

# Protect and Preserve Pennypack Greenway



Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)



Within one of the most rapidly developing parts of Pennsylvania is found a creek and watershed system that has sustained remnants of the primal beauty and wildlife that has existed within it for thousands of years. It is the Pennypack Creek watershed, a system that feeds Pennypack Creek as it runs from its headwaters in Bucks and Montgomery counties, through Philadelphia and into the Delaware River. Publicly accessible pockets of this graceful natural environment are used daily by

thousands of citizens, young and old, providing a refuge from the pressures of daily life. Yet this system faces real threats. Undeveloped land alongside Pennypack Creek is sought after for development and there isn't a protected passage through it. The result of this development is increased water pollution, bank erosion and the loss of habitat and wildlife.

Whether you are someone who uses one of the special natural areas or parks daily, visits occasionally, or has children who play along the banks of the creek, your participation and support of the Pennypack Greenway is essential. To enhance and protect this rare natural treasure and to preserve it for future generations the time to act is now!

Some of the busiest, most congested and stress-inducing traffic is found on roads crossing southeastern Pennsylvania—the Pennsylvania Turnpike, U.S. 1, and Interstate 95. Unbeknownst to the vast majority of the drivers barreling down these highways, they are crossing some of the quietest, greenest, and most restful landscapes in the urbanized East—the Pennypack Greenway.



Flowering dogwoods (*Cornus florida*)

Anchored by two large public parks and a private natural area in its southern half near the Delaware River, the planned Greenway narrows to hug the Pennypack Creek tightly through its central reaches, then broadens again in the northernmost headwaters.

Encompassing 2,650 acres, the Greenway will link communities and neighborhoods, provide countless opportunities for healthful recreation, maintain and improve environmental quality, and act as a psychic "safety valve" for the hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors who live nearby and enjoy the Greenway regularly—even if the contact is as brief as watching horses grazing peacefully in a foggy meadow during the morning commute.

## Location

The Pennypack Greenway's gentle, verdant curve embraces Philadelphia's near-northern suburbs and the city's northeastern neighborhoods. Bordering its namesake creek, the completed Pennypack Greenway will measure 21 miles. Pennypack Creek rises from springs on College Settlement Camp—the northern end of the Greenway, located in Horsham Township, Montgomery County. Gathering waters from tributaries in 11 municipalities in Montgomery and Bucks counties, the creek enters Philadelphia on its way to the Delaware River at Pennypack on the Delaware, a recreation complex in Philadelphia's Holmesburg neighborhood 10 miles northeast of Center City.

## History and Culture

During colonial times, the Pennypack valley's proximity to one of America's earliest and largest settlements coupled with its abundant water power resources guaranteed its rapid conversion from forest to an agricultural and industrial landscape featuring 30 mills and dozens of bustling villages. The advent of the railroads in the mid 19th century connected the Greenway's villages to Philadelphia and further transformed the valley. Now largely urban and suburban with over 250,000 residents, the valley nevertheless retains pieces of its colonial history. For example, the Greenway contains 43 sites either already listed or determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. From the nation's oldest stone arch bridge (1697) that crosses the Pennypack where Native Americans had forded the creek to distinctive religious institutions and museums perched on the valley's rim, the Pennypack Greenway offers a cultural panorama that spans our nation's heritage.



Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

## Recreation and Healthy Lifestyles

One day, a trail may stitch together many of the natural areas along the creek. But it is not necessary to wait for a completed trail to enjoy the Greenway. Pennypack Park provides dozens of miles of hiking and equestrian trails and features a popular 9-mile paved all-purpose trail from Pennypack on the Delaware north to Pine Road. Pennypack Park's trail system links directly to six miles of trails in Lorimer Park, and the Pennypack Preserve offers hikers, bikers, and nature lovers 10 more miles of trail



Skidders in Lorimer Park

to explore. The Powerline Trail, currently 2.5 miles long, joins the Greenway in Horsham, and the eastern end of Montgomery County's Cross-County Trail will begin at the Greenway when it is completed in the next few years.

