

NEW NAME. SAME US.

BY: **GAIL FARMER**



**WISSAHICKON
TRAILS** CONNECTING LAND,
WATER & PEOPLE

We have had outstanding success over the past 3 years – protecting an additional 30 acres of open space, improving more than 40 acres of habitat, partnering with 13 municipalities to draft a shared water quality improvement plan for the Wissahickon Creek, and much more. What has been the key to our success? People. People, like you, who bring your values to life by partnering with us in this work. Today, we reach about 7,000 people in our region – more than ever before in our history. While we are thrilled with this number, the reality is that 7,000 is only 3% of the roughly 220,000 people who live in our watershed. We see this as an incredible opportunity. How do we seize this opportunity to engage even more people in our work? Imagine what we could achieve if we were able to engage 10% or even 20% of the people in our region!

Our board and staff have given a great deal of thought to the future and how we can best position ourselves for success at engaging more people, not just today or tomorrow, but for years to come. The challenge is that we live in a

changing world, and if we want to continue to be a vibrant and successful organization into the future, we must be willing to change with it.

So we are making some big changes and I am excited to share them with you. First, we have made the important decision to change our name and logo. Our new name is *Wissahickon Trails*. We believe this is the perfect name for us because trails are the gateway for people to experience every aspect of our work – from land preservation to protecting the Wissahickon Creek. Our mission is about so much more than trails; but trails are critical to fulfilling our mission because, like us, trails connect land, water, and people.

Over the last year we have been reaching out to you, our friends and supporters, with surveys and meetings to ask for your input about other ways we need to change. We've heard you. We are making some changes to better align giving with donor interests (see pg. 4 for more info). I can't wait for you to see the new web-

site we are launching, where you will find an interactive map designed to help you find new ways to connect with nature and participate in our conservation work. New trail signage and 11 new print trail maps will make navigating our trails safer and easier. We will officially be launching our new name, logo, website, and maps at our Annual Meeting, March 25th, but we wanted to use this newsletter as an opportunity to give you a sneak peak of the changes to come.

Here is what's the same – who we are and what we do. Our board and staff are the same and our mission is the same. We hope these changes will be a springboard for engaging even more people in our work to keep the Wissahickon Valley healthy, vibrant, and green. Because nature needs people – more people like you.

You can help us reach more people by being an ambassador for *Wissahickon Trails* – please help us spread the word about who we are and what we do.

See you on the trail.

2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

12/31/19

ASSETS

CASH	94,703
CONTRIBUTIONS & GRANTS RECEIVABLE	527,476
INVESTMENTS	7,613,712
CONSERVATION EASEMENTS, PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT, NET	12,632,419
OTHER ASSETS	31,349
TOTAL ASSETS	20,899,659

LIABILITIES

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & OTHER LIABILITIES	142,517
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NET ASSETS

WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	15,205,711
WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	5,551,431
TOTAL NET ASSETS	20,757,142

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	20,899,659
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SUPPORT & REVENUE

CONTRIBUTIONS & GRANTS	1,080,276
PROGRAMS & OTHER REVENUE	350,430
RELEASES FROM RESTRICTIONS	449,904
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	1,880,610

EXPENSES

CONSERVATION & ENGAGEMENT	1,039,596
DEVELOPMENT	345,563
ADMINISTRATIVE	288,983
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,674,142

PHOTO: MARGARET ROHDE



We recognize that in order to be a good steward of nature, it is essential that we be a good steward of the dollars contributed by the many donors who invest in our mission. We are careful with how we use those dollars and I am pleased to share our 2019 Statement of Financial Position. We closed the year in strong financial standing. Our support was fueled by individual, institutional and market growth, providing us with funding and an asset base to support our conservation and engagement initiatives.

If you read *By the Numbers* (page 3), you can get a sense of how we have converted contributed dollars into more protected and improved habitats, a cleaner creek, more diverse wildlife communities, better trails, and more opportunities for people to enjoy and learn about nature. *Thank you* for your investment and for sharing in our vision of creating a Wissahickon Valley where people *and* nature can thrive.

