



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

March 2023

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:

Lots of upcoming events, Earth Day news, Porchfest, Rain Gardens, Legendary Lenape Program, a History of the Green Team, a Journey in Compost. . . and Green Beer!



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



March 16, 7 pm: Porchfest Meeting--virtual. Contact Rani Norley
raninorley@gmail.com

March 25, 9-11:30 am: Goose Creek Clean-up: West Chester and West Goshen sites. Register online at <https://www.crcwatersheds.org/what-we-do/streams-cleanup/streams-cleanup-volunteering/> Meet at our same spot at the Public Works Dept along Lacey Street and head out from there to clean the Borough stretches of Goose Creek - Make sure you **choose Site 112**.

March 26, 1 pm: Water committee meeting at La Baguette Magique. The agenda will include discussing what goals the water committee should focus on. See additional details on page 3.

March 28, 7 pm: WCGT Board meeting, virtual. Hosted by David Wickard. Details to come.

April 18, 10 am: WCGT Education Committee meeting, 409 W. Union St., West Chester. Help us plan and present this program to the community: Legendary Lenape--Family Education Program. Canoeing and Cooking, Crafts and Storytelling, and Deep Reverence for the Natural World

For details on these and other March (and later) events, please see listings beginning on page 3.

Related groups and committees:

4th Monday of every month: East Bradford Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), 7 – 8:30pm, East Bradford Township Bldg, 676 Copeland School Rd.

4th Monday of every month: East Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee, 7 – 8:30pm, East Goshen Township Bldg, 1580 Paoli Pike

4th Tuesday of every month: West Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee, 6 – 8 pm, West Goshen Township Bldg., 1025 Paoli Pike

4th Tuesday of every month: Westtown Environmental Advisory Council, 7 – 8:30pm, Westtown Township Bldg., 1039 Wilmington Pike (Rt. 202)

4th Thursday of every month: West Chester Sustainability Advisory Committee, 6:30 – 8 pm, Room 240, Borough Hall, E. Gay St.

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 31! 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.

This and That

More Coming Attractions:

Lots of upcoming events, so save the dates now!

March 9, 2023, at West Chester University: Spirituality and Sustainability Symposium. This year it will feature [Dr. Christopher Carter](#) who will speak on *Race, Spirituality, and Food Justice*. It will be free and open to the public.

March 11, 2023, at West Chester University, The President's Speaker Series presents Erin Brockovich, 8 pm in the Asplundh Concert Hall. You've seen the movie, now see the real person!

"Erin Brockovich's dogged persistence was the impelling force behind the largest medical settlement lawsuit in history. A modern-day "David" who loves a good brawl with today's "Goliaths," Erin thrives on being the voice for those who don't know how to yell. She is a rebel, an environmentalist, and a mother. She is also a strong believer that it only takes one person to make a difference."

Get your tickets now at

<https://wcupatix.com/president-s-speaker-series>



March 26, 2023 at 1 pm, Mackenzie Fulton, senior in the Honors College at WCU, plans to explore the creation of a committee focused on water with interested members of the community. Mackenzie has been working on this, her capstone project, with Prof Megan Fork. Megan has focused on rain gardens in our community which is a timely topic as the borough is now allowing the adoption of rain gardens by borough residents, a GT goal for several years. If you are interested in this topic, please plan to attend the brainstorming session with Mackenzie. Location: La Baguette Magique, 202 W. Market St., West Chester. For more information, contact Mackenzie at MF956758@wcupa.edu

March 31, 2023, Vision Zero PHL Conference: *Creating an Equitable Future with Zero Traffic Fatalities*. Sponsored by the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, 9 am to 3:30 pm, Temple University Student Center South, 1755 N. 13th Street, Philadelphia. Pa. The conference will be followed at 4 pm by the 2023 Better Mobility Mayoral Forum where the Philadelphia mayoral candidates will have an opportunity to speak about their views on sustainable mobility and Vision Zero. Daniel Pearson, Inquirer Editorial Writer, will moderate the discussion.

