

DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION

The Valley



Fall 2015

All DCVA Members and Friends

Please join us for the DCVA Annual Meeting

February 27, 2016

Community Recreation and Environmental Center, Havertown, PA

Time to be announced

Posters, Presentations, Conversation & Lunch provided



They're Off! DCVA Canoe Ramble, September 2015



President's Pen

By Jaclyn Rhoads, DCVA President

As we near the end of 2015, our annual meeting is a great way for members to learn about what DCVA has accomplished this past year in the watershed. Our annual meeting will take place in February at the Haverford Community Recreation and Environmental Center.

DCVA is lining up speakers including Joshua Barber, a representative from the Environmental Protection Agency, who is managing the clean-up of the Lower Darby Creek Area Superfund site. DCVA plays an important role in the clean-up by following all of the activities of the EPA and receiving funds from EPA as part of a Technical Assistance Grant. The grant pays for an independent consultant to review technical documents produced by EPA. Mr. Barber will talk about the next steps for the superfund site as they get closer to capping the landfill which will reduce the contamination of the Darby Creek as it flows through Eastwick and the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge.

Board members and volunteers of DCVA will display posters about other activities in the watershed including most notably our annual watershed clean-up. It is our banner event and pulls in hundreds of volunteers every year. We can always use more help, so please consider volunteering your time in April to help clean up the watershed. Lastly, our annual meeting is free to our members and includes lunch. Come out to network, learn about new ways to volunteer, and hear about our latest activities. We love to see members out at our events, and it provides us an opportunity to learn more about your interests and ways we can help you to get involved.



At left: Comcast file photo; Above: Photo by Ann Jackson

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nominations for the Board of Directors (the Board) ***Please review before the Annual Meeting February 27, 2016***

The Board appointed Nominating Committee consisting of Tim Denny, Clyde Hunt, Ann Jackson, Earl Wilson and Jaclyn Rhoads has conferred and is putting forth the following slate of candidates for the Board of Directors. Incumbent Board members who have agreed to serve if re-elected are:

Donna Adams	Tim Denny	John Furth	Gerry Krieg
Ann Jackson	Derron LaBrake	Toni McIntosh	Peter Puglionesi
Jaclyn Rhoads	TomRoy Smith		

Anyone interested in being on the Board must be a DCVA member and agree to serve. If interested please contact DCVA at president@dcva.org. Additional nominees for the Board may be made in writing to the secretary at the above address prior to or from the floor at the Annual Meeting (February 27, 2016). The Board may consist of 9-35 members. The Board, including the incumbent nominees listed above would consist of 27 members.

The Darby Creek Valley Association Board of Directors is pleased to report to the membership that they voted on November 21, 2015 to donate \$1000 to the Friends of the Heinz Refuge to help pay for buses to bring groups of school children to the refuge.

DCVA Members and Friends: Watch for the announcement of “How to Have a Creek Friendly Backyard Workshops” by Jamie Anderson

Please watch the DCVA website <http://dcva.org> or the Pennsylvania Resources Council website <http://prc.org/programs/conservation-workshops/watershed-rain-barrels> for the announcement of specific dates, times, and locations for two “How to Have a Creek Friendly Backyard” workshops. There will be 2 workshops in the Darby-Cobbs watershed this spring. The focus will be on general storm water information including rain gardens and how to build and use your recycled rain barrel. Workshops are not limited to a certain number of attendees, but the first 50 people who arrive will receive rain barrels. We hope to see you there!

Jamie Anderson is a DCVA Board member

Learn How to Start a Rain Garden Program in Your Town by Peter Puglionesi

Environmental Advisory Committees (EACs) and other interested local groups are welcome to learn how to develop their own rain garden programs by participating in the Haverford Township Hav-a-Rain Garden program. Under a grant discussed in the Summer 2015 Valley, the Haverford EAC started its Hav-a-Rain Garden program which helped install 10 residential rain gardens in 2015. While grant applications for formal classroom training and support for developing Rain Garden programs in other Townships are uncertain, Hav-a-Rain Garden is planning to install another 10 residential rain gardens each year until it meets its goal of 100 rain gardens built in Haverford in 10 years. All it takes to start your own local program is a few dedicated volunteers and some training. The best way to learn is by doing, so Hav-a-Rain Garden is inviting EACs or other local groups to join us and learn how it’s done. You will have access to their assessment and design tools and advice on starting a program in your town. Email havaraingarden@gmail.com with your name, phone and organization’s name and whether you are interested in just participating in a few “build” events or if you want to participate in the core team activities of assessing residential properties, designing gardens and building them.

