



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

December 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:

Dark Skies, Vintage clothing, Pesticide spraying, Artificial v. real Christmas trees, Meadow in East Bradford. . .and an apology



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



December 14 at 6 and 7 pm: Gingko Arts, 21 S High St Suite 100, West Chester. Dawn Mazzone—Our Connection to Nature 6 pm; Tim Lawlor--Dark Skies, 7 pm.

No Board meeting this month.

For details on these and other December (and later) events, see listings beginning 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)

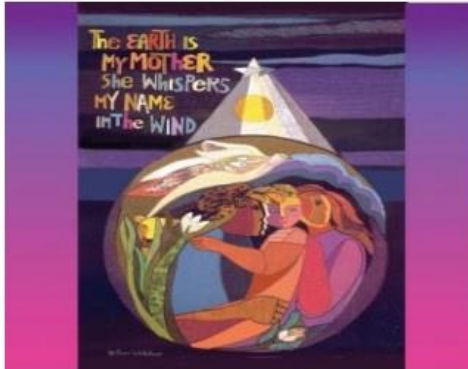
4th Thursday of every month: West Chester Sustainability Advisory Committee, 6:30 – 8 pm, Room 240, Borough Hall, 401 E. Gay St.

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 January 2024 issue is December 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:



educating businesses on sustainable practices since 2001 and has received the Chester County Business Award, Penn Future's 2007 Platinum Green Power Award, and is a founding member of the business standard, B Corporation. She has been active with the West Chester Green Team, developing a WCGT Victory Garden and more.

This evening of December 14th will also include a member of the Green Team, Tim Lawlor, head of the WCGT Dark Skies Committee, to share about "Dark Skies" from 7:00pm to 8:00pm, following the earlier program hour. Join us!

January 6: Gifts & Thrifts, vintage clothing swap at Unitarian Congregation, 501 S. High St., West Chester, 1-5 pm

Do you have some choice pieces in your closet that are gorgeous, quirky, or classic, and you no longer wear? Vintage clothes are all the rage with young people. They wear grandpa's sweater or grandma's silk jacket--and that keeps those items in use and out of the landfill.

Aiden McFadden came to the Green Team for help with his clothing swap idea, and we are asking you to look through your closet and come up with a few donations for Gifts & Thrifts.

Adult clothing only, please. Drop off on the porch at 409 W Union Street or at 802 Kenmara Drive, West Chester, PA between 12/16 and 1/2. Put a tag on each piece or make a list for your bag of clothing donations. You get swapping credit and early admission to the site on 1/6. See the article elsewhere in this newsletter on page 6.



What a great way to find new homes for your old clothing. You can trade something old for something new. No money involved.

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

Stop the Drift!



Keep Media Green's Julie Smith discussed her struggles with pesticide spraying at Ginkgo Arts in West Chester on October 19. This was the third in a series of presentations on green themes following Inner Transitions gatherings with Dawn Mazzone.

Over the past year, with help from the PA Department of Agriculture (DoA), Smith has been fighting to stop a pesticide company from allowing chemical spray applied nearby to drift into her yard and damage her plants and ecosystem.

"I documented everything from that day," Smith said. "I recorded the wind speed and temperature, and I took a photo of the truck."

Based on evidence she provided, Smith contacted the DoA to file a report, as spraying pesticides on someone else's property without permission is illegal. The DoA came out to investigate and took many samples to analyze for pesticide residue. Smith was offered legal representation, but, in the end, the company withdrew its defense. They were fined \$3,600 for illegal drift—quite a victory for Smith and for all of us who want protection from pesticides.

Unfortunately, Smith's neighbors continue to have their yard sprayed by the same company. Smith has worked with her doctor and is now on the chemically hypersensitive list, which requires pesticide sprayers to provide her twenty-four-hour notice of spraying. Smith uses that time to cover her plants with a blanket to help prevent their being in contact with the pesticide and to leave the area to protect herself. (If with your doctor's endorsement you qualify for the hypersensitive registry, sign on at <https://extension.psu.edu/pesticide-hypersensitivity-registry-and-application>.)

