

WELLSPRING

A publication of The Watershed Institute. Keeping central New Jersey's water clean, safe, & healthy since 1949.

50
YEARS
EARTH
DAY 2020



The
Watershed
Institute



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Earth Day at 50

by Jim Waltman

April 22 marks the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. The celebration of this transformational moment in the nation's history comes at a challenging time.

As I write this column, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is exploding across the globe, creating widespread anxiety and despair. In keeping with state and federal health recommendations, we've closed the Watershed Center to visitors, canceled or postponed programming through at least the month of April, and asked our staff to work remotely from home.

The Watershed Institute is not immune from the economic challenges facing the nation. As a not-for-profit organization, our staff are supported largely by charitable contributions from individuals and institutions, and registration fees from a wide variety of programs. Because we have had to cancel or postpone all of our programming for schools and the public for the time being, we have lost an important revenue stream.

The content of this newsletter was written before the outbreak of the virus escalated into a national emergency. This edition highlights the global movement of young people that is demanding action to combat climate change and protect biological diversity. This green youth movement gives me hope for our future and I hope that you will take heart too.

We've seen the power of this movement at every scale—from global climate strikes to engagement at our town councils. I witnessed this first hand in early January when a dozen fifth graders from Hopewell Elementary School appeared in front of the Hopewell Borough Council to speak out in favor of a ban on single-use plastic bags. The Council, which had been equivocal on the issue just a few years ago, voted unanimously to enact the ban (see p. 3).

The Watershed Institute seeks to foster youth engagement in environmental protection through our programming, internships, and summer camp.

This summer we are offering a week-long course on environmental advocacy as part of the Watershed Academy for High School students (see p. 7). Other Academy courses will engage students in the effort to combat climate change and water pollution, design sustainable buildings through greener architecture, and learn from non-profit leaders, academics, and engineers in the private sector.

This Earth Day—even in the face of the global pandemic—The Watershed Institute's scientists, educators, advocates, land stewards, and other professionals are working to change attitudes, behaviors, and laws to protect the environment.

We're exploring ways to continue these efforts through new online means that provide for the "social spacing" called for by health professionals.

We are working to ensure that, when we get through this pandemic, individuals, schools, businesses and other institutions will be empowered and equipped to become better stewards of our water and environment through our River-Friendly program.

This Earth Day will most likely be celebrated without the joyous large gatherings of both committed and casual environmentalists that we've enjoyed in the past. But I hope you will still use the occasion of Earth Day's 50th Anniversary to take stock of what you can do to protect the environment. And let us know how we can help.

Good health to you and your family and Happy Earth Day!

PROTECTING WATER

Hopewell Borough Bags Plastics

Earlier this year, The Watershed Institute teamed up with local students to help propel the passage of a plastic bag ban in Hopewell Borough as part of the youth-driven movement to raise awareness about climate change and other environmental issues.

On January 2, about a dozen fifth graders from Hopewell Elementary School and Watershed staff joined voices that urged the Hopewell Borough Council to finalize a ban on distribution of single-use plastic bags by businesses. The Council voted unanimously to have the ban go into effect on Earth Day (April 22, 2020).

Erin Landis, the Watershed's River-Friendly Coordinator, worked with the borough to create an education campaign over the past six months. Erin also coordinated with teachers and students at the Hopewell Elementary School and reached out to dozens of small businesses in Hopewell about the ban.



Erin Landis stands with Hopewell Resident Mark Bovenizer at the Hopewell Harvest Fair.

The Watershed has given out more than 650 free, reusable bags to businesses to distribute to their customers. Erin also handed out another 150 free bags directly to consumers at community tabling events. The Shepherd Foundation gave a generous donation to cover the costs of these bags.

Along with giving out more reusable bags in 2020, the next step includes posting signs in Hopewell Borough parking lots to help remind people to carry reusable bags into stores while shopping.

Be sure to join the movement wherever you live!

For more information, please contact
Erin Landis at elandis@thewatershed.org

The students said they were energized by the results!

