

THE Quill

PILOT PROJECT ENGAGES YOUTH IN WISSAHICKON WATERSHED HEALTH

By Virginia Ranly

The fish kill that occurred in Wissahickon Creek this summer, and the release of raw sewage just a few days later, remind us of our heavy dependence and impact on local waterways. Not only are the freshwater streams in our area a great resource to the community, but these streams also bear the brunt of the many stresses that we as people add to the land and waterways. Despite protected areas along the stream, within Philadelphia and Montgomery counties,

PaSECs are groups of senior citizens (55 and older) who volunteer to monitor Pennsylvania's waterways on a regular basis. Pennsylvania sometimes uses volunteers to collect water quality data because the state is charged with monitoring the status of all of its waterways, including 53,982 miles of streams—a monumental task that is never completed. Many individuals and school groups take water quality measurements without proper quality assurance measures and without careful planning, resulting in the collection of data that is of little scientific value. With the creation of a Study Design for the students and a Student Field Manual with a variety of safety and quality assurance protocols built into the program, the JEC pilot project aims to give validity to water monitoring done by students. The Study Design and Student Field Manual were created by The Schuylkill Center with assistance from the PADEP's Citizen Volunteer Monitoring Program and will be made available to other schools after the pilot project concludes.

An integral part of the JEC pilot project is the intergenerational collaboration between members of PaSECs and the middle school students. This collaboration enhances the quality of the data being collected and also emphasizes the importance of a community approach to improving our environment. The three PaSEC groups participating in the project are the Montgomery County SEC in Lansdale, the Center in the Park SEC in Germantown and The Schuylkill Center SEC. If you or someone you know is 55 or older and interested in participating in the Senior Environment Corps and/or mentoring Junior Environment Corp students, please contact Virginia Ranly at (215) 482-7300, ext. 129 or vranly@schuylkillcenter.org.

Funding for the project is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener program. This funding, along with the commitment of materials and time from many other community partners, has allowed The Schuylkill Center to dedicate the resources to make this a successful and influential project.

Additional information about the JEC Pilot Project can be found on The Schuylkill Center's Student Water Monitoring Network website at <http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/programs/watermonitoring.html>. This site also hosts the students' water quality data and additional information about their projects.

To learn more about watersheds, see page 7!

FALL EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 1 Fall Bird Seed Sale
- 7 Fishing Fanatics
- 14 Family Camping at SCEE
- 18 Rain Barrel Workshop
- 21 Restoration Volunteer Workday
- 21 Rain Barrel Workshop
- 27/28 Halloween Hikes & Hayrides
- 30 Bats: Myths and Reality

NOVEMBER

- 1 Teacher Workshop
- 4 Watershed BMP Tour
- 4 Bird Club Trip
- 18 Restoration Volunteer Workday
- 23 Center Closed

DECEMBER

- 2 Wildlife Protection Family Program
- 25 -1 Center Closed



Christian Gonzalez and his classmates in the Green Woods Charter School's 7th grade participate in the Junior Environment Corps project.

Wissahickon Creek is heavily impacted by human activities throughout the watershed.

This fall, The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education is implementing a pilot project with four schools in the Wissahickon watershed. Through this pilot project, a Junior Environment Corps (JEC) will be established in each of the four schools—Pennfield Middle School in Hatfield, C.W. Henry School in Mt. Airy, James Dobson School in Manayunk, and Thomas Mifflin School in East Falls. These JECs will monitor points regularly on both the Wissahickon Creek and the Schuylkill River. JEC students will receive training in water quality assessment, participate in watershed stewardship education programs and watershed-focused service projects, and conduct community outreach.

The Junior Environment Corps concept is modeled after existing Pennsylvania Senior Environment Corps (PaSECs).



at a
glance

FALL FAMILY CAMPING PROGRAM

Saturday, October 14th
Sat. 5:00 pm - Sun. 11:00 am

See Calendar of Events for details.

TRAILS OPEN:
MON-SUN, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

MAIN BUILDING/BOOKSTORE:
MON-SAT 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Bookstore closes at 4:30 pm daily
CLOSED SUNDAYS



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WHO KNEW YOUR YARD COULD DO MORE THAN JUST LOOK GOOD!

