing the recommendations.

We will also be forming a new volunteer group in 2020 to carry out trail projects at Welkinweir -- if you like to hike and you like Welkinweir, please consider volunteering.



Amy Lutsko, Senior Project Manager, Penn Trails LLC. Amy is responsible for trail project management including conducting professional trail/pathway assessments, project planning and project construction. She is the project lead for Penn Trails' trail assessment process. She is also responsible for management of their proprietary, state-of-the-art, GPS data dictionary, data base reporting system and resulting reports for clients.

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.

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### ON THE COVER:

*HIGHLAND CATTLE, TYDDYN GLAN*



# BELOW THE SURFACE



**Damselflies and Dragonflies** are gloriously jeweled hunters of our summer skies. Masters of flight, they can hover, fly backwards, accelerate to thirty miles per hour and turn instantly at any speed, all in pursuit of their prey, which they catch only while flying. Prolific consumers of small flying insects, *they are superb at controlling mosquitos and flies*, consuming dozens or more each day. Damselflies and Dragonflies are ancient, with fossil records stretching back over 250 million years! Some species will undertake complex long distance migrations similar to Monarch butterflies, although studying the migration of these insects is challenging.

**Their life cycle begins** in streams and ponds where they rely on clean water and an abundance of prey. They will typically spend less than a year in the water (although some species stay longer) as *nymphs* before climbing out of the water, shedding their exoskeleton, and transforming into adults. This nymph was photographed during a Master Naturalist class and will soon emerge as an adult--note the well developed wing pods. When next you see one of these marvels of the air, take a moment to reflect on how absolutely dependent they are on clean healthy aquatic habitats *below the surface*.



## *American Eel Release*

**For the first time in decades**, eels are inhabiting the Pickering Creek watershed! The elvers (tiny eels) being released in this picture were most recently being raised at a USGS facility in north central Pennsylvania before being brought to this release site. Additional releases were made at other sites in the Pickering, and included larger eels which are tagged.

This release was at Historic Yellow Springs in September with staff from the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and USGS.

For more information about this exciting project please see the Summer 2019 issue of Streamlines.



# VOLUNTEERING

## *Water Quality Data App*

With our Delaware River Watershed Initiative partners, we have trained nearly 60 volunteers in the Schuylkill Water Stewards (SWS) program since 2014. SWS volunteers have been busy sampling a range of sites so GVWA is developing products to provide direct access to the data being generated. After reviewing several options, the online map interface was identified as a simple and efficient way to view and interpret the data collected so far. In addition to SWS data, this app provides quick access to a myriad of online resources which provide information about the health of our watersheds--all at one site.

Why do we need data and what are we doing with it? Water quality issues we are investigating are:

- Nutrients. Elevated Phosphorous and Nitrogen negatively impact stream aquatic ecosystems and can foster the growth of harmful algae.
- De-icers. The winter application of snow melting salts has increased dramatically over the past two decades. Chloride levels (from salt) are increasing and have been linked to declines in stream health.
- Bacteria. Increases in bacteria in some streams over normal background levels are being studied.
- Sediments. Material washing into the streams (NPS) and streambank erosion are creating excessive sediment conditions in our streams. Sediments are very stressful for fish, and also clog (or even bury) stream bottoms where most of the aquatic life makes its home. Access the app here. <https://arcg.is/1yK1CS>



*2020 SWS Class Registration starts January 2020 [schuylkillwaterstewards.org](http://schuylkillwaterstewards.org)*

## *Chester County Updating Watersheds Plan*

The Chester County Planning Commission recently completed an update to the County's comprehensive plan, Landscapes 3, which was approved by the County Commissioners November 2018. In support of this new plan, the Chester County Water Resources Authority (CCWRA) is now preparing to update the county's Watersheds plan, the County's Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan, and the model stormwater ordinance. The new stormwater ordinance will to assist municipalities in achieving the latest NPDES MS4 stormwater ordinance requirements prior to the PA DEP's September 30, 2022 deadline.

Get involved! CCWRA staff is in the process of gathering input on desired changes to incorporate into the updated documents from stakeholders and municipalities across the county. CCWRA is hosting a series of public meetings through December seeking comments and input on desired changes to incorporate into the updated plans. You can visit the Chester County Water Resources Authority website for meeting dates and locations.



