



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

February 2025

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:

Check out the School Gardening Workshop, Our intern's activity summary, Earth Day details, Preliminary PORCHFEST info, Forest Fridays, and lots more!



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



For details on 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 2025 issue is February 28! 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, February 19 through Wednesday, April 2, Meet from 7:00-9:00 PM ET via Zoom to delve into almost every aspect of the plastic pollution crisis and, most importantly, *what we can do to help fix it*.

[Click here to learn more and register now.](#)

BEYOND PLASTIC POLLUTION

A Bennington College class taught online by Judith Enck



Class meets via Zoom on Weds, from 7-9 pm ET Feb. 19 - April 2

This class is open to anyone high school-aged and up, anywhere.

Starting February 25: RUX 110: Environmental, Food, Land Justice, & Community Change! 3-credit short course running 2/25-4/01/2025. In-person 3/07-3/09. Synchronous online meetings 2/25, 3/18, 3/25, and 4/01 in evenings. Taught by WCGT member and WCU professor Megan Schraedley. For WCU students and community organizers. We are still looking for Environmental Justice Community Fellows to participate in the course! For community organizers please note that For your expertise, time, and participation, receive \$2500 OR \$1500 and 3 college-credits towards a certificate in Community Change Studies. If you know an organization or person who might be a good candidate, please reach out to Megan Schraedley at mschraedle@wcupa.edu

March 22: School Gardening Workshop

10 AM-12 noon, West Chester Friends School, 415 N. High St., West Chester



School Gardening Workshop

Join us for presentations on how to create school gardens

SATURDAY MARCH 22
10-12PM

WEST CHESTER FRIENDS SCHOOL
415 N HIGH STREET, WEST CHESTER

About the Event

This workshop is free and open to anyone interested in school gardening as we'll learn from 3 groups and their experience on starting and maintaining school gardens.

What You'll Learn

Marilyn Quinn and Courtney Finneran share their experience with the Hillsdale Elementary School Garden.

Nancy Hiro from the West Chester Friends School on Small School Gardens discusses her work with school gardens.

Kale Doughty from the Chester County Food Bank talks about how the CC Food Bank assists school gardens.



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION: WWW.WCGREENTeam.COM

April 26: Earth Day—Peace for the Planet

On April 26, the West Chester Green Team will be celebrating Earth Day in collaboration with our friends at the Unitarian Congregation in West Chester. Our focus this year is on the importance of peace to the health of planet Earth with the keynote speaker Dr. Sa'ed Atshan. See his information here: <https://www.swarthmore.edu/profile/saed-atshan-%E2%80%999906>



Dr Atshan will discuss the importance of peace for environmental as well as human health and ways to come together even when governments seem to be at odds. Atshan has worked in Germany and Israel/Palestine on peacemaking as well as in Georgia, USA. He has local roots having spent a year at Westtown School after his graduation from Ramallah Friends School, on the West Bank Palestine/Israel. After Dr Atshan's address, a Middle Eastern banquet catered by the Mediterranean Restaurant will be served to attendees with an introduction on this cuisine by incoming GT President, Karen Slossburg. **See the WCGT website and Facebook page to make a reservation for this event.**



Earth Day 2025

On Stewardship of Earth:
Personal Reflections

Earth Day celebration, lecture, and dinner

- Lecture by **Dr. Sa'ed Atshan**, Chair of the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at Swarthmore College
- Celebration of the culture and heritage of the Middle East with food and music

Admission including dinner for adults \$25, children 7-17 \$12.50, children 6 & under free \$10 admission for those not eating dinner.



April 26th 5pm

Location
Unitarian Congregation,
501 S High St.,
West Chester,
PA 19382

Donate: 

Register: 

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

Our Little Library

In summer of 2021, the Melton Center requested that the Green Team provide them with a Little Library to replace the one they had, which had been destroyed. We did so, and since then we have had three volunteers securing books for it and taking care of it. Our librarians are Peggy Pillard, now living in Philadelphia, Marilyn Branton who has continued to secure books for us from Second Reading II, and most recently, Julie Daly, who also helps the Green Team by hosting for Porchfest. Thank you to all our many--usually unsung--volunteers who help the West Chester Green Team make our community a happier and healthier place to live.



We are officially a Little Library, #130507, chartered in 2021 at the Melton Center, 501 E Miner St. To volunteer to help with this effort, contact Margaret Hudgings through the website at wcgreenteam.com.

Go Green: 10 Tips for a More Sustainable Lifestyle

From Appalachian Mountain Club

Measuring a person's carbon footprint includes a number of factors. Choices we make, from the food we eat, to the products we use and industries we support, to the distances we travel, play into the amount of greenhouse gases we add into the atmosphere. These greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, all aid in the warming of the atmosphere, and contribute to the effects of climate change.

"It's easy to be cynical about the impact our individual actions can have on reducing climate change," says Dave Publicover, AMC's senior staff scientist. "After all, all of us support and use the products of power plants and factories (the produce most of the greenhouse gas emissions). But individual actions and choices, when multiplied by millions of households, can collectively have a major impact."

