

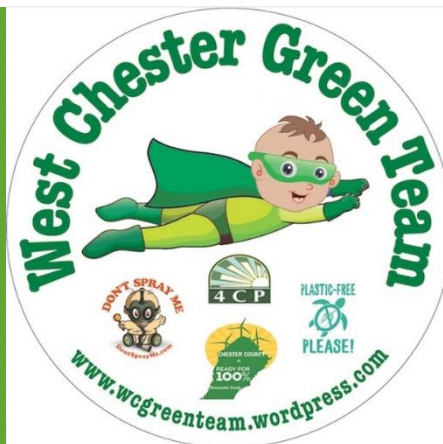


WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

March 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: Living Landscapes, Art Award, Light Pollution, Goose Creek Clean-up, Urging Businesses to Do More, Earth Day Preparations . . . and a Porchfest Update



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events



When – What – Where.

March 7: Porchfest Committee, 7 pm, virtual. All welcome. Contact Miggy Mason at miggy.mason@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

March 10: WCGT Meet up at Taco Mar, 122 E. Gay St., 6 pm, hosted by Megan Schraedley. Meet like-minded people and learn about Green Team's latest projects.

March 22: WCGT Board Meeting, 7 pm, Virtual, hosted by Nathaniel Smith. Contact Nathanielbsmith@earthlink.net

March 23: Living Landscapes meeting, 7 pm, virtual. [Click here to join the meeting](#)

March 23: Dark Sky Initiative meeting, 6 PM in the WCU Planetarium

Events of interest hosted by other organizations:

March 26: Goose Creek Clean-up, 9-11 am. See article on page 7 for details.

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/>

NOTE: Deadline for the April issue is March 30! We welcome contributions and suggestions from our readers for possible inclusion in a future issue. E-mail your ideas to Dianne Walsh at LDwalsh318@gmail.com.

What's New with Living Landscapes?

by Courtney Finnaren

On February 16th, the Living Landscapes subcommittee held their first meeting of the year to discuss plans for the upcoming season. The meeting brought together about 10 new members, from a variety of backgrounds and experience levels, all living locally in the West Chester area.

After recapping some successful 2021 projects, LL Committee Chair Courtney Finnaren described some projects that the group is planning for 2022.

A key effort for 2022 is to focus on the message of Doug Tallamy and signing up gardens to be included on the Homegrown National Park online map. Volunteers will help distribute educational flyers and work to show people how they can sign up their own yard on the map.

Several native garden projects are in the early stages of planning. LL members will help in a variety of ways, from developing or reviewing the proposed designs, to helping source the plant materials, to planting the gardens in the spring. The keystone project for WCGT this year will be a new native pollinator garden located at the Chester County Art Association - stay tuned for more information.

Finally, the group recognized that generating awareness and educational resources through easy to understand DIY Fact Sheets and website updates was an important goal for the year. One new member came up with an idea for the borough to sell a "DIY Pollinator Starter Kit" for future hellstrip plantings which we are exploring alongside the development of a DIY Hellstrip Planting Guide.

Our next meeting will be held March 23 at 7 PM, so please reach out to courtney.marm@gmail.com for more information.



Looking for Garden Space?

The West Chester Green Team is again matching up residents who would like free garden space with community garden plots for summer 2022. Our garden plots are usually 4 X 8 feet in raised beds. We furnish the spaces; you furnish seeds or starter plants, tools, and your time.

If you are interested, please act now, as some early crops can be sown as early as mid-March, and we will assign beds as soon as we have a good match with interested people. Visit our web site at <https://wcgreenteam.com/2022/03/03/looking-for-garden-space-this-summer/> to find out how to apply for your space.



Porchfest 2022 is Growing! Here are the Details

Porchfests are annual music events held across the United States and in Canada on front porches. Started in Ithaca, New York in 2007, porchfests bring local musicians and neighborhoods together to celebrate and create a sense of community.

Here in West Chester, we have assembled an energetic committee to organize this event and community response has been impressive.

Where: From Church St. to Bradford Avenue and Miner St. to Dean St.

When: May 21 from 1-7 pm with May 22 as the rain date

Your hosts: 20 to 30 front porches. See the poster below for a sampling of some of West Chester's beautiful porches.

