



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

August 2026

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:

A train trip beckons, What's up with West Chester's Stream Fee?, Our volunteers of the month, Turks Head Trail, Celestial happenings this month, More on our event at the Uptown theater, Buckets of DOOM, and much moe!



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



August 25. WCGT Board meeting at 6:30 pm. Location to be decided,

August 30: All aboard for a train ride! Noon-1:30PM. See details on page 3.

For details on other August and later events, see listings beginning page 3. Also see more events at <https://wcgreenteam.com> and countywide events at <https://chescoenvt.org>.

Related groups and committees (please check online before attending, especially on or near a holiday):

1st Wednesday of every month: West Chester Tree Commission, 6pm, Borough Hall, 401 E. Gay St.

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 2026 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

August 30:

ALL ABOARD!!

West Chester Green Team Invites the Community

**Train Ride Sunday, August 30 at NOON--till 1:30
West Chester to Glen Mills by the side of the Turks Head Trail**



Founder Nick Rickards of Turks Head Trail Committee will ride along on the train, tell the history & speak about terrain challenges for building The Turks Head Trail along the route.



Music by Barbershop Quartet Late Entry, who performed at Valley Forge on July 4.

Tickets \$10 per adult, \$5 per child under 18, under 6 free, per family \$25. Meet at Noon at WC train Station, Market St. Use the QR code below to order your tickets or visit tinyurl.com/2as5wvxc



September 2: 2026 Sustainability Showcase from 11am-1pm in Sykes Ballrooms at WCU.

The goal of this event is to bring together groups and departments from across campus that promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability to showcase current programs, events, and projects. Everyone in our WCU community (friends and neighbors, too) is invited.



September 12: Secret Gardens of West Chester Tour

This is a self-guided walking tour of privately owned gardens in the north-west area of the Borough of West Chester. The tour route includes the outdoor learning area at West Chester Friends School. Stop by the plant sale located on the school campus to shop for additions to your garden. Our recently-planted garden at Church St. Towers (see photo at left) will be included in the tour. For more info visit:

<https://birdease.com/secretgardensofwestchester>

September 20: 3 PM, WCGT Annual Meeting Annual Meeting at the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester 501 South High Street. We will welcome the Turk's Head Trail. (See page 7 for a description of what this trail is and where it will be located.)

October 1: Olivia DiNucci will present "War is Ecocide: How We Need to Build a Local Peace Economy Instead" at 2pm at WCU in the Philips Autograph Library. It will also be



livestreamed to Zoom. More details in September!

Olivia DiNucci is an anti-militarism and climate justice organizer based in Washington D.C. Olivia is the CODEPINK DC Coordinator who seeks to build and bridge connections from issues to people. She came to this work after living and working abroad as an experiential learning facilitator with college students. She is active in arts and creative communities, direct action, and building out more local to global solidarity in DC through deepening and weaving relationships.

October 22: Plastics Panel discussion at WCU. Details to come next month.

The Dog Days are here again? How nice, but what do you mean they're not about ME? How utterly preposterous!

No, Tallulah, they're not all about you. The term "dog days" comes from ancient astronomy and the star Sirius, known as the "Dog Star," which rises and sets with the Sun from July 3 to August 11 each year. Ancient Romans believed the bright star added extra heat to the Sun to create the year's hottest weather.



But keep those sunglasses on—you just might need them!

More on Green Team at the Uptown, July 2!

The PROMISE of AMERICA: Our ROOTS and BRANCHES, presented on July 2nd at Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center, was an inspiring celebration of American and West Chester history. Through visuals and spoken word, 30 presenters took the stage to express the indigenous worldview of honoring our connection to the land.

With the Iroquois Thanksgiving Prayer for the Natural World alongside selections from the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, the "I Have a Dream" speech, and other national and local texts, we honored the rich and diverse legacy of the United States.



