

**DARBY  
CREEK  
VALLEY  
ASSOCIATION**

The  
**Valley**



**Summer 2015**



**Paddle for Preservation  
With the  
Darby Creek Valley Association  
Darby Creek Canoe and Kayak  
Challenge and the Darby Creek Canoe Ramble 2015**

**Sunday, September 13th – rain or shine – 11:45 AM**

Darby Creek Kayak and Canoe Challenge: This Race begins at 1:00 PM – Mass Start at High Tide

Registration begins at 11:45 AM

Start Point: Cusano Environmental Education Center,

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge 8601 Lindbergh Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19153

End Point: Cusano Environmental Education Center

Late lunch after race either on-site or at Taste of Key West on Ridley Marina– RSVP for lunch

Suggested Donation: \$20 per person (Donations are greatly appreciated!)

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**Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup> – rain or shine – 8:30 AM**

Darby Creek Canoe Ramble: This leisurely paddle begins at 8:45 AM – Registration begins at 8AM.

Start Point: Cusano Environmental Education Center,

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge 8601 Lindbergh Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19153

End Point: Morton Mortonson House, 111 Leon Ave., Norwood PA. 19074

Cradle of Birding Festival follows all day at John Heinz Wildlife Refuge!

Donations are greatly appreciated! Kayak and Canoe Rental (Available Sept 19 only): \$32 per person

Registration will take place under the pavilion at the Cusano Environmental Education Center, 8601 Lindbergh Blvd, Philadelphia, PA.

For more information call 267-221-5274 or visit [www.dcvva.org](http://www.dcvva.org).

## President's Pen

### By DCVA President Jaclyn Rhoads

Darby Creek Valley Association has a long and great history. Last year, we celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. DCVA was started by hard-working, caring, and visionary people. The passing of one of these individuals made me realize how precious the people of DCVA are and how important it is to know the history of the organization.

Bob Doherty passed away in July. He was one of our founding members and the Robert Doherty Ribbon of Green Award is awarded annually for giving time and energy toward preserving the environment. Bob was a Boy Scout leader in Darby, a member and Past President of the Lansdowne Rotary Club and a life-long member of the Darby Fire Company. Bob was very active in local politics; he was the Democratic Committee Chairman of Darby/Collingdale and a Democratic Councilman in Darby. Current board members remember his ability to gather people at the annual clean-ups for the watershed – an initiative that he also began. He also had the ability to get local groups and individuals to make donations. He had many other affiliations and accomplishments, and his family continues to live within the Darby Creek watershed.



DCVA relies upon our volunteers, our visionary leaders, and the general public to continue protecting the watershed. Work done today can have long-lasting impacts as we see with Bob Doherty's legacy. At the heart of anyone's work is understanding how critical clean water is to every element of our lives. This knowledge motivates individuals to host cleanups, educate children, and participate in a variety of activities.

Thanks to Bob Doherty for creating the DCVA legacy and I look forward to continuing his work for another 30 years.



Upper left: William Frasch and Robert Doherty hold Darby Creek Clean-up T-shirts

Left: Fritz Thornton and Robert Doherty having a little fun.

*Photos By Olga Thornton*



Left: Bob Doherty in his office Right: Clyde Hunt (left) with Dr. Ruth Patrick of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University and Bob Doherty at the ceremony at which Dr. Patrick was awarded the Darby Creek Valley Association Ribbon of Green Award

## Bob Doherty - An Appreciation

### Tom Roy Smith

What can anyone say, Bob is one for whom it can said in unison: *He is missed!!*

I always thought it was good fortune that Bob was a local standout Democrat - when President Johnson was elected. Bob was next to last to be party-appointed in the old political patronage way by which postmasters were chosen in the past...I do mean chosen - by the reigning party President: A loyal dedicated Democrat, Bob was appointed Darby Postmaster by President Johnson.

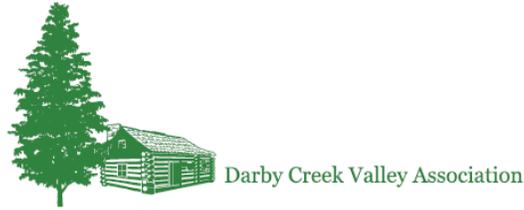
A pal of Bob's told me that prior to his postal appointment Bob was in charge of enforcing licenses for local business. The job took him face-to-face to operators of unlicensed businesses. Once he made a visit to an unlicensed hair salon and told the owner to close up shop and to get a proper license. His manner was very proper, very nice. The owner ignored his nice firmness. Hhmm, what to do?

