

NLREEP: Environmental Education in Philadelphia



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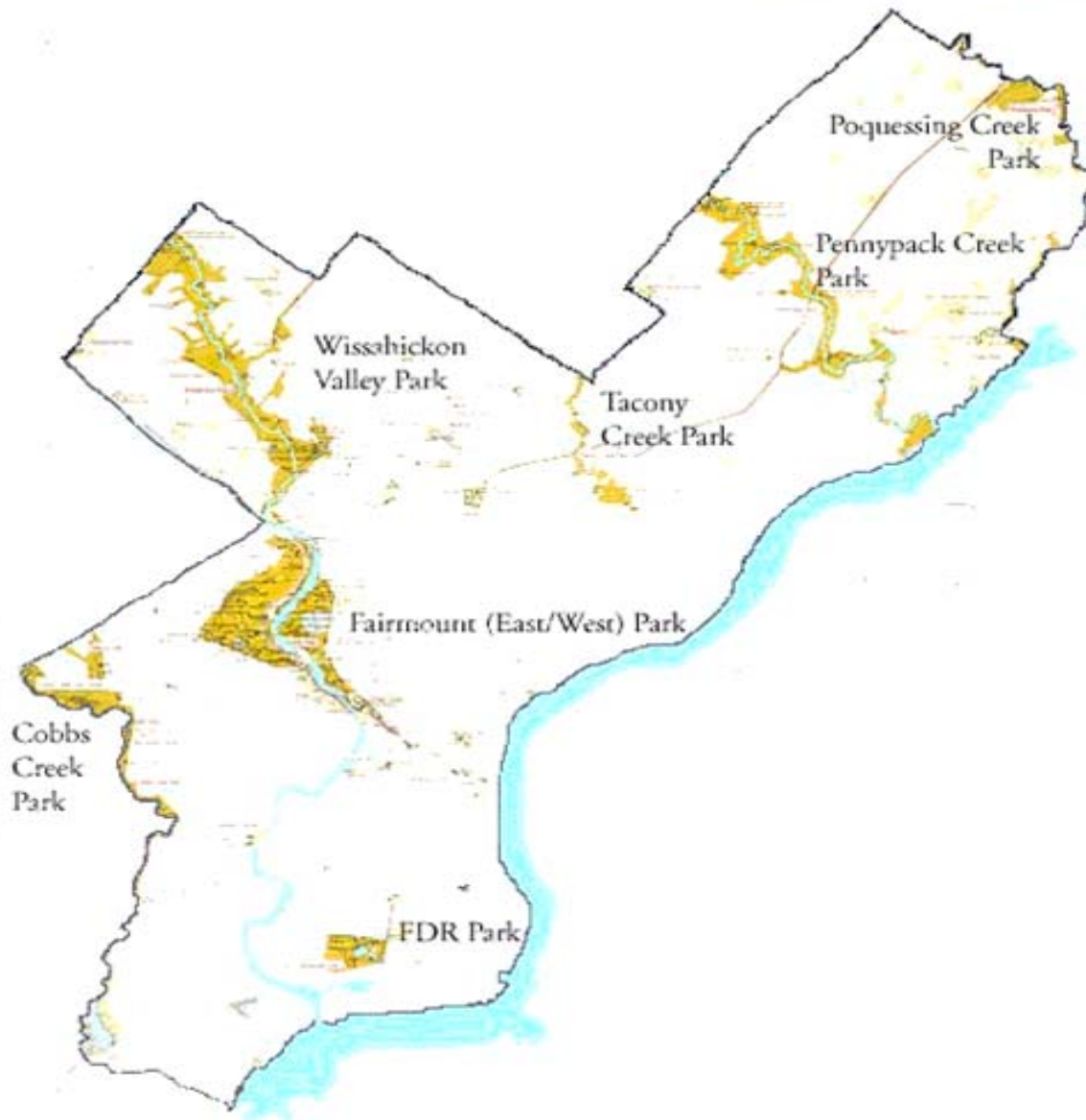
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- In charge of Philadelphia's 9100 acres of parkland, half of which are natural areas
- Created Natural Lands Restoration and Environmental Education Program (NLREEP) in 1997 to **promote healthy urban ecosystems**
- NLREEP funding comes from the city, state/federal grants, and park programs.

