

Charlestown Township Newsletter

Spring 2022 Newsletter

www.charlestown.pa.us

Published by the Board of Supervisors

4030 Whitehorse Road, Devault, PA 19432 - (610) 240-0326

Township Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday - Friday



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MONTHLY MEETINGS

Supervisors

1st Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

2nd Tuesday @ 7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission

Semi-monthly 3rd Tuesday
@ 4:00 p.m.

Environmental

Advisory Committee

2nd Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation

3rd Thursday @ 7:30 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Great Valley Middle School, 255 N. Phoenixville Pike, Malvern.

Free Summer Concerts!

- by Stephanie Robinson, Parks & Recreation Board

The Charlestown Historical Society and Charlestown Township Park & Recreation Board will jointly sponsor three free summer concerts. The first concert will be held at Charlestown Historical Society's Wisner-Rapp House at 3020 Yellow Springs Road, Malvern (next to Brightside Farm and Park) on Thursday, June 23 from 7 to 9 pm. featuring The Malarkey Brothers, a five piece band with accordion, fiddle, guitar, keyboards, bass, drums, and vocals performing Irish music. They are returning from a performance here several years ago before Covid. So bring your blankets and lawn chairs!



Above: Concert at the Rapp House in 2019, photo by Darrah Ribble

The second concert will be held at Charlestown Park (adjacent University of Valley Forge) 100 Academic Way, Phoenixville on July 7th featuring One Man Dog, a James Taylor Tribute Band.

Concert #3 will also be held at Charlestown Park featuring the Might Manatees Band.

Additional information nearer to concert time will be posted on Charlestown Historical Society's website at:

www.charlestownhistoricalsocietypa.com

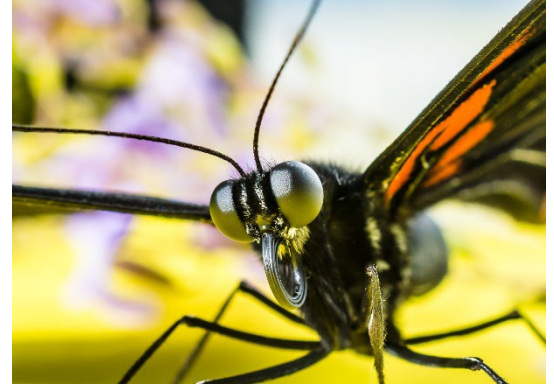
and Township website at www.charlestown.pa.us

National Pollinator Week: June 20-26

- by Sharon Richardson, Environmental Advisory Committee Member

Did you know that fourteen years ago the U.S. Congress designated the last week in June as “National Pollinator Week” to emphasize the need for all Americans to address the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations? Pollinator Week has now grown into an international celebration, promoting the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats, beetles, moths, wasps, and flies.

There are MANY sources to learn about this vitally important topic, but I have selected two to highlight. IF you'd like to read just ONE book, I respectfully submit that it should be Doug Tallamy's recent book entitled *Nature's Best Hope*. The reason I selected that particular book is because it is packed with simple, practical things each and every one of us can do. As Doug says, 'this is not rocket science – we can all make a difference.' WE, you and me, are Nature's Best Hope. The choices we make on our own properties matter! If you don't have the time or interest to read Doug's book, please consider the suggestions provided by Pollinator.com



Above: Beauty is in the Compound Eye of the Beholder

1. PLANT FOR POLLINATORS

- Habitat opportunities abound on every landscape – from window boxes to acres of farms to corporate campuses to utility and roadside corridors – every site can be habitat.
- Utilize plants native to your area (or at the least, non-invasive for your area).
- Utilize the [Ecoregional Planting Guides](#) and the [Garden Recipe Cards](#) to create or enhance your pollinator garden. Decide among the plant material options - seeds, plugs, plants or a combination.
- Know your soil type and select appropriate plant material.
- Plant in clusters to create a "target" for pollinators to find.
- Plant for continuous bloom throughout the growing season from spring to fall.
- Select a site that is removed from wind, has at least partial sun, and can provide water.
- Allow material from dead branches and logs remain as nesting sites; reduce mulch to allow patches of bare ground for ground-nesting bees to utilize; consider installing wood nesting blocks for wood-nesting natives.

2. REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE IMPACT OF PESTICIDES.

- Check out the [Pesticides Learning Center](#) on the Pollinator Partnership website to learn more about the interactions between pollinators and pesticides!
- Where possible, avoid pest problems in the first place by burying infested plant residues, removing pest habitat, and planting native plants that encourage natural enemies of pests.
- Practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- If you are a farmer or pesticide applicator, check out our [Pesticide Education Module](#).
- If you must use pesticides, read and follow ALL label directions carefully.

Let's make Charlestown a pollinator friendly township. IF each of us play our part, we will build pollinator corridors. Remember, WE ARE NATURE'S BEST HOPE!

What is a “Native Tree”?

- by Pete Goodman with Editorial and Technical assistance from Carol Armstrong

At a recent Planning Commission meeting when a tree ordinance was being discussed, someone asked, “What is a *Native Tree* anyway?” and implied, “what does it matter?”

I was somewhat taken a back at the question which was referred to me to answer. I thought everyone in Charlestown knew that native vegetation was important and why. I flustered with an answer saying something about the fact that ‘native’ refers to trees that evolved here spending hundreds of thousands of years interacting with the environment and the animals and insects. And that they provide ecological services that imported trees do not offer to benefit the animals, birds and insects that live here.

At right: Mature native tree forest



It wasn't until waking the next morning that it came to me that what happened the night before was an opportunity and that I should write an article explaining what native vegetation is and why it is important. This is an article to educate the community whom I had wrongfully assumed knew the value of native plants and their importance in our community.

So first, what is native vegetation – trees, shrubs, flowers, plants of all kind? Native vegetation are the plants that developed here over hundreds of thousands of years. Not just for a thousand or two but hundreds of thousands of years. These plants did not evolve in a vacuum as individuals. They evolved as the climate changed, before and after ice ages, and with animals as they evolved. The insects, the reptiles and the amphibians, the birds and the mammals all evolved together to form a relatively stable functioning ecosystem that provided food, shelter and a place or manner in which to propagate the species. This ecosystem balanced itself. More bats - fewer flying insects at night. More foxes - fewer rabbits. But it was never “x” of this equals “y” of that, or exact computations. There were always wide variations and fluctuations, and species adapted and new forms evolved, to make a complex, very diverse, all in an interrelated world of ecosystems reliant one on another.

Enter Man. We changed it all. Especially here in the United States. We can really see it and study it here. Just consider Pennsylvania alone. Many people believe that the landscape significantly changed when the Europeans showed up and started farming. But even before that, the indigenous people were farming, though on a much smaller scale than what the “white man” brought. The indigenous people used fire to manipulate the forests, to produce more nuts, and to provide edge habitat that certain game preferred. The impacts of those manipulations were low due to the fairly sparse population of indigenous people and the fact that few non-native plants were introduced.

Native vegetation is not something that was brought over when America was colonized or later as a beautiful exotic from the far east. Native trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses evolved here. They are suited to live here. Native plants provide specific services for the insects, birds and animals. They provide the food and shelter throughout the seasons without which our flying, crawling, walking, and swimming partners in our ecosystem could not survive.

Scientific studies of the interrelationships of animals to vegetation found in some cases native insects will starve to death rather than eat non-native food sources. Some ornamental imported species offer insufficient food value to our native insects and animals, not enough for the insects, birds, and other animals to make it through the winter. Our native forests are being decimated. The Chestnut blight took out a native species that represented 25-30% of all our hardwoods in Pennsylvania. Now we are contending with the Ash Emerald borer and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid further destroying our forests.



The non-native Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), which is found everywhere, locally is the host tree for the Spotted Lantern Fly (at left), an invasive pest that can kill native maples, fruit trees and grape vines. This is just one example of a long and growing list of non-native invasive plants that are tending to dominate our landscape. Some others are the Princess tree, Callery Pear tree, Multiflora rose, Japanese Stiltgrass, - continued on p. 4

Miscanthus/Silvergrass, Bamboo, Autumn olive and Oriental bittersweet. None of these tree, shrub, and grass species provide much or any benefit to our native animals, neither as food nor homes.

