



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

October 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:

Suzanne Simard, Phil Jamison Award, Gray Water, Blue Hydrogen, and more!



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



October 19, beginning 6 PM: Gingko Arts, 31 S High Street, West Chester with parking across the street in the borough parking garage. Details on page 3.

October 21, 10 am: WCGT Board Meeting at Ironworks Church, 312 W Union Street, West Chester. Reports on Porchfest, Gardens and Trees, Dark Skies and activities. All welcome.

October 23, 6 PM: West Chester University, Sciences and Engineering Bldg., 155 University Ave., West Chester. Environmental Progress in Chester County 2023. See details on page 3.

For details on these and other October (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 November issue is October 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:

Friday-Sunday, October 6-8 - [National Solar Tour](#) highlights regional homes and businesses. Hosted by the [American Solar Energy Society \(ASES\)](#) for over 28 years, the purpose of the National Solar Tour is to promote renewable energy awareness and increase the adoption of solar energy. The National Solar Tour centers around neighborhood discussions about solar, recommendations on installers, financing, local laws, and other considerations and hesitations around installing solar panels, purchasing electric vehicles, and instating energy efficiency upgrades. This is a free and public nationwide event!

Thursday, October 19: Ginkgo Arts, 31 S High Street, West Chester with parking across the street in the borough parking garage.

6pm: Dawn Mazzone leads a discussion of Inner Transition:


The changes we need to make within ourselves to transition to the more caring, equitable, beautiful, sustainable and resilient world our hearts are longing for. For more information contact Dawn Mazzone--creativeeconomyenterprises.com

7 pm: Don't Spray Me hosts Keep Media Green which has successfully worked with the PA State Dept of Agriculture to address pesticide drift. Local residents are following their template. Come find out how to fight back and win, and plan joint action to address the problem of pesticides. For more information contact Margaret Hudgings, mhudgings@gmail.com.

Saturday, October 21: Come join CRC Watersheds Association for a **tree planting** along Goose Creek in Westtown Township. They will be planting 50 native trees. Interested in attending?
Email lynn@crcwatersheds.org

Monday, October 23:


Environmental Progress in Chester County 2023: Native Plants, Green Energy and Community Collaboration



6:00: Reception and art show of works by Denise Vitollo, 2023 winner of Philip Jamison Art and Nature award
6:30: Presentation of West Chester Green Team accomplishments by Courtney Finneran, WCGT board member and head of the Living Landscapes Committee
7:00: Panel with Josh Maxwell--County Commissioner, Rachael Griffith--Chester County Planning Commission Sustainability Director, Kathryn Cloyd--Borough Council President, and Will Williams--West Chester Borough Sustainability Director

Monday October 23 @ 6pm

**Room 101A, Sciences and Engineering
Center and the Commons, 155 University
Avenue, West Chester 19383**



Sponsored by West Chester University, Office of Sustainability, and West Chester Green Team

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

Suzanne Simard on Finding the Mother Tree

Prof. Suzanne Simard, the Canadian researcher who discovered that trees can communicate with each other, spoke at West Chester University to a crowd of over two hundred environmental enthusiasts on Thursday, September 28. West Chester University President Christopher Fiorentino welcomed the audience and congratulated WCU's Office of Sustainability Director Brad Flamm on his award-winning leadership on environmental issues. West Chester University has partnered with the West Chester Green Team for six years in bringing environmental programming to the community. Simard's lecture is part of this series.



Suzanne Simard with Brad Flamm

Simard, author of the book "Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest," spoke to a packed house after spending the afternoon touring the Gordon Natural Area, a 150 acre forest and outdoor classroom on campus with Prof Megan Schraedley. Schraedley, a professor of communications and a leader of the West Chester Green Team, had suggested inviting Simard to speak about her work with trees. The importance of native wisdom and the interconnectedness of all living things which Simard stressed aligns well with the philosophy of the Green Team which presented a series of eight programs on the Lenape for families this past summer.

Rob Montgomery, Green Team member and master gardener, commented that "Simard's enthusiastic presentation covered a lot of ground, from her initial work with fungal filaments, to how these fungi allow forest trees to form cooperative communities that communicate, nurture and heal each other, similar to the way that human communities operate. She reminded us that trees and forests are our main source of clean air and biodiversity and that it is our responsibility to respect, protect and expand their coverage of the planet."

Courtney Finneran, WCGT Board member who attended the lecture with her fellow Hillsdale Garden Club co-chairs, Rebecca McConnell and Sara Getz, remarked how inspiring it was to hear Dr. Simard's message. "The three of us sat in our seats after the lecture was over, full of inspiration and hope, and together we brainstormed ways we could try to put some of Dr. Simard's messages into action at Hillsdale Elementary School where our children attend. Seeing Dr. Simard really motivated us to think about working with the School District to try to reforest some of the large swaths of grass across the school campus."

Mia Bosna, local artist commented, "I particularly liked that Simard asked us to develop an 'Indigenous stewardship' for where we live. 'We are the ones that will solve climate change' rang out clearly as she outlined her own findings as well as the collective wisdom of 65 shamans from many different tribes."

Simard, con't.



Simard speaks to a full house at WCU.

Stephen Marvin, Green team member and retired West Chester University librarian, also commented on Simard's focus on native wisdom. It is "impressive to learn how many indigenous cultures treat not only the animals but also the flora of the region as intimate aspects of their lives. The image of a shaman nestled against a large tree and calling it his grandfather," that Simard showed in her lecture, Marvin added, illustrates this interconnection of all life and the respect that is at the core of Simard's message.

