



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

February 2024

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:

Fundraising wrap-up, Birds v Bees, Looking for garden space?, Dance and the Green Team, An end to flooding at Goose Creek?, What's happening at Peirce Middle School: The Brownfield Lot . . .and more



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



February 12h at 6.00PM: Dark Skies meeting, WCU. Contact Suzanne (websterse@etown.edu) or Tim (tml10@psu.net) for details.

February 17 at 10 AM until 1:30PM Repair Café at Technical College High School, Pickering Campus

No Board meeting this month.

For details on these and other February (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 March 2024 issue is February 29! 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:

Birds vs. Bees Challenge



Birds vs. Bees is a two-month virtual running challenge that takes participants on a narrative-driven journey through a backyard ecosystem, from the point of view of a bird and a bee. Participants can choose from a variety of distances to cover over the course of two months, from 90 to 320 miles. You can cover the miles by running, walking, or using your preferred human-powered means of locomotion, such as biking or rowing.

Each week, two chapters in the story will be sent out, filled with pollinator-driven plot and helpful information on how to improve your backyard ecosystem, wherever you live. The

aim of Birds vs. Bees is to help people stay active in the challenging winter months, and to help pollinators by improving backyards, moving them closer to a Homegrown National Park through education and awareness.

Registration packages start at just \$10, and all participants receive access to online participation tools and a Facebook group.

Towards the end, participant materials will be mailed out to those who purchase the Standard and Deluxe packages. The swag includes a t-shirt, sticker, (handmade in the USA) wooden bird and bee ornaments, and a birdhouse construction kit you can build yourself (highly suggest you find yourself a young assistant to help you out).

[Sign up and join the fun](#), for yourself and for your friendly local pollinators! The challenge runs from February 1st - March 31st, and registration ends February 9th.

Looking for Free Garden Space This Summer?

We are happy to be able again to match people who would like free garden space with community garden plots that we have located for summer 2024. Our garden plots are 4 X 4 or sometimes 4 X 8 feet. We supply the space, you supply tools and your time.

The West Chester Green Team believes that 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.



Garden space, con't.

We particularly want to help area residents who wish to grow some healthy food, for themselves or to donate, but who lack space of their own. Children are very welcome to join family members in the garden areas.

If you are interested, please act expeditiously, as some crops can be sown as early as March, and we will assign beds as soon as we have a good match with interested people.

To apply, please see full information here: <https://wcgreenteam.com/2024/01/24/looking-for-garden-space-this-summer/>

Jeans and Socks Recycling Drive

Keep textile waste out of landfills. Drop off your used clean socks and denim items at the Schuylkill Township Municipal Building, 111 Valley Park Road, Phoenixville, PA, from Feb. 1 to April 30.

A colorful graphic for the Schuylkill Township Jeans and Socks Recycling Drive. It features a grid background with a recycling symbol and the text 'TEXTILE RECYCLING' and 'SCHUYLKILL TOWNSHIP JEANS AND SOCKS RECYCLING DRIVE'. Below this, there are three sections: 'DID YOU KNOW?' with statistics from PADEP, 'WHAT IS IT?' explaining the partnership with TerraCycle, Zappos, and Cotton's Blue, and 'HOW YOU CAN HELP?' with instructions on where and when to drop off items. The graphic also includes illustrations of socks, jeans, and denim items.

TEXTILE RECYCLING

SCHUYLKILL TOWNSHIP JEANS AND SOCKS RECYCLING DRIVE

DID YOU KNOW?
According to PADEP, in Pennsylvania as of 2021, 9.6 million tons of solid waste per year are dumped in landfills. That equates to 1480 pounds per person per year. 4 percent of that waste is textile waste or 384000 tons per year. That equates to 59.2 pounds per person per year.

WHAT IS IT?
Schuylkill Township has partnered with TerraCycle® through their GOLDTOE® Socks Recycling Program and Zappos for Good collaboration with Cotton's Blue Jeans Go Green™ Program.

HOW YOU CAN HELP?
Drop off your used clean socks and denim items at the Schuylkill Township building from February 1st to April 30th.