West Chester University's Fourth Spirituality and Sustainability Colloquium

Race, Spirituality, & Food Justice


Thursday, March 9, 2023
5 - 6:30p • Sykes Theater

Presented by Dr. Christopher Carter

Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter's research, teaching, and activist interests are in Black, Womanist, and Environmental ethics, with a particular focus on race, food, and nonhuman animals.

FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE!

*Refreshments and greetings start at 4:45 in the hallway.



Dr. Carter's latest publication, *The Spirit of Soul Food*, explores how American food culture has disproportionately harmed Black communities and reflects on how people of color can eat in a way that reflects their cultural identities while remaining true to the principles of compassion, love, justice, and solidarity with the marginalized.

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SPIRITUALITY & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE:
Welcoming Message:
Dr. Bradley Flamm (Office of Sustainability)
President/Respondent:
Dr. Jea Sophia Oh - Korean Donghok Tradition
Respondents:
Dr. Joey Miller: The Muscogee Tradition
Dr. Tabassum Ruby: Islamic tradition

drchristophercarter.com

*For more information, contact Dr. Jea Sophia Oh at joh@wcupa.edu

April 21, 2023, at West Chester University: Earth Day Eve! Sign dedication in cooperation with Brad Flamm and the Sustainability Office. The WCGT will also honor three long-time members: Christi Marshall, George Squire and Don Braceland. West Chester Mayor Lillian DeBaptiste and University President Christopher Fiorentino will speak. Meet near the Frederick Douglass statue behind Philips Memorial Hall.

April 22, 2023 (Earth Day), Rally at Historic Courthouse, 1 pm, with State Sen. Carolyn Comitta, County Commissioner Josh Maxwell, State Rep. Chris Pielli, and other speakers. Theme: Climate: What Next? Then, march down High Street to the Unitarian Congregation where there will be a **Green Fair from 2:15 until 4:30**. Includes a Repair café, plantings, snacks and activities for children. What's a repair café? Essentially, attendees bring items in need of repair which other people fix! This keeps usable items from going to landfill and reduces the volume of raw materials and energy needed to make new products. It also provides those with repair skills the opportunity to put them to good use and share with others in the community! **We are looking for such people!** If you can repair clothing, small appliances, electronics, lamps, small pieces of furniture, etc, please contact Ginny Marcille-Kerslake at gmarcillekerslake@fwwatch.org . A great way to celebrate Earth Day! See more below.

April 29, 2023—2 pm, Unitarian Congregation, S. High St. Workshop by Dee Durham, president of Plastic-free Delaware (see her other credentials at <https://www.friendsfordeedurham.us/about/>). Advance registration required. Topic: HOW to ban PLASTIC. She will be discussing getting rid of plastic--which she did successfully in Delaware--and successfully running a non-profit group--as it grows. Spaces for this event are limited so please rsvp to save a spot. Josh Maxwell from our own Chester County government will be joining us. Contact mhudgings@gmail.com to sign up.

May 20--PORCHFEST 1-7 pm. Southwest quadrant of West Chester. **May 21--Porchfest** rain date

As always, see updates and other events in our website calendar at the bottom of our Web site homepage at <https://wcgreenteam.com>

Earth Day Birthday '23!

We will celebrate with a rally at the courthouse and a group of great speakers and live music. We even have a 7-year-old showing off her Earth Day poster and an 11-year-old sharing his thoughts on the future of the planet.

What can you do to help? First of all--be there. 1 pm on April 22 at the courthouse. It is so important that we attend to show our representatives that the environment is at the top of our personal agenda. Do you think the plastic bag and straw ban would have passed Borough Council without a massive turn out? And see the result. As a friend from Philly put it at an earlier Earth Day rally, "Who would have thought that little West Chester would be leading the way?"



