



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

January 2022

Mission: The West Chester Green Team is a civic organization in West Chester, PA, that works to educate the local public and to establish and nourish green initiatives in the community in harmony with nature and each other, promoting the health of all living things and of planet Earth.

Inside: Front Porch Concerts, Light Pollution, Plastic Bag and Straw Ordinances, 2021 in Retrospect, Green Team Scrapbook and more!



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events



When – What – Where.

January 10: Front Porch Concert committee meeting, virtual, 7 pm. Join in planning this event--Front Porch concerts on WC borough front porches, scheduled for May 21 1-7 pm/May 22 rain date. Cosponsored by Mayor Lillian DeBaptiste and WC Green Team. Contact Mhudgings@gmail.com for more information.

January 25: Green Team Board meeting, virtual, 7:00-8:30 pm

February 1: Dark Sky Committee meeting, West Chester University Planetarium on Tuesday, February 1st at 6:00 PM. All are welcome to attend.

One More Auction Recap...

Our 4th annual auction had more than 100 donations and more than 383 bids as well as our highest number of bids ever on a single item: 22 bids for a home garden consultation with Doug Tallamy. All items had bids. Everybody seemed pleased. One new bidder from Malvern said that our auction items are the highest quality she has ever seen. A significant billing glitch had us scrambling for a bit but, in the end, we raised our highest total amount ever. Thank you auction committee, donors and bidders. Thank you, Mayor Jordan Norley for being the Green Santa and the face of the auction. THANK YOU, EVERYONE for a very successful Season's Greenings Auction!

Be sure to visit our Web site at <https://wcgreenteam.com/> and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WCGTeam/> (all are welcome to post environment- and sustainability-related items there). If you wish to support our work, please donate here: <https://wcgreenteam.com/contact-2/>





Front Porch Concerts

The WCGT began its Transition conversations in January of '21. At that time, we decided to add in three initiatives to our Green Team work, all with a Transition focus:

1. Community gardening--did it at 3 locations last summer
2. Living Landscapes--a Doug Tallamy inspired approach to getting rid of grass and planting pollinator-friendly native plants to increase soil health and return the Earth to its original balance--created an inspirational Green Man Garden Tour, worked on a sample garden and assisted the local business community in planting in alleys

3. Get rid of plastic--worked with WC borough on its Sustainable Storefronts program and networked with Phoenixville, West Goshen and most recently East Bradford residents to achieve this goal.

Next up? Inspired by Transition thinking, we are taking on a new project in our quest for community building and happiness: Porchfest West Chester. Incoming Mayor Lillian DeBaptiste and the Green Team will cosponsor concerts on front porches to celebrate our diversity and promote community. After 2 years of Covid, it is time to celebrate emerging from it--and what better way than music on our beautiful West Chester front porches?

But what does music have to do with the environment? We are using a feel-good event for its own sake and also as a vehicle for environmental learning: planning children's activities in Everhart Park, a seed station, a gardening advice booth, and cooking demonstrations featuring local products. And we will have voter registration spots. (We did something similar but on a much smaller scale back in '19 with our Strawberry Festival in Everhart Park. That event was inspired by Margaret Westbrook of Buy Nothing, West Chester. Thank you, Buy Nothing, WC!)

The date is May 21st with the 22nd as a rain date. The time is 1-7 pm. The location is the southwestern part of WC borough: Church St to Bradford Avenue and Miner to Dean Streets.

Rani Norley, and newcomer from Boston, Miggy Mason, are leading the effort.

We will have a Porchfest West Chester website (www.westchesterporchfest.com) up in the next couple of weeks so check back soon, but in the meantime....

Want to host? Fill out the form [here](#).

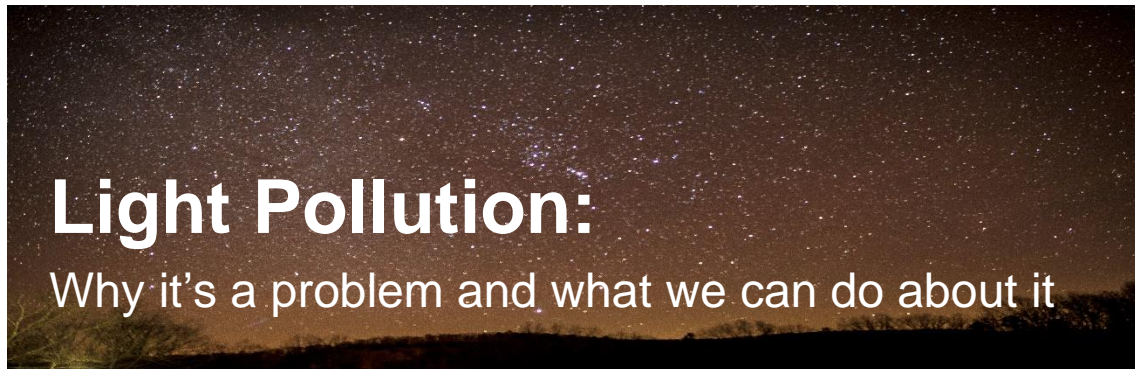
Want to perform? Fill out the form [here](#).

