

***Darby  
Creek  
Valley  
Association***

The  
**Valley**



**January 2017**

*Please join us for the*

**DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING**

**Speakers, Posters, Great Conversation, and Lunch**

**Learn about the State of the Watershed and How You can Participate**

**FEBRUARY 18, 2017**

**Haverford Community Environmental and Recreation Center**

**9000 Parkview Drive Haverford, PA**

**See the DCVA website for times and details [www.dcva.org](http://www.dcva.org)**

*President's Pen*

**A New Year with Many New Activities**

Happy New Year to our members and friends. DCVA has a busy year in front of us. Besides our regular array of activities such as insect identification, annual meeting, stream watch, and clean-up, board members are working hard to find an administrative and project management assistant and implement a few grants the organization received in 2016.

DCVA is participating in the planning phase for round 2 of the William Penn Foundation's Delaware River Watershed Initiative. This initiative seeks to improve water quality on stream reaches within the Delaware River Basin. More specifically, DCVA is partnering to improve the stretches that are part of the Cobbs Creek. These efforts include helping to install rain gardens, educate homeowners and work with municipalities.

To further advance this work, DCVA applied and received two National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grants. One of the grants is part of a collaboration with partners to develop a Stream Smart House Calls program to work with homeowners to improve storm water collection and reduce pollutant loading into streams.

Continued on next page...



*President's Pen continued...*

The second grant entails working with a municipality to install rain gardens along right-of-ways, roads, and on municipal grounds. Altogether, we are working with residential, business, and municipal land owners to improve the watershed.

With all of this work, we continue to help on other projects as needed. If you are interested in learning more about projects and meet our board members and fellow DCVA members, join us for our annual meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>. More details about the meeting can be found in this edition of our newsletter. I look forward to seeing you then!

---

## **An Appreciation**

### **Anne Ackerman, Well Known and Little Known**

**By Tom Roy Smith**

In an era when fathers really only expected a daughter to marry after high school graduation, Anne Gilbert Ackerman, who admired her father, was inspired by him to go out and be a shaker in what was still man's world. Mr. Richard Gilbert was an Upper Darby civic presence. My take on his role in the community is that he was more a respected opinion holder than an open forum speaker. Action over words, he was a shaper of future men and woman. The highest Boy Scout Award, rarely presented, is the Silver Beaver. Anne and Elizabeth's father was awarded the Silver Beaver for thirty years of keenest devotion to Valley Forge District Scouting. Anne and her sisters followed their father into scouting, I am not certain if they were Girl Scouts or Campfire Girls; I slip in memory. What I do know is that in the Second World War, the girls were given use of the Swedish Cabin and that Anne is pictured with a group of girls in front of the cabin in a photo taken in the early 1940s. This introduced Anne to the cabin.

Anne was an honor graduate in the class of 1953 at Upper Darby High School. She went on to graduate from William and Mary College in 1957, a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and carried out further graduate studies at Oxford University and American University. Anne devoted her teaching career to teaching history at Haverford High School where she also served as department chair.

Anne was excited from the initial planning for the first Earth Day. Long before she became involved in the Darby Creek Valley Association, Anne made sure to involve her students in Earth Day. Anne was particularly proud of one young girl who was full of leadership promise, an ardent participant of the first Earth Day produced by Anne. The death of this bright young woman made Anne work even harder to celebrate Earth Day in her honor. Anne held the torch higher and only fragility that came with age caused her to put it down.

We remember Anne as a very very important member of the Darby Creek Valley Association. She was the among the founders of DCVA, and a principle force behind the Darby Creek Watershed River Conservation Plan that was completed for DCVA in 2005 by Cahill Associates Environmental Engineers and Planners. River conservation plans are documents that record the ecological state of a watershed and recommend plans for the future; they are incredibly important studies for any watershed. She also played many roles other roles in the Darby Creek Valley Association-- contributing strongly to its success throughout many years.

Anne was also a co-founder of Haverford Township Day, a member of the Haverford Township Civic Council, and helped to save the historic Grange Estate. Anne was really a person who got things done! We are grateful for her contribution, and that we had the opportunity to know her.

Thank you for listening.

*Tom Roy Smith*

## IMPORTANT

### *Please review before the Annual Meeting*

### ***Nominations for the Board of Directors (the Board)***

The Board appointed Nominating Committee consisting of Jamie Anderson, David Bennett, Clyde Hunt, Jaclyn Rhoads, and Ann Jackson, has conferred. No names for new Board members have been submitted for nomination to the Board. DCVA Members may submit names of potential nominees to [president@dcva.org](mailto:president@dcva.org). New Board candidates must be a DCVA member or a non-member who will join DCVA before the Annual Meeting, become active participants in DCVA activities/projects, and agree to serve. If interested please contact DCVA at [president@dcva.org](mailto:president@dcva.org). Additional nominees for the Board may be made in writing to the secretary at the above address prior to the Annual Meeting or from the floor at the Annual Meeting on February 18, 2017. The Nominating Committee puts forth the names of the following Incumbent Board members who have agreed to serve (3 year term-2020) if re-elected:

Richard Carroll   Carl DuPoldt   Barbarann Keffer   Kate Goddard   Rich Horwitz   Clyde Hunt   Earl Wilson

The Board may consist of 9-35 members. Currently there are 28 Board members, including the above listed incumbents.