“It was really exciting – people were listening to kids and not just to adults. We want to reduce things that would harm the world the most,” said Sophia Pellegrino, 11. “If we don’t take care of the environment today, then our world will be full of pollution.”

Added Saxon Okumura, 10, “I felt like we had done something – like I had stepped on the moon after all of this work.”



Did You Know... half of all plastics ever made have been produced just within the last 15 years? Americans alone use 100,000,000,000 (one hundred billion) plastic bags every year. All of that plastic still exists! Switch to reusable bags and make a difference today!

National Geographic | "The World's Plastic Pollution Crisis Explained" - <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/plastic-pollution>

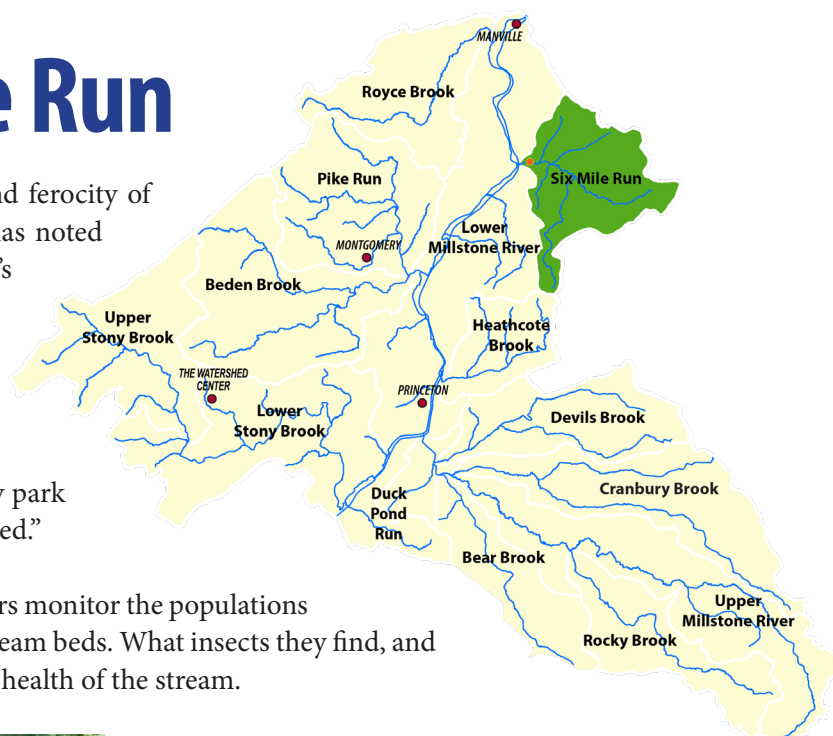


Sampling Six Mile Run

As climate change has increased the frequency and ferocity of storms, StreamWatch volunteer Stephanie Fox has noted the biological degradation of Six Mile Run, which she's monitored for almost two decades.

Fox, who works as a resource specialist at the D&R Canal State Park Commission, said her work and hobby mingle as a StreamWatcher of the Franklin Township waterway. "Six Mile Run is right next to my park office and it's an easy way to contribute to the Watershed."

StreamWatch Biological Action Team (BATs) volunteers monitor the populations of benthic macroinvertebrates, the insects living on stream beds. What insects they find, and how many, provides a picture of the overall ecological health of the stream.



A view of Six Mile Run from Route 27.

Streambank erosion, habitat loss, and fewer aquatic insects for her to measure are some of the impacts of flooding, as are the fallen trees, washouts, debris and damage to the towpath and historic buildings at the near-by D&R Canal State Park.

She said the floodwaters have taken a toll on stream's aquatic life.

"The abundance and diversity of macroinvertebrates has dropped dramatically," she said. "I used to regularly catch crane flies and damsel and dragonflies. Now we are pretty much lucky if we get a ton of scuds," a pollution tolerant macroinvertebrate species. "It doesn't take very long to do our count."



Six Mile Run at South Middlebush Road

Anecdotally, she believes she has seen more flooding recently as compared with her earlier years as a StreamWatcher.

