



# WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

March 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:

So much this month! Stream clean-up, Porchfest update, School gardening workshop, Plastics in our bodies, chemicals in our drinking water, Neonic pesticides...and WE NEED YOU!



# WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

## When – What – Where.



**Saturday, March 22: School Gardening Workshop, 10 AM-12 noon,** West Chester Friends School, 415 N. High St. See pages 6 & 7 for details.

**Saturday, March 29, 9:00 – 11:30 AM, CRC Streams Clean-up 2025.** See page 6 for details.

**For details on other March 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 April 2025 issue is March 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](mailto:LDwalsh318@gmail.com).**

## Farewell letter from Green Team President and Co-founder Margaret Hudgings

As I step back from the West Chester Green Team, I want to express my gratitude to all of you for the opportunity to bring forward green issues to the West Chester community. Both our interns and volunteers have been creative and engaged with this important work, and the success of our programs would not have been possible without them. I would also like to thank the many community organizations that have joined us in sponsoring programs to educate and entertain the community from workshops on gardening to the fun of Porchfest. Special thanks to the West Chester University Office of Sustainability, local churches and meetings that supported work on the Lenape and Earth Day, and fellow Green Teams from Phoenixville and Media who worked with us and inspired our journey. As leadership passes to a new generation, I feel confident that the West Chester Green Team will continue to work for clean air and water and healthy and happy living for our community. Now is a good time to volunteer to help the new leaders with this important work.

Margaret Hudgings

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## WE NEED YOU!

The West Chester Green Team is seeking interested individuals to fill several Board vacancies. If you are interested in joining our Board to help us carry on our mission of educating the local public and establishing and nourishing green initiatives in the community in harmony with nature and each other, please contact Karen Slossburg at [karenslossburg@gmail.com](mailto:karenslossburg@gmail.com) or Chris Pugliese at [chrispugl@gmail.com](mailto:chrispugl@gmail.com).

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. —Margaret Mead*



## ***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.*



March 8

NEW

# **VOLUNTEER**

## **OPPORTUNITY**

East Bradford Township is pleased to announce the launch of a new volunteer program, "Free-a-Tree", starting this year.

"Free-a-Tree" will begin as a monthly initiative focused on revitalizing sections of open space within the Township by removing invasive vines and other non-natives to "free" trees and other native species. Each month, a location will be chosen, and we will spend roughly two hours on site with loppers and other hand tools provided by the Township (or bring your own).

Our first project will be Saturday, March 8th, from 10:00am-12:00pm. We will be removing vines from mature trees along Hillsdale Road behind CCAA property.

Please contact Ryan Staiber [rstaiber@eastbradford.org](mailto:rstaiber@eastbradford.org) with any questions or concerns.

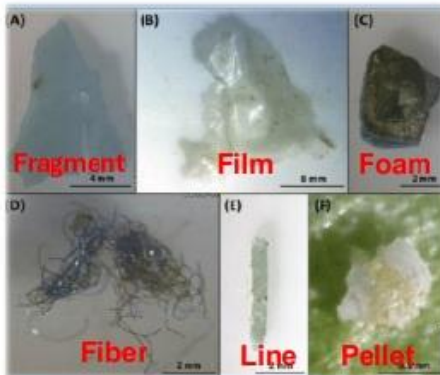
**Saturday, March 8: 10:00 am – 12 noon. East Bradford Township near the Chester County Art Center building. Free-a-Tree!**





Microplastics that permeate our air, water, and soil are also found in human bloodstream, lungs, placenta, immune system, brain, and other vital organs. The smaller the size, the more they permeate our tissues. Some sources are:

- Fibers; synthetic clothing, medical materials, ropes, and landscape textiles
- Fragments; broken down plastic items including building materials and air blasting to remove rust and paint
- Pellets; from plastic production, personal care products
- Films; degraded plastic packaging



## There are Plastics in our Bodies

**Now what?.....**

### Risks & Realities



On Thursday p.m., March 13<sup>th</sup> 7:00-8:00p.m. Carol Armstrong, Ph.D, will describe current findings on how micro and nano plastics enter our tissues, give evidence of damage and health impacts, and suggest habit changes to decrease our absorption of microplastics and their chemicals. There will be live Q&A.