---

## **Invasive plants**

### **By Carl Dupoldt**

Invasive plants are plants which displace other plants in the community. They can do this because they are introduced by people either accidentally or on purpose, into a region far from their native habitat. Invasive plants are often referred to as "exotic," "alien," "introduced" or "non-native" species. In their natural range, these species are limited by environmental, pest or disease conditions, keeping these species in balance within their ecosystem. When introduced into an area where these limitations are absent, some species have the ability to become invasive. Native plants are a problem in southeastern Pennsylvania and many other parts of the world. Some riparian (streambank) zone plants that are invasive in Pennsylvania are pictured at right and/or listed here:

Common Reed      Garlic Mustard      Japanese Knotweed  
Japanese Stilt Grass      Lesser Celandine      English Ivy  
Purple Loosestrife      Reed Canary Grass  
Spotted Knapweed      Thistle – Canada and Bull  
Japanese Honeysuckle      Japanese Hops

See Link - <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/invasiveplants/index.htm>

Pennsylvania Field Guide Common Invasive Plants in Riparian Areas – see link - <https://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/watermgt/wc/subjects/streamreleaf/Docs/Invasive%20Plants.pdf>



Garlic mustard (above) <http://www.unh.edu>

purple loosestrife (below)

<http://refugeassociation.org>



# DCVA Wins NFWF Grant for Naylor's Micro-Watershed/Darby Road Median Rain Gardens By Peter S. Puglionesi

Darby Creek Valley Association was awarded a \$99,500 grant by the National Fish and Wildlife Federation and William Penn Foundation. This Delaware River Restoration Fund project will build highly visible Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) in an urban and suburban landscape within the Naylor's Run Watershed in Delaware County. The rain gardens and GSI will collect, treat, detain, and recharge stormwater runoff from impervious areas which will reduce peak flow and pollutant load to the upper reaches of Naylor's Run.

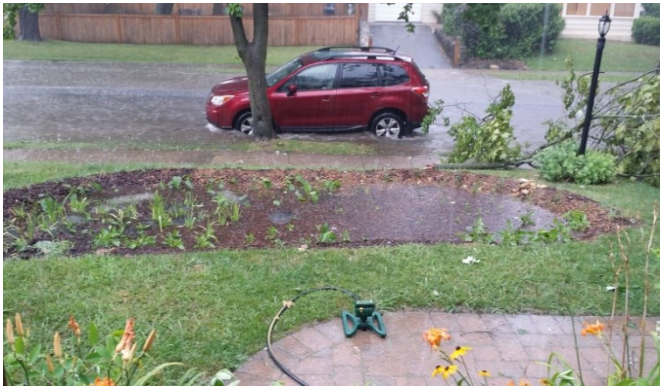
DCVA's partners include Haverford Township and the Hav-a-Rain Garden program, a collaboration of the Environmental Advisory Committee and the Haverford Township Civic Council, a local non-profit umbrella organization. The partners' rolls include:

Haverford Township will provide a match of at least \$56,000 in the form of expenditures and in-kind services for design and construction of the concrete curb inlet for the rain gardens on medians of Darby Road, a major 4 lane divided thoroughfare.

The Hav-a-Rain Garden program will assess locations and design and install 10 rain gardens totaling 4000 square feet on either residential, commercial or local school properties in the micro-watershed. It will contribute a match of 1000 volunteer hours or more valued at \$22,000.

## What is a Rain Garden?

Rain gardens are beautiful landscaped areas built down, instead of up, intercepting runoff from buildings, driveways and other impervious surfaces before it can reach the storm sewers and streams. Small gardens are typically 6-12 inches deep and drain within a day or two after a rain. Plants are typically both water and drought tolerant, meaning little or no watering is required after they are established.



Bring on the Rain! This garden built in spring 2016 near the headwater of Naylor's Run is doing its job with room to spare while Prescott Road is underwater during a July 18 deluge.

## Business, School and Homeowner Partners Sought

Businesses, homeowners and schools are encouraged to request a rain garden or collaborate with DCVA on integrating rain gardens into the STEM curriculum. This project is focused in the Naylor's watershed area but DCVA or Hav-a-Rain Garden can provide technical assistance for those outside this area.

**Ask for a Rain Garden:** Small businesses or homeowners in the Naylor's microwatershed in Haverford who want a rain garden can contact [havaraingarden@gmail.com](mailto:havaraingarden@gmail.com) and note that they are in the Naylor's watershed. More information can be found at [www.facebook.com/HaverfordRainGardens](http://www.facebook.com/HaverfordRainGardens).

**Adopt a Rain Garden:** Businesses can "Adopt a Rain Garden" by maintaining a public garden, build one on their property, become Hav-a-Rain Garden sponsors or contribute to DCVA. Email us to learn more about becoming a sponsor.

**Start a Rain Garden Program in Your Township:** Hav-a-Rain Garden has already built over 20 rain gardens and has an objective of building 100 in 10 years at no cost to the homeowners. For advice starting a program in your town contact [havaraingarden@gmail.com](mailto:havaraingarden@gmail.com).

*Continued from previous page...*

**Landscapers, Landscape Designers, and Builders:** The best way to learn is by doing. Hav-a-Rain Garden invites landscapers, landscape designers and builders to come out and join us to learn what its all about.

**Interns:** College students and High School seniors seeking internships can help in a wide variety of ways, ranging from creating web-based design libraries to outreach to assisting in managing the program.

**Schools:** Integrate practical application of environmental science, math, geology and biology through teaching about, designing, building and maintaining rain gardens right in your own backyard.

## Take Your Opportunity to Help!



Expanded Triple Wide Driveway with 90% of Runoff Going to Street and Sewer

Every day new landscaped areas are built “up” instead of “down”, driveways and impervious areas are built or expanded and new homes and driveways are built creating more runoff and contributing to stream pollution and flooding. Take the opportunity and improve our watershed – instead of degrade it.

