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Environmental Education Watershed Stewardship Conservation Programs

Trees – Good for you, good for your community, good for the environment!

(Excerpts from materials provided by the Stroud Water Research Center, www.stroudcenter.org and the Montgomery County Natural Areas Inventory)

Presented for your use by:
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 Executive Director

For thousands of years, thick forests were the dominant landscape across Pennsylvania and most of eastern United States. The huge trees and dense underbrush must have been an awesome sight to early European explorers whose homeland had long been deforested. William Penn's new home provided lush forests that lined the banks of the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. He certainly understood the value of the fish that filled local waters, the wild game that flourished in the region and the timber that would be used to construct a new nation. But he may not have fully understood the invisible but more important value of Penn's Woods as the provider of critical "ecosystem services."

Much of the extensive forest that cloaked the Pennsylvania countryside in colonial times is long gone and some current communities are nearly devoid of even street trees. The trees along the streams and rivers disappeared as industrial developments took their place. As the trees were removed, water quality in creeks, streams and rivers, and the habitats that surrounded them suffered greatly. It was not until the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972 that industrial pollutants began to be cleaned up. The once