Presentation will be given at:  
Charlestown Township Building  
11 General Warren Blvd. Ste. 1  
Malvern, PA 19355

Presentation will be virtual at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83918353690?pwd=vLdCMG6376suUqb8yteULUh2aNueZq.1>

**Please share and encourage others to attend.**

Dr. Armstrong is a Neuropsychologist and Neuroscientist, Professor Emerita, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee, Charlestown Township; Penn State Univ. Ext. Master Watershed Steward.

Free, Jensen, Mason, et al., 2014

**Saturday, 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](http://WWW.WCGREENTEAM.COM)

## **Saturday, March 29, 9:00 – 11:30 AM, CRC Streams Clean-up 2025**

Hello all! It's that time of year again! Join us on March 29th to help clean up Goose Creek in WC Borough as part of the Chester Ridley Crum Watersheds Association annual stream clean up!

If you register by March 6th, you will receive a complimentary T-Shirt. **Choose Site 112 for West Chester Borough.**

We will meet in the Public Works located at 205 Lacey Street where there is plenty of parking. Join us at 9am.





Register before *this Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup>*  
to get your free t-shirt for the 2025 Streams Cleanup!

[Sign-up now!](#)

**We can't wait to see you at our Streams Cleanup!**

**When?**

**Saturday, March 29, 2025  
from 9:00-11:30AM**

**Where?**

**33 sites throughout the Chester, Ridley,  
and Crum Creeks**



Interested in sponsoring your community's Streams Cleanup?

The deadline to be listed on volunteer t-shirts is this *Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>*!

[Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

Questions? Contact [jarad@crcwatersheds.org](mailto:jarad@crcwatersheds.org)

## March Bird Walks

Interested in birding? Try a bird walk at the Gordon Natural area at WCU. Here's this month's schedule.



**MARCH 2025**

# BIRD WALKS

 GORDON NATURAL AREA  BINOCULARS PROVIDED. WEAR SHOES THAT CAN GET MUDDY.

<b>7</b> Friday	<b>8:30AM-10:00AM</b>
<b>22</b> Saturday	<b>9:00AM-10:30AM</b>

## BIRDING OFFICE HOURS

Drop in to learn the birding basics!

<b>31</b> Monday	<b>12:00PM-2:00PM</b> Outdoor Classroom (behind Merion)
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**LEARN MORE** 



# REPAIR CAFE

## DOWNINGTOWN

**April 22nd, 2025 11am -1pm**

Zero Waste Summit @ West Chester University  
(Sykes Student Union Ballrooms)

### Pop-up Repair Clinic for Desk & Table Lamps

### Get It Fixed... for FREE\*

Everyone is welcome, you don't have to be a WCU student.

**Tuesday, April 22, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM**


Pop-up repair clinic for desk and table lamps at WCU, Sykes Student Union Ballroom, Rosedale Ave., West Chester. All welcome; you do not have to be a WCU student.

Get your lamp fixed free! Bring your own parts, or purchase parts on-site. One lamp per person, please!

We will be repairing desk and table lamps at our pop-up repair clinic. You can also learn more about our Repair Cafe events held every other month in Downingtown.

**Limit 1 lamp per person!**  
\*Bring your own parts, or  
lamp parts are available for  
purchase at our cost.

#### MORE INFORMATION

 [repaircafedowningtown.com](http://repaircafedowningtown.com)

 [repaircafe165@gmail.com](mailto:repaircafe165@gmail.com)

 [@RepairCafeDowningtown](https://www.facebook.com/RepairCafeDowningtown)



Flyer design by Upward Arrow



## 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

# PORCHFEST Update!

By Molly Hanford

Here's the latest from the Porchfest committee on plans for this year's event.

Preparations for Porchfest on May 17<sup>th</sup> are in the works!