"Sometimes ... we can't even go out sampling because it (the water) is dangerously high," she said. "Flooding occurs at such a regular interval at that section. We don't bother to do sampling right after flooding because [the bugs] have been washed away."

Her interest in benthic macroinvertebrates, the bugs that are indicators of a stream's health, was sparked as a camp counselor in the Hunterdon County Park System. Soon after graduating from college and being hired as a park naturalist at D&R Canal State Park, she began her Watershed volunteer work.

She said her StreamWatch experience has helped her create and run education programs for families and camp groups, showing people the kinds of organisms that live in streams and how they can help determine water quality.

"StreamWatch plays in nicely to our mission in the park," she said. "We try and create a clean healthy park for people and the wildlife."



Six Mile Run State Park entrance.

Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to StreamWatch volunteers Ruma Arabatti, Peter Rice, and Stephanie Fox for monitoring Six Mile Run subwatershed. Generous funding for the StreamWatch program is provided by Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc, and the New Jersey Water Supply Authority.

Scorecard

Aquatic Life	🔴
Nitrogen	🟢
Phosphorus	🔴
Dissolved Oxygen	🟡
pH	🟢
Temperature	🟢
Turbidity	🟡
Bacteria	🔴?
Impervious Cover	🟡

Overall Health 🟡

Rankings

🟢=Excellent 🟡=Good 🔴=Fair 🔴=Poor

Volunteers Needed for New Monitoring Program

The Watershed Institute is recruiting volunteers for a new water monitoring program, which will be launched this spring. Volunteers in this program will monitor local lakes weekly for harmful algal blooms (HABs) and other pathogens so that we can alert residents and state agencies about unsafe recreational waters.

Concerns over HABS resulted in the closure of Rosedale Lake, Lake Hopatcong, and other New Jersey waterways. Harmful algal blooms (HABs) are massive growths of toxin-producing cyanobacteria. The tainted water can cause illness and death for humans, pets and wildlife. Due to increasing temperatures and rainfall, HABs pose a bigger threat than ever before.

Last year, the number of confirmed HABs in New Jersey exceeded the number found in 2017 & 2018 combined. In response to this growing threat, we are launching a LAKE monitoring program. This program will start in April 2020 and continue through the swimming season until September.

Contact StreamWatch coordinator Nik Hansen at nhansen@thewatershed.org for more details on how to get involved.

Spring 2020 Calendar

Due to the global spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), The Watershed Institute has cancelled, postponed, or converted to an online format all of our programming in March and April.

We hope to be able to offer the programs listed below but may have to cancel if conditions don't improve. We will offer online educational information and programming on our website, Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram.

Renew your membership, and automatically receive member discounts securely from any device.

Pre-registration is required. Programs with low registration are subject to cancellation.

Watershed members receive 20% off most programs when signed in.

thewatershed.org/events

FRIDAY, MAY 1

May Day Storytelling

7:30-9:00PM, General Audience; Free

Step away from the screen and into the moonlight! Listen to our storytellers spin yarns from several cultures that will spark your imagination! Roast a marshmallow as you lend an ear to stories from far and near. Co-sponsored by Washington Crossing Audubon Society.

SATURDAY, MAY 2

Early Bird Migration Walk

8:00-10:00AM, General Audience, ages 6+; \$5

Join us for a stroll along the trails near the Watershed Center in search of migrating songbirds! Early May is a wonderful time to search for these colorful spring visitors as they migrate north to their nesting grounds. This walk is an intro to birding, and we will learn some basic identification tips along the way. Bring binoculars if you have them.

SATURDAY, MAY 2

Build a Birdhouse

1:00-2:30PM, General Audience, ages 5+; \$20 per birdhouse

Join us for a brief hike to discover several bird homes and nests. Then build your own bird house with us to take home and invite your new avian neighbors! This activity helps you earn River Friendly points.

WEDNESDAY MAY 6

The Art of Fly Tying: Other Aquatics

7:00-9:00PM, Adults; Free

This five-session workshop, taught by Joel Weiner, a member of the Ernest Schwiebert Chapter of Trout Unlimited, will enhance your enjoyment of fly fishing. We will tie impressionistic flies of uncommon insects that make up a large part of fish diets. It is recommended that you bring your own equipment, if you have it. Equipment is available for those who do not have their own.