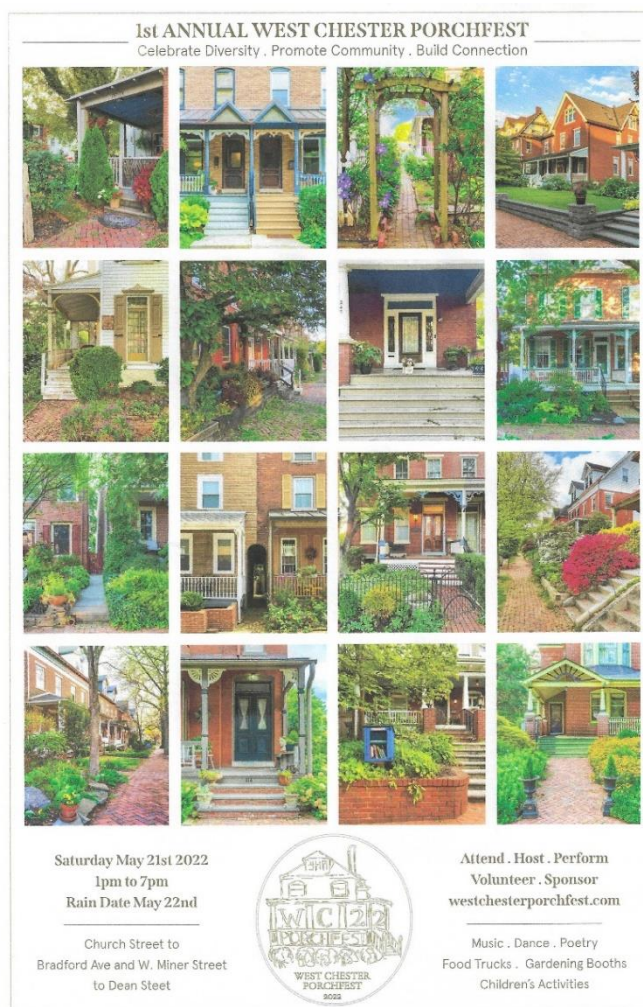
The entertainers: Bands of all sorts, dancers, a cellist, a jazz pianist, singer/composers, a Japanese folk singer, a gospel choir, a recorded Appalachian folk musician, a player of antique music boxes, guitar players of all sorts and --we are hoping--a mariachi band.

For the kids: face painting, planting, arts and crafts, and a musical "petting zoo" in Everhart Park. Ice cream and gelato.

Food trucks and picnicking at Ironworks Church and Everhart Park. And first of the season-- Strawberry Shortcake.

Information stations to learn about Green Team projects including planting native pollinator friendly gardens, community food gardening, Dark Sky (wouldn't it be nice to see the Milky Way?) and a new Water Committee working toward cleaner, healthier water for our community.

As we emerge from a time of darkness, let's celebrate spring with music in the air at the first annual West Chester Porchfest. Keep up with what's happening by visiting the web site at westchesterporchfest.com and DubC Porchfest on Facebook.



This and That:

To hear Mike McGrath's (You Bet Your Garden) recent talk on lawns, try one of these links:

Here's the page with the recording: <https://www.westpikeland.com/post/speaker-series-the-dirty-little-secret-of-lawn-care-february-24-2022-7pm-via-zoom>

This is the direct recording link as

well: https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/pR_OPAVPbRDjQSPli_G-fuE_FHERbaz70z_8CpVHYaLJQpJ3_8t4ycZrwdl0rQ.kmmUMp5PissH_Kyq

Philip Jamison Art and Nature Award



In honor and memory of famed Chester County artist, Philip Jamison, the West Chester Green Team by arrangement with the Jamison family, will be offering an art award. The Philip Jamison Art and Nature Award will be given to a local artist whose work celebrates nature as Mr. Jamison's did. Submissions may be made by the artist or by a friend or admirer. To offer a work, contact Dianne Walsh, Art Committee chairperson. The deadline to submit a work is **April 15**. The award will be given at a ceremony at 11 am on Earth Day, Friday, April 22 at West Chester University. For more information contact LDwalsh318@gmail.com

Doug Tallamy News

Stay tuned for exciting information coming soon on Doug Tallamy. And...the Green Team will be launching the Doug Tallamy Homegrown National Park Program this spring, too.

Who is Doug Tallamy?

He is the author of such books as *Nature's Best Hope*, *Bringing Nature Home*, *The Nature of Oaks*, and *The Living Landscape*. To quote Doug, "Chances are you never thought of your garden--indeed, all of your property--as a wildlife preserve that presents the last chance we have for sustaining plants and animals that were once common throughout the U.S. but that is exactly the role our suburban landscapes are playing."



