



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

August 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:

So much this month: Reports from Media and Dark Skies; Legendary Lenape continues, plans for next year's Porchfest, Wildflowers in West Chester, Spruce Alley, WC Railroad, Meet our summer volunteers, and a very special event!



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



August 6 at 4 pm at the Melton Center--Gardening Lenape style--Part of the Legendary Lenape series.

August 13 at 4 pm at the Melton Center--Lenape banquet--chili and fry bread, three sisters salad--kettle corn and the native American summer drink--or as close as we can get to it. Catered by Rebecca Malloy. Entertainment by Eunice Alexander.

August 24 at 6:30 pm at the Mather planetarium at WCU. Dark Skies and Fireflies. Tickets required see link. **SOLD OUT.**

August 26, 1-5 pm: Chester County Grows Pre-party. World Music on the Porch Day! On the porch at the Chester County History Center. Flower and art market, displays of Green Team interns' work, music by the Ukulele Orchestra and the Sweet Potato Fries.

August 26, 5-7 pm: Chester County Grows with DOUG TALLAMY speaking with an update on Homegrown National Parks--next steps. Courtney Finneran, mc, Rev Dayna Spence speaking on her community garden and Bondsville highlighting a joint project with Longwood Gardens.

For details on these and other August (and later) events, 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, 401 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 September issue is August 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:

The Legendary Lenape: Our summer program features these sessions. Sign up at <https://wcgreenteam.com/2023/05/15/legendary-lenape-summer-program-june-august-2023/>.

Sunday, August 6, Gardening Lenape Style: 4pm-6pm, Melton Center, 501 E Miner St, West Chester, PA 19382. Tour of the Melton Center garden and information on Native American planting.

Sunday August 13, Feast of the Lenape: 4pm-6pm, Melton Center, 501 E Miner St, West Chester, PA 19382. Get together one last time to celebrate the end of our sessions with a banquet of traditional Native American dishes (including dessert!). The recipes were pulled from the Mitsitam cookbook produced by the Smithsonian's American Indian Museum and will be prepared by local chefs. Desserts will be sweetened with maple syrup.

**DARK SKIES
AND FIREFLIES**

WHEN: THURSDAY, AUGUST 24 6:30-8PM

**WHERE: WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY'S
MATHER PLANETARIUM: 750 S. CHURCH ST.**

Please join the West Chester Green Team's Dark Skies Committee, West Chester University, State Senator Carolyn Comitta, and State Representative Chris Pielli for a special planetarium event.

THIS PRESENTATION IS FOR ALL AGES!

GIFTS OF BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLIES TO EACH CHILD ATTENDING.

TICKETS FOR THE EVENT ARE FREE AND ARE LIMITED!
AVAILABLE AT WCGREENTeam.COM



**GET TICKETS
HERE!**

August 24 at 6:30 pm Dark Skies. Welcome to WCU Planetarium-- with WCU Astronomy Prof Marc Gagne', Rep Chris Pielli and Senator Carolyn Comitta. who brought this issue to the Green Team and inspired the creation of a Dark Skies Committee. Special thanks to Prof Marc Gagne' who organized this event. This is a free event but you must have tickets. Limit four per registration. **NOW SOLD OUT!. Another session will be held at a later date.**



A Very Special Event: August 26 at 5 pm at CCHC

We cordially invite you to join us for West Chester Green Team's "Chester County Grows" event on **August 26th at 5PM at the Chester County Historical Center**. The WCGT is proud to host keynote speaker **Doug Tallamy**, a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware.

Tallamy will speak about native plants, gardening, insects, and the Homegrown National Parks program progress. Additionally, featured speakers from Chester County will provide updates on environmental issues and gardening initiatives. Tickets include a light dinner by Mae's, dessert, and 2 drinks.

