

2020 Annual Report



 **DCVA**
DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION





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DCVA MISSION STATEMENT:

Darby Creek Valley Association is a nonprofit watershed organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the Darby Creek Watershed and its resources, including water, wildlife, historical sites, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian zones.

President's Pen

Jaclyn Rhoads, DCVA President



Wow! What a year!

There have been lots of changes due to COVID that will make DCVA stronger and more versatile and hopefully we can serve our watershed better. It's been a tough year for everyone, and we are very grateful to our members who continue to support DCVA and the watershed. As described throughout this report, we adjusted in great ways to continue to provide as much programming as possible despite the pandemic.

Some of the highlights from 2020 include:

- Multiple fall cleanups throughout the watershed - 24 cleanups with 512 volunteers
- Cleaned up and removed invasive plants at our Folcroft property
- Contracted with a database manager to help streamline our membership database
- A new webinar series on interesting topics such as birds, fish, and the macroinvertebrates of the Darby Creek Watershed
- A virtual storybook time with local authors for the Young Naturalist Program
- New digs (office/storage space) in Secane

DCVA has much to be thankful for. We look forward to working with a new energetic Delaware County Council on illegal dumping in the watershed and the new Sustainability Commission as they chart a new path for the county. Lastly, DCVA will be sharing shortly in the New Year our new strategic plan. The board met several times together and in subcommittees to work on different parts of the plan. We hope members will review the plan and provide their feedback. 2021 should be an exciting fresh start!

Many blessings to all!



Citizen Scientists

Susan Miller

The Darby Creek Valley Association, the Willistown Conservation Trust and the Stroud Water Research Center are collaborating to collect water quality data in Darby Creek headwaters. The headwaters of the Darby Creek mainstem are in the western part of the watershed near Route 30 in Tredyffrin Township. The mainstem of the Cobbs Creek, a major tributary of the Darby, begins in Haverford Township. The eastern side of the watershed begins in Radnor and Lower Merion Townships. The studies on the upper part of the watershed are limited. Fueled by the collaboration and the expansion of the Citizen Science Program we will be able to collect valuable information. The data collected will be used to help pinpoint areas of concern and to implement best management practices in the headwaters.

To familiarize residents and volunteers with the watershed, the collaboration developed a Watershed 101 webinar series that can be found on Darby Creek Watershed Association's website on the Citizen Scientist/Stream Keepers tab. This webinar series includes an introduction to the Darby Creek watershed, fishes, macroinvertebrates, invasive species, and birds of the watershed. DCVA received two grants to help offset the cost of the equipment that will be used at sites in the headwaters in Haverford, Radnor and Easttown Townships. Private donations have been received that will cover the cost of one site in Easttown and four sites in Upper Darby.

The volunteers will be trained in proper field sampling techniques and safety protocols and will collect water samples on a monthly basis. Samples will be analyzed at the Willistown Conservation Trust's Watershed lab. We will be holding site specific training in 2021. Videos of the training will be posted on the DCVA website.



DCVA Cleans Up Darby Creek Watershed

Susan Miller

Since the spring of 1984, Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA) has organized a watershed wide cleanup. The pandemic could have interrupted what would have been our 36 year, but as restrictions were lifted, we were very pleased to hold 24 separate cleanups in the fall of 2020! DCVA, with the help of 512 volunteers removed a total of 55,668 pounds of debris from our waterways and surrounding areas from September 4, 2020 through November 30, 2020.

DCVA continued to cleanup the Cobb's Creek bank that borders Darby Borough and Philadelphia. This part of our cleanup campaign is an effort to improve both the living conditions and water quality along a reach of Cobbs Creek that flows through Darby and Yeadon Boroughs in Delaware County. The multi-phased project is sponsored in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Coastal Resources Management Program and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. In its first phase heavy equipment removed larger items. This action made it easier for the 32 volunteers to access the area and hand-pick and bag smaller items. Over three days, 32,880 pounds of trash and 23 tires were removed from the creek and its banks. Numerous municipal partners, scout troops, school groups, veteran groups and community volunteers joined forces to make the Fall 2020 Cleanup a success.



28 tons of trash were removed during 2020's cleanup.