Please also consider baking cupcakes for the event. It is a birthday celebration. We want to hand out cupcakes to interested attendees. And we are hoping that lots of children will be there to make it a truly beautiful occasion. It is their planet after all! Get creative and do this activity with your children or grandchildren or neighborhood kids. Let me know if we can count on you. mhudgings@gmail.com

More details will be shared next month including a list of speakers and musicians, a preview of our march from the courthouse to the Unitarian Congregation and a list of activities at the Green Fair we are holding there--which includes a Repair Cafe and planting activities.



Porchfest – We Need More Performers and Porches!

The second annual Porchfest will be held Saturday, May 20 (Rain date is the following day, May 21) in the Borough's southwest quadrant from 1-7 pm, with the support and endorsement of Mayor Lillian DeBaptiste. So far, 33 bands or individuals have signed up to perform, 17 porches have been volunteered, and we're looking for more! To volunteer to perform, host, sponsor, or help out visit <https://westchesterporchfest.com/>. Contact Molly Hanford if you wish to donate to this new West Chester community tradition. mbhanford@msn.com.

And how do you like this year's spiffy new poster over there on the left? Many thanks to Miggy Mason for her wonderful design!

Want to Adopt a Rain Garden?

West Chester Borough Adopt-a-Rain Garden Program is kicking off this spring! Borough residents are invited to volunteer to help maintain the Borough's rain gardens. The information provided below is from the Borough's website:

Rain gardens are an important component of the Borough's DEP-mandated stormwater quality improvement goals, and also help mitigate flooding downstream of their construction by capturing and holding stormwater runoff during heavy precipitation events, and slowing the release of water to flood-prone waterways. Some of the water infiltrates into gravel and soil beneath the garden, and sediment and pollutants settle out or are filtered by hardy plants.

You can get involved in the Borough's rain gardens and keep them looking their best. Volunteers will be involved in plant selection, planting, and light garden maintenance, and most importantly making sure the infrastructure is working as intended.

[SIGN UP AS A NEW OR REPEAT VOLUNTEER HERE!](#)



Looking for Free Garden Space this Summer?

The West Chester Green Team is happy to be able again to match up people who would like free garden space with community garden plots that we have located for summer 2023. Our garden plots are usually 4 X 4 or sometimes 4 X 8 feet. We supply the space, you supply tools and your time.

We believe gardening and growing our own food offer good ways to get in touch with the natural world, give us the satisfaction of acting for the good, and are educational to all concerned. Our gardeners are expected to grow organically and not use any chemical fertilizers or insecticides.



See more details and how to apply [here](#).

Clean Water for Pennsylvanians: It Takes Work

It has been an uncertain start to the 2023–2024 Pennsylvania legislative session with special elections and newly elected officials taking office. But our creeks wait for no one—now it's time to roll up our sleeves and continue the work to restore and protect clean water in Pennsylvania.

Building on the momentum of the last year will be key for clean water. Passage of the Clean Streams Fund package has positioned the Commonwealth for success. The most important part of package was the creation of a statewide program called the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) that helps farmers design and implement conservation practices critical for clean water. But long-term funding will be necessary for future generations to enjoy the benefits of this program. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation provides a summary of action needed in the current Pa. legislative session at <https://www.cbf.org/about-cbf/locations/pennsylvania/legislative-session>

Take a look and see if you can help.

History of the West Chester Green Team



The West Chester Green Team (WCGT) was formed in January, 2019, as an alliance of four local environmental groups: Don't Spray Me!, Plastic-Free Please, Ready for 100, and Chester County Citizens for Climate Protection. By 2023, this partnership has evolved, with Transition and Porchfest joining, and our energy initiatives added to the Transition work.

