



Society of Women Environmental Professionals of Greater Philadelphia (SWEP GP)

2023 Year-End Newsletter

A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR

Leaving With My Dancing Shoes

It's that time of year – As we look forward to the holidays with family and friends, time off of work, winter sports and hobbies, a change of seasons, or a winter getaway vacation, we also look back on all that SWEP GP has accomplished. I can honestly say, SWEP GP – we've had a REALLY wonderful year! Eighteen – that's right, 18 events in 2023 for our members and guests! We began the year with a joint gathering with BCONE, had conversations with several guest speakers, shared breakfasts, lunches, and happy hours, hiked through the woods of eastern Pennsylvania, and of course had a blast at our capstone event of the year – our Touchstone Reception at World Café Live in Philadelphia, where we even got to meet Miss Pennsylvania! What a year!

We also say farewell and thank you (but not goodbye) to some of our outgoing Directors, Officers, and volunteers. Rolling off in 2023 were Jennifer Poole and Marjorie Robinson and at the end of 2023, Katie Eberhart, Jessica Stearns, and Victoria Bisbing. We send our gratitude and thanks to these women for their dedication and commitment to serving as a volunteer and bringing so much to the Board and committees you served on. Thank you so very, very much!

With these goodbyes also come the hellos as we introduce you to our new and returning officers for 2024. We welcome Andrea Decola (Co-Chair), Beth Hyde (Co-Chair), Sonya Ward (Treasurer), Marie Forney (Secretary), Jennifer Kugler (Director), Valerie Coghlan (Director), Kristin Weiler (Director), Amy Schneider (Director), Ammie Martin (Director), and Laurel Klein (Director). There are still openings for additional Directors if you wish to serve or nominate someone, and opportunities to volunteer for a Committee.

Lastly, it has truly been my pleasure to serve as your Greater Philadelphia Chapter Chair for the last few years and to serve as a Director and Committee Chair prior to joining the Executive officers. It brings me joy to have ended my term in one of my favorite venues in the city of Philadelphia- World Café Live and to have shared a final happy hour for 2023 with some of our New Jersey friends at Fringe Bar. I pass the torch to our new officers and inspiring women who share the mission of SWEP.

To our members – thank you for your support as well. Without you these events are not as fun, are not as interesting and engaging, and well, they just don't happen at all without you showing up to be part of this organization. Thank you for being with us for another year, and we look forward to seeing you again in 2024!

Be well, be happy, and do something that brings you joy each day.



With many thanks and all the best,

Becky Buchanan
SWEP GP Chair



COMMITTEE UPDATES

, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE



February 2023: Black History Month

You might ask why Black History Month occurs in February. The significance of the month of February dates to 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson established “Negro History Week” during the second week of February. Dr. Woodson was an American historian, author, journalist, and the founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History ([ASALH](https://www.asalh.org/)). He established “Negro History Week” during the second week of February because it includes the birthdays of both Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, men who advocated for freedom and equality. This week provided an opportunity to celebrate African American people of all ages and backgrounds and extend the public’s study of black history. The ASALH set a theme annually for the annual week-long celebration and provided materials such as pictures, lesson plans, plays to reenact historical events and posters detailing important dates and people. However, Dr. Woodson did not believe that history of African American people should be confined to one week, that Black history was too important to America to be crammed into one week and began advocating for a Negro History Year. The ASALH continued to expand its outreach and formed branches across the country to support increased availability of Black history educational materials and programs. Dr. Woodson established the Negro History Bulletin in 1937 to reach a wider audience. The expansion of Black history education and awareness continued to grow from the 1940s through the 1970s, and in 1976, fifty years after the first celebration, the ASALH succeeded in shifting the celebration from a week-long to a month-long event. Since the mid-1970s, every U.S. president has issued proclamations celebrating Black History Month.

~ Article Contributor: Becky Buchanan, SWEP GP Chair



March 8th: Embrace Equity on International Women’s Day

International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8th to honor the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. In the U.S., Australia and the UK, March is also recognized as the Women's History Month to reflect on the contributions women have made to history, culture and society. **You can learn about the story behind Women's History Month at <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>**

~ Article Contributor: Becky Buchanan, SWEP GP Chair



November 2023: National Native American Heritage Month

The history of National Native American Heritage Month began over a century ago. The recognition of Native American Heritage began as a single day set aside by the Boy Scouts of America known as the day for “First Americans”. This idea originated from Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, Director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, NY. Following the coordination with the Boy Scouts, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association formally approved a plan concerning American Indian Day, and on September 28, 1915, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, President of the American Indian Association, issued a proclamation declaring the second Saturday of each May as American Indian Day, which contained the first formal appeal for recognition of Indians as American citizens.