The socks can be any color, size, fiber content, missing their mate or have holes. Your used clean denim items can be in any color or condition. **Please make sure they are clean before leaving them at the Township.**

New Online Course: Science of Freshwater Streams

Do you want to learn more about freshwater streams? The Stroud Center is offering something new for you! A five-week online course taught by Stroud Center researchers launches **Tuesday, February 7** from 9 to 10:15 a.m. weekly.

Offered in partnership with the University of Delaware's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, the course will be offered live via Zoom. Interdisciplinary from the start, this course will cover the structure and function of streams including chemistry, microbiology, hydrology, and of course, aquatic macroinvertebrates.

Intended for adult learners who are curious about the natural world around them; there is no homework, no tests or grades, nor any academic credit associated with this course. A course fee of \$24 includes access to recordings. [Learn more](#) or [email Jennifer Merrill](#) for details.

Saturday, April 13--WCGT Board meeting. Time 10 AM-noon. Location to be announced. If you are on the Board please plan to join. Zoom option will be available too. More details later but mark your calendar now.

Earth Day Plans



Saturday, April 20--EARTH DAY celebration. 3 PM: Rally at the courthouse with Carolyn Comitta, Josh Maxwell and Jordan Norley with Rev. Dan Schatz providing music as well as wisdom. Also speaking will be Quinn Galey and Owen Weber, both age 11, who organized a bake sale to benefit the Green Team last spring. All will be MCed by Prof Megan Schraedley. Plan to attend and show your support for a healthy planet.

4:15-4:30 PM: March from the courthouse to the Unitarian Congregation at 501 S High St. for tabling by lots of green groups and a Mexican buffet planned by Silvia Martinez- Uribe.

5-7 PM: Mexican buffet and our first attempts in Spanish and reports by students and allied groups such as the WC Coop and Mother Compost and sponsorship by UCong and WC Coop. Cost is \$25 for an adult and free for children and youth 18 and under with an adult.

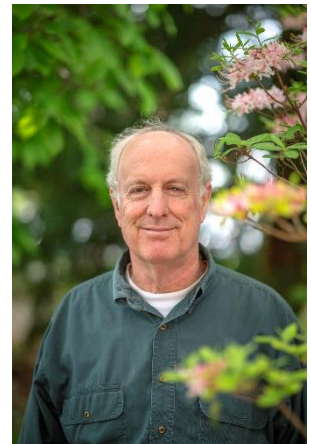
Doug Tallamy to Speak at PSU Great Valley

Tuesday, May 7 at 7:00 PM

Recent headlines about global insect declines, the impending extinction of one million species worldwide, and three billion fewer birds in North America are a bleak reality check about how ineffective our current landscape designs have been at sustaining the plants and animals that sustain us. Such losses are not an option if we wish to continue our current standard of living on Planet Earth. The good news is that none of this is inevitable. Tallamy will discuss simple steps that each of us can- and must- take to reverse declining biodiversity and will explain why we, ourselves, are nature's best hope.

For more information and registration, go here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/natures-best-hope-tickets-694781138087?>



Saturday May 18 from 1-7 PM: WC PORCHFEST! Details coming soon!



Rooted in Dance and in the Community

By Dawn Mazzone

Do you know what's happening in your neighborhood? West Chester is an artistically rich community; I know that, but on Saturday January 27th, I was introduced to something I was unaware of happening almost in my backyard; I live that close to WCU.

I had the pleasure of introducing those attending ROOTED IN DANCE at WCU to The West Chester Green Team at an information table prior to the opening and at the intermission. ROOTED IN DANCE was the Winter Dance Festival XVI of the WCU Alumni Dance Chapter. Have I known about this festival happening for the last 15 years – No! I am glad I do now!

The program consisted of 19 performances by 16 different dance companies. All delightful, varied, and totally engaging.

Similarly, wonderful people stopping by our Green Team table, were excited to learn about the varied programs The West Chester Green Team contributes to the community. Visitors happily shared their own stories of gardening, or aspirations to bring beauty and native plants to their own yards. Some knew of Porchfest and some were delighted to hear about it. People signed up for our newsletter and enjoyed selecting our give-away seeds, “Sneezeweed” always surprised!