Don't Spray Me! originated in 2015 in response to the threat of pesticides being sprayed in West Chester Borough by the Chester County Health Department. Mayor Carolyn Comitta encouraged residents under the leadership of Graham Hudgings to gather signatures objecting to pesticides being sprayed. Volunteers went door to door, obtaining over 400

signatures and informing residents of the threat from pesticides. Overwhelmingly, people were in support of preventing pesticides being sprayed in their home area. DSM in its first year signed up 120 block captains throughout the Borough, who educated the community on the dangers of pesticides and other chemicals and worked alongside local government to avoid the spraying of pesticides.

Don't Spray Me! subsequently incorporated activities involving chemical-free growing of flowers and food, and this has become one of our most popular and visible areas. Now we have a **Living Landscapes Committee** that plants pollinator-friendly gardens in public spaces, a Community Garden initiative that provides garden plots free to interested gardeners, and a partnership with the Business Improvement District in greening downtown Borough alleys, leading up to a Mary Cassatt Gardening Awards event next August. Overarching all of our gardening efforts is the guidance of Doug Tallamy, creator of [Home Grown National Parks](#) and NY Times best-selling author.

Plastic-Free Please was created in 2017 in alliance with then West Chester Mayor Dianne Herrin, who worked with local students to bring forward an ordinance to ban plastic straws and bags in the Borough. In a historic moment, on July 17, 2019, in a packed room after a public hearing with numerous residents speaking in support, Borough Council passed the ban by a vote of 4-3. See more on that event [here](#). However, state legislators then snuck a "ban on bans" into a budget bill, and for the duration West Chester promoted a voluntary [Sustainable Storefronts](#) program, signing up businesses to agree to adopt green practices. With help from WCU students in Professor Megan Schraedley's communications class, as of November 2021, 17 businesses had signed on. The ordinance finally went into effect on January 2, 2022. Several other nearby municipalities have done similarly, and Plastic-Free Please hopes that many more of them and the County overall will now follow suit! Challenged by Covid, PFP has been on break but is reemerging in spring of '23 with a workshop by DE state representative Dee Durham, who achieved a single-use plastic ban in her home state. PFP is reaching out countywide to try to realize its goal of plastic reduction. CCEA ([Chester County Environment Alliance](#)) is joining the effort to think more widely about such issues.

Ready for 100 (RF100) Chester County joined with us as a committee of the Southeastern PA Group of the Sierra Club, part of a national, grassroots movement of people working to inspire leaders to fight climate change and embrace a vision of healthier communities powered with 100% clean, renewable energy. RF100 seeks to create safe, livable communities that protect and bolster public health, improve air and water quality, and foster sustainability, equity and resilience in the face of climate-related disruptions. RF100 has set community goals for transitioning to 100% renewable energy and urges all Chester County officials to set a 100% clean energy

Green Team History, con't.

goal. Since the local Ready for 100 has achieved its goal in pledges from Chesco municipalities, Sierra Club retired this program as a separate local entity in 2022. The Green Team continues our energy-related work through our Transition initiatives (below).

Chester County Citizens for Climate Protection (4CP) was founded in 2008 to further community education on climate change and green energy solutions. Over the years, 4CP held a stimulating series of lecture/discussions in WC Borough Hall, maintained a web site, and published a newsletter. In 2021, 4CP decided to disband and pass its role over to the WC Green Team.

West Chester Area Transition (WCat) is an initiative conceived in 2020 and realized in 2021 through acceptance as a member of the national **Transition** organization. The WCGT sponsored brainstorming in January of '20 to assess the interest in the community in the idea of Transition and to determine directions. We created 5 goals: 1. Living Landscapes-- planting native, shrinking lawns, going organic. 2. Community Gardens--providing space for community members to grow food. 3. Education on Green issues--for children and families. 4. Porchfest--encouraging community connection and happiness through music. 5. Repair Cafe--volunteers helping people repair broken items. Those goals are now achieved or scheduled, with the final one represented for the first time on Earth Day '23. West Chester, Media and Phoenixville are now Transition Towns and West Chester has now joined as West Chester Area Transition (WCat).

