

What is Keeper of the Stream?

Keeper of the Stream is a partnership between Valley Forge National Historical Park and the Valley Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited to increase community involvement in the protection and restoration of the Valley Creek Watershed. Through observation, education, monitoring, and conservation projects this program addresses the following goals:

- Promote the long-term protection, preservation, and restoration of the Valley Creek Watershed through a network of community volunteers whose efforts in and outside the park have a direct positive impact on water resources within the park.

Mission
Preserve, protect, and restore the Valley Creek Watershed through education and community involvement and promote an ethic of conservation and stewardship.

- Improve understanding of the natural and cultural importance of Valley Creek and the primary threats to the continued health of this ecosystem.

- Develop an informed network of volunteers that will provide early warning/early detection of threats to the health of the watershed and promote rapid response to address and/or mitigate these threats.



Image by Mike Ticchino

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Valley Forge National Historical Park
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania



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Artwork by Carl Dusingberre

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www.nps.gov/vafo

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The Valley Creek Watershed

The Valley Creek Watershed encompasses 23.4 square miles, primarily within Tredyffrin and East Whiteland Townships, Chester County, PA. The last two miles of Valley Creek pass through Valley Forge National Historical Park to the creek's confluence with the Schuylkill River in front of 18th-century George Washington's Headquarters.

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is the area of land that drains into a common waterway such as a stream, river or aquifer.

The Valley Creek Watershed has been designated "Exceptional Value," affording it the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's highest level of protection. It also has been designated a "Class A" Wild Trout Fishery by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Historically and ecologically significant, the creek's designations demonstrate the value of this resource at the local, state, and national levels.

The stream itself and riparian habitat along the banks are home to a great diversity of plant and animal species, provide opportunities for recreation, and improve our overall quality of life.

Because the park is located at the bottom of the watershed, everything that occurs upstream affects park resources. These impacts include washing away of archeological artifacts, degrading aquatic (e.g. fish) habitat, and threatening infrastructure such as roads and trails. Working to improve watershed conditions *outside* the park is the best way to protect resources *within* the park.

KOS Volunteer Activities

The Keeper of the Stream volunteer program connects people to Valley Forge by providing volunteer opportunities both *within* and *outside* the park that have a direct positive impact on water resources here. Through this program you have the option of participating in two types of activities. *Stream Watch* is best suited to volunteers interested in long-term involvement, who are able to work independently and walk a 1-2 mile section of stream on a periodic basis. *Valley Creek Conservation Corps* is best suited to volunteers interested in one-day stream conservation projects and stream work days hosted by the NPS and/or VFTU.

Stream Watch

Help us be proactive and respond to problems quickly! Adopt a 'stream beat' somewhere in the watershed—perhaps a section of stream you visit already— and walk it at least four times per year. Look for problems such as erosion, spills, and fish kills, collect baseline data such as photographs, and report what you see to people who can help. Receive training on what to look for, stream monitoring, and incident reporting.

Valley Creek Conservation Corps

Support the creek by conducting stream conservation projects in the watershed. Activities include repair of fenced stream buffer areas, trash pick-up, streambank stabilization, and tree planting, depending on needs identified by the park and VFTU. Receive email notification of activities and projects as they arise. Great for individuals or groups!



NPS Photo

Become a Keeper of the Stream

Keeper of the Stream is active all year long and provides diverse opportunities for volunteers both inside and outside the park. Join *Stream Watch* and make your walk along the stream count by learning to see things differently. Join the *Valley Creek Conservation Corps* and work outdoors to protect riparian buffers, stabilize stream banks, and improve fish habitat. All ages are welcome.



T-shirts provided for *Stream Watch* volunteers to wear while walking your 'stream beat'.

To become a Keeper of the Stream, visit the Valley Forge NHP volunteer website: <http://www.nps.gov/vafo/supportyourpark/volunteeropportunities.htm> and indicate which activity you are interested in on your volunteer application.

To keep up to date on watershed news and issues or become a member of the Valley Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited, visit: <http://www.valleyforgetu.org/>

To learn more about the Valley Creek Watershed please visit www.savevalleycreek.org