DCVA Cleans Up Darby Creek Watershed (continued from page 5)

Susan Miller



Our volunteers were truly amazing this year! DCVA staffed each clean up to assure that everyone followed COVID-19 restrictions. Everyone wore masks and/or remained socially distanced. Hand held trash pickers were funded by DEP's Coastal Resources Management Program. This equipment made people feel more comfortable picking up discarded bottles and food wrappers, particularly in this pandemic period.

DCVA is planning our 37th Annual Watershed Wide Clean up for April 10th, 2021. We will return to one watershed wide cleanup on a single day as was done prior to 2020. There will be sites throughout the watershed including the headwaters in Chester and Montgomery County and throughout most of the watershed in Delaware County and parts of Philadelphia counties including the Cobbs Creek subwatershed.

The cleanups will not only help protect the regions waterways but will also prevent the trash from moving farther downstream and entering the ocean. If you are interested in volunteering or sponsoring our 2021 cleanup please visit www.dcva.org.

The municipalities that participated in the cleanup were:
Collingdale Borough
East Lansdowne Borough
Folcroft Borough
Glenolden Borough
Marple Township
Norwood Borough
Radnor Township
Sharon Hill Borough
Springfield Township
Upper Darby Township
Yeadon Borough



Annual Report Meadowbrook Run 2020

Ann Jackson

Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA) collaborates with parents, students, and staff of Sacred Heart Academy (SHA), plus community volunteers to restore Meadowbrook Run. This two mile long stream flows through Haverford and Radnor Townships. It is part of the Ithan Creek subwatershed of the Darby Creek watershed. The restoration project is focused on the stretch of the stream that flows through the campus of Sacred Heart Academy in Bryn Mawr and the adjacent wetlands, riparian buffers and uplands. The goals of this project are:

- reduce stormwater run off.
- stabilize stream banks.
- improve biodiversity by planting native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants for pollinators.
- create an outdoor environmental education area for the students and the community.

The project has experienced great success due to the hardworking volunteers. The accomplishments on this project since its inception are:

- Invasive plants were removed.
- Riparian, wetland, upland areas were stabilized by seeding with native seed mixes, and planting trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges.
- Willow and silky dogwood live stakes were planted to stabilize the banks.
- A Penn State Cooperative Extension certified pollinator garden was created.
- Native plants for pollinators were planted.
- An outdoor environmental classroom was created.

Work on the project continued in 2020: This year 15 trees, 22 shrubs, 360 live stakes, 637 herbaceous plants for pollinators were planted. Funding for this project has come from three major sources. Individuals have donated approximately \$2,800. In addition, a Delaware County Conservation District Mini Grant of \$500, and Hardy Plant Society Grant of \$600 have helped to fund the Meadowbrook Run restoration. SHA plans to continue its partnership with DCVA for this ongoing and successful project.



DCVA Stream Watch & Insect Identification Workshop

Alan Samel

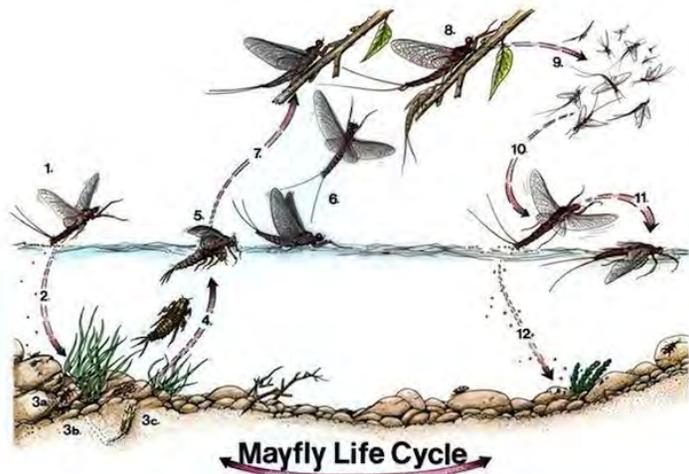


Image from Dave Whitlock's Guide to Aquatic Trout Foods

Many hands make light work, and everyone did an incredible job. The Darby Creek Valley Association is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the Darby Creek Watershed and its resources, including water, wildlife, historical sites, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian zones. An important part of that mission is tracking physical, chemical, and biological measures of water quality in the watershed. Stream Watch is the name of our yearly assessment of the diversity of macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects, snails, crustacean, and others) living in the Darby Creek and its tributaries.

