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## Perkiomen Watershed Conservation Corps

The Perkiomen Watershed Conservation Corps program is a youth-based program dedicated to furthering the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy's mission of protecting the watershed's land and water resources. Members help achieve this mission while cultivating their own conservation and community engagement skills through the participation in hands-on service learning opportunities.

### Experiential Education and Service Learning

The Perkiomen Watershed Conservation Corps (PWCC) focuses on experiential environmental education and service learning for local high school youth. Members participate in service events focused on ecological land management, watershed stewardship, and community outreach, integrated with instruction and reflection to enrich learning while promoting civic responsibility. The program equips members with valuable conservation and community engagement skills and experiences as they enter college, internships, and/or the workforce.

### Member Requirements

In order to provide a full and meaningful experience within the PWCC, members are held to the following criteria, listed below. A "Successful Member" will complete at least the minimum requirements listed under "Program Requirements," participate in the fundraising event. All "Successful Members" are eligible to participate in the program's capstone project, the Perki-Bay Expedition.

**All communications about PWCC meetings, events, and other important information are sent to members via email.** Please be sure to monitor the email address you provide on your contact form during the program cycle for detailed information about upcoming PWCC events and information.

### *Program Requirements*

- 1) **Monthly meeting attendance.** Monthly meetings are designed to engage PWCC members with one another and Conservancy Staff and allow time for reflection about previous and upcoming service opportunities. These meetings are critical to the education and context component of the service learning experience. Members discuss important themes and topics highlighted during events, learn about environmental issues and solutions, and review upcoming service opportunities. **PWCC members must attend a minimum of three monthly meetings.** Unless otherwise noted, monthly meetings take place at 6:30 PM on the first Tuesday of each month from January to June at the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy headquarters. The monthly meeting dates are as follows.
  - January 9th, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm
  - February 6th, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm
  - March 5th, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm
  - April 2nd, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm
  - May 7th, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm
  - June 4th, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

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- 2) **Event attendance.** Environmental education is at the core of everything the Conservancy does. PWCC's environmental education component is largely implemented by engaging in hands-on projects with and under the direction of Conservancy staff. The Conservancy offers a variety of hands-on projects throughout the year for PWCC members to gain unique environmental and conservation education experiences. Each member is required to attend a minimum of five events or projects during the program cycle. A few common educational themes and examples of events/projects are listed below:
  - Watershed Stewardship - Stream Clean-up
  - Stormwater Management - Rain Garden Maintenance & Installation, Rain Barrel Workshop
  - Ecological Restoration - Riparian Buffer Planting, Native Plantings
  - Water Quality Analysis - Water Quality Monitoring Program
  - Native Plant Identification - Native Plant Sale & Native Plant Project opportunities
  - Invasive Plant Management - European Water Chestnut Removal, Native Planting Maintenance
  - Community Engagement - Lenape Challenge, Perkiomen Creek Sojourn
- 3) **Canoe Skills/Concepts Workshop.** Each member is required to attend at least one Canoe Skills and Concepts workshop led by Conservancy staff. These canoeing workshops will prepare PWCC members for their participation in the Perki-Bay Expedition. Workshops will be held on the Perkiomen Creek at the Conservancy headquarters and/or the Walt Road Day Use Area in Green Lane Park.
- 4) **Capstone Research Project.** As a final capstone to the PWCC experience, each member is required to research a specific watershed management issue or relevant outdoor recreation topic and write a one-page, double spaced report about that topic. Members participating in the Perki-Bay Expedition will use the knowledge from their research report to create a short video segment about the topic during the trip. The topic selected must pertain to something that may be encountered or experienced during the Perki-Bay Expedition. Articles are due to Beth Myers, via email on Thursday, June 20th. Topics could include, but are not limited to:
  - Stormwater Pollution
  - Invasive Species – Hydrilla, Eurasian Water-Milfoil or other aquatic or terrestrial invasive species
  - Water Quality Degradation
  - Portaging
  - Dams
  - Riparian buffers
  - Camping
  - Packing for an Expedition
  - Fundraising
  - PWC
  - Erosion
  - Difference in industries lining waterways
  - Another topic that interests you. Email Beth for approval.

