



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

August 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:

Dark Skies and Fireflies, "Common Ground" Bondsville happenings, Stormwater relief, Dark Skies action, Pennsylvania's waterways, Nature's new classroom, and much more.



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



Wednesday, August 28, 5 PM: Dark Skies and Fireflies Celebration at West Chester Friends Meetinghouse. Please join us! See details page 3.

For details on other August 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/>

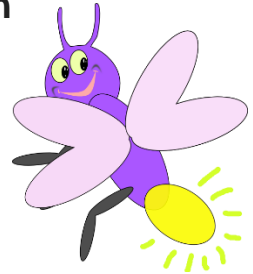
NOTE: Deadline for the September 2024 issue is August 31! We welcome contributions and suggestions from our readers for possible inclusion in a future issue. E-mail your ideas to Dianne Walsh at LDwalsh318@gmail.com.

This and That

More Coming Attractions

Wednesday, August 28, 5 PM: Dark Skies and Fireflies Celebration

at West Chester Friends Meetinghouse. This is Green Team's annual gathering and awards presentations. This year we are featuring State Senator Carolyn Comitta as our keynote speaker and recipient of the WCGT Environmental Leadership award. Also honoring Vaughn Stadtmiller and Rev. Dayna Spence with awards for art and innovation, respectively.



Dinners will be from Mae's, cake from the Master's Baker and gelato once again donated by D'Ascenzo's. Come celebrate with the WC Green Team and meet the leaders. Children are welcome. Register by scanning the QR code on the poster below or by clicking this link: <https://ticketstripe.com/events/9302105722514520>

Sponsored by West Chester Green Team and West Chester Cooperative


DARK SKIES & FIREFLIES CELEBRATION



West Chester Friends School, 415 N High St, West Chester
Wednesday, August 28 5-7pm

Featuring keynote speaker Senator Carolyn Comitta on bringing lightning bugs back to West Chester, with art by Vaughn Stadtmiller and an update by Rev. Dayna Spence on the Poplar Street community garden. The West Chester Green Team and the West Chester Cooperative invite you to our annual meeting and award ceremony!

- The West Chester Co-operative, Media's Green Wagons, WCGT's Porchfest, Living Landscapes and Dark Skies Committees will have table displays.
- Lenape crafts for children lead by Catherine Bosna & yard games.
- Music by Steven Hanford, Porchfest musician
- Dinner: picnic style outside on the porch and on the lawn, with box meals from Mae's, apples from Barnard's Orchard, cake from the Master's Baker and gelato donated by D'Ascenzo's



Please bring your own water cup to help us cut down on plastic.

Tickets: \$18 for adults & \$10 for children 18 and under.
Register with the QR code or at wgreenteam.com



September 9 at 7 PM: The film "Common Ground," free and open to the public at WCU. Co-sponsored by WCGT and WCU Office of Sustainability. Celebrities explore how many of the problems that ail humans connect to the state of the world's soil. Independent farmers implementing historic indigenous techniques demonstrate how changing agricultural practices could potentially save the world to come. Location to be determined.



Presented by



WCU
WEST CHESTER
UNIVERSITY
SUSTAINABILITY

WCU
WEST CHESTER
UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

**Free and open
to all**

By fusing journalistic exposé with deeply personal stories from those on the front lines of the food movement, Common Ground unveils a dark web of money, power, and politics behind our broken food system.

SEPTEMBER 9TH
RECEPTION 6:30PM
FILM AT 7PM

Business and Public Management Center Room 101

From the Website:

*"Common Ground is the highly anticipated sequel to the juggernaut success documentary, Kiss the Ground, which touched over 1 billion people globally and inspired the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to put \$20 billion toward soil health. By fusing journalistic exposé with deeply personal stories from those on the front lines of the food movement, **Common Ground** unveils a dark web of money, power, and politics behind our broken food system. The film reveals how unjust practices forged our current farm system in which farmers of all colors are literally dying to feed us. The film profiles a hopeful and uplifting movement of white, black, and indigenous*

farmers who are using alternative "regenerative" models of agriculture that could balance the climate, save our health, and stabilize America's economy – before it's too late."