Sincerely,

Gail Farmer



2019 BY THE NUMBERS

2,000 students from 9 local schools participated in our environmental education program. As part of this program, 440 students collected aquatic insects from the Wissahickon Creek and 175 students brainstormed solutions for flooding along the Wissahickon Creek in Ambler.

1,240 community members financially supported our mission through membership, annual fund donations, and designated gifts. For a complete list of donors visit our website.

7,267 people follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

496 wildlife observations recorded in iNaturalist by 46 different contributors.

201 salamanders measured by Citizen Scientist volunteers to understand the habitat quality.

132 birds across 19 different species studied at our MAPS Bird Banding Station at Crossways Preserve.

17 Stream Smart House Calls reached homes in Abington, managing 3.4 million gallons of stormwater per year, which removes 947 lbs of sediment, 1.06 lbs phosphorus, and 8.65 lbs of nitrogen from the Sandy Run annually.

146 days of rain this year caused flooding in the Wissahickon Valley. The Wissahickon Clean Water Partnership is actively working to manage stormwater issues.

873 native trees and shrubs and 500 native wildflowers planted in the Wissahickon watershed.

22.7 acres of habitat improved through conservation projects. An additional 6+ acres were protected through a donated conservation easement.

34 nestlings lived in nestboxes on our preserves until they were ready to strike out on their own.

18 trail signs installed along the Green Ribbon Trail and on our Preserves to improve wayfinding.

950 volunteers contributed 7,202 hours of work. Of the total number, 4,918 hours supported stewardship and trails projects, and 778 hours were dedicated to the Citizen Science and Creek Watch programs.

131 monarch butterflies tagged to track their migration, 43 of which were raised by residents and staff at the Hill at Whitemarsh retirement community.

12 major trail improvements completed - including geotextile installation and boardwalks - to keep trail users safe and (mostly) dry.

447 visitors learned about historical engineering and technology at the Evans-Mumbower Mill.

72 events engaged 4,455 community members in education and recreational activities throughout the Wissahickon watershed.

110 corporations, foundations, and small businesses supported our work through sponsorship, donations, and grants.

GIVING MADE EASY

BY: **ANNA MARCHINI**

For more than six decades, our generous donors have provided the resources needed to bring our mission to life. From land protection to trail improvement projects to floodplain restoration, these projects only happen when people invest their dollars in the work. This continued support speaks volumes about the trust our donors have in our work and the value of open space to our communities.

At this pivotal point in time, we have carefully considered the type of organization we need to be to best serve our mission in the future, while still honoring the past. For two years in a row, we've asked our members what was important to them, and overwhelmingly, we heard that investing in our mission and work was the driving force behind their support. Due to this feedback, we have decided to simplify our giving options to better reflect our donors' reasons for giving. We are shifting from

using the term *member* to *supporter* to better express our donors' priorities. In 2019, we had 462 members and 778 donors (made a donation but not in the form of a membership). Moving forward, we will simply have 1,240 supporters with plenty of room to grow.

The good news is that your support gives you access to the same benefits as your membership gift did in the past. The most important of these benefits is knowing that you're supporting a cause that is meaningful to you. Supporters (\$75 or more annually) will still receive free registration to most of our nature programs. Our handful of partners that provided a discount to their goods and services will continue to do so.

In the end, we've selected a word to best reflect the future of this organization that will allow us to connect with more people. Changing it will not change your connection to the work, impact, and people of Wissahickon Trails.



PHOTO: ANNA MARCHINI



PHOTO: DAVID FREED

You may still have questions, such as:

-I just renewed my membership. Now what?

You are fine! Next year, you may notice that we don't send you a membership renewal but will remind you to renew your support. All your benefits remain the same.

-What about my membership card?

It turns out there aren't any reasons to print and mail these cards. As a bonus, we will save paper and postage.

-I never gave a membership, but only gave a gift at the end of the year.

You're fine, too! You will be included as a Supporter and we hope you will continue to show your generosity, year after year.

