

8-2008

## Gordie News, August/September 2008

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

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# GORDIE NEWS

(Aug & Sept 2008) 2:7

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 ([www.gordonarea.org](http://www.gordonarea.org)) and other activities**

**Contact Erika Szonntag with feedback or ideas for articles at [es631042@wcupa.edu](mailto:es631042@wcupa.edu)**

## :: What's New? ::

### **West Chester University has a new Outdoor Classroom!**

On Wednesday, Sept. 3, West Chester University's Outdoor Classroom located outside of the Schmucker was complete. Certified as a National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat, the Outdoor Classroom will be used for research and general enjoyment.

Plants were purchased from Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery and were planted with help from the WCU Biology Club. All of the species used are native and attract pollinators like bees and butterflies; some species include Joe Pye Weed, Purple Coneflower, various grasses, and Anise Hysop (an excellent butterfly attracter).



Top from left: Dr. Gestl, Biology Club Advisor, Vice President Matt Bigos, and Elizabeth Burchi, also of the Biology Club

## :: Visitors to the GNA ::



Dr Helmke's Geology soil class doing a field exercise in GNA.

Delaware Nature Society campers and David Pragoff, School & Group Programs Team Leader, at far right.



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## September's "Everyday Environmentalist" Tips

Straight from the Nature Conservancy's Great Places e-newsletter, here are just five of 10 easy to do, science-based "go green" tips suggested by readers. Visit their site to read the rest and to send your own tips and tricks!

### 1) Get to the Root of It

Try to **eat locally** (defined as your food having traveled no further than 100 miles from its source to your plate). Eating locally in the winter months can be difficult, however, so you can **build a root cellar in basement** for storage of garden produce. Especially useful for root crops like potatoes (and perhaps wine). Use root crops over winter as much as possible.

### 2) Deja Vu for Everything

**Reuse** everything, like coffee bags to store and send breakable objects. Plastic Ziploc bags can also be reused; just be sure to wash them out

### 3) Support the Surge (Protector)

Use **surge protector strips** for all computer and TV components, then turn strips off when the electronics are not in use.

## 5) You Don't Spray!

Try **vinegar** to rid yourself of garden pests and plastic strips and mulch to keep weeds out of gardens. No need for harsh chemicals!

## 10) Water Your Plants with Coffee (Grounds)

Save your **coffee grounds to mix with three or four parts water** and feed it to your evergreens and roses. The grounds are highly nutritious for these acid loving plants, and eliminate the need to buy fertilizer which can contain harsh chemicals.

*Courtesy of <http://support.nature.org>*

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## United Nations Environment Programme: Art for the Environment

*“The UNEP Art for the Environment initiative aims to generate environmental awareness using the universal language of art as a catalyst for individuals, communities and leaders to focus on environmental values.” – UNEP.org*

Working with the Natural World Museum of San Francisco, the UNEP is working towards raising environmental awareness through the arts. Exhibits and events are held annually worldwide to celebrate a variety of art focused on “the plight of the planet”, including everything from “ancient and indigenous” pieces to modern art and photography.



Events and exhibits are held in several countries around the world, with most spanning many countries at once. The annual event “Moving towards a Balanced Earth: Kick the (Carbon) Habit World Environment Day 2008” was held in the United States, as well as other countries, on June 5. Artists were asked to bring fresh perspectives on the planet through their artwork to move towards an environmentally sound and balanced earth.

The UNEP and NWM hope “to promote a deeper understanding and connection to our natural world” through the acknowledgement and celebration of environmentally conscious artwork around the world.



At left is “Swans” by photographer Luo Hong. Visit [www.unep.org/art\\_env/](http://www.unep.org/art_env/) for more artists’ galleries and event updates.

© Mr. Luo Hong

## Birds of the Gordon

### *Carolina Wren*

Considered one of the loudest birds in the forest, this small songbird weighs less than one ounce and is characterized by cinnamon and rust colored plumage with a distinct white stripe running along its head over the eye. Males and females are similar in appearance and are monogamous. *Thryothorus ludovicianus* is abundant in the eastern United States, except for the northernmost parts of New England, and maintain the same territory year round. The species appreciates dense foliage and brush cover and enjoys insects and spiders as food. **Cool Fact:** The Carolina wren “dismembers large insects” by beating and shaking them with its bill until they fall apart; a somewhat violent procedure for such a small bird!



### *Song Sparrow*

While this sparrow is found throughout most of North America and is common year round in Pennsylvania, *Melospiza melodia*'s appearance varies greatly with its geographic location. They tend to be smaller and lighter in color in southern regions and larger with darker patterns northward. Despite the physical differences, the genetic makeup of this sparrow across the region is surprisingly consistent. The song sparrow is characterized by variations of tawny, cream, white, and muted brown coloring and striping. Some defining features are the brown spot on its streaked chest and long, rounded tail feathers. The bird weighs anywhere between roughly 0.4 and 1.9 grams and can be between 12 and



17 cm in length. **Cool Facts:** Females value intelligence. They are attracted to those males who not only have a well developed song, but also to those with the strongest ability to learn and match their “song tutor’s” song. The species also uses a combination of day length (like many birds) and temperature as their breeding season signal. Researchers found that on the Northwest coast, a population living on the coast began breeding two months prior to a population living in nearby mountains. While the day length was the same at both locations, temperatures in the mountains were cooler than desired for that two month period in comparison to coastal temperatures.

*Information courtesy of [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu)*

# 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

3,908,075,793/200

## Planted

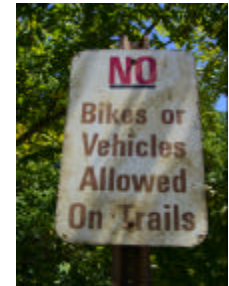
2,299,895,988/136

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

**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



## NOTICE

New St. to High St. down to and through the Gordon Natural Area is Stadium Rd. The parking lot R is officially 20 Stadium Rd. If you need 911 call and mention where you are on Stadium Rd.; other security needs should call campus security.

## 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](mailto:ghertel@wcupa.edu); 610-436-2722; 484-883-3371**