By Joanne Malfatti

If you think fall is a good time to attract a wide variety of animals and insects to your property, you're right! Fall is a tremendously active season when it comes to wildlife. Plus, it can be an excellent time to see native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers at their best. Fall is the season in which plants provide their well-developed bounty of fruit and seed to countless species of wildlife, all of whom are preparing for the long winter ahead. Berries, nuts, and seeds are as important to birds and animals as is nectar for bees and butterflies. Without the food source, these creatures would struggle to survive migration or hibernation.

As autumn draws near, take the time to observe all the changes taking place. Birds begin to migrate, mammals gather food for the coming winter, and plants put on a glorious display of fruit and fall color. How are all these changes related? Plant species rely on wildlife to help them spread. Animals act as seed dispersers, consuming the seeds and depositing them away from the parent plant. So it is not mere coincidence that fruiting of many woodland trees and



Red Chokeberry (Aronia arbutifolia), is a common plant eaten by wildlife.

shrubs occurs at the time which there is the greatest number of migratory birds flying overhead. Furthermore, plants have a built in "broadcast" system to ensure their fruit is seen by birds flying overhead. Just as migration begins, certain plant species exhibit foliar fruit flags, or early leaf color change, often a bright yellow to orange and red.

Think about this ingenious facet of nature the next time you come across a golden-leafed spicebush, a scarlet Virginia creeper, or a brilliant red tupelo tree. You just might appreciate the magnificent colors for more than just beauty.

CREATING HABITAT IN YOUR YARD OR GARDEN

Why not take the opportunity this fall to bring wildlife to your backyard? Think about the basic needs of wildlife: food, water, and cover. Think of creative ways to incorporate each of these elements into your property. The native plant species listed below are excellent choices to provide not only berries, nuts, or nectar, but also cover for animals.

TREES

Oak (*Quercus* spp.)
Dogwood (*Cornus* spp.)
Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Black Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*)

SHRUBS

Chokeberry (*Aronia* spp.)
Viburnum spp.

Blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.)
Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)

VINES

Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

HERBACEOUS

New York Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*)
Thin-leaved Sunflower (*Helianthus decapetalus*)
Woodland Aster (*Aster divaricatus*)

If your backyard is already stocked with native plants, there's a good chance that wildlife will continue to visit as the colder months approach. Resist the urge to cut back perennials in the garden after they bloom. Leaving the dried seedheads will invite migrating birds to your yard for a quick refueling. Should the need arise, place small water-holding containers in your backyard or around the garden for wildlife to use. A one inch depth of water is all that's needed.

Providing habitat for wildlife is a great way to connect with nature. Take some time this fall and get out in your yard, dig in the earth, and relish in the beauty of the season as it slows towards winter.



BEFORE, AFTER, AND BETWEEN: VARIATIONS OF THE LANDSCAPE

Featuring selected participating artists from Philadelphia Open Studio Tours 2006



"Forest Watch" Series by Cynthia Back

The Schuylkill Center is pleased to present works by artists who live or work in the Northwest section of Philadelphia from September 9 – December 10, 2006 as part of the Philadelphia Open Studio Tours (POST) 2006 event.

To that end, *Before, After, and Between* is an exhibition of work by four artists who interpret the landscape as it is, as it should be, or how it might become. Cynthia Back's tree trunk series brings us face to face with texture, color, and form. Gina Michaels' small scale sculptures of fanciful trees evoke an imaginary world where man and nature are in a true symbiotic relationship. Ann LaBorie's positive and reverse image photographs heighten the abstract characteristics of the landscape, while David Taffet's photographs presents a tension as we struggle to

art program update

focus on the beauty of the landscape looking beyond the human presence.

POST is a city wide event where artists open their studios free to the public for two weekends in October. Now in its 7th year, nearly 200 artists will participate. POST is a grassroots effort to celebrate Philadelphia's visual artists, to promote Philadelphia's vibrant art community, and to connect the general public to the artists. The event allows visitors from the region and beyond to meet visual artists in their workspaces, view and purchase artwork, and introduce children and families to art in a welcoming environment.

To learn more about the Center's Environmental Art Program, visit <http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/departments/art/>.

REI SUPPORTS SCEE NATURE RAMBLERS!



Charles Kline of REI presented a grant check to Camila Rivera-Tinsley, SCEE Camp Director. This funding from REI will provide underserved children with scholarships to the Center's Nature Ramblers Summer Camp.

