



FRIENDS OF WEST MILL CREEK DOG PARK · MARCH 2021

## Paw Prints



### From the Steering Committee

Well, 2020 was a year unlike all others – the pandemic took center stage and changed everything. Park usage has skyrocketed, with many new people and dogs showing up to enjoy nature and a good run. Our usual volunteer and social events were drastically curtailed or canceled, and we will not be having our usual annual meeting – so this Annual Newsletter will serve to let you know of Friends of West Mill Creek Park

accomplishments in 2020 and plans, news, and gentle reminders for 2021.

#### New Steering Committee Member

We are pleased to announce that **Jill Cooper** has agreed to formally join our Steering Committee as Publicity Chair. A warm welcome to her from the existing Steering Committee -- **Ellen Briggs** (President); **Karen Hinckley** (Secretary); **Ellen Reese** (Treasurer); and **Judy Argon** (Events Chair).

#### October Planting Days—A Big Thank You to the Boy Scouts and to Lower Merion Township

Although we couldn't advertise volunteer days to our general membership due to pandemic concerns, we were able to accomplish some major planting anyway! First, we hired Master Naturalist consultant, Michelle Detwiler, to design our annual plan to plant native trees, shrubs, and perennials. The focus is to maximize ecological benefit and add to the beauty of our Park. We ordered 24 trees, 19 shrubs, and 18 perennials. On October 2, 2020, the **Lower Merion Department of Parks & Recreation crew** planted all of the perennials, shrubs and trees bought with your donation dollars, and also added 11 additional native trees provided by the Township.

Then the **Boys Scouts of Troop 176** took over! We ordered 194 additional perennials and on October 11, the Scouts (socially distanced of course) planted them for us. A few parent volunteers also pitched in. All of us Park users owe a big debt of gratitude to the Scouts and the Township for their hard work during this pandemic. THANK YOU SO MUCH!



Township crew planting trees



Troop 176 Volunteers



The BEFORE. Visit the park for the AFTER.



# Lower Merion & Narberth Pollinator Pathway



## Friends of West Mill Creek Park Is a Founding Member of Pollinator Pathways of Lower Merion

Pollinators and other beneficial insects and wildlife are critically important to our own life on the planet—and are in serious decline. Since its founding, the Friends of WMC Park has been dedicated to planting native species that provide food and habitat for these small creatures. But current science shows that helping nature to thrive in public parks alone is not enough. More space is needed to provide corridors of nature-friendly habitat so that these small creatures can range from place to place. So, in 2020 the Friends of West Mill Creek Park partnered with the **Lower Merion Conservancy**, the **Narberth Area Garden Club**, and the **Penn Valley Civic**

**Association** to promote the new **Pollinator Pathway of Lower Merion and Narberth**. This project aims to establish a corridor of pollinator-and-stream friendly public and private properties in our community. YOUR YARD can provide that crucial habitat and look lovely at the same time. It's easy to add your yard to the Pathway by adding native trees or plants and pledging to avoid use of harmful pesticides. You can also help spread the word by ordering an attractive Pollinator Pathways sign from the Lower Merion Conservancy.



*For more information on the importance of the project and how you can participate, visit the Pollinator Pathway website, <https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/merion-narberth>.*



## For all you native plant geeks. . .

Here's a list of all the plants from the 2020 annual Fall Planting to look for as they leaf out this Spring:

**Trees:** American Hornbeam, Swamp White Oak, Black Willow, Bald Cypress, River Birch, Allegheny Serviceberry, and Smooth Alder

**Shrubs:** Arrowwood Viburnum, Bottlebrush Buckeye, Withered Viburnum, and Spicebush

**Perennials:** Pink Turtlehead, Interrupted Fern, Tiarella, Barren Strawberry, and Striped Cream Violet.



### Tennis Balls at the Park - A New Perspective

For years now, some of our public-spirited members have been stocking baskets with old tennis balls for the use of all at the Park, for which we were all grateful. But it now turns out that this dog-friendly Park practice is not so environment-friendly. As people play with the balls and leave them on the ground for others to use, over time rain and flood events at the park are washing hundreds of tennis balls into our waterways. This is environmentally harmful, so we are asking all members to be aware of the issue. If tennis-ball fetch is important to you, please bring your own tennis balls to the Park and make every effort to take them home with you when you leave. Or, better yet, play fetch with a stick if your dog will cooperate. This precaution should drastically reduce the number of tennis balls washed into Mill Creek.

### Plans for 2021

Plans are underway for the 2021 planting season. There will be a Spring planting that will focus on adding seasonal color and pollinator habitat to the Wildlife garden at the park entrance. Our new native flowering shrubs and perennials will include Virginia Sweetspire, Purple-flowering Raspberry, Black Cohosh, Bleeding Heart, Indian Pink, Jacob's Ladder, Golden Alexander, Fernleaf Phacelia, and Cardinal Flower. And of course, we also plan to add many new native trees and shrubs to the main park at our annual Fall Planting Day in October.

