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Gordie News, August 2007

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

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GORDIE NEWS

(August 2007) 1:8

Erika Szonntag, editor

Gordon Natural Area for Environmental Studies

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

(A Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation)



Special Announcements & Dates-

September 29-GNA at Homecoming

November 10-workday

Help save postage: If you have an E-mail we can add you to the Friends of the Gordon Natural Area mailing list. You will be notified of the latest Gordie News (<http://darwin.wcupa.edu/gordon/>) and other activities

Contact Erika Szonntag with feedback or ideas for articles at es631042@wcupa.edu

:: What's New? ::

Smokey and Woodsy Coming to the Gordon Natural Area (GNA)!

On Saturday September 29 (Homecoming) Smokey the Bear and Woodsy Owl will be around the main gate of the Gordon Natural Area from noon to 4pm. Bring the kids over get pictures taken with GNA's new friends. Check out the websites below to learn about Smokey and Woodsy



<http://www.smokeybear.com/>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/woody/>

<http://www.symbols.gov/smokey/index.shtml>

Two Homeless Men Found Spending their Days in the GNA

On Friday August 24 we found one homeless man that spent his day light hours in the shade of our woods after noticing an accumulation of garbage just south of the High Street gate. An obvious camp was also set up for another man, who was found Saturday. Public Safety escorted both men from the property and continues to monitor the area near the High Street gate. Please notify Public Safety (436-3311) whenever you observe unusual activity in the GNA.

New Demonstration Area now Established in the GNA (Funded by: PA DCNR, Wild Resources Conservation Program)

Dr Hertel and Rachel Stern (Senior, Biology Education) and other assistants (Missi Bole, Erika Szonntag, Tara Speck, Spencer Ruston) just completed the implementation of the deer/non-native plant demonstration areas, which are meant to show the impact of deer and invasive plant species on native plants. One area is located at the High Street end of the GNA and south of University Rd (the road that goes through the GNA). The other areas are located in the flood plain west of New St and south of Tigue Rd and in an abandoned (1968) farm field just west of the old apartments on South Campus.



In each location you will find four fenced and four not fenced fifty foot square plots (=treatments). In two of each treatment (fence, no fence) non-native plants were removed by hand! Already you can see the dramatic role non-native plants are having by just looking at the area they occupied. Over the next tree years we will monitor to see how the treatments affect native plant recovery.

See Rachel below holing root system from an old Oriental bittersweet vine pulled up in one of the plots on the old farm field site.



Earth Day 2007 Revisited

West Chester University's Dr. Gerry Hertel's shares his views on last year's Earth week.

A Flame is Lit

"What I saw happening this week was a movement from hot embers to a flame: individuals, groups, students, staff, faculty, local residents, young and old all getting "fired up" about the condition of the planet on which we live, with much of the activity centered around West Chester University. People seemed to work harder as they reflected on what happened at Virginia Tech. Many earth-related activities occurred all over our campus, in the Borough, and surrounding townships. I was so happy to read the Readers Forum (Philadelphia Inquirer; Chester County; April 22) this morning; our own Dr Lutz (Geology) and my daughter Kelley Kramer (who by the way helped plant trees in the Gordon Natural Area) presented their views on climate change and offered suggestions on what we should do."

"All of this, I believe, puts West Chester University in a unique position; taking local and regional leadership in providing climate change solutions and providing graduates that are in position to make a difference at graduation. We can continue to be a "flickering flame" or become a fire of change; not one of destruction as a raging wildfire but as a controlled burn that can restore a fire-adapted ecosystem to health and vitality. Our campus can and should be a model to follow."

Birds of the Gordon

Mourning Dove

The mourning dove is the most common dove in the United States and the most widely hunted game bird. It is a plumper bird about 9-13 inches in length and has a tawny body with darker khaki colored wings. Black spots can be found near the tips of the wings. *Cool Fact:* During the nest-building process, the female will stay at the nest while the male collects sticks. He then stands on her back to give her the nest material as she weaves it into the nest.



Red-Tailed Hawk

This is the most common hawk in North America. Wingspan can range from 45-52 inches, but females are slightly larger than males. While their tails are typically brick red and wings are



brown with a white belly, where there is geographical variation there is color variation; a red-tailed hawk can have a wide variety of light to dark shades. This bird is a *raptor*, or a bird of prey, thus its diet consists mostly of small rodents and snakes. *Cool Fact:* Even if you have never seen one of these hawks, you are bound to recognize its cry: *"the raspy call of the Red-tailed Hawk is used in movies to represent any eagle or hawk anywhere in the world"*.

