



# WATERSHED NEWS

## November 2024

Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association  
P.O. Box 183 Leetsdale, PA 15056

[www.lscwatershed.org](http://www.lscwatershed.org)

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## Note from the President 2024

Barbara Carrier, LSCWA President

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Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association (LSCWA) was originally formed by residents living along the stream, teachers, and people interested in preserving the quality - as well as the flora and fauna - along the creek. The original goal was to have the stream declared as a *High-Quality Stream* by the State of Pennsylvania, which would give it various protections that would ensure the continued water quality and help protect wildlife in the watershed. After financing several water quality tests, Little Sewickley Creek is one of four streams declared a *High-Quality Stream* that puts it in this protected category.

One of LSCWA's missions from the very beginning has been to educate others about the fish, flora, and wildlife encompassed by the twenty-six-mile watershed, and has several programs to further this mission. The association continues the work, originally started by local Quaker Valley biology teacher Ed Schroth, of educating Quaker Valley Students. His *Up the Creek Gang* continues as the *QV Creekers* today with the support of Fern Hollow and LSCWA. It recently has been expanded to include a middle school group. Last year, Professor Dr. Brady made a presentation at our membership meeting about the fish findings that his students compiled at Duquesne University. Years ago, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History helped Myrna Macdonald and Jane Konrad, two LSCWA members, preserve flora samples they had collected along Little Sewickley Creek. The association is reaching

out to the department for more information about the specimens.

Little Sewickley Creek and its tributaries flow through many different communities, and the LSCWA board understands how important it is to maintain contact with each of these communities. As part of our efforts to engage with them, we have members that include residents and elected officials from these communities. The strong bonds we have formed were evident this year, when digging to fix a pipeline began in Edgeworth next to the creek. The community had no prior notice of this activity but checked their permits and communicated with the association about the work being done. These vital connections help to ensure that issues concerning the creek are relayed to the board and can make difficult situations easier to manage.

In the upcoming year, the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association will be sponsoring two events open to members and the public: a bird count in January and a BioBlitz in April. Please read further in the newsletter for more information about these events.

Lastly, the association bids a fond farewell to our Vice President, Diana Morrow. She has been a strong believer in the preservation of our natural areas and teaching the wonders of nature to children through her involvement in *Nature Guides*. Her ability to offer insightful solutions and her passion for the watershed will be missed. Her contributions to LSCWA were invaluable and we know will be built upon for years to come. Thank you for everything you have done, Diana, you will be missed!

# Summer Discovery Camp 2024

Chriss O'Lare, Director

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Campers returned to the creek during LSCWA's day camp Summer Discovery. Rising fourth through seventh graders attended one of the week-long sessions where they explored the creek at Walker Park and visited upstream at King's Lake. They took creek walks, played games, walked in the woods, looked for critters and learned about all aspects of the watershed. Head to our website next spring to find out the 2025 dates and how to register!



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## Quaker Valley Creekers

Sam Capezzuto, FHNC Executive Director

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Quaker Valley Creekers experienced a remarkable surge in high school interns during the 2023-24 school year. Under the guidance of Fern Hollow educators Gretchen Barbera and Cam Elko and Allegheny Creekers Laura Branby, the interns delved into environmental sciences, focusing on watersheds. The QV Creekers ventured into the field to explore beaver dams with Steve Downing, silviculture with James Palmer, saw-whet owl banding with Bob Mulvihill, and much more. During one of the excursions, Creekers collected data at vernal pools located in Bell Acres of Sewickley, PA. The pools were full of wood frogs and Jefferson salamander eggs at the beginning of every lifecycle stage. Each of the two pools was divided into four quadrants. In total, interns counted 24 wood frog masses and 38 Jefferson salamander masses.

The Creek Connections at Quaker Valley High School tradition will continue with Cam Elko and Jen Pruszyński in the 2024-25 school year with a full schedule of environmental exploration. We will survey the Little Sewickley Creek watershed for flora

and fauna and conduct chemical testing throughout the year. Differences in the water chemistry can indicate seasonal pollution, such as road salt runoff, which can damage the ecosystem in the creek. These hands-on experiences for students build confidence in learned science skills and a deeper connection to the watershed. We will also learn about environmental careers, touring a laboratory at Robert Morris University and presenting at the annual Creek Connections Symposium in April of 2025.

We look forward to a great year in environmental learning thanks to the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association.



# Acorn Park Upgrades to Support Outdoor Recreation, Education

Letty Savage, LSCWA Member

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If you have driven by Acorn Park since the end of August, you may have noticed construction at the edge of the normally quiet forest. It's all part of an upgrade to enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation particularly hiking, biking, and bird watching. Infrastructure improvements will also provide space for environmental education programs. The park, located on one of the upper tributaries of Little Sewickley Creek, is part of Franklin Park Borough's dedicated green space.