65 musical performers have signed up so far with something for everyone. There will be singer-song writers playing guitar; a saxophone quartet; ukulele group; a string quartet playing oldies and show tunes; a symphony of 6 fiddles and a guitar playing bluegrass; 20+ boys/girls choir from Malvern Prep and Villa Maria singing classic rock; a chorus of an 18 member, 4-part cappella harmony of versatile repertoire; a jazz ensemble from West Chester University; rock and roll cover bands as well as bands bringing their own music and lyrics, all to the Southwest Quadrant of West Chester. How exciting!

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer during the event, please visit the website below and sign up. All help is appreciated! Also, donations and/or sponsorships are always helpful. Thank you!

<http://westchesterporchfest.com>



Please note: There will not be any rain date, so hope for great weather! Please come out and enjoy!

## Earthjustice Wants You to Know 5 Things They Did Last Week

Earthjustice is hard at work defending the environmental progress that the Trump administration has been attempting to undo.

- ✓ Sued the Trump administration for an unlawful offshore drilling order.
- ✓ Sued Trump's USDA over climate censorship
- ✓ Organized supporters to contact their members of Congress to defend our federal agencies
- ✓ Joined a lawsuit to defend the Biden administration's decision to end new coal leasing on public lands in Wyoming and Eastern Montana
- ✓ Secured a victory for grizzly bears in Montana



# Chemicals Found In PA Drinking Water Revealed In New Study

Pennsylvania's water utilities have 123 contaminants, including vinyl chloride, arsenic, chloroform, and radon, according to the study.

By **Max Bennett**, Patch Staff  
Posted Thu, Feb 27, 2025



Residents of Pennsylvania who drink tap water could be getting a dangerous cocktail of hundreds of chemicals, heavy metals and radioactive substances every day, according to an analysis of the nation's drinking water supply released Wednesday.

Pennsylvania's 1,884 public water utilities, which serve 11,354,000 people, have 123 known contaminants, according to the [Environmental Working Group](#), a research and environmental advocacy nonprofit organization. A [search-by-ZIP-code function](#) allows people to see what's in their community's drinking water.

Contaminants include chloroform, radium, arsenic, thallium, cadmium, radon, barium, and vinyl chloride.

EWG analyzed water quality data from [nearly 50,000 water systems](#) collected between 2021 and 2023. It identified [324 contaminants](#) in drinking water supplies across the country, with almost all community water systems having detectable contaminants.

The report comes amid federal government upheaval that jeopardizes [landmark standards regulating PFAS](#) — a dangerous, ubiquitous class of chemicals linked to cancer, reproductive issues and other serious health problems.

The final rules, approved in April, are “the most significant action on drinking water in a generation for some of the worst chemicals in drinking water — a tremendous public health plan,” Melanie Benesh, the EWG's vice president of government affairs, told Patch.

“It means thousands of people are not going to get sick or die from serious, chronic diseases,” she said. “It shouldn't be reversed. Lives and health are at stake.”

More than [143 million people](#) are exposed to PFAS in their drinking water, according to data from the Environmental Protection Agency. PFAS have been detected in nearly every American's blood, including newborns.

President Donald Trump's “[Regulatory Freeze Pending Review](#)” memorandum in January directed agency and department heads to consider delaying the effective date of any final rules published in the Federal Register for 60 days pending review.

That's not unusual any time there's a change in the administration and agency leadership, Benesh said.

Lee Zeldin was sworn in as the 17th administrator of the EPA on Jan. 25. As a congressman representing New York's 1st District from 2015 to 2023, he voted in favor of tougher regulation of PFAS.



### ***Chemicals, con't.***

Though a positive sign, Benesh said the EWG and other safe-water advocates have “real concerns that these landmark health protections for our drinking water will be significantly weakened and rolled back.”

Also in January, the Trump administration withdrew a proposed rule from the previous administration that would have subjected manufacturers to federal discharge limits on [PFAS](#). The withdrawal means there is no federal limit on the amount of PFAS a manufacturer can release into waterways. That places greater burden on states to place limits on states.