West Chester Porchfest is our latest creation, holding its first music festival in May 2022, to great public attendance and acclaim. Its goal is to build connections, promote community, and celebrate spring in our historic borough. Porchfest is family-friendly and FREE for all! Performers and hosts volunteer their time and talents, their porches and lawns, in the southwest quadrant of the Borough. Attendees stroll from porch to porch and relax on front lawns and sidewalks as they enjoy live, local talent on the beautiful porches of historic West Chester. Food trucks, children's activities and informational displays add to the festivities. Don't miss our next: May 20, 2023.

For all of the Green Team's ongoing initiatives, see our website home page at <https://wcgreenteam.com/>.

Coming this Summer: The Legendary Lenape

For eight weekends this summer the Green Team will offer an intergenerational education and activity program based on the culture of the Lenape nation. WC Green Team member Nora Ziegler has been reaching out--attending a pow wow and presentations of Lenape culture. We have connected with the Museum of Indian Culture in Allentown for programs and advice. The dates are June 25 through August 13. Each session is independent so plan to come to one or all eight. Some of these dates and locations are tentative, but we wanted to give an overview of an exciting summer program that will bring us the wisdom of the Lenape.

Session 1--West Chester Friends Meeting--Games, crafts, the history of the Lenape presented by a Lenape tribe member from the Museum of Indian Culture in Allentown

Session 2--Canoeing at Northbrook Canoe Company

Session 3--Chris Applegate from the Allentown Museum talks about Indian life and demonstrates bow and arrow at Birmingham Friends Meeting

Session 4--Bondsville Mill Park--the animals who lived here in 1700. Two nature educators presenting at beautiful Bondsville, near Guthriesville.

Session 5--East Goshen Park--Growing and cooking Lenape style

Session 6--Stream study in a WC borough park

Session 7--Canoeing again

Session 8--Banquet at the Melton Center

We know all of us learn best and are happiest with hands-on activities so we will have lots of them from pottery making to creating journey sticks. We will observe gardens growing and make food and music. Calendar of events and registration begins on Earth Day, April 22.

WCGT Education Committee and consultants are: Nora Ziegler, Beth Watts, Celia Lang, Melinda Bradley, Tim James, Terri James. Anna Sechrist, Kim Stack, Catherine Bosna, Suzanne Kent, Elizabeth Cunningham, Andrea Ferment, Jessica Nagle, Nathaniel Smith, Tom Walsh, Chris Lang, and Margaret Hudgings.



From Campus to Community: My Journey in Compost

by Tiffany Kennedy



If you asked me in 2016 what compost was I would have told you I had no idea. I had just moved to West Chester and was studying nutrition & dietetics at the University.

One course required a volunteer activity, and I ended up at the campus garden. The garden intern gave a tour of what was growing, and tasked myself and another volunteer with turning the compost. "What's that?" I asked, little did I know that this was THE moment. Their brief explanation of this natural decomposition process sparked a curiosity that still drives me.

Not yet fully aware of the complexity of composting, I grasped the basic premise: recycling but for plants. The intern told me to bring my own food scraps over to the garden pile, and I was thrilled to start incorporating composting into my daily life.

Eager to learn about growing produce and its role in the food cycle, I continued volunteering weekly. My interest in nutrition shifted away from telling people what to eat and towards ensuring that people had access to nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables. My understanding of gardening and the compost process had deepened, and it became clear to me that nutrition started with the soil. In order to grow nutrient-rich produce, we need to have healthy soils.

As an undergrad, I got involved with the University's Office of Sustainability and its Sustainability Advisory Committee, which connected me with a supportive community of action-oriented students, faculty, and administrators. With their assistance, two compost initiatives were brought to life. We worked together with the campus food lab to gather all the raw fruit and vegetable scraps and bring them to the South Campus Garden compost pile. Additionally, with the help of many volunteers, we gathered up all the peels and mashed bananas and integrated composting to the tradition of Banana Day.

