

Nine Mile News

FALL 2013

NINE MILE RUN
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

IN CELEBRATION OF TREES, THE MOST ESSENTIAL OF GREEN SOLUTIONS

The Watershed Association is working on plans for a variety of green infrastructure solutions that would help handle stormwater more effectively before it causes sewers to back up and overflow, and before it wreaks havoc along the banks of Nine Mile Run. But while researching bioswales, green roofs, and permeable paving, we never lose sight of the primacy of nature's original and still most effective stormwater managers – trees!

While some portions of our watershed communities are blessed with abundant mature street trees, other areas lack any tree canopy to intercept rain before it hits pavement. And even in well-treed areas, many trees are approaching the end of their expected lifespans, and no coherent plan has been developed for replacement. Blocks lined with huge London plane trees and pin oaks are the result of an investment in the future made by an earlier generation. Surely we owe our children and grandchildren a commensurate investment.

These trees bring a host of benefits to our communities beyond their stormwater management value. They significantly reduce ambient temperatures in the summer, resulting in lower energy bills for residents. They are cleaning the air, raising property values, reducing noise pollution, providing critical habitat for many species, and even reducing violence and crime. (See <http://actrees.org/resources/about-trees/tree-facts/> for more information about current research on the benefits of trees.)

NMRWA is proud to have worked with our partners on the Wilkinsburg-TreeVitalize “Rooted in Wilkinsburg” 500 Trees Project. (see page 5 for more details) Planting concluded this spring, but NMRWA will continue to care for the newly planted trees through 2015 to insure their survival. This project brings our grand total for trees planted in the Nine Mile Run watershed municipalities since 2001 to 869.

Working with the shade tree commissions in each municipality, we

will continue to seek sources of support for additional tree plantings in the future. But we'll also direct attention to the preservation of mature trees, which are already delivering a level of benefits that the newly planted trees will take decades to achieve. Our street trees face many threats, including pests and disease, excessive road and sidewalk salt, careless drivers, people who mistake them for bike racks, and overzealous contractors who prune roots dangerously when replacing sidewalks.

Using impermeable concrete for sidewalks often leads trees to send their roots aggressively under the pavement, in search of water, eventually lifting one or more concrete pads more than an inch. At this point the property owner is in code violation and can be cited. But replacing the sidewalk with new concrete pads isn't a long-term solution; within a few years the problem recurs, and the root pruning done by many contractors can destabilize the tree and open a pathway for disease. NMRWA has demonstrated other approaches to sidewalk repair that are better for the trees and will last longer. See the GreenLinks section of our website to learn more about these projects.

Want to help preserve and improve the watershed's urban forest? Consider a gift to the Watershed Tree Fund. Growing this fund helps us prepare to respond quickly to emergencies like oak wilt, and to take on small projects that may not be appropriate for foundation support. You can also lend hands-on support at our tree care events this fall – see page 3 for details.

Many thanks!



Cover & back page photos by
John Moyer.



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Upcoming Events

Please check our website, www.ninemilerun.org, under "Get Involved" for a complete list of upcoming events, cancellations, and last minute changes. Unless otherwise specified, all events are free and open to the public. Families are welcome!

FALL STREAM SWEEP

- ▶ Saturday, October 5, 2013
- ▶ 9:30am-12:00pm

Meet in the Fern Hollow parking lot - located at the bottom of Lancaster Avenue

Every time it rains, trash & debris from the upper watershed communities of Pittsburgh, Edgewood, Wilkinsburg, & Swissvale washes into Nine Mile Run. Come out and help us keep the stream clean & beautiful by helping pick up trash. We will provide gloves, safety vests, trash bags, & coffee! Please wear long pants & sturdy boots or closed-toe shoes. If you have tall rain boots, hip boots, or waders, please bring them.

For more information, contact Sara at 412-371-8779 ext. 123 or sarap@ninemilerun.org.

STATE OF THE WATERSHED

- ▶ Saturday, October 12, 2013 (rain date: Sunday, October 13)
- ▶ 9:30am - 1:30pm

Meet at the CLASS building (1400 S Braddock Ave).

Join us for our fourth annual State of the Watershed event! We will be presenting the results of our last two years of stream monitoring and we will also feature hands on activities outside in the restoration area for the whole family! A light breakfast and lunch will be provided. Please register now on our website to reserve your space!

For more information, contact Sara at 412-371-8779 ext. 123 or sarap@ninemilerun.org.

TREE PLANTING & TREE CARE EVENTS

For more information about any of the tree care events listed below, contact Alicia at 412-371-8779 ext. 116 or alicia@ninemilerun.org.

- ▶ Tuesday, October 8, 2013
- ▶ 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Meet at the intersection of Park Ave and Monongahela Ave in Swissvale to care for trees planted in Swissvale last fall as part of the TreeVitalize Pittsburgh project! Come ready to remove stakes, weed, and mulch.

- ▶ Saturday, October 26, 2013
- ▶ 9:00am - 12:00pm

Meet at the parking lot next to the Penn-Lincoln Hotel (789 Penn Ave). Help spruce up the Wilkinsburg Business District before the Arbor Day Foundation's annual Partners in Community Forestry National Conference comes to Pittsburgh in early November! We will be replanting four trees in and around the Business District as well as weeding, mulching, and removing stakes.