September 23: Spotlight on tree planting enthusiast Ryan Davis from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, speaking at WCU on September 23. A program jointly sponsored by WCU Office of Sustainability and the WCGT. Davis will also speak on meadows. We will also be honoring outstanding male gardeners at this event. Read more about Davis at:

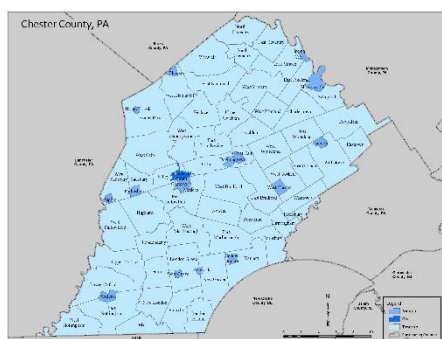
<https://www.greenzine.org/post/alliance-for-chesapeake-bay-ryan-davis>

Time and location: 7:30pm in SECC Ballroom A



October 22: Coming to WCU in October is a poet with an environmental focus. Ramya Ramana, is an American poet based in New York who was named Youth Poet Laureate in 2014. The Green Team has been invited to help welcome Ms Ramana to WCU.

More details will be coming soon.



October 28th: Environmental Progress in Chester County: Panel discussion. 6:30pm reception, 7pm event at WCU in SECC Ballroom A. More details to come.

Oh, These Dog Days!

The term "dog days of summer" refers to the hottest and stickiest days of summer when the sun is in the same part of the sky as Sirius, the Dog Star. Sirius is part of the Canis Major constellation, which translates to "Greater Dog". The Romans called this period "dies caniculares," or "days of the dog star," which eventually became "dog days" in English in the 1500s.

It really has nothing to do with hot, panting dogs!



Bondsville Streams and Butterflies Workshop

Penn State Extension Master Watershed Steward and Bondsville Mill Park volunteers provided a Streams and Butterflies workshop in the beautiful Bondsville Mill Park on July 20th as part of the West Chester Green Team's Legendary Lenape Summer Program. Over 25 people came to learn about healthy streams and macroinvertebrates as indicator species and the relationship between native plants, pollinators, and ecological health.

At the native plants and ecology station, attendees learned about our regional pollinators, their importance, and how to support them. Attendees also played an ecology-themed scavenger hunt bingo with “creepy” insect prizes that thrilled the kids. Down by the stream, attendees searched for stream bugs, aka benthic macroinvertebrates, to determine the health of two model stream sections, before examining some living macroinvertebrates found in the section of Beaver Creek near the main parking lot. Based on the diversity of macroinvertebrates with different pollution-tolerance, we determined that the stream segment is healthy for biological conditions and had not had a recent flush of pollutants.

Near the library, Mill volunteers showcased their efforts, while a Monarch Waystation and the monarch caterpillars captured everyone's attention. It was a great day and we hope to do more with Historic Bondsville Mill Park and West Chester Green Team!



Finn Lawrence finds a tiny new friend.



A group activity on stream health led by Meagan Hopkins-Doerr of Penn State Extension

West Chester Council Moves to Create More Stormwater Relief

By BILL RETTEW | wrettew@dailylocal.com | Daily Local News

West Chester is building more rain gardens to help control storm water run-off, like this one at the South Everhart and West Nields streets intersection. In a bid to help mitigate flooding in the Goose Creek watershed and improve stormwater quality in accordance with the DEP, Borough Council voted unanimously to build two rain gardens and a bioswale, or what is a vegetated, shallow ditch or channel that collects and filters stormwater runoff. The rain gardens and bump-outs will be located near the Public Works property. Bump-outs are a barrier for when rain gardens encroach into the street. Councilmembers Sheila Vaccaro and Patrick McCoy were absent from Wednesday's voting session.

Councilman Brian McGinnis emailed a letter to his colleagues on council. "There are not only environmental benefits but economic ones as well with adding these bump-outs," McGinnis said. "As storms have become more violent in recent years, such as with the rain in Miami last week, we must do all that we can to prevent flooding in this section of town and do our part to combat climate change. "These engineered green spaces, often planted with native vegetation, help manage rainwater at its source, reducing the volume and velocity of runoff entering storm drains and waterways."



The Borough of West Chester has obtained grant funding to pay for two new rain gardens like this one at the South Everhart and West Nields streets intersection. (BILL RETTEW/MEDIANEWS GROUP)

Every little bit helps and the Goose Creek/Public Works Green Stormwater Management Project will make an impact. "While many such projects are necessary to move the needle on flooding, the project gets us about 11% of the credit needed to meet the DEP mandate for the watershed," according to an email release from Borough Director of Sustainability Will

Williams. Williams also led the discussion at Tuesday's work session. Former Councilman Don Braceland lives close by to a pair of rain gardens at the South Everhart and West Nields streets intersection. He said that the rain gardens seem to control some of the regular flooding at the intersection.