Bob waited for a time when the illegal shop was full of clients with their hair wet under their bonnet hair dryers. Bob took along the pal who told me this story. Pushed to shove, Bob masked the smile that usually creased his face. Together they marched the clientele out of the illegal shop with both hands pressed to their heads, but only because they had to walk that way- they were all holding towels around their heads! Bob had been pushed to shove; He closed the shop down. No doubt there are readers who do not see much to laugh about in this story, but this was the only time he had to take such an action. Nonetheless, it illustrates his honesty and strong adherence to the law.

When he was elevated to Darby Post Master his earlier line of work in licensing kept him well grounded. Bob worked very hard at everything that he did. Bob Doherty loved Darby Creek Valley. Years before the incorporation of the Darby Creek Valley Association, Bob took Boy Scouts to the Darby Creek. He taught them to respect the stream and stream valley. Most early DCVA members rank as latecomers in comparison to Bob. Ever fair and smile-friendly - that was hard worker Bob. Bob was a great friend to many; he lived his life as a ribbon of sincere, open friendship. I

**Printing the *Valley* is quite costly and uses a lot of paper! Email Kate Doms at [kgoddard@ursinus.edu](mailto:kgoddard@ursinus.edu) if we can send you the *Valley* by email only! Thanks!**

***The following letter was approved by the Board of Directors of the Darby Creek Valley Association and sent to Senator Bob Casey on July 8, 2015:***



P.O. Box 732 Drexel Hill, PA 19026  
484-222-2502    www.dcva.org

July 8, 2015

Senator Bob Casey  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Re: Darby Creek Watershed in Pennsylvania  
Dear Senator Casey:

We are writing to you on behalf of our beloved Darby Creek watershed and the health of its natural and cultural resources that the Darby Creek Valley Association has been working hard to preserve for over 30 years. Protecting the creek's waters, its tributary streams and wetlands, from pollution and destruction is an ongoing and vital part of our mission. We educate the citizens in the 31 communities within the watershed on the critical functions that headwater streams and wetlands play: filtering pollutants, capturing floodwaters and attenuating flooding, and providing the food sources that nurture the creek's aquatic life and the wildlife dependent on it.

We are celebrating the issuance of the Clean Water Rule by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a major boost in protecting the waters that course through our communities and also those all across the country. The Obama administration has at last brought to an end the destructive and costly uncertainty about which of the nation's waters are protected from pollution and destruction under the federal Clean Water Act. The confusion was created by two U.S. Supreme Court rulings in 2001 and 2006 and the previous administration's inappropriately broad interpretation of the waters to which they applied. In the ensuing years, Clean Water Act protection has been denied to many, many streams and wetlands that had longstanding protection and were in no way similar to the waters addressed in those cases. And the jurisdictional uncertainty has hamstrung agency staff as well as permit applicants.

Several industry groups are crying foul, however and have convinced members of Congress to sponsor legislation blocking the rule from taking effect or denying the agencies the funding to implement it. We urge you to oppose bills such as Senator Barrasso's **S. 1140** that would do just that, and here are some straightforward principles as to why:

- **Enough is enough:** One of the claims heard from industry and some state governments is that they have not had adequate chance to provide input on the rule. But in fact the agencies have conducted an exhaustive process to solicit input from stakeholders as well as the public. This included over 400 meetings with stakeholders including states, small businesses, farmers, academics, miners, energy companies, counties, municipalities, environmental organizations, other federal agencies, and others, and a public comment process drawing over 1 million public comments on the proposal.

***DCVA letter to Senator Bob Casey continued...***

- **The headwaters matter:** The agencies conducted a thorough scientific analysis to underpin the rule, and particularly to inform the determination of what small streams and wetlands have a “significant nexus” with and therefore affect the health of larger waters downstream. The significant nexus test derives from the Supreme Court’s reasoning. The agencies’ Science Advisory Board issued a report developed by a panel of scientists, including scientists from Pennsylvania’s renowned Stroud Water Research Center, summarizing over 1,200 peer-reviewed, published scientific studies. [See their June 2015 “UpStream Newsletter” article on the rule: <http://www.stroudcenter.org/newsletters/2015/issue3/epa-water-rule.shtml>] We appreciate the need for a strong scientific basis establishing the connectivity of headwater streams and wetlands to downstream waters for jurisdictional purposes. But the basic concept isn’t that hard. Most of the elementary school kids we take out in the creek to sample the stream chemistry and “bugs” can tell you that what they find is very much affected by what is happening in the feeder streams above. And as Fly Rod and Reel Magazine Conservation Editor Ted Williams observed recently, “The Clean Water Act says this: ‘The Congress hereby declares that it is the policy of the United States that there should be no discharges of oil or hazardous substances into or upon the navigable waters of the United States.’ It doesn’t say, ‘except by gravity.’”

