

Paw Prints



Our Second Annual Meeting

On Sunday, March 8, we held our Second Annual Meeting at Beth David, with 21 people in attendance despite the incentive to play hookey offered by the lovely spring-like weather. Thanks for coming everyone! Ellen Briggs reported on accomplishments of 2014 and plans for the future—the substance of that report (plus some additional details) is provided in this newsletter. In addition to thanking all of those who donated money or volunteered in the wildlife garden, she awarded Consolation Prizes to two of our most long-suffering canine members. A bag of Greenies was awarded to:

Tooke the Old English Sheepdog for his patience while **Chris Bushnell** spent hours designing and building



our compost bin, and also trimming the logs for the log border of our wood-chip path.

Whitney the Brittany Spaniel for her patience in waiting while her person, **Dan Barry**, worked in the garden. Dan was our high scorer in number of member hours worked at over 26 hours, and he also appeared as Mummer Man during our Santa Paws event.

A big THANK YOU to Chris, Tooke, Dan, and Whitney!! Ellen Reese, our Treasurer, then gave our annual Treasurer's Report. A copy of the report is included in this mailing.

After the Ellens' report, we enjoyed a wonderful presentation on the history of the Mill Creek Valley (home



to both West Mill Creek and Rolling Hill dog parks) by **Jerry Francis**, President of the **Lower Merion Historical Society**. Jerry brought artifacts, maps and first person narratives that made the past centuries at Mill Creek—from Lenape Native Americans to Revolutionary War drama to the 19th century agrarian and industrial past—come alive. We also partook of coffee, tea, and an array of fruit and excellent pastries and an opportunity to chat without needing to keep an eye on the dogs. It was a wonderful afternoon.

2014, Our First Year, in Review

Our mission: to improve the park while preserving its essentially wild nature, to enhance our sense of community, and to have lots of fun doing it!

2014 PROJECTS REPORT

First Project - Beach Seating. Mission Accomplished!

We took a trip out to Rolling Rock quarry and bought 5 beautiful locally quarried Pennsylvania bluestone boulders with flat tops. With the help of Township crews, the boulders were installed last summer. Many thanks to our members who financed this purchase.



Second Project -

Improvement of Park Infrastructure. Mission almost accomplished (we hope). We have been in close touch with the Township throughout the

year, and have stressed our members' interest in improving the trail and parking lot. The Township has

repaired the former big pothole at the parking lot entrance, and plans to do trail improvements and further parking lot improvements this Spring. The timing of the work depends on weather conditions and needs for Township crews on other projects, but we are

assured that WMC is on the priority list.

Third Project - Create a wildlife garden that will also serve as a retreat for people and dogs that need some quiet time. Thanks to the Boy Scouts, in-kind donations and services from local businesses, and most of all to the generosity of our members with volunteer labor and financial support, we got a wonderful start on our garden—success way beyond expectation!

In summary...

- We engaged Cramer Design Associates to prepare a site plan; bought a water tank for permanent use in the garden, and bought boulders for garden architecture (all installed by

by Township crews for us)

- We held 19 work days
- 18 Friends of WMC Park volunteers donated a total of 155 hours of labor to site preparation (some of that very heavy, difficult work); planting; watering; and weeding
- We planted 5 trees and 48 shrubs, all native plants that benefit birds and beneficial insects
- We created a log-and-wood chip path
- We dug a berm and swale to control stormwater overflow in the garden
- We built a compost bin
- We were the lucky recipients of 4 gorgeous garden benches and a table designed and built by Eagle Scout Pranav Pillai and his troop.



2014 EVENTS REPORT

In addition to our First Annual Meeting last year, where we announced our plans and had a talk by Patrick Gardner of the Lower Merion Conservancy on ecological issues affecting WMC Park, we held a successful “Dog Days of Summer” fundraiser at the Park (we sold Gnat Hats, tee shirts, and home made lemonade and dog biscuits.)



In December, we held a Santa Paws event. Santa Paws himself, accompanied by his helper the Mummer Man, came to the park to help us raise money

for the Pennsylvania S.P.C.A. Our members responded with great generosity—we raised \$560 for this wonderful cause!



Members Survey and Feedback

To help us in planning future events and projects, we would love to have feedback from YOU, our members. Please fill out the Member Survey form included in this mailing—we need and welcome your ideas! And of course, feel free to communicate with any member of the Steering Committee in person at the Park, by email, or through our website if you have suggestions, comments, questions or concerns any time. (P.S. Thanks **Tessa Lamont Siegel** for suggesting and helping to create the survey form)

Volunteer Recognition

We are so grateful to each and every one of our 2014 garden volunteers. You could have been sitting at home on the porch with a nice glass of lemonade—but instead you reported for duty at the hot, weedy, vine

filled, asphalt-and-rock laden work site and did a lot



of heavy, nasty site preparation work. The fun, camaraderie, and sense of creating something beautiful and useful from a former weed patch makes it all worthwhile, but still. . .all you volunteers are champs!

