

QUALITY OF LIFE, COMMUNITY, & ADVENTURE

A Message from the Director of Parks & Recreation

OUR MISSION

Willistown Township Parks and Recreation is committed to celebrating community and enriching life through people, parks, and programs. We endeavor to foster healthy minds, bodies, and spirits through a variety of parks and innovative programs. We encourage a love of being outdoors and a connection to nature by creating lasting, happy memories there. It's all about quality of life, community, and adventure in Willistown!

OUR SERVICES

The Department manages 294 acres of parkland including 245 acres of nature preserves, over 10 miles of trails, two active recreation parks, and one neighborhood park. Our programs include the award-winning *GO WilMa!* Outdoor Adventure Program (serving 850 kids and their families in 2019), Greentree Park Parties, the Willistown Country Fair, new events coming soon, as well as Scout and other volunteer programs. We also oversee year-round sports camps for 3 to 5 year-olds and Willistown's Summer Fun Camps for K-5th grade children.

YOUR INPUT

To provide top-notch parks and programming, we need your input to

help shape the future of the park system and recreational offerings. We want to know what adds value to your lives. Surveys are one of the methods we use to hear your thoughts. Please stay tuned to the Crier, our social media outlets,

and sign up for Parks and Recreation Enews through Notify Me on the website for more about the Parks and Recreation Survey coming out this fall.

20TH ANNIVERSARY

Parks, preserves, and programs play a significant role in shaping the unique character of Willistown. Our residents are mainly to thank for the park assets Willistown is known for. This year is the 20th anniversary of the Willistown Township Open Space Referendum.

In 1999, the Board of Supervisors proposed

the referendum asking residents if they would be in favor of a 1/8th of 1% increase in the earned income tax rate "for outright purchase of critical properties or for the purchase of easements to protect vital natural, scenic, and recreational resources." Willistown residents passed the referendum with a resounding 82% of the vote!



One of the earliest wildflowers in Pennsylvania, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, or Bloodroot, in the woods at the 180-acre Okehocking Preserve. Native Americans used the root's red juice as dye, which is the origin of the plant's common name.

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ASSETS AMASSED

Twenty years later, the hard-earned dollars of Willistown residents have purchased 318 acres through the Open Space Fund. This includes the Township's Okehocking and Serpentine Preserves, Greentree Park, and Duffryn Trail (235 acres) as well as contributing to Willistown Conservation Trust's 83-acre Kirkwood Preserve. Open Space Funds in the amount of \$10,031,520 were leveraged through successful grant applications to Chester County and the PA State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Township received \$5,825,000, and the Willistown Conservation Trust received \$3,275,000 in funding. That ends up being about 91 cents in grant funds to every dollar of open space money spent—an incredible statistic and something to be very proud of!

VOLUNTEERS ON A MISSION

Today, your Supervisors, fellow

Willistown residents serving on Township advisory boards and committees, and Township staff continue to look for viable parkland and easement acquisitions to add to Willistown's inventory. To see the Open Space Acquisition Project Summary visit willistown.pa.us under Government and Open Space Review Board.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

Your Parks and Recreation Department looks to serve you through offering creative community programming and opportunities to get outside in an outstanding park system. As a one-person department, taking a leadership role and inspiring partners to collaborate is key to successful community building programming. The award-winning, large-scale *GO WilMa!* Outdoor Adventure Program is a case in point. Enrolling the assistance of dedicated members of the Parks and Recreation Board is also critical to

hosting outstanding programming.
YOUR PARKS & RECREATION BOARD

Each volunteer Board member is a Park Ambassador, a presence in the parks gaining input from and informing park users like you. These Board members also serve as the eyes and ears of the community. Please look for them in blue Willistown Township shirts at our Park Parties and in our parks and preserves and say, "Hello." It is our pleasure to serve you. They are available to hear your concerns, comments, and enthusiasm—as am I!

See you in the park!

Mary

—Mary Hundt

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