### *Attire and Dress Code*

PWCC conservation work occurs mostly outdoors in a variety of conditions, including but not limited to: weather (rain, cold, heat, humidity, wind), uneven or steep terrain, thick vegetation, thorns, poison ivy, ticks, stinging insects, dirt and mud, etc. To ensure participant safety, **PWCC members should wear durable and protective clothing and footwear** while participating in Conservancy events. We suggest wearing long pants, tall socks, sturdy sneakers or boots, and a long sleeve t-shirt depending on weather. Please also bring a hat, sunscreen, and jacket or coat with you. Always dress appropriately for the weather, temperature, and project/event. It is always a good idea to dress in layers. If you have any questions about clothing, or need assistance acquiring appropriate attire, please reach out to Beth.

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## *Perki-Bay Expedition and Fundraising*

**About the Expedition:** The Perki-Bay Expedition is a self-sustained, 50-mile canoeing and camping trip, launching from Red Fox Park in Schwenksville and concluding at Fort Mifflin in Philadelphia. The Expedition occurs at the end of each program cycle during the last full week of June. In 2024, the trip will be Monday, June 24th through Friday, June 28th. The watershed expedition serves three purposes:

- 1) Members experience firsthand three major south-eastern PA waterways (Perkiomen Creek, Schuylkill River, and Delaware River), and their associated ecological and land use changes.
- 2) Members utilize and synthesize conservation, education, and recreation skills and knowledge obtained during the preceding program months, including paddling, native plant identification, water quality testing, etc.
- 3) Members conduct hydrological analysis of major waterways and tributaries along the Expedition route. The Perkiomen Creek, Skippack Creek, Schuylkill River, Wissahickon Creek, and Delaware River are all surveyed. The results of these analyses will be recorded in the Conservancy's database that logs data from previous Expedition years.

**Fundraising:** In order to conduct such an extraordinary venture, PWCC members and Conservancy staff organize a fundraiser to help offset expenses. Members and staff also run a media campaign to raise awareness for the PWCC program and the Conservancy as an organization. Each member attending the Expedition is highly encouraged to raise the funds necessary to participate. The Conservancy will host a fundraising event to assist PWCC members in achieving their individual fundraising goals. Each PWCC member has an expedition fundraising goal of \$250. The fundraising event is discussed during the first or second monthly meeting and PWCC members brainstorm fundraising opportunities that interest them the most. Raising funds is not mandatory, but is highly encouraged.

## **A Final Word**

These requirements are not intended to be daunting. Their purpose is to ensure that each member receives a well-rounded experience that exposes them to a variety of environmental topics and introduces them to conservation field work while providing meaningful service to the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy. At the conclusion of the program cycle, successful PWCC members have the opportunity to participate in the Perki-Bay Watershed Expedition. A successful member will have the knowledge and skill base that enables them to fully engage in the expedition and research project, while promoting the Conservancy and its mission. Further, successful program participants obtain a greater awareness of watershed stewardship than they had prior to joining the PWCC, and can draw on that knowledge throughout the course of their lives.

## **Staffing the PWCC Program**

The Conservancy's Director of Ecology, Beth Myers, will lead the PWCC Program; the Conservancy's Executive Director, Ryan Beltz, will lead the Perki-Bay Expedition. Often, PWCC will be invited to participate in Conservancy programs that are already in place. For example, participants will aid in the Stream Clean-up and the Native Plant Project. These programs are already in existence and funded through other sources. The Conservancy will also host PWCC specific events to ensure that members are exposed to a wide range of environmental topics and are able to engage in a variety of conservation and community projects.