Wanted: Library steward for the Little Library purchased by the Green Team for the Melton Center. Please stop by as needed to refill it with books. Peggy Pillard, who has done such an excellent job with it, will orient the next leader. Position begins on April 1.

Effects of Light Pollution on West Chester Wildlife

By Lucinda Bauman

It is plain to see how light pollution worsens all our lives. In return for wasting our money and resources, it is making us all sick. But did you know that not only us, but all life in the ecosystem is being harmed? Especially in the West Chester area, where microorganisms, plants, and animals are hit the hardest by skyglow.

Microorganisms are a diverse range of lifeforms, such as bacteria, archaea, and some fungi, that are crucial to our environment. They provide fresh oxygen, recycle nutrients in the soil, help animals' bodies function, and much more. But even the smallest microorganisms are suffering from light pollution. To function properly, their circadian rhythms are dependent on the dark night/light day cycle.



With the nighttime environment brightened by artificial light, however, they cannot distinguish between day and night any longer, thus throwing off their circadian rhythms. Therefore, they struggle to regulate growth, reproduction, responsiveness, and metabolism; some of the fundamental components of life. Effectively, microbes also cannot fulfill their essential roles. Especially some of the most crucial microorganisms in the West Chester environment, such as *Bradyrhizobium*, *Rhodopseudomonas*, and *Burkholderia* bacteria that are necessary for nutrient recycling.

The damage that is inflicted on microorganisms cascades onto more complex lifeforms such as plants and animals that rely on the microorganisms. Plus, much like microorganisms, plants and animals' circadian rhythms also cannot function properly with light pollution.



Under the faux-daytime/night environment, plants struggle with pollination, growth, dormancy, and fluorescence. This especially affects nocturnal plants, like the local evening-blooming yellow primrose. Something so fundamental to the primrose as blooming at night, it often struggles to do correctly. This is just one outward reflection of the plants' struggle to live.

The strain that is placed on plants puts a strain on animals, and vice versa. This interconnectivity of the local ecosystem is a large reason why

plant life is declining in Pennsylvania, which is especially dangerous considering the hundreds of rare, threatened, or endangered native species.

Light pollution also throws off animals' circadian rhythms, which harms their reproductive, nourishment, sleep, and migration cycles. But there are also other ways in which light pollution hurts animals. For example, dragonflies that lay their eggs in ponds often mistake dark asphalt, that is lightened by skyglow, as ponds. So, their offspring are effectively doomed. Also, fireflies struggle to find each other for reproduction, when in their perception, their glow is not bright enough. In all, hundreds of billions of bugs die yearly by exterior lighting, either from the heat or exhaustion of trying to find an escape from it.

Wildlife, con't.

Insects, mice, rabbits, deer, and other prey animals are extremely vulnerable in a polluted environment, as they do not have the protective darkness to hide them. In effect, they are overhunted by predator animals.

Migrating animals, such as birds and butterflies, often become disoriented in environments with light pollution. Their circadian rhythms and internal navigation systems are dependent on seeing the starry night sky, but this is impossible in over-lit environments. Because of this, they often become lost, thrown off track, or crash into bright buildings. In 2020 alone, over 1,500 birds flew into skyscrapers in Philadelphia. In the whole United States, the bird population has declined by nearly 30% over the past 50 years; and if no action is taken, two-thirds of birds in the US could become extinct.

In Pennsylvania, it is estimated that 40% of Pennsylvania's birds are threatened by climate change. As birds migrate northward to escape the changing climate, we could stop seeing the rarer ruffed grouse, rough-legged hawk, American tree sparrow, and evening grosbeak altogether in Pennsylvania. However, the majority birds that are fleeing are the common ones, like warblers, swallows, sparrows, and finches. This loss of common birds can likely lead to ecosystem erosion.

As light pollution causes this catastrophe in the ecosystem around us, so many of us do not even realize. So, we must increase awareness by educating everyone—friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, etc.—on the dangers of light pollution and how we can fight back, both individually and as communities.

24th Annual CRC Streams Cleanup (Site 112)

Saturday, March 26, 2022, 9:00-11:30 am

It has been two long years since we last gathered for the **Goose Creek Cleanup in West Chester Borough**. This year, the cleanup has been moved to March in order to start off the season with a good spring cleaning. The event is happening RAIN OR SHINE!