Want to help out? We will be needing lots of volunteers before, during, and after the event to pull this off. Contact Margaret mhudgings@gmail.com.

Concerts, con't.

We look forward to an inspiring, uplifting, community-oriented event this spring and hope you'll host, perform, volunteer, and/or attend! Please spread the word!

Some performers you know: Stephanie Markstein and the Rev. Dan Schatz and bands brought to us by Kyle Weber and Lillian DeBaptiste. Want to help out? We will be needing lots of volunteers to pull this off. Contact Margaret mhudgings@gmail.com. Stay tuned for more information!



by Professor Marc Gagné

Most of us are familiar with air, water, and land pollution, but did you know that light can also be a pollutant? Since Thomas Edison's patent of the tungsten lightbulb in 1906, artificial electric lighting has transformed our lives. But in the process, we have lost an important part of our human heritage: the night sky. Less than 100 years ago, most everyone could look up and see a spectacular starry night sky. Today 80% of Americans cannot see the Milky Way from their home. Over the last century, the increased or excessive and widespread use of artificial light at night has not only impaired our view of the universe but has adversely affected; the Earth's climate through human energy consumption, numerous plants and animals that have relied on Earth's regular rhythm of night and day for billions of years, and human health and safety.

Light pollution is a major contributor to the climate crisis. Large amounts of electricity are needed to generate light, and electricity is often produced by burning fossil fuels. Uncontrolled outdoor lighting wastes energy. As much as 50% of outdoor lighting is wasted, increasing greenhouse gas emissions, and contributing to climate change.

Plants and animals depend on the daily cycle of light and dark to regulate reproduction, nourishment, sleep, and protection from predators. Scientific research has linked light pollution to negative and deadly outcomes for many creatures including amphibians, birds, mammals, insects, and plants. For example, some nocturnal birds use the moon and stars for navigation during their migrations; and they can become disoriented when flying through brightly lit areas. Female sea turtles shy away from areas with bright lights, which interrupts their nesting patterns. Newly hatched turtles are so drawn to lights, so instead of heading to the ocean, they often end up on land instead.

Research suggests that artificial light at night can negatively affect human health as well, increasing risks for obesity, depression, sleep disorders, diabetes, and breast cancer. Scientists

Light Pollution, con't.

have also established a link between light pollution and air pollution. Light from our cities can destroy nitrate radicals that form at night that help to cleanse the air.

In addition to the negative economic, environmental and health impacts associated with light pollution, we are losing a precious natural resource: our nighttime environment. Outdoor lighting illuminates the sky, hiding the stars and changing how we experience the night. Despite a century of uncontrolled outdoor lighting, there are ways to combat light pollution that will make a difference right away. The West Chester Green Team is addressing the problem of light pollution by creating a local Dark Sky Initiative. If you would like more information about light pollution and what we can do now to improve our nighttime environment, the International Dark-Sky Association is a good place to start: <https://www.darksky.org>. If you would like to learn more about the West Chester Dark Sky Initiative, please contact Marc Gagné at mgagne@wcupa.edu. The Dark Sky committee's kick-off meeting will be held in the West Chester University Planetarium on Tuesday, February 1st at 6:00 PM. All are welcome to attend.

2021 Film & Forum Series Wrap-up

by Megan Schraedley

The final West Chester Green Team Film & Forum Series event of 2021 enjoyed excellent community turnout with over 60 in attendance on Dec. 7th at West Chester University's Business and Public Administration Building. The "Thirsty for Justice" panel, sponsored by the West Chester Green Team, the WCU Office of Sustainability, the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester, and the West Chester Co-op, brought together local political leaders and environmental advocates to discuss green issues. Panel members were state Senator Carolyn Comitta (19th district, state Representative Dianne Herrin (156th district), Chester County Commissioner Josh Maxwell, and Faith Zerbe, Water Watch Director with the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. John Jackson, PhD, a Senior Research Scientist and entomologist from Stroud Research Center and science advisor to the WCGT, led the discussion by prompting panel members to discuss local environmental concerns ranging from increased flooding in southeastern PA to planting more pollinator gardens and native trees, to supporting local and state politicians who propose or support climate change disaster mitigation strategies.

At the beginning of the event, Mayor Jordan Norley acknowledged Margaret Hudgings and Nathaniel Smith's environmental work in the Borough with the WCGT by reading proclamations and presenting them each with the key to the borough. The event emphasized the importance of open communication between citizen environmental groups and local politicians in order to take action on the issues that matter.