The presence or absence of species known to be tolerant of or sensitive to water quality impairment is an excellent measure of water quality over long periods of time. Thus the Stream Watch and Insect Identification Program is an essential program to the DCVA mission.



The program has been active for almost 15 consecutive years, until the 2020 pandemic brought this consecutive year streak to a grinding halt. Always putting the health of our volunteers before anything else, we were forced to cancel the 2020 Stream Watch and Insect Identification Workshop. While the program was down in 2020, Stream Watch will start up again and carry on many years into the future. We will hold the Stream Watch on a Saturday in April, 2021. Stay tuned! The insect identification workshop will be held in the fall. It felt very strange to not get in the stream and take samples or get into the lab and go through the samples to determine the water quality. But, this has been a very strange year! But, we will see each other again soon and again talk about the stream and the amazing creatures that live in it and tell us so much about our watershed!

Young Naturalist Program Highlights

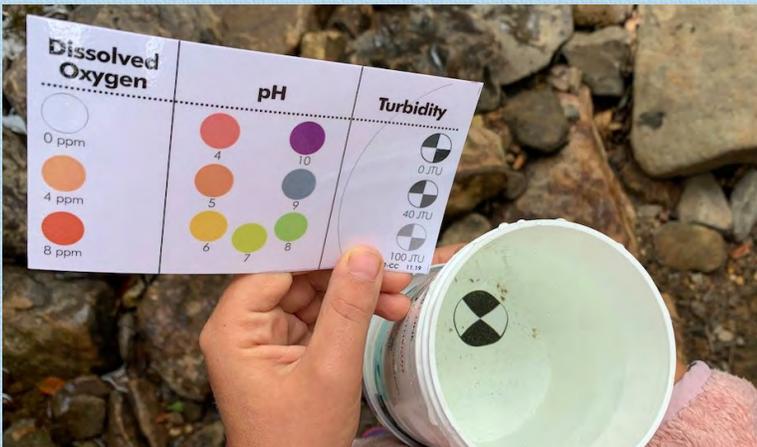
Aurora Dizel (DCVA Youth Education Coordinator)

In this year of social distancing our Young Naturalist Program worked hard to continue offering our community quality environmental education opportunities. A highlight of the year was lining up several children's book authors for "Lunch & Learn" webinar events where authors from all over the country shared their books with us, with topics ranging from bird watching, to toads, to exploring creek critters and their relevance in healthy watersheds.



It was truly inspiring to see children engaging directly with authors, asking meaningful questions, and sharing their own experiences in nature together!

In September we celebrated World Water Monitoring Day with a small, socially distanced Introduction to Water Monitoring event, which we have plans to grow into an ongoing program in 2021 as we develop more hands-on events geared towards our youngest watershed stewards. We are proud to report that despite 12 of our 13 Young Naturalist program events being delivered virtually this year we were still able to increase our year-over-year participation with 179 event registrations, an 11% increase over 2019 - a trend we expect to continue in the coming year!



Rain Gardens: A Beautiful Way to Create Curb Appeal and Protect the Environment

Susan Miller

Darby Creek Valley Association has numerous projects throughout our watershed to improve stream health and control stormwater runoff. Some of these projects are on Cobbs Creek, which is Darby Creek's largest tributary. Cobbs Creek begins in Haverford Township, Delaware County, PA. Indian Creek is a major tributary of the Cobbs that begins in Narberth and Wynnewood and flows southwest to meet the Cobbs near 69th Street, Philadelphia, PA. Next the creek flows through the Cobbs Creek section of Philadelphia. The confluence of the Darby and Cobbs Creeks is in Colwyn, PA. The Cobbs Creek, known to the Native Americans of the region as "Karakung", provided the power for the first water mill built in the area-- it was built in 1645. Today the Cobbs Creek courses through many different neighborhoods and provides recreational opportunities to many citizens and educational opportunities to many children.

