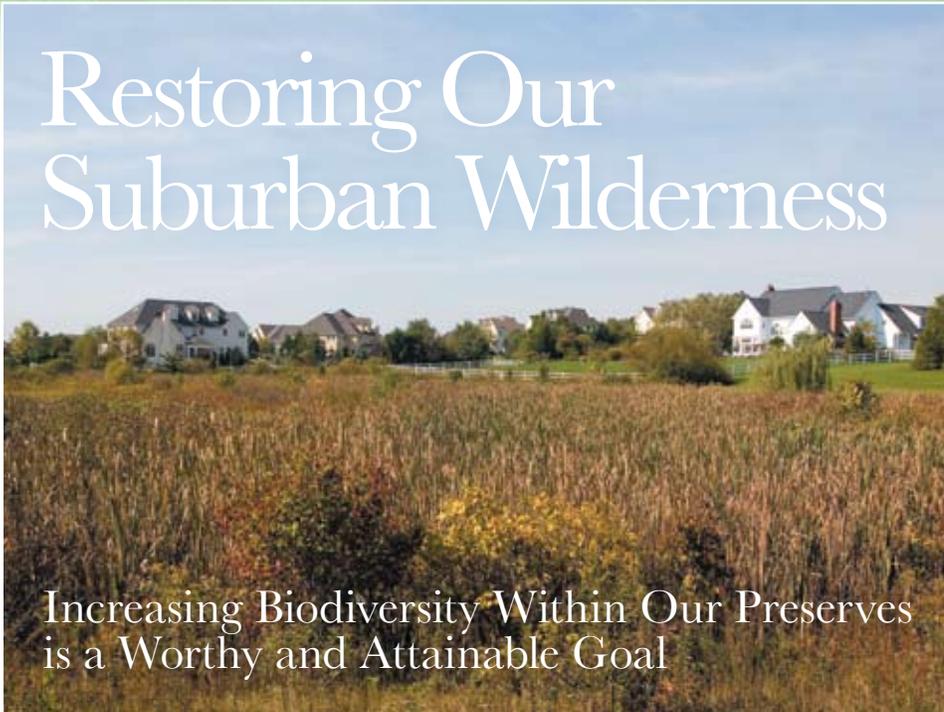


Currents



Restoring Our Suburban Wilderness



Increasing Biodiversity Within Our Preserves is a Worthy and Attainable Goal

By Dennis Miranda

Our Suburban Wilderness, the WVWA's newest program, acknowledges that our preserves and Green Ribbon Trail are lands that have suffered from a combination of threats: suburbanization, invasive plants, burgeoning deer and the steady loss of wildlife habitat. All this comes from the cumulative loss of natural habitat on a landscape level by the thousands of acres since the colonial era. Our nearly 1300 acres of open space are only a small remnant of the hundreds of square miles of forest that used to be found in Montgomery County. While we cannot bring back the wilderness, we can restore the wilderness values in a suburban setting. Increasing the biodiversity richness within our preserves, the number of species of plants and animals that occur in our ecosystem, is a worthy and attainable goal!

To begin, we are taking a scientific approach to assessing the natural state of our preserves. This spring, WVWA staff will conduct a natural resource

inventory (NRI) to determine the health of our preserves. The result of this study will tell us what the relative health of our ecosystem is and that of the different wildlife habitats. We will learn what native species of fauna and flora still occurs and what is missing. A breeding bird survey will tell us how many species use our preserves to nest.

While these steps are ongoing, we are forging ahead in taking steps to restore wilderness values right here in our preserve at the Four Mills Barn. We are developing a deer enclosure to plant a treasure trove of native plants that belong here but that have disappeared. While we continue to remove invasive plants, we are returning species that are missing. Locally extirpated or critically imperiled plants such as Flame Azalea, Virginia Sweetspire, Highbush Cranberry, Winterberry Holly, Witherod Viburnum, Highbush Blueberry and other previously common species will occupy their old habitat as we restore the forest understory.

Come and take a peek later this spring! 🌿



DENNIS MIRANDA

Our New WVWA Shade Woodland Garden

By Dennis Miranda

Many have never seen the ghostly white spires of the Goatsbeard's which will tower nearly six feet tall this summer at a shaded area near the Four Mills Barn. Contrasting the Goatbeard will be the incessant daisy-like flowers that flourish amid a sea of lush greenery only about a foot above the ground of the Canada Anemone! For the curious, we invite you to visit the linear strand of open space adjacent to the Four Mills parking lot in late spring. Here will be the home of our new Woodland Shade Garden. After careful research, the WVWA staff and volunteers will plant a variety of native understory shrubs, trees, flowers, ferns and other herbs that are native to the Piedmont region of Pennsylvania.