Peter Puglionesi is a DCVA Board Member

A History of the Founding of the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

A Story that spans 35 Years

By Jean Diehl

Editor's Note: We are pleased to host guest columnist, Jean Diehl, former president of Concerned Area Residents for Preservation of Tinicum Marsh in this issue of *The Valley* and the next. Jean lived in Tinicum Township as a child, and tutored by her dad who hunted and fished in the marsh, used the marsh as her stomping ground. When she returned from the service she married and had a family. She learned about and became interested in the preservation of Tinicum Marsh at her daughter's Girl Scout meeting. CARP president Rhoda Gribbel introduced Mrs. Diehl to state environmental officials and involved her in all of CARP's infant activities. This article is Mrs. Diehl's personal account of the events that lead to the preservation of the marsh and the formation of the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge. Mrs. Diehl is active in The Friends of the Heinz Refuge and is the editor of *Marsh Musings*, their newsletter.

The Setting - The lands and waters that now comprise the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum are set in a highly industrialized corridor at the foot of the Darby Creek watershed. Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the refuge lands lie within the boundaries of the City of Philadelphia and are known today as the "refuge impoundment". The remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ of the refuge's acreage lie in Delaware County and contain the bulk of the refuge's tidal marshes. In the early 50's, the area was surrounded or impacted by an ever expanding international airport, three sewage treatment plants, a tank farm, a smoke belching, water polluting incinerator, high density residential development, and crisscrossed by several oil and gas pipelines. Then in the mid to late 60's two highly unsanitary landfills and international highway development were added to the mix. This was an unlikely spot in which to found a national wildlife refuge!



Lagoon Dredging FWS file photo

The Background - It was in the early 50's that developmental pressures began escalating, and resulted in the massive loss of Tinicum's wetlands. The US Army Corps of Engineers (**USACE**), as part of a river deepening project, was depositing millions of cubic yards of dredge spoils daily on the wetland corridor bordering the Delaware River. A Folcroft developer began executing his well-organized plan to fill and develop Delaware County's remaining marshes in Folcroft and Tinicum Township. This developer lived Folcroft Borough and had close connections to Delaware County's political power structure and members of the state legislature. His plan was simple. First, purchase all the Delaware County marshes which were being sold at tax sales for \$50 an acre; second, petition Folcroft Borough to rezone his newly acquired wetlands for light industry; third, have the Delaware County Planning Department



Stu Bowie points to fires on the Folcroft Landfill Photo by Rhoda Gribbel

A History of the Founding of the refuge continued...

and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) update their zoning and land use maps to reflect the zoning change granted by Folcroft Borough; and fourth, petition Folcroft Borough for a permit to begin a solid waste landfill on his wetland acreage. State permits that might have been required to construct a landfill in tidal waters did not exist and while the Corps of Engineers has permit authority over filling in navigable waters, they failed to require the developer to obtain one. If the developer had been required to apply for, and then been denied a landfill permit – There never would have been a Folcroft Landfill!

The developer did not stop there. He encouraged a PA state legislator to execute two more actions on his behalf, which would facilitate his plans for industrial development of Folcroft's marshes. First ACT 347 OF 1957 was introduced and approved. This legislation permitted the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund monies anywhere in the state of PA, EXCEPT DELAWARE COUNTY. This law is still on the books today.

Second, he asked the same state legislator to introduce another bill to authorize the construction of a cross marsh highway (from Folcroft to I-95) that would connect his existing and planned industrial parks, by land, air and sea, to the markets of the world while splitting the remaining wetlands in half.

Finally, in order to gain public acceptance for his landfill, he distributed flyers in the Tinicum Marsh communities that promised economic benefits from the landfill and industrial park construction. He promised there would be no more mosquitoes or rats, and that they would never have to pay taxes again.

A Major Controversy Regarding the Future of Tinicum Marsh Was Taking Form - It became clear that two opposing views for the future of Tinicum Marsh were emerging. One view called for filling the marsh, constructing highways through and around it, and developing the area. The second view – which ultimately won—called for preserving the marsh forever as a national wildlife refuge.

Chapter one of the story began in 1952 and took about 20 years primarily in the City of Philadelphia - The Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, led by **Alston Jenkins**, formed an organization called the "Tinicum Committee" (later the "Philadelphia Conservationists") and devised a plan by which they hoped they could save the Philadelphia portion of Tinicum's marshes. They negotiated with Gulf Oil and the City of Philadelphia, arranging for Gulf to donate 150 acres of wetland to the city, and for the city to manage it as a Wildlife Preserve. Then they negotiated with the USACE to donate 70 more acres to the city to be managed as part of the Wildlife Preserve known as "The Impoundment".

Over the next 20 years, the Conservationists continued their work. They constructed a visitor's building, paid the Preserve warden's (**Jim Carroll**) salary, built a visitor's contact station and brought a successful suit in federal court to halt the expansion of the Folcroft Landfill. Along with other organizations they lobbied PennDot to relocate the proposed bed of I-95 away from the bow of Darby Creek, promoted legislation to create a national wildlife refuge in Tinicum, and provided testimony against the construction of the "cross marsh highway" at several hearings held in Folcroft.



CARP Cavalcade- Canoe and walking tours of Tinicum Marsh brought the public to see the marsh which was otherwise not accessible. These tours developed a great deal of interest and support from the public.