The flyer is titled "West Chester Green Team Presents" and "CHESTER COUNTY GROWS: KEYNOTE BY DOUG TALLAMY". It features a circular photo of Doug Tallamy. Below the title, there are three callout boxes: "Bringing communities together through gardening", "Updates", and "Native plantings around Chester County". A central image shows a lush garden. Below that, a box states "Light Dinner, Dessert, 2 Drinks included with ticket purchase". The event details are "Saturday, August 26" at "Chester County History Center 5 PM - 7PM". Ticket information is provided at the bottom: "Purchase tickets at <https://ticketstripe.com/ChesterCountyGrows-Aug-26-2023>". There is also a small illustration of flowers and a red circle.

On the patio from 1-5 PM before the event, enjoy live music including West Chester Ukulele Jam, informational displays by Green Team committees and student volunteers, art works for sale, and a native plant gardening advice booth.

Share our flyer with others!

Purchase your event tickets here:

<https://ticketstripe.com/ChesterCountyGrows-Aug-26-2023>

Thursday, September 28: Suzanne Simard, Professor of Forest Ecology at the University of British Columbia and the author of *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest*, is coming to speak at WCU! Time and location are still TBD so keep watching this space for updates. She'll be speaking about trees and the fungal networks that connect them and help them to communicate with each other underground. It'll be part of the celebration of 50th anniversary of the Gordon Natural Area at WCU.

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

Help Wanted: Be a Leader for Air & Water!

These twin issues, which round out the essentials of environment and sustainability in our area, are in need of a volunteer or volunteers willing and able to take the lead; if that might be you, or if you can recommend someone, please [contact us](#).

Our lives and health—and the whole natural world—depend on the air we breathe and the water we drink. So does one of the Green Team's major focuses, gardening, because polluted air and contaminated or inadequate water will not produce the healthy plants and food we deserve.



Read more about it on our website at <https://wcgreenteam.com/2023/07/18/air-water/>.

Report from *Keep Media Green*

By Julie Smith

Last summer (2022) I noticed that there were no aphids on my milkweed, no pollinators on my mountain mint, and the caterpillars would disappear very young off my milkweed in my back pollinator garden. The milkweed that was sheltered in my front yard did still have aphids. It wasn't until I was going to work late one morning in early August and walked out onto my patio and was slammed by the intense garlic smell that I started to figure out what was going on. On the hill above my house there was a Mosquito Shield



application happening. The applicator was spraying a cloud straight up into the air. I called both my municipality and the neighboring township to find out what I could do. They had nothing in place. I contacted the PA DEP who referred me to the PA Department of Agriculture. I contacted them and filed a complaint for pesticide drift. They came out 10 days later and took a sample of my vegetation and a written statement from me. It took about an hour.

I finally received the results in December 2022 that bifenthrins were detected on my property, the same ingredient in the Talstar Mosquito Shield was spraying. Mosquito Shield was to pay a \$3600 fine for the drift. Mosquito Shield appealed and I was contacted by a Dept of Ag attorney who was representing me for the hearing scheduled for May 11 in Harrisburg. I didn't have to go but because I had done so much research and was well aware of how negligent their applications are, I was going to go and testify. The attorney was great. A week before the hearing, Mosquito Shield decided to admit fault (the attorney said the video I had recording the cloud he was spraying up into the air really helped) and paid the \$3600 fine to the Department of Agriculture.

Keep Media Green, con't.

Unfortunately, the \$3600 fine wasn't enough deterrent for Mosquito Shield and they were back out spraying Talstar at the same property the first week in May. I reported them again, the Department of Ag came out again, and again bifenthrins were detected on my property. There was a much faster turnaround this time. They measured the level of bifenthrins this time because they said it could be residual (!!!!) from last August and only gave Mosquito Shield an advisory letter. I was understandably very upset.

As of July 15, 2023, I am on the pesticide hypersensitivity list (I originally got on due to my anxiety of never knowing when they were coming and destroying my wildlife habitat in my backyard. I have since started getting pins and needles in my tongue when I am near the spray). I am required to be notified at least 12 hours in advance of any pesticide application within 500 feet of my house. I reported EcoShield to the Department of Ag because they sprayed without notifying me on Wednesday. I will keep reporting them as many ways as I can and encourage others to do the same to make it extremely difficult for them to spray in my area.