Creating a shaded woodland garden with the species that have historically occurred together in large patches of forest have been dramatically reduced due to urbanization, agriculture and other man-made land uses. All of the proposed species are appropriate for this region. Some are extirpated or extremely imperiled according to the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program database. Others are simply rare in our region, although they may occur elsewhere in the State of Pennsylvania. 🌿

Insects in the Garden



Insects are by far the most numerous animals on our planet. They are everywhere! According to the Smithsonian Institute, some 900 thousand different species of living insects are known. Experts suspect that there are at least 2 million more unnamed living insect species.

Insects are critically important in many ways:

- They pollinate flowers, fruit and vegetables as well as make honey, beeswax, silk and other useful products.
- They provide a food source for animals further along the food web.
- They break down and dispose of wastes, dead plants and dead animals in the environment.
- They help disperse seeds.

Trivia Fact- Scientists estimate that there are over 200 million insects for each human on the planet!

What is an insect?

Insects are arthropods that have 3 pairs of legs, a segmented three-part body, one pair of antennae and usually wings. Some well known insects are butterflies, beetles, dragonflies, cockroaches, ants, termites

and bees. When we speak of insects in the garden we also include other arthropods such as sowbugs, centipedes, millipedes, ticks and spiders.

What is the difference between an insect and an insect pest?

Nearly all plants in nature are a food source to one kind of insect or another. When insects feed on plants we find desirable- either ornamentally or agriculturally- they are pests. When insects sting or bite us, they are pests. When insects damage homes, clothing or other products we use, they are pests. When insects harm us or our animals, they are pests. In spite of the presence of pesky insects, the vast majority of insects are “good guys” we want to encourage and protect in our gardens.

How can we encourage “good guy” insects to take up residence in our gardens?

Simple. Plant native plants and avoid the use of pesticides- synthetic or natural. Yes, even natural pesticides will non-selectively kill most insects – good and bad alike.

Why plant native plants?

Native insects co-evolved with native plants. For thousands of years these plants have supported balanced populations of native insects. Native plants will attract “good guy” insects which in turn support wildlife and help keep “bad guy” insect populations down.

What if I spot insect damage on my plants?

Learn to tolerate small amounts of insect damage. A little leaf chewing usually won't hurt your plants. Frequently, some level of pest infestation must be tolerated to attract and maintain natural enemy populations. After all, if the natural pest enemies (aka “good guys”) don't have any pests to feed on, they will leave your yard and won't be available when another pest outbreak occurs.

Why does this matter?

I only have a small garden.

Insect populations in our region have declined as the influence of human activity has exploded. Humans have significantly altered the landscape in our watershed and we can never recreate the ecosystem that existed before Europeans settled this region. This is why our suburban yards have become so important in restoring the ecological integrity of suburbia and in preventing the extinction of most of our plants and animals.

The next newsletter will provide important information on incorporating Integrated Pest Management (IPM) into your home garden. 🌱

For more information check out the following:

- **Bringing Nature Home** by Douglas Tallamy- published in 2007, this informative book provides an engaging account of the interactions between plants and wildlife and the ever-increasing importance of our suburban gardens.
- **The Xerces Society** www.xerces.org- International, nonprofit organization that protects wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitat.
- **Penn State Entomology** [http://ento.psu.edu/extension-Insect advice form Pennsylvania State Extension including insect fact sheets, images and Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\)](http://ento.psu.edu/extension-Insect%20advice%20form%20Pennsylvania%20State%20Extension%20including%20insect%20fact%20sheets,%20images%20and%20Integrated%20Pest%20Management%20(IPM))

APRIL

Creek Clean Up

Saturday, April 27 starting at 9 a.m.

Join WVWA and the Friends of the Wissahickon to clean all 21-miles of the Wissahickon Creek and its tributaries, from top to bottom! Following the clean up, join all of the volunteers for a picnic in Fort Washington State Park. All volunteers are registered and pre-assigned to sections of the Creek on a first-come first-serve basis.

- Email Bob Adams at bob@wvwa.org or call 215.646.8866



Spring Bird Walk

Sunday, April 28, at 8 a.m.

- Meet at WVWA's Four Mills Barn at 12 Morris Road.

Experienced birders Jamie Stewart, Amy Johns and new WVWA Executive Director, Dennis Miranda, will lead this popular annual morning bird walk through Four Mills Reserve. Bring binoculars; loaner binoculars will be available. All ages and birding levels welcome. Wear comfortable shoes.

- Free of charge but pre-registration is encouraged
- Register online

MAY



Wissahickon Birdathon

Friday & Saturday, May 10 & 11

Teams of birders canvass the Wissahickon

Watershed in this fun and friendly competition identifying as many bird species as possible within a two-day period. The teams collect pledges to raise funds for WVWA. Following the birding the teams meet at WVWA's barn for a festive party. Birders and teams of ALL skill levels are encouraged and welcome. Teams can bird as best fits their schedule over the time allotted.

