

Rachel Carson EcoVillage

at Providence Heights



Our vision is a world where people value connections with each other and nature, and human life contributes to the life of the planet.

Want to know about what RCE members are up to? [Check out our blog](#) - there are new posts several times a month!

February News



It's happening! The first of our onsite work began in January as the Fourth River crew got underway clearing out trees that were either unhealthy or non-native species to make room for houses. But don't worry – lots of trees – healthy and old - aren't going anywhere. And we're thinking of the future as well, by planting young trees that will grow with our community.



Along with our usual three Zoom Introductory sessions in January, Stefani gave a live presentation for members of the La Roche Lifelong Learning community. Over 50 people attended – including some administrators from La Roche. Also in the audience were Founders Jill and Judy T. and one of our newest explorers, Bev.

- By Founding member Judy Trupin

Congratulations to our newest Sociocracy class:

Bev and Jerry
Betsy

Walela
Malcolm
Kenji
Rene and Bob
Penny

Welcome new Explorers - Rene and Bob!



Rene and Bob retired from being physicians in 2016, and say they've "been on the move" ever since. Really moving lately – as they've been living out of a VW pop-top in New Zealand for the past 3 years. Guess they don't have to learn about downsizing when they move to Pittsburgh in March, where one of their two adult children lives. Instead, they may be the only RCE folks to truly be upsizing!

Among their varied interests are voluntary simplicity, sustainable living, growing their own food and listening to and performing folk music. You can find their band, Wandering Thyme on Bandcamp. [Take a listen here!](#) What are Rene and Bob looking forward to? Having grown up in the upper Midwest, they said, "We look forward to returning to the deciduous forests of our youths to rediscover the native plants of PA. We are looking forward to a community of people with similar philosophy and diverse interests."

Founders' Corner

Founding member Doug Cooper will be having a show of recent paintings, many of them focused on Forbes Field (former home of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team) and the life of the neighborhood around it. Doug used to live on South Bouquet Street directly across from the players' entrance. The show, entitled "Forbes Field and Other Remembered Places", runs from February 15 - March 29 at Concept Gallery. The address is 1031 S. Braddock Ave in the Regent Square neighborhood. The opening reception is Saturday, February 15, 1- 4pm. If you're in town – plan to stop by!



Also, Founders Kelly and Melvin and their beloved beast found themselves at Pins Mechanical Co. in Columbus. Why? I guess you'll need to ask them!



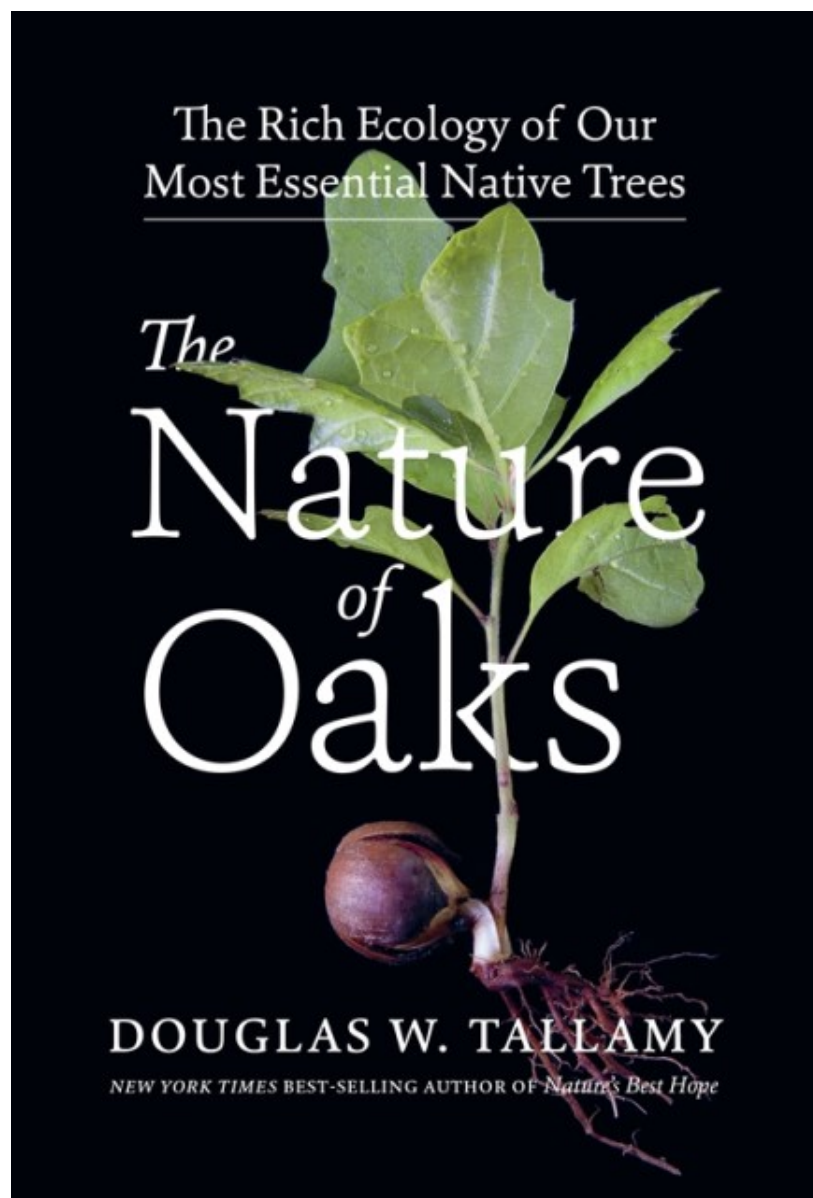
Pittsburgh ...You might be inclined to be surprised that...