Some additional notes:

- It does not cost a cent to report - even when I was going to have to have a hearing.
- This is not reporting the neighbor. The report is between the company, the Dept. of Ag, and the reporter
- Pesticide drift is illegal. If mosquito spray, roundup, anything gets on a neighboring property, it can be reported.
- I'm hoping the more people who report and have drift detected, the more these pesticide companies will get discouraged.
- The property that was sprayed was over 90' away and there are two properties between us.

TO REPORT IN OUR REGION:

- Chester County is in Region 7 of the PA Dept. of Ag. Emily Fricke is our contact. Phone: (610) 489-1003 ext. 108, emfricke@pa.gov - <https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/regional-offices/Pages/Region-7.aspx>
- Can only be reported if drift is witnessed. Please take video, photos, record wind speed, take photo of company vehicle and/or sign to prove they were there.
- PA Department of Ag won't sample for 25b pesticides (the "natural" oil ones that are sometimes used) even though we know they are destructive, too. Always worth a call if drift is suspected because the Dept of Ag will get records of what exactly was sprayed - don't believe the pesticide company

TO GET ON THE PESTICIDE HYPERSENSITIVITY LIST:

- <https://extension.psu.edu/pesticide-hypersensitivity-registry-and-application>
- It is easy but takes time and patience.

YES, people do have the right to not have pesticides drifting on to their property, according to the PA State government. Hope that means that the County Health Department will not be spraying us when we object. Julie and her group of activists in Delaware County are an inspiration. We plan to continue working together in the future.

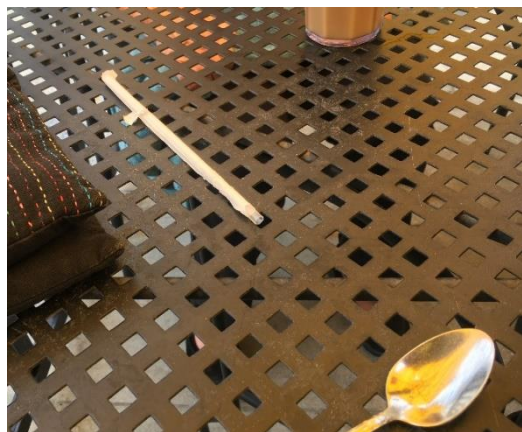
Help Cut Down on Single-use Plastics

By Nathaniel Smith

In southeastern PA, many municipalities have taken action against the proliferation and careless disposal of plastic products. In our immediate area, two municipalities have banned the retail distribution of single-use plastic bags and straws (with certain exceptions, like bags for meat packaging or newspaper delivery). See full info on those bans in West Chester [here](#) and West Goshen [here](#).

Several other local municipalities have discussed but not yet enacted bans. If yours needs a gentle push, contact one of your town supervisors to express your view.

Example of a violation: plastic straw (in photo) brought with iced tea at a restaurant in West Chester



borough. Be part of public education by reporting such violations via the links above! Maybe the establishment just needs to be reminded to train its new servers better.

Or, if you want to be preemptive, no matter where you are patronizing a food establishment, when you make your order, ask your server not to bring straws.

By the way, don't count on recycling plastic bags; even when you drop them off to at a collection

location, they are almost always sent to the landfill or even worse, burned.

Do you want to offer or request help on this issue? If so, please [contact us](#).

Of course, it goes without saying that, if you are reading this, you always take a reusable shopping bag with you wherever you might purchase anything!



Let's Hear it for Our Summer Volunteers!

Mateo Niiler is 17 years old and entering his senior year at Wilmington Friends School. He has volunteered for the Green Team this summer, organizing musicians for the porch at the CC History Center, accompanying the committee to restore rail service to visit the trains. His article on rail service appears in this issue. He joins three other high school aged summer volunteers: **Ryan Horenkamp, Jack Reichert, and Tyler Schmale**. Tyler's work on Dark Skies will be featured at the August 24 planetarium show and on the porch at the Chester County History Center on August 26. Jack had an article in last month's newsletter. We look forward to hearing about Ryan's volunteer work in next month's newsletter.