---

## East Coast Greenway Implementation Phase I

**By Carl Dupoldt**

*Delaware County is researching potential management strategies for the East Coast Greenway.*

The East Coast Greenway is a primarily off-road multi-use trail system that will run from Maine to Florida. Delaware County is fortunate to have a designated segment of the trail proposed to run along the Delaware River coastline through Tinicum, Ridley, Eddystone, Chester, Trainer, and Marcus Hook.

The County was recently awarded a \$40,000 Coastal Zone Management Program grant from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to work with area municipalities and stakeholders to identify potential construction and maintenance costs, as well as to identify possible trail management structures to ensure consistency in quality across the six municipalities.

The project will involve research into costs for trail development, management, and maintenance. Research will also include review of other trail development and management structures for multi-municipal trails throughout the region, state, and country. The project build upon efforts on the part of state and regional organizations, such as the East Coast Greenway Alliance, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, DVRPC, and DCNR, all of which have either undertaken efforts to either identify models for trail installation and management, or have direct experience in trail development.

Questions about the East Coast Greenway Implementation Plan? Contact the Planning Department at 610-891-5200 or <http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/planning/currentprojects/EastCoastGreenwayImplementationPhaseI.html>

---

# In the light of lime, it's time to get plastered

By John Haigis

The Darby Creek Valley has a number of historic sites and treasures. Many of our historic buildings were made with lime based mortar and lime based plaster and the ability of that material to "breathe" is one of the reasons those buildings have survived for so long. After the Second World War and promotion of harder and quicker-setting Portland cements, lime skills have been neglected....but are now being rediscovered and passed on to new generations.

From the time humankind left their caves and built wattle and daub huts for shelter, we have used lime mortar to build and lime plaster to insulate, decorate, and protect ourselves from fire. Lime is found in deposits of limestone, chalk, or shells and is pulverized, heated to 890 degrees Celsius (1634 degrees Fahrenheit) in a lime kiln to make quicklime which creates a chemical reaction when combined with water. Lime can also be used to create bright lights as was done in 19th century theaters who lit the stage with "limelights." lime is a rock that some say remembers it was a rock and wants to go back to being a rock. It gets stronger over time.

According to "The Stone Mason's Gospel" by Ian Cramb (2011), lime has been used in building since 4000 BC. and was brought to a high degree of sophistication in Roman times including a "rediscovery" of an ancient type of insulating plaster using cork, hydraulic lime, diatomaceous earth and clay called Diathonite soon to be available in our area.

The main difference between the materials of the past and today's concrete based material (like sheetrock) is the ability of the material to breathe, Water is the universal solvent. For proof, just look at the steep slopes of the Darby Creek Valley: moisture dissolves almost everything and can destroy any building. Hard Portland type cements trap moisture and in the freeze/thaw cycle can act as little stone chisels, damaging the building. Lime based materials in contrast take in moisture and then evaporate that moisture in a natural cycle. Lime mortars can adjust to seasonal and structural fluctuations without causing damage to the building. It's almost as if the mortar can heal itself.

In addition, to aesthetic benefits, (Sheetrock cannot "flow" around curves) lime mortars require less energy to produce, sequester more carbon in the curing process, and are more environmentally sustainable than cement-based mortars

Lime based mortars and plaster do take more time to fully cure but that can and should be dealt with in the work schedule. Slaked lime (lime putty) is sometimes allowed to cure for months or years before it is used. Good things take time. There is a need and opportunity to train people in time honored crafts and rediscover what we once knew. Virtually every building constructed before 1939 contains lime based plaster. Today's current "gut and sheet rock" ethos is wasteful, often unnecessary, expensive, and creates a less attractive and sustainable result. There are sustainable alternatives as we rediscover the things we once knew and learn more about "Healing History."

For more information visit [www.limeworks.us](http://www.limeworks.us) or [www.AcademyofBuildingConservation.org](http://www.AcademyofBuildingConservation.org) or [www.limeworks.us](http://www.limeworks.us)



## Another Successful Insect Identification Workshop!

By

Alan Samel

We had our annual Insect Identification Workshop January 21, 2016 at the Haverford Reserve. The environmental lab is a great place for us to set up and take a look at the samples we took from stream the past year on April 16, 2016. We also had lunch supplied by DCVA, too! Beautiful!! Many thanks to the folks who came out and made the Workshop a success. You broke the record for the number of participants: over 20!

The annual Stream Watch was April 16. We took 10 samples, 2 from each site. Thanks to the small army of volunteers who helped make this a great day. It was a beautiful day to get wet! It was sunny and about 55°F. 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 collect provide a snapshot of the health of Darby Creek. We have been conducting these sample collections and identifications for almost 15 years. From this long-term sampling, 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 was to identify the bugs pulled from the stream. We then identify the level of water quality for that section of the creek. The purpose of the workshop is to identify the aquatic organisms taken in samples during the Stream Watch. The results provide an assessment of the water quality of Darby Creek at each site during that period of time will be assessed based on the organisms present during sampling. The 2015 samples showed decreases in water quality at all locations. While one year does not point to a problem, we will monitor this closely. The next stream watch is scheduled for this coming April 15<sup>th</sup>.

This insect identification workshop 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, this year we had kids process samples collected! So much energy; it was great. And they did a great job.

This was the 12<sup>th</sup> year for this workshop, so we have gotten pretty good at it. If you are interested in the stream watch and insect identification workshop, please contact me at [alan.samel@verizon.net](mailto:alan.samel@verizon.net).



