Environmental Issue: Urban parks are under siege! Horses, mountain bikes, hikers and ATV (all terrain vehicles which are illegal) all use the Wissahickon Park adjacent to Philadelphia University’s campus in ever increasing numbers. Massive storm water run-off from parking lots and streets also destroy park trails and vegetation. Invasive plants such as Japanese Knotweed and Oriental Bittersweet are out competing our native plants and invasive animals such as deer are eating most of the spring wildflowers and under story trees. The Natural Lands Restoration and Environmental Education Project of the Fairmount Park Commission is trying to restore the Wissahickon by repairing trails, controlling invasive plants and animals and working with park users to take care of the park when they come. To care for this 1,500 acre park there is much to be done!

Chapters in Textbook: Ch 4 Biological Communities (connections between plants and animals)
Ch 5 Biomes (restoration)
Ch 13 Biodiversity: This is on reserve in Gutman Library under Dr. Bockarie’s name
Ch 14 Agricultural Methods and Pest Management
Ch 20 Water Pollution

Internet Sources: Invasive Alien Plant Species of Virginia: http://www.vnps.org/invasive/FSPOLYG.html
The Amazing Story of Kudzu: http://www.cptr.ua.edu/kudzu.htm
Fairmount Park History: http://www.phila.gov/phils/Docs/Inventor/textonly/agencies/A149.htm
Golden Gate National Park: http://www.nps.gov/goga/ (great volunteer restoration program)
Friends of the Wissahickon: http://www.fow.org/

Title: Restoration of the Wissahickon Park

Dates: One group of 25 students on Fridays from 2-5 pm starting March 16th. No transportation needed.

Site Supervisor: David Bower, Volunteer Coordinator
Fairmount Park Commission
NLREEP
Memorial Hall, PO Box 21601
Philadelphia, PA 19131
215-991-3272

On-Campus Coordinator: Dr. Bockarie
Office: Search Hall 312
Mailbox: Search Hall 310
Email: BockarieA@philau.edu
Office hours: MWF 9-10 am
215-951-2877

Description: Students will use the library databases and internet resources to research: 1) trail restoration techniques (water bars, switchbacks), 2) impact on parks or natural areas in the NE temperate deciduous forest of horses, mountain bikes, ATV’s and hikers, 3) how to control grape vine, Japanese Knotweed and Oriental bittersweet and 4) the quality of the water in Philadelphia streams and what we can do about it. The site supervisor may choose additional topics for the research portion of this project. Copies of all research materials will be made and given to the site supervisor. Students will walk to the Wissahickon Park weekly and assist in 1) trail repairs and reconstruction, 2) native tree planting, 3) graffiti removal, 4) invasive vine control, 5) clean up after Hurricane Floyd and other park tasks as outlined by the supervisor. Students may also assist other school groups in park clean up, educational or trail restoration activities depending on arrangements made by the site supervisor. Students should wear old clothes and dress for the weather. Insect repellent and sunscreen may be needed. We recommend you tell the site coordinator if you are allergic to insects, bees, poison ivy or other plants on the first day.

Directions: The site supervisor will meet students promptly at 2 pm in the parking lot behind Hayward Hall near the middle doors. The site supervisor and/or his field assistant will walk with students to the restoration site in the park. After the first day students will be expected to walk as a group on their own to the site. (It is a 10-minute walk across the Henry Ave bridge).