Don't forget, we have an option for monthly giving, the *Green Ribbon Circle*, which makes giving to Wissahickon Trails simple and effective. You decide what amount you want to give monthly and we do the rest. If you've been a donor, thank you. If you have not made a gift yet, this is a perfect time to do so. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at anna@wissahickontrails.org.

JANUARY

Citizen Science Fair

Tues, Jan 28 | 7:00 PM

**Wissahickon Trails Headquarters
at Four Mills Reserve**

Learn about the new Citizen Science opportunities, such as nest box monitoring and raising monarch butterflies.

Program is free.

FEBRUARY

Great Backyard Bird Count

Sat, Feb 15 | 9:00 - 11:30 AM

**Wissahickon Trails Headquarters
at Four Mills Reserve**

Join birdwatchers of all ages from all over the world, to create a real-time snapshot of which birds are on our preserves. We partnered with Weavers Way Co-op to make and take home DIY bird feeding treats.

Birds & Brews: Barnegat Lighthouse

Sat, Feb 29 | 10:00 AM

Barnegat Lighthouse State Park, NJ

Explore this winter birding hotspot on Long Beach Island. We'll look for harlequin ducks, loons, and mergansers, plus purple sandpipers and snow buntings. We will then migrate to Ship Bottom Brewery for a drink.



PHOTO: DAVID FREED

MARCH

Maple Sugaring Festival

Sun, Mar 1 | 12:00 - 3:00 PM

**Wissahickon Trails Headquarters at
Four Mills Reserve**

Take a walk along the Green Ribbon Trail at Four Mills Reserve to learn how maple syrup is made, from tree to table! This program is perfect for the whole family and participants end the tour with waffles, syrup, and hot chocolate at our historic barn.

Supporters: \$5 adult / \$3 child

General public: \$10 adult / \$5 child

Woodcock Walk

Fri, Mar 20 | 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Crossways Preserve

Join us for an evening walk to witness one of the most remarkable signs of spring, the display of the American Woodcock. The walk will end by (hopefully!) watching the courtship dance and song of this secretive bird.

Walk the Wissahickon Southern Series

These hikes are perfect for people who have hiked the northern part of the trail during the Annual Walk the Wissahickon event, but wish to explore the southern sections of the Green Ribbon Trail and Forbidden Drive. Hikes are guided and participants are bussed back to the start.

Supporters: \$30 per hike

General Public: \$40 per hike

Sun, March 22 | 1:30 - 4:00 PM

5-mile Hike

Four Mills Reserve to Morris Arboretum

Sun, April 5 | 1:00 - 5:00 PM

8-mile Hike

Northwestern Stables to

Philadelphia Canoe Club



PHOTO: DAVID FREED

Annual Meeting

Wed, Mar 25 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Germantown Academy

Supporters, volunteers, and friends are invited to join our board of directors and staff for a night of good cheer as we celebrate the success of 2019 and share our plans for 2020 and beyond. Light refreshments will be served.

Event is free; RSVP requested.

iNaturalist Walk & Demo

Sat, Mar 28 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**Wissahickon Trails Headquarters at
Four Mills Reserve**

Use your phone and the iNaturalist app to contribute valuable data to our conservation efforts. Participants will learn how to help us compete in the City Nature Challenge in April.



PHOTO: KRISTY MORLEY

APRIL

Serve the Preserve

Sat, Apr 4 | 9:00 AM

Armentrout Preserve

Help us continue our restoration and monitoring efforts in the Wissahickon Valley this spring. Volunteers will participate in a BioBlitz using the iNaturalist app and, if time allows, remove invasive plants. Free, registration required.

Ambler 5-mile Loop Hike

Sat, Apr 4 | 4:00 – 6:30 PM

Forest & Main Brewing Company

This hike will show you how to connect to the Green Ribbon Trail, Lower Gwynedd Trails, and Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve from Ambler Borough. We will begin and end at Forest & Main Brewing Company, staying for a drink after the hike.

Wissahickon Photo Contest

Mon, Apr 6 to Fri, Oct 9

We've teamed up with Friends of the Wissahickon to present the 2020 Biennial Wissahickon Photo Contest. The contest kicks off April 6 and the submission deadline is October 9. For rules and to submit photos, visit: fow.org/photocontest2020.