# Pennsylvania Master Naturalist

2019 was the first year for this program at GVWA!

The watersheds in northern Chester County are amazingly rich in natural features of all kinds--there is so much to see and learn! We are therefore very excited about this program which is connecting volunteers with this wealth of diversity around us, and then providing unique opportunities for volunteers projects.

Over the 11 week course the classes cover a range of topics, lead by experts in their fields. For example, our northern Chester County Piedmont geology provides a fascinating mix of many different rocks and minerals. The Field Geology segment is lead by Ronald Sloto, who is the author of 'The Mines and Minerals of Chester County, Pennsylvania', and a recognized authority on local geology. Topics for other segments include Ornithology, Herpetology, Entomology, and Mammology. The program includes four field trips as well, to destinations such as French Creek State Park, The Great Marsh Institute, Stroud Water Research Center, and more. Students who attended and



Aquatic Communities  
Stroud Water Research Center



Field Geology  
Ron Sloto

completed 2019 trainings are currently working on their volunteer projects and had many good things to say about the course! One said it perfectly, "What we know, we love. What we love, we protect. I now know more, so..."

## Pennsylvania Master Naturalist 2020 Training Schedule

Where: Green Valleys Watershed Association

Welkinweir 1368 Prizer Road, Pottstown

Classes start 3/25 Wednesday- 6:00pm-8:30pm

Field Trips are Saturdays- 8:30am-2:30pm

Make up dates class: 4/23, 5/14, and 6/4

Make up dates field trip: 5/16 and 6/6

[pamasternaturalist.org/become\\_a\\_master\\_naturalist/training-details/](http://pamasternaturalist.org/become_a_master_naturalist/training-details/)



## Summer Nature Camp 2020

The seasons are changing and the temperatures are cooling, but we are WARM thinking about our 2020 Summer Nature Day Camp. Look for new adventures including new themes and projects, and exciting field trip destinations and activities for 6th and 7th graders. Look for the 2020 camp brochure in your mailbox in January!



### Environmental Education in Pottstown Elementary Schools

Thank you to PECO for a \$5,000 grant and to AXAXL for a \$6,000 grant that will enhance and support our After School Nature Explorers Club program at the four elementary schools within the

Pottstown School District. This fall over 45 second grade students are participating in Nature Explorers Club at Franklin and Rupert Elementary Schools, with the club planned for students at Lincoln and Elizabeth Barth Elementary Schools this spring.



Since 2012, we have offered this after school program to Pottstown schools, free of charge, thanks to business and foundation funding. Student participants learn, engage and connect with the natural world, through a variety of activities focusing on ecosystems, birds, plants, adaptations, and water.

### CALENDAR

November 2019 through January 2020

For more details and registration, please contact Dawn White at 610-469-8646 or [dwhite@greenvalleys.org](mailto:dwhite@greenvalleys.org).

#### Holiday Open House

December 7th  
1 to 4 p.m.

Experience the historic Welkinweir estate decorated for the holidays. Enjoy holiday music on the 1928 Skinner Player Pipe Organ and learn about the estate's 300-year history. Open to all; donations gratefully accepted.

#### Christmas Tree-Cycling

Saturday, December 21  
10:30- 12:00 p.m.

Discover different ways to "Treecycle" your used Christmas tree. Create food-based decorations that help the animals survive the harsh winter weather and decorate our wildlife Christmas tree!

For ages 6 to 12, adult must accompany children. Fees per person: GVWA Members \$7, Nonmembers \$9.

#### Nature after Dark

Friday, January 24, 2020 (Severe weather date, January 31 )  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Explore the nocturnal world during a leisurely walk along the trails in search of beavers, owls, and other critters, before warming up by the campfire with stories and s'mores. Refreshments provided.

For ages 6 to adult. Fees per person: GVWA Members \$7, Nonmembers \$9.

#### Nature on Tap

Friday, February 21  
Saturday, March 14  
7:00-9:00 p.m.

Join us for some fun and educational programs for the 21+crowd! Sit back, relax, enjoy a glass or pint, and some tasty plates, as you learn about wildlife and conservation initiatives in our community.

Programs run rain or shine.

Save the Dates!



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)  
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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  
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