Simard concluded her lecture by telling a story about bears and their kinship with trees. We are all in this together, she seemed to be saying. And together we can solve the environmental crises confronting the planet. As Simard said, "Trees will save us, if we pay attention to their wisdom."

Next up in the West Chester University-West Chester Green Team series is a panel discussion entitled Environmental Progress in Chester County, 2023. Monday evening October 23 at 6:30 in Ballroom A of the WCU Science and Engineering building. Free event. All are welcome.

Photographs by Erica Thompson, WCU photographer.

Looking ahead to Porchfest 2024



This year, the committee is headed by Molly Hansford and Renee Perna. Contact Molly at mbhandford@msn.com if you would like to be involved. Next year's date is May 18, 2024.

Molly (left, sitting) and Renee (right, in yellow) helping children at one of our Legendary Lenape summer sessions.

Phil Jamison Art and Nature Award: Denise Vitollo



Vitollo's Meadow at Willistown Conservation Trust

Denise Vitollo was selected by the GT's Art Committee in recognition of her portrayal of the natural world, beautifully and sensitively in her painting, especially through her use of color. This award is given in memory of Philip Jamison, Chester County artist and Green Team friend and supporter. The award includes a check for \$300.

The award will be presented on October 23 at WCU at a panel discussion--Environmental Progress in Chester County 2023. There will be a reception from 6:00-6:30, with the program starting at 6:30 in Room 108 of the new science and engineering building. Denise will have a display of her work outside Room 108.

Congratulations to Denise! You can view her portfolio of work at

<https://www.denisevitollo.com/>

From the Chesapeake Bay Foundation:

Trees are critical to a healthy environment and the backbone of our communities. But every year we continue to lose acres of tree canopy through the Chesapeake Bay watershed and much of it is being replaced by impervious surfaces. A recent report by the Chesapeake Bay Program showed that from 2013-2018, the watershed saw an increase of 79 square miles of impervious surface—that's more than the size of Washington, D.C. But with vocal advocates like you by our side, we can speak up for strong forest protections and green infrastructure. Use this link to become a tree advocate: <https://p2a.co/Oi77gxF>



Your Attention Please!



Please note that the West Chester Green Team's **Facebook** page is <https://www.facebook.com/WCGTeam/>. Please friend and follow us there. We have an older Facebook page that is no longer maintained, and we will soon delete it; so, if you have that one in your records, please discard that reference.

Source of 'gray water' in West Chester found at 'old Woolworth' building

By Bill Rettew, from the Daily Local News, September 15, 2023

After two months of investigation, the source of "gray water" that contaminated a tributary of Taylor Run was traced to the Woolworth Building at High and Gay streets.

Dishwasher discharge was released into the stormwater system from the building owned by Barry Properties that houses Iron Hill Brewery, D.P. Dough restaurant and Windish offices. J Loew Property Management did not respond to a phone call request for an interview.

Public Works Director Don Edwards reported that the source was found and corrected, with the approximate cost for clean-up and investigation at \$100,000.

Borough Councilman Brian McGinnis said the borough hopes to recoup its costs.

"This is an unfortunate incident that we are still in the process of resolving," McGinnis said. "We need to hold those responsible accountable for their actions.

"This would include reimbursing the borough for the clean-up any fines associated with this neglect."

Edwards talked about the gray water that entered the storm water system.



"A pipe that collected sewage from a restaurant and an office building was discharging to a storm sewer in Prescott Alley," Edwards recently said. "When we first discovered the contamination, we noticed that it was mostly gray water, which usually comes from dishwashers or clothes washing machines.

"It turned out that the gray water was from a restaurant dishwasher."

Edwards said that process to find the source was arduous.

"We inspected buildings, televised sewers and sampled water," he said. "The discharge was intermittent, so it was very difficult to find the problem when it was happening.

Plumbing repairs at the Woolworth Building in West Chester. (SUBMITTED PHOTO/BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER)

"We were able to identify the storm sewer on Prescott Alley as discharging the waste. From there, we found the source in the basement of the former Woolworth's building."

Gray water, con't.

The property manager was notified immediately. During Labor Day weekend, the property manager's plumber disconnected the sewer lateral from the storm sewer and then connected it to the sanitary sewer.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Fish & Wildlife Commission was informed of recent developments.

"They seemed satisfied," said Edwards.

The clean-up is not yet completed, according to Edwards.

"This has nothing to do with the businesses," Edwards said, "We are working with the property owner and manager."

The borough hired an environmental contractor, Lewis Environmental, to clean up and maintain a containment area for two months. The Borough also installed and operated a temporary pump and added hay bales along the stream.

While there is yet no hard evidence to support his claim, and after looking at the basement plumbing, Edwards suggested that the problem might have started in 2021,

"Our Public Works Department is happy and relieved that this problem was rectified," Edwards said. "It really was like finding a needle in a haystack."

Exposing the blue hydrogen greenwashing reality

While we already have all the knowledge and tools at hand to tackle the Climate Crisis – namely lowering emissions on a vast scale – we are repeatedly sold the promise that new, emerging and as-yet unfeasible technologies will save us.

A chief technology touted as a cure-all for meeting our growing energy demands while lowering carbon emissions is hydrogen.

Yet recent events have reiterated the hydrogen is not the sustainable solution that many have claimed it to be, shining a much-needed spotlight on the greenwashing around this fuel source.

To find out more, see the article at <https://www.irishevs.com/lobbying-boss-exposes-hydrogen-greenwashing-reality>