Stormwater Relief, con't.

"It's an aesthetic addition to the neighborhood and it's a wonderful haven for all sorts of insects, and to some extent, birds," Braceland said. "The bees are going nuts." Two and a half acres of drainage area and two acres of impervious coverage are impacted with the projects. The rain gardens would be located near the Public Works property, with two vegetated bump-outs on the 400 block of South Matlack Street. The bump-outs are similar to the ones installed elsewhere in the Borough in 2018 and 2019.



There are currently approximately 15 rain gardens within the borough. "The storm water "BMPs" will collect and detain storm water from large areas of impervious surface that are currently flowing directly into Goose Creek, contributing to flooding on South Franklin Street and further downstream," Williams said. A parking study was performed and two non-codified no parking areas on the block will be removed. Though built in the right-of-way, there is no impact to parking availability on the block from the project, according to Williams. Bump-outs stick out less than parked cars into the roadway. There have been no reported accidents with existing bump-outs since seven were installed in 2018-19. There has been no property damage and precautionary reflective signage has been, and will be, installed. Borough staff, state Sen. Carolyn Comitta and state Rep. Chris Pielli helped secure the funding. One hundred percent of the construction cost is funded by grant funding. The program and grant awards are: American Recovery act or ARPA-funded with the DCED – Small Water & Sewer for \$118,008; PA DEP Growing Greener Grant Program – \$200,747. "The grant funds allowed us to expand the scope of the project to maximize the impact on flooding and storm water quality improvement," Williams said. "Similar, existing storm water infrastructure projects in West Chester are maintained by a 3rd party contractor, with assistance from volunteers through the Adopt-a-Rain Garden program established by the Borough in 2023.

A conceptual plan was designed and two grants were submitted during 2023. The final design was set to be performed in the summer of 2024 and construction might start as soon as Fall 2024. According to the presentation by Williams at the committee level, the sustainability director noted that the new additions will be located downstream from the impervious areas and upstream from regular flooding. Everything is located on borough property or right of way. Councilman Bernie Flynn asked Borough Manager Sean Metrick, at Wednesday's meeting, whether underground utility and other lines might be damaged. Metrick said that those issues had already been considered and there would be no impact. Flynn also asked if a clog develops and a resident's basement fills with water, would the borough be liable. "We don't think runoff would flood someone's basement," Metrick said. Metrick also told Flynn that residents living near raingardens were not notified in advance of upcoming construction near their property.

Dark Sky Action: Please Support PA Responsible Outdoor Lighting Bill

By Suzanne Webster and Tim Lawlor

As you may already know, with the help of the West Chester Green Team's "Dark Skies Committee," Pennsylvania House Representative Chris Pielli recently introduced a Responsible Outdoor Lighting bill to the PA legislature (HB1803: see <https://legiscan.com/PA/bill/HB1803/2023> and <https://legiscan.com/PA/text/HB1803/2023>).

Dark Skies Action, con't.

As it currently stands, this bill has the potential to elevate our legislators' awareness of and knowledge about light pollution. In turn, this could have significant impacts upon the ways in which those decision-makers think about night-time environments in their communities. In future, that awareness could translate into a desire to curb and regulate light pollution produced by private, as well as public, lighting fixtures. Essentially, this bill is thus an important first step in generating nonpartisan, State-wide support for the improvement of night-time environments all throughout Pennsylvania.



If this legislation is to see successful passage through the General Assembly, people like us will need to spread word of the bill's existence; petition their State Reps (and, then, their State Senators) to co-sponsor the bill; and encourage other citizens of the Commonwealth to join the action.

If you have not already done so, then, please consider requesting that your House Rep. support HB1803. Assisted by Rep. Pielli's District Office Director, Dr Julie Mesaros, we have created a template to help guide you, and your contacts, in the formation of your requests (*please see the end of this email message*).

If you're unsure of who your Rep. is, then you can find out who they are here:

- [Find Your Legislator - PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](https://www.state.pa.us/legis/FindYourLegislator.aspx)

If you feel comfortable creating additional momentum for the bill, please also consider contacting members of the General Assembly's two Environmental Resources and Energy Committees:

- [House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee - PA House of Representatives \(state.pa.us\)](https://www.state.pa.us/legis/House/Committees/EnvironmentalResourcesandEnergy.aspx)
- [Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee - PA State Senate](https://www.state.pa.us/legis/Senate/Committees/EnvironmentalResourcesandEnergy.aspx)

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to send them to us, or to this group list as a whole. However, as this list amalgamates several interested groups, and other, individual advocates, please refrain from discussing issues that do not apply directly to this legislation and how we can work to help ensure its passage.