Legislation pending in California would require the state to pass an emergency resolution codifying the federal limits in the event that the EPA weakens the standards, Benesh noted. “I wouldn’t be surprised if other states follow suit,” she said.

Dozens of states have adopted [policies concerning PFAS](#). Pennsylvania recently joined litigation against chemical manufacturers over PFAS substances. Other states involved are Arizona, Arkansas, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

The Trump administration has also asked for a stay on pending litigation surrounding the PFAS standards. The final rules face a multidistrict [legal challenge](#) in U.S. District Court in South Carolina, a consolidation of 10,000 associated cases with tens of thousands of plaintiffs.

Defendants include large companies such as 3M, DuPont, Chemours and Corteva. “It is imperative that we do everything we can to keep them in place,” Benesh said of the standards. “The Trump administration, on the whole, has been very sympathetic to chemical companies.” The Biden administration also unlocked nearly [\\$1 billion in funding](#) to help states and territories implement PFAS treatment measures through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Some of the money in the Safe Drinking Water Act revolving loan fund has already been distributed. But it’s unclear how Trump’s [pause on infrastructure spending](#) could affect PFAS mitigation, which many utilities would be unable to tackle without government help.

Other key findings in Wednesday’s EWG report include:

[Volatile organic compounds](#): VOCs like trichloroethylene or [TCE](#), perchloroethylene and benzene are widespread contaminants linked to industrial pollution and environmental persistence. These chemicals, even at low concentrations, can cause cancer, liver damage and neurological issues. They are found in tap water at levels ranging from parts per trillion to parts per billion.

[Nitrate](#): Nitrates from farm runoff and wastewater can contaminate drinking water, especially in rural areas. Long-term exposure to high nitrate levels can cause serious health problems, including cancer, thyroid issues and harm to developing babies. Nitrate contamination is particularly dangerous for infants, especially when used in baby formula, as it can lead to life-threatening conditions like methemoglobinemia.

Heavy metals: [Arsenic](#) is a naturally occurring mineral that causes bladder, lung and skin cancer as well as harm to the skin and lungs. Arsenic is found in drinking water in all 50 states. [Hexavalent chromium](#), or [chromium-6](#), is a carcinogen made infamous by the Erin Brockovich case in California, and is in the drinking water of over 250 million Americans. There is no federal limit for chromium-6, despite its widespread presence and link to cancer and organ damage.

[Disinfection byproducts](#): Chlorine disinfectants used to treat water can form harmful byproducts linked to cancer and reproductive health issues. These byproducts are consistently found in large water systems serving millions of people.

## Chemicals, con't.

**Radiological contaminants:** Radium and uranium were detected in many water systems, sometimes exceeding EPA limits. Long-term exposure can lead to neurological disorders, developmental delays and organ damage. Radioactive elements like radium and uranium, naturally occurring or released from mining and industrial processes, increase cancer risk due to ionizing radiation.

**Fluoride:** While fluoride is added to water for dental health, high levels can cause dental and skeletal fluorosis and may harm children's neurodevelopment. Some communities have seen fluoride concentrations exceed recommended limits.

## What You Need to Know About Neonic Pesticides

*From PennPIRG*

**If we lose bees, we lose the ability to effectively farm at least a third of the food that we eat.<sup>1</sup>**  
Our pollinators are worth protecting. So why are we still dousing our crops with toxic bee-killing pesticides?

Neonicotinoids, or neonics, are a particular problem for bees -- which makes them a particular problem for us, too.

**Here are a few facts you might not have known about neonics, and why these bee-killing pesticides have no place in our food system.**

Neonics are being sprayed and neonic-coated seeds are being planted on thousands of acres of cropland each year in the name of reducing pests and protecting farms.

**But the truth is that neonic application may reduce crop yield, not increase it.**

These toxic chemicals kill off the natural predators of target pest species, giving surviving pest insects free rein to damage crops.

But some progress has been made. Twelve states and counting have some form of restriction on neonic pesticides.