Photo by Rhoda Gribbel

A History of the Founding of the Refuge Continued....

The Conservationists were successful in all their pro-Tinicum Marsh ventures, except their efforts to kill the bill which would have permitted construction of the cross marsh highway. In this, they were soundly rebuffed by Delaware County politicians who called them “carpetbaggers” and told them that since they didn’t live in the county, they couldn’t tell them what they should or shouldn’t do.

The final insult to Tinicum Marsh’s integrity was PennDot’s failure to select the most environmentally sensitive alternative for constructing I-95 through Tinicum Marsh that would have put I-95 on pilings and would have required minimal dredging and filling. Instead PennDot selected the worst alternative which was to construct the highway on a raised berm requiring massive amounts of dredging and filling that decimated over half of what remained of Tinicum Marsh.

At this point in time Department of Interior Secretary, Walter Hickel, was invited to view the area and hopefully broker a solution between the warring factions. He met with Delaware County politicians who assured him that they supported the highway construction with its attendant dredging and filling operations, as well as future industrial development of the area, and would not change their minds. Then Secretary Hickel met with preservationists and advised them that in light of the political atmosphere, if they wanted a chance to win they would have to form a grass roots organization.



*CARP presentations generated support for marsh preservation.
Photo by Jean Diehl*

Concerned Area Residents for the Preservation of Tinicum Marsh was formed - Responding to Secretary Hickel’s advice to form a new organization – Concerned Area Residents for the Preservation of Tinicum Marsh (**CARP**) was born, a grassroots group (initially) consisting primarily of Delaware County residents who lived in the communities immediately surrounding the marsh. The time had come to move the focus of the fight to save Tinicum Marsh to Delaware County. The Philadelphia Wildlife Preserve was not large enough to support the feeding and nesting requirements of the large number of migratory and resident wildlife that used the area. Making sure that the Delaware County marshes were saved was critical to meeting this need.

So, Began Chapter Two of the Fight to Save Tinicum Marsh - One of CARP’s first actions was to work with the Philadelphia Conservationists and other interested organizations to petition our congressional delegation to submit a bill to the U.S. Congress that would create a National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. **On June 30, 1972 Public Law 92-326 creating the Tinicum National Environmental Center (now called the Heinz Refuge) was signed into law by President Nixon.**

While this was a significant victory in one way, in another it was a hollow victory - The legislation passed with no appropriations and significant tracts of land and water had been cut from the bill before it passed. Besides that, the FWS was not wildly enthusiastic about this new refuge that was now their responsibility. This was a refuge on paper only, and the proposed refuge’s lands and waters were still subject to ongoing atrocities. Highway dredging and filling operations were still underway. Folcroft landfill was accepting hospital and industrial wastes, and was constantly on fire because it was using hot incinerator fly ash as ground cover. The Darby Creek Joint Sewer Plant was still spewing raw sewage into Darby Creek almost daily. The nearby incinerator was still causing air and thermal pollution. “Fly-by-night” dumpers were still making illegal deposits everywhere. Finally, PennDot still hadn’t made a decision about relocating the highway corridor.

Clearly, much remained to be done, and it was going to be largely up to CARP to find a way to do it because they were “grassroots” and not “carpetbaggers” - To address these problems successfully, CARP developed

A History of the Founding of the refuge continued....

non-political strategies to topple the wall created by public apathy, governmental neglect, and GREED. These strategies worked amazingly well, and as a result CARP's support base swelled in a few short years from a few diehard individuals to a veritable army of supporters that included hundreds of individuals, 4 youth groups, 30 civic groups, 11 environmental groups, 6 men's groups, 9 schools, 19 garden groups, 4 fraternal organizations, 10 political subdivisions, 1 senior group, 2 historic groups, 7 sports groups, 4 political groups, 7 birding organizations, 25 businesses, 7 foundations, 13 women's groups, 1 animal group, 2 corporations, 1 union, Delaware County, and individuals from 9 states and the Virgin Islands.

CARP's first strategy was to find ways to transform public apathy into public support - People generally relate well to something they can visualize. For the most part, Tinicum Marsh was inaccessible to the general public. CARP decided to bring the public (including politicians and the news media) to the marsh to let them see for themselves what was going on. CARP offered guided canoe tours and walks through the area. Everyone came away energized and ready to join the fight to save the marshes (and nobody ever fell in).

CARP borrowed a page out of the developer's notebook and stressed the (true and ongoing) economic value of Tinicum Marsh if it remained undeveloped. CARP researched economic factors in favor of marsh preservation, quantified them, and sought out certified experts who confirmed them. We worked up a slide show and got ourselves invited to other people's meetings, presented at malls, school assemblies, sportsmen's shows, garden shows and all sorts of fraternal, political, and women's organizations, church youth groups and more. At each of these venues we gathered signatures on petitions, accepted spontaneous donations, and gained new members.

Economic Arguments for Marsh Preservation included:

Better Water Quality: Marsh Plants remove up to 5.3 tons of chemicals per acre per day and exchange that for up to 6.2 tons of oxygen per acre per day.

