



Ryan Beltz, Executive Director  
1 Skippack Pike  
Schwenksville, PA 19473  
610.618.9057 (c)  
[www.perkiomenwatershed.org](http://www.perkiomenwatershed.org)

## Perkiomen Watershed Conservation Corps Program and Mission

The Perkiomen Watershed Conservation Corps Program is a youth-based program dedicated to furthering the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy's mission by providing valuable watershed stewardship, while fostering a rich and varied conservation-based skill set within each of its members.

### Experiential Education and Service Learning

Our method in completing our described objective is to create a program that focuses on tapping local high school students and their talents to help complete Conservancy goals. However, this relationship is reciprocal in that each member of the program receives valuable conservation land management and watershed stewardship instruction while gaining a varied environmental education. Further, the program integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience while teaching civic responsibility. The youth will be drawn primarily from local communities and by recommendations of Conservancy stakeholders. The corps program will consist of six to eight members and will run approximately 15 months. Each member will be involved in a number of conservation projects including watershed preservation, ecological restoration, invasive plant management, ecological monitoring, trail restoration and construction, and other conservation field work related to watershed management. There will also be a strong emphasis placed on environmental education and many opportunities will be available for members to gain "hands-on" field experience.

### Member Requirements

A necessary component of the PWCC program is a dedication to providing valuable services to the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy while subsequently providing a rich and varied conservation-based skill set to its members. To be considered an active corps member in the program, each participant must complete a number of mandatory requirements. The first of these components is a requirement of a minimum of 80 service hours (10 days) in a given program cycle (15 months). These hours must be completed with the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy under the direct supervision of PWC staff. The second component of the program is for members to participate in a minimum of three environmental education sessions in a given program cycle. The education sessions must be completed at the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy under the direct supervision of PWC staff or staff-sanctioned educators. Third, members must complete a course of study in basic wilderness ethics and backcountry travel. Finally, members will participate in a capstone expedition that will draw upon all that they have learned throughout the program.

Serving the people and communities of the Perkiomen Watershed  
by conserving and protecting land and water resources through commitment to and leadership  
in environmental education, watershed stewardship and conservation programs.



Ryan Beltz, Executive Director  
1 Skippack Pike  
Schwenksville, PA 19473  
610.618.9057 (c)  
www.perkiomenwatershed.org

## Environmental Education Requirements

First, the environmental education requirement allows for more flexibility than the service-learning component of the program. A number of education programs will be offered throughout the year. It is required that each member attends three programs at minimum. Following are a number of common educational opportunities:

- Watershed Stewardship
- Stormwater Management
- Ecological Restoration
- Water Quality Analysis
- Native Plant Identification
- Invasive Plant Management

Second, each member will be required to research a specific watershed management issue or related outdoor recreation issue and will subsequently write a one-page article about that topic. Members will then use the information they have gathered during this research project to create a short video segment during the watershed expedition.

Third, each member will be required to complete a course of study in basic wilderness ethics and backcountry travel, which in turn will be applied throughout the program. These courses are as follows:

- Leave No Trace
- Wilderness First Aid / CPR / AED
- Canoe Skills and Concepts
- Orienteering and GPS Navigation

## Watershed Expedition and Fund Raising

As part of the PWCC program, a watershed expedition will be conducted at the end of the program cycle. This trip will occur in August of the 15<sup>th</sup> program month. The watershed trip serves three purposes. First, the program members are afforded the educational opportunity to experience the Perkiomen watershed from headwaters to bay. Second, the program members will also have the opportunity to employ all of the skills they have developed over the preceding program months. Finally, program members will conduct a hydrological analysis of the Perkiomen Creek from headwaters to bay. The results of this analysis will be recorded with Globe – NASA's citizen science database. In order to fund such a venture, a fund-raiser and media campaign will be conducted to help offset expenses and raise awareness of the program and the Conservancy.

## A Final Word

These requirements are not intended to be daunting. Their purpose is to ensure that each member receives a well-rounded education in both theoretical and practical conservation field skills while providing meaningful service to the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy. Also, at the conclusion of the program cycle, successful PWCC Members will have the opportunity to participate in a watershed expedition. The idea is that a successful member, who meets the minimum requirements, will have a substantial knowledge and skill base that will enable them to fully engage in a very serious expedition and project while promoting the PWCC and its mission. Further, successful program participants will possess a greater knowledge of watershed stewardship and will be more likely to espouse the inherent beliefs throughout the course of their lives.

Serving the people and communities of the Perkiomen Watershed  
by conserving and protecting land and water resources through commitment to and leadership  
in environmental education, watershed stewardship and conservation programs.