Report from the Spruce Alley Project

By Elizabeth Cunningham

On July 18, the West Chester Green Team, urban designer and alley expert Thomas Dougherty and landscape architect Chris Pugliese proposed an alley beautification project for Spruce Alley, which lies between the 400 block of West Union Street and West Barnard Street. Christiane Torres designed and proposed different design plans with native plants. The event encouraged neighbors of Spruce Alley to work on their property that faces the alley to beautify the small road.

The WCGT reached out to those who live on the block of Spruce Alley to get their involvement and interest in the project. Each participant would get an individual plan for their property. The goal of the project is to attract birds, support pollinators, reduce heat and absorb run-off. In addition, the project will upgrade garages, fences and driveways to improve the appeal for passersby as well as potentially increase property value.



At the event, Dougherty spoke about the history and the importance of alleyways. “Alleys and yards take up about fifty percent of a homeowner’s property,” Dougherty said. “Today, most alleys are not being used as they were originally intended.”



Alleys served as space for carriage houses and living spaces for those who could not afford to live elsewhere. Service alleys, like the ones in West Chester, were used for coal deliveries, water wells and waste removal. Today, alleys are ambiguous in their purpose as plumbing and parking are on the main streets. Only electrical lines and the occasional trash can clog up the alleys.

He showed cities like Rome, Edinburgh, Paris and London as prime examples of the use of alleys. “Inner block alley is West Chester’s most beautiful, human-scaled urbanism waiting

to be built,” Dougherty said. He encouraged homeowners to make alleys a transitional space. Including plants in alleys utilizes the space better and encourages people to move in the narrow spaces.

Some residents of Spruce Alley have started their part of the project. City Planner Ray Ott is waiting to look at the finalized version of his plan before he decides to redesign his property. “I’m always interested in new ideas. In my urban planning practice, I have been an advocate of ‘traditional neighborhood development’ and ‘new urbanism’. I love town life and have been living in West Chester since 1978,” Ott said.

The West Chester Green Team hopes that more neighbors along Spruce Alley reach out for potential design plans and that this project inspires more residents and other property owners to rethink their alleys with beauty and nature in mind.

Our Legendary Lenape Program Is Still Going Strong!

Wanishi at Westtown Lake

The Legendary Lenape series of environmental and cultural programs organized by the West Chester Green Team continued on July 22 with a session on Lenape language and canoeing at Westtown Lake. Over fifty attendees of all ages met on the campus of Westtown School which was founded in 1799 as a co-educational boarding school by members of the Society of Friends (Quakers). The 600-acre campus includes a lake that has enriched the life of the school with ice skating in winter and canoeing in summer. The boat house there holds 30 canoes, with many out on the water for this Lenape program.



Pictured by Westtown Lake: Katie Bryan, Mateo Niiler, AnaMaria Niiler, from West Chester, and Rose Joly-Menard, exchange student from Paris.(Photo by Meg Niiler.)

Tim James, former Westtown faculty and outdoor educator, led the activities. "I liked the introduction (by Tim James) of saying thank you for the day in Lenape which is wanishi," Katie Bryan, age 17, from Arden, De commented. "We learned to read the Lenape language and the words for icehouse, creek and owl's nest. And the canoeing was fun."

Carla Sanders of West Chester attended the event with her family of five. Carla, who is descended from the Lenape in the Dover, DE area, was thrilled by the outing and said that more people should be taking advantage of this opportunity. "We loved it. Fabulous. My boys were so happy to have this chance to go canoeing." Carla

plans to attend upcoming Lenape events including an upcoming paddle down the Brandywine at Northbrook Canoe Company next Sunday.

At Westtown Lake, some were going on a Lenape themed scavenger hunt by canoe, while others hiked around the lake and observed wildlife. "We saw a tree that a beaver had chewed on and two blue herons and some snapping turtles," observed Ana Maria Niiler, age 13, of West Chester.