## **2024 Timeline and Schedule of Events**

- Fall 2023 – Member Recruitment from Area Schools and the Local Community
  - Methacton High School

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- o Perkiomen School
- o Perkiomen Valley High School
- o Spring-Ford High School
- o Souderton Area High School
- o Upper Perkiomen High School
- o Other Local Schools
- November & December 2023 - Member Selection
  - o Member Interviews
  - o 2023 Program Information Dispersal
- January through June 2024 - Program Meetings and Events
  - o Monthly Meetings
  - o PWCC Events and Projects
  - o Canoe Skills Workshop
  - o Perki-Bay Expedition

## 2024 Tentative Schedule of Events

**Please be sure to monitor your email for pertinent information about PWCC events and meetings. All PWCC event information will be sent out to PWCC members monthly during the program cycle. Please sign-up for events with the Sign-up.com link sent out in the emails. The PWCC event sign-up link will be provided via email and will be posted on the PWCC page on the Conservancy's website.**

Additional events and programs will be added or removed as needed.

Event	Date	Location	Description
First Monthly Meeting	Tuesday, January 9th 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	PWC - 1 Skippack Pike, Schwenksville, PA 19473	Parents welcome – Introductions, ice breakers, and get to know each other. Go over PWCC Program and watch 2023 Perki-Bay Expedition video. Talk about CCC and inspiration for PWCC program. Fill out/turn in paperwork. Talk fundraising event ideas.
Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service	Monday, January 15th 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Dragonfly Farm @ Jacob Reiff Park - Closest Physical Address: 764 Quarry Road, Lower Salford. Please park behind the white barn with the red roof.	Native Plant Seed Sowing. Help the Conservancy prepare for our 2024 conservation projects by sowing seeds in our new greenhouse!
Snowshoe Race	Saturday, January 27th 7:30 am - 9:30 am	Spring Mountain Adventures - 757	Help the Conservancy host the largest Snowshoe Race on the

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		Spring Mt Rd, Schwenksville, PA 19473	East Coast! PWCC members will kick-off the event by leading the Children's Snowshoe Race. PWCC will also assist PWC staff with serving as course directors. <b><u>Please dress appropriately to be outside during the event.</u></b>
Second Monthly Meeting	Tuesday, February 6th 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	PWC - 1 Skippack Pike, Schwenksville, PA 19473	Parents welcome - Snowshoe 5K recap. Discuss impacts of climate change in PA in relation to snowfall and winter sport recreation. Continue discussion and make final choices about fundraising event and pick date for fundraiser. Career Highlights with guest speaker.
Hypertufa Planter Workshop	Saturday, February 10th 9:30 am - 12:00 pm	Dragonfly Farm @ Jacob Reiff Park - Closest Physical Address: 764 Quarry Road, Lower Salford. Please park behind the white barn with the red roof.	Help the Conservancy host a Hypertufa Planter Workshop! Help participants make hypertufa planters! Assist Conservancy staff with setting the event up and cleaning up post event.
Third Monthly Meeting	Tuesday, March 5th 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	PWC - 1 Skippack Pike, Schwenksville, PA 19473	Parents welcome - February event recap. Begin discussion about native plants. Transplant native plugs in preparation for our Native Plant Sale and stormwater projects. <b>Please dress to get dirty.</b>
March Meltdown 5K	Sunday, March 10th 8:30 am - 11:00 am	Perkasie Dog Park in Lenape Park - 620 Constitution Ave, Perkasie, PA 18944	Help the Conservancy host this race that highlights the connection between the land and the water. PWCC members will help out as course directors and help at water stations throughout Lenape Park. <b><u>Please dress appropriately to be outside during the event.</u></b>
Water Quality Monitoring	Saturday, March 30th	PWC - 1 Skippack Pike,	Learn about the Conservancy's