The first American Indian Day declared and celebrated by a state was issued on the second Saturday of May in 1916 by the governor of New York. Several other states followed in New York’s example and declared their own American Indian Day. In 1986, Congress passed the authorization requesting President Reagan to proclaim the week of November 23-30 as “American Indian Week”, which he did. The law and the presidential proclamation recognized American Indians as the first inhabitants of the lands that now constitute the United States. Further, the proclamation included details of significant contributions American Indians have had on American society, including food, medicine, literature, art, and the participation of American Indians in America’s Armed Forces.

Congress continued to pass bills requesting the President to designate a week as American Indian Week, which Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush continued to support and proclaim through 1989. In 1990 Congress issued Public Law No. 101-343 which authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the month of November 1990 as “National American Indian Heritage Month”. The month of November was chosen as it was the end of the traditional harvest season and served as a time of thanksgiving and celebration for American Indians. On November 14, 1990, George W. Bush issued Presidential Proclamation 6230 which declared the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month and gave recognition to and celebrated the history of Native Americans. From 1990 through 2008, Presidents continued to issue annual proclamations designating November as National American Indian Heritage Month. Starting in 2009, President Obama issued a proclamation designating November as National Native American Heritage Month. Since 2009, Presidents continue to issue proclamations designating November as National Native American Heritage Month.

The purpose of National Native American Heritage Month is to designate a time to celebrate traditions, languages, and stories of Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and affiliated Island communities, as well as encourage citizens to learn more about these cultures. The U.S. Department of the Interior has declared the theme for the 2023 National Native American Heritage Month as “Celebrating Tribal Sovereignty and Identity”. As stated on the Department of the Interior – Indian Affairs website “Tribal sovereignty ensures that any decisions about Tribes with regard to their property and citizens are made with their participation and consent. The federal trust responsibility is a legal obligation under which the United States ‘has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust’ towards Indian tribes.”

On October 31, 2023, President Biden issued a Proclamation on National Native American Heritage Month for 2023. Within the proclamation, President Biden references the resiliency of Native peoples, and brings attention to the fact that Native Americans are essential to the strength of the United States. As mentioned in the proclamation, “Native Americans serve in the United States Armed Forces at higher rates than any other ethnic group. They continue to steward so many of our great lands. Their contributions to science, humanities, arts, public service, and more have brought prosperity for all of us. Their diverse cultures and communities continue to thrive and lead us forward.” To read President Biden’s entire Proclamation on National Native American Heritage Month for 2023, please visit WhiteHouse.gov at the following url:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/10/31/a-proclamation-on-national-native-american-heritage-month-2023/>

Sources:

- <https://www.nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/about.html>
- <https://guides.loc.gov/national-american-indian-heritage-month/history-and-overview>
- <https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/>
- <https://www.bia.gov/NNAHM#:~:text=2022%20%3A%20President%20Biden%20issues%20on,National%20Native%20American%20Heritage%20Month.%22>
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/10/31/a-proclamation-on-national-native-american-heritage-month-2023/>

~ Article Contributor: Valerie Coghlan, SWEP GP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Chair

DEI Committee 2023 Recap:

2023 was a great year for the SWEP GP DEI Committee. We were able to hold two great lunch and learn sessions that provided information and discussion on a range of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion topics, including conversations on Transracial Adoptions with Cliff Gibson of Constellation Energy, as well as conversations on Environmental Justice in the Greater Philadelphia Region with Amani Reid of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Keep an eye out for activities to be held during the upcoming 2024 year!

The SWEP GP DEI Committee is always looking for volunteers – If you’re interested in participating, please email Valerie Coghlan at vcoghlan@harsco.com

~ Article Contributor: Valerie Coghlan, SWEP GP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Membership registration for 2024 is now open! Visit our [membership page](#) to view the different [membership categories](#) or log in to your account to renew. Some of the benefits of membership include reduced registration fees for most events, a free member event (e.g., member breakfast or lunch), and first choice on presenting at our programs.

For 2024, Membership Levels and Rates are:

<u>2024 Membership Levels</u>	Rates for 2024 Memberships
*Joint= Joint membership with NJ SWEP and SWEP GP Chapters	
Corporate (single chapter)	\$385
Corporate Joint	\$500
Individual (single chapter)	\$140
Individual Joint	\$175
Individual Gov't/Non-Profit Single Chapter Membership	\$35
Gov't/Non-Profit Joint Chapter Membership	\$50
Individual Student/Academia/Retiree- Single Chapter Membership	\$20
Individual Student/Academia/Retiree Joint Chapter Membership	\$25

~ Article Contributor: Ammie Martin, SWEP GP Membership Committee Volunteer

SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANTS COMMITTEE

SWEP 2024 Grant Announcement

SWEP is proud to announce that we will be presenting grants of up to \$5,000.00 to support organizations and/or programs that creatively address a local environmental need. Please watch our [website](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) for the latest information on when the 2024 application process will begin.