Why is native vegetation so important? Because native vegetation developed here over millennia. Each plant became a part of a living, breathing, life giving community. Each native plant, insect, bird, reptile, amphibian and mammal has its place in this community. The community was in balance until humans started dramatically manipulating their environment. Now we have so drastically changed our environment that we are eradicating species at an alarming rate – the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services reports that 1 in 8 species are threatened with extinction. In order to forestall some of the loss, scientists recommend that it is critical that we plant native vegetation.

Science has found that non-native vegetation provides little or no support for insects which form the base of the food web. But why do we need insects? We need insects to pollinate the plants that are our food, and to pollinate the plant-based feed that sustains our cows, goats, chickens and turkeys. Pollination fertilizes the plant and allows it to grow its fruits, vegetables, and nuts. Without insects, there would be few plants for us to eat and there would be fewer plants to feed our beef and poultry.

We all live here, in an interconnected environment. There are many examples of losses of native plants. There are many examples of the introduction of invasive non-native vegetation. We need to try to live in a more natural 'native' space. Our lives may depend on it in the future. That is why I am dedicated to planting and maintaining native trees and shrubs along the tributary to Pigeon Run in both Brightside Park and in the Deerfield open space.



Above: the newly planted riparian buffer at Brightside Farm June 2021

Wildflower Walk on the Pickering Trail

- by Ester Underhill

Sunday, April 24, 1:00



Dutchman's Breeches

Fishermen and walkers enjoy the Pickering Trail and Creek year round. However, in spring it is known by many for its large variety of spring ephemerals. Those flowers that bloom in the woods before the leaves are on the trees.

Some flowers we always see: Spring beauties, Jack in the pulpit, and Solomon's seal. But there are also surprises, depending on when Spring comes. Perhaps you'll spot a flower we haven't seen before and can add to our list for next year.

We will meet in the parking lot behind the Charlestown Mill, on Charlestown Road north of the Pickering Creek. We will talk a

bit, pick up a checklist of plants we hope to see, and head out to see what each of us can find to share with others.

Bring the family, this is a short walk and you can leave when you wish. You may want to find as many kinds of flowers as you can, how many colors of violet you spot, or just go for a walk in the woods.



Yellow Violet



CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS AND RECREATION

Yoga Walk

BRIGHTSIDE FARM PARK

3108 Yellow Springs Road
Malvern, PA

MAY 22 & JUNE 26
9:00 AM

*~1 mile walk integrated with gentle yoga and mindful breathing.
No yoga props needed.*

*Weather permitting. For updates, check the
Charlestown Parks and Recreation Facebook page.*



At left: The Brightside Farm features spectacular viewsheds perfect for relaxation and renewal of spirit.

Give yourself a gift this spring – stop over at 3108 Yellow Springs Road and spend some quality leisure time enjoying our trail and the beautiful views at Brightside.

Pano shot on April 9, 2022 by George Csete

MUSIC MAKES PEOPLE
COME TOGETHER,
SEIZE THE MOMENT!



CHARLESTOWN FREE SUMMER CONCERTS

The Malarkey Brothers Celtic Folk Rock Band

Thurs, June 23RD 7-9PM

The Wisner-Rapp House

3020 Yellow Springs Rd - Malvern, PA

Hosted by The Charlestown Historical Society

One Man Dog: James Taylor Tribute Band

Thurs, July 7TH 7-9PM

Charlestown Township Park

100 Academic Way - Phoenixville, PA

Hosted by Charlestown Parks and Recreation

The Mighty Manatees Band

Wed, July 27TH 7-9PM

Charlestown Township Park

100 Academic Way - Phoenixville, PA

Hosted by Charlestown Parks and Recreation

BRING A BLANKET OR CAMP CHAIR!

Requirements for mask wearing and social distancing will be based on state regulations at the time of the concerts.

Additional event details will be provided on the corresponding event host Facebook page.