Pittsburgh once had an incline that went from the Strip District food markets, over the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, and all the way up to the Hill District. It could carry vehicles. There were many residents of the hill who ran food cart businesses around the Hill, buying their produce in the strip and then selling it throughout their neighborhood.

- By Founding member Doug Cooper

Thinking and Learning About How We Can Contribute to Biodiversity



Whether the winter season has you busy keeping warm and shoveling snow, reflecting and regenerating, or thinking ahead to RCE completion, here are some great opportunities to consider how what we do in our individual yards and working together at Providence Heights can have a positive influence on our broader ecological community:

“Where the Wild Things Were: Addressing the Disappearance of Wild Nature” will be presented by the Post Carbon Institute/Resilience+ on February 13, 11 AM US Pacific (2 PM Eastern), with Douglas Tallamy as one of two speakers. The event is free, donation optional. Registrants receive a discount code for purchase of Tallamy’s books and a chance to win five of his books when logging on to the presentation.

<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2025-01-09/live-event-where-the-wild-things-were-addressing-the-disappearance-of-wild-nature/>

Doug Tallamy is an entomologist, ecologist, and University of Delaware professor, who has written several books about how home gardens and landscapes can enhance ecosystems by providing habitats for native plants and animals. His latest two books are *Nature’s Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard* and *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of our Most Essential Native Trees*. If you can’t attend the event above, you might want to check out his books, or find versions of his “Nature’s Best Hope” presentations and interviews on YouTube!

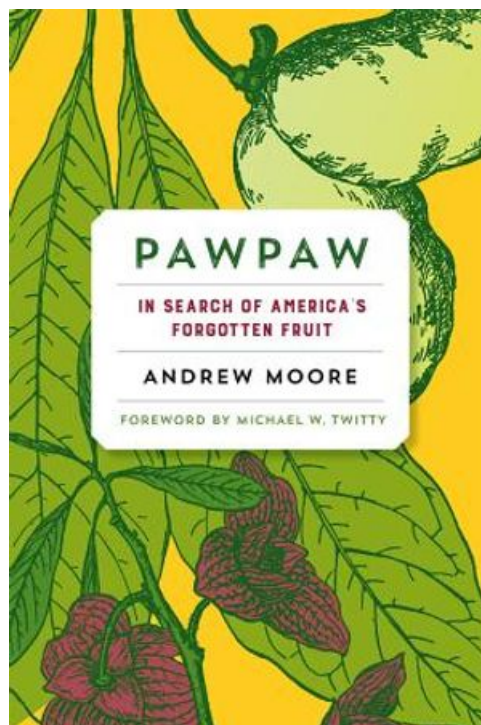
Penn State Extension has been offering a number of webinars in a “Know Your Natives” series, one of which might be especially pertinent to our

location where deer have had a definite presence. **“Know Your Natives: Deer Tolerance”** can be viewed on demand as a pre-recorded webinar, for a nominal fee, until April 22, 2025—a chance to get us thinking about deer resistant plants and co-existing with those four-leggeds. <https://web.cvent.com/event/0e3c2119-8632-49ab-82e3-300b5daa57b8/summary> Additional educational offerings pertaining to native plants and a wealth of other topics related to gardening and forest ecology can be searched via the Extension website.

Among various presentations, adult classes, and events, **Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens** in Pittsburgh will begin a series of virtual **“Nature Talks”** this month, with topics that include “Nature’s Pharmacy,” “Gardening in a Changing Climate,” and “Deer: Our Wild Neighbors.” Costs differ for members and non-members, with a special rate for viewing all three of these. <https://my.conservatory.org/events?k=conferences&view=list&enddate=2025-06-30>

- By Founding member Becky Lubold

Need a good read for a snowy day?