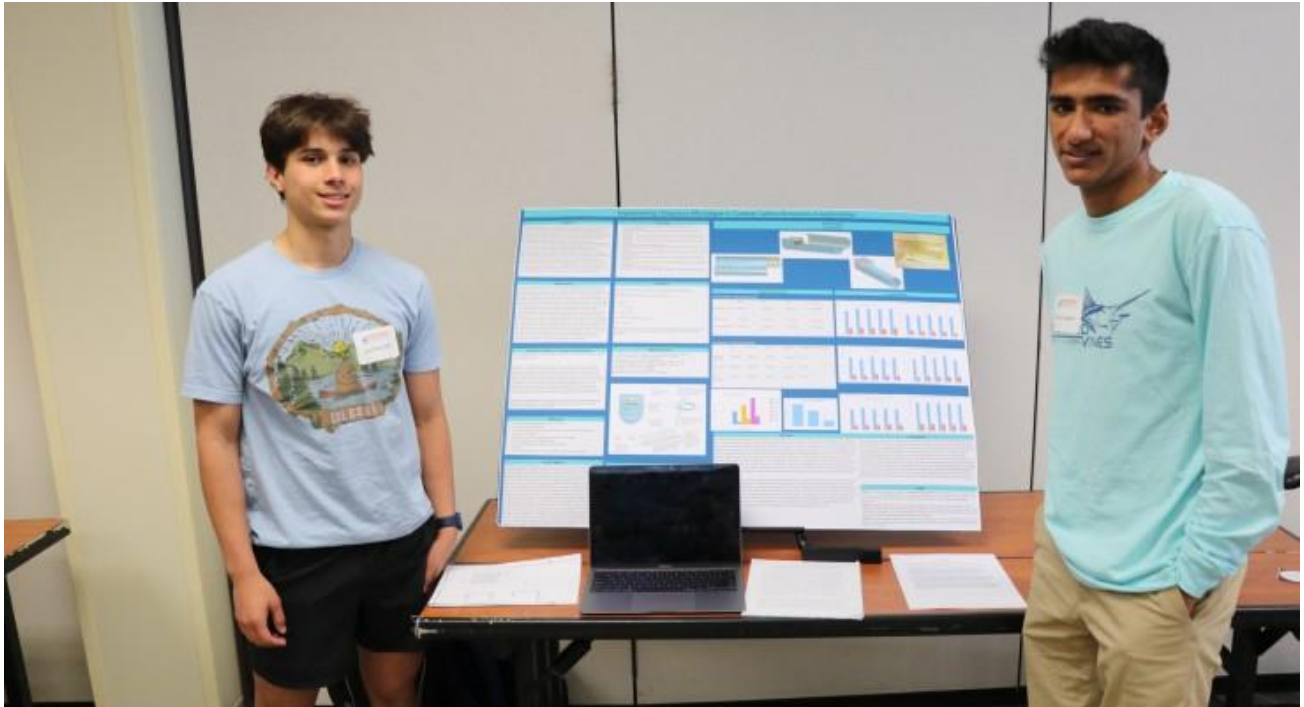
The Lenape program continues next Saturday at Bondsville Mill Park north of Downingtown with a stream study led by Faith Zerbe of Maya van Rossum's Delaware River Keepers. People of all ages are welcome to attend. The program is free. For more information see WCGreenTeam.com.



Canoeing on Westtown Lake (Photo by Jim Hudgings.)

Our Volunteer Jack Reichert in the News

Last month we published an article by Jack Reichert explaining his invention, the GoGreen Filter (patent pending) for cars. This device will take carbon dioxide and convert it to oxygen by means of a unique algae filtration system. Jack and his co-inventor Rohan Kapoor from Unionville High School have made it all the way to the 2023 Raytheon Technologies Invention Convention U.S. Nationals at the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation in Dearborn, Michigan. Congratulations Jack and Rohan! Read more about it [here](#).