Follow the Charlestown Parks and Recreation Facebook page for event details, concert updates, rain dates, and cancellation announcements.

Sponsors and Vendors needed!

Please contact info@gofoxonline.com for event sponsorship and vending opportunities.

FREE

SUMMER

CONCERT

SERIES!

2022 Dates for Chester County Household Hazardous Waste Events

Charlestown Township is a 2022 Participant in the Chester County Hazardous Household Waste Event Program. Bring unwanted hazardous household, automotive products, home maintenance, lawn and pest control products to the next Collection event. There are five events listed below.

Registration is required for each event! Registration will be available online a few weeks before each event.

Saturday, April 9, 2022

**Technical College High School
(formerly CAT Pickering)**
1580 Charlestown Road
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Saturday, May 14, 2022

Owen J Roberts Middle School
881 Ridge Rd.
Pottstown, PA 19465

Friday, June 24, 2022

Coatesville Learning Center
1425 East Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320

Saturday, August 27, 2022

Oxford School District Admin. Building
125 Bell Tower Lane
Oxford, PA 19363

Saturday, October 8, 2022

Government Services Center
601 Westtown Rd
West Chester, PA 19380

**No latex paint, alkaline batteries,
electronics or appliances are accepted.**

Please Note:

- The system allows one appointment per household.
- You will print your "ticket" at the end of the registration process.
- Place your ticket on your dashboard during the event.
- *Materials will only be collected from trunk of car or bed of truck. STAY IN YOUR CAR.* This is a NO CONTACT event.
- If you need to cancel, please cancel through the county's registration process to allow others to take your appointment slot.

For more information on acceptable and non-acceptable materials, packing your materials, and traffic flow, please visit the County Solid Waste Authority's website page:

<https://www.chestercountyswa.org/121/Upcoming-Household-Hazardous-Waste-Event>

17th Annual Earth Day Clean Up

- by Linda Csete

The soggy start to our litter clean up event on April 9th didn't stop over 65 residents, township officials, and personnel from coming out to clean up our parks and roads. For the first time since Covid arrived, the Township office was again opened on Earth Day for volunteers to pick up coffee, juice, and donuts along with their clean up supplies to head out onto various roads, trails and parks.

Approximately 120 bags of trash were collected along with a large load of tires dumped along Phoenixville Pike, and odd items such as grills, a 20-year old wallet complete with Blockbuster card, and a Packard hub cap. A toilet, 2 vacuum cleaners, a mattress, and an old tube TV were also removed.

Once again the fire police and our roadmaster, Jim Thompson were on hand to close off Coldstream Road for about an hour so resident Jill Williams could lead 10 neighbors in collecting 27 bags of trash along the dangerous curve area.

Members of our Planning Commission, Parks & Recreation Board, and Environmental Advisory Committee joined in along with long-time volunteers, Girl Scout Troop #440 lead by Jeannine Espenshade. Jeannine also got her adult Hiker Babes group to do a clean up along the Pickering Preserve. Frank Pafumi organized residents at Charlestown Meadows for their annual clean up as well.

Here are some photos from the day's work. Thanks to all who joined in!



Jill Williams' group on Coldstream Road



Rachel Ghosh on the Pickering Trail



Amanda Glatfelter's Daisy/Brownie Troop 480
Brownie Troop 41861 at Charlestown Park



Bill Longua and daughters Margot & Calla along the Pickering



Charlestown Meadows residents cleaning up their community



James Ghosh on the Pickering Trail



Colin & Aiden Peacock off Pickering Dam Road

Top Left: Some of the Volunteers from Charlestown Meadows, organized by Frank Pafumi & Terry Callahan. Thanks also to Steve Skoufalos, Peter Georgopoulos, David Hoffritz, Joanne Vogel, the English family Michelle, Jason, Ashton, Ellery & Lee, Pam Smyth, He Rivers, Jim and Priscilla Depp, and Pradeep Jayaraman



44 tires hauled away by our Fire Marshal, Tim Hubbard from Phoenixville Pike



Carol Armstrong of our EAC and Planning Commissioner Andy Motel alongside the Devault Gateway area off Morehall Rd (rt. 29)



Planning Commissioner/EAC member Dan Walker and 8 year old Carter Walker on Yellow Springs Road

Jeannine Espenshade's Girl Scout Troup 440 has been cleaning up at Brightside and along Yellow Springs Road for over ten years!