Smith has filed two more complaints with the DoA, which are still in progress. "It's difficult to get a report because of the testing that goes behind it. They're a small branch of the Department too, so it's going to take a while. I'm still waiting to hear back from the results of the samples taken in May," she said.

Originally founded as [Don't Spray Me!](https://dontsprayme.com/), the West Chester Green Team applauds Smith for her continuing fight against chemical drift. We hope to support her and anyone who faces a similar situation. At least two Green Team members have followed Smith's lead and filed drift complaints with DoA. Thank you, Julie, for leading on this issue and for speaking to us last month.

For more on pesticides and herbicides generally, refer to the following: <https://dontsprayme.com/> and <https://wcgreenteam.com/issues/pesticides/>. To contact us on the topic, email westchestergoesgreen@gmail.com.

Dark Skies Report

By Marissa Mowrer, Earth and Space Science Club, WCU

Artificial Light at Night (ALAN) is a new area of Dark Skies research that encompasses a diverse range of investigations. Many studies are aimed at understanding its multifaceted impacts on ecosystems in particular. Contemporary studies delve into the intricate relationships between ALAN and biodiversity, focusing on the behavioral adaptations, population dynamics, and species interactions of both flora and fauna. Technological



advancements, including remote sensing and satellite data, enable a broader examination of light pollution's influence on ecosystems, with a particular emphasis on freshwater habitats. Researchers are exploring evolutionary responses to prolonged exposure, investigating whether species are adapting to persistent artificial lighting.

Evans (2023) sheds light on the consequences of streetlights, emphasizing the challenges posed by the transition to LED technology and advocating for collaborative efforts to minimize long-term negative impacts. Fobert et al. (2023) navigate uncharted waters, illuminating the relatively unknown impacts of ALAN on temperate and tropical reefs, hinting at potential shifts in system-level dynamics. In prairie fragments, Grenis et al. (2023) uncover a narrative of decreased abundance and species richness, urging a nuanced understanding of diverse ALAN effects on biodiversity. Heinen et al. (2023) explore the interplay between ALAN, plant defenses, and plant-insect interactions, underscoring unexpected nuances in part-night ALAN impact on aphid colonies.

Hirt et al. (2023) contribute to an understanding of light pollution's ecological impacts, calling for a comprehensive exploration of ALAN's effects at higher ecological levels. Hölker et al. (2023) contribute to research on light pollution's influence on rivers and lakes, highlighting the need for innovative lighting concepts. Sanders et al. (2023) further explore how ALAN rewires ecological networks and disrupts daily activity patterns, hinting at the delicate balance shaping ecosystem functioning. Seymoure et al. (2023) join this narrative, revealing changes in time and space due to ALAN's impact on species interactions. Spoelstra et al. (2023) focus on ground-dwelling invertebrates, hinting at potential cascading effects on ecosystems by considering specific types influenced by artificial light. Tidau et al. (2023) draw the curtain with a focus on the early life stages of ecosystem engineer species, underscoring the importance of natural light-dark cycles.

Supported by diverse and contemporary light pollution research, the Dark Skies community is actively engaged in devising mitigation strategies to alleviate the ecological consequences of ALAN, experimenting with alterations in lighting design and intensity. These investigations extend beyond localized impacts, considering the global perspective and encompassing diverse ecosystems, including urban, suburban, and rural environments. Long-term studies provide insights into the cumulative and chronic effects of artificial lighting on ecosystem dynamics, contributing to our evolving understanding of the intricate interplay between artificial light and the natural world.

Dark Skies, con't.

