

The Delaware River Watershed Initiative

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The William Penn Foundation led the charge a little over two years ago to re-align its foundation giving into focus areas throughout the Delaware River Watershed. Darby Creek Valley Association was invited to participate in this process and join with Lower Merion Conservancy to monitor water quality along the Cobbs Creek which drains into the Delaware River and is an 11.8-mile-long tributary of Darby Creek and help conduct outreach and education programs about the importance of protecting the creek.

Each year since the initiative began, William Penn Foundation hosts an all-cluster winter gathering which brings together partners from each of the clusters in Pennsylvania and New Jersey under the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI). It is a two-day retreat focused on the work of each of the clusters, the William Penn process, feedback from clusters to the foundation, and opportunities for partnering within clusters and across clusters. The Foundation also invites other foundation partners that have joined in this initiative including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Open Space Institute and other institutional partners such as the Academy of Natural Sciences and the Institute for Conservation Leadership.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation provides funding under the DRWI for restoration work, and the Open Space Institute primarily funds land acquisition. The Academy of Natural Sciences is responsible for monitoring and working with funded organizations who monitor as well. DCVA is a partner in monitoring on the Cobbs for the Suburban Philadelphia Cluster.

The William Penn Foundation is getting ready to supply details on its expectation for partners to modify/update the first 3-year plan created at the beginning of the Initiative in 2014. Partners, including DCVA, will be participating in an 8-10 month planning process to identify additional opportunities for water quality improvement through education/outreach and restoration for four sub-watersheds within the cluster including the Cobbs Creek. An updated plan will be developed, and our hope is to share these goals with our members.

Board members from DCVA have participated in each of the gatherings, and it is amazing to hear from the array of diverse organizations throughout the region working together to protect our water resources. We are honored to have the opportunity to participate and represent the interests of residents in the area at these events.

More information about the cluster work can be found on DCVA's website as well as our partner, Lower Merion Conservancy, website -

http://lmconservancy.org/watershedconservation/delaware_river_watershed/