The Schuylkill Center's Nature Ramblers Summer Camp had a fabulous 2006 season. Approximately 223 campers attended our environmentally-focused camp this summer. While younger campers spent time doing creative projects like building dinosaur skeletons, making and using solar ovens, and learning to fish at Wind Dance Pond, our older campers had the opportunity to visit

exciting places like the Pine Barrens, Promised Land State Park, and Tytoona Cave on overnight camping adventures! On behalf of SCEE, we would like to thank all of our outstanding camp counselors: Jeanine Schroeder, Bianca Wallace, Calli Ritter, Jared Lucas, Liz Widmaier, Stacy Davis, Monica Ranly, Chris Cohen, and Kevin Groves. We couldn't have done it without you!

In addition, the Center recently received a grant from Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) to provide scholarships for underprivileged youth to attend sessions of our upcoming 2007 Nature Ramblers Summer Camp. This grant also provides much needed camping gear to the Center, which will be used primarily by our 10-12 & 13-15 year old campers as they participate in off-site excursions. Thank you REI!

grants, gifts and donations

April 1 - June 30, 2006

We graciously thank the following foundations, corporations, and businesses for their generosity.

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In Honor of Hannah Ashley for attaining tenure
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In Honor of Anne Todd Bockarie & David Bower's Wedding
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Mr. & Mrs. Michael Conicelli
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Tom & Cindy Stewart

In Memory of Henry H. Meigs
Mrs. Lee Stull

In Memory of Tatnall Starr
Mr. & Mrs. William G. Walkup

In Memory of Leon Young and Catherine Preston
Mr. & Mrs. J. Michael Dzuba



calendar of events

For questions or to register for an event, please call (215) 482-7300, ext. 110 unless noted otherwise. Become a member today and receive a discount on most programs!

October

Sun | 1st *Fall Bird Seed Sale*

1:00 – 4:30 pm

A variety of bird seed will be available, including Sunflower Chips and a Conservation Mix. Order early and save money, members receive an extra discount! To sign up for our Bird Seed Sale mailing list, contact Beatrice McLaughlin at (215) 482-7300, ext. 110 or bmclaughlin@schuylkillcenter.org.

Sat | 7th *Fishing Fanatics*

12:30 - 3:30 pm

\$5/members; \$10/non-members; pre-registration required.

Bring the entire family and learn about how to bait a fish hook, cast a rod, and safely place a fish back in the water from a PA Fish and Boat Commission certified Fishing Skills Instructor. Hike to the Center's Wind Dance Pond and discover what lies beneath the surface of the water as you spend the morning relaxing at the water's edge. Refreshments provided.

Sat | 14th *Fall Family Camping at SCEE*

5:00 pm Saturday - 11:00 am Sunday

\$20/person (up to a family of four);

\$15 per addtl. person; members may bring one free guest; pre-registration required.

(Two-person tents may be rented for \$5 each.)

Enjoy a night of camping with your family at SCEE! We will pitch our tents, learn to make camp with minimal impact on the environment, prowl the trails for owls and other nocturnal animals, make s'mores by the campfire and challenge you to an orienteering program on Sunday morning.

Wed | 18th *Rain Barrel Workshop*

6:30 - 8:30 pm

FREE; pre-registration required.

The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) in partnership with SCEE and Friends of the Wissahickon, is offering a free rain barrel to residents of the Wissahickon watershed who attend this workshop on how to install and use rain barrels and implement other water-saving measures. Participants will be required to monitor their rain barrels for 6 months following installation. Rain barrels and workshop space are limited. Pre-register by contacting Joanne Dahme (PWD) at joanne.dahme@phila.gov or 215.685.4944. Workshop will be held at SCEE.

Sat | 21st *Restoration Volunteer Workday*

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Get outside and dig in the dirt! Join our Land Restoration Department and participate in various projects to help care for the Center's landscape. Projects range from invasive plant removal to planting native vegetation in restored sites. Be sure to dress in layers, wear sturdy boots, and bring bot-

tlated water. Light refreshments and snacks provided. To volunteer, contact Joanne Malfatti at (215) 482-7300, ext. 144.

Sat | 21st *Rain Barrel Workshop*

1:00 – 3:00 pm

FREE; pre-registration required.

The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) in partnership with SCEE and Friends of the Wissahickon, is offering a free rain barrel to residents of the Wissahickon watershed who attend this workshop on how to install and use rain barrels and implement other water-saving measures. Participants will be required to monitor their rain barrels for 6 months following installation. Rain barrels and workshop space are limited. Pre-register by contacting Joanne Dahme (PWD) at joanne.dahme@phila.gov or 215.685.4944. Workshop will be held at SCEE.