- ▶ Thursday, October 31, 2013
- ▶ 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Meet at Turner School (1833 Laketon Rd) for some Trick or Tree Care! Come in costume (one you don't mind getting a little dirty) to care for trees planted last fall as part of the Wilkinsburg TreeVitalize Project. We will be removing stakes, weeding, and mulching.

- ▶ Sunday, November 10, 2013
- ▶ 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Meet at the empty lot where Edgewood Ave begins along the busway (near the Arby's on S Braddock Ave). Come ready to weed and mulch the maple trees along the East Busway in Swissvale!

DUCK HOLLOW HIKE

- ▶ Saturday, November 2, 2013
- ▶ 9:30am-12:00pm

Meet in the Duck Hollow parking lot along the Mon at the bottom of Old Browns Hill Road

Join NMRWA & Edgewood resident Paul Heckbert for a hike through the woods in Duck Hollow & Swisshelm Park, around where Nine Mile Run flows into the Monongahela River. Paul will take us on some little known trails, but be aware that some parts of this hike are rigorous & boots are recommended.

For more information, contact Sara at 412-371-8779 ext. 123 or sarap@ninemilerun.org.

URBAN ECO STEWARD EVENTS

To register for an Urban EcoSteward event, visit www.pittsburghparks.org/uestrainings.



Native Plant Propagation

- ▶ Saturday, October 12, 2013
- ▶ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Frick Environmental Center, 2005 Beechwood Blvd, Pittsburgh PA 15217

Learn how to collect & grow native trees, shrubs, & wildflowers from seed or cuttings to replant & repopulate your EcoSteward site.

Planting Techniques

- ▶ Saturday, November 2, 2013
- ▶ 10:00am-12:00pm

Emerald View Park, Norton Street Entrance; 515 Norton Street, Pittsburgh PA 15211

Learn how you can properly select, plant, & protect trees & shrubs for long term success on your site. EcoStewards are eligible to receive a FREE tree.

WELCOME

Mike Hiller joined NMRWA during July 2013 as our new Director of Policy & Outreach. He holds an undergraduate degree in Urban Studies and a Master of Art degree in Geography with a Graduate Certificate in GIS & Spatial Analysis, both from the University at Albany, SUNY.

Prior to moving to Pittsburgh, Mike was the GIS Coordinator for the University at Albany, where he developed a campus-wide system of infrastructure. He also has experience as an urban planning consultant, working to create more sustainable regions and places.

At NMRWA, he will be responsible for coordinating watershed communities and organizations to develop and implement green infrastructure projects. Make sure to say hello to Mike at one of our Fall events!



Mike

On Saturday, September 7, 2013, StormWorks helped organize and lead a rain garden design and management workshop for landscape professionals in Etna.

Following technical presentations in the morning and lunch, the workshop participants got some hands on experience by helping to install a rain garden designed by Sara Madden on site.

Go check out the finished rain garden! It's located at the Clarence Fugh Memorial Park and Pool, just behind the Etna Borough Building at 437 Butler Street in Etna.



(L to R) A view of the rain garden before planting; Workshop participants help install the rain garden. Photos: T. Lange, B. Dutton

Our Programs are Made Possible through the Generous Support of Our Funders... Thank You!

ACTrees
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In-kind Donations:

AgRecycle, for mulch
Al's Fish and Chicken, Wilkinsburg
Allegro Hearth Bakery, Squirrel Hill
Bruegger's Bagels, Squirrel Hill
Coffee Tree Roasters, Squirrel Hill
PennDOT, for gloves and safety vests
Salvatore's Pizza, Wilkinsburg

Special thanks to The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park, GAI Consultants, Second United Presbyterian Church of Wilkinsburg, South Avenue United Methodist Church, and UCP/CLASS for the use of their facilities for meetings.

NMRWA's 500 Tree Initiative Comes to an End

On a fitting occasion – Earth Day, Monday April 22, 2013 – the final tree in the Wilkinsburg TreeVitalize Project: Rooted in Wilkinsburg – 500 Tree Initiative was planted in front of the Wilkinsburg Borough Building on Ross Avenue.

Beginning in Fall 2011, with the assistance of many wonderful volunteers, NMRWA's Wilkinsburg TreeVitalize Project successfully planted 500 street trees in Wilkinsburg. These trees will help reduce stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution entering Nine Mile Run, while also adding to and improving public green spaces within the Borough. Funding for this project was received through the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PennVest), and NMRWA worked in partnership with TreeVitalize, the Borough of Wilkinsburg, and the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation.

The planting of the final tree - a flowering Japanese stewartia - complements the recent landscaping and repainting of the Borough Building completed last fall as part of the Wilkinsburg 125th Anniversary Celebration. This special tree is also one half of a memorial project for John Metzler, founder of the Urban Tree Forge, who died in the spring of 2010.