Rich Horowitz (top left), Joyce DeYoung (top right), and Bob and Mary Ellen Scott (at right) Sorting invertebrates

## **There is Life even in Dead Trees**

### **By Clyde Hunt**

So you say that's a dead tree!?! Most trees are not completely dead! Some are just more dead than alive. Before you get rid of deadwood, LOOK FOR LIFE - EVEN IN DEAD TREES!

The value of any tree should be evaluated by a series of factors, i.e.

- Is it a rare species?
- Is it occupying a particularly special place?
- Can we find an endangered species living in/on this tree?
- Does the tree pose a danger to its neighbors? Other trees? Buildings? People?
- Could this tree be nursed back to health?

If a weed tree satisfies any of these reasons for keeping a tree in place, it might be retained in the forest stand or the landscape. If this tree species is favored by a special bird species or cute flying squirrels would you protect that tree species?

Woodpeckers seek out borers, large ants or termites. Some of these trees have fungal weakened wood which yields an easy nesting chamber when hollowed out. You wouldn't want to become a home wrecker would you? Plant a cut limb in a post hole if you don't have a dead tree close by for woodpeckers to feed on. They'll love working over the bark for bugs or suet.

Microscopic fungi cover the entire healthy root system, including root hairs. If we retain the root systems of dead trees, young seedlings can grow quickly through the root masses to speedily occupy the soil mass and take over the site. Such fungal mycorrhizae are found in all types of organic soils. They need live tissue to support their growth. They help the root hairs absorb additional soil moisture.

Nematodes are tiny tubular "worms" you can barely see through. They feed on and tunnel through most any group of cells in living (and dead) trees. With bright lights they crawl out of the sample through fine screens and drop into water to be further studied under a microscope.

Suppose you have the last Native American Chestnut tree in your watershed. The roots keep sending up new shoots. Can we keep the top of this chestnut from dying? Would anyone complain if this tree just won't die! It might be resistant. If we keep this tree alive until we can grow a whole stand of chestnuts, we can claim to have saved our chestnuts! The end result for many people might not be just a forest of chestnut trees but a source of the nuts themselves. That's why we lost our chestnuts in the first place. The European chestnuts brought in the chestnut blight spores (and killer disease). They infected our native trees. The European nuts were larger, not sweeter. Might we be satisfied with smaller fruit? Would that be okay? We still might then have our chestnut forests. If branches drop off, they can still cause damage to surroundings, to younger trees, hikers on trails through the woods, buildings, other targets, etc. Sapsuckers on (maples, birch and hickories) make wounds on healthy trees that attract flies into the spring sap. These birds not only drink the fresh sap but, feast on the early spring flies caught in the sap.

---

## **Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Update**

**By Derron LaBrake**

As many know DCVA has received a number of grants over the past 10+ years to assist the Eastwick Community with understanding what EPA is doing at the Lower Darby Creek Area Superfund Site. Just before Thanksgiving EPA provided a copy of the 60% design for the Clearview Landfill Operable Unit to the Eastwick Lower Darby Creek Area – Community Advisory Group (ELDCA-CAG) for review and comment. ELDCACAG provided a copy to DCVA and we passed it over to our contractor EnviroAce, Inc. for review and comment.

EnviorAce did their usual excellent work and identified a number of technical issues that warrant comment from the TAG. DCVA's TAG committee will be forwarding comments to ELDCACAG's Leadership Team so that they can address



those concerns with EPA, as EPA works toward a 90% design (due to be completed near the end of March 2017). The skills DCVA can tap at EnviroAce are excellent; however, they cannot cover the depth of this complex project. DCVA was instrumental though our involvement with the ELDCA-CAG in identifying and assisting the community in securing additional technical assistance through EPA's Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) for the areas that are outside of the expertise of EnviroAce.

During the week of January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 the TASC contractor (SKEO) visited the site and brought their geotechnical expert, who has reviewed the 60% design and provided some excellent comments to the Leadership Team, which they will be passing on to EPA. DCVA continues, as an organization, to help the Eastwick Community gain a more thorough understanding of what EPA is planning to do to address the cleanup of the Superfund Site that is quite literally in their back yard.

---

DCVA Board Member Derron LaBrake, who was appointed by the ELDCACAG to be Co-Chair of the Technical Work Group continues to provide technical assistance to the community by bring his wealth of experience from working on nearly two dozen different Superfund Sites in the region. The Technical Work Group generally meets on the third Wednesday to dive quite a bit deeper into the many technical aspects of this project. If anyone is interested in attending those meetings, which are open to the public, more information is available at [www.eldcacag.org](http://www.eldcacag.org) or by contacting Derron LaBrake at [2ndvp@dcva.org](mailto:2ndvp@dcva.org).



From left to right: Kaitlyn Mansterski, Jasmine Sadat, Loida Hopkins, Joseph Small, Brittany Salen, Russell Zerbo, Earl Wilson

## **Annual Darby Creek/Cobbs Creek Cleanup, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**By David Bennett**

Our annual Watershed Wide Cleanup event in 2017 will take place on April 29<sup>th</sup>. It will take place at approximately 30 sites spread over the entire watershed including Darby Creek, Cobbs Creek, Naylor's Run, Muckinpatis Creek, Ithan Creek and the various small streams that feed these named creeks. The event will begin at 9:00 AM and continue until 12 noon. As in the past we will be working in 31 municipalities that cover the watershed from East Town, Chester County thru all the sites in Delaware County following the Creek as far South as Norwood Borough at the Morton Morton House. We will also be cleaning the Cobbs Creek from Haverford Township heading South thru Upper Darby, Millbourne and Philadelphia to Eastwick.