Philly City Nature Challenge

Friday, Apr 24 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Piszek Preserve

Philadelphia and its neighboring counties will compete against other cities in the world to see who can find the most species. Download the free iNaturalist app on your phone and join us as we explore Piszek Preserve to document the species present and help Philadelphia win.

50th Annual Creek Clean Up

Sat, Apr 25 | 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Be part of the 50th Annual Creek Clean Up of the Wissahickon Creek and its many tributaries. Volunteer program is free, sign up for your section on our website.

Evans-Mumbower Mill Open House Events

Sundays | 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Free; donations accepted

See history come alive and take a tour of the fully operational mill and blacksmith shop. Each Open House has a different theme, visit our website for more info.

April 19 – Season Opener

May 17 – Connecting with Nature

June 21 – Dog Adoption Event

MAY

26th Annual Birdathon

Fri, May 1 to Sat, May 2

5:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Teams explore the Wissahickon watershed in friendly competition to identify as many species as possible during this 24-hour fundraiser to support our conservation efforts. \$35 registration fee includes t-shirt, swap meet, and Brag & Boast ceremony.

Bird in Hand: Songbird Banding

Sat, May 16 | 8:00 – 10:00 AM

Willow Lake Farm

Join us for a "behind the nets" tour of a bird banding station. Learn about wild bird identification and ecology as they are banded, measured, and released. You may have a chance to release a bird from your hand!

JUNE

6-mile, 6 Preserve Hike

Sat, June 6 | 5:30 PM

Wissahickon Trails Headquarters at Four Mills Reserve

Join us for a 6-mile loop hike connecting six different protected properties, starting on the Green Ribbon Trail at Four Mills Barn and walking through Camp Woods, Armentrout Preserve, Briar Hill Preserve, Prophecy Creek Park, and Willow Lake Farm.

31st Annual Tex Mex 5k Race for Open Space

Wed, June 24 | 7:00 PM

Tex Mex Connection, North Wales

Come for the race and stay for the party. Register to run or volunteer, and enjoy dinner, music, and a Tex Mex Margarita (21+). Proceeds support our mission to inspire and engage diverse communities of people in protecting, stewarding, and enjoying the land and waterways of the Wissahickon Valley. Advance registration \$42.



PHOTO: MARGARET ROHDE



Groups from Merck & Co., Inc. and Interfaith Housing Alliance helped catch a total of 17 migrating monarch butterflies at Dodsworth Run Preserve for tagging and release.

PHOTO: KELLY JOSLIN



At Camp Woods, staff from LTK Engineering Services worked hard to re-route a frequently muddy section of trail to drier ground.

PHOTO: BERNIE WILSON



Volunteers helped hand-seed meadow areas and plant 207 native wildflowers at Piszek Preserve, making it a future haven for pollinators.



A group of Merck & Co., Inc. staff helped repair and enhance a deer enclosure that protects a vernal pool at Crossways Preserve.

PHOTO: MARGARET RHOIDE



Conservation Crew members installed and maintained deer protection for native trees and shrubs at Byrne Family Preserve.



YOUR COMMUNITY AT WORK

OUR MISSION

We inspire and engage diverse communities of people to protect, steward, and enjoy the land and waterways of the Wissahickon Valley.

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PHOTO: MARGARET RHOIDE



Merck & Co., Inc. employees did an excellent job repairing and expanding boardwalks along a muddy section of the Green Ribbon Trail.

PHOTO: MARGARET RHOIDE



Fairwold Academy students and members of the Ambler Rotary Interact Club helped plant 70 native trees and shrubs at Piszek Preserve.

PHOTO: MARGARET RHOIDE



Conservation Crew members helped install 293 native wildflower plugs at Camp Woods in newly-created "pocket" pollinator meadows.

PHOTO: PAI OELSCHLAGER



Conservation Crew members replaced failing footbridges and boardwalks along the Green Ribbon Trail near the Merck Stepping Stones crossing.

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