One action item to add yourself in the fight against climate change is to adopt a sustainable lifestyle and consider how our day to day habits play into that. Ten ways to get started can be found here: <https://www.outdoors.org/resources/amc-outdoors/conservation-and-climate/go-green-10-tips-for-a-more-sustainable-lifestyle/>



What our intern has been doing...

Green Team Internship Summary 2024-2025: Research for New Initiatives in West Chester Borough

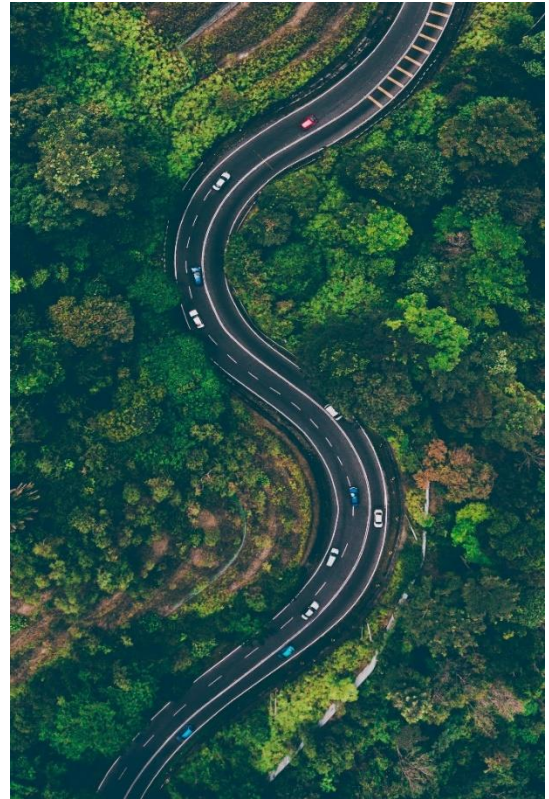
By Yasir Kundi

This internship project aims to enhance the sustainability of West Chester Borough by addressing two critical areas: expanding tree coverage and mitigating light pollution. Through advanced spatial analysis, the project evaluated the borough's urban forest by dividing it into four quadrants: Northwest (NW), Northeast (NE), Southwest (SW), and Southeast (SE). This division allowed for an in-depth assessment of tree canopy distribution and light pollution levels. My analysis identified the SE quadrant as the area with the lowest tree coverage (7.6%) and the highest light pollution intensity (radiance value: 538), highlighting it as a key focus area for future interventions.

Using tools such as ArcGIS Pro and Google Earth Engine (GEE), I mapped existing tree canopy coverage and analyzed vegetation health using the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI). Results showed a strong correlation between low NDVI values and regions with sparse tree coverage, particularly in the SE quadrant. This lack of vegetation not only exacerbates the urban heat island effect but also impacts air quality, wildlife habitats, and rainfall absorption, increasing the risk of flooding. Simultaneously, light pollution data from NASA's VIIRS revealed that the SE quadrant experiences the highest light intensity, disrupting ecosystems, affecting human health, and limiting opportunities for astronomical observations.

Based on my analysis, the project proposes several actionable recommendations. Expanding the tree canopy in the SE quadrant is a top priority, with strategies including partnerships with the WC Tree Commission to plant trees in public spaces, streetscapes, and residential areas. Green roofs and community gardens are also suggested as innovative solutions to increase urban greenery. To combat light pollution, the team recommends collaborating with local businesses to adopt eco-friendly, Dark Sky-compliant lighting. These fixtures minimize glare and reduce light spill, preserving the night sky and mitigating the harmful effects of artificial lighting.

Community engagement is central to the success of these initiatives. Organizing workshops and events, such as tree planting days and "Lights Out" nights, can foster awareness and participation among residents. Informational materials, both online and offline, can educate the community on the environmental and health benefits of reducing light pollution and increasing tree coverage. By integrating these efforts, the project provides a comprehensive roadmap for creating a greener, more sustainable West Chester Borough.



PORCHFEST!

It'll be here before you know it. Here's the latest from the Porchfest committee on plans for this year's event, plus a sneak peek at this year's poster.

Porchfest is coming May 17, 2025.

- The Porchfest Poster Contest had eight submissions. The Porchfest Committee picked the design at right by Bree Dillon for the 2025 Porchfest event. The artist was kind enough to also submit a rendering for the Porchfest T-shirt (similar design but rendered in green and white).
- The Performer and Hosting Sign Up questionnaires were opened on the WestChesterPorchfest.com website on February 1st.
- We are requesting the borough to close 11 blocks to traffic for the event this year as follows: 200-600 W. Union St.; 200-400-Dean St.; and 200-400 W. Barnard St (same as last year).
- We have 10 food trucks signed up and have reached out to a few more. The food trucks are all going to be placed in the 200 block of W. Union St. this year.
- Margaret Hudgings has already started gathering ideas for some "Green Initiative" porches and "Children's Activities" for Porchfest. Thank you, Margaret!
- The Porchfest Sponsorship Committee has started reaching out to past sponsors and to new ones. Did you know that Harley Davidson is putting a location where Kelly's Sport used to be? New corporate sponsor? We hope so.
- If you have any suggestions on possible donors/sponsors, please direct them to me at mbhanford@msn.com or the westchesterporchfest.com website Donate/Sponsor tab.