In 2019 the Darby Creek Valley Association received a Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Grant to install 50 residential rain gardens in one of three areas within Haverford Township. The value of rain gardens and the principles behind their ecological benefit is described elsewhere in this annual report. The rain gardens will be professionally designed and installed. Already 10 people signed up to indicate their interest in having a rain garden on their property. The area of the township that has the most signups will receive the 50 rain gardens. The installation is planned for the Spring of 2021. This concentration of rain gardens is anticipated to have a significant impact on the water quality in Cobbs Creek.

The Darby Creek Valley Association also has been working with McCall's Golf Course to help control the stormwater run that flows into two of the Cobb's Creek unnamed tributaries. This project is reported on elsewhere in the annual report.



Managing Stormwater One Rain Garden at a Time

Susan Miller



The McCall's Golf course is an 18 hole-public golf course located on 77 acres in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA), working with McCall's management, built a rain garden to filter the runoff from the adjacent Lynn Boulevard. Begun in November 2020, a 3,500 square foot rain garden was constructed with the potential to retain 6111 gallons of rainwater each storm event, and prevent the sheet flow across the golf course from entering one of the Cobbs Creek's unnamed tributaries.

DCVA received a \$500 grant from the Delaware County Conservation District to plant mature shrubs and plants to help increase the productivity of the rain garden and its curb appeal. Derron LaBrake, Principal at Wetlands and Ecology, INC and a DCVA board member, has selected plants specific to the type of soils and other growing conditions at the site that will increase the success and beauty of the garden. Shrubs will be planted in the next stretch of warm weather, and the perennials will be planted in the spring of 2021.

Research has shown that runoff from roadways, driveways can introduce pollutants into the waterways, and increase flooding downstream. Rain gardens are gardens constructed to capture stormwater. They are planted with water tolerant native plants. Rain gardens retain and filter stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, such as driveways, parking lots and roadways, through plants and soils. This process reduces stormwater flow into creeks, removes pollutants and improves water quality.

soils and other growing conditions at the site that will increase the success and beauty of the garden. Shrubs will be planted in the next stretch of warm weather, and the perennials will be planted in the spring of 2021.

DCVA Folcroft Land: 6 Acres of Green in SE Delaware County

Gerry Krieg

In April 2017, DCVA acquired an approximately 6 acre wooded property at the juncture of Norwood, Glenolden & Folcroft boroughs. The property lies within the boundaries of Folcroft borough and is bordered by Delmar Drive to the north, the Muckinipates Creek to the west and south, and Folcroft residences to the east.

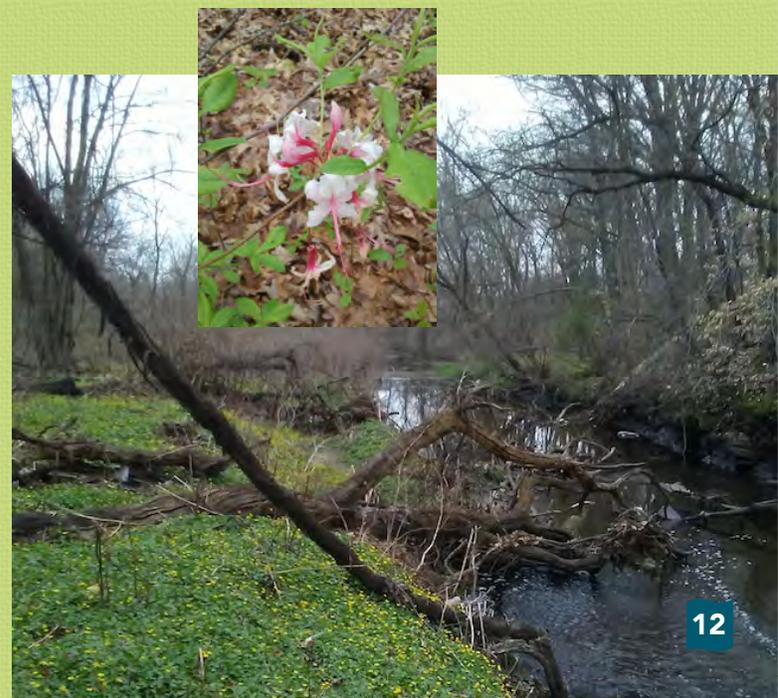
We found the area to be overgrown with invasive species, including Phragmites, Japanese knotweed, multi-flora rose, vines entangling and choking mature trees, and other invasive species. In addition, a portion of the area that is most accessible to the road (and used by area teens) was strewn with the usual waste of glass and plastic bottles, food wrappers and containers of various kinds. Some larger items, such as mattresses and tires, were also found. In 2019 we received two grants to begin to work on this area. An AmeriCorps Grant resulted in a dozen or so enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers filling up two dumpsters worth of debris and invasive species! This revealed some of the promise of this largely undisturbed natural woodland area.