This will be our second year at the site in Eastwick beginning at the northeastern border of the Clearview Landfill and heading up the Cobbs as far as Island Avenue. We have a new crew working at the Bell Tavern on Main Street at the Cobbs Creek Parkway led by the Clean Air Council of Philadelphia. We also hope to clean farther up the Cobbs in the vicinity of the Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Education Center at 63<sup>rd</sup> and Catharine St. in Philadelphia.

There will also be a separate cleanup event at the John Heinz Wildlife Refuge, which DCVA partners with, on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 led by the Refuge Staff and the Friends of John Heinz. They always need to hold their event at a time when the tide is at its lowest level on a Saturday in order to access the stream and marsh banks.

*Stream Clean-up continued.....*

We are supported by the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority, Delaware County Maintenance District of Penn DOT, The Delaware County Conservation District, and the City of Philadelphia. We also receive wonderful support from most of our individual municipalities, generous individuals, and our numerous volunteers.

We will have a Web Page up and running on the DCVA Website later on this winter but for the time being we need to get our ducks in a row with up to date information. In the meantime, please contact me, David Bennett, Chairman of the 2017 DCVA Cleanup with any questions you may have. Please do not contact our President, Jaclyn Rhoads or any other officers because they will need to refer questions to me anyway.

I want to invite any interested folks to volunteer. We can always use more help. Also, we need volunteers to take photographs of the people and the creek and the trash and send them back to us.

At your service

David Bennett, [dster21@comcast.net](mailto:dster21@comcast.net) (610) 626-1344 Cleanup Committee Chair

Earl Wilson, Vice Chair (Eastwick Captain)

Donna Adams, Communications

Barbarann Keffer, Troubleshooter

Gerry Krieg, Technical Consultant

---

## **Wetland Rehabilitation**

**By Derron LaBrake**

DCVA is assisting the Country School of the Sacred Heart in developing a plan for rehabilitating a large (about three acres) wetland on their property that has been mostly taken over by non-native invasive plants. This large wetland has tremendous potential for being a beautiful wetland once the invasive plants have been removed and the natives are allowed to regain their previous stature.

This effort was started by the vision of Michael Kearney (Chairman, Building and Grounds Committee), who recognized that the School might have something special. Wetland scientists from both the US Army Corps of Engineers and DCVA have visited the wetland and agree that this wetland is going to need a little help to restore it to their former glory and make it a community asset. Both DCVA and Michael are up to organizing the task.

A meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at 7:00 PM at the Country School of the Sacred Heart, where we will begin forming our rehabilitation plan. Two of DCVA's Board Members, Derron LaBrake and Clyde Hunt will both be speaking to those assembled about how to go about rehabilitating this wetland. For frame of reference, the wetlands are in the floodplain of Meadowbrook Run, which flows along So. Bryn Mawr Avenue, in Radnor Township. Meadowbrook Run is a major tributary of Ithan Creek, which is an important tributary of Darby Creek.

If you or anyone you know may be interested in helping out with this effort please contact Michael Kearney at [kearney19041@gmail.com](mailto:kearney19041@gmail.com) or Derron LaBrake at [2ndvp@dcva.org](mailto:2ndvp@dcva.org). It's going to take the combined effort of a community to rehabilitate this important wetland.



## **Stream-Watch is Coming Soon!**

**By Alan Samel**

The annual DCVA Stream Watch will be April 15<sup>th</sup>. It's hard to believe that we have been doing this for over 15 years! This is a tribute to the legions of volunteers that have helped in the past and continue to help. If you have never participated in the Stream Watch there's no better time than now. Like the Vernal Equinox, the Stream Watch occurs once a year. And now is the time for you to get involved. The Stream Watch is one way for us to give back to our communities in our continuing and non-stop effort to enhance the Darby Creek Watershed.

Over the years we have experienced glorious and, um, less than glorious days. Last year we had a beautiful spring day! The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and we were right where we wanted to be: in the streams! This year, we're hoping for another incredibly beautiful day...hope springs eternal. It's always easier to get into the stream on a beautiful day; but this is a rain or shine event and the show must go on. We plan to start at 9:00 and hope to finish around 3:00. People come to all sites and people help out at some sites. Anyone with an interest can come when they can.

This is a great opportunity for you to get in the creek, take samples, work with the samplers, and see what is living in Darby Creek. We take samples 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. What a great way to meet others and learn more about Darby Creek!!

The insects and bugs we collect provide a snapshot of the health of Darby Creek. This is the ninth year of intense sample collections and identifications. From this long-term sampling, 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 stream watch program.

The next step will be to identify the bugs pulled from the stream. We then can identify the level of water quality for that section of the creek. The Insect Identification Workshop will be scheduled for this coming fall. Please check the DCVA web-site for more information as we get closer to this time.