Once again, Laurel Klein will be leading the Grant Committee’s process as we select the most deserving applicant to receive SWEP’s generous support. This is always a challenging process for the Committee! To be considered for funding, applications must address a locally-defined need to create, enhance, restore, or protect the natural environment. SWEP also looks to support projects that provide environmental awareness, through educational sessions, with a particular emphasis on encouraging girls and/or women in the sciences, engineering, or environmental fields.

~ Article Contributor: Laurel Klein, SWEP GP Scholarship and Grants Committee Chair

Update from a 2022 Grant Recipient: GIRLS GROW GREENS

Each year, as a condition of the award, grant recipients are required to submit a report to SWEP offering the Grant Committee and Board of Directors and its members insight into the impact of our funding. The report summarizes the program goals and includes pictures if possible.

One example of an outstanding program supported by the 2022 SWEP grant cycle, is the Girls Grow Greens program, which takes place in an after-school setting at the Odyssey Charter School.



Through a hands-on approach, the girls in this program come to understand how food is a reflection of citizenship and social justice as they engage in a diversity of activities that put agriculture and environmental sustainability at the forefront of learning. A culminating experience for the girls takes place in the Hydroponic Learning Lab where they study health and nutrition, entrepreneurship, and advocacy. The girls participate in seeding, transplanting, harvesting, and distributing pounds of leafy greens to people in need.

Announcing the 2023 Scholarship and Grant Winners

The Scholarship and Grants Committee led by Laurel Klein with members Elaine Feldman, Beth Hyde, Katie Eberhart, and Marie Forney, reviewed many outstanding applications. After careful consideration, the Committee selected three scholarship recipients and three nonprofit grant recipients. With the full endorsement of the SWEP GP Board of Directors, the Committee was able to distribute \$15,000 in scholarships and grants at the Touchstone Reception on November 2, 2023. All awardees, except Get Fresh Daily, were able to attend. Unfortunately for us, Get Fresh Daily had their main fundraiser the same night. Each of the women and organizations inspired Touchstone attendees about what the financial support meant to them upon receiving their plaques and checks. Recipients were as follows:



Janelle Edwards

Janelle Edwards, a final-year Doctoral candidate at Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health, has dedicated herself to Climate Preparedness. Janelle is currently at the forefront of two groundbreaking research projects, examining the link between extreme temperatures and morbidity patterns with a focus on primary care utilization in Philadelphia. Her work promises to revolutionize our approach to these critical issues. Upon completing her doctoral degree, she aims to advocate for the inclusion of an indicator of structural racism in climate preparedness policies, creating a more equitable and resilient future.



Kisha Grady

Kisha Grady is pursuing a Doctorate in Public Health at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her passion is to address pressing public health issues affecting underrepresented workers, especially laborers and workers of color. In addition to her academic pursuits, Kisha manages two vital health and safety programs at Temple University. Her remarkable commitment to both her profession and studies is truly commendable.



Rachel Roday

Rachel Roday is in her final year pursuing a Master of Science in Marine Biosciences at the University of Delaware. Rachel's impressive academic journey includes the completion of two Bachelor of Science degrees in Marine Science and Biology in just four years, all while part of UDEL's Honors Program. Her impactful research involves tagging American shad in the Brandywine River and tracking their movements post-dam removal, benefiting various stakeholders.



Friends of Burlington Island

"Where Does Trash Go in the Streets of a River Town?" is a program led by Erica Shabert, a trustee, teacher, and Girl Scout leader. Erica and Friends of Burlington Island engaged young women, 8th grade and older, in a unique two-day adventure. They explored water quality monitoring, shoreline cleanups, and various outdoor activities. This experience introduced many of these girls to the lake and island for the first time, fostering a deeper respect for the environment.



Get Fresh Daily

Get Fresh Daily (GFD) dedicated itself to integrating plant-based living experiences, farm-fresh produce, and culturally empowering wellness education in West Philadelphia. GFD's programs were a testament to the resilience of the neighborhood. GFD successfully utilized SWEP funding to launch their "Growing + Glowing in the Garden After School Program." This program was an extension of their Growing + Glowing Spring Camp for Girls, empowering young girls with the skills to camp, engage in mindfulness experiences, and cultivate a garden, all in preparation for the upcoming season. The funds directly supported staff fees and essential supplies for the after-school program, further enhancing the community's well-being.