The synergy of gardening and dance is to be celebrated and hopefully, expanded.

Thank you to Anna Sechrist for inviting us to share The West Chester Green Team's work in the community.

Thank You Elizabeth Cunningham and Dianne Walsh for sharing this experience!



2023 Fund Raising Wrap-up

The Bourbon Street Jam and our Seasons Greenings Auction were successful fundraisers last year. We netted \$2,555.20 at the Bourbon Street Jam and \$8,545.62 through the auction. These funds will help support Porchfest and other WCGT programs. Thanks to all who supported us. We can't do it without you!



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

Flooding at West Goshen's Goose Creek Addressed

By Bill Rettew, Daily Local News, January 30, 2024

If you've ever driven—or tried to drive--down Montgomery Avenue in West Chester during or after a heavy rain, you've seen what Goose Creek does nearly every time: it floods. The Goose Creek Alliance is working with an \$80,000 grant from PADEP to help solve the problem.

Read Bill Rettew's DLN article at the link below to learn more about what's planned:

In the photo: Goose Creek flood waters recently overtook a vehicle at Montgomery Avenue in West Goshen. (Photo from the Daily Local News by DAVE MARCH)



<https://www.dailylocal.com/2024/01/29/flooding-at-west-goshens-goose-creek-addressed/>

Advocating for Sufficient Resources in the Pa. State Budget

From *Save the Bay Newsletter*, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

The state budget represents the priorities of the Commonwealth. For well over a decade, conservation program monies have been diverted and key environmental regulation and conservation and agricultural agencies have lost funding and staff. Routinely, there were numerous legislative efforts to divert resources and underfund conservation and protection agencies via a special state budget process. Some fail but many succeed. Further, in the recently amended [Pennsylvania Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan](#), it was projected that an additional 100 new resource agency staff would be needed in order to implement the plan.



With the recent passage of the 2022-23 state budget, the three resource agencies of the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Department of Agriculture received increases of \$13.6 million, \$12.9 million, and \$51.9 million, respectively. County conservation districts received an additional \$6.8 million.

In addition, the state budget allocates \$320 million towards various water and sewer projects and \$156 million towards parks and recreation infrastructure improvements.

The Brownfield Lot: A Lesson in Sustainable Design

By Susan Farrelly

The EPA defines a brownfield as property “which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.” By definition, West Chester has its own large brownfield lying between E. Union, S. Adams, W. Nields and Bolmar streets. This vacant plot, formerly a Wyeth pharmaceutical manufacturing facility but recently green space, faces various other challenges, including its location in a USDA-designated food desert and a FEMA-designated flood hazard zone.

Students in Peirce Middle School’s “Sustainable Design” course, taught by myself, determined that rather than constructing more warehouses and parking lots, this section of our town requires a focus on sustainable design.

Sustainable design ensures lasting solutions that prioritize the well-being of people and harmony with the environment for generations. 8th-grade students had the opportunity to rethink the development of the 30-acre “brownfield” lot under the lens of sustainability and sustainable design. Students spent an entire marking period exploring the definition of sustainability and researching various sustainable innovations worldwide. Their final project resulted in a model of a sustainable solution for the property. Solutions included streetlights powered by dog poo, green architecture, zero waste stores, vertical farming facilities, permeable parking areas, and businesses with the specific intention of employing vulnerable populations.

This project is an example of “authentic learning.” Incorporating learning based on relevant, real-world situations and then



Pointing out features.

sharing with relevant members of the community encourages students to be more actively engaged in complex tasks and higher-order thinking skills. At the presentation of their projects on January 12, the 8th graders' audience consisted of 6th grade World Geography students and members of the West Chester Green Team Nathaniel Smith and Chris Pugliese. Nathaniel and Chris helped students connect their work in the classroom to the real world.

Teaching students to think sustainably is vital for cultivating responsible global citizens. This mindset fosters critical thinking and innovation, empowering individuals to make decisions that consider the long-term impact on the environment and society. It prepares them to contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future.



Peirce Middle School students in Sustainable Design class.