Groundwater Recharge: An aquifer under Tinicum Marsh supplies well water to a sizable portion of Gloucester County NJ; if the land over the aquifer is kept open, water can continue to seep into it and feed those wells.

Flood Prevention: Wetland soils absorb rain and slowly releases it during times of drought. Studies have shown that each marsh acre absorbs up to 640,000 gallons of water.

Erosion Control: During storms, rainwater is channeled into storm drains and crashes downstream with enormous force. It tears soil from stream banks, uprooting trees and eroding stream bank properties. When this high velocity water reaches a marsh its force and erosion power is diminished.

Education and Recreation: Tinicum Marsh has everything. It is an outdoor classroom utilized by students from pre-school through university. It is a natural recreation area with trails and waterways for hiking, biking, canoeing, fishing, bird-watching, or just plain relaxing.

Food Chain Amelioration: At least half of the organic matter produced in marshes is transported downstream to the estuary and sea, forms the base of the food chain.

Noise Control: Spongy marsh soils deaden much of the noise from I-95 and the airport. CARP members have also noticed while on canoe trips that the high walls provided by stands of cattails and wild rice provide this same function.

Improved Mental Health: Studies have shown that passively recreating in open space helps relieve the stresses of highly structured urban life and for children, playing in the outdoors can reduce the effects of ADHD.

**TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT EDITION OF
*The Valley.....***



Update on the Clearview Landfill Clean-up

By Derron LaBrake

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (**USEPA**) presented portions of the 30% design for the Clearview Landfill (part of the Lower Darby Creek Area Superfund Site) on October 28, 2015 at the Technical Work Group's (**TWG**) monthly meeting. EPA is working on the significant design challenges caused by the very steep slopes along the side of the landfill along Darby Creek. EPA is proposing to cut back the slope in some areas and to stabilize the banks along Darby and Cobbs Creeks using a bio-engineering approach that includes some hardened surfaces (rip-rap) and soft edges (vegetation). This design is at the conceptual phase and EPA has a lot more work to do to bring the design to completion by March 2017. The significant design components that EPA is working on are:

- Clearing to install the cover (how much depends on the results of a soils investigation and how the clearing will be phased during construction, so that the whole landfill isn't disturbed all at once)
- Demolition of existing buildings (timing will depend on when various businesses are relocated)



- Grading (how the landfill and its edges will be blended into the surrounding landscape, and addressing all of the steep slopes)
- Landfill cover and trees for the evapotranspiration cover
- Access roads, signs, fencing, etc. (for post remediation management and maintenance)
- Leachate collection system and wetlands treatment system (size and location)
- Management of post-construction stormwater (to address any new impervious surfaces and the interim change in cover from forest to grass, until the new cover trees mature)
- Floodplain management (so that there are no adverse impacts to flooding)
- Wetlands (permits for disturbance and filling, and compensation so that there is no net loss of wetlands)
- Creek bank restoration and reinforcement (along the landfill and site as a whole)
- Erosion control (to prevent soil loss and sediment from entering the adjacent Creeks)
- Construction (phasing of work and temporary facilities)

The Technical Work Group meetings are open to the public and public participation in the meeting is encouraged. DCVA's Technical Advisory Group (**TAG**) will be reviewing EPA's 30% design in concert with the Eastwick Lower Darby Creek Area Community Advisory Group's (**CAG**) technical advisory group in the coming weeks and will be providing comments to EPA. The completion of a 30% design for the Clearview Landfill is a significant milestone and puts EPA well on the path to having a design that can be put out to bid for construction in the not too distant future.

Derron LaBrake (DCVA Board Member and CAG TWG Co-Chair), can be reached via email at 2ndvp@dcva.org

First Order Tributary of the Darby Creek

Photo by Kate Doms

EASTWICK IN ACTION

BY Earl Wilson

This "EASTWICK IN ACTION" article is a continuation of the same article that was written in the spring issue of *The Valley*. The spring article showed how the actively involved community members of Eastwick Friends and Neighbors (**EFNC**) and the Eastwick Action Committee (**EAC**) were involved in community and environmental issues. This article will be more specific because it will highlight areas where the members of EFNC and EAC have been fully engaged in communicating with the community and others with pertinent activities that will help move the community forward. Progress is very important in enhancing a community that will make its residents proud.

EFNC, among its many community involvements, has been working toward getting its 501c3 non-profit status. When this status is achieved, EFNC will be able to obtain charitable funds to help pay for its operating and ever-increasing budget. At one point, EFNC was offered a one-time contribution from the area's political ward leader. This contribution would allow for EFNC to pay for the financial phase of its 501c3. The only way that this was possible was to have another organization with the 501c3 status to act as a fiduciary on behalf of EFNC so that the contribution could be obtained. Thank you DCVA! The role that you played in this process has allowed EFNC to obtain this one-time contribution. This type of support is deeply appreciated and will not be forgotten. EFNC now has the financial foundation to complete its 501c3 objective, to continue its community outreach efforts and to be in position to obtain additional funding. This is a great example of how groups can support each other in an effort to improve our communities and the environment.