- **Beware the misinformation:** Industry group characterizations of the Clean Water Rule have been factually challenged, to put it generously. The National Association of Home Builders, in a press statement the day the rule was released, claimed, “the rule significantly expands the definition of a tributary to include any dry land feature that flows only after a heavy rainfall.” This is not true. The American Farm Bureau Federation has been fanning resistance to the rulemaking, claiming “Nearly every drop of water that falls would be regulated by the federal government. ... It could be a gutter, a roadside ditch or a rain puddle.” In fact, the agencies have leaned over backwards to accommodate agricultural interests, expanding on and codifying into regulation exemptions for farming practices.

- **Look to the future:** The nation has lost ground in protecting its remaining headwater streams and wetlands during this period of limbo. In a communication opposing S. 1140,

1980s, annual wetland losses are on the increase: the rate of wetland loss in 2004-2009 increased by 140 percent over 1998-2004. The Barasso bill also further limits the streams, wetlands, lakes, and other water bodies covered by the Clean Water Act, undermining our ability to maintain and restore our nation’s waters.” And as EPA and the Corps have noted, climate change adds to the importance of protecting what’s left of our headwaters:

“Climate change makes protection of water resources even more essential. Streams and wetlands provide many benefits to communities by trapping floodwaters, recharging groundwater supplies, filtering pollution, and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. Impacts from climate change like drought, sea level rise, stronger storms, and warmer temperatures threaten the quantity and quality of America’s water. Protecting streams and wetlands will improve our nation’s resilience to climate change.”

We urge you to stand up for the protection of our headwater streams and wetlands and stand up to the heavy pressure to cripple it. Please oppose all measures to undermine the effective implementation of the Clean Water Rule.

Thank you for all that you do. I can be reached at [president@dcva.org](mailto:president@dcva.org) or 484-222-2502 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Rhoads, Ph.D.

President

## Clearview Landfill

By Jaclyn Rhoads, DCVA President

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DCVA and its technical consultant, EnviroAce, reviewed the Sampling and Analysis Plan for Remedial Design of Clearview Landfill (SAP). Below are the primary concerns with regards to the Pre-Design Investigation (PDI) described in the SAP.

The description of work to be done was not presented clearly in this SAP. Many questions about sampling locations and quantities remain after review of the SAP.

### Human Health Risks

The Remedial Investigation conducted by EPA Region 3 concluded that there were unacceptable risks to human health posed by surface soils in the Eastwick neighborhood and in City Park due to chemical concentrations in surface soil and total soils exceeding safe levels. To that end there has not been adequate characterization of the soils in the Eastwick neighborhood or in City Park to conclude that no further remediation of these soils is necessary to protect public health.

The Eastwick neighborhood must be thoroughly characterized for the contaminants of concern. Distance to the landfill or lack of visual debris or staining is not adequate to conclude that risks do not exist beyond the areas already sampled. Risk-based concentrations of PAHs, PCBs or metals are not visible. Individual samples must be characterized over a small enough area to ensure that a typical backyard or play area has been characterized.

The City Park area has elevated concentrations of contaminants in soils. This area is of high priority because of the exposures to children to these soils. It must be a priority for the PDI to fully characterize these areas where known exposures occur. Use of limited samples in areas adjacent to earlier elevated samples is not adequate for assessment of human health risks. Individual samples must be characterized over a small enough grid to ensure that a typical backyard or play area has been characterized.

### SAP Comments

The entire Eastwick neighborhood and City Park should be characterized, except in areas already characterized. An overlay map showing past sample locations and associated analytes should be prepared with the PDI sampling to complete the grid for the City Park and Eastwick neighborhood exposure areas not fully characterized in previous sampling events. Additional information on the historic uses of these sites is necessary to determine if they are out of the influence of known contaminant sources.

Borrow sources will bring with them potential contaminants from their source material. Care will be needed to get multiple representative samples of the products to evaluate for potential contaminants of concern. This evaluation will have to be ongoing since borrow sources are not homogeneous.

Additional vapor intrusion and methane screening is needed to evaluate vapor risks and insure the safety of the residents and recreational uses. It has been DCVA's understanding that additional sampling would be done as part of the OU-3 investigation. Once all the data (groundwater and vapor) has been obtained, a holistic risk analysis can be done.

The community requests that the Eastwick neighborhood and City Park be sampled in a grid fashion. Surface samples (0-1 ft) and total soil samples (0-10 ft) should be collected and analyzed for all COCs, including PAHs, metals, PCBs, and dioxins/furans.

The SAP is a critical next step to remediate the landfill. These concerns were shared with EPA and the Eastwick community and further plans are necessary to finish the landfill remediation.