West Mt. Airy Neighbors

West Mount Airy Neighbors (WMAN), a nonprofit organization, is making a positive impact with SWEP funding. The focus of their application was the reclamation and restoration of land surrounding the Carpenter Lane Train Station, an area that WMAN has taken under its stewardship. This project is more than just environmental restoration; it's about fostering community engagement, education, biodiversity, and sustainable agro-ecology practices. Working alongside local schools, students, and nonprofit partners, WMAN is fostering ecological literacy in West Mt. Airy.

~ Article Contributor: Laurel Klein, SWEP GP Scholarship and Grants Committee Chair

SOCIAL AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS COMMITTEE



Onward to 2024 – Upcoming Events

The Social and Technical Programs Committee has been quite busy the last couple of months working on our plans for 2024. We are looking to bring back several of our more popular events, maintaining our shift to more in-person events, while still offering virtual options where they make sense.

We are happy to announce that we will be hosting our first (at least that I am aware of) sporting event networking night. Join us on Thursday, February 8th for a Night at the Rink with networking, food, drinks, and Flyers hockey! Registration is open and we only have 30 spaces. Don't miss the special discount if you reserve your spot before the end of the year! We are also working on a Night at the Ballpark for later in the spring to watch the Reading Fightin' Phils.

We are also planning several breakfast, lunch, or happy hour networking events for next year, including co-hosting a Happy Hour with BCONE sometime in the first quarter. We hope to continue our “fireside chats” (with a mix of virtual and in-person) where environmental professionals will meet to discuss a topic and network. In addition, we are working on an 18 hole golf scramble followed by dinner.

On the technical side, we are planning a follow-up to our PFAS seminar, our regulatory update, and several technical lunch and learns. We will also be continuing our outdoor events with more hikes and volunteering events that will include technical topic discussions.

As these and other events are planned, we will post them to our website, so watch the [Event Calendar](#) for more information. If you have any ideas for future events, want to see the return of a past event, or know someone who would be interested in presenting, please contact us at programs@swepweb.com. We look forward to seeing you in 2024!

~ Article Contributor: Ammie Martin, SWEP GP Social and Technical Programs Committee Chair



PFAS at the PECO – My Experience at the PFAS Seminar

On Thursday September 21st, SWEP GP organized a per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) seminar at the PECO Building in downtown Philadelphia. A vast number of people with different backgrounds in the environmental industry attended and participated to provide a variety of information in relation to PFAS. Some companies in attendance included but were not limited to Waters™ ERA; Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP; Environmental Standards, Inc.; Regenesis®; Langan, and Montrose Environmental Group. Topics discussed were general PFAS information; data validation topics; PFAS quality programs and studies; remediation and treatment technologies; laboratory and methodology advancements; and increased litigation topics and legislation.

The day of presentations started with Stephen Zeiner, CEAC, of Environmental Standards, providing an analytical insight view into the data validation world of PFAS. One of the first slides indicated there is an on-going controversy of what constitutes and defines a compound as a PFAS. Despite this dispute, there are thousands of CAS-named PFAS compounds, but only a fraction of certified reference standards and even less isotopically labelled analogues. If this wasn't concerning enough, Steve explained the further complexities of analyzing and validating PFAS data, which included but was not limited to the following topics:

- Methodology inconsistencies and laboratory modifications.
- Homogeneity, matrix effects, and contamination.
- Branched and linear isomer complexities.
- Surrogate and internal standard complications.
- Quantitative interferences.
- Qualitative identification issues.

Melissa Coyner, director of ERA, was the next presenter. She discussed ERA's assistance and development in PFAS validation studies and quality programs. Quality is crucial for the success of method development and laboratory analysis; however, understanding how a quality program is implemented from the start, is something that many individuals may not get to experience. Fortunately, this presentation provided a detailed overview of the quality program that was initiated and executed by ERA during the Draft PFAS Method 1633 study for a variety of matrices. The insight provided from this presentation, exemplified the resources and organization necessary for the accomplishment of a study and quality program of this magnitude.

As the day continued, the presentations evolved into remediation and treatment technologies; PFAS litigation trends and Natural Resource Damage (NRD) claims; and analytical advances and limitations. Remediation and treatment technologies were presented by Amita Oka, PhD of Langan; Glenn Iosue, P.E., BCEE of Regenesis; and Rick Shoyer, LSRP of Montrose Environmental Group's ECT2. These environmental solution companies employ several state-of-the-art techniques and technologies in regard to their clients' needs to help contain, remediate, and manage PFAS contamination sites. Some of the *in-situ* and *ex-situ* implementations and solutions included the following:

- Granular activated carbon (GAC), colloidal activated carbon (CAC), ion exchange resins (IEX), and reverse osmosis (RO) and ultrafiltration.
- Foam fractionation and ozofractionation.
- Proprietary media filtration.