Susan Karas dressed like Lady Liberty to talk about the Statue of Liberty at the Green Team's celebration for America250 at Uptown! (COURTESY OF JIM HUDGINGS)

The program also featured excerpted biographies honoring Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, as well as the contributions of artist Mary Cassatt, "Fighting Quaker" Smedley Darlington Butler, naturalist Humphry Marshall, civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, and Pennsylvania native Rachel Carson. Additionally, Susan Karas, costumed as the Statue of Liberty, read the inscription from the statue to recognize the USA as a nation of immigrants.

More than 100 attendees enjoyed the event and gathered afterward for a taco meal and gelato from D'Ascenzo's. The gelato was served in memory of First Lady Dolley Madison, who first introduced ice cream to the White House. Musical entertainment was provided by White Feathers, a four-member jazz and traditional American folk band led by West Chester native and Swarthmore College junior Mateo Niiler.

Following a detailed post-event review by Bill Rettew in the Daily Local News, we are thrilled to share that our WCGT event has been captured in a beautiful book. Thanks to Chip Simmons of Uptown!, this book will be included in the Parks and Recreation Department's "Time Capsule."



Volunteer(s) of the Month: Ronnie and Rob Montgomery



The saying goes, A picture is worth a thousand words and these photos illustrate Rob Montgomery's outstanding gardening skills better than words could. Rob has helped the Green Team from its beginnings, often working with children on planting or explaining how bees make honey, another fascinating part of his garden.

Ronnie and Rob donate to the Green Team auction (Ronnie makes the most amazing almond cookies!) and their daughter Katie has given time at her B&B in Puerto Rico. Families like the Montgomerys help the Green Team continue to offer its programs to the community. Sincere thanks to the Montgomerys.

Enjoy these photos of their lovely gardens.



The Turks Head Trail: A New Vision for Connecting Our Communities

Imagine being able to safely walk, bike, or jog for miles along a scenic, paved local trail that connects neighborhoods, schools, parks, universities, and transit. That's the vision behind the Turks Head Trail, an exciting community project that could transform the railway corridor and create new opportunities for recreation, wellness, and alternative transportation throughout the region.



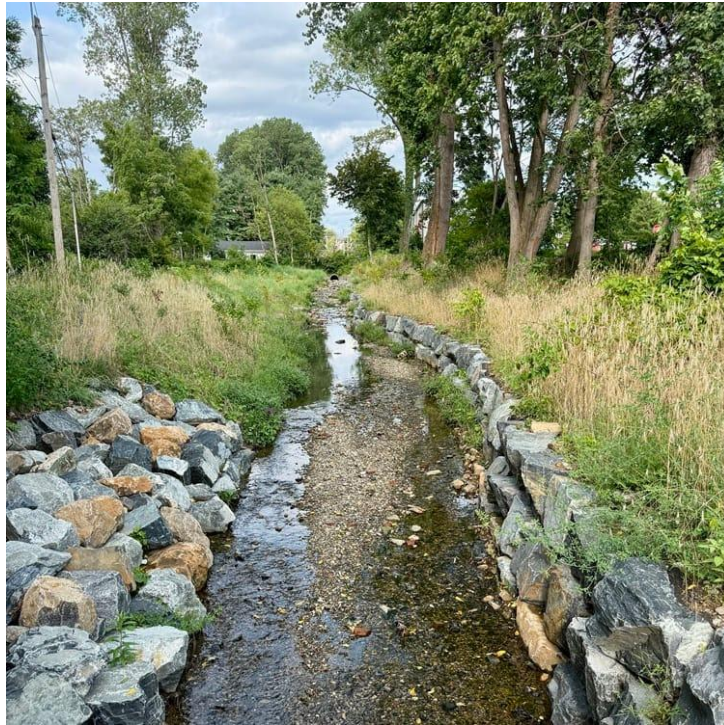
As shown below, the proposed 9.29-mile multi-use trail would connect the Borough of West Chester to the Wawa train station in Middletown Township, serving residents across seven municipalities. Designed for people of all ages and abilities, the trail would provide a safe and accessible pathway for walking, running, cycling, inline skating, wheelchair use, stroller access, and dog walking.