- See website or contact Carol DeLancey at carol@wvwa.org or 215.646.8866



Preserve Walk at Briar Hill

Saturday, May 18 at 1 p.m.

Take a brisk walk through the WVWA

Briar Hill Preserve. WVWA will offer two options – a fast paced exercise walk and another more leisurely guided walk.

- Free of charge but pre-registration is encouraged
- Meet at Prophecy Creek Park Parking Lot

Kids Day at the Evans-Mumbower Mill!

Sunday, May 19 from 1 – 4 p.m.

- Swedesford and Township Line Roads, Upper Gwynedd
- More information on the back of the calendar

JUNE

National Trails Day Upper Wissahickon Preserve Walk

Sunday, June 2 at 1 p.m.

Explore the upper section of the Green Ribbon Trail that begins in Upper Gwynedd Township Park, located on Parkside Place, off of Sunnyside Pike in North Wales. View the stream restoration work that WVWA completed this year!

- Meet at the parking lot across from the pool
- Free of charge – Pre-registration requested but not required

Father's Day at the Evans-Mumbower Mill

Sunday, June 16 from 1 – 4 p.m.

- More information on the back of the calendar

23rd Annual Tex Mex 5k Race for Open Space

Wednesday, June 26 beginning at 6:15 p.m.

- Benefitting WVWA

Run for the Environment! A festive run followed by an award ceremony and Party Under the Stars. Capped at 1700 runners, the race sells out early. Inquire about our

Green Ribbon Teams!

- *TexMex Connection Restaurant & Bar, 201 E. Walnut Street, North Wales*
- For registration and more information go to: www.wvwa.org, click the link for *TexMex*

JULY

Ice Cream Social at the Evans-Mumbower Mill

Sunday, July 21 from 1 – 4 p.m.

- Swedesford and Township Line Roads, Upper Gwynedd
- More information on the back of the calendar

Old Fashioned Mill Festival at the Evans-Mumbower Mill

Sunday, September 15 from 1 – 4 p.m.

- More information on the back of the calendar

VISIT WVWA.ORG for ongoing sudden nature events and talks and to join the WVWA mailing list

Save the Date!

**Walk for the Wissahickon
Sunday, October 6**

Fall Birdseed Sale

Friday October 19 2-5 p.m.

Saturday, October 20 9 a.m. - noon

- Seed **MUST** be pre-ordered. Order Deadline: Tuesday, October 15 by noon

Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail Run

Saturday, November 2

ONGOING

Adopt A Tree Program

Support our efforts to eradicate invasive plants and reforest the Wissahickon Watershed. Make a memorial donation, honor a friend, or just purchase a native tree to be planted. \$30 donation per tree.

- Donate on line at www.wvwa.org or call 215-646-8866

Happenings at the Mill

2013 Evans-Mumbower Mill Open House Schedule

WVWA's Evans-Mumbower Mill is the only fully restored, working gristmill in Montgomery County that is open to the public. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Mill is open on the third Sunday of the month, April through September; October and November feature special program times and dates. Start your visit by viewing an introductory DVD program about the history of milling on the Wissahickon Creek. Costumed guides will demonstrate operation of the Mill as you tour the Mill. Save time to browse in the museum and see the artifacts from the Mill's archaeological dig.

The Evans-Mumbower Mill is located on the banks of the Wissahickon Creek at Swedesford Road and Township Line Roads in Upper Gwynedd, up the road from Route 202. Parking is available in the surrounding neighborhood.

To arrange a group tour of the Evans-Mumbower Mill contact WVWA at 215-646-8866 or info@wvwa.org

Kids Day at the Mill!

Sunday, May 19, 1 – 4 p.m.

Join us for a fun and informative day at the Mill, with many hands-on activities that let kids explore the many simple machines that helped to power the Mill

• *WVWA members free, non-members \$5 adult and \$3 children 3-12*

Father's Day at the Mill

Sunday, June 16, 1 – 4 p.m.

Discover the Mysteries of the Mill - Solved and Unsolved.



A historian's role is to reconstruct the history of the Mill and the families that owned the Mill. Researching historical documents, the

discovery of artifacts and hearing stories told by the families' descendants help us to piece together the history of this Mill. Seeing the copy of Lincoln's inauguration on the wall of the Miller's Office, the outline of the engine that powered the wheel in later years, or the Miller's scribbles on the wall all present us with mysteries and provide clues to the answers.

• *WVWA members free, non-members \$5 adult and \$3 children 3-12*



Mid-Summer Ice Cream Social

Sunday, July 21, 1 - 4:00 p.m.

Take a break from the summer heat and enjoy delicious ice cream treats on the lawn of the Mill.