What's Happening in 2015

PROJECT PLANS FOR 2015

- We will continue to advocate for trail and parking lot improvements as needed. Reminder: please fill out that Member Survey so we know what is most important to you.
- We will continue the creation of our Wildlife and Respite Garden. We planted trees and shrubs last year—but an effective wildlife garden must be multi-layered to provide habitat for a broad spectrum of birds and beneficial insects. In other words, in addition to trees and shrubs it must have tall, mid-size and short perennials with a diversity of bloom times and flower shapes. If when spring comes we find we have successfully gotten the weeds* under control by smothering them with multiple layers of organic weed suppressant (also known as cardboard), we plan to plant approxi-

mately 600 wildlife friendly perennials. NOTE: We need to plant as many as we can afford so that the good plants will take over—bare space just invites the weeds to come back. We hope to welcome back many of last year's volunteers and add many more new volunteers for this planting blitz. The work should be much less taxing this year —the bulk of the work should not require pickaxes and toting of big chunks of asphalt!! Also, you will be glad to know that the Boy Scouts have volunteered to give us a helping hand. Volunteer work days will be posted on the



website and you will get reminder emails.

EVENT PLANS FOR 2015

Our next planned event will be a tour of a portion of the Bridlewild trail. A knowledgeable Bridlewild volunteer will guide the tour, and dogs on leash are welcome. The walk will take place on May 31, 2015, at 2 p.m. and will leave from the Beth David parking lot that has direct access to the trail. Check our website for more details in May.

* porcelainberry vine, goutweed, garlic mustard, and lesser celandine, for those of you who are interested

2014 Donations

Thanks are due not only to our volunteers, but also to all the Friends of WMC who donated money and supported our fundraising events. Your donations made it possible for us to buy high quality, wildlife friendly native plants (not treated with neonicotinoid pesticides – which keep the plants visually attractive but are harmful to the beneficial insects we are trying to help.) THANKS!

2015 Donations



PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FRIENDS OF WEST MILL CREEK PARK AS A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER! SEE ENCLOSED FORM FOR DETAILS.



Supporters in 2014...

Friends of West Mill Creek Park gratefully acknowledges the following Founding Members:

The Founding Members of Friends of West Mill Creek Park are all those members who, in 2014, our first year of operation either: supported us as garden work day volunteers, made donations, or contributed other services.

Anonymous
Janice Asher
Dan Barry
Ellen Briggs
Erik Bronstein
Paula Burns
Chris Bushnell
Mary Fran Cardamone
Jill Cooper
Aidan Dutwin
David Dutwin
Elias Dutwin
Helene Feinberg Walker
Mary Blitzer Field
Karen Garbeil

Karen Hinckley
Jamie Markizon
Maddie Kessler
Tessa Lamont Siegel
Joan Logue
Martha Lombardo
Karyn Lush
Jay & Marya Margolis
Linda McConnell
Debby Merker
Middleman Family
Hazel Murphy
Craig Oliner
David Preefer & Karen
Zimmerman

Gary Stein & Linda Dorey-Stein
Gary Stein & Ellen Reese
Bob & Marilyn Steiner
Elaine Stern
Janine & Jon Weller
Flaura Winston



Log onto <http://www.friendsofwestmillcreekpark.org/our-supporters/founding-members>

Other Supporters in 2014...Thanks

FOUND- ING MEM- to... BERS



Harriet Cramer of **Cramer Design Associates** for all the help with garden site design, plant

selection, and a helping hand planting the Winter King hawthorns that we discovered were too big for our volunteer planting crew—those trees needed professionals!



K Squared Landscaping for donating the labor of finding, trucking in, and unloading our large and heavy Winter King hawthorn trees.

Narberth Boy Scout Troop 176 and



Pranav Pillai.

Pranav designed and built the beautiful table and four benches currently installed in our Wildlife and Respite Garden.



Beth David Reform Congregation for the use of their lovely facilities for our membership meetings.

Lindsay Taylor, Dave DeAngelis, and the work crews of the **Lower Merion Dept of Parks and Recreation**—you were there when we needed you, digging out asphalt, making a retaining wall, delivering mulch—and so much more.



Finally, thanks to all the businesses that supported our efforts with in-kind donations:

Ricklins Hardware, McShea's Take Away, Petit Mitron and American Family Market in Narberth; **Cosi** in Bryn



Mawr;
Giant