FRIDAY, MAY 8

Exploring the Night

8:30PM-10:30PM, General Audience, ages 8+; \$10

Join this illuminating exploration of nature at night on the Watershed Reserve. Throughout the year, nighttime offers unique and revealing insight into the local ecology. On this spring evening we may discover the songs of courting frogs, talk to owls, listen for foxes and look for lingering glowworms. Please bring a flashlight or headlamp.

SATURDAYS | MAY 9, & JUN 13

Mindful Nature Walk & Yoga

10:00AM-12:00PM, Adults; \$25 per person

Start the day by engaging mindfully with nature and your body through movement. We will start by walking outside to awaken the senses and (re)establish a deeper connection with the land and then we will move inside for a gentle yoga flow focused on choice making and interoception. No prior yoga experience necessary. Bring a mat.

THURS | MAY 14, & JUN 11

Out There Reading Group

7:30–9:00PM, *Adults, Free*

Explore the wide and varied terrain of nature writing with Education Director Jeff Hoagland. This unique and relaxed reading group will focus on a curated collection of river-themed readings.

SATURDAY, MAY 16

Family Exploration – Stony Brook on the Watershed Trail

10:00AM–12:00PM, *General Audience, ages 5+; \$5*

Join us on this hike explore the Stony Brook as it rambles along the Watershed Reserve. We will focus on seasonal ecology, meeting a variety of plants and animals, including those that indicate water and environmental quality.

SATURDAY, MAY 30

Paddle Carnegie Lake

9:30AM–12:00PM, *General Audience, ages 8+; \$20 pp*

Join us for a guided morning paddle in cooperation with Princeton Canoe and Kayak Rental. We will share some of the many wonders of Lake Carnegie. View the lake from a different perspective, discovering firsthand a wide array of plant and animal life. Meet at 875 Princeton-Kingston Road, Princeton, NJ. Canoes, paddles, and PFDs are provided. All paddlers must be 15+ but younger children are welcome to ride along. Bring your own PFD for any child under 50 lbs.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Meet the Fish

10:00AM–12:00PM, *General Audience, ages 6+; Free*

Come discover a diversity of life at the pond, and maybe even a love of fishing! First, using a seine, we will catch smaller organisms before then trying our hand at using our handcrafted bamboo poles. Meets at Wargo Pond. Part of NJ Free Fishing Day (no license required), and the Youth Fishing Challenge! Co-sponsored by the Washington Crossing Audubon Society.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Rain Barrel Workshop

1:00–3:00PM, *General Audience; \$50 per barrel*

Learn how to capture and reuse rain water in your home garden. We will help you construct your own rain barrel in this River Friendly Workshop. Fee includes all materials to construct one rain barrel.

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

Family Frogging

4:00–5:30PM, *General Audience, ages 6+; \$5*

Join us for some good old fashioned family frogging. Learn about frogs, and then head out to our wetland to meet our amphibious friends. Wear tall rubber boots or closed-toe water shoes. Part of 2020 Hopewell Valley Come Outside & Play!

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Butterfly House Seasonal Opening

10:00AM–2:00PM, *General Audience; Free*

Celebrate the start of the butterfly season! Join us at our annual opening of the Kate Gorrie Butterfly House for tours of the house, butterfly catching with nets, and more! Part of 2020 Hopewell Valley Come Outside & Play!

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

Secret Lives of Fireflies

8:00–10:00PM, *General Audience, ages 6+; \$5*

Come discover the secret lives of the lightning bug, from glowworm to adult firefly. Enjoy ‘nature’s fireworks’ and learn how to identify different species by their unique flash patterns.

FRIDAYS | JUNE 19 – AUGUST 28

Butterfly House Tours

10:00–11:00AM, *General Audience; \$5*

Join us for a guided tour of the butterfly house to view and learn about local butterfly species. If time and weather allows, we may try catching wild butterflies in the field. Cameras welcome. Butterfly House Tours will continue weekly through the summer.