**Haverford Township Heritage Festival 2015:** At left: Haverford Township Environmental Advisory Commission. From left to right: Peter Pugliosesi, Henry Eichman, Dave Hartke, Jan Marie Rushforth. At right: Darby Creek Valley Association. Alan Samel and Ann Jackson. Everyone is ready to share their collective knowledge of raingardens, climate change, and recycling.

## Cobbs Creek: A Water Quality Retrospective

By Kate Doms

Cobbs Creek is a tributary of the Darby Creek whose watershed comprises 27% of the Darby watershed. The Cobbs arises in three places: the East Branch and West Branch of the Indian Creek arise in Narberth and Lower Merion Township, Montgomery Co., respectively. The third source is the Cobbs Creek arising in Haverford Township, Delaware Co. The Cobbs forms the boundary between Philadelphia and Delaware Counties. It meets the Darby Creek in Colwyn Borough, Delaware Co. and they flow as one to the Delaware through the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge.

The Cobbs watershed includes 33 miles of streams. The towns through which the Cobbs flows include areas of multi- and single family homes in the upper watershed. Multi- and single family homes in the more densely populated lower watershed are mixed with commercial properties. The watershed is home to a total of 230,000 residents. In the spring 2015 issue of the *Valley*, Dr. Rich Horwitz discusses the historical use of the watershed, some of which helped to lead to its present need for our attention.

The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD, 2009) identified several water quality issues in the Cobbs watershed that we can all work to solve including: (1) trash, (2) low dissolved oxygen, (3) low base water flow in dry spells and raging floods after storms, (4) bacteria, (5) metals, and (6) erosion destroying streambanks and filling the waterways with sediment.

Studies of the macroinvertebrates over the last decade by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP, 2013) yielded scores of 11 to 28 on a scale of 100 in the middle and lower Cobbs watershed and similar scores in the middle and lower Darby; higher scores are recorded elsewhere, in the Ridley Creek Watershed, for example. An earlier study by the PWD (PWD, 2009) found all testing sites on the Cobbs to be moderately to severely impaired on the basis of macroinvertebrate assessment. If you would like to join us in monitoring water quality in the Cobbs please contact Derron LaBrake at [dlabrake@wetlandsandecology.com](mailto:dlabrake@wetlandsandecology.com) or Kate Goddard Doms at [kgoddard@ursinus.edu](mailto:kgoddard@ursinus.edu).

### Bibliography:

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. 2013. Aquatic Life Use Assessments in Pennsylvania Southeast Region. <http://www.dcva.org/page-18138>

Philadelphia Water Department. Updated 2009. Darby-Cobbs Watershed Comprehensive Characterization Report Supplemental Document Volume 14. [http://www.phillywatersheds.org/litcpu/Vol14\\_DCCCR.pdf](http://www.phillywatersheds.org/litcpu/Vol14_DCCCR.pdf) and <http://www.phillywatersheds.org/your-watershed/darby-cobbs>

*Cobbs Creek is the focus of part of the grant from the William Penn Foundation to the Darby Creek Valley Association. This is the second article in a series of articles about Cobbs Creek. See Dr. Rich Horwitz's article in the Spring 2015 Valley to learn more.*

## NEWS FROM EASTWICK

### By Earl Wilson, Eastwick Resident

The article written in the previous issue of the Valley (Spring, 2015) showed the activism of many members of the Eastwick, Southwest Philadelphia Community. This article is a follow-up, in that it will continue to inform the readers just how much effort is being made on several environmental issues, especially the clean up of the Clearview Landfill project. Hopefully, the successful efforts will help to make the Eastwick area a better place to live and to improve the Lower Darby Creek Area.

During the waning months of 2014, the Eastwick community, including the Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition, Eastwick Action Committee and other community groups began meeting to form its own "Community Advisory Group. This action was taken because there was an understanding that eventually the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will get involved and will institute specific rules and regulations that will allow for the formation of the official Eastwick Community and EPA affiliated Community Advisory Group (CAG). The first official CAG meeting was held on February 3, 2015. It was at this meeting that the attendees were introduced to the EPA facilitator, Marion Cox, who from that point on began working with the community to develop the Community Advisory Group. A CAG Members list was established and five members from that list were selected to be on the CAG Leadership Team.

The basic function of the CAG Leadership Team is to receive information from the EPA, to evaluate, prioritize and disseminate the information to the established working groups or to the CAG Members so that they can apprise the community as to what is happening at and around the superfund site. The CAG Leadership Team is also responsible for collecting questions and concerns from the community. The collected information will then be prioritized and sent to the EPA or one of the established working groups.

The flow of information, as mentioned above, is guided by a document called the "Operating Procedures". This document not only guides how the Eastwick Community and the EPA shall work together to make the superfund site process a success, but will also add to the transparency and cooperation among all of the entities involved in this project.