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Training Day	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Schwenksville, PA 19473	new water quality monitoring program! Test out some water quality monitoring kits and equipment to prepare for the Expedition. <b>Please wear clothes and shoes that you do not mind getting wet.</b>
Fourth Monthly Meeting	Tuesday, April 2nd 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	PWC - 1 Skippack Pike, Schwenksville, PA 19473	Parents welcome – Meltdown and Water Quality Monitoring recap. Discuss litter pollution and impacts. Discuss SCU and plan for event. Help organize SCU supplies.
Stream Clean-Up	Saturday, April 13th 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  Rain Date: Saturday, April 20th 9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Meadow Park - 300 Main Street, Schwenksville, PA 19473	Work with the Conservancy's Executive Director, Ryan Beltz, to collect trash, tires, recyclables, and scrap metal from Meadow Park and the Perkiomen Creek in Schwenksville. <b>Please wear clothes and shoes that you don't mind getting wet and muddy!</b>
Perki-Bay Expedition Participation Confirmation	Monday, April 22nd by End of Day	Please email Beth Myers	You must confirm your participation in the Perki-Bay Expedition capstone project by end of day on Monday, April 22nd. Confirming your spot in the Expedition will allow us to acquire the necessary gear for all participants. Please reach out to Beth with any questions.
Lenape Challenge	Saturday, April 27th 8:00 am - 10:30 am	Hill Road Day-Use Area at Green Lane Park - 2821 Hill Road, Green Lane, PA 18054	Help our team host one of the Conservancy's signature events, the Lenape Challenge! Help us host the adventure race by staffing water stations, serving as course directors, and more. <b>Please dress appropriately to be outside during the event. Be sure to wear clothes and shoes you can walk on uneven terrain in.</b>

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Fifth Monthly Meeting	Tuesday, May 7th 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	PWC - 1 Skippack Pike, Schwenksville, PA 19473	Parents welcome! Recap of Lenape Challenge. Learn about water quality monitoring, why it is important, and practice sampling with the kits. Brief overview of Native Plant Sale. <b>Please dress appropriately to be outside during the event.</b>
Native Plant Sale	Saturday, May 11th 9:00 am - 4:00 pm (Pick from a 9 am-12 pm shift or a 12 pm -4 pm shift) & Sunday, May 12th 9:00 am - 1:00 pm.	Dragonfly Farm @ Jacob Reiff Park - Closest Physical Address: 764 Quarry Road, Lower Salford. Please park behind the white barn with the red roof.	Help our Conservation Team host our annual Native Plant Sale! Assist participants by helping with plant selection and help the Conservancy's team by assisting with check out, plant re-stocking, parking, and more. <b>Please dress appropriately to be outside during the event.</b>
Paddling Skills Session	Thursday, May 16th 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Walt Road Day Use Area 1051 Walt Rd, Pennsburg, PA 18073	Learn some canoe paddling tips and tricks to prepare for the Perki-Bay Expedition. Practice safe paddling techniques, proper paddling strokes, and more. <b>Please dress appropriately to be paddling on the reservoir. Your feet will get wet getting in and out of the canoes.</b>
Perkiomen Creek Sojourn	Saturday, June 1st 10:00 am - 12:30 pm  Rain Date: June 8th	Collegetown Creekside Park 107 W. 1st Ave, Collegetown, PA 19426	Help us run a successful Sojourn by hosting a water quality monitoring and macroinvertebrate demonstration station during the Sojourn Lunch stop. <b>Please wear clothes and shoes you don't mind getting wet and muddy!</b>
Sixth Monthly Meeting	Tuesday, June 4th 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	PWC, 1 Skippack Pike, Schwenksville, PA 19473	The final monthly meeting! PWCC members and parents will meet to discuss the Perki-Bay Expedition. <b>This meeting is important for all attending the Expedition!</b> We will go over a gear list and

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			receive tips and tricks for trip packing. <b><u>If you plan on attending the Expedition please do your absolute best to attend this very important meeting. Please coordinate with Beth if you cannot attend!</u></b>
Paddling Skills Session	Thursday, June 11th 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Walt Road Day Use Area 1051 Walt Rd, Pennsburg, PA 18073	Learn some canoe paddling tips and tricks to prepare for the Perki-Bay Expedition. Practice safe paddling techniques, proper paddling strokes, and more. <b>Please dress appropriately to be paddling on the creek. Your feet will get wet getting in and out of the canoes.</b>
Perki-Bay Expedition	Monday, June 24th @ 8:00 am - Friday, June 28th @ 3:00 pm	PWC, 1 Skippack Pike, Schwenksville, PA 19473	Participate in a fun, challenging, and unique expedition. Paddle 50 miles on the Perkiomen Creek, Schuylkill River, and the Delaware River while camping along the way. Perform water quality testing in various waterways and experience the Perkiomen Watershed and Philadelphia in a new way.