With many thanks, and all best wishes,

Suzanne E. Webster and Tim Lawlor (Co-Chairs of the WCGT Dark Skies Committee)

Update: The House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee has just scheduled a voting meeting for Wednesday (Dec 13th) that includes HB1803.

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/cteeInfo/Index.cfm?Code=8&CteeBody=H&SessYear=2023>

Plum Creek's Been Cloudy and Now We Know Why (Yay!)

By **Cara Corridoni**, Hello West Chester, July 7, 2024

Last month, we learned about some unsolicited discharges into Plum Creek. (Thanks, Matt Herring!). Well, after weeks of back-and-forth and some (green) dye testing, we have our culprit. It was a West Chester University sink - and they are on it. Here is their official response from Deputy Public Relations Director Loretta MacAlpine.



“Following multiple dye tests, West Chester University has identified an issue with a janitor’s closet sink in Goshen Hall. That sink, which has recently discharged into Plum Run Creek, and all other janitor closet sinks in the residence hall are not being used until the matter has been resolved,” she said.

Illicit runoff gave Plum Creek a cloudy appearance on multiple occasions over the last month.

With the problem identified, the University is working through the clean-up process with West Chester Borough and adjoining municipalities as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. They have also instructed employees and contractors that workers must clean their equipment at the University's maintenance building until the residence hall plumbing is fixed.

“The University’s Facilities Department is developing an immediate action plan to repair or replace the piping in the residence hall. Once permits are received, this work will be completed this summer so that there will not be any disruption when classes resume for the fall semester,” shared Loretta.

This is a Watershed Moment for Pennsylvania's Waters!

From the Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Governor Josh Shapiro recently signed the Pennsylvania budget for fiscal year 2024-25 which includes \$50 million in new annual funding for the Clean Streams Fund, extending the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP). We are thrilled that the Governor and legislators have made increased and sustained investments in the new budget for family farms and cleaner rivers and streams. It is a watershed moment like no other for Pennsylvania.

This win for Pennsylvania streams wouldn't be possible without the steadfast leadership of PA Senators Scott Martin (R-13) and Gene Yaw (R-23) and the hundreds of people like you who have stood with us for years, voicing support for the creation of ACAP and a dedicated funding stream for the program. We would not be celebrating this victory if it weren't for you. Thank you!



The Commonwealth's legislature took the historic step of creating the Clean Streams Fund in 2022, funded initially by a comprehensive package of \$220 million in federal investments from the American Rescue Plan. The fund dedicated \$154 million to ACAP as investments to be passed through conservation districts to help farmers design and pay the costs of implementing conservation practices.

A statewide, state-based conservation cost-share program did not exist in Pennsylvania before ACAP. Now, the State Conservation Commission distributes ACAP funds to all 67 counties in the Commonwealth. Importantly, under ACAP, project decisions on local agricultural practices to reduce polluted runoff are made locally.

The new funding in the fiscal year 2024-25 plan extends ACAP at a critical time for the program. **In just over 16 months since the program was launched, more than 500 conservation projects statewide, totaling more than \$73 million, are in the early stages of design because of ACAP.**

Pennsylvania waterways, con't.

Had this new funding not been included in the budget, the initial historic federal investments would have been exhausted by the end of 2026, stalling this important work.

Only days before signing the budget, Governor Shapiro praised Pennsylvania's progress in reducing pollution to local waters and the Chesapeake Bay as noted in a recent report. "We are seeing real results and improvement in the Chesapeake Bay," the Governor said. "We're not *talking* about fixing the Bay anymore, we *are* fixing the Bay, and we are making sure Pennsylvania does its fair share."