Fri/Sat | 27th/28th *Halloween Hikes & Hayrides*

6:00 - 10:00 pm each evening

\$5/members; \$7/non-members (Hayride included); \$30 max per family; pre-registration required.

Join us for our annual Halloween Hikes and Hayrides! Explore SCEE by flashlight and learn about the nocturnal animals that inhabit our forests and fields. Enjoy a hayride along a woodland road. Refreshments, s'mores by our campfire and pumpkin painting will be available! These activities are not scary and are perfect for little ones.

Mon | 30th *Bats: Myths and Reality*

7:00 - 8:00 pm

\$5/members; \$7/non-members; proceeds benefit SCEE's Wildlife Rehab Clinic; pre-registration required.

Why are bats so feared when they are so tiny, shy, clean, intelligent and the cornerstone of a healthy environment? Because bats are so different, they are misunderstood and persecuted. This child-friendly program with bat expert Brenda Malinics will help you discover the benefits and develop an appreciation of bats worldwide, especially local species, while dispelling the myths that have been associated with bats throughout time.

November

Wed | 1st *Teacher Workshop "Reading to Learn Content: Focus on K-3 Environment and Ecology"*

8:30 am - 3:30 pm (lunch provided)

FREE; pre-registration required.

Patricia Vathis, the Environment and Ecology Advisor for PA Department of Education, will introduce teachers, reading specialists and curriculum coordinators of grades K-3 to an exciting new program which incorporates a wide variety of nonfiction reading books, manipulatives, integration techniques and hands-on inquiry based activities.

Teachers will receive a selection of nonfiction and fiction leveled readers along with content specific nonfiction reading books, animal/insect puppets, reading forest mat, and originally developed lesson plan with activities to support the environment and ecology and science standards/anchors. Act 48 approved.

Sat | 4th *Watershed BMP Tour*

This tour will be conducted by the Philadelphia Water Department and include a stop at The Schuylkill Center. For more info, contact Jennifer Hoffman at (215) 482-7300, ext. 124 or jhoffman@schuylkillcenter.org.

Sat | 4th *Bird Club trip to Bake Oven Knob Hawk Watch*

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

\$15 for seat in van; otherwise carpool separately; pre-registration required.

The SCEE Bird Club will travel to Bake Oven Knob, on Blue Mountain, about 20 miles east of the more heavily visited Hawk Mountain. This trip will require hiking in order to reach the best observation sites, but the views of migrating raptors and forested hillsides will be worth the effort! Please dress for the weather, wear hiking boots, and pack water and a lunch.

Sat | 18th *Restoration Volunteer Workday*

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Get outside and dig in the dirt! Join our Land Restoration Department and participate in various projects to help care for the Center's landscape. Projects range from invasive plant removal to planting native vegetation in restored sites. Be sure to dress in layers, wear sturdy boots, and bring bottled water. Light refreshments and snacks provided. To volunteer, contact Joanne Malfatti at (215) 482-7300, ext. 144.

Thu | 23rd *Center closed for holiday*

December

Sat | 2nd *Wildlife Protection Family Program*

1:00 – 3:00 pm

\$5/members; \$7/non-members; pre-registration required.

What happens behind the scenes at The Schuylkill Center's Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic? Find out about common injuries to urban wildlife and how kids and adults can help to prevent these problems. Meet animals living at the Clinic and ask questions of the Center's Director of Wildlife Rehabilitation, Rick Schubert. This program will take place at the Center's main Education Building, 8480 Hagy's Mill Road.

Mon | 25th – Jan | 1st *Center closed for holiday break*



AN AIR QUALITY ALERT FOR PLANTS AND WILDLIFE

By Michael Burri of the Clean Air Council

Air pollution, as most of us know, is unhealthy for human beings. When air quality worsens, asthma rates rise, together with the incidence of acute respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. But how many of us know the impacts of air pollution, daily or long term, on plants and animals?

In fact, many of the airborne hazards that impact human health also affect the vitality of plant and animal life. Ground level ozone, for example, is a chronic summer air pollutant. Also known as smog, it forms when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds interact with sunlight during hot days. The Philadelphia area is in non-attainment for federal ozone standards and has about 20 high ozone alert days a year. On these days, health officials encourage people, especially children and older adults, to limit their outdoor activity and to stay indoors if possible. Meanwhile, plants and animals stay exposed to smog. Ozone molecules near the ground damage lung tissue in animals and prevent respiration in plants by blocking the openings in leaves. Without respiration, a plant cannot photosynthesize normally and its growth is stunted.

