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Gordie News, May 2008

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

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GORDIE NEWS

(May 2008) 2:5

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-

Next Workday: Saturday October 18, Gordon Natural Area 10-12PM

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? ::

WCU Gets Forest Restoration Grant

West Chester University was notified in late April that the Gordon Natural Area would be funded to begin restoration of the Big Woods forest. The project was funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Tree Vitalize Program administered by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Chester County Conservation District. Planting was completed during our work day on May 3. Tree diameters and heights are now being measured. The rains of late have been great for our new trees! More trees will arrive in the fall.

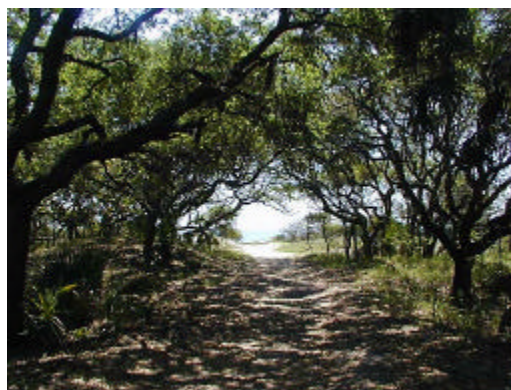
:: Check out these Websites ::

Trees & Music

Connect to the healing power of trees

www.musicofthetrees.co.uk/

Paul Forrest (yes, that is his real name) is a folk musician from the United Kingdom who has composed music in honor of different tree species, like ginkgo, oak, and aspen. Paul plays guitars, the flute, the recorder, the mandolin, the zither, and percussion on his nine tracks dedicated to trees. Log onto the website and click on "Listen" to enjoy some relaxing melodies.



Gerry's Rock

Folksongs from Michigan's History

www.secondcello.com/michiganfolksongs/notes.html

Dr. Hertel graduated from the University of Wisconsin, so you may very well hear these songs in the background while being graced by his presence. Composer Duane Starcher's historical tunes offer astute cultural insight into Michigan's 19th century history with a country twang and make for a refreshing history lesson. While Dr. Hertel unfortunately did not help to compose any of these backwoods ballads, they certainly do fit his style. Note #4 The Jam on Gerry's Rock...

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:: Visitors to the Gordon ::

Health Walk participants in the GNA. Each took the opportunity to plant a tree in our restoration area



May 3rd Workday Huge Success!

Below are some snapshots of the Garlic mustard Pull #2 workday. Thanks so much to all of those who came out. With your help, we were able to pull loads of garlic mustard and finish planting the trees donated by the Tree Vitalize Program.



Top Left – Dr. Helmke of the Geology Department pulling garlic mustard in the woods around the newly planted trees; also provided EMT support



Top Right – Gold! Megan Barker and Maddie Lohr, Dr. Hertel's granddaughters, with the pulled garlic mustard



Left – Dining in the GNA. Dogs on the fire: Dr Tiebout of Biology and Gail Fellows of Environmental Health & Safety for WCU; getting ready to grill up some grub, on their right is new President of E.A.R.T.H Club, Andrew Barrett.



Clockwise from top left: Group shot, Dr. Turner and company with a newly planted tree, and past-President of E.A.R.T.H. Club, Tara Speck

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Research Projects with the Gordon Natural Area



Macrofungal Diversity at the Gordon Natural Area

By: Lauryn Levy, Dr. Turner and Dr. Hertel

Abstract

The Gordon Natural Area (GNA), a suburban preserve in Chester County, has been protected since 1973. In Fall 2007, riparian and wooded habitats at the GNA were surveyed for macrofungi (MF) presence and abundance. Specifically, Ascomycete and Basidiomycete sporocarps were identified, counted, and classed into functional groups as: decomposers, mycorrhizal, or other. Several species of gilled

mushrooms, jelly fungi, morels, puffballs, and shelf fungi were found. Of these, shelf fungi were the most abundant, while morels were the rarest. Most species were classed functionally as decomposers of fallen logs and snags, while several presumed mycorrhizal species were also found, primarily associating with oak (*Quercus*) hosts. Further, most species were found in forest compared to floodplain habitats. This is the first comprehensive MF survey at the GNA, and results suggest that MF species richness can be relatively high in natural areas located in fragmented, urban landscapes in southeastern PA. Pictured above right: Turkeytail

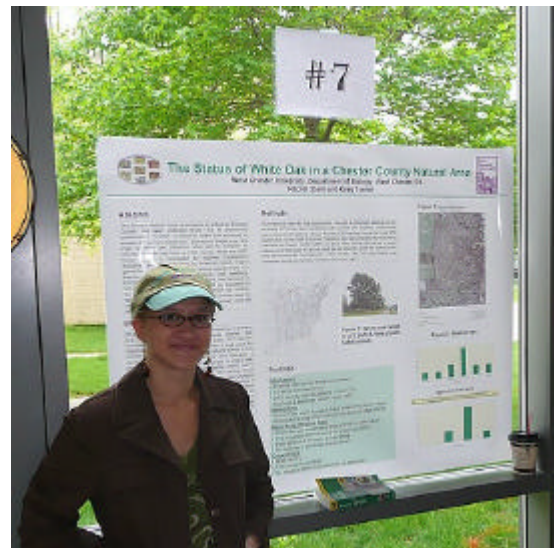


The Status of White Oak in a Chester County Natural Area

By: Rachel Stern

Abstract

The Gordon Natural Area, a preserve in suburban Chester County, has been protected since 1973 for biodiversity conservation. In 2007, a preserve forest was surveyed to assess the current distribution, abundance, basal area, and vigor of white oak (*Quercus alba*) and to compare its abundance with that from a 1970 survey. While the 2007 forest canopy is dominated by tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), and the understory by American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), white oak was sparse among canopy trees (< 1 tree/ha) and absent among saplings and seedlings. Compared to 1970, white oak abundance has declined to include only large canopy trees (DBH > 56 cm prevalent) in the preserve. Of these trees, however, most are healthy, based on crown vigor estimates, and could provide seed for recruitment for years to come, though recruitment must be facilitated.



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:: Bartram's Oak ::

The Bartram's oak is a cultivar of the native willow oak, with leaves that look like a cross between an oak and a willow. This mature oak is the largest tree in the Quad at 59.8" DBH. The dual copper wires on the tree are for lightning protection. This specimen can be found on WCU's Quad



Who was Bartram?

John Bartram was the first to describe this rare but naturally occurring hybrid of the Red and Willow Oaks. He discovered a specimen known as *Quercus heterophylla* growing on his own farm. Born in Darby Township to a Quaker family, John Bartram (1699-1777) became America's first great botanist, naturalist, and plant explorer. Lacking a formal education, Bartram taught himself through observation, reading and correspondence with equally inquiring minds in the colonies and abroad. From his 102-acre farm near Philadelphia, which he purchased in 1728, Bartram traveled north to Lake Ontario, south to Florida, and west to the Ohio River in search of



plants and natural history specimens for his own botanic garden and for collectors at home and abroad. Bartram and his son William are credited with identifying and introducing into cultivation more than 200 of our native plants.

By 1765, Bartram's international reputation earned him the notice of King George III who honored him as Royal Botanist, a position he held until his death in 1777.

Left-dia tape (metric) around WCU's specimen (almost 151 cm)

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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 200 trees thus far. World target-pledged-planted/the Gordon Natural Area

Target



7,000,000,000/200

Pledged

3,729,893,802/200

Planted

2,138,936,565/136

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

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 Café; Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery

2008: Redbud Native Plant Nursery, ARAMARK

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; 911 calls tell them you are on Stadium Rd