The West Chester Green Team's Dark Skies Committee, in collaboration with Pennsylvania House Representative Chris Pielli, has introduced the Responsible Outdoor Lighting bill (HB1803) to the PA legislature. This legislation aims to address the growing issue of light pollution, which is impacting citizens across Pennsylvania. The bill's potential passage could significantly raise awareness among legislators about the adverse effects of light pollution and prompt action to regulate outdoor lighting. To support this cause, constituents are encouraged to spread awareness, petition their State Representatives and Senators to co-sponsor the bill, and engage others in advocating for responsible outdoor lighting practices. The bill, considered a crucial first step, aligns with nonpartisan, statewide efforts to enhance nighttime environments and combat light pollution. For detailed advocacy guidance, including contact information for relevant committees and a template for reaching out to representatives, interested individuals can refer to the provided resources on our Instagram page: @wcgtdarkskies. The success of this initiative relies on collective action and community involvement.

Youth Go Vintage

Aiden McFadden, East Bradford native and a star soccer player who now plays professionally in Atlanta, has an idea. He wants to create a local clothing swap that features vintage items. His vision is a clothing swap for young adults. Youth are promoting a vintage clothing renaissance. His concept is to work with it and save waste, save money, stop polluting the world with fast fashion and have a good time in the process.



McFadden plays soccer.

As McFadden explains, "The project, called Gifts and Thrifts, revolves around creating a pop-up thrift store event as a venue for the local trading of clothing items. My goal is to make the thrift store a place for like-minded people to meet up. A repair cafe is to be linked to it so people can have items fixed and can learn repair skills."

McFadden visualizes the event as a clothing swap and a repair event. Give a shirt you no longer wear and take one you like, with no money changing hands. Minor repairs can be made on site. He plans to collect donated clothing and then review and sort the items and organize them for the swap.

McFadden reached out to the WC Green Team for help with his green project. Nathaniel Smith, Green Team co-founder, stated, "Of course we will work with Aiden on his event. The Green Team board is happy to support the environmentally responsible visions of people in the community. It is especially encouraging to see this kind of leadership in one so young." (McFadden is 25.) Plans are underway to schedule Gifts and Thrifts on January 6 from 1-5pm at the Unitarian Congregation, 501 S High Street.

The Green Team has connected Aiden with another vintage clothing fan. West Chester native Liam Hudgings, age 22 and a senior at Hamilton College, studied in Paris last spring and felt he needed

Vintage, con't.

a more sophisticated image when studying in France. He went for vintage fashion including a used Burberry overcoat worn with a scarf.



"Vintage clothing is ideal for my generation," Hudgings said. "We are concerned about climate change and don't want to waste money on fashion that will only last through a few wearings. We do not need to feel bad about buying vintage clothing. It is cheaper and often better quality than new clothing. Everyone says they care about the environment," Hudgings continued, "but buying vintage clothes is a way to do something about it."

McFadden and Hudgings plan to assemble a committee of 7 or 8 organizers and a group of about 2 dozen people to work the pop up. Interested in helping out or donating vintage clothes? Contact the West Chester Green Team c/o Elizabeth Cunningham at westchestergoesgreen@gmail.com.

To read more on the problem of fast fashion and how you can avoid it, this article ("Why you should buy clothes to last (almost) forever") by Michael J. Coren in the Washington Post explores the subject:

<https://s2.washingtonpost.com/3bb841b/654a5f24cc4fe07c87bfc872/596a80b8ae7e8a0ef33f18a4/14/37/654a5f24cc4fe07c87bfc872>

Sustainability Perspectives: Are real or artificial Christmas trees better for the environment?

From Chester County Planning Commission Sustainability News, Fall 2023

Welcome to the holiday season! Whether you haul out your holiday decorations before Thanksgiving or wait patiently till December, the big question is: *real or plastic*. Some families prefer the convenience of a plastic tree that can be used year after year, but there is a strong sustainability argument to be made for a fresh, locally grown tree. Not only does it invigorate our local farming economy for generations to come, but live Christmas trees have a serious edge when it comes to the environment.