In a recent mailing from Tree Pittsburgh, an organization whose stated mission is “enhancing community vitality by restoring and protecting the urban forest through tree planting and care, education, advocacy, and land conservation”, they had two books to suggest – one for children and one for adults.

Full disclosure: I haven’t read either, but was intrigued by the title of the one for adults: PawPaw - In search of America’s Forgotten Fruit. The book, by Pittsburgh author Andrew Moore delves into the history of this fruit, which evidently once grew in Pittsburgh, and there are still some places around Frick Park where it can be found. My only association with the pawpaw was the song “Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch.”

As a child, when we sang it, I pictured the pawpaw as some kind of vegetable, since it grew in a patch. Little did I know that it is was a fruit. I also had no idea what it tasted like, nor where it might be found. Evidently it tastes like a cross between a banana and a mango. I’ve got the book on reserve at the Pittsburgh Library – and looking forward to the read!

- By Founding member Judy Trupin

Rachel Carson Homestead – can you lend a hand?



The Rachel Carson Homestead is where Rachel Carson grew up and lived until she was 22. Located in Springdale, PA, it's now a National Historic site and is maintained by the Rachel Carson Homestead Association. The Homestead's website says it's where Rachel's "sense of wonder was nurtured, and where the seeds of her environmental ethic were planted". If you've never toured the homestead, it's definitely worth getting a tour and visiting their book store. I find *The Sense of Wonder* book is a nice birthday or baby gift.

Now, though, the RC Homestead needs help. They need individuals who are willing to be docents and Board members. They particularly need people with grant writing skills and legal skills. If you have any interest in helping as a Board member or docent, please contact Judy Robertson.

judy_robertson@verizon.net

- By Founding member Judy Robertson

Governance Matters: Rounds & R,E,D

The three letters signifying Report, Explore and Decide are common entries in the final column for all our agendas, but we don't always use them as well as we might. Complex or ill-defined reports can stall out with discussions that span several meetings, especially those about surveys or new procedures. At times, a clear understanding of what the group is supposed to do with the information gets lost. Efforts to close out the discussion with a proposal for consent, especially when objections are ignored, may leave some members feeling unheard.

Sociocracy offers remedies for all of these issues through different types of rounds. A *clarifying round* can help define the most useful questions to answer in a report, resolve confusion about wording or explore an alternative, and construct proposals after the context and relevance of any objections are fully understood. A *quick reaction round* may speed up an easy decision or enable the group to stop unproductive discussions. Finally, a *process round* can sort out a better strategy for making progress. Helping each other find good answers for the community is what we do best. For more details, check the Sociocracy for All link: [On rounds in sociocracy - Sociocracy For All](#)

- By Founding member David Clapp

We Jammed and Blogged and you'll see

some soon!



11 Founders and Explorers met and created some new blogs for this year. Aside from whipping up some new blogs, we also enjoyed some quality Zoom time. Some of us finished, some just got started, but we're planning another Jam in April. Stay tuned – and you can see the first of our blogs by Mel and Stu on the website now.

- By Founding member Judy Trupin

Spread the word about RCE!

You don't have to live locally to help spread the word with business cards and postable flyers. MOPG would be over the moon if you would download and print cards and flyers and spread them around your community. Both reside on our google drive. The card is [here](#) and the flyer is [here](#). Flyer is set up to print two per page. You can also pick up some business cards from Judy T. if you are local. Get in touch! trupinjet@gmail.com

February Events

RCE Introductory Meetings (Virtual)
Tuesday, Feb. 4th & 18th from 5:30 - 7pm ET
and
Saturday, Feb. 8th from 12:30-2 pm ET

We welcome anyone who's interested in learning about the Rachel Carson EcoVillage to join our *online* introductory session. We will have a short illustrated talk about the ecovillage and discussion. We look forward to meeting you! Email RCEIntro@gmail.com OR text 412-573-1927 to register for your zoom link.

Newsletter staff

Many, many thanks to this month's contributors! Your editor humbly apologizes in advance for all typos and assorted goofs.

Coordinating Editor: Judy Trupin

Calendar Editor: Kelly Leonard

Editorial Assistants: Larry & Carol Sullivan

Contributing writers this month: David Clapp, Doug Cooper, Judy Robertson,

Becky Lubold, Judy Trupin
Information manager/Newsletter layout: Grace Astraea

Contact us at:
rachelcarsonecovillage@gmail.com
Our website: rachelcarsonecovillage.org
or call 412-441-2948
From all of us at Rachel Carson EcoVillage, with love.
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