SUMMER | JULY 13 – AUGUST 21

Watershed Academy

9:00AM–4:00PM, *High School Students*

Discover week-long environmental investigations that take on real-world issues. Each session is designed to invoke a sense of wonder and inquiry into the environment. Students explore environmental careers alongside professors and professionals through hands-on activities while they engage in scientific techniques and actual conservation projects. Scholarships and stipends available to qualified individuals. *Learn more at* thewatershed.org/academy.

Insect Blight - vs - Volunteer Might

Volunteers play a critical role in the stewardship of our 950-acre Watershed Reserve in Hopewell Township. The challenge of managing the property has become more complicated with the invasion of the emerald ash borer, a metallic green beetle native to Northeast Asia that has decimated the forest.

A small group of Watershed staff removed and hauled away dozens of pest-damaged, dead ash trees just north of the Watershed Center last summer to prepare the area for a habitat restoration project.



(from left) Pat, Allison, Matt, & Kory stand on the ash pile.

After eleven trees were removed, Property Manager Matt Thompson and his assistant, Pat Schornstaedt, used a brush hog and chainsaws to clear out and mulch the stumps, and remove multiflora rose and other non-native, invasive species.

“This was a challenging effort that will unfortunately have to be replicated on a larger scale over the coming years,” said Jim Waltman, executive director of The Watershed Institute. The emerald ash borer was discovered in the United States in 2002 and is believed to have arrived on wooden packing materials from China.

Females lay eggs in the tree bark and the insect larvae feed on the inner bark of the ash trees, interfering with the tree’s ability to transport water and nutrients. After two years, the larvae emerge as adults. As the infestation worsens, lighter patches and scratches appear on the tree’s outer bark. Currently, the insect has blighted trees in 35 states and areas of Canada.



Princeton University students replant trees in the remediated Watershed plot.

After the damaged trees were removed at the Watershed property, about three dozen Princeton University students replanted more than 200 trees including sweetgum, red cedar and white pine trees. They and Allison Jackson, the Watershed’s Stewardship Coordinator, ripped out Japanese stilt grass, multiflora rose, Russian olive shrubs and other invasive plants. Next, they spread a native seed mix to prevent growth of new invasive plants in the spring and summer.

Allison, Matt and Pat next cordoned off about 900 feet with an eight-foot high fence to prevent deer from grazing on the tender saplings. Most of the felled ash wood has been cut up into smaller pieces for campfire and other uses, Matt said, and a few of the larger logs will be milled and fashioned into benches for the property.

Summing up the project, Matt said, “That area of the forest is healthier now without infested trees, invasives removed, and the addition of native plants.”



To join our volunteer team, contact
Eve Niedergang at eniedergang@thewatershed.org.

Amidst this Din and Confusion...

by Jeff Hoagland

Winter bypassed us this year. I love my seasons, each of them, and celebrate their assertiveness. Give me some spells of wilting heat and humidity in the summer, and give me some windblown snow in winter. An insistent or prolonged winter always enhances the arrival and beauty of spring.

Spring is the season of rebirth and renewal. It is the reawakening of so many of our animal neighbors, the return of the biophony of courtship. Birds, frogs, and insects voice their desire amidst the great plant revival, an explosion of green all around us, underfoot and overhead. I love the warmer, longer days, but I feel in my heart the joy of all these beings around me starting anew. It is a time for celebration.

In 1969, at Bear Tavern School, we celebrated Arbor Day. There were songs, poems, and outdoor time in honor of our most dependable neighbors, trees. The day concluded with the distribution of tiny white pine saplings to each student.

What a gift! My very own tree! My parents embraced this opportunity, guiding me through tree planting and care, creating a tree lover beyond this one-day-a-year celebration. The pine and I would grow up together.

In 1970, a broader celebration was launched at school. We were celebrating not just trees, but the wonder and fragility of the whole planet. There were speeches, serious in tone and perhaps beyond my fourth grade comprehension, about caring for our planet. A circle of sod was ceremonially peeled back, and in the bare earth a collection of pines was planted in a circle. This was the first Earth Day, symbolic of a new awakening.