In addition to trail-oriented activities, municipal and county parkland within the Greenway provides unlimited recreational opportunities. Municipalities have developed playgrounds, ball fields, picnic areas, fitness courses, and basketball courts that welcome the public. Fishing is popular along many stretches of Pennypack Creek, and cross-country skiers and sledgers enjoy the thrills offered by the rolling landscape during the winter.

## Fostering a Sense of Community

The Pennypack Greenway threads through seven municipalities in two counties. Each of these individual municipalities has a distinct character and identity, as do the half-dozen neighborhoods through which the creek flows in Philadelphia. The creek and its Greenway foster a sense of community linking diverse neighborhoods around a shared resource. Repeated flooding has forced the communities along the creek's banks to think outside their own borders because the causes of the flooding transcend municipal boundaries. A growing network of public trails is poised to connect the Greenway to the web of trails crisscrossing the region. With the possibility that an unused rail line in the central part of the Greenway might become available for conversion to a trail, there's great potential for strengthening community connections.

## A Natural Haven

The mixed oak woodlands that give character to the Pennypack Greenway provide habitat for a rich diversity of species—some rare and endangered. In the skies overhead, the Pennypack Greenway is an important component of the Atlantic Flyway along which birds migrate with the seasons. Many thousands of birds use the Greenway to rest and refuel during their migrations,



Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)

and some stay to nest. Dozens of species are year-round residents. More than 200 species of birds have been recorded in the Greenway - half of all bird species recorded in Pennsylvania. In the creek itself, hickory



Chicken Mushroom (*Polyporus sulphureus*)

shad and other migratory fish may soon be spawning again after having been excluded from the creek three centuries ago when milldams blocked their upstream passage. Several of the Greenway Partners are actively removing or retrofitting the remaining dams, which will improve water quality and free the fish to migrate once again. And in the fields, woodlands, and swamps alongside the creek there can be found at least 650 plant species. These green communities create the habitat upon which the Greenway's animals depend—the valley's wild turkeys, red foxes, Eastern coyotes, opossums, bats, chipmunks, and many others.

## Environmental Benefits

The Pennypack Greenway cleans water as it flows off our communities' streets and sidewalks, stabilizes the amount of water in streams so that we can fish year-round, allows floodwaters to spread out harmlessly, filters dust, dirt and pollutants from the air, cools our neighborhoods, and holds our soil in place so it doesn't wash away. The benefits to our communities provided by the Pennypack Greenway are so valuable that replacing them with engineered and manufactured alternatives would be unaffordable. Greenways like the Pennypack add value to property located near the preserved woods and fields, and the value is not limited solely to the lots immediately adjacent to the greenway. Interconnected greenways, parks and trails enhance all of our communities and help to assure that they remain desirable places in which to live and work.



## What You Can Do

It's easy to get involved in the Pennypack Greenway. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

- Encourage your municipal officials to protect the environmentally sensitive lands identified in local open space plans.
- Get dirty! Participate in one of the creek cleanups held throughout the Greenway.
- Stand up for the creek at municipal meetings when your commissioners and council members are discussing stormwater management.
- Enjoy one of the many annual events that take place along the Greenway such as sheep shearing, Maple Sugar Day, and Applefest at Fox Chase Farm.

## If you have a yard

- Make your yard friendlier for wildlife by planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Audubon Pennsylvania's "Audubon At Home" program can help.
- Minimize or eliminate your use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.
- Control (or eliminate) aggressive non-native plants infesting your garden.
- Reduce the paving on your property to allow rainwater to percolate into the soil, and install rain barrels on your downspouts.
- If you have a stream on your property, allow an unmowed strip between your lawn and the stream.