- Flocculation and coagulation.
- Soil stabilization using additive such as activated carbon, activated alumina, and kaolin clay.
- Excavation and disposal.
- High temperature incineration.
- Soil and sediment washing.
- Sub and supercritical oxidation.

Due to the robustness and complexity of PFAS, analytical and legislative development has been a slow on-going process. Nicole Moshang of Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox discussed the litigation trends, while Jenifer Lewis of Waters informed us of analytical innovations. Like previously stated, the definition of PFAS is continuously changing and each governing entity seems to have its own classification. This makes regulation of PFAS contamination more difficult because it does not allow for common ground. Without common ground, analytical and regulatory development tends to suffer and cannot catch up to the growing public concern.

Although there is a delay in analytical and regulatory advancements, new analytical technology and techniques continue to be developed. New instrumentation, instrument modifications, and better process consumables, continue to enhance the laboratories' capabilities to analyze a variety of PFAS contaminated matrices. These innovations allow for increasing sensitivity and decreasing matrix effects and interferences. Continued analytical advancement will be necessary as PFAS legislation and regulations change but little progress is better than no progress.

The momentous take aways from the seminar was that PFAS are very complex with significant legality, methodology, and financial ramifications. However, there seems to be a light guiding us toward treatment and prevention of the dark waters. Significant progress forward is necessary, but as momentum builds, velocity should come. Hopefully to the extent, that the grand scheme question can be: How can we prevent these types of contamination from occurring in the first place?

~ *Article Contributor: Dwight Hoster, Environmental Standards, Inc., Event Attendee*

Recap of the 2023 SWEP GP Outdoor Events (ODEs)

Members of SWEP GP came together in late April and again in September to participate in two guided hikes.



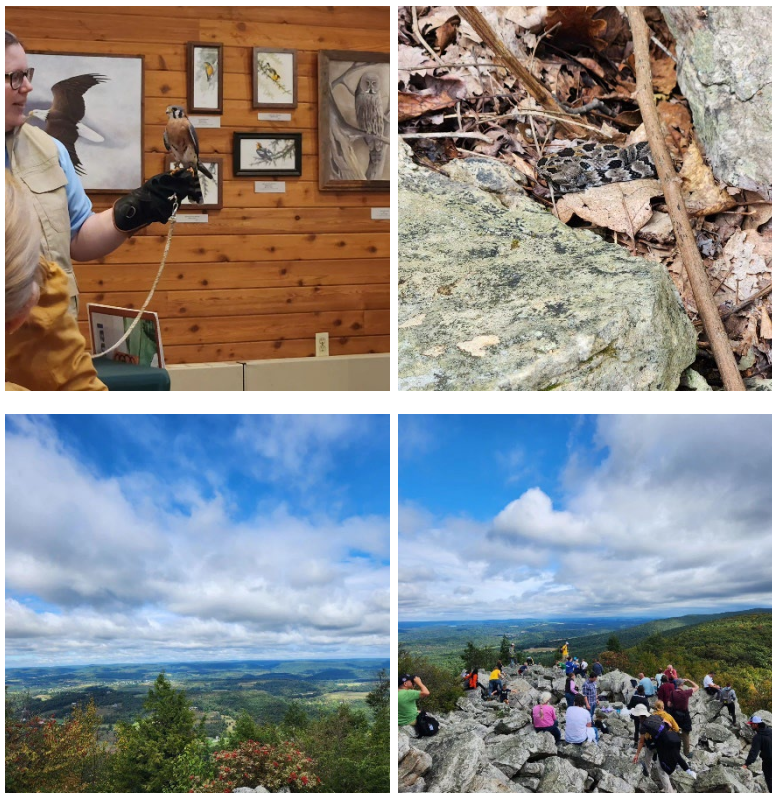
The April hike was at Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site near French Creek State Park in Elverson, Pennsylvania. The SWEP GP group of 14 were led by park rangers on a four-hour hike around the visitor center, where we explored the surrounding area where Mark Bird decided to build his "iron plantation" in 1771. During the hike, the rangers discussed several topics such as big woods' contributions to charcoal; mining and source of iron ore for Hopewell Furnace; ecological significance and impacts; birds of Hopewell; invasive species of insects and vegetation; and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

Nestled in the beauty of the almost 850-acre area was a little village of different restored structures that would have been utilized in the forging of iron products between 1771 and 1883. The buildings were restored, so that visitors could immerse themselves into a glimpse of what the area would have looked like back during this time. During our hike, we crossed the treacherous route 345 to visit the remains of the living quarters, where former residences working the furnace, once lived. The buildings were mostly collapsed and overgrown by vegetation, but enough remained for the rangers to give a fair amount of information of what these structures would have looked like. To think that during this time, people built these stone homes with basic tools was fascinating to semi-see and imagine. Next, we were shown the CCC built picnic pavilion, which was created for recreational purposes during the Great Depression. Yet another wonder to think something so robust was constructed during a time where everything was manual labor and basic tools.

