

July 16, 2012



PARK PICKS
by

FRIENDS OF THE ALLENTOWN PARKS



Join Friends today! Become a member and help make Allentown's great park system even better.

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SAVE THE DATE
National Public Lands Day
September 29, 2012

Buffer Zones

To Mow or Not to Mow

Walk along many of the creeks in our parks and you will encounter "No Mow" or "Grow Zone" areas. These are buffer regions to help stabilize creek banks and more. Conventional wisdom is to leave an unmowed buffer of native vegetation at least two (2) stream widths on either side of the stream channel. Why?



Promote bank stability: Deep rooted native plants hold soil in place and keep banks stable. Turf grass has roots only an inch or two deep—not very effective in preventing erosion!

Flood flow reduction: Fully grown vegetation slows the velocity of overland flows by providing enough resistance to allow some of

the water to infiltrate the soil. This helps to recharge groundwater and reduces flood damage downstream.

Water quality: Natural vegetation removes pollutants and fine sediment from the waterway, leaving water cleaner and clearer.

Reduction of mosquito habitat: Turf grass does not absorb water as well as full-height vegetation; consequently, ponding occurs, which makes an ideal habitat for mosquito breeding. Higher vegetation may absorb more water and decrease the opportunity for mosquitoes to breed.

Wildlife habitat:

Stream banks in a natural state provide a habitat for a diversity of reptiles, amphibians, birds, and small animals. Fish and aquatic insects are also protected by the purifying function of a buffer.



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Friends of the Allentown Parks

2700 Parkway Blvd.

Allentown, PA 18104

Phone: 610-432-7275

info@allentownparks.org

www.allentownparks.org



The movie is free and open to the public. Bring blankets, lawn chairs and plenty of water. (Trash cans will be provided.)

Upcoming Event

Movie in the Park

Date: July 20

Time: dusk

Location: Dadonna Terrace

Movie: The Muppets

Sit in this wonderful outdoor amphitheater and prepare to enjoy an evening of entertainment, fresh air and lots of laughter.



What to Plant?

Often, when left to grow on its own, a streamside buffer will contain mostly weeds and other undesirable plants. One way to make sure this doesn't happen is to plant native plants.



Friends of the Allentown Parks

created a native plant garden at Cedar Creek Parkway (see 7.2.12 **Park Picks** for vegetation details). Stop by our garden (two beds) situated adjacent to the "Grow Zone" area west of the Allentown Rose Garden. We provide just one instance of the plants which complement the buffer zone, and, are plants which homeowners can use in their own gardens.



Common Concern about Streamside Buffers—Ticks

Ticks are an unpleasant and potentially dangerous reality in this area of Pennsylvania. Deer ticks carry Lyme disease and are often found in areas of high grass and shrubs. To mitigate this concern, the Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation has mowed paths to gain access to streams without walking through high grass.

Learn to recognize deer ticks and check yourself and your pet thoroughly if you have been walking through areas with tall grasses or shrubs.

For additional information on ticks: www.tickinfo.com or Lyme disease: www.lymediseaseassociation.org.