---

## **Water Quality Monitoring Update**

**By Derron LaBrake**

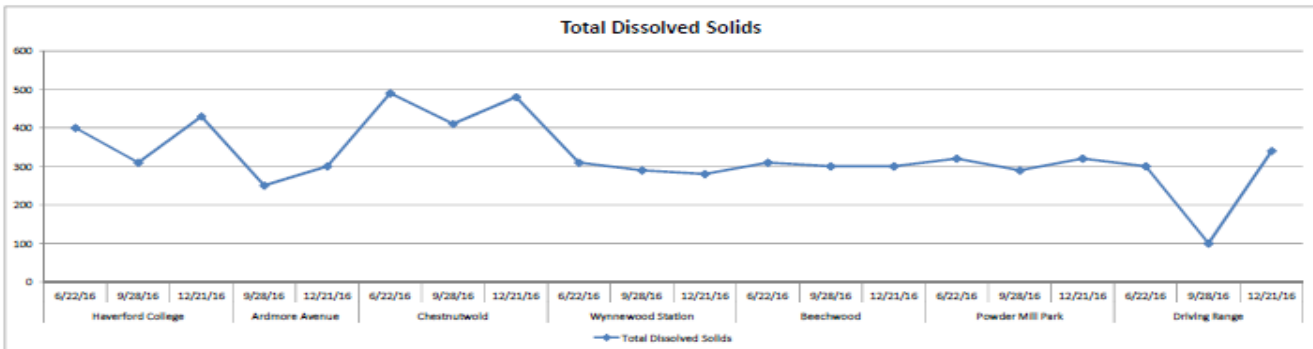
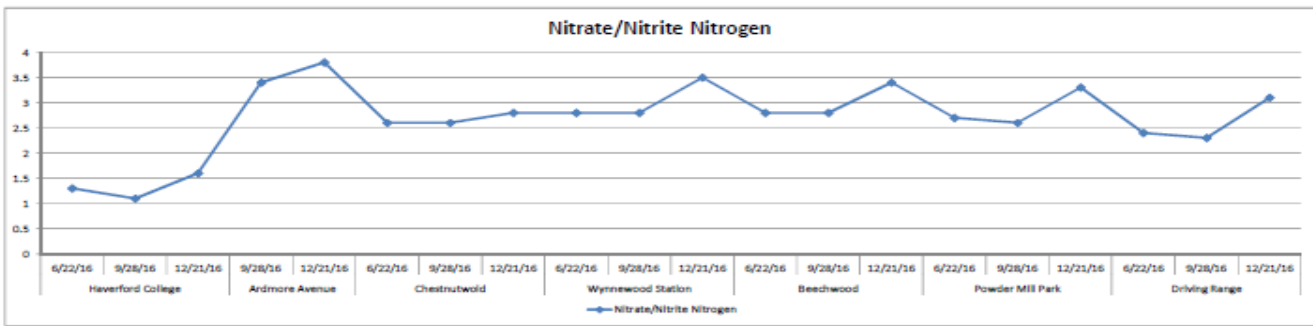
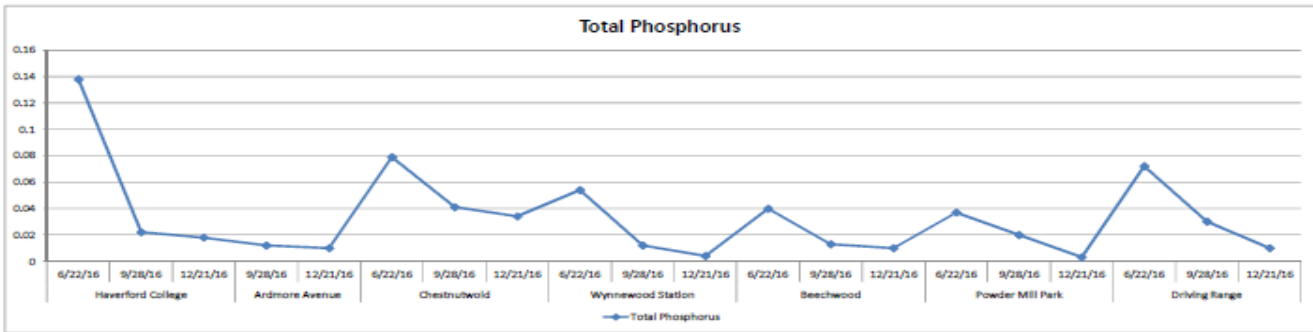
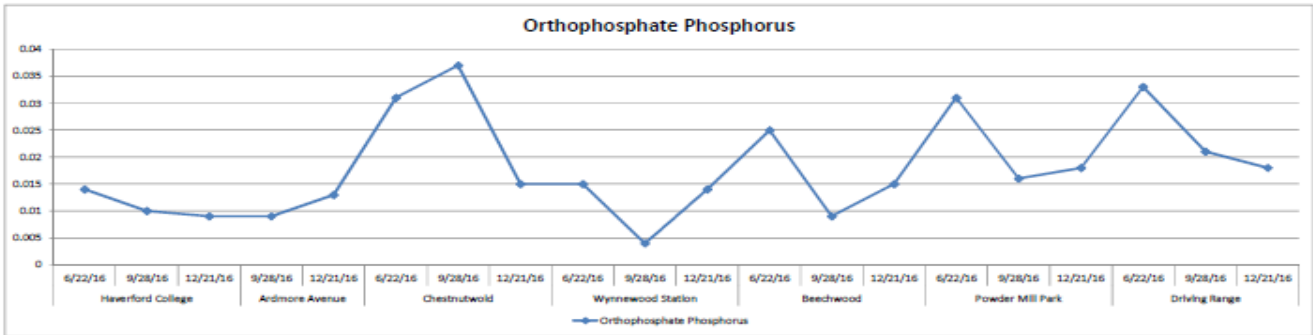
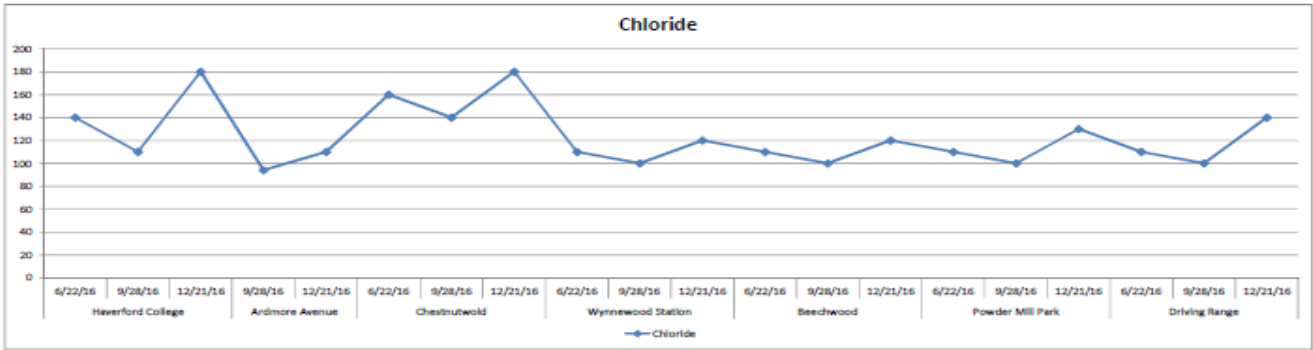
Using a combination of grants DCVA has received (one from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University) in support of the William Penn Foundation's Delaware River Watershed Initiative; DCVA has been able to begin monitoring water quality along the main stem of Cobbs Creek and in Naylor's Run in Delaware County. We have three years of data from six sample locations on the two creeks (three on each) and we have nearly six months of water sampling data from seven new locations on Cobbs Creek. DCVA is very fortunate to have a group of intrepid volunteers that have been wading in every other month to collect water samples that they then analyze using field test kits (pH, temperature, nitrite, phosphate, dissolved oxygen and chloride). Their diligent work coupled with our every other month monitoring using a hand-held meter (temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, salinity, dissolved solids, turbidity and ORP) is help us immensely toward gaining a better understanding of water quality in Cobbs Creek.