Global warming is also disrupting natural cycles in animal and plant life in some very disturbing ways – and not only among polar bears and penguins. A March 2006 report released by Clear the Air Coalition pointed to global warming as the environmental trigger for “season creep,” or the increasingly early arrival of signs of spring. Warmer temperatures, it found, had already begun to alter patterns in bird migration and the blossom timing of specific plants. Northern cardinals are singing 22 days earlier, for example, while frogs are starting their mating season 12 days earlier, and lilacs and honeysuckle



On a local level, global warming, and the rising levels of CO2, may cause certain plants, like this Oriental Bittersweet, to grow more vigorously.

are blooming 6 days earlier. More troubling, no one can say what the broader consequences will be.

Plants and animals are impacted by air pollution and global warming across the planet and in our own backyard. But because individual choices are part of the problem, they are also part of the solution. Simple actions to take are to make a conscious effort to conserve energy and to drive less. Because coal-fired power plants contribute so disproportionately in our region to both air pollution and global warming, individuals should choose a renewable energy option for their residential electricity. PECO Wind, for example, is now widely available. Individuals can also be advocates for clean air policies by becoming involved with a local air quality organization such as Philadelphia-based Clean Air Council. Founded in 1967, the Council is committed to protecting everyone’s right to breathe clean air. For more information, visit www.cleanair.org.

Notes

HELP SCHOOLS VISIT SCEE!

The Schuylkill Center is a popular field trip destination for Philadelphia elementary schools, many of whom lack the financial resources to afford both program fees and transportation costs. We are seeking contributions to our Wheels to the Woods Fund which helps schools in need to visit the Center, and give students the opportunity to explore and learn from our diverse natural environment. Please direct donations to Sarah James, Membership Services Coordinator. For questions about this Fund, contact Sarah at (215) 482-7300, ext. 117 or sjames@schuylkillcenter.org.

ENTER TO WIN A TOUR OF THE FRENCH CREEK RIDGE VINEYARDS!

We value your opinion and are seeking your feedback on The Schuylkill Center. Starting October 1st, please visit our website www.schuylkillcenter.org and follow the link to our on-line survey. It should take about 10 minutes to fill out and will go a long way to help us serve you better. To show our appreciation, survey participants will be entered to win a tour of the French Creek Ridge Vineyards for them and 14 or their closest friends and family. Located in Northwest Chester County, it was voted best Local Wine 2006 in Philadelphia Magazine and has received awards for its champagne. Thanks in advance for your help!

VOLUNTEERS SHINE AT ANNUAL PICNIC



Pictured here from left to right are: Louise Wright, Sue Leavesley, Andrew Mamora, and Sarahann Koenig, SCEE's Outstanding Volunteers of 2006.

On July 13th, The Schuylkill Center, joined by friends and staff celebrated our members and volunteers who make it all possible. This year, volunteers Louise Wright, Sue Leavesley, Andrew Mamora, and Sarahann Koenig, received special recognition for their extraordinary efforts. The accomplishments

obtained through their hard work and dedication include: revitalizing the Center’s Organic Gardens, developing unique outreach programs for the Environmental Education Department, lending graphic design expertise to all departments of SCEE, and increasing

the professionalism of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic, respectively. In addition, a special presentation was given by Gary Sheehan of Mesa Environmental Sciences, Inc. regarding SCEE’s newly installed 10.2 kW Solar PV Array. Thanks to all of our supporters who attended!

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR VISITORS

As of July 1, 2006, The Schuylkill Center is no longer charging an admission fee for access to our hiking trails. In addition, our Education Building is now closed on Sundays (unless a special program is scheduled); however, the trails remain open for guests. Visitors are welcome to hike at the Center Monday-Sunday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. Please note that due to these new policies, Schuylkill Center staff may not always be available at the Education Building, in the case of an emergency.



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 MS. DONNA WILHELM

A special thank you to all of our new members—you are most appreciated! Please let us know if you prefer to see your name with a different spelling or format by calling (215) 482-7300 x 117. Membership contributions received after June 30th will be acknowledged in our next issue of *The Quill*.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WILDLIFE REHABBER

By Rick Schubert



Rick Schubert, Director of Wildlife Rehabilitation, is shown here feeding an 11 week old raccoon whose mother was hit by a car.