Governor Shapiro also made it clear that the Commonwealth plans to continue its clean water work for the long haul. **"You have my commitment that this work will continue," he added.**

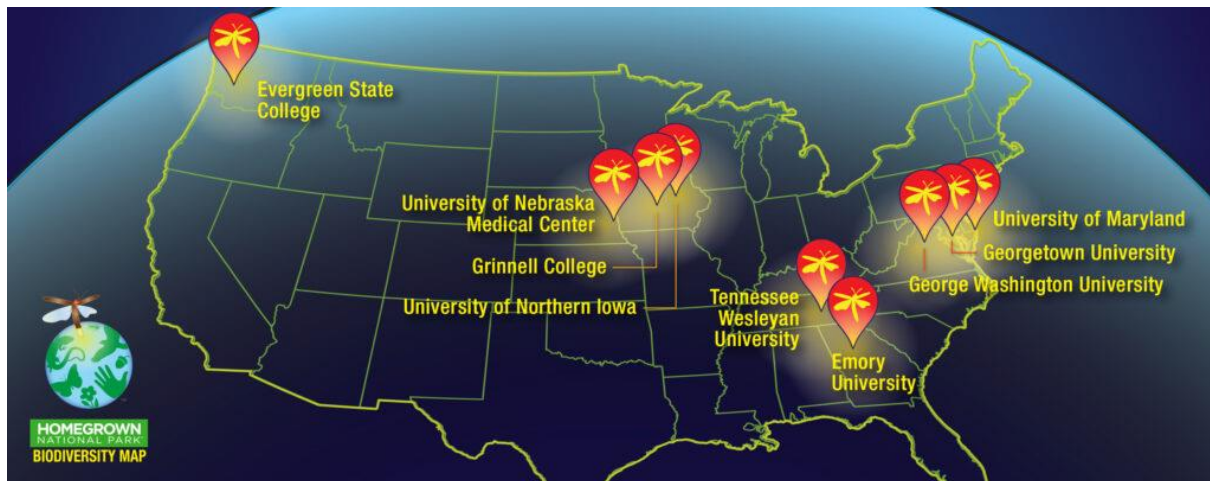
"Pennsylvania is all in." This new funding proves that.

Nature's New Classroom

Universities Leading the Way with Healthier Landscapes

By Grant Jensen and [*Re:wild Your Campus*](#)

Learn how campuses are converting to native ecosystems and organic land care, and how you can get involved with your campus or alma mater. Find these universities on the [Homegrown National Park Biodiversity Map](#)!



Native plants are more than a trend in university landscaping; they are essential for ecological restoration. These plants are the ecological foundation of our local habitats, perfectly adapted to our climate and soil, making them the ultimate support system for local wildlife. By planting native, universities are turning their campuses into biodiversity hotspots, providing essential resources for pollinators and birds, reducing water usage, and slashing maintenance costs.

The Green Campus Movement

Across the country, forward-thinking universities are redefining what it means to be a "green campus." They're not just recycling more or cutting down on energy use; they're reshaping their landscapes to support local ecosystems. For examples of what universities are doing and more information about this initiative, click here: <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/natures-new-classroom/>

Paddling on Westtown Lake with the Green Team

By [MediaNews Group](#), Daily Local News, July 22, 2024

WESTTOWN—Despite a rainy forecast, more than sixty people, many of them children, went canoeing at Westtown Lake last Saturday as part of the Legendary Lenape summer family education program. And no rain fell on the lively celebration of Lenape culture.



Canoeing on Westtown Lake. (SUBMITTED PHOTO/FINN LAWRENCE)

This series of programs is sponsored by a coalition of environmental groups led by the West Chester Green Team. Tim James, retired Westtown School faculty, organized the activities which included canoeing on the lake, pottery making in the Lenape style led by artist Karen Slossburg and painting Lenape words with their English translation on rocks.

These reminders of the Lenape, the people who lived on this land, will be put in place at Camp Linden near Marshallton later this summer.

Katie Bryan led the rock painting activity. Bryan, who will begin her studies at William and Mary College this fall, remarked on the enthusiasm of the children about the activities.

“The rock painting station was a success!,” she said. “The kids got to learn the Lenape translation of their favorite things in nature and then paint them on rocks.

“This group particularly liked spiders or xalahputisàk in Lenape.”

Karen Slossburg led the pottery making.

“We spent a lovely summer morning by the lake talking about how the Lenape gathered clay from local streams,” she said. “Everyone had a chance to create a pinch pot and learn about the clay.”

Paddling, con't.

The free series of programs continued on Saturday, July 20 at at Bondsville Mill Park near Downingtown. Penn State extension teachers under the leadership of Meagan Hopkins-Doerr, principal educator, explored the stream and observed native plants and the many butterflies nurtured at this Monarch nursery.

Hopkins-Doerr read the story of the Lenape calendar, "When the Shadbush Blooms." West Chester Green Team stream monitor and Strode volunteer Joe Debes lead stream exploration. To learn more about these programs and to register for any of the Lenape events, visit WC Green Team on Facebook or our website at <https://wcgreenteam.com/>.