As a rail-with-trail project, the Turks Head Trail would run alongside the active railroad corridor on a separate, dedicated path. In a region where many roads lack sidewalks and residents often rely on cars for even short trips, the trail would open new possibilities for healthy recreation, active transportation, and community connection. The trail would connect an impressive range of destinations, including downtown West Chester, two elementary schools, two high schools, West Chester University, Cheyney University, 11 public parks and nature preserves, and dozens of residential neighborhoods and employment centers. At its southern end, the trail would link to the Chester Creek Trail and Octoraro Trail, creating even greater access to the growing Circuit Trails network.



West Chester's Stream Protection Fee is Done

Reprinted from *Hello West Chester*, July 31 issue. Reporting and photos by Marge Swart



Stream bank restoration project completed at Taylor Run. On average, West Chester spends \$700,000 a year on state-mandated stormwater management projects.

On April 30, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled, 4 to 3, that West Chester's Stream Protection Fee was not a fee after all. Rather, it was a tax, and as such, tax-exempt institutions like West Chester University did not have to pay it. Beyond that, little was known about what would come next.

Well, it seems the implications of that 31-page decision run deeper than we first thought.

Earlier this week, we stumbled onto some hints of just how big the impact would be to the Borough. On page 57 of the Borough's latest financial audit, in the section reviewing the Stormwater Fund, there is a header "Subsequent Events." Here, auditors have listed financial changes that will impact the future revenue stream. It reads as follows:

"The Borough is collaborating with its legal team to determine next steps and intends to fully comply with the PA Supreme Court's decision. Among these steps include no longer accepting payments for stream protection fees from any payor."

I reached out to Borough Manager Sean Metrick for confirmation that the text is saying what I think it's saying: there will be no Stream Protection Fee for anyone going forward.

“You are correct. The Borough is no longer accepting payment for stream fees, regardless of the payor’s taxable status,” he wrote. “Going forward, [Borough] Council will have some tough choices.”

I’ll say.

Between 2017 and 2025, the Stream Protection Fund received approximately \$12.6 million in contributions. About \$11.1 million came from the Stream Protection Fee itself. The rest was generated through grants and interest earnings. However, while the bulk of that revenue stream has been voided, the Borough’s responsibility to provide clean water has not.

“Stormwater system improvements for towns like West Chester are mandated by the state and enforced through the Department of Environmental Protection. We’ve been investing on average about \$700,000+ per year in capital projects and another \$50,000–\$250,000 per year in maintenance,” Sean shared.

The Borough’s Buffer



Rain gardens like the one seen here at Veterans Memorial Park help slow and clean water runoff from sidewalks, streets, and blacktops. They have been popular stormwater projects in the Borough.

As of April 30, the date of the ruling, West Chester had collected nearly 90 percent of the year’s fees. There was also roughly \$400,000 from grants and other revenue sources, and a bit of a carryover from previous years. At the end of May (when the audit was completed), the Stream Protection Fund had a \$2.3 million balance. This is not an indefinite solution, but it does seem to give Borough Council a bit of a buffer.

“Borough Council will need to create a new income stream in 2027 during the budget process in 2026 so that the Borough can continue to fund debt payments, maintenance and new projects to

be compliant with PADEP Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements,” the statement continues.

What that income stream will look like will be discussed beginning next month. If you have thoughts on these developments, and I am guessing you may, I want to pass along Sean’s advice:

“I encourage you to tune in to work sessions in August, September, and October,” he said. Borough Council August Worksession will be Aug. 18 at 6:30 p.m.



Through the eight years of the program, West Chester has collected roughly \$11 million. For reference, I looked up our Stream Protection Fee for 2026. We own a median-range home in the borough. We have a small yard, but also definitely some impervious surface. A few years ago we planted a couple of trees which may have gotten us a break early in the program. For 2026, we paid \$35.19.