Ever thought of what it's like to be a professional wildlife rehabilitator? Probably not...it's not on the list of most popular occupations in the world. But wildlife rehabilitation is a growing field, driven by a clear public demand and an overwhelming public need, in an age when humans are coming into increasing contact with wild animals. The thousands of wildlife rehabilitation centers that have cropped up across the country in the last twenty-five years, and the hundreds of thousands of people who take time out of their daily lives to care for injured animals shows that Americans care about their native wildlife and are getting involved to protect them. We here at The Schuylkill Center are on the cutting edge of this trend.

But as far as the day-to-day life of a wildlife rehabilitator...a typical day goes something like this:

6:00 am - Up and out of bed.
 7:45 am - Arrive at work, start planning my day and clearing phone messages. Dozens of calls come in from people who've got wild animals that were possibly hit by cars, poisoned, and orphaned.
 8:00 am - Volunteers start arriving, and I get them started right away heating formula for the baby squirrels, rabbits, and raccoons. They also mix the liquid

fur and feathers

diets for the baby birds at this time.

9:00 am - There are hungry mouths to feed everywhere you turn, feeding and medication charts to be filled out, medicines to be given.

10:00 am - The first patient arrives, a hawk hit by a car that has a broken wing—we've got to stabilize the animal and get on the phone with the vet to schedule a radiograph.

11:00 am - Still behind on the morning feedings, those baby birds need to be fed again, forty gaping mouths that need food every hour, all day long. Opossums are behind schedule, we've got to be careful placing the catheter tubes into their stomachs to deliver the measured amount of formula. And we've got to order more supplies...

12:00 pm - Lunchtime? Not for rehabbers! Time to start another squirrel feeding; it's back to the incubators with our little syringes of warm milk. The phone's ringing again, plus someone just pulled up with another animal, this time it's a bat caught in a glue trap. I swallow some food while walking around the building, checking the injured hawks...did they eat the food I left for them?

1:00 pm - A turtle arrives, run over by a car.

2:00 pm - Still fixing injured patients, still answering phone calls.

3:00 pm - Another patient. This time it's a litter of dehydrated squirrels that were orphaned to make way for the next strip mall.

4:00 pm - Another shift of volunteers arrives...time for the next nursery feeding!

5:00 pm - Clean clean clean! Loads of laundry to be done, outside cages to clean and dishes to do...and being grateful again for all the wonderful volunteers I work with.

6:00 pm - Taking care of an injured fox, and there's an owl that needs his meds.

7:00 pm - The sink is broken! We try to fix it as best we can to get us through another day.

8:00 pm - One last round of squirrel and opossum feedings, check to make sure everyone's ok, and time to go home! Tomorrow's another day...

SCHUYLKILL RIVER SOJOURNERS LEARN IMPORTANCE OF WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

By Laura Catalano, Staff Writer, Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area

When the Eighth Annual Schuylkill River Sojourn stopped for lunch at Norristown's Riverfront Park, paddlers were met by more than the landing captains. The Schuylkill Center's Director of Wildlife Rehabilitation, Rick Schubert, was on hand to greet them with a baby opossum and a recovering box turtle. And the paddlers had something for him, as well—a turtle with a cracked shell that they had happened upon earlier in the day. Schubert, who provided Sojourners with an informative program about how humans can safely coexist with wildlife, took the injured turtle back to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic for treatment.

The Schuylkill River Sojourn is a 7-day, 113-mile

canoe and kayak journey down the river. It began in Schuylkill Haven, Schuylkill County on June 3rd and ended in Philadelphia's Historic Bartram's Garden on Friday June 9th. About 50 paddlers stopped for lunch in Norristown and heard Schubert's presentation on Thursday, June 8th. Hosted by the non-profit Schuylkill River Heritage Area, the Sojourn aims to help paddlers rediscover the river and its heritage, making stops at cities, towns, parks and historic sites along the way. It also invites the public to free evening programs that reflect the heritage of the region. More than 170 people participated in this year's Sojourn, some for the whole journey, many for just one or two days.



education initiatives

A BLUEBIRD SINGS IN PERFECT KEY...



Warren Petrillo, SCEE Intern, helps to put up bluebird boxes along the Chris McCabe Bluebird trail.