We should all be saying an enthusiastic thank you to Jess B., Dan H., Bob C., Brian W., Bonnie and Keith H., Jeff J., and Matt M. for their work. In the spring of 2016 DCVA collected macroinvertebrate (aquatic insect) samples from the seven new locations on Cobbs Creek to bring us to a total of 10 on Cobbs Creek. We can add those data to the 2014 and 2015 sample results from the six locations we have on Cobbs Creek and Naylor's Run. We used some of our grant money to have those samples sorted and the macroinvertebrates identified.

There will have a poster with more details at DCVA's annual meeting on February 18, 2017. We will again be looking for volunteers for collecting macroinvertebrate samples from those 13 locations again this spring, sometime in early March, so if you have any interest please contact Derron LaBrake at [2ndvp@dcva.org](mailto:2ndvp@dcva.org). It's a great couple of days and we always have a good time.

---

# Water Quality Monitoring Update Data



**Title: An Artist Behind Every Tree**

**Author: Tom Smith and John Haigis**

Writer Christopher Morley called Darby Creek "a laughing little river that preaches sermons unawares." The beauty of the Darby Creek Valley is known to many. Sometime ago we were made aware of an a Summer Art School in Darby by Albert Brancato, who was born and raised in Upper Darby and who now lives in Germany. He ran across a Wikipedia article about artist Thomas Anschutz that mentioned a "Darby School of painting," to wit: "In 1898 he (Anschutz) and Hugh Breckenridge co-founded the Darby School, a summer school outside of Philadelphia which emphasized [plein air](#) (open or in full air) painting." He asked if we knew anything about the Darby School and research indicated that it was in Fort Washington.....end of story.....or is it? To add to the information and speculation, our friend, David Fingerlie is a member of the Sketch Club and has a copy of a book printed in 2002 for the 150th anniversary of the club which says that Hugh Breckenridge and Thomas Anschutz started the Darby school in Darby in 1900 and in 1902, because they needed more room, moved to Fort Washington. Now there are three Darby's (Upper Darby, Darby Village (now Darby Borough) and Darby Township), and the creek itself. Historian Keith Lockhart found an article about the school which placed it about one half mile from the Darby trolley stop which indicates the location may have been on Herford Place or on the Scott Estate.



DCVA's own Tom Smith added to the story by writing about the parade of artists who came out to Darby Creek. "Charles Wilson Peale visited c 1800, later photographers for stereoscopic, and more particularly ones who took shots that topped song sheets. Hear Ye! Idyllic Darby Creek was pretty and very close for sunlight grabs for painters and others; most famous was filmmaker Sigmund Lubin 1898-1911 era. Yes 1898! Picnickers came and so lodge groups. All part of the parade. Hear Ye! The farther one went downstream - the less idyllic the creek's pretty border. To be particular the artists painted above Garrett Road, above Addingham, and down along Darby Creek to a beloved log cabin and on downstream to the next below bend that darts eastward and takes an underpass for a Trolley to Sharon Hill. Artists - a few - still came in the 1950's and the one I last recall was situated at the cited bend - some several hundred

yard above the Trolley pass. Many artists painted from the east side of the creek. The lugging of easel and canvases was cumbersome. What to do? Acquaint and ask a local. May I leave canvases at your home; with promise to render their home on one? One woman who did this for a male art teacher - who annually brought his class to the woman's home, abutting the creek. Her outside plat was filled with class artists who painted her home. And she received the promised painting each year."

Tom continued: "I am not saying that artists did not paint below Baltimore Pike, but I hold an opinion that the comers from Philly formed the parade at Addingham, above that place and downstream going to the bend below the log cabin; some 100's of yards above the Sharon Hill Trolley line."

Tom also wondered if by "Darby Artist Colony" they meant the one along Darby Creek, which was part on the Tuscarora Tract That is well documented and even holds a place in artist scrapbook records. The artists cane out from Philadelphia. The Newman Gallery recognizes that there was a Darby Creek School of Artists. A surname Wagner was the most famous. I love this lore and you will also, Locals were surprised in going creekside - surprised often by making a turn round trees,. Hence the expression - "an artist behind every tree."