It may be no surprise that Chester County is home to many family-owned **Christmas tree farms**, but did you know that Pennsylvania ranks third in the nation for the number of Christmas tree farms? There are more than 1,400 Christmas tree farms in the Commonwealth. These tree farms account for nearly 31,000 acres and produce 1 million cut trees each year. These trees are both a renewable and recyclable resource. Real Christmas trees sequester carbon dioxide as they grow and emit fresh oxygen back into the atmosphere. Farm-grown Christmas trees stabilize soil, protect water supplies, and provide refuge for wildlife while creating scenic green



Christmas trees, con't.

belts. And real Christmas trees can be easily reused or recycled for mulch and in some cases, fed to farm animals.

It is also customary for Christmas tree growers to plant one to three new seedlings for every tree they harvest. Artificial trees on the other hand are usually a petroleum-based product manufactured in factories and travel thousands of miles to get to your home. The average family uses an artificial tree for only six to nine years before throwing it away, where it will then remain in a landfill indefinitely.

By buying fresh trees from Chester County farmers, you help keep our farmland in agricultural production and you can reduce the amount of fossil fuels needed to transport a fresh tree from out of state. It's a win-win for everyone. Let's make it a fresh, local Christmas this year!



A Meadow for East Bradford?

A Report from Chris Pugliese



Just wanted to update you all on the meeting with East Bradford Township (EBT) on this proposed project:

As you may know, Chester County Art Association (CCAA) reached out to the WCGT to assist with the cleanup of their woodland parcel west of their parking lot; I subsequently walked the area a few weeks ago with John Spangler, who is on the CCAA board. I was intrigued with the opportunity to turn the vast lawn area at Hillsdale into a meadow.

I sat in on the meeting held at EBT today for a proposed trail which would start at the CCAA and end at the Windon development via EBT's easement which borders Hillsdale School's property. After a brief discussion it turned out the rest of the group were fully on board with the meadow concept.

Although it's yet to be determined if the entire lawn area would be transformed into a meadow, it's a good possibility. As I learned today, there are grants available from the Penn State Extension for creation of pollinator meadows and John Spangler volunteered to look into this further. It seems as if Spring of 2024 is a reasonable target date to start the project.

Meanwhile, I spoke to John about the WCGT providing assistance in the restoration and cleanup of the invasives in their woodland, which has already been started by CCAA volunteers.

Meadow, con't.

I suggested that the best approach for this would be to target some weekend dates in advance so we can send out information to our volunteers.

How can you volunteer and be involved in this project? Contact mhudgnsgs@gmail.com For more information.

Our Apologies



Our article last month on “New Water Work with Stroud” was inadvertently incomplete. Here is the full article—and our apologies to Tim James for having been left off the first time around.

New Water Work with Stroud

Thanks to George Seeds and Joe Debes, the West Chester Green Team is now volunteering for the Stroud Water Resource Center. John Jackson and Courtney Finneran, both water professionals, have long been advising the WC Green Team, and we have had the help of Nathaniel Smith with rain gardens and salt runoff issues. Megan Fork and Mike Dunn have also helped out with water issues, as has Gillian Alicea. Now we are now taking another step in the direction of addressing local water concerns.

The program is West Chester Sensor Maintenance, and our Green Team volunteers are Nur Ritter who is maintaining the sensor at Plum Run in the Gordon Natural Area and Tim James at Plum Run at the New Street Garage.

Nur Ritter, who is Stewardship Manager of the GNA, received a B.S. in Botany from the University of New Hampshire in 1993 and a Ph.D. in Natural Resources from the University of New Hampshire in 2000. His doctoral research entailed a country-wide survey of aquatic vegetation and habitats in Bolivia. We have known Nur through West Chester University for many years and are happy to be working more closely with him on this Stroud project.

Tim James, a retired Westtown School teacher of mathematics and theater, is a graduate of Macalester College in Minnesota and a jack of all trades, like Nur. He and his wife Terri have worked on Goose Creek cleanup for many years. Tim has served the Green Team as an elf with our Green Santa and the designer of a canoe obstacle course on Westtown Lake for the Legendary Lenape program this past summer.

Welcome Nur and Tim!