Jack Reichert and Rohan Kapoor. Photo from Chester County Intermediate Unit website.

Dark Skies Committee Report

By Tim Lawlor



The primary work of our committee in July has been to seek input from members of our committee and other experts with experience in dark sky issues (or as one member prefers to call it, responsible lighting) and we have begun to work on drafting a sample legislative document which will be considered and edited by our PA State Representative Chris Pielli and others in his office.

To this point, and tentatively, this document will include some basic dark sky principles and more likely than not will be applied to state owned and state funded properties. Such principles include using high efficiency LED lighting that has an effective temperature color less than 2700 K and preferably lower. This number is approximate and has yet to be discussed and officially decided in the committee. A second high priority will include using fully shielded, full cutoff, light fixtures. This allows for lighting that does not trespass onto neighboring properties.

Dark Skies, con't.

We will consider including such limitations in lighting based on the so called 'BUG' system. This stands for 'back light,' 'up light,' and 'glare.' Back light is especially important to consider when light fixtures are close to a property line. Up light is important to consider for protecting wildlife and natural resources such as a dark sky, and glare is important to consider for overall safety. The Illuminating Engineering Society and the International Dark Sky Association worked to create the BUG rating system, which can be described in tables found by clicking [here](https://www.landscapeforms.com/enlighten/pages/2-1/BUG-Rating-Article.aspx). Another good description is found at:

<https://www.landscapeforms.com/enlighten/pages/2-1/BUG-Rating-Article.aspx>

or at:

<https://blog.1000bulbs.com/home/how-is-a-bug-rating-calculated>

Other priorities may include and not be limited to the use of motion sensors and timers to prevent lights from being used when no one is present, say between 11pm and 6am. We hope to include a provision that at least encourages private businesses and residents to consider such measures. The committee has also discussed how such legislation may impact local ordinances.

West Chester's Railroad: Will it "Pop Up?"

By Mateo Nailer

West Chester's first railroad was [established in 1831](#), and the borough always had at least some form of public rail transportation for over 150 years. However, in 1983, SEPTA took over running the railroad, and the amount and frequency of train rides stopping in West Chester slowly decreased, until 1986, when SEPTA stopped offering service. That might have been the end of the history of trains as public transit in West Chester if not for the work of the [West Chester Rail Restoration Service Committee](#). In conjunction with [Pop Up Metro, LLC](#), this committee has come up with a plan for reusing the existing tracks to establish a connection to Wawa, PA, which has its own connection into Philadelphia. Should this plan succeed, it would mark West Chester as an example of the potential of public transportation for the rest of the country to follow. While there are too many benefits to list and justify, let's examine just one aspect: the University.

The average passenger vehicle emits approximately [411 grams of CO₂ per mile travelled](#). Assuming minimum distance travelled (the shortest distance route on Google Maps), each car trip to Philadelphia from West Chester emits approximately 14.5 Kilograms of CO₂. West Chester University has over [17,000 students](#), 10,200 of which [commute](#) (technically they live off campus, but that necessitates a commute), and 69% of those (7,038 students) [drive alone to get to the university](#).

Conservatively, presuming that 1% of students who attend the University commute in from Philadelphia every day (having spoken with some university professors, the rate seems to several times higher, potentially as high as 5%, but I was unable to find actual numbers), and only counting the students commuting alone, we reach a minimum estimate of 2041 Kg CO₂ per day emitted by a round trip from Philadelphia to West Chester.

Conversely, Pop-Up Metro has electric trains with regenerative braking, which means no CO₂ is emitted from actual transport. Electric trains produce [20-35% less](#) CO₂ per passenger mile than diesel trains (this is the only number I could find, however, modern rates are likely more efficient as opposed to less), which emit approximately [133 grams per passenger mile](#). We find that (with the

Railroad, con't.

