



COBBS CREEK OUTDOORS & MORE

Community Spotlight: Elaine Wells with Tiny Trekkers



Elaine Wells, executive director of the youth nature and literacy program "Tiny Trekkers PHL" describes the program as "creating a pipeline of green warriors." Designed for kids ages 2 through 9 and their families, Tiny Trekkers curates free experiences in nature, exposing participants to historically inaccessible activities such as hiking, kayaking, birdwatching, fishing, horseback riding and more. The experience leads into further programming opportunities, supporting youth up to age 17 in deepening their connection with neighborhood green spaces.

Wells grew up three blocks from Cobbs Creek Park at Whitby, yet it wasn't until well into adulthood that she learned there were trails and flowing creeks in the park. She describes her first exposure during a meetup with a friend from another trekking group: "She showed me stone steps that led down to a trail that we followed around to the bank of the creek. We couldn't hear any traffic or see any houses from where we were as if we were transported to a whole different place! And as we stood there taking in the silence, we suddenly saw two great blue herons lift off from the water and fly away." That moment of beauty stayed with her, and strengthened her resolve to create the Tiny Trekkers program.

Wells began to learn about other beautiful green spaces, most of which she discovered were free to visit, had free programming, and were located right in the middle of Black neighborhoods; yet visitors to these spaces did not reflect the demographics of their surrounding communities.

With Tiny Trekkers and other nature programming, Wells hopes to disrupt barriers to access by providing a safe and encouraging space for youth from underrepresented communities to explore nature on their own terms, introducing them to resources they can return to again and again.

"I want the kids to be wild and free and exploring," Wells explains, describing how she guides parents away from telling their children "not to do" things, and instead encourages kids' curiosity. Together, they learn about the creatures who call the park home and practice becoming good stewards of the land. Fostering this sense of wonder, relationship, and responsibility to the natural world is central to Tiny Trekker's approach. "Kids want to take care of the space that they have discovered they love to be in."

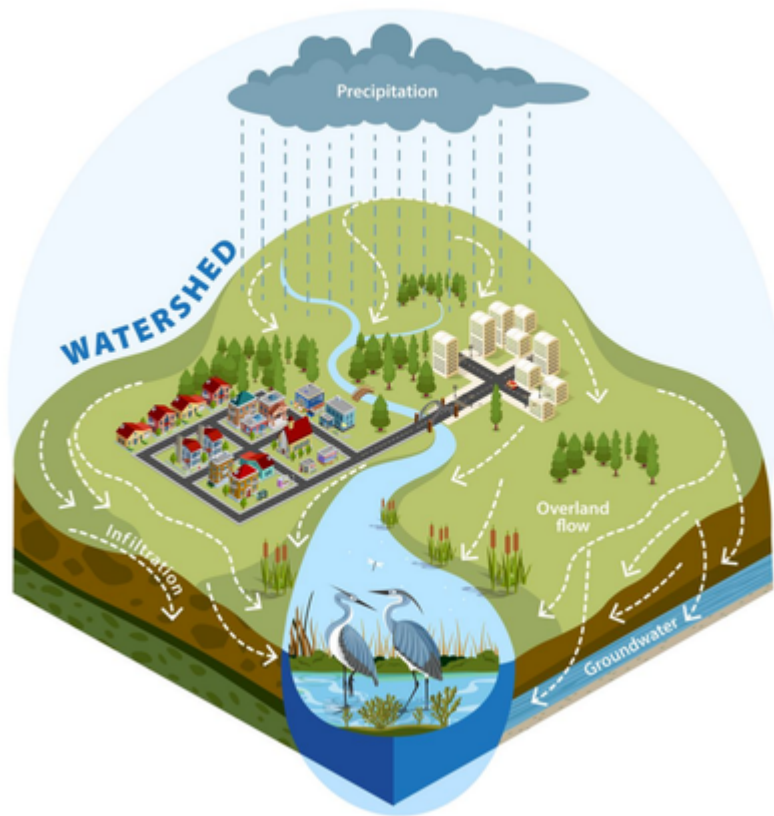
A longtime quality education advocate and grandparent of a dozen nature-lovers, Wells guides this project through an unabiding passion for her community. Her love for this work is reflected back to her by the neighborhood children who excitedly greet her as "the Tiny Trekker lady," and the parents who tell stories of adventures Tiny Trekkers inspired. Wells is doing the quiet, necessary work of pulling away barriers for kids like her grandchildren to enjoy the natural world around them, lighting pathways into a future where they can continue experiencing connection and wonder in outdoor spaces.

Families interested in learning more can reach out to Elaine Wells at globalthinkinginitiatives@gmail.com

Understanding Watersheds

What exactly is a watershed?

An area of land where all the water drains into the same body of water or outlet. The Cobbs Creek watershed makes up every part of the land—homes, streets, and green spaces—that flows into Cobbs Creek.



What are some reasons communities care about the health of a watershed?

- Cleaner spaces for people to enjoy nature
- Reducing expensive water treatment costs and ensuring better water quality
- Helping manage flood risks
- Protecting urban ecosystems and the animals within them

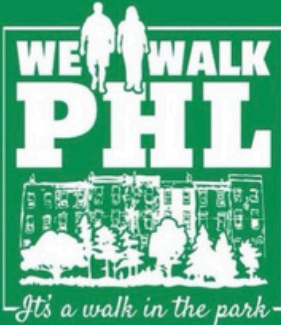
How do our day-to-day actions impact the watershed?

Our actions directly impact the health of the watershed and the water quality of the receiving body of water. When rain or melting snow creates runoff, it travels across the land, picking up pollutants, dirt, trash, and chemicals before eventually draining into waterways.

Activities such as picking up litter or using non toxic chemicals can help keep the watershed healthy. Everyone has a role in helping their community and watershed thrive.

UPCOMING EVENTS





**Join us for a
Virtual
Info Session!**

**Wednesday, March 4
at 5:30 PM**



Learn more & register: qrco.de/wewalk-info





the Little Nature Playgrounds project

Community Dinner & Design

March 10th | 4pm - 6:30 pm
Cobbs Creek Library

ADA accessible

**Collaborative
Drawing!**

**Lego design
station!**

**Face paint
station!**



Join us for an evening of crafts, play, and creativity as we celebrate Cobbs Creek Park with upcoming child- centered installations with a chance to share your ideas!

Register for updates:



Survey:



**Questions? Email:
Trails@cleanair.org**

www.cleanair.org/little-nature-playgrounds/



Keep updated on Cobbs Creek events by following the Cobbs Creek Watershed Coalition on Facebook and Instagram



COBBS CREEK OUTDOORS & MORE

I SPY : Winter animals found in Cobbs Creek Park



☐ Cardinal

☐ Fox

☐ Robin

☐ Beaver

☐ Raccoon

☐ Rabbit