The formation of the CAG and insights from various CAG Members allowed for the formation of three "working groups" designed to deal with specific information coming from The EPA and the community. Listed below are the working groups that have been established to date:

1. The Technical Working Group: The Technical Working Group will focus on analyzing technical information from the EPA and transferring that information to the CAG. The Technical Working Group is Co-Chaired by Derron LaBrake (Wetlands/Ecology, DCVA) and Eileen San Pedro (Data Analyst and an Eastwick Resident).
2. The Health and Safety Working Group: The Health and Safety Working Group will be establishing and examining new data relative to the health and safety issues of residents in the community during the superfund site clean up process. The Health and Safety Working Group is Co-Chaired by Dr. Marilyn Howarth, Center of Excellence in Environmental Toxicology, UPENN) and Chere Driver (Registered Nurse and an Eastwick Resident)

3. The Communications Working Group: The main function of the Communications Working Group is to disseminate information to the community. This group is in its formative stage and is being organized by Ted Pickett, a member of the Leadership Team. The CAG has developed its own official name:

**EASTWICK LOWER DARBY CREEK AREA COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP**

CAG - [eastwicklowerdarbycreekareacag@gmail.com](mailto:eastwicklowerdarbycreekareacag@gmail.com)

EPA - [ldca2015site@gmail.com](mailto:ldca2015site@gmail.com)

The Eastwick residents are also concerned about several other issues that are evolving at this time. These issues are listed below:

1. Flood mitigation problems and flood insurance costs.

2. The 128 acres adjacent to the Heinz National Wildlife Refuge.

These areas of concern are basically in the discussion phase with no definitive solutions for them at this time. However, the Eastwick coalition of community groups are determined to be actively involved so as to make the ultimate solutions the benefit of the Eastwick Community. Please expect to hear more information about these issues within the coming months or in the next issue of the *Valley*.

**The Vacant Lots of Anywhere**

**By John and Jan Haigis**

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The vacant lots of Anywhere

Not a lot to see

Once they held our story

And our history

Some buildings lost to fire

Some were lost to greed

For some their time had simply come

Others had no need

Their presence just an eyesore

Their maintenance a chore

We simply called the backhoe in

And, POOF, they are no more

The memories and promise

Of our shared legacy

Are remembered now on vacant lots

Not a lot to see.

**Another Successful Year for DCVA's Signature Event:  
The 31st Annual Darby Creek/Cobbs Creek Watershed-Wide Cleanup  
By Jan Haigis, 2015 Cleanup Committee**

Led by both veteran and new volunteer Captains, the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual DCVA Darby Creek/ Cobbs Creek Watershed-Wide Cleanup on April 25, 2015 brought together more than 650 volunteers to clean 40 separate sites in our 77-square-mile watershed, located in 31 municipalities in 4 counties. For many volunteers, the Cleanup is a family affair or a neighborhood effort. A large part of the overall success of the Annual Cleanup is the decentralization of its leadership. Each Captain recruits his or her own crew and selects a favorite spot to clean and beautify.

This year 10.45 tons of material were removed from our watershed in dumpsters donated by Jack Clark, J & K Trash, and Opdenaker upstream, and Waste Management at the Cleanup at Heinz Wildlife Center, held on April 18 due to better tidal conditions. The dumpsters and their disposal was coordinated once again by Michele Campellone of the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority to whom we offer grateful thanks! Additional tonnage of trash and debris gathered by volunteers in bags or piles was picked up by their local municipalities, for whose assistance we are always grateful! The Cleanup is truly a cooperative community event and we thank everyone who worked to make it happen!

In support of the above efforts, the 2015 DCVA Cleanup Committee raised funds for 10,000 watershed game placemaps and 500+ tee shirts; distributed placemaps to restaurants, schools and libraries; gathered Cleanup supplies donated by Penn DOT and the Delaware County Conservation District; and assembled bags of supplies for each Captain to pick up prior to their Cleanup .

This is the 11th year that John and I have headed up the DCVA Cleanup Committee and the 28<sup>th</sup> year that we have been Cleanup Captains. We are proud to have been part of the DCVA family for all of these years of Cleanups and other important watershed work, but are passing the Cleanup torch to Board Member David Bennett, who will Chair next year's Cleanup scheduled for Saturday, April 23, 2016. In addition to David, who was a member in 2014 and 2015, we would like to thank the other members of the Cleanup Committee: Barbarann Keffer, our wonderful Volunteer Coordinator since 2011 who is also stepping down from the Committee this year; Ann Jackson, our representative extraordinaire for a variety of tabling events throughout the year promoting DCVA and the Annual Cleanup; and Ed Silberstein, in charge of Logistics for the past three years. What a great group of hard workers and wonderful people! It has been our pleasure to have you as part of the team!!