Once we crossed back, we were led to the orchard area, where about 150 apple trees were maintained. As we strolled through the apple trees, the rangers explained how management of the orchard was set to mimic what it would have looked like in the 19th century. The sight was a wonder to see how different a modernized orchard was compared to a rustic one. They also covered some of the pests that have been introduced to the

area, such as the spotted lanternfly, and the significance pest management plays in protecting and maintaining the orchard.

After the orchard, we hiked through some of the surrounding recreational trails, where the rangers covered some additional historical significances and identified some of the invasive species. Finally, we finished at the reenactment CCC camp, where reenactors provided insight to a day in the life of a CCC worker and showcased some items they would have possessed. For more information of the area please visit, [Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#) and [French Creek State Park](#).



The September hike was at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Albany and East Brunswick Townships of Schuylkill and Berks Counties. The sanctuary is located along the Atlantic flyway of the Pennsylvania Appalachian Mountains and is frequently visited by migratory bird enthusiasts, especially regarding birds of prey and raptors. As you drive up the mountain to reach the sanctuary, you become engulfed in the thick forest almost becoming disoriented until you reach the parking lot. Since it was a weekend visit, volunteers were easily spotted in their fluorescent vests and assisted with parking. Once parked, we made our way to the sanctuary visitor center, where the SWEP GP group of 12 began the day with a raptor presentation conducted by sanctuary educators featuring a live American Kestrel demonstration.

During the 45-minute program, we were educated about the different types of birds of prey to lookout for on our hike and the historical significance of the sanctuary and surrounding land. When the presentation was finished, the educators led us on our hike to the North and South Lookouts. Getting to the South Lookout made the hike seem like it was going to be simple, as all we had to do was cross Hawk Mountain Road and hike up a slight upgradient. Once there, we were met by students that have been conducting studies on raptor migration. Two of the students had even traveled from foreign countries to conduct their studies, which emphasizes how world renown Hawk Mountain is for its migration significance.

After a brief explanation of their study and how they were conducting counts and bird tracking, we continued on our way to the North Lookout. On our way up, it became understood why all the reviews of the area indicated how difficult and treacherous hiking up Hawk Mountain is. Aside from the steeper gradient, the trail was basically paved with rocky terrain that made it apparent that proper footwear is essential. One wrong step could have meant a trip to the emergency room with a twisted ankle. Not to mention, the further you got up the mountain, the harder the rocky way became. Despite the difficulty, reaching the North Lookout was such a rewarding experience. The view at the top is absolutely stunning as you can see for miles across the mountains. Pictures honestly do not do justice to how breathtaking the view is, which made up for the fact that we didn't get to see too many migrating raptors. Unfortunately, we found out that migration counts significantly vary daily due to weather conditions, so it all comes down to the luck of the draw, in terms of the amount of migration one will experience when visiting. However, our fortune of sighting some uncommon wildlife changed, as we returned to the South Lookout, where we were informed that two baby Timber rattlesnakes had been hanging out a few feet from us. This was exactly why a warning was included in the sign-up email for the ODE but seeing them up close and in the wild made for a cool tale that only the SWEP GP members who attended could say they got to experience. If you are looking for an extraordinary adventure, Hawk Mountain should definitely be on your list to visit, since it is semi-local and provides so many different experiences. Make sure to check out [Hawk Mountain Sanctuary](#), prior to your visit for rules, regulations, and tips prior to your visit.

The success of the 2023 SWEP GP hikes was certainly evident, as many in attendance had nothing but great words to say about these ODEs. Because of the success of these events, we are planning to make 2024 SWEP GP ODEs more frequent and even better.

Some of the ideas we are looking into include:

- A hike or bike event at Valley Forge National Park.
- A visit to the Morris Arboretum and Gardens.
- A fly-fishing tutorial and expedition event.
- A visit to a Reading Fightin' Phils ball game.
- Beach and/or river cleanup events.
- A hike at Delaware Water Gap in the fall.

Make sure to keep a lookout for save the dates and event signup emails, as we send them out.

If you have any suggestions for future ODEs, please reach out to Dwight Hoster on [LinkedIn](#) or at dhoster@envstd.com.