On October 8, 2015, **America's First Urban Refuge** was launched. The Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, led by its manager, Lamar Gore and the United States Fish and Wildlife Services, led by its director, Dan Ashe, sponsored a program at the Penrose Elementary School to launch the above initiative. The event was attended by dignitaries from the City of Philadelphia; community groups which included members from EFNC and EAC; residents from the community and the principal and two classes of students from the school. The central goal of the inauguration of this initiative was to connect the Wildlife Refuge to the City of Philadelphia to produce a partnership that will make it the only urban refuge in the country. To highlight the event, the students from Penrose Elementary released hundreds of Monarch Butterflies into the environment. A good time was had by all!

Residents from the Eastwick Community were invited to a community meeting to hear the proposals of three possible buyers/bidders on the George Washington Pepper School and the Communication/Technical School sites. This meeting was held on September 17, 2015. EFNC and EAC delivered nearly 3,000 flyers to the community to encourage residents to attend the meeting. The guest speaker of this public meeting was Councilman Kenyatta Johnson. He was very instrumental, along with Terry Williams, President of EFNC, in making sure that the event was conducted as planned. In the end the residents who lived in the 19153 zip were given the opportunity to take a "straw " vote on the proposals presented by: (1) The First Baptist Church, (2) Envista Urban Farming and (3) The Henderson Group. When the results of the "straw" vote were analyzed, more than 50% of the residents in the 19153 zip were not satisfied with the presentations that were made by the invited groups. That data was significant in that it caused the planners from EFNC and EAC to initiate a second round of specific questions, with the expectations that the presenters would respond to them as soon as possible. This is an on-going process, so please stay tuned for an up-date on these proposals as well as a more detailed description of the companies that will be making them. Philadelphia City planner, Martine DeCamp and the City Planning Commission, invited selected members from various

“Eastwick in Action” continued...

community organizations to the first 2035 city planning efforts for the Lower Southwest Philadelphia District, which includes Eastwick. EFNC and EAC participated in this activity, as well as the second meeting, which involved the general public.

This second meeting, much like the first, allowed for participants to evaluate (from a large map of the Lower Southwest Philadelphia District for each of the many groups that were assembled at the meeting) the entire area, including Eastwick. The attendees were asked to look at and identify the most troublesome and deficient areas on the map. In the end, they were also asked to identify the areas that had the most potential to improve the quality of life in the Lower Southwest Philadelphia District.

The information from these meetings will be assimilated and presented at the next meeting, which is scheduled for January.

DCVA 2016 Creek Wide Cleanup

By David Bennett

The 2016 annual cleanup event will take place on Saturday April 23rd rain or shine. This will be our 32nd year of continuous operation carried out entirely by our dedicated volunteers. Last year we had 650 folks who unselfishly helped clean litter and other debris from Darby Creek, Cobbs Creek, Naylor's Run, and other tributaries



2015 Clean up a Great Success!
Photo of Naylor's Run by Rachel and Mike Walker

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) is continuing to work with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the established work groups to complete the pre-design phase of the superfund site cleanup project. The work around the landfill is becoming more detailed but very interesting. This is the reason why the CAG is encouraging the public to attend these meetings and to get involved with the actual process of this cleanup project. The CAG monthly meetings are held every second Wednesday of each month.

This article has covered several areas of interesting activities that are evolving in the Eastwick area. Please be mindful of the update on these activities in the next issue of *The Valley*.

Earl Wilson is a DCVA Board member, a member of the Eastwick Community Action Committee, and the Eastwick Lower Darby Creek Area (ELDCA) CAG.



Photo by Rachel and Mike Walker

over 77 square miles at 40 sites in 31 municipalities in 4 counties throughout our watershed. Included in this effort is the annual John Heinz Wildlife Refuge cleanup which is usually held on a different day during a low tide in the tidal region when conditions are easier and safer.

I want to thank last year's and prior year's chairpersons Jan and John Haigis, as well as Anna Jackson, Barbarann Keffer, and Ed Silberstein for all their hard work.

This year, I, David Bennett, will be in charge of the event along with a newly formed committee that will be helping me. Most of our work begins in January and continues through the winter up to the day of the cleanup. Those tasks include: fundraising, publicity, arranging to acquire donated materials and supplies from

various sources such as PennDot and the Delaware County Conservation District, preparing and printing brochures, scouting and surveying old and new sites, gaining municipal, small business, and corporate sponsors, contacting past captains and recruiting new captains and volunteers.

I am looking forward to working with all of you and ask for your support. If anyone is interested in joining our Cleanup Committee, being a site captain, simply volunteering, or has any questions at all, please contact me at dster21@comcast.net or call 610-626-1344 and leave a message.