Funding for the improvements, which are estimated to cost \$1.7 million, has been provided in part by a \$662,328 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DNCR) and a \$215,000 grant from the Gaming and Economic Development Tourism Fund. Permits were received in early 2024 so work could begin this summer.

Planned upgrades include:

- New entry with clearer sight lines on Magee Rd. Extension
- New parking area with permeable paving
- Public restrooms
- Electricity and wi-fi access
- Mountain bike pump track with bike wash
- Outdoor classroom gazebo with bench seating
- New playground with nature theme
- Rain garden to capture and control runoff from the pump track and parking area
- ADA accessible trail connecting the parking lot to the outdoor classroom
- Network of hiking and biking trails throughout the park with two bridge crossings over Little Sewickley Creek and observation decks and benches on the trails

Contractors have removed the old tennis court and the old playground and removed the asphalt paving, which

will be recycled. Approximately 75 trees, many with oak wilt, were removed from the construction area along with invasive shrubs and vines. Before construction began volunteers removed dozens of native plants that may be replanted after construction is complete.

When the project is finished trees and shrubs will be planted in the disturbed areas. In addition to the plants required in the construction permits, the borough has pledged to plant three trees for every one removed that had to be removed. Emphasis is on native plants including native trees that are not currently growing in the Acorn Park forest. Plant selection has been recommended by a landscape architect, DNCR, and the Department of Environmental Protection and reviewed by the borough's Environmental Advisory Council. The goal is to introduce more diversity to provide food and habitat for wildlife. Two riparian buffer plantings are also planned to support the health of Little Sewickley Creek.

Much of the construction will be completed by the end of the year with plantings and riparian buffer restoration scheduled for 2025.

The Acorn Park upgrades will also provide opportunities for volunteers, particularly during "Green Up Days" sponsored by the Franklin Park EAC. For example, in spring 2024 volunteers planted 100 willow and buttonbush shrubs in a riparian buffer away from the construction area. Volunteers also removed invasive plants and vines, particularly bittersweet, from disturbed forest areas. For information on park events and volunteer activities visit the Franklin Park Borough website at <https://www.franklinparkborough.us/>.

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**Our next Members meeting is Nov. 11, 2024.**

**Join us at 7 pm at Fern Hollow Nature Center!**



# Watershed Winter Bird Count

John Orndorff, LSCWA Treasurer

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On January 4, 2025, Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association will sponsor a winter bird count. Interested residents of the watershed will submit lists of bird species and the number of individual birds they observe at their bird feeders or in their neighborhood. Volunteer field watchers will do a count at Fern Hollow Nature Center, Sewickley Height Park, Walker Park, and Devil's Hollow. LSCWA will post the results of the count on its website. Board member John Orndorff will coordinate the count and give more detailed instructions to participants. Please contact John by phone (412-313-1363) or by email (orndjo@gmail.com) for more information.

## 2024 Current Board Members

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### Officers

President: Barbara Carrier, Glen Osborne Rep

Secretary: Chriss O'Lare, Franklin Park Rep

Treasurer: John Orndorff

### Members

David Case, Leet Township Rep

Steve Downing

Meg Forsyth, Bell Acres Rep

Joseph H. Hajnas, Sewickley Hills Rep

Roy Kraynyk

Joe Marrone, QVRA & QVHS Construction Liaison

Deb Canney, Leetsdale Rep

Chris Popovic, Website

Steven Pukansky

David Quatchak

Harton Semple, Sewickley Heights Rep

Gary Smith, Edgeworth Rep

# Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association 2025 Budget

John Orndorff, LSCWA Treasurer

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## LSCWA 2025 Budget

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$13,000.00</b>
<b>Membership Contributions</b>	\$ 9,000.00
<b>Summer Discovery Camp Registration Fees</b>	\$ 1,500.00
<b>Investment Account</b>	\$ 2,500.00
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$13,000.00</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>\$ 11,000.00</b>
Summer Discovery Camp Expenses	\$ 4,000.00
QV Creekers Program (2024-25)	\$ 3,750.00
QV Middle School Watershed Club	\$ 2,500.00
Website Expenses	\$ 750.00
<b>Administrative</b>	<b>\$ 250.00</b>
Postage	\$ 75.00
Post Office Box Fee	\$ 125.00
Secretarial Supplies	\$ 50.00
<b>Fund Raising</b>	<b>\$ 1,750.00</b>
Newsletter	
Expenses	\$ 1,600.00
Postage	\$ 150.00

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**If you would like to become a member or contribute to the LSCWA, please send a check to "Donations" at P.O. Box 183, Leetsdale, PA 15056.**

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