WEST CHESTER METRO PROJECT SUMMARY

A demonstration of an Interurban Light Rail Transit (ILRT) operation is proposed for an existing railway line that connects Wawa, PA with downtown West Chester, PA. The route is a former Pennsylvania Railroad electrified (but now without electrification) commuter line that is owned, but not operated, by SEPTA. The route, which is approximately 9.2 miles in length, is comprised of a single track (with the exception of a pocket track at West Chester) and is oriented in a (railroad) north/south direction, with West Chester being the (railroad) south terminal. West Chester is, in fact, geographically north of Wawa, however railroad timetable references are used throughout this document. A geographically correct map is included as Figures 1 below.

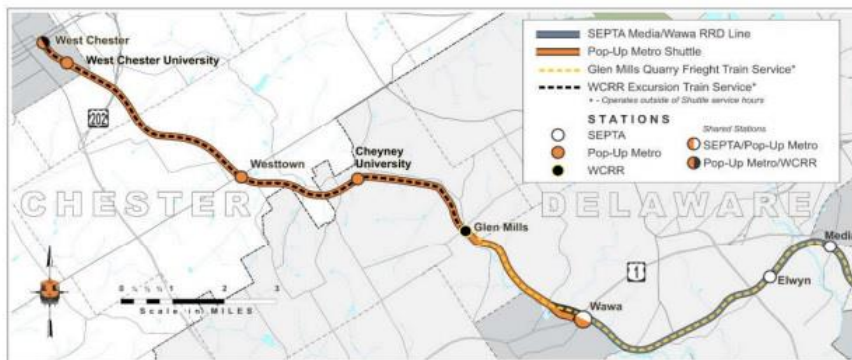


Figure 2: West Chester to Wawa Corridor Map

conservative estimate of 20% less CO₂), if 100% of the students making round trips took the train instead, riding Pop-Up Metro and then the train line from Wawa, PA into Philadelphia, there would be a 64% reduction in CO₂ emissions.

The benefits of reestablishing a rail line are clear: more available parking spots for West Chester residents, overall lower CO₂ emissions, and significant time saves for West Chester

University students who can work and/or sleep on the train, and no longer need to try to find parking in both Philadelphia and West Chester every day they have classes. So, what is stopping the line from being established?

With the rates estimated by working with Pop-Up Metro, the borough would have to spend [less than the cost of a preliminary study](#) to get Pop-Up metro set up (initial estimates, while obviously low, are \$2.5 million annually), compared to traditional rail rates, some of which exceed \$250 million per mile of track, so it's clearly not money preventing the railroad, or lack of community will. The West Chester Rail Restoration Service Committee was established in 2014, and for nine years has been fighting for the trains to be reestablished, without the committee disbanding.

The short answer is that the blockade is SEPTA and U.S. rail regulations. The long answer is that Pop-Up Metro's trains are from England, and don't meet all FRA standards, which on the surface makes allowing the lines to run seem impossible. However, there have been many similar cases where the FRA has reviewed such trains and found them acceptable for use and allowed them to run. This is where SEPTA comes in. SEPTA owns the largely unused track from West Chester to Wawa (there is the historic railroad still running on the tracks, however Pop-Up Metro's plan would not interfere with its operation), and in order to make real progress with the FRA, Pop-Up Metro needs SEPTA on board. However, SEPTA has been unresponsive, and the few responses they have given cite concerns with regulations. Using prior examples as precedent has not seemed to convince SEPTA.

The proposed vehicles do not meet current FRA regulations and requirements for operating on the general railroad system," ([1. West Chester - Pop Up Metro Supplemental 7-14-23.pdf](#), 51).

Thus, it seems that West Chester is remaining without a rail line for the moment, until either the FRA or SEPTA can be convinced to meet again with Pop-Up Metro. If you want to get involved with helping the railroad's cause, here are links to [WCRRSC](#), and [Pop Up Metro, LLC](#). After speaking with Jordan Norley, a key member of the WCRRSC, and Henry Posner, the chairman of Pop-Up Metro, it seems that more demonstrated community interest would really help. They concluded that getting the state governor to contact SEPTA directly would likely make the necessary difference.