PHILADELPHIA: Fairmount Park Facilities



Goals of NLREEP

- Reverse the damage done to Fairmount Park's natural areas by:
 - stormwater run-off, pollution, invasive species, animal overbrowsing, species loss, soil compaction
- Build a “constituency of volunteers” for park protection



February's “Volunteer of the Month”

Volunteer Statistics

January 1998 - December 2003

- **2,510** volunteer events
- **48,785** volunteers
- **122,086** volunteer hours
- **50%** of volunteers return
- **98** participating groups in the “Preserve Your Park” Program
- **16,889** trees maintained
- **15,803** trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants installed
- **49.8** miles of trails improved

Participating groups “adopt” a small area of the park,
maintaining and improving it...



Removing Invasive Species...





Planting native species ...

Restoring streambanks...



...trail maintenance, and general clean-up.



NLREEP Website

- Park programs
- Links
- Volunteer sign-ups
- Invasive species page
- Publications



NLREEP Environmental Education Division Mission Statement

"To promote understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of Fairmount Park and our total environment.

From neighborhood to region to world, our actions impact our environment and our environment impacts our quality of life."

Environmental Education Goals

- **Bring more people to Fairmount Park.**
- **To increase cultural diversity of Fairmount Park users.**
- **To increase public understanding of ecological concepts.**
- **To identify the relationship between human activities and natural ecosystems.**
- **To recruit volunteers.**
- **To develop team building, problem solving and self-esteem in program participants.**
- **To address local and national goals for environmental education.**

Environmental Education

Goals (continued):

- **To develop partnerships with other organizations.**
- **To promote interest in and access to careers in environmental science and related fields.**
- **To highlight similarities between Fairmount Park issues, regional issues and global issues.**
- **To increase positive action taken on behalf of Fairmount Park and our total environment.**
- **To sustain the Park's long-range environmental education efforts.**

Philadelphia's Environmental Education Centers



Cobbs Creek



Pennypack



Wissahickon



Fox Chase Farm

Some Programs

- Nature walks
- Lectures and workshops
- Afterschool and school-day programs
- Service Learning
- Crafts for kids

Wissahickon Environmental Education Center

**THE ANDORRA NATURAL AREA
OF WISSAHICKON VALLEY**

100 ACRES ACQUIRED AND PRESERVED
IN 1977 BY
THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

AND
FAIRMOUNT PARK COMMISSION

THROUGH THE COOPERATION AND GENEROSITY OF
MR. AND MRS. L.M.C. SMITH

FRANK L. RIZZO, MAYOR
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



FAIRMOUNT PARK COMMISSION
ROBERT W. CRAWFORD, PRESIDENT
HAROLD D. SAYLOR
COMMISSIONER AND TRUSTEE
ROBERT C. MCCONNELL, DIRECTOR

Wissahickon Environmental Education Center



The “Tree House”



Inside the Tree House...





And on the trails.



Goals for the Wissahickon EEC

- Make Andorra and the Tree House more widely known in the area
- Work more closely with public schools
- Extend hours

High Points

- Integration of volunteerism, restoration, and education
- Award-winning programs
- Fun, interesting displays
- Provides a pleasant environment for kids to learn about ecology
- Knowledgeable staff

Critique

- Not reaching as many people as it should, especially public schools
- Focus is mostly ecology, with little discussion of conservation/sustainability
- Needs a little maintenance



Sources

- Website: www.nlreep.org
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- Chung, Juliet. “Branching Out.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 29, 2002, B1.