The other half of the memorial is funded by the Wilkinsburg Shade Tree Committee and will include a memorial bench created by Jason Boone made out of reclaimed urban trees. The bench will be installed at the Borough Building later this fall. Mr. Metzler, who is remembered as a friend of Wilkinsburg's trees by the Shade Tree Committee, often said, "No trees; no life. Know trees: know life."

This is a great reminder for residents of Wilkinsburg and the watershed as we look forward to the life these newly planted 500 street trees will bring to their community in the decades to come.

If you are interested in participating in an upcoming tree care event or have further questions about the 500 Tree Initiative, please contact Alicia Donner at 412-371-8779 ext. 116 or alicia@ninemilerun.org.

500 TREES AT A GLANCE

501 Trees Planted

6,180 Square Feet of Impervious Surface Removed

24 Tree Planting Events

385 Volunteers - THANK YOU!

1,348 Volunteer Hours



Former GreenLinks Program Assistant, Maeve Rafferty, demonstrates proper tool safety procedures to a group of volunteers. Photo: S. Powell



Marsha Robinson and Kate Borger plant a tree together during a Spring 2012 planting. Photo: NMRWA



A group of PULSE volunteers gather for a picture following a successful tree planting during Spring 2012. Photo: Chris Cooke

StormWorks partners with the Hill House Association to get creative with rain barrels

Beginning in May of 2013, StormWorks, Pittsburgh Green Innovators, and the Hill House Association partnered on a project to install 20 NMRWA 133-gallon rain barrels at the Hill House campus to raise awareness about stormwater management. These barrels will provide a valuable education tool for the community will allow them to control and utilize rainwater more efficiently.

The rain barrels are a part the Hill House's Sustainable Landscape Plan, designed by Pittsburgh Green Innovators, who partnered with The Penn State Center Sustainable Landscaping Program. The goal is to capture 95% of the stormwater that falls on the 6-acre campus using green infrastructure such as rain barrels, rain gardens, pervious pavement, and bio-swales. The campus project builds on the Hill District's 2009, "GreenPrint", plan to re-connect the community with nature, as well as strengthen community relations with the greater Pittsburgh area.

Reene Kredell, a professor from Penn State University working with the Hill House Association on this project, emphasized the importance of design to the students of the Hill House summer program, "Xperience". The participating students, in grades 5-9, painted the rain barrels, creating functional pieces of artwork to benefit the environment and the community. Her objective was for the students to recognize the importance of design in the every day world - everything starts out as a creative idea that is transformed into a functional innovation.

The students began the art project by creating a design concept board made of inspirational magazine pictures and also formed a color scheme. Next, Ms. Kredell, who has a background in dance, had each student dance in front of the group before choosing their paint colors. Kredell, who incorporated dance throughout the project, stated that dancing allows her to connect to the students while simultaneously building their self-confidence and creativity.



Fifth grade student, Kayla Kinney, showing off a rain barrel she helped paint with her classmates this summer. Photo: A. Vitalie

The finished rain barrels are all unique, with vivid colors, imaginative ideas, and themes such as geometric design, romance, and nature.

StormWorks recently installed the finished rain barrels on the north side of One Hope Square adjacent to the Hill House. Stop by and check them out!

For more info about the Hill House Association, visit:
www.hillhouse.org/home.html

For more info about Pittsburgh Green Innovators, visit:
www.pghgreeninnovators.org

If you are interested in a rain barrel, please contact Luke Stamper at 412-371-8779 ext. 120 or luke@swpgh.com or visit the StormWorks website, www.swpgh.com.



All of the rain barrels painted as a part of the Hill House "Xperience" summer program. A lot of creativity went into making each barrel unique - they feature vivid colors and imaginative themes. Photo: A. Vitalie

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Coming soon... a new NMRWA website!
Make sure you follow us on Facebook
(facebook.com/NineMileRunPGH) to find out when our new & improved website goes live!

PLEASE JOIN US!

Our members are crucial in demonstrating to our grantors and elected officials that the community cares about Nine Mile Run. Your membership donation is a vital source of support for our programs, helping to restore and protect the watershed and lending strength to our voice as we advocate for green approaches to urban challenges.

Your donation entitles you to receive a special gift in appreciation of your support, and all members also receive free admission to Nine Mile Run events. Please choose a level of support that works for you:

- \$25** **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**
- \$50** **FAMILY MEMBERSHIP/SUPPORTER**
RECEIVES a NMRWA logo Hat
- \$100** **STEWARD**
RECEIVES a NMRWA logo T-Shirt

- \$250** **RESTORER**
RECEIVES an autographed poster-sized photo of Nine Mile Run by John Moyer
- \$500** **PROTECTOR**
RECEIVES a NMRWA Rain Barrel, delivery and installation included
- \$1,000** **VISIONARY**
RECEIVES all of the above, or a StormWorks rain garden design

Please note that the amount of your donation that is tax-deductible varies according to membership level and gift. For more information, please contact us at 412-371-8779 or info@ninemilerun.org.

The Nine Mile Run Watershed Association is a legally incorporated 501(c)3 charitable organization. Official registration and financial information may be obtained by calling 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Donate online on Thursday, October 3, 2013 at:



Please support NMRWA during the 2013 Day of Giving!

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