## Join a Group Working to Protect the Greenway

Become a supporter of one or more of the groups already working to protect and expand the Pennypack Greenway:

Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust  
2955 Edge Hill Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006  
215-657-0830  
[www.pennypacktrust.org](http://www.pennypacktrust.org)

Montgomery County Lands Trust  
PO Box 300, Lederach, PA 19450  
215-513-0100  
[www.mclt.org](http://www.mclt.org)

Audubon Pennsylvania  
1201 Pawling Road, Audubon, PA 19403  
610-666-5593  
<http://pa.audubon.org/>

Friends of Fox Chase Farm  
8500 Pine Road, Philadelphia, PA 19111  
215-728-7900  
[www.foxchasefarm.org](http://www.foxchasefarm.org)

Friends of Pennypack Park  
PO Box 14302, Philadelphia, PA 19115  
215-934-7225  
[www.balford.com/fopp/](http://www.balford.com/fopp/)

Natural Lands Trust  
1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media, PA 19063  
610-353-5587  
[www.natlands.org](http://www.natlands.org)

Pennypack Environmental Center  
8600 A Verree Road, Philadelphia, PA 19115  
215-685-0470  
[www.fairmountpark.org/pennypackEC.asp](http://www.fairmountpark.org/pennypackEC.asp)

Pennypack Farm Education Center for Sustainable Food Systems  
685 Mann Road, Horsham, PA 19044  
215-646-3943  
[www.pennypackfarm.org](http://www.pennypackfarm.org)

Southeastern Montgomery County Trout Unlimited Chapter #468  
<http://www.tu468.org/>

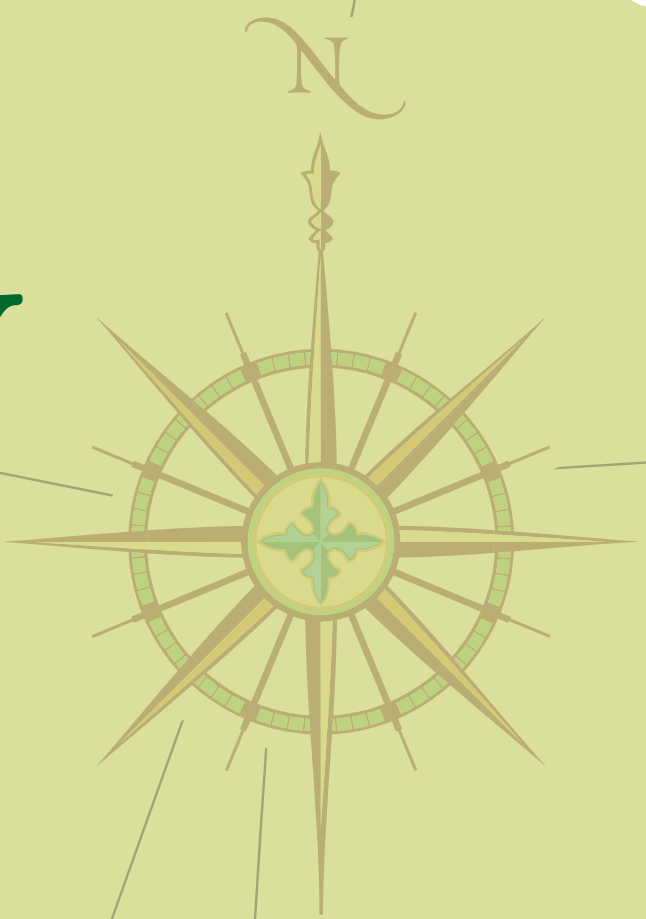
## Great Things to Do in the Pennypack Greenway

- Enjoy a picnic at Pennypack on the Delaware while you take in great views of the Delaware River.
- Listen to music under the stars on summer Wednesday evenings at the Pennypack Band Shell. Visit [www.fairmountpark.org](http://www.fairmountpark.org) for the full schedule.
- Hike or bike on miles of trails in Pennypack Park.
- Attend an event at Fox Chase Farm with your family. See the cows, sheep and pigs up close, walk through the livestock barns and enjoy scenic vistas.
- Visit Pennypack Environmental Center for a bird walk, stream hike, evening campfire, or other program. Volunteer for an ecological restoration project.
- Fish, hike, horseback ride, or picnic in the 230-acre oasis of woods and meadow of Lorimer Park.
- Work up a sweat helping to rescue trees from invasive vines during one of the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust's weekend "Free A Tree" forays.