This was a time when television, a frequent companion around dinnertime, presented an endless onslaught of the news of turbulence – the war in Vietnam, the fight for equal rights, racial injustice, assassinations, Kent State, and burning rivers. I could not fully comprehend all of this, nor the emotions of those around me.

Amidst this din and confusion, Earth Day blossomed, offering the masses an opportunity to celebrate and righteously act on behalf of our environment. Beyond our circle of trees, in colleges and universities, in towns and on city streets,

the fight for our environment rose to new levels, magnified, like the mayhem, on TV news. Twenty million people participated in the first Earth Day.

While the memory of that first Earth Day, for me, is obscured by fog of long-ago youth, it sowed seeds for me – seeds of hope, positivity and empowerment. Despite the news and policies from Washington these days, Earth Day is every day. It is up to all of us to keep in our heart the sacred offering and pact – the earth provides, we protect and honor. We must work together to continue the righteous work that blossomed fifty years ago.



Pine trees can live for over 400 years in ideal conditions. Their height can reach 245 feet and above - anchored with a well-developed tap root system.

Final note -

Those pine trees and I grew up together. Every day I would fall in love. Birdsong emanated from the branches and robins constructed their nests, one mouthful of mud at a time. Rabbits scurried on forays for clover, seeking shelter beneath the skirt of branches. So many lovely weeds – scarlet pimpernel and creeping jenny – kept company with these pines.

If I stare up into the branches, I can block out the noise to imagine the pine needles growing past our daily worries -dropping when they've completed their task. The pine trees will be here for the next Earth Day. They will stand tall to inspire other children, breathe deeply, and send their roots a little deeper. Their work is not done yet, and *neither is ours*.

Freshwater Science - A Love Story

Dr. Pamela Silver, a biology professor and academic dean at Penn State Behrend as well as former editor at Freshwater Science magazine, said her pivotal experiences at The Watershed Institute shaped her interests and career.

“I can’t think of anything more formative,” she said. “Those experiences there showed me that I could take things that I thought were really interesting and turn them into a career, and I realized how much I enjoyed that career.”



Pam Silver on a visit to The Watershed Institute.

She said a director from the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association came to Career Day at her Hopewell high school in 1969 and described the fascinating world of algae. “I thought it was the coolest thing I had ever heard about,” she said.

Pam was hooked and began volunteering at the Watershed as a high school sophomore, riding her bike from her Harborton home to the property. During the school year, she assisted with overnight field trips when sixth graders visited the Watershed to learn about water and the environment in a natural setting. An avid “piper”, she entertained the students by playing her bagpipes as they sat around the campfire.

She also worked with the director as a Watershed teaching assistant in pioneering workshops to train teachers in ways to take their students outdoors to develop solutions to environmental problems. As a student at Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey), she continued to volunteer at the Watershed.

“The Watershed’s influence on my life was profound – it set the course of my career,” Pam said. “It was the first time I had really thought about how I could put my love of things

outdoors into a career path. And being included as a teaching assistant in a series of workshops to teach kids how to solve environmental problems was mind-boggling. Those, and the fact that I discovered freshwater ecology, gave me a path forward.”

Eventually, she was able to gain two degrees; her M.S. in botany in 1987 and her Ph.D. in biology with a specialization in aquatic ecology in 1992. She taught at the University of South Florida for two years and then moved to Penn State Behrend. She taught various biology and ecology classes there and in 2017 was appointed interim academic dean before assuming the post permanently in 2019.

In 2002-2003, she became co-editor of the peer-reviewed journal, Freshwater Science, and assumed the helm as editor in 2006. Her tenure there lasted until she became academic dean. Freshwater Science originally focused on benthos, the organisms that live on the bottom of lakes, rivers and ponds. Eventually, the journal’s scope expanded to include anything that involved freshwater science. The journal publishes papers with original research as well as practical applications of freshwater science, which helped influence national policies on water and ecology protections.