David Bennett is a DCVA Board member and Chair of the 2016 Darby Creek Cleanup

DCVA and Lansdowne Friends School Plant Native Shrubs and Plants

By Ann Jackson

On October 8, at Lansdowne Friends School (LFS) Jan Haigis and Ann Jackson helped John McKinstry, Head of School, students, teachers, and volunteers uproot invasive barberry bushes and other non-native plants so that native plants that attract pollinators and beneficial insects can be planted in the Spring 2016.

Prior to the “uprooting”, Dan Duran, a parent of an LFS student and Assistant Professor in the Department of Biodiversity, Earth, and Environmental Sciences at Drexel University presented “More than Green: How Insects and Native Plants make Ecosystems”. His information sparked the students’ curiosity, enthusiasm and insight.

This project is part of a DEP Environmental Grant awarded to LFS in partnership with Delaware County Conservation District and Darby Creek Valley Association. LFS’s goal is to plant native species on campus, develop a hands on learning experience for students and to educate the public on the importance of using native plants in landscaping. Lansdowne Friends School’s sustainability program.



Photo by Ann Jackson

John McKinstry stated, "Another goal is to improve the ecological value of this parcel of land in Lansdowne Borough".

Ann Jackson is a DCVA Board member.

OcTrolleyFest Celebrates Transportation Heritage and Community

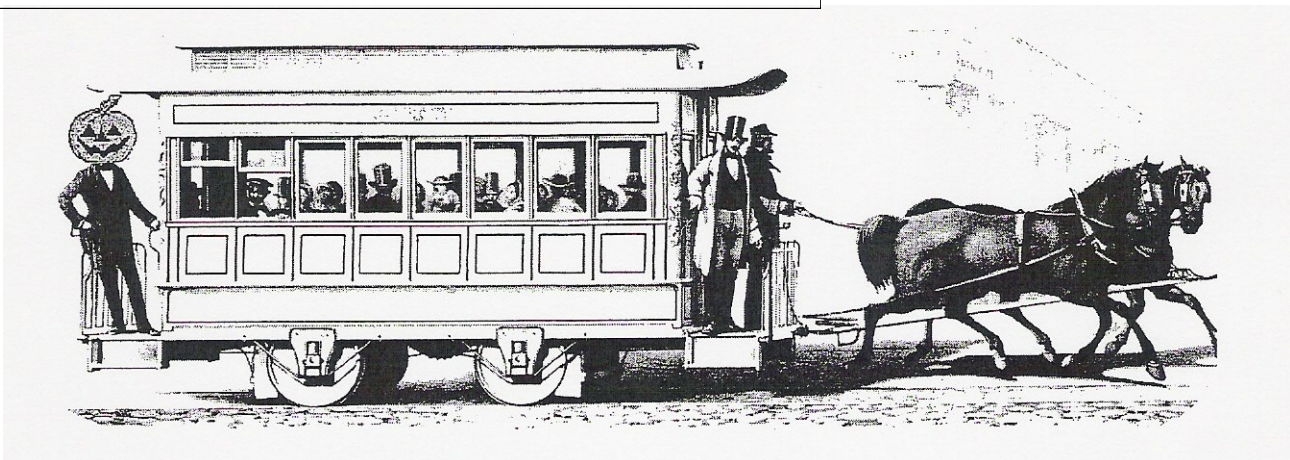
By Jan and John Haigis

The 11th annual edition of OcTrolleyFest, of which DCVA was again a sponsor, rolled through the region on Saturday, October 10, starting in Darby Borough. "Our light rail transit system is an asset to celebrate" said John Haigis who coordinated the event with his wife Jan. "Trolleys connect us all in a way that is green, electric, sustainable, and fun." One of the Trolley Tours that day was a Meet up Ride and Hike led by Jed McKee and Scott Maits to Eden Cemetery and then to the Swedish Cabin on Darby Creek. Another tour went to the Trolley Museum in Aldan, while kids at Darby Library made Scarecrows from recycled gallon milk jugs, had a Scarecrow Parade, listened to music, or took a tour of Darby History. Another OcTrolleyFest highlight was the Art Contest sponsored by Sharon Savings Bank. "We had students from 10 area elementary schools who participated this year," said Jan Haigis who coordinated the contest. "These are all fifth-graders and it was quite wonderful to see all the variations on the same theme and the different ways in which young people see their world. For example, one student drew a trolley advertising "Free donuts and Wi-Fi," while another had witches and goblins from the Monster Hotel on their way to an OcTrolley Feast." Winners and their families later celebrated at a reception at Sharon Savings Bank where the art work was on display. Pictures and more information can be found on the website, www.OcTrolleyFest.org and a video of the art contest can be found at <https://youtu.be/aZGk0UNJhvl>.



Photos by John Haigis. Above: Milk-jug scarecrow and artwork submitted by 5th graders at area schools for the Octrolleyfest art contest. At right: Jan Haigis is wearing Victorian garb in front of a picture of Edward Hicks "Peaceable Kingdom" painted by Ted Manchor "The lion shall lie down with the lamb."