• *Adults \$5, Children 12 and under \$3*

Old Fashioned Mill Festival

Sunday, Sept. 15, 1 – 4 p.m.

Enjoy an afternoon filled with historic crafts, activities, live animal displays, music by the Now & Then Duet, and a tour of the Mill.

• *Adults \$5, Children 12 and under \$3*

The Ghost of Henry Mumbower

Saturday, October 26, 6 – 9 p.m.



Old Henry Mumbower returns for the evening to see how well we have been caring for his Mill. Enjoy a slightly scary evening complete with a marshmallow roast!

• *WVWA members free, non-members \$5 adult and \$3 children 3-12*

Open House & Walk Along the Headrace

Sunday, Nov. 10, 1 – 4 p.m.

Tour the Mill, and take a guided hike to the old dam thought to be the beginning of the Mill's old head race.

WVWA members free, non-members \$5 adult and \$3 children 3-12

Get Involved!

If you have a passion for history and/or mills, WVWA invites you to become a volunteer at the Evans-Mumbower Mill. Volunteers assist with tours, research, construction and publicity. Contact Carol DeLancey at carol@wvwa.org or 215-646-8866.



Calling All Runners!

Tex Mex 5k Race

By Carol DeLancey

The excitement is building for the 24th annual Tex Mex 5k Race for Open Space on June 26 at the Tex Mex Connection Restaurant in North Wales. This popular race raised over \$98,000 for WVWA in 2012. It has already attracted new sponsors. Nolan Painting and Bosio Metal Specialties will join other lead sponsors: National Label, First Niagara Bank, Amica Insurance, D. E. Walker Heating & Air Conditioning, North Wales Running Company and Kitsch Designs.

Tex Mex Connection is one of only three Certified 3-Star Green Restaurants in Pennsylvania! Runners are encouraged to take public transportation and leave their water bottles behind. North Wales Water Authority is on hand with plenty of water.

This spring, Tex Mex Connection added an outdoor patio with a green roof and a green “wall” just in time for Cinco de Mayo. 🌿



Birdathon 2013

By Carol DeLancey

There's a new bird in town! WVWA's new Executive Director, Dennis Miranda, is an avid birder. His enthusiasm for the sights and sounds of birds at Four Mills as spring migrants arrive in the Watershed is infectious. Watch WVWA's Twitter for his sightings.

The Birdathon is scheduled for May 10-11. Teams of birders canvas the Watershed trying to identify the greatest number of species in this two-day span. The competition is friendly, teams will often alert each other to interesting finds. The event culminates with a Reporting Party where the tired participants relax, eat and share their stories of the day.

The birders work hard to raise funds in support of WVWA because they know that the abundance and variety of birds that they can see are here largely due to WVWA's history of preserving open space and protecting habitat.

If you would like to participate in the Birdathon, please contact Carol DeLancey. All levels of expertise are welcome or, join WVWA on Sunday, April 28 at 8:00 AM for a bird walk at Four Mills Reserve, reserve your spot online. 🌿



Our Mission

The Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association's Mission is to protect the quality and beauty of the Wissahickon Creek and to enhance life in the watershed by:

- *Protecting and enhancing open space*
- *Promoting awareness of environmental issues through education*
- *Promoting wise land use*
- *Preserving historic sites important to the history of the Wissahickon*

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE Become a WVWA Volunteer

By Cari Reilly

A volunteer for the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association is someone who cares about protecting and enhancing the beautiful natural resources of the Wissahickon Creek, its preserves and trails; promoting awareness through our Environmental Education Program; volunteering for the Evans-Mumbower Mill; or supporting special events, whether they are our signature walks and races, Mill Open Houses or educational outreach programs for children and adults.

We would like to recognize two of our

outstanding volunteers. Ann Western and Duane Deaner work selflessly with WVWA staff by providing extraordinary service in support of WVWA outreach and volunteer efforts. Their dedication, energy and commitment have made a real difference to the success of WVWA.

WVWA encourages volunteers of all ages whose interests and abilities can support the many opportunities available. Please view our volunteer link on the WVWA website at www.wvwa.org/volunteering for opportunities and the link to volunteer.

We welcome your support. 🌿

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Creek Clean Up 2013

By Carol DeLancey

This spring marks the 43rd anniversary of Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association's annual Creek Clean Up sponsored by Merck & Co. This is the fourth year that FOW has teamed up with WVWA to clean the Wissahickon Creek from top to bottom—all 21 miles of it! On April 27th volunteers of all ages will clean the creek, the surrounding trails, and the many tributaries of the Wissahickon Creek. The volunteers celebrate their finds at the "Talkin' Trash" Picnic that follows the clean up. 🌿

Presenting Sponsor



Environmentalists



Trail Makers



North Wales Water Authority



Creek Keepers