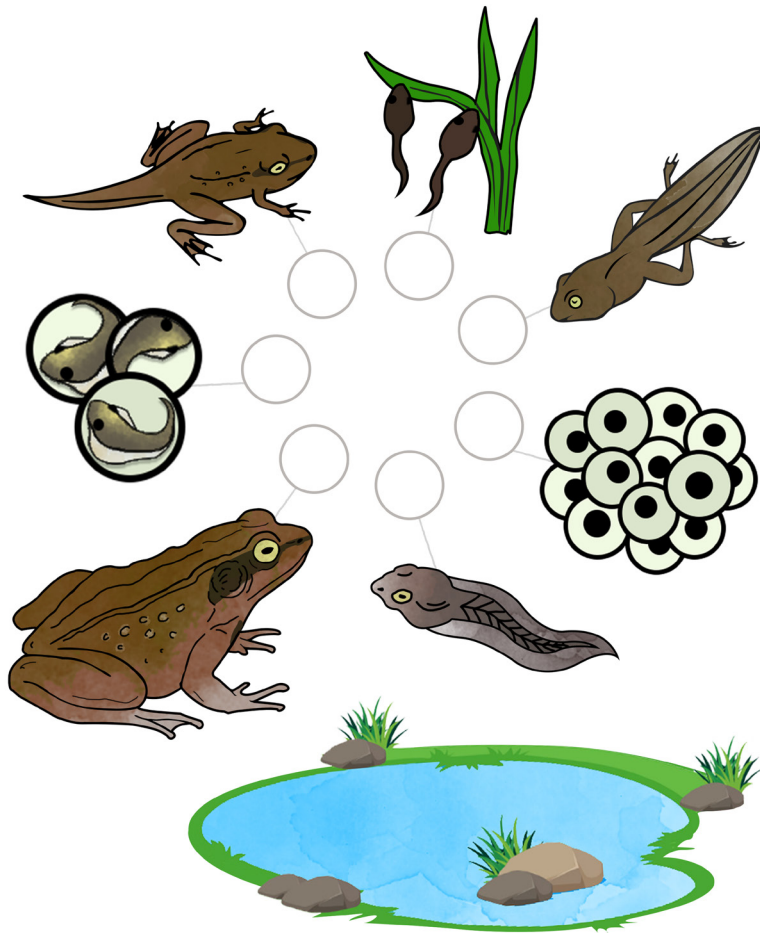
Pam Silver takes a turbidity reading for suspended solids.

She believes that protecting our freshwater is a matter of human survival. “Freshwater is globally threatened,” she said, “and the people who work in the field are very conscious of the water, the organisms that live in the water and the effect of human resources on the quality of that water.”

For more stories like this one, visit thewatershed.org/stories and be sure to tell us your own. Water you up to? Email us: info@thewatershed.org.

Life Cycles of the Vernal Pool

Vernal pools are a unique type of seasonal wetland habitat that are vital for certain plants and animals - like the wood frog! Put numbers in the circles below to put the wood frog life cycle in the correct order.



Keeping water clean, safe and healthy is the heart of our mission.

We work to protect and restore our water and natural environment in central New Jersey through conservation, advocacy, science and education.

Visit us online to show your support. Stay informed, get involved, donate.
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Answer Key
 Clockwise from top: 3, 5, 1, 4, 7, 2, 6



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OUTRUN THE SUN

WATERSHED

SOLSTICE

RUN

JUNE 20

thewatershed.org/trail-run

The poster features a large, stylized sun graphic on the left side, with a photograph of two runners (a woman and a man) running on a trail, framed within the sun's rays. The text "OUTRUN THE SUN" is at the top in a bold, orange, hand-drawn font. Below it, "WATERSHED" is in a smaller, blue, blocky font. "SOLSTICE" and "RUN" are in large, bold, black, hand-drawn fonts. "JUNE 20" is in a smaller, blue, blocky font. At the bottom, the website URL "thewatershed.org/trail-run" is in a bold, orange, hand-drawn font. A small, blue, cartoonish character is running to the right, partially overlapping the "RUN" text.