Since graduating, I have been invited back to campus each semester to speak with a class about compost and its benefits. Composting can have a big impact. According to the Institute for Local Self Reliance, more than 50% of municipal garbage can be sorted for compost! In the United States there are more closed landfills than open ones, composting is a solution to increasing the longevity of the landfills we still have available. But it is more than just recycling organic materials. When applied back to the soil, it increases the soil structure, nutrient profile, and water absorption. Healthier soils are able to capture carbon dioxide through a process called carbon sequestration, which actually works to reverse the impacts of greenhouse gas pollution.

After graduating, I was introduced to Mother Compost founder Gwenn Nolan. She was looking for help as she was then



Compost, con't.

working a full-time job and raising three children, all while starting this new business. I was excited to get involved with the company and its mission to provide a simple solution for residents to compost.

Since then, Mother Compost has grown to a team of nine and serves over 1,200 residents along the Main Line. In 2021 we expanded to include commercial services, composting with local schools and businesses. And now in 2023 we are thrilled to have our first geographical expansion and begin providing a composting solution for the residents of the West Chester Borough!

You can find out more at the the [Mother Compost website](#) and sign up [here](#) for service. All new subscribers get an automatic free 30-day trial & folks signed up by 3/31/23 will receive a free bag of compost this spring.

Green Beer and Raising a Toast to Sustainability

by Diane Hoffmaster as published on *Turning the Clock Back*

Diane is a professional blogger and nationally certified pharmacy technician at [Good Pill Pharmacy](#). She earned her BS in Microbiology at the [University of New Hampshire](#) and has worked in cancer research, academics, and biotechnology. Concern over the growing incidence of human disease and the birth of her children led her to begin living a more natural life. She quickly realized that the information she was learning along the way could be beneficial to many others and started blogging and freelance writing to share this knowledge with others. Learn more about her [HERE](#).

This month, a scroll through Pinterest will show you all sorts of green snacks, green beer, and green foods in general. Neon green cookies and rainbow-colored cakes seem to catch everyone's eye this month.

In honor of spring, people dye chicks a rainbow of colors and dump green dye in rivers. Is this obsession with all things green a good thing? If you are asking yourself how to get green beer for Saint Patrick's Day, I want you to stop and think about something.

Instead of looking for a beer that is the COLOR green, how about you focus on the kind of green beer that reduces its carbon footprint on this planet?



Is there a green beer? That depends on what you mean!

Read more at <https://www.turningclockback.com/how-to-get-green-beer/>



Reducing Sports-Related Waste

by Emily Miller

Football games, and sporting events in general, are notorious for their waste. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 50-100 tons of garbage is produced at each professional or high-level collegiate game (this info can be located in places like [this](#) study, which found that just one of Penn State's football games produces 50 tons of waste alone), and that number does not include the actions of people who are watching at home. Readers of this newsletter are familiar with the importance of eliminating or reducing food waste, but there are a few lesser-known tricks for helping the environment during sporting season.



One of the largest ways to reduce waste is to simply keep a recycling bin out for any visiting guests during sports events. If the option is there, and readily available, they are more likely to choose to recycle instead of throwing away materials that don't need to go to the landfill. Alternatively, you can save some of the items garnered during the game and personally reuse them. Many companies now use recyclable/glass containers for alcohol or drinks in general, and those containers can be re-used several times in a variety of ways (vases, water jugs, arts and crafts, etc).

If you're heading out for the "big game" in a stadium/arena, try and make conscious choices for the environment wherever possible. A new trend is to swap out the higher emission foods--such as beef--and enjoy chicken or vegetarian options instead. Many stadiums also offer recyclable containers to eat out of, and choosing one of those could greatly reduce your personal impact at sporting events.

Overall, it's simply a matter of being conscious about the impact of our choices during fun events. Swapping out plastic for cardboard doesn't mean the fun has to stop, however; it just means taking the time to make a choice that will make Mother Nature happier.

