



SCHUYLKILL RIVER NATIONAL & STATE HERITAGE AREA

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Photo caption: See below

Schuylkill River Heritage Area Distributes Almost \$400,000 in Grants to Improve the Watershed

POTTSTOWN — The Schuylkill River Heritage Area distributed nearly \$400,000 in grants Wednesday to seven projects that will improve water quality in the Schuylkill River and its tributaries.

The Schuylkill River Restoration Fund grants were funded by Exelon Nuclear's Limerick Generating Station, the Philadelphia Water Department and Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, and administered by the Schuylkill River Heritage Area (SRHA). The grant announcement took place at the Albert M. Greenfield School in Philadelphia, a 2010 Restoration Fund recipient for a recently completed stormwater improvement playground project.

Speakers included State Sen. Larry Farnese; State Rep. Kenyatta J. Johnson; Executive Director of the Delaware River Basin Commission Carol R. Collier; General Manager of Public Affairs and Environmental Education for the Philadelphia Water Department Joanne Dahme; Marquitta Kennedy, representative for Sen. Vincent Hughes; Joseph Szafran, Site Communications Mgr of Limerick Generating Station; and Kurt Zwikl Executive Director, Schuylkill River Heritage Area.

This is the sixth year the grant program has been available. This year, money was distributed to seven agencies for projects that will mitigate abandoned mine drainage (AMD), stormwater runoff, and agricultural pollution, and assist with protected land easements (Please see 2011 Grant Awards list for recipients and project descriptions).

All the projects will benefit the entire watershed because they reduce the amount of pollution that enters creeks, and ultimately, the river, which is a source of drinking water for over one million people.

“This program has allowed us to fund a number of significant projects over the past six years that have improved the health of the Schuylkill River Watershed,” said Zwikl. “It continues to succeed because of the unique partnerships that form a foundation for conservation and restoration of the watershed.”

Exelon Nuclear contributed a total of \$215,479.92 to this year’s fund, while the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) donated \$100,000. Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, a first-time contributor, allotted \$10,000 specifically for land protection transactions.

The newly introduced Land Protection Transaction Grants program within the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund provides for matching grants of up to \$4,000 per project. It will pay for costs associated with property purchases and conservation easements, in order to facilitate preservation of high priority lands for water quality and habitat protection. To date, one \$4,000 grant has been awarded and the application period for the Land Protection Transaction Grants has been extended to October 31, 2011.

Exelon has provided over \$1 million to the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund since it was founded in 2005. The annual fund began as part of a demonstration project for what is known as the water supply program at Exelon Nuclear’s Limerick Generating Station. That program is under the purview of the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC).

For the past several years, the Schuylkill Action Network (SAN) has been working to grow the program by seeking additional funders. Since then, both the Philadelphia Water Dept. and the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary have begun contributing to the fund, so that more projects can be undertaken. SAN continues to seek additional contributors in an effort to further expand the fund.

“They say it takes a village to raise a child, but it takes a whole watershed of citizenry to really protect a watershed as beautiful as the Schuylkill,” Collier said.

Photo caption: Exelon Nuclear’s Joseph Szafran addresses a crowd at the Albert M. Greefield School in Philadelphia. Behind him are (l. to r.) Executive Director of the Delaware River Basin Commission Carol R. Collier; State Rep. Kenyatta Johnson; State Sen. Larry Farnese; Marquitta Kennedy, representative for Sen. Vincent Hughes; General Manager of Public Affairs and Environmental Education for the Philadelphia Water Department Joanne Dahme; and Executive Director, Schuylkill River Heritage Area Kurt Zwikl.

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The Schuylkill River Heritage Area, managed by the non-profit Schuylkill River Greenway Association, uses conservation, education, recreation, historic preservation and tourism as tools for community revitalization and economic development.

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