We are aware that 31 years of Cleanups has made quite a difference in the appearance and health of our watershed. Some Captains this year concentrated on invasive plant removal and tree planting in areas where past cleanings had made enough headway to encourage these new chores. As some areas cleaned for many years become less needy, we know new areas in the watershed still require work. If you know of such spots in places you frequent along our watershed's creeks, please contact David Bennett or [www.dcva.org](http://www.dcva.org) to let us know to add them to our sites for 2016. Perhaps you or a friend would even like to be a Captain there. That's terrific! You'll get lots of support and encouragement from the 2016 DCVA Cleanup Committee.

In closing, we want to thank all of you who helped out in 2015 and also the many of you who were involved in DCVA Cleanups even before we began shepherding them in 2005. All of us working together in the parts of the creeks we love, with family, friends and neighbors – and making new friends who come to join in the fun of Cleanup – that's what makes this effort successful and rewarding year after year!! Thanks for your help and thanks for joining us as part of this great enterprise for so many years!

P.S. Keep up the good work! The Darby Creek / Cobbs Creek Watershed's health depends on all of us!



Captain Dave Damon and his Cleanup volunteers at Indian Rock Park stop for a photo op! His crew included 14 young Girl Scouts from Mrs. Sharon O'Hara's troop #5783, who eagerly looked forward to Cleanup after learning about taking care of the watershed during a sing-a-long program with Jan and John Haigis.

## Looking at Assets We Already Have

By Jan and John Haigis

Question: "What is the difference between a row house and a town house? "

Answer: "A few zeroes." Anon.

Southeastern Pennsylvania in general, and the Darby Creek Watershed in particular, is a treasure trove of American history with human activity going back to well before the early Swedish settlements in 1638. Our past is an asset able to help us understand our present and illuminate our future. A few of the 31 municipalities of the watershed have been able to use their history to promote tourism, boost economic development, and foster civic pride, with sites like Collenbrook, Green Bank Farm, the Massey House, and Colonial Plantation to name a few; some have not. Charged with protecting the public health, safety, and welfare, some municipalities see old buildings as eyesores and problems, and seek to demolish them. In this they may be very short-sighted.

One of the chief aims of urban renewal has been the elimination of "blight," which, like beauty, may be in the eye of the beholder. Although Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding can be used for historic preservation, it more often is used for demolition. Funding for demolition seems to be more easily obtainable. For the municipality, it is a one time cost: poof, vacant lot, problem solved, but one may ask, what is the cost of opportunity lost?

According to the Philadelphia Healthy Rowhouse Project ([www.healthyrowhouse.org](http://www.healthyrowhouse.org)), "for the minimum of \$300,000 it takes to build a new affordable house in Philadelphia, between 14 and 30 homes can be improved. Preserving rowhouse blocks builds on the architecturally significant assets that are amenities unique to Philadelphia (and Eastern Delco?). Preserving existing resources is environmentally sustainable. The most sustainable home is the one that already exists." Like Philadelphia, many areas of eastern Delaware County have significant numbers of row houses and other houses built before 1940.

We are seeing development pressure bring new homes to areas that were once old growth forests. (See article on Whetstone Run.) Meanwhile we are creating more vacant lots and ignoring the acres of existing housing that already cover a goodly portion of the Darby Creek Watershed.

We just lost another 18<sup>th</sup> century house and barn at 554 Lansdowne Avenue. and created another vacant lot. There has to be a better way. We have a wealth of older houses with "Good Bones." The greenest building is the one already built because of the embodied energy of materials and past investment. Perhaps we should find a way to use these assets rather than tear them down and perhaps create jobs in the process.

## Our Colleagues at the Pennsylvania Resources Council and the Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative use a Boeing Grant for Stream Education of Upper Darby Middle School Children

By Jamie Anderson

The Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) and the Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative (EDCSC) educated over 1000 middle school and high school students regarding watershed science and stormwater pollution in the spring of 2015. Student included every 7<sup>th</sup> grader in the Upper Darby School District and every 9<sup>th</sup> grader in the William Penn School District. The stream stewards pilot program was funded through a grant from Boeing and combined hands-on classroom environmental education with real-world science through field trips to local streams.

In class sessions consisted of the concept of a watershed, the water cycle, and how human development of the land within a watershed can create negative consequences to our local waterways and even our oceans. Students were given an opportunity to witness the causes of stormwater pollution using an enviroscape model. Following this, students were given an opportunity to explore how to determine the health of a stream through identifying macroinvertebrates.