Tree Swallow

This petite songbird is characterized by a lucid, brilliant sapphire head, back, and wings that contrast sharply with its clean white belly. With a slight beak, round body and delicately sweeping wings and tail feathers, the tree swallow is quite a pretty bird. Tree swallows occupy most of central and northern North America, with their breeding range ending at tree line. These birds are very social and may form flocks up to several thousand.



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Sustainable Operations Tip of the Month *It's a Turn Off!*

Fact to ponder: A computer left continuously running will emit 2,161 pounds of CO₂ in a year and cost \$45 a year to power (at \$0.0372 per kwh).

Action to take: Shut down your computer, monitor, all lights, and other electrical equipment before leaving your office, even if you will only be out for a couple of hours. You may wonder, “What if I leave my computer on but have a screen saver running?” Screen savers were originally designed to help protect the lifespan of monochrome monitors, which are now technologically obsolete. Most screen savers do not save energy unless they actually turn off the screen or, in the case of laptops, turn off the backlight.

Source: Ohio University. 2007. “Green” computing guide.
<http://www.facilities.ohiou.edu/greenpc/>. (August 9).

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Become a Tree Tender

“As part of TreeVitalize, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, in partnership with Penn State Cooperative Extension, will offer nine hours of hands-on tree-care training for residents of the five-county Philadelphia region. Based on PHS's city-based Tree Tenders project, the free training will cover tree biology, identification, planting, proper care and working within your community. The Tree Tender training is designed for lay people and experts alike. The course is offered on weekday evenings at three locations each spring and fall. Pre-registration is required.”

(PHS website) Visit www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org/phlgreen/tree-training.html

to register.

Classes for Chester County will be held Thursdays October 11, 18, and 25 6-9 pm at:

Coatesville Area Public Library
501 E. Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, Pa
See you there!

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:: Check out these Websites ::

Living on Earth

www.loe.org

“Living on Earth with Steve Curwood is the weekly environmental news and information program distributed by Public Radio International. Every week approximately [300 Public Radio stations](#) broadcast Living on Earth's news, features, interviews and commentary on a broad range of ecological issues”. Visit the site to browse books and music pertaining to the earth and environment and to see where you can tune in.

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Information for the Conservation of Biodiversity

www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us

“The PNHP is a member of NatureServe, an international network of natural heritage programs which gathers and provides information on the location and status of important ecological resources (plants, vertebrates, invertebrates, natural communities and geologic features). Its purpose is to provide current, reliable, objective information to help inform environmental decisions.” Check out links to see how the ecosystems in your area are faring, as well as those across the country.

Encyclopedia of Life

www.eol.org

The Encyclopedia of Life is a new website that makes all key information about life on Earth accessible to anyone, anywhere in the world. The goal of the site is to create an evolving encyclopedia with contributions from scientists and amateurs alike in a global effort to document all 1.8 million named species of animals, plants and other forms of life on Earth. When completed, the encyclopedia will serve as a global biodiversity tool, providing scientists, policymakers, students and citizens with information they need to understand and protect the planet.

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Billion Tree Campaign

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has launched a campaign to plant trees all over the world. The Gordon Natural Area has pledged 100 trees thus far. World target-pledged-planted/the Gordon Natural Area

Target



1,000,000,000/100

Pledged

1,099,755,4350/100

Planted

133,715,617/64

Visit <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>

See West Chester University on line photos!

<http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/photoGallery/indexNorthAmerica.asp>

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GNA Supporters:

2004: Presidential Initiative (WCU); Environmental Council (WCU); USDA Forest Service; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2005: Wegman's; Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery; Environmental Council; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2006: Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery; Valero Energy Corporation; National Wildlife Federation; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2007: Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources; WCU Alumni Association; Darlington Biological Society; MENTA Cafe

Contact: ghertel@wcupa.edu; 610-436-2722; 484-883-3371

NO TRAIL BIKES ARE ALLOWED IN THE GNA – They have increased the length of trails by 300% and are impacting the biodiversity in the GNA.

DOGS NEED TO BE LEASHED – Students doing laboratory assignments have been attacked by unleashed dogs.



WCU Public Safety: 610-436-3311