What is HB 1308 and can it help us out of this mess?

It would definitely help. Unfortunately, the last time this bill saw action was last fall. West Chester isn’t the only place in the state whose stormwater budget was upended by the Supreme Court decision. At least 70 other Pennsylvania municipalities charge a similar fee for stormwater services. [House Bill 1308](#) seeks to end this unfunded mandate by clearly giving the municipalities doing the work the ability to charge for their services. These charges can be levied on anyone who benefits from the services, regardless of tax status.

Of course, this means a fee, not a tax.

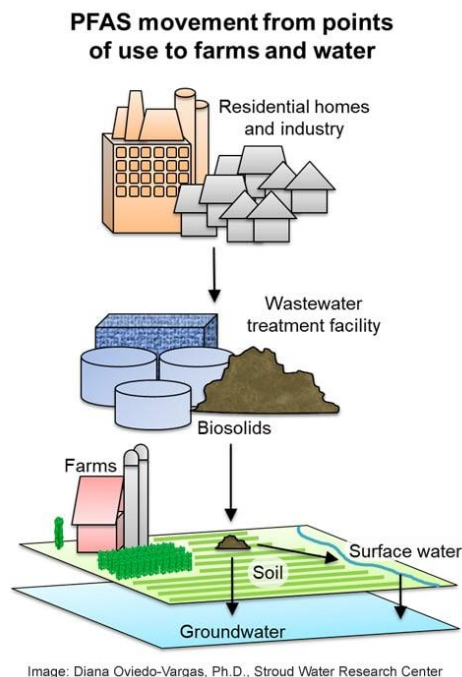
From PFAS to Road Salt, Science Helps Us Discover What's Lurking in Our Water and Find Solutions

By Diane Huskinson From: Stroud Water Research Center

At daybreak, the sun's warmth gives rise to mist above cornstalks and a nearby stream that flows toward homes, schools, and businesses not far away. From farm fields to city streets, water connects us all—and so do the remnants of how we live on land.

The cleaning products, fertilizers, and other substances that make modern life easier (at least in some ways), don't disappear after use. They run down our drains, roads, and landscapes and end up in our water. Certain chemicals and microorganisms are increasingly detected in fresh water. They are often invisible, poorly understood, and not yet fully regulated, but they may threaten human health and ecosystems. Scientists call them emerging contaminants.

Read the full article at: <https://stroudcenter.org/news/the-next-frontiers-of-freshwater-science/>



Balcony Solar Now!

From RootsAction.org

Our current administration is doing everything it can to prevent the spread of solar energy. But state laws allowing plug-in or balcony solar are spreading fast.



When we started promoting balcony solar, Utah was the one state with a law that allowed people to **plug small solar panels on balconies or patios into ordinary outlets** for enough electricity to run their home appliances without paying any power company for it -- just as millions of people had long been able to do in Germany and other countries.

Soon a **majority of U.S. states were working on doing the same thing** -- with popular and bipartisan support.

Before long, new laws were signed in **Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and Colorado**, with bills awaiting the governor's signature in New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts, and bills passed by one chamber in California, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Rhode Island, and North Carolina.

[Tell your state legislators and governor to get on board now!](#)

Biodiverse Native Garden Transforms Library's Landscape

From: Chester County's Official News and Information newsletter

Recently, the Chester County Library unveiled a new native garden, transforming a large section of turf into a biodiverse habitat for pollinators, birds, and other local wildlife. Anchored by a keystone oak tree, the garden features goldenrods, asters, dogwoods, witch hazel, year-round fruiting shrubs, and milkweed to support monarch butterflies.



The Chester County Library Trust funded the garden through a generous donation by Richard Hankin and Ada Brainsky, who were inspired by their experience planting native species at their home. Reflecting the Trust's commitment to ecological stewardship and community education, the garden serves as a living demonstration of how native plants can replace conventional turf, reduce chemical use, and create thriving wildlife habitat.