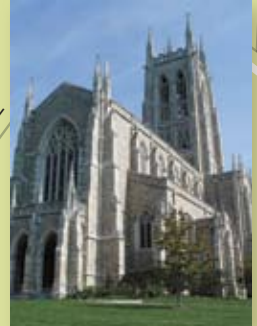
## Active Partners:



# Pennypack Greenway



**1** Pennypack Farm Educational Center for Sustainable Food Systems is a nonprofit organization focused on increasing public understanding of the health, economic, ecological, and social issues related to sustainable local food systems. The farm offers educational programs and operates a Community Supported Agriculture vegetable farm for shareholders. [www.pennypackfarm.org](http://www.pennypackfarm.org)



**3** Bryn Athyn Cathedral is a place of worship for the Christian faith known as the General Church of the New Jerusalem and is open for tours. [www.brynthyncathedral.org](http://www.brynthyncathedral.org). The nearby Glencairn Museum, originally the home of Raymond and Mildred Pitcairn, uses arts and artifacts from many cultures and time periods to educate visitors about the history of religion. [www.glencairnmuseum.org](http://www.glencairnmuseum.org)



**2** Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, a nonprofit land trust with headquarters in Huntingdon Valley, is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and preservation of over 700 acres in the Pennypack Preserve. Educational programs, volunteer opportunities, and miles of trails open to the public make the Preserve a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts. [www.pennypacktrust.org](http://www.pennypacktrust.org)



**4** Fetter's Mill Historic District, added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006, encompasses eight structures nestled in a scenic hollow. The community originally developed around Fetter's Mill (1740), and then expanded when the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad added a station in 1880.



**5** Council Rock, a rugged outcropping overlooking Pennypack Creek in Lorimer Park. Legend has it that Native Americans held ceremonial meetings at this picturesque location.



**7** Fox Chase Farm, a 112-acre educational working farm, is a working farm, one of the few remaining in a major American city. The farm hosts popular annual events such as sheep shearing, Maple Sugar Day and Applefest, as well as weekday programs for area schools. [www.foxchasefarm.org](http://www.foxchasefarm.org)



**9** Pennypack Band Shell has hosted big name bands such as Glenn Miller and the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. The neighborhood venue now hosts the revived Pennypack Park Festival on summer Wednesday evenings featuring everything from "doo-wop" to big bands.



**10** Frankford Avenue Bridge, built in 1697, is the oldest stone arch bridge in continuous use in America. The bridge is on what was once called the King's Highway, the main route from Philadelphia to Trenton and New York.



**11** Pennypack on the Delaware is a newly developed park that offers an unparalleled view of the Delaware River and a connection to the future East Coast Greenway. Opened in 1998, the park includes a fishing pier, paved trail, eight soccer fields, four softball fields, and restrooms.



**6** Lorimer Park, a popular trout stocking location for anglers, is noted for hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, wildlife watching and, in winter, sledding and cross-country skiing. The property was donated to Montgomery County by the late George Horace Lorimer, former Editor-in-Chief of The Saturday Evening Post.



**8** Pennypack Environmental Center, located in Fairmount Park, was dedicated in 1958 as a bird sanctuary and offers educational and volunteer opportunities. It features an outdoor amphitheater, exhibits, meeting room, reference library, campfire and picnic areas. [www.fairmountpark.org/pennypackEC.asp](http://www.fairmountpark.org/pennypackEC.asp)

## Map Key



Pennypack Greenway is located in Southeastern Pennsylvania

- Point of Interest
- P Parking
- Ⓜ Picnic Area
- ♿ Restrooms
- Ⓜ Playground
- Streams
- Preserved Greenway
- Unpreserved Greenway
- Watershed
- Major Roads
- County Lines
- Municipalities
- Existing Trails
- Future Trails

(As of January 2008)

0 0.5 1 2 miles

Pennypack Park, part of the Fairmount Park system, stretches nine miles from the Delaware River northwest to Philadelphia's border with Montgomery County. In addition to many scenic vistas and picnic areas along the meandering creek, the park features paved and unpaved paths for bikers, joggers, walkers, and equestrians.