Chemical Recycling: The Magical Fix, or Just a Mirage?

From PennPIRG

Here are the facts:

- **Only 5% of plastics actually get recycled -- that is, turned into new, usable material.**

But that's not what chemical recycling does. Instead, it breaks down plastic back into oil and gas to eventually be burned, releasing toxic pollutants into the air, including some known carcinogens.

- **Very little recycled material is produced at chemical recycling facilities -- only about 1% to 14% of the plastic material sent to chemical recycling plants is actually processed into new products. Instead, that plastic is almost always being burned for energy and fuel.**

Not only does chemical recycling not accomplish much recycling, it produces *more* pollution than the original plastic did. Chemical recycling can be 10 to 100 times worse for the environment than virgin plastic production.

We need real solutions to the plastic waste crisis, not burning plastic and calling it recycling. But unfortunately, chemical recycling is gaining ground.

Bills to reclassify chemical recycling as manufacturing -- thus allowing chemical recyclers to skirt more stringent regulations -- have passed in 24 states.

There are currently 11 chemical recycling plants operating in the U.S., and the American Chemistry Council has advocated for building a total of 150 chemical recycling plants.



With a problem as big as plastic waste, we need to tackle it from all sides. Urge corporations to reduce their plastic waste and switch to sustainable alternatives. Phase out the worst single-use plastics. Hold producers accountable for the waste their products become. And keep microplastics out of our waterways.

Chemical recycling is a distraction from real solutions to plastic waste, diverting money and attention away from projects that would create real solutions.

Forest Fridays

By Cara Corridoni

Every Friday, rain or shine, Michelle Lozowski and her kindergarten class are bussed to various nature preserves and parks in the area. The class then spends two to four hours out in nature just observing. The idea was born from the [Japanese practice of forest bathing](#), or immersing yourself in the sights and sounds of the forest as a kind of technology break.

"The point of the Forest School is to connect children to nature," said Michelle. "So much learning and time at home is now spent with technology. Being out in nature gives them the opportunity to watch something other than screen," she added.

Forest Fridays, con't.

The program's impact was recently captured beautifully by writer Jenn Lindsey for the [Concord Quarterly Meeting](#) Newsletter. Below is an excerpt from her piece:



"Along the way, Teacher Michelle points out things of interest, a large squirrel's nest, an area where bees gather. We come upon a deer that has passed away. I am momentarily fearful of the kid's reactions and anxiously wonder how [Michelle] will handle this unexpected moment. Instead of ignoring it or telling the kids to avert their eyes, she mentions it as we pass and then stops to explain that sometimes animals get sick and pass away and that it is a natural part of life and nature. She says this

calmly and reverently and the children ask lots of questions. She takes the time and answers all of their questions... It does not escape me that what I have witnessed here is a perfect example of what [Michelle] intended for this program: lessons that come about organically, inspired by what the students see and question."

Now, the program that has inspired hundreds of impromptu lessons here in West Chester has been exported to Mexico. Congratulations to the West Chester Friends School and Teacher Michelle on helping kids across North America reconnect with nature.

Clean up our farmland: No more PFAS

From PennEnvironment

Millions of acres of American farmland have been contaminated by fertilizer tainted with toxic chemicals commonly referred to as PFAS.

Dubbed "forever chemicals" due to their near-indestructible composition, PFAS have been linked to kidney disease, certain cancers, birth defects and countless other health issues. And now companies selling this PFAS-laced fertilizer are lobbying Congress to stop farmers from taking them to court.



PFAS spread on farmland is then absorbed by the crops used to produce the food on our tables. Nearly every American has PFAS in their blood, with studies reporting an increased presence of PFAS in food products including milk, eggs and fruit juice. These fertilizers are

No more PFAS, con't.

poisoning our food, our environment, and our bodies. The companies that produced them should pay the costs of cleaning up.

How did this fertilizer become tainted by PFAS in the first place? The short answer: sewage sludge.

Once heralded for their durability and water-resistance, PFAS have been integrated into all sorts of products. The non-stick pans you cook with, the raingear you wear and the furniture you sit on all more than likely contain PFAS. Some of the factories that put PFAS in these products send their wastewater to sewage treatment plants. The PFAS in their wastewater then winds up in the "sludge" that remains after sewage plants treat their water.

Multiple studies have detected elevated levels of PFAS in sewage sludge, with scientists first reporting high concentrations in sewage to the Environmental Protection Agency in 2003.

Despite that contamination, some companies have been recycling sewage sludge into fertilizer and selling it to farmers.

For the safety of our food and environment, we must decontaminate America's farmland from PFAS as soon as possible. But that will only happen if farmers can make the fertilizer companies pay for the damage they have caused.

Tell your U.S. senators: These fertilizer companies must be held accountable so we can clean up America's farmland.