Following the in class sessions students were given an opportunity to take their knowledge to a local stream. Drexel Hill Middle School students explored the health of Naylor's Run at the Drexel Gardens Park while Beverly Hills Middle School students explored the health of Naylor's Run at Naylor's Run Park. William Penn Students traveled to Ridley Creek State Park. Each field trip included gathering samples of macroinvertebrates and identifying them for water quality indications. Water Chemistry was also completed including pH, Nitrates, Phosphates, Dissolved Oxygen, and Temperature. This hands on experience helped give students a real world picture of the information they learned in the classroom sessions. It offered them an opportunity to explore the water quality of their local streams and see concrete the impacts that human activities can have on water quality.

PRC and EDCSC hoped to continue their educational partnerships in the future to expand this project to other districts. Both feel that making this connection with students to water quality and causes of a pollution is an important step towards improving water quality in the long term.

*Jamie Anderson is a DCVA Board member as well as the director of the Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative. For more information on the Collaborative see*

<http://separcd.org/2011/05/eastern-delaware-county-stormwater-collaborative>

For more information on the Pennsylvania Resources Council see <http://prc.org>



Diana Andrejczak of the Pennsylvania Resources Council doing water quality testing with Upper Darby School District middle schoolers in spring 2015. This program was funded by a Boeing Grant.

Photo by Jamie Anderson

## Demonstration Raingardens construction throughout the Darby Creek Watershed led by the Pennsylvania Resources Council and the Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative

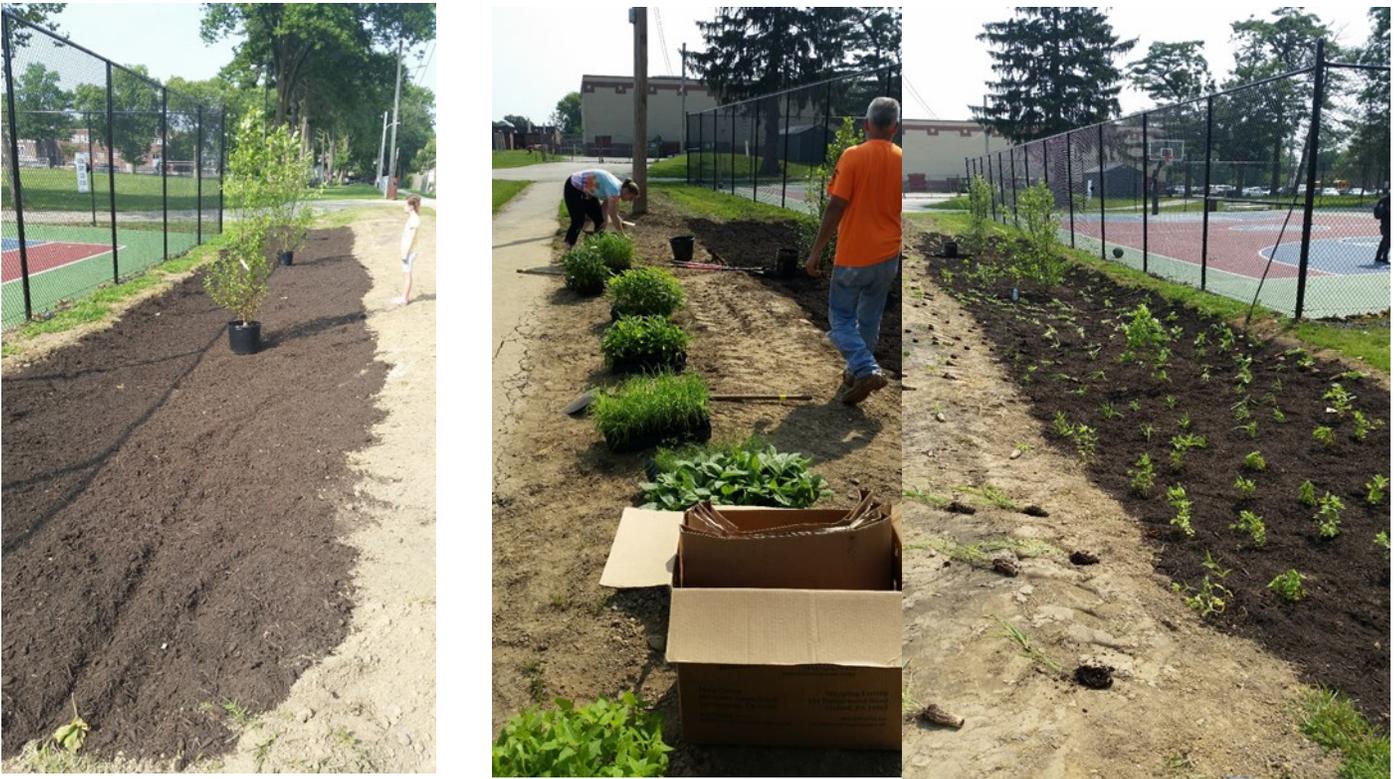
By Jamie Anderson

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The Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) and the Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative (EDCSC) received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant in 2014 to create demonstration rain gardens throughout the Collaborative 8 municipal member service area. The NFWF grant funds were matched by grants from the Ethel Sergeant Clark Smith Foundation and the Royal Bank of Canada as well as in kind matches from volunteers and municipal public works staff.