As early spring arrives in Philadelphia, so do flocks of Eastern Bluebirds, flying north with the warmer weather and burgeoning insect populations. These migrating birds join the hardier bluebirds that remain in southeastern PA throughout the winter, their diet switching to seed and fruits (during SCEE's Winter Bird Census, we counted nearly 30 bluebirds that were perched on the fence line surrounding our organic gardens!).

Bluebirds prefer low-growing, grassy fields with occasional trees or shrubs on which to perch as they scan the meadow for insects. As cavity nesters, they require a selection of dead, standing trees and rotting fenceposts. In areas where farmland and naturally occurring fields have been developed or undergone succession to young woodlands with few dead trees, prime habitat for bluebirds has been destroyed. Across Pennsylvania, bluebird populations plummeted through the mid-1900's due to habitat destruction and overuse of chemical pesticides.

At SCEE, concerned citizens have been working for the last decade to maintain and improve the open habitat necessary to support bluebirds during the nesting season. Chris McCabe, a longtime volunteer naturalist, dedicated many years of work before his death in 2003. His family established the

Chris McCabe Bluebird Fund to further the development of a bluebird trail at SCEE – a network of widely spaced nest boxes that can be observed from our existing walking paths. The fund will support meadow restoration, installation of new nest boxes and maintenance of existing boxes. Pat Ford, of the Philadelphia Water Department, Fran Lawn, SCEE's Director of Land Restoration, and students from Green Woods Charter School have all participated in the creation of the bluebird trail.

This summer, the Center was fortunate to have the help of Warren Petrillo, SCEE Intern and student at Philadelphia University. Warren inventoried 30 nest boxes, constructed and installed several new boxes, and helped to create a concept for at least two walking routes along the bluebird trail. A pamphlet will soon be available for SCEE guests that highlight the routes, the natural history, and habitat needs of bluebirds and other cavity nesting species. Stop by soon to visit the new trail and perhaps you will be inspired to install a nest box in your yard, or work with your neighbors to install a bluebird trail in your area!

For more information on bluebird trails, visit www.nabluebirdssociety.org and to learn more about bluebird populations in Pennsylvania, visit www.pgc.state.pa.us.

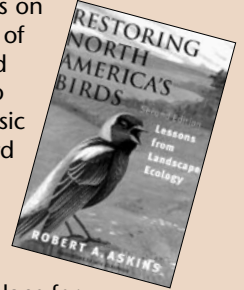
WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

- ❖ A watershed is an area of land from which rainwater and snowmelt drain into a particular river, stream, or lake.
- ❖ The 64 square miles of the Wissahickon watershed are located in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties and contain all or part of 14 different municipalities.
- ❖ The Wissahickon watershed is an area of special importance because of its effect on Philadelphians' drinking water.
- ❖ The Schuylkill Center is not located in the Wissahickon watershed, but we recognize that residents of our local neighborhoods are and that many of us drink its water!

book store

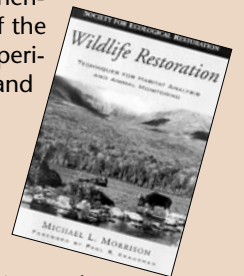
Restoring North America's Birds
By Robert A. Askins

This book draws on recent research of bird species and their habitats to explain how basic principles of bird ecology and landscape ecology can help us create scientifically sound plans for protecting and restoring the rich diversity of North American birds.



Wildlife Restoration: Techniques for Habitat Analysis and Animal Monitoring
By Michael L. Morrison

Produced by the Society for Ecological Restoration, this book provides a comprehensive overview of the principles of experimental design and monitoring as they relate to wildlife restoration. Readers will learn practical, scientific skills for measuring and monitoring wildlife populations.



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See Page 5 for details.



Gift Membership

Have you thought about the perfect gift? Why not give the gift of a Schuylkill Center membership. There are year round activities for "kids" of all ages. Why not ease your yearly giving hassle and call 215-482-7300, ext. 117 to order your gift membership today. Some of the benefits of membership include: unlimited admission, discounts at the bookstore, special invitations to member-only events and much, much more!

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Seton Fellow: \$500

Thoreau Fellow: \$1,000

Halloween Hikes & Hayrides

Friday, October 27 &
Saturday, October 28
6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

s'more-making
by the campfire

Festive hayrides
pumpkin painting



\$5.00 (members)
\$7.00 (non-members)

\$30.00 maximum per family
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