Looking for 2022 Intern(s)



As is our tradition, the West Chester Green Team plans to have one or more paid interns in spring and summer 2022. West Chester University's Center for Community Solutions has kindly offered us hours. If you know of any student with the interest, skills, and background in gardening--plus, preferably, writing and social media management--please let us know by emailing us at westchestergoesgreen@gmail.com and we will advise.

Plastic Bag and Straw Ordinances



As you'll recall, in July 2019 West Chester Borough Council passed an ordinance banning most retail usages of single-use plastic bags and straws, to be effective in July 2020. Special interests in our state's capital delayed enforcement by legislative action initiated at the request of a manufacturer of plastic bags. During this time, the Borough implemented a voluntary green program for stores known as [Sustainable Storefronts](#). Finally, the state legislature has ended its obstruction, and the West Chester ordinance is now in effect as of January 1, 2022. See details [here](#).

The West Goshen Supervisors just enacted similar measures, to go into effect on Earth Day, April 22, 2022 (see [here](#)); and East Bradford's Environment Advisory Board has been considering a recommendation (discussed in 3 meetings in 2021 minutes [here](#)).

East Goshen, meanwhile, is implementing a collaborative plan that includes offering awards for businesses that adopt sustainable practices, furnishing recycled-material multi-use bags with the East Goshen and EG Sustainability Advisory Committee logos, provided by an East Goshen business, that residents can use over and over in stores. EG SAC will be urging residents to take selfies with these bags inside businesses and will be posting them on social media. The Township is also launching an educational program to help residents and businesses to achieve sustainable goals together.

If you live in one of those 3 municipalities, please express your support for any and all measures taken to cut down on plastics. And in other municipalities, please urge elected officials and administrative staff onward! And please let us know of measures taken or considered in your municipality.



Note: Deadline for the February issue of Green Team News is January 28!



2021 Year in Retrospect

More was accomplished in 2021 than we can even remember! See our web site <https://wcgreenteam.com/> for some events and while you're there, check out our home page, newly reorganized thanks to WCU student volunteer Jolianna Schenk-Cruz, now including descriptions and links for our main areas of activity to date, namely:

- [*Climite and Energy*](#)
- [*Gardening and Food*](#)
- [*Pesticides and Herbicides*](#)
- [*Reducing use of plastics*](#)
- [*West Chester Area Community*](#)

Some special highlights of the year:

- a chilly Earth Day celebration, with street chalking and art displays
- community gardens at three locations
- progress by the [West Chester Tree Team](#) in encouraging the Borough to plant more street trees
- Mondays at Melton programs for children on summer evenings
- installation of a Little Library at the Melton Center
- plantings at the Chestnut St. garage, Chester County History Center, and a private streetside strip
- Doug Tallamy lecture at WCU, very well attended, in September
- Fall Film and Forum series at WCU in the three subsequent months
- Chesco Clean Energy Tour by **Ready For 100**, October 2-3
- Most successful December auction yet, online, to fund our 2022 activities
- Green Santa!
- invasives removal at Goose Creek, 4/16-17/21; see <https://wcgreenteam.com/2021/04/20/riparian-improvement-at-greenfield-park-on-goose-creek-west-chester/>
- WCU Communications students help with Sustainable Storefronts

Water

Downpours, floods, stream bank erosion, evacuations but, contradictorily, fears about declining tap water quality and rising prices. Parts of many municipalities have been hard hit lately. Our area has some rain gardens and retention basins, which help capture run-off and direct it into the soil, but more are needed. The Green Team needs help to start up a Water Team. If you'd like to join in the effort, please email us at westchestergoesgreen@gmail.com. When we get enough volunteers, we'll meet and get it started!



Flooding, E. Union St., West Chester, 9/1/21

Trees and Landscaping

Even during the midst of the ups and downs of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 turned out to be a successful and dynamic year for the West Chester Tree Team and the Living Landscapes Committee....

Visit our web site by clicking [here](#) to read the full article by Courtney Finneran about six impressive 2021 projects undertaken by her team:

- street plantings
- Goose Creek invasives removal
- lawn to native pollinator garden conversion
- Green Man garden tour
- Chestnut St. hellstrip garden
- and Chestnut St. garage alley garden



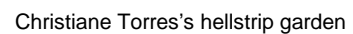
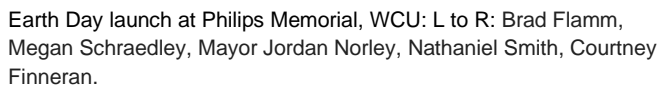
Congratulations to leader Courtney Finneran and all team members who made these great contributions to West Chester's environment and streetscape attractiveness!



Chestnut Street Hellstrip Garden (September 12, 2021)

If you are interested in supporting this group, please email WCTreeTeam@gmail.com and let us know!

2021
Green Team
Scrapbook





Nathaniel Smith and Margaret Hudgings receive awards from Mayor Jordan Norley.



Mondays at Melton kids.



Megan Schraedley (center) and Rani Norley (right) give out Sustainable Storefront awards



...and Green Santa!