The horse drawn trolley (With Mr. Pumpkin as conductor) was taken from an 1880 advertisement.



Stream-Watch a Huge Success: The Insect identification Workshop is coming up fast

Alan Samel

Put it on your calendars! Put it on your refrigerator door! The DCVA Annual Insect Identification Workshop will be held Saturday January 16 at the Environmental Center at the Haverford Reserve from 8:30 to 4:00. We have been doing this for over 10 years; more than 10 years of water quality monitoring!

The annual Stream Watch was April 18. Thanks to the small army of volunteers who helped make this a great day. It was a beautiful day to get wet! Samples were taken from five locations on Darby Creek: Bartram Park in Darby, Darby Creek Road in Havertown (downstream from the Haverford Reserve), Skunk Hollow in Radnor, the Brandywine Preserve at Waterloo Mills in Easttown, and the Swedish



Cabin in Upper Darby.

The insects and bugs we collected will provide a snapshot of the health of Darby Creek. From this long-term sampling program, a trend of the stream health at each site has been determined. Each year we compare our findings from the water quality determinations from the previous years. It's a way of getting the big picture from a lot of very small bugs! But getting into the stream and collecting the bugs is only part of the Streamwatch program.

The next step will be to identify the bugs from the stream and identify the level of water



quality for that section of Darby Creek. The purpose of the Insect Identification Workshop will be to identify the aquatic organisms taken in samples during the April 18 Stream Watch and assign them a water quality value. From these values, we can calculate and determine the water quality of each site; very good, good, marginal, fair, or poor. The 2014 samples showed a rebound in water quality at all sites compared to 2013. Now we get to see if the trend upward continues. We need your help!

This is not anywhere near as hard as it sounds. Yes, we use microscopes. Yes, the bugs are small. And yes, there is mud and twigs and leaves. But NO, it is not difficult. Heck, last year teenagers processed over half the samples collected! Yes, teenagers. You know, almost adults with no attention span. Those teenagers! And they did a great job. This is the eighth year for this workshop, so we are getting pretty good at it. But we need your help and participation to make this work even better. If you are interested, please contact me at alan.samel@verizon.net.

Did I mention that lunch is included.....I'll try anything!

Alan Samel is a former president of DCVA and First Vice President of DCVA



All photos on this page by Alan Samel

CRICKER'S CORNER

Valley Beautiful: "Silvery Hem"

By Tom Smith

All DCVA *Valley* readers, at some time in their lives, experienced their first look upon the silvery currents of the Darby Creek. My own first look on the creek was riveting! In a real way the memory sustains me.

My first years in Drexel Hill were wonderfully lived on the township's last residential street in that our property was bordered by a grand part of Darby Creek proper. Throughout my youth I styled the steep stream valley as being "back of my backyard." When I looked down upon it, it signaled adventure, and wide-eyed discovery.

I perfectly recall my first solitary vision of Darby Creek Valley. As a small child I remember mounting an earthen wall at the far end of our garden. A few steps later I was atop the wall, and I first saw Darby Creek Valley. Both valley sides were thick forested, the creek strode by below. I recall the sun was over the Springfield bank on the west side. Hence the sun rays slanted east toward me, the beams divided and spilling between the trees. The sun rays formed silvery patches on the water. My eyes popped, it was joy a-sudden, and my heart skipped a beat. Now, many years later in 2015, my knees yet buckle, and my oldster heart still skips a beat when I think of that first wonderful day on the creek and all of the days that followed.

That, however, was not my first attempt to get to the creek. As an early walker, I was an escape artist. I astoundingly scrambled up the nearside of the fence with ease, but coming back down on the creek side of the fence was not so easy-- I found myself upside down strung up by my suspenders, in an inglorious attempt to make my escape. A neighbor alerted my mother, "Mrs. Smith! Again!!! Tommy is hanging upside down!"

Instructions for the gentle reader follow: I ask readers to close eyes, and visualize. See what I first saw:

I saw a valley, brilliant green, divided by a silvery hem.

Now Blink! I know you have seen that too, and remember it. Be sure to revisit often. I revisit often, although only in revelry; I can still see the "silvery hem."

Tom Smith is a DCVA Board member

To Residents of the Cobbs Creek watershed and other DCVA members and friends:

You may be interested to learn about the 18 green infrastructure initiatives being carried out by the Philadelphia Water Department and Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation at this website:

http://www.phillywatersheds.org/what_were_doing/green_infrastructure/cobbscreek



The Need to Promote Healthy Darby Creek Watershed

By Carl DuPoldt

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), healthy intact watersheds provide many ecosystem services that are necessary for our social and economic well-being. These services include water filtration and storage, air filtration, carbon storage, nutrient cycling, soil formation, recreation, food and timber. Many of these services have not been monetized and therefore the economic contributions of healthy intact ecosystems are often under-valued when making land use decisions. Ecosystem services provided by healthy watersheds are difficult to replace and most often very expensive to engineer. An engineered ecosystem service replacement may only provide a fraction of the services provided by highly functioning natural systems.