You must register online (as soon as possible please) at this link: <http://www.crcwatersheds.org>.

* * Select **Site 112** for WC Borough * *

We will meet at **205 Lacey Street** by 9:00am - there is plenty of parking. Grab a cup of hot coffee, pick up some supplies and listen to a quick educational and safety moment before we break up into groups.

We also will snap a photo so we can make sure to document the hard work of our team - we are but one group of a watershed-wide cleanup event, with hundreds of volunteers joining to make a real difference in our environment.

Please wear gardening or work boots (knee-high or waders are always appreciated since we need help to access some hard-to-reach areas).

Bring Your Own Tools - Simple garden tools can help loosen up and reach trash that may be stuck. Consider bringing a heavy-duty rake, a pick or a hoe are very helpful tools. We will supply gloves and trash bags.

Bring your kids! We will have some family-friendly sections that are suitable for kindergarteners and older.

How Do We Urge Institutions to Do More in the Climate Crisis?

by Bill Haaf

A very hot planet is coming fast, causing many to suffer the consequences. We should be pushing establishments and people to take action now. Here are two sample letters that you can adapt to the institution or business of your choice. Please tailor them to fit the specific business and situation. Remember, always be respectful; you will make a greater impact.



#1) To a retirement community enlarging its facilities:

Dear _____,

I read your annual report and was excited to see that you will construct a sizable addition.

I am hoping your new building would very energy efficient, perhaps using ground-source heat pumps for heating and cooling and some solar panels on the roof.

Could you please describe how you plan to significantly reduce your carbon footprint and move to renewable energy?

Thank you,

#2) To a resort

Subject: Climate crisis

Dear _____,

Good morning, nice talking to you today. My family has enjoyed our stay at_____.

As [scientists / teachers / businesspersons], we believe the climate science and are very concerned about the health and welfare of our children and grandchildren in a much hotter and more dangerous world.

Your location and property are perfect for solar panels and geothermal wells.

Thus, what goals has _____ established to reduce your large carbon footprint and move to renewable energy?

Thanks for your reply,

Earth Day Preparations

by Indira al-Rashid



As we approach Spring, preparations for Earth Day are in full swing. The rise in environmental consciousness led to the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. The day was selected to fall on a weekday between Spring Break and final exams in order to ensure the maximum amount of student participation. Presently, Earth Day is considered to be the second largest global secular observance.

There is a similar air of determination in today's youth, to save the planet and create a more sustainable Earth.

Over a billion people each year are continuing efforts to keep the Earth clean and healthy, as evident in the ordinance banning single-use plastics in West Chester, which went into effect earlier this year. Young people remain heavily involved in Earth Day celebrations around the world.

I spoke with Amy Domenick, a local fifth grade teacher, about her Earth Day plans. She and the Quaker Leadership Team at her school have engaged in multiple Earth Day projects over the last few years. Previous to the official ban on plastic bags in West Chester, her students collected surveys on the ban and submitted them to the Borough to promote the ordinance being put into effect. The goal is to have this year's students, most of them only eleven years old, ponder over what they can do as young kids to help keep their community clean for Earth Day.

Currently the class is drafting a letter to the Borough, enclosing a proposal to disperse water bottle refill stations around West Chester. The goal of the refill stations is to encourage the use of refillable water bottles. Restaurants and businesses could volunteer to be water bottle refilling stations for the public.

This refill project originated in the UK and is now a global movement. A mobile application allows citizens all over the world to find stations nearby to refill their water bottles, thus avoiding the need for single-use plastic water bottles. Along with the app, students suggested businesses also being able to advertise with a sticker in their window that they will fill your water bottle.

Last Earth Day, The West Chester Green Team partnered with Professor Megan Schraedley to organize an Art Festival and Stroll event. The event featured art and a sidewalk chalking. Over a hundred people were in attendance to celebrate our planet! This year, there will be a second-annual sidewalk chalking event on April 22nd. Those involved with the Green Team and West Chester University are eager to make this year's Earth Day event even better than the last.

In what ways can you participate in Earth Day? Try to limit your use of single-use plastics. Perhaps you can organize a cleanup in your community. Maybe plant a garden in your yard or get a plant for your room! And plan to come to view the environmental sidewalk art on April 22. Now is the perfect time to think of ways to participate in this year's Earth Day celebration!