Weed Warrior Program

- by Carol Armstrong, Environmental Advisory Committee

The Kickoff Meeting was held at the beginning of April by Parks and Recreation and the EAC.

You can still get involved! For more details about this program and the invasive plants being targeted, please send an email to eac@charlestown.pa.us. Our kick-off meeting was a big success. You can thank the nine volunteers for removing a great deal of invasive multiflora rose from near the hiking path and within the riparian tree plantings. If you cannot join this group effort, you can help by pulling invasive and noxious plant on your own. We will help you recognize how to differentiate invasive from native plants, and how and when to remove them. See information sheets posted on the EAC page of the township website at www.charlestown.pa.us

SAVE THE DATE: Our next Weed Warrior Meeting will be on Saturday June 4 from 9am to 11am on the Pickering Trail – other details to be announced. We will be targeting the very invasive Garlic Mustard and Narrowleaf Bittercress (another mustard).

Garlic Mustard – Alliaria petiolata



Narrowleaf Bittercress – Cardamine impatiens



Examples of Unwelcome Plastics in our Environment

- By Carol Armstrong and Linda Csete



Here are a few pictures taken during our Earth Day cleanup demonstrating how plastics end up fragmenting into microplastics in the environment. The most common type of plastic found in studies of water, air, and soil are microplastic fibers, and the white sheet at left is a fibrous textile that we use a lot.

The most common plastics found were drinking bottles, bags and films, cigarette butts (also a source of microplastic fibers) and food packaging.

The photo at right shows how Styrofoam™ in the environment can so easily break up into tiny pieces that can mimic food for aquatic and land animals.



Polystyrene (Styrofoam is a type) takes at least 500 years to biodegrade, and releases toxic chemicals during that time. The EPA produced a report, *Demonstration of Packaging Materials Alternatives to Expanded Polystyrene* in 1998 (24 years ago), but it is still one of the most common synthetic polymers found in water, on land, and in our blood and lungs.

What Can We Do?



- Avoid using disposable plastics. 90% of the plastic items in our daily lives are used once and then tossed.
- Bring your own bags to the store and use a travel mug.
- Stop buying water and carry a reusable bottle instead.
- Buy in bulk.
- Avoid health and beauty products that have microbeads, found in some pillows, soft toys and sacs, and crafts.
- Cook more at home. It's healthier and doesn't involve takeout

containers.

- Source: National Resource Defense Council

Let's all renew our recycling efforts!

**Charlestown Historical Society
Meeting
Special Presentation:
Many Nations – Chester County**
- by John Martin

On Wednesday, May 11th, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in the Charlestown Elementary School cafeteria, the Charlestown Historical Society will present a program entitled "Many Nations - Chester County" discussing 300 years of diversity through the lens of migration.

From contact between the Lenape and the first European settlers in the 1600's, people from around the world have called Chester County home. Learn about the ways national and international events have led to such a diverse population that continues to make a significant impact on our community.

The speaker is Ellen Endslow from the Chester County Historical Society's Speakers Bureau.

The Elementary School is located at 2060 Charlestown Road, Malvern, PA.

Please park in the parking lot on the side of the school near the bus lot and enter the school thru door # 5.

**Charlestown Township
P.O. Box 507
Devault, PA 19432**



**Bird Walk at
Brightside**

On Saturday, May 28th at 8:00am, Vince Smith, President of the Valley Forge Audubon Society, will lead a birding field trip at Brightside Farm Park, 3108 Yellow Springs Road in Malvern.

The public is invited to attend and all participants will assemble in the public parking lot on Yellow Springs Road. Because the group will follow the asphalt multi-use loop trail through the park,

the event is **accessible to wheelchairs & strollers**. We ask that children under the age of 14 be accompanied by an adult. Please remember to bring binoculars if you have them!



Taken at Brightside in 2020: Photos by Julie Amador