Preventing impairments in healthy watersheds protects valuable ecosystem services that provide economic benefits to society and prevent expensive replacement and restoration costs. Maintaining riparian connectivity and natural processes in the landscape provide a supporting network for ecological integrity, ensuring the sustainable and cost effective provision of clean water over time. Some healthy watershed practices include:

- reforesting along wetlands, drainage basins and river corridors to reduce soil erosion, increase rainwater absorption and extend bird and animal habitat.
- increasing roadside tree cover to increase shade for human travel and safe passage for birds, and other animals.
- educational programs for local schools, communities, businesses and concerned citizens to understand how they benefit from ecosystem health and how they can both participate in and advance strategies.
- coordination among local, regional, and state organizations and layers of government to develop policies and best practices to protect and improve ecosystem services.
- promote watershed connectivity through the implementation of riparian forest buffers throughout the entire Darby Creek Watershed.

There are ways that DCVA members and the public at large can make these things happen. Changing gardening and lawn care practices, being active in tree

planting and rain garden construction, and participation in or communication with local government are ways that we can all help.

Carl DuPoldt is a DCVA board member

Kids and Creeks

By Kate Doms

Ann Jackson from DCVA, Jamie Anderson from DCVA and the Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative, and Kate Doms from DCVA and some students from Ursinus College accompanied a group of homeschoolers to Ridley Creek in Ridley Creek State Park to instruct the children about how to conduct an "IBI". An IBI is an index of biotic integrity- a study of the stream insects and other invertebrates to measure water quality. It is much the same as what is done in the DCVA Streamwatch, only slightly less complex for the children. By asking the children questions we discovered they were already very knowledgeable about the technique, as well as erosion and other stream issues. We worked with this group at Merry Place in Havertown, PA in the past. It was nice to see some of the children from previous trips had grown so much. We look forward to working with this group of enthusiastic students again.

Kate Doms is a DCVA Board member



Above: Kate Doms, Zach Trauger, Maddi Franklin and Tucker Noel, all of Ursinus College ; Below: 4th-8th graders in the homeschool group



Photos by Ann Jackson

Paddle for Preservation Canoe Ramble: *Congratulations to all of the Paddlers*

By Ann Jackson

On September 19, 2015 DCVA held its annual Paddle for Preservation-Canoe Ramble at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge (**JHNWR**). Jaclyn Rhoads and Nora Schmidt led the paddlers, including the energetic Dick Carroll and John Furth, down Darby Creek from the boat ramp at the Cusano Center to the dock at Morton Morton House in Norwood and back again. Quite a feat! Canoeists enjoyed the adventure and scenic beauty of Darby Creek.

Rocco Mastrocolo and David Bennett hauled, steadied, and launched canoe, after canoe, after canoe.....Their hard work made the whole event pure pleasure! Congratulations to Rocco, a tide expert, who accurately predicted the rate of fall in the creek depth and increase in the exposed muck as the tide went out at the Morton Morton House dock.

Thanks to Jaclyn, Wilderness Canoe, and JHNWR for another successful Ramble. It is an event that showcases the beauty of Darby Creek and the need to preserve this natural resource.



DCVA Treasurer Dick Carroll enjoying the DCVA canoe ramble Sept 2015 ; Photo by Ann Jackson

Ann Jackson is a DCVA Board member

Printing the *Valley* is quite costly and uses a lot of paper. Email Kate Doms, Editor of *The Valley* at kgoddard@ursinus.edu if we can send you the *Valley* by email only. Thank you.

JOIN THE DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION TODAY!

The Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA) is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of all of the watershed's resources, including water, wildlife, historical sites, and the floodplains. The organizations immediate goals are to prevent all forms of pollution in the Darby Creek and its tributaries, to prohibit dumping and construction on the floodplain and to expand our educational programs for all residents within the watershed. It Also seeks to improve water quality and maintain a debris-free stream through clean-ups and public education. DCVA works to preserve historic properties, such as the Swedish Cabin and the Blue Bell Inn. The Association would like to set aside the more than 30 miles of valley for use as a greenway for all residents to enjoy. We need your support. Help us continue to protect the environment for ourselves and our children.

We invite you to fill in the form below, check member category, and mail form with your check to:

The Darby Creek Valley Association, PO Box 732, Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Individual member.....\$25 Family member.....\$35 Corporate or Municipality.....\$50

Senior Citizen or Student.....\$10 Non-Profit Group.....\$35 Life Member\$250

DCVA is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization– All Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

CALENDAR

Insect Identification Workshop.....January 16, 2016 Community
Recreation and Environmental Center, Haverford, PA

DCVA Annual Meeting.....February 27, 2016 Community
Recreation and Environmental Center, Havertown, PA

DCVA Board MeetingsSaturday of each month Delaware
County Peace Center

2016 Darby Creek Clean-UpApril 23, 2016 throughout the watershed

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