~ Article Contributor: Dwight Hoster, SWEF GP Technical and Social Programs Committee Volunteer

TOUCHSTONE COMMITTEE

Meet our 2023 Touchstone Awardee – Kelly Lee Kinkaid, P.G.



Ms. Kinkaid is a professional geologist with over 35 years of experience, employed by both governmental and consulting entities. After obtaining a B.S. in Earth Sciences from The Pennsylvania State University in 1985, she began her career as a cartographer for the Defense Mapping Agency in Brookmont, MD. She soon realized that working in the dark three levels underground was not for her. In 1986 she moved back to Pennsylvania and began working for the PA Department of Environmental Resources (PADER), initially as an air quality inspector and then as a geologist in the Clean Water Program, handling sewage facilities planning, remediation/regulatory oversight of petroleum & chemical bulk storage facilities and implementation of the statewide groundwater monitoring program. Lured away from the PADER, Ms. Kinkaid began her environmental consulting career in 1990. Her consulting work included brownfields & leaking storage tank investigations & remediations; due diligence site assessments; water supply development; stormwater management; sinkhole repairs; air & water discharge permitting (industrial, radiological & infectious waste streams); and CERCLA site investigations. Known for her thoroughness, no nonsense approach, and focus on accomplishing site goals, Ms. Kinkaid has taken an impressive number of sites to closure under various state cleanup programs. Kelly has always been active in community service and strives to be a servant leader both in her private and professional life, leading by example and encouraging fellow staff to make ethical decisions, always do their best and challenge themselves. This servant leader attitude led to her decision to return to government employment in 2019, taking a professional geologist position with the PA Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) where she reviews geologic & hydrogeologic evaluations associated with landfills and other waste management facilities. In her private life, Kelly enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her horses and her husband John, and is an active member of the Kiwanis Club of Greater Reading-Berks County.

Touchstone Reception Sponsors – THANK YOU!

SWEP GP would like to thank our continued and new sponsors for the 2023 Touchstone Reception. Without their support we would not be able to have this wonderful event each year or offer the scholarships and grants to deserving ladies and non-profit organizations year after year. Thank you!

Thank you to our Sponsors

Palladium:



Platinum:



Gold:



Silver: Manko, Gold, Katcher, & Fox ROUX

Bronze: Brightfields SLR Consulting

In-Kind:



Beer & Wine

Brownfield Science & Technology, Inc.
Carbon Offset

Specialty Technical Consultants, Inc.
Hors D’ouvres

Coventry Environmental
Dessert

2023 Touchstone Reception – An Attendee’s Point of View



This year, I had the honor and privilege of attending the 2023 Touchstone Reception for the Great Philadelphia chapter of the Society of Women Environmental Professionals. As a young professional, I am new to networking, but the theme – “Barbie’s Green Gala” – inspired incredible attire. This in turn was a great icebreaker for the many productive conversations I had that night. During cocktail hour, I was able to spend some time chatting with two of the scholarship winners, Ms. Rachel Roday and Ms. Janelle Edwards, about their research. Rachel is studying the movements of American shad in the Brandywine River for her master’s degree in Marine Biosciences and hopes to use this data to determine how the removal of dams in the Brandywine affect shad habitat use. Many don’t consider how important one species of fish may be to an ecosystem, but Rachel regularly reports her research to various stakeholders.

Janelle, meanwhile, is a doctoral student of Public Health studying morbidity patterns in Philadelphia; she aspires to incorporate structural racism into the social vulnerability indices used for environmental justice trackers. Her passion called to mind Ms. Amani Reid, a coordinator in the Office of Environmental Justice who spoke at the PADEP Regulatory Update held by SWEP in August, and I was able to connect to them through LinkedIn. The third scholarship winner, Ms. Kisha Grady, is also a Public Health doctoral student at Temple University focusing on environmental justice, especially for workers of color. She also manages two health and

safety programs at Temple, committing herself wholeheartedly to the safety of herself and others. As someone who hasn't pursued post-graduate education, I admire all three scholarship winners for their dedication to researching and advancing their respective fields.

In addition to scholarships, three grants were also awarded that night. Get Fresh Daily is an organization that runs a community garden in Philadelphia to help maintain connection among residents in an area of the city facing drug use, gun violence, and systemic racism. They plan to use their grant to fund an after-school program for children in the area to learn about gardening, camping, and mindfulness. Friends of Burlington Island will use their grant to recruit young women for a program called "Where Does Trash Go in the Streets of a River Town," a multi-day excursion that teaches young women about water quality, the beauty of nature, and how their actions affect the environment. Finally, West Mount Airy Neighbors plans to use their grant to restore the area around the Carpenter Lane Train Station for community engagement purposes, including outreach and education programs for local schools. I was so glad to see a focus on community outreach among the grant winners, especially in teaching today's youth about the importance of the environment.