Looking Ahead to Next Year's Porchfest

Following up on a goal since its founding last year of making Porchfest a diverse community celebration, Green Team cofounders Nathaniel Smith and Margaret Hudgings met with Rev. Dayna Spence about expanding Porchfest to include Poplar Street in the eastern part of West Chester borough. Since that meeting, Rev. Kyle Boyer has joined the planning group. Rev. Boyer first spoke at a Green Team rally at the Chester County Courthouse in September of '18. Rev. Boyer is a long-time Green Team ally who shares with Rev. Spence and the Green Team a commitment to community wellness, the support of families and the education of children.

Rev. Spence articulated her dream lineup of Porchfest performers for Poplar Street to include a jazz band, a gospel choir and a mariachi band. It's a dream that we will be working toward for WC Porchfest '24 which is scheduled for May 18 in the area from Church St to Bradford Ave and Miner to Dean Street and adding in Poplar St.

Rev. Spence gets things done, as she has most recently demonstrated in creating a beautiful community garden on Poplar, despite high fees and bureaucratic red tape. We are hoping she can bring her vision and leadership to Porchfest. As founder, CEO and President of Dayna's iCare Foundation, she had focused on the wellbeing of families and the happiness of children. With the addition of Rev Boyer and his church, the Mount Carmel Church of God in Christ, as a performance location, Green Team leaders are confident that our goals can be met, and Porchfest expanded to another area of the borough.

Would you like to volunteer to help with this effort? Contact us.

Read about Dayna Spence's garden in the Daily Local News at <https://www.dailylocal.com/2023/07/03/new-garden-will-benefit-neighbors/>



Rev. Dayna Spence and the Poplar St. community garden. Photo from *Daily Local News*, July



Wildflowers in West Chester: an interview with Christiane Torres

By Cara Corridoni

The following article is excerpted from **Hello, West Chester**, published by Cara Corridoni each week via e-mail. Cara is also a Green Team member and Christiane Torres is a long-time GT volunteer.

I recently caught up with Christiane Torres, a member of West Chester's Green Team and the visionary behind the mini-wildflower meadow happening alongside the Chester County History Center on Chestnut Street.

Q. Why did you choose wildflowers for the space?

A. This strip used to be a weedy grass strip that a volunteer had to keep mowed. It did not add much to the curb appeal or any natural benefits. Together with CCHC and Mike Dunn, the Borough arborist, we decided to plant the strip with flowering perennials. We also added trees back for additional shade in the future.

Q. So, are these native plants?

A. Yes, we only planted native beneficial flowers and ornamental grasses with interest for every season: grape hyacinth and Golden Ragwort for spring flowers, catmint, evening primrose, coneflower for the summer, asters, and sedum for the fall. The ornamental grasses stay up all winter and look beautiful until new growth starts in the spring.

Q. Why did you choose native plants – what are the benefits?

A. Compared to the grass strip that was there previously, we now provide nectar for bees and butterflies, leaves and hiding places for caterpillars, worms, and others. It's becoming its own little ecosystem and instead of mowing the strip on a regular basis throughout the spring and summer, the maintenance is now very low. It takes only an hour in the late spring to cut down the dried flower stalks (we keep them up for insects to overwinter in the hollow stems) and ornamental grasses. And another hour for a bit of weeding in the summer.



Q. Any tips for residents that want to create their own hell strip pollinator garden?

A. We would love to see more hell strips established with beneficial plantings like this. It can be a wild meadow or a more formal planting with beneficial shrubs. Select plants that stay short and upright to avoid flopping plants on the sidewalk or street. They should be drought-resistant and selected for the light conditions (sun/shade/partial shade) of the area. Also, be conscious of foot traffic (e.g. leave space open around bus stops), and maybe add stepping stones for people exiting parked cars.

Thanks, Christiane!

The Chester County History Center garden, as well as the Chestnut Street Garage pollinator garden and others maintained by members of the West Chester Green Team, are now part of the "Homegrown National Park," a program started by University of Delaware Professor Doug Tallamy that aims to regenerate biodiversity across the U.S. and Canada.