---

Picture caption: Valley House (c 1844-2016). Painted by artist J.P. Hoot in 1936 and presented to the Birch family who lived nearby.

# EASTWICK IN ACTION

BY EARL WILSON



Excitement reigns supreme! In the last issue of the Valley, I indicated that I would update the Valley readers on several issues having to do with the progress that is being made in Eastwick in the following areas:

1. The City Planning Process for Eastwick
2. The renovation of the Penrose Plaza Shopping Center
3. The on-going progress being made at the Clearview Landfill

The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, in conjunction with other agencies, including Eastwick Friends and Neighbors (EFNC) and other residents of the community have selected one of eight competing groups to serve as the main group that will survey the Eastwick area and develop an overall plan that will suggest how Eastwick, specifically the abandoned Pepper/Comp-Tech schools and the undeveloped 135 acres that the city now owns, can utilize these properties to improve it's surrounding community. Residential involvement have been engaged through this process and these residents are very excited about helping to plan out the Eastwick community, starting in 2017. I should be able to present specific information about the selected group in the next issue of the Valley. Stay tuned!

The most physical and visual aspect of the change in Eastwick is what's happening in the Penrose Plaza Shopping Center. More than two years ago the shopping center was almost 50% vacant of stores during the Korman Corporation's ownership. Now, under new management, the shopping center has a committed occupancy rate of over 90%. The most exciting part is the most obvious construction work that is occurring as of this writing. Some of the new stores are being expanded and at least one store will add a second floor with an elevator and a large community room for residential use.

Just as the residents are getting excited about the renovations that's happening at the shopping center, they are also concerned, but are aware of the work that's being done at the Clearview Landfill. You should know that the Community Advisory Group (CAG) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been working together diligently to accomplish all aspects of the Remedial Design Plan. To date, 60% of the Remedial Design Plan has been reached and the above teams, along with the established work groups and specific experts have their sights set on the work that has to be done in the 60% to 90% phase of the plan. An update of this work will be included in the next issue of the Valley.

---

## **Crickers' Corner**

**Tom Roy Smith**

### **Peeled Eyes Served as the Best Teachers**

**By Tom Roy Smith**

The tag "Cricker" implies one who has been braced with facts that compliment living in the immediate watershed. In past eras, generations of older Darby Creek Crickers taught their skills to the upcoming generation. Fathers and older brothers often did the instructing, teaching facts and lore as "to fit up" local living. I was "Cricker" embrightened by way of an older brother and his friends. They had learned, by turn, from oldsters. In my teen years I added to my Darby Creek knowledge by speaking with many folks born in the 1800's. From them I learned of bits of local lore dating back to the 1840's. I was accorded as worthy the tag, Cricker.

A few boyhood chums, with whom I reminisce from time to time, constitute the last locals possessed of Cricker sensibilities. As a member of a dwindling culture, I try here to relate the feel and ways of the Cricker. The Cricker education

***Crickers Corner continued....***

included how to study the environment and how to think - by trained seeing - with peeled eyes. For example, whereas a person untutored in Cricker ways could stand upon a wild grass field and miss what was at the feet -- a Cricker could kneel down and soon locate a hidden grassy tunnel, a rabbit run at the same spot. (A rabbit run is a mostly hidden path used by rabbits during the safety of nighttime darkness.)

In past eras, textbooks on nature were not needed because peeled eyes were properly focused. Seeing and tabulating facts by observation was reckoned the best means of learning. To a Cricker, nature hints were facts not proven out. A reminisce below illustrates how close observation earned an expected result:

Once I entered home via the rear kitchen door, walked the length of it, passed through the dining room, crossed the front hall, and awoke my mother, "Hey Mom! Look what I got." My mother a night nurse was indulging herself with some shut eye. My mother opened one eye and quickly widened both. My prize fine of the day was the longest snake I had ever seen; and I held it almost aloft over my mother.

as calm a voice as she could muster - almost in a whisper – she instructed, "Tommy, very carefully take the snake outside and release it back where it belongs."

Outside I carefully put the snake into one of our empty metal trash cans, lidded it, and after carrying it beyond our fence, let the can roll and watched the snake make a record slither down into the rear abandon quarry.

The above story of a snake was true. Here I wish to relate Cricker lore through reference to the same snake. -- Peeled eyes had "hinted" to me that a long snake was near--simply, I was aware of the snake before actually seeing. What particular sighted 'hint' foretold to me, of the snake's presence? I had found a snake skin of surprising length at the base of the forty foot quarry wall behind my house. Hmm... this Cricker thought, a rough quarry wall to help tear off the old skin, might the big fellow still be around? This thought, before actual seeing, and then there he was, holed up nearby. In conclusion, sometime later I read in a book that snakes, when in need to shed a skin, search out a rough surface to aid. As a Cricker I had not needed to learn that fact from a book.

Thank you for listening.

P.S. Nothing has changed, peeled eyes still serve as the best teachers.

**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

# CALENDAR

- DCVA ANNUAL MEETING .....SATURDAY FEBRUARY 18,2017 HAVERFORD RECREATION CENTER**
- CVA Board Meetings ..... Third Saturday of each month Delaware County Peace Center
- John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge Clean-up.....April 15, 2017
- Streamwatch.....April 15, 2017
- 2017 Darby Creek Clean-Up ..... April 29, 2017

Printed on Recycled Paper

Non-Profit  
Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #29  
Upper Darby, PA

**Darby Creek Valley Association**  
**P.O. Box 732**  
**Drexel Hill, PA 19026**