The effort consists of two parts. The first effort engages municipalities in creating rain gardens on their public properties. These rain gardens are simple structures that could easily be replicated on private properties and will include educational signs regarding the purpose and function of the rain gardens. Second, is a partnership with the Haverford EAC to establish a program to install rain gardens on private properties. The hope is that this initiative can spark a change in the behavior of both private and public landowners, creating a new normal for how stormwater is handled in the Darby and Cobbs Watersheds.

During the fall of 2014, the Rain Garden Task force of the Haverford EAC along with PRC and the EDCSC created a framework to solicit interest from residents interested in a rain garden on their properties. They then developed a mechanism to evaluate suitability and select the first properties to receive a garden. Additionally, PRC and EDCSC completed site visits in the 8 Collaborative communities to determine possible locations for rain gardens in public locations and garnered support from the local municipalities to support the garden construction with staff time. In the spring of 2015, the first 7 gardens were created. This included 5 the region.



One of the Public Rain Gardens : This public rain garden shown during planting is in Sharon Hill in a borough park behind the Academy Park High School. Photo by Diana Andrejczak.

gardens on private property in Haverford Township and 2 gardens on public property in Sharon Hill and Norwood boroughs. All gardens were designed and created with volunteer time and are planted with native plants that will also help increase habitat in the region.

The initiative will continue into Spring of 2016. In the end 10 rain gardens will be installed on private property in Haverford Township. The framework created through this initiative will be available for other Collaborative municipalities to utilize with the intent of the initiative moving down the watershed to the other 7 communities. At a minimum, there will be 7 public gardens created in highly visible areas at parks, municipal buildings, libraries and schools. The gardens will increase Green Stormwater Infrastructure in the area and begin to create a new vision for stormwater management in the watershed.

Another example of a public raingarden:  
This public raingarden is in Norwood at the Norwood Fire House – The top photo was taken during planting with volunteers. The bottom two photos show the raingarden after it was planted and is being watered.



## A Letter to the Darby Creek Valley Assoc.

### From: Ed Applegate, Drexel Hill Resident

The Darby Creek was an integral part of my history growing up. In 1960 when I was 10 years old I swam, fished, boated in a cement tub and hiked along Darby Creek. Recently I walked my Siberian Huskies along the Darby Creek trails from Warrior Road to Rt. 1, Township line road by Idle hour Tennis club.

Also, recently starting in 1987 I participated in Darby Creek clean-up and trout fished. In 1989 I worked with Anne Ackerman and the Hilltop and Pilgrim Garden Civic Association to start the annual clean-up of Darby Creek. Also, I worked with Bruce Merkle in reestablishing the Darby Creek clean-up. Larry Werner who belonged to Pilgrim Garden Civic Assoc. was a big help in maintaining the environment along Darby Creek from Township Line Road to Rt. 3 West Chester Pike.

I value very much the upkeep of Darby Creek and am glad to see the trails maintained. I plan on bicycling along Darby Creek from Merry Place along Glendale Road to Rt. 3 West Chester Pike this Spring. I also will be fishing there with my 30 year old daughter and her boyfriend in the Spring. Hopefully this letter will interest other people and promote Darby Creek Valley Assoc.

Peace and best regards,

Ed Applegate



Some examples of the construction of private raingardens being constructed in Havertown. Top left: A attractive swale that drains water from the down spouts on the home to the garden. Top right: Rototilling to loosen soil to make it more hospitable for the growth of the young plants. Immediately to the right: Volunteers planting.

**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 Ad-  
dress; \_\_\_\_\_

- |                                    |                            |                                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 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



Two Great Upcoming Events of the Governor Printz Challenge:

Darby Creek Kayak and Canoe Race .....Sunday, September 13th – 11:45 AM

Race begins at 1:00 PM – Mass Start at High Tide – Registration begins at 11:45 AM; rain or shine.

Start Point and Registration: Cusano Environmental Education Center , John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge 8601 Lindbergh Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19153

Darby Creek Canoe Ramble .....Saturday September 19th- Registration begins at 8 AM

Start time 8:45 AM rain or shine

Start Point and Registration: Cusano Environmental Education Center, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge 8601 Lindbergh Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19153

DCVA Board Meetings .....Saturday of each month Delaware County Peace Center

2016 Darby Creek Clean-Up .....April 23, 2016 throughout the watershed

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Drexel Hill, PA 19026