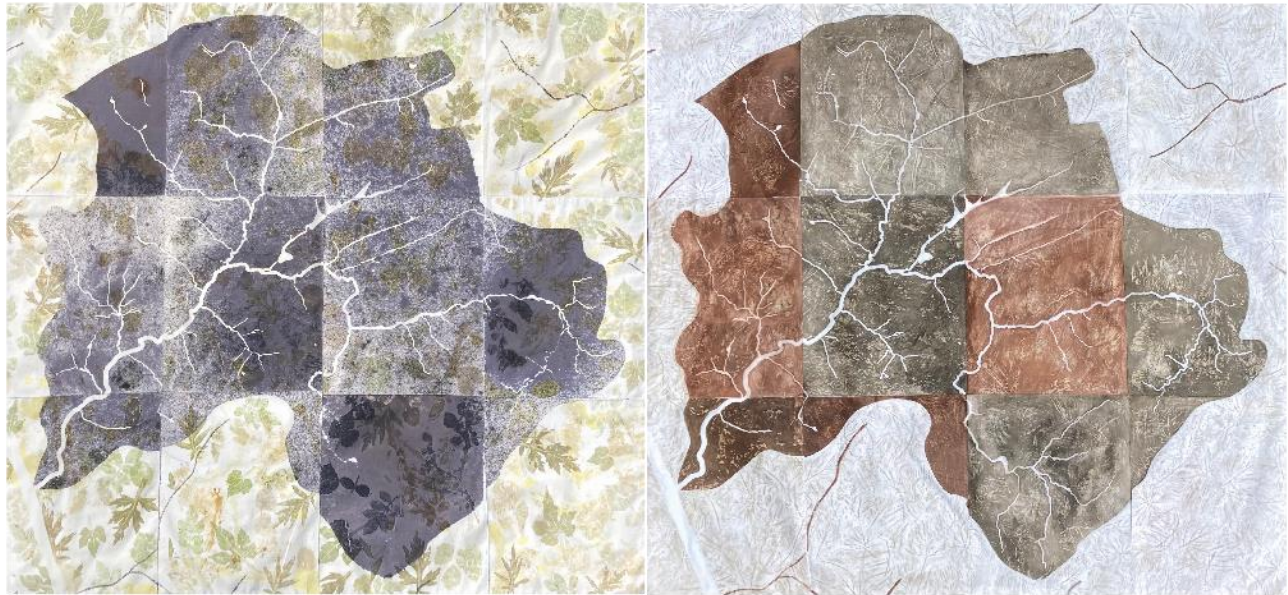


alexauken creek watershed: a community art & education project



made possible with support from lower delaware wild & scenic river

Project/Program Summary:

Lauren Rosenthal McManus led a diverse group of 7th-12th grade students from the South Hunterdon School District through the process of making two distinct watershed maps of the Alexauken Creek utilizing both invasive plant matter and rock pigments on cotton fabric. Anneli Martin, owner of New Hope Atelier, sewed individual fabric panels together to complete the maps, which were then displayed publicly in several local Lambertville businesses. The collaborative nature of the project reflects our collective responsibility in preserving the unique local ecology of the watershed.

Project/Program Goals Achieved:

The goals of the Alexauken Creek Community Education & Public Art Project were to:

- **Practice Invasive Species Management** – community volunteers, including Jim Amon and several members of the Lambertville Environmental Commission, aided artist Lauren Rosenthal McManus in collecting and dethorning wineberry, Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, garlic mustard, and autumn olive from Pryde’s Point on the Alexauken Creek (work completed May 10).
- **Engage Students in the Arts and Sciences Related to River Resources** – Lauren Rosenthal McManus led twenty-five 7th-12th grade students from the South Hunterdon School district through the process of making two distinct watershed maps of the Alexauken Creek utilizing both invasive plant matter and rock pigments. The participants represented a diverse community and included ESL students, whose teacher was present to translate important information during the workshop. McManus also created this [short resource guide](#) for program participants, which describes the art-making processes utilized in the workshop, some of the philosophy and ecology behind the work, and provided information about Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic. Guy Ambrosino took photographs during the latter half of the workshop, which are available to view via a dropbox link [here](#) (workshop took place at South Hunterdon Regional High School on May 11).

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- **Elevate community awareness about the river and its resources and importance** – the maps created during the workshop were displayed in several local businesses throughout Lambertville during the months of September and August. While we had hoped to have a kick-off event at [Kate & Guy's](#) kitchen/studio, we decided to proceed with caution due to the threat of the Covid Delta variant. Instead, we piggy-backed on Lambertville's Porch Fest, an outdoor event that brings local residents outside to listen to music presented on neighborhood porches. We imagined that we'd capture more eyes in a safer way by making a debut presentation of the work in this context. Next, we hung the work in the window of [Sojourner](#), a high-traffic location on Bridge Street, and at [Union Coffee](#), the busiest new coffee shop in Lambertville's Central Business District. We also displayed it at [Owowcow](#), Lambertville's award-winning ice cream shop, which is located in the Alexauken Creek watershed and lost everything due to it's floodwaters during the recent Ida storm event. Being able to hang a map of the watershed in this particular location after it was rebuilt is especially poignant, a celebration of our community's resilience and a reminder of both the joys and devastations that the creek can manifest for us.





- **Result in educated participants who will be better stewards of the local environment** – students and teachers were asked to complete a brief survey after the program.

Questions asked of the students:

- What is one thing you learned from the workshop?
- What did you enjoy most about the workshop?
- What did you enjoy least?
- If this workshop was offered again, would you take it?

Student responses were overwhelmingly positive. Some of the answers included:

- I learned about the water and about some of the plants that were invasive in our area, and it was really cool to feel in touch with nature in a way while making art.
- I learned how to make art from natural materials around me. I also learned about my local creek.
- I enjoyed seeing how amazing nature is.
- I really liked the experimentation and the meaning behind it was very cool.

Almost all of the students would take the workshop again and all enjoyed the program.

Questions asked of the teachers:

- On a scale of 1-3, how did this workshop fit into your curriculum?
- What could be modified about the workshop to make it fit better with your curriculum?
- On a scale of 1-3, how likely are you to recommend this workshop to a colleague?

Overwhelmingly, teachers would have liked to have more prep time before the workshop to integrate similar topics and projects into their classrooms so that background knowledge would have informed the process. Because we were working within the context of the school year and juggling various schedules, there was a real crunch to make the workshop happen only 2 weeks after receiving notification that we'd received the grant. The tight turnaround was challenging and didn't allow for an ideal amount of pre-workshop preparation. However, all of the teachers said they would likely recommend this workshop to colleagues, including environmental science teachers.

In addition to addressing LDWS management goals and all criteria of the LDWS Mini-Grant application, this project has also supported a Chamber priority to connect businesses and visitors to Lambertville's environmental context, to strengthen the City's social and economic fabric, and to support local arts and artists.

Overall, the project has been a success and we've checked off the goals we set out to accomplish toward fulfilling the grant. In addition, Lauren created giclée prints of the work for a local arts-based Hurricane Ida relief fundraising effort. A physical display of the artworks was hosted by Jess's Juice Bar, on Church Street in Lambertville. We will continue sharing the work with the community and broadening the audience for its message through the end of the year.