A second native garden, honoring the legacy of the Hankin family, is planned for the Henrietta Hankin Branch Library this fall.

Note: This was not a Green Team project.



What is a **BUCKET OF DOOM**?

Fun (in a macabre sort of way) and practical, too! Find out here:

<https://sidewalknature.com/2022/05/08/mosquito-bucket-of-doom>

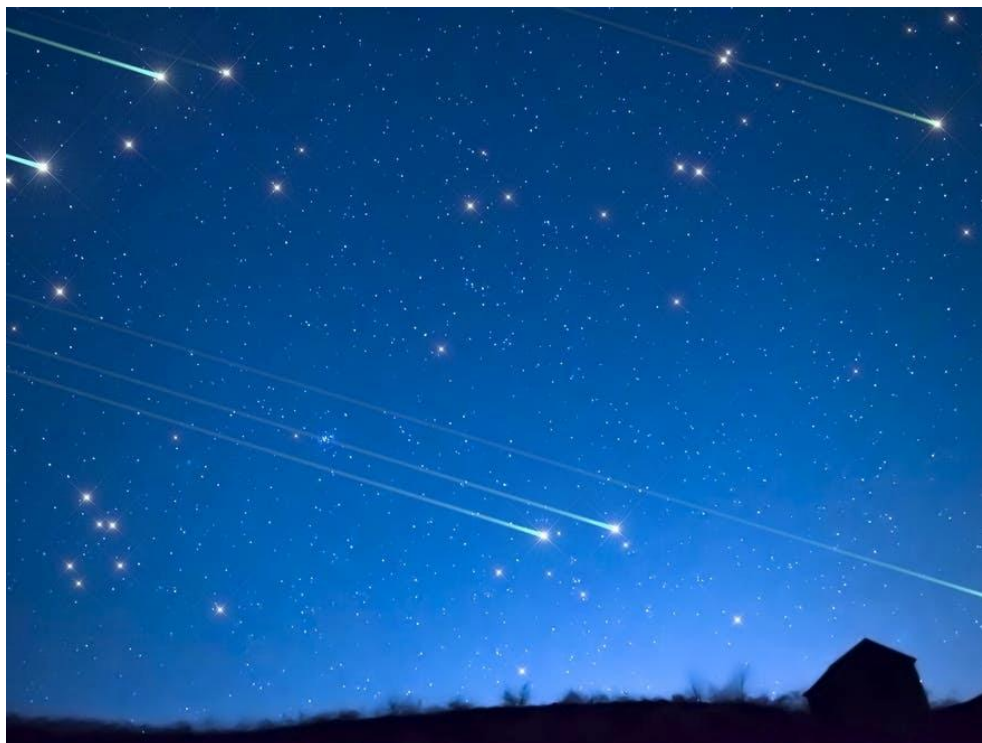
Don't worry, it's only doom for mosquitoes.

Skywatchers take note:

Perseids, Solar Eclipse Among August Skywatching Highlights For PA

From *West Chester Patch*, by [Kara Seymour](#), Patch Staff, Posted Fri, Jul 31, 2026

August is coming in hot with a full celestial calendar offering Pennsylvania skywatchers their best chances to see meteors this year and a couple of eclipses.



As long as the skies are clear, the Perseids meteor shower — the one people wait for all year — should put on a spectacular show during the Aug. 12-13 peak. There's a new moon at the same time, meaning skies will be completely dark for skywatchers who get away from city lights.

Earlier in the day on Aug. 12, a partial solar eclipse will be visible across a broad swath of the country, from Alaska into parts of the Midwest, Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

And later in the month, the next-best thing to a total lunar eclipse will turn the moon blood red.

To get all the details on these celestial events, read the entire article at:

<https://patch.com/pennsylvania/westchester/s/kkx1r/perseids-solar-eclipse-among-august-skywatching-highlights-for-pa>