We received the same grants for 2020 but unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic were unable to carry them out. The good news is that both grants will most likely be carried over into 2021 so we look forward to continuing the work of restoring this area with more clearing, native species planting, and trail creation in the New Year. In the meantime we did carry out a cleanup in the Fall as part of DCVA's annual watershed wide cleanup, further removing invasives and accumulated trash while trimming and pruning the 'Gateway' area to the property.



The second grant was a TreeVitalize Watershed Grant that allowed us to remove more multi-flora rose and plant about 50 native trees and shrubs (river birch, swamp white oak, spicebush & more) in a separate 1/4 acre or so area.



Annual Report to DCVA on the Upper Darby Rain Gardens

Jamie Anderson & Steve Lockard

The Upper Darby Rain Gardens Group was formed in Winter 2019. Our first event was a workshop in March, 2020 to introduce the public to the benefits of rain gardens and to explain how they are constructed. Several of the workshop participants requested an assessment of their properties to determine if their land was appropriate for rain garden construction. We performed these assessments in Spring and Summer. Our installations, however, were temporarily postponed due to Covid-19 precautions.

Our first installation was over Labor Day weekend at 900 Belmont Avenue, Secane. This rain garden is more complicated than many others that DCVA has installed in the past, and we believe we can still improve the volume of stormwater that it can capture. Two weeks later a second install was performed at 734 Surrey Rd. in Penn Pines, Aldan. In mid-October we performed two installations in one weekend in Drexel Hill at 1008 Edmonds Avenue and 1120 Mason Avenue for a total of four rain garden built. We have returned frequently to reassess their performance, and to make adjustments, or to make recommendations to the homeowners.

DCVA provided nearly \$4,000 for tools, plants, mulch, stone and other supplies to help the Upper Darby Rain Gardens Group get started. Our expenditures came to nearly \$3,700 for the first two rain gardens installed. Through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Cornerstone Streamsmart Stormwater Housecall Grant, project partners the Pennsylvania Resources Council and the Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative helped fund the construction costs for the two rain gardens on Edmonds Ave and Mason Ave. in Drexel Hill. These were built by a landscaper and planted by Upper Darby Rain Garden Volunteers. Plant material came from the funds provided by DCVA with supplemental plants coming from the NFWF grant.

These first four rain gardens have helped to establish the program, train volunteers, and create many educational opportunities for residents about stormwater and green solutions. The homeowners that received the gardens are great ambassadors for the program. Further we have begun to build a volunteer base that will serve as a necessary step to carry the program into the coming year. The Upper Darby Tree Tenders were of great help. During 2021 we hope to build six rain gardens--three in the spring and three in the fall. We have assessed four properties and at least three of them are good candidates. We will continue to use the established Facebook page to solicit interested homeowners, engage volunteers, and educate the public about stormwater problems and solutions.