Our keynote speaker was Ms. Miranda Moore; she's a Certified Environmental Engineer (EIT), a Sustainability Professional (ENV-SP), and Miss Pennsylvania. If I'm honest, I didn't realize she was an environmental professional until I caught her short biography on the slideshow during cocktail hour, and I found myself quite curious about her path to this point. As we mingled, my colleagues and I had the chance to chat with her, discussing our backgrounds, *Barbie* (of course), and most importantly, the environment.

Contrary to popular depictions of pageants on shows like "Toddlers in Tiaras," Miranda entered her first pageant as an adult and found both that she enjoyed it and that it was a great avenue for the advocacy that she wanted to do. Since winning the title of Miss Pennsylvania, Miranda has used her platform to campaign for sustainability in the fashion industry through her nonprofit, [Take Action in Fashion](#). As part of this mission, she's visited schools across the state to teach K-12 students about the importance of protecting the environment and those who create the clothes we wear.

I realized throughout our conversation that I, and probably many others, had the same knee-jerk reaction to seeing her, and one that she told us she's been on the receiving end of: "Why are you here?" The fact that people have asked that of her based on what they see, and not who she is as a smart, capable professional, was a much-needed wake-up call for me. We all loved *Barbie* so much, and yet we still miss the mark so often, automatically judging anyone or anything feminine or woman-centered at face value. Through her keynote speech, Miranda showed us all that titles like Miss Pennsylvania are so much more meaningful than being a pretty face, and I think it's safe to say she inspired us to truly embrace every facet of ourselves.

Throughout the program we heard from so many amazing women, and still there was one more! Ms. Kelly Lee Kinkaid, the Touchstone Awardee herself, is a professional geologist who has spent over 35 years working in both the public and private sectors. Her speech was inspiring, relaying how she grew into her career without female role models and subsequently became one to those entering the field after her. She spoke of how important it is to lead by serving those around you and encouraging them to challenge themselves. Her passion doesn't end at her work, however; she is also involved in community service, as well as a number of personal hobbies. Ms. Kinkaid's speech was so encouraging, her commitment to being not only a great geologist, but also a great person, is something we should all aspire to.

All in all, the 2023 Touchstones was a wonderful night of networking, connection, and inspiration. I can't wait to attend next year's reception and get to know even more of the SWEP community!



~ Article Contributor: Katelyn Kelly, Environmental Standards, Inc., Event Attendee

WEBSITE/PUBLIC RELATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE

2023 Recap

The Committee's mission is to publicize and promote SWEP GP's membership benefits, professional resources, and advertise events and member opportunities by maintaining SWEP GP's website and LinkedIn account and publishing our newsletter. We are currently looking for volunteers to help maintain the website and assist with the newsletter. If you are interested in helping out with either of these tasks, or just providing an article for an upcoming newsletter, please contact Ammie Martin at amartin@envstd.com.

~ Article Contributor: Ammie Martin, SWEP GP Website/Public Relations/Social Media Committee Co-Chair



IN OTHER NEWS

2024 Events Survey

The Programs Committee has started to noodle over the 2024 events schedule. Some great ideas have been brought up, but we would love your help!

Please take a couple minutes to complete the survey below so we can plan social and technical events that you would want to attend in 2024.

<https://forms.gle/dWvMkAVrwd46pS7u8>



Call For 2024 Board of Directors Volunteers

If you are interested in serving as a Committee Chair/Co-Chair, Committee member, or on our Board of Directors, please email info@swepweb.com and provide the position(s) you are interested in. We are seeking nominations to fill a number of positions for the 2024 – 2025 Committee term or 2024 – 2026 Board of Directors term.

Our Board of Directors positions are 3-year terms and are considered voting members of the organization, helping make important decisions to keep the organization running and providing the most benefit to our members.

Elections will be held in early 2024, with terms beginning in the same month.

Our Mission

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter of SWEP (SWEP GP) was formed in 1995 as a resource for women environmental professionals in the Philadelphia region. The mission of SWEP GP is:

- To encourage and promote the leadership, achievement, and professional development of women in the environmental professions,
- To provide an informal setting for women in the environmental professions to meet, share substantive information and work experiences, and to establish a communication exchange,
- To educate members on new developments and current trends in the environmental field
- To encourage and promote the development of business relationships,
- To encourage and promote public service in the environmental field.

And, if you made it this far, thank you and we look forward to seeing you in 2024!

Follow us on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/swep-of-greater-philadelphia/>

Watch our website for the latest information on upcoming events, scholarships and grants, and touchstones: <https://swepweb.com/>

Contact us at info@swepweb.com