Whenever the pandemic allows, we plan to resume traditional social and volunteer events – though at this point it looks like that might not happen until 2022!

### Friendly Reminders—PLEASE:

**Clean up after your dog**, whether the poop lands on the trail or elsewhere in the park. Your dog park friends' shoes and the wildlife in the stream will all benefit from your care!

**Be respectful of our neighbors' property.** The Park boundary at the far end of the park is now clearly fenced off and signs are posted to remind park users not to trespass. This has been a problem in the past year, so please be mindful and don't treat our neighbors' yards as an extension of the park!

**Obtain an Off Leash Permit.** It's easy to obtain an off-leash permit from the Lower Merion Township website. The permit should be renewed for each calendar year and is open to residents and nonresidents alike. This permitting system aids the township in addressing a variety of issues, and getting the permit is a great way to show your support for the continued existence of our beloved dog parks.

### News on Parking at the Park

We were recently informed the Township Board of Commissioners has received numerous complaints about illegal parking at West Mill Creek Park. People have been parking along the garden fence on Mill Creek Road, and in the green lawn area at the corner of Mill Creek and Old Gulph roads. This presents a safety issue at the parking lot entrance. Also, repeated parking on the lawn compacts the soil and allows nasty car chemicals to enter the floodplain. The Township will probably be posting No Parking signs and stepping up police enforcement, and may also construct physical barriers to discourage illegal parking. Please understand that this is for the safety of everyone.

The bottom line is: park your car legally. We know how disappointing it is to plan an outing at the park and find the lot full -- but if there are no legal spaces left, it's time to find another time or spot to walk your dog. Please try to park to maximize parking spaces for others—don't take up more room than you need!

**Parkers Beware! Hide your valuables in your car before you arrive.  
Thieves are watching.**

#### Treasurer's Report FWMC December 31, 2020

<u>Beginning Balance</u> (1.1.20)	3385.03
Revenue Collected	5314.00
Donations	5314.00
Expenses	
Annual Meeting	(376.76)
Printing/Mailing	(474.83)
Planting	(1993.77)
Total Expenses	(2845.36)
<u>Balance Forward</u> 1.1.20	5853.67
*FWMC Checking	4749.99
*FWMC LMT Escrow Acct	1103.68

Respectfully submitted,

*Ellen Reese*

Ellen Reese, Treasurer

## In Memoriam Karen Garbeil

As many of you know, **Karen Garbeil** passed away on January 3, 2021. Karen was a valued member of our Friends of West Mill Creek Park Steering Committee ever since our founding in October 2013. She and her beloved Golden Retriever, **Junior**, visited the park almost every day. She was a friendly, welcoming, and inclusive presence for new visitors and Park regulars alike. Generous donations to Friends of West Mill Creek Park in Karen's memory have been given by:

Judy & Yair Argon, Peter & Ellen Briggs, John Bryan & Nancy Winkler, Jill Cooper, Paul & Gloria Feldman, Judith Freeman, Bobby Harmelin, Karen Hinckley, Nora & Barry Kramer, Susie & Paul Lichtman, Beth & David Marks, George & Antoinette Oneill, Ellen Reese & Gary Stein, Kay Sude.



## Thanks to Our Contributing Members

Many thanks to our Contributing Members--we couldn't do it without you!

### FOUR PAWS (\$150 or more)



Peter & Ellen Briggs, Fred Fisher, Anne Hamilton, Bobby & Randie Harmelin, Beth & David Mark, Marsha Perelman, Ellen Reese & Gary Stein, Maria Spagnuolo, Anthony Vale

### THREE PAWS (\$100-\$149)



Judy & Yair Argon, Janice Asher, The Cassimatis Family, Harold Feldman & Annie Steinberg, Richard Hamilton, Pam Hamilton & Steve Levy, Karen Hinckley, Alan & Julie Hochman, Michael Hoessly, Joan Logue, Craig Oliner, Sheila Romirowsky, Kay Sude, Jill & Eric Sussman

### TWO PAWS (\$50-\$99)



Judy & Art Axelrod, Charna Axelrod, Iain & Mary Black, Kirk & Stephanie Brandon, Randy Esposito & Fotini Debonera, The Farrell Family, Linda & Bob Pitt, Jay & Marya Margolis, Helene & Kent Walker, The Wassmansdorf Family

### ONE PAW (up to \$49)



Katya Grischuk, Christine & David Hartzell, Hank & Barbara Holmes, June Lauer

## Thank You to our Corporate/Organizational Friends!

- Beth David Reform Congregation
- Lower Merion Department of Parks & Recreation
- Strategic Websites for hosting our website.



BETH DAVID  
REFORM CONGREGATION