Statement of Financial Activities

for the Twelve Months Ending December 31, 2020

REVENUE	DUES		6,514.56
	CONTRIBUTIONS	Restricted – not including watershed wide cleanup	5,800.58
		Unrestricted	33,317.80
		Watershed wide cleanup	3515.00
	GRANTS	William Penn Foundation	19,374.56
		EPA Technical Assistance Grant	0.00
		PA Growing Greener Grant	54,927.59
		Delaware County Conservation District	500.00
		Pennsylvania Environmental Council	1,175.00
PROGRAM REVENUE	Canoe race & other events	1,865.39	
DIVIDENDS & INTEREST		33,792.31	
TOTAL REVENUE		160,782.79	
EXPENSES	GRANT PROGRAMS	William Penn Foundation- consultants and other expenses	64,662.42
		EPA Technical Assistance Grant	14,495.00
		Growing Greener	38,766.25
	OTHER PROGRAMS	Watershed wide cleanup	3620.20
		Meeting	3209.49
		Other programs – Streamwatch, Raingardens and others	18,569.74
	CONTRIBUTIONS	Loaves and Fishes and others	1077.68
	ADMIN/OTHER	Accounting Services	3250.00
		Consultants- Folcroft property and others	3222.95
		Insurance	2758.00
		Printing/postage <i>The Valley</i> quarterly newsletter	2217.00
		Office supplies/expenses/ other postage/ website	3044.91
		Rent	3948.26
TOTAL EXPENSES		162,841.90	
NET REVENUES		-2,059.11	
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL STANDING FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2020			
ASSETS	ASSETS	Folcroft Property	27,725.00
		Checking	12,623.75
		Vanguard	280,711.69
		TAG	200.00
	TOTAL ASSETS		321,260.44
	LIABILITIES	None	0
NET ASSETS		321,260.44	

Funds that appropriately apply to the 2020 budget will be received in early 2021 that will address the negative balance shown here. Those funds will be from a Growing Greener Grant and the USEPA Technical Assistance Grant.

Thank You to Our Supporters in 2020

Thank you to our individual donors who this year provided extraordinary gifts to further specific goals or the general advancement of the DCVA mission. DCVA endeavors to honor all reasonable restricted contribution requests. We are proud to honor one recent request that will be used to dedicated to a cause consistent with our mission.

GRANTING AGENCIES, SPONSORS & FOUNDATIONS SUPPORTING DCVA IN 2020

Americorps

Delaware County Community College
Bristol - Myer Squibb Foundation
Delaware County Conservation District
Destination Delco
EarthEcho International
Foundation for Delaware County
Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful
Marshall Hamilton Fund Foundation
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Philadelphia Electric Company
The Community Foundation
TreeVitalize Watershed Grant Program
US EPA Technical Assistance Grant
William Penn Foundation

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Program

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Coastal Resources Management Program



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Get Involved with DCVA

Join today to help make a difference!

- \$15 Senior/student
- \$25 Friend
- \$50 Supporter
- \$100 Patron
- \$250 Protector
- \$500 Steward

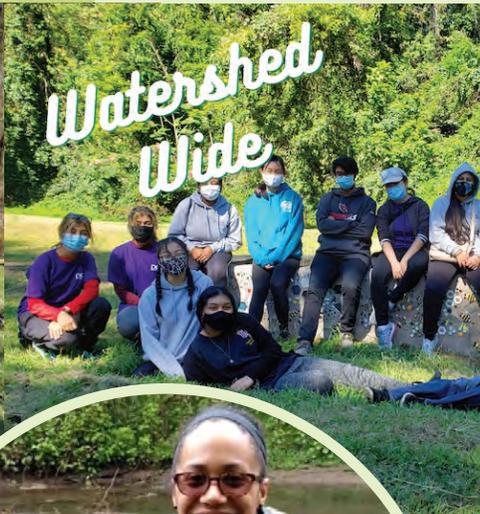


Get Involved!

DCVA is looking for volunteers interested in helping and leading efforts to protect and enhance the Darby Creek watershed and its historical sites.

If you would like to volunteer please contact DCVA President Jaclyn Rhoads at president@dcva.org or DCVA Director Susan Miller at 484-222-2502 or suedcva@gmail.com.

Learn More at: DCVA.org




DCVA
DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION

SAVE THE DATE

37TH ANNUAL CLEANUP

APRIL 10, 2021

For more information visit DCVA.org

NOTABLE IMPACTS

- 1 new raingarden program in Upper Darby
- 1 new citizen scientist watershed monitoring program in Berwyn
- 24 clean ups throughout the watershed
- 28 tons of debris removed from the streams and their banks
- 26 Webinars reaching 699 people on topics of interest to the Watershed
- 34 tires removed from streams and their banks
- 512 adult volunteers plus families at the cleanups
- 637 herbaceous plants for pollinators, 15 trees, 22 shrubs,
- 360 live stakes were planted at Meadowbrook Run at Sacred Heart Academy

