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SRHA Awarded \$600,000 Grant for Schuylkill River Trail

The 24-month grant is the largest ever received by the Schuylkill River Heritage Area

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area received a two-year, \$660,000 grant in February from the Philadelphia-based William Penn Foundation. It is the largest grant ever awarded throughout the SRHA's history.

The money will go toward improvements to the Schuylkill River Trail, funding the creation of a system that will unify the trail's many different segments.

The trail has been under construction for years, but its various parts are owned and maintained by different entities.

Now, a newly formed trail council and a new trail steward will work together to establish standardized signs, access points, maps and brochures for the entire trail.

"For trail users, it will become recognized as a 128-mile trail system instead of many different segments," explained Kurt Zwinkl, Executive Director of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. "We can now start to talk about a trail system that will be a resource not only for residents, but a draw for tourists. In time, it will become a regional destination."

How will the money be spent?

Money from the grant is being used to fund Trail Steward Kara Wilson, who is responsible

for much of the work involved in unifying the trail. Her duties include improving signage and marketing for the trail. She will also support a regional trail management study being funded by the grant.

That study will recommend maintenance standards and policies and identify long-term funding sources and strategies.

"For trail users, it will become recognized as a 128-mile trail system instead of many different segments," explained Kurt Zwinkl, Executive Director of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area.

The grant will also pay for signs and marketing materials, and will fund trail improvements at three targeted areas, which will serve as demonstration areas for the remainder of the trail. Those areas

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Celebrating the Past

New Gateway Center Installed at Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area installed its seventh Gateway Center at the Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site in April. Located in the visitors' center, the new Gateway Center is similar to others established by the SRHA.

It includes two large illustrative wall maps, a podium containing a three-minute video highlighting sites and attractions, and a nearby rack with tourism brochures.

"It serves as an introduction to the Schuylkill River Heritage Area," said SRHA Executive Director Kurt Zwikl. "It informs people of who we are and what we're all about. At the same time, it provides specific information about Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site."

The center includes a map illustrating the entire Heritage Area, and identifying trails and other nearby historic attractions.

A second map represents a new Gateway Center concept. It shows an area surrounding Hopewell Furnace, pinpointing 28 furnaces, forges and mines that once dotted the region.

The new Gateway Center is the seventh such information booth opened by the SRHA. The first was installed in 2003 in Mahanoy City in Schuylkill County. Later, others were added to the Valley Forge National Park Visitors Center; the restored Tamaqua Train Station, in Schuylkill County; the Reading Area Community College library; Cabela's retail store, in Hamburg; and the Fairmount Park Water Works, in Philadelphia.

Over the next several years, a network of about 25 Gateway Centers will be installed at selected, well-visited tourist sites throughout the Heritage Area.

Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site

What is it? : The region surrounding the Schuylkill River was once at the center of early American iron-production. Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site is a preserved 19th

Century iron plantation that allows modern visitors to step back into that era. Situated on 848 acres of mostly wooded land, the furnace was founded in 1771 by Ironmaster Mark Bird, and it operated as a furnace until 1883. It was declared a National Historic Site in 1938, and

on molding and casting, farming activities, crafts and domestic life are offered regularly. Hikers and horseback riders can also explore trails through the woodlands, most of which connect to French Creek State Park. In September, visitors can pick apples in a historic orchard



Cutting the ribbon for the dedication of the newest Schuylkill River Heritage Area gateway are: (L-R): Jeffrey Collins-Hopewell NHS; Kurt Zwikl-SRHA; Edie Shea-Hammonds, current Hopewell NHS Superintendent and Bill Sanders, former Hopewell NHS Superintendent

now features 14 restored structures. Those include the ironmaster's mansion, workers' homes, a general store and blacksmith shop, as well as a re-built blast furnace, complete with an impressive, functioning waterwheel,

What to do: Self-guided tours and special programs offer a glimpse of life in an iron making community, and a look at the fascinating process by which iron was produced. Demonstrations

featuring 30 different varieties.

Where and When to Go: The park is located on 2 Mark Bird Lane, in Elverson, off Route 345. Hopewell Furnace is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A \$4 admission fee is charged for adults aged 17 and over.

For more information about Hopewell Furnace National Historic site, visit their website at www.nps.gov/hofu or call 610-582-8773.

SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL *continued from page 1*

include Center City from Locust Street to the Montgomery County/city line, a section from the city line to Mont Clare, and a third section from Pottstown to Reading.

What is the Trail Council?

The Trail Council is responsible for providing direction on management and maintenance of the Schuylkill River Trail. It is composed of 18 representatives from the trail's various owning and managing entities. The council began meeting bi-monthly in December 2005.

A Better Known Trail

Ultimately, the trail improvements are intended to enhance knowledge of and improve access to the trail.

"Having a trail that travels through the Schuylkill River corridor as a recognized resource is a way for residents to become more connected to the river and more conscious of the natural and cultural resources of the Heritage Area," said Madeline Cantú, trails project manager for the SRHA.



Montgomery County's recently opened Pottstown to Berks County section of the Schuylkill River Trail

Scenes of the Schuylkill Art Show



Columbia Bridge No. 6 by William Ternay, 2005's *Scenes of the Schuylkill* selection

The SRHA will host the fourth annual *Scenes of the Schuylkill* Art Show, which celebrates the region through art, featuring works of art illustrating a scene from the Heritage Area.

37 jurored pieces will be on display September 8-October 27 at the new Art Gallery at the expanded Montgomery County Community College, West Campus, located at 16 High St., Pottstown. The show's reception is October 27, where the selected painting, its prints and cards, and the other fine pieces of artwork will be available for sale.

Scenes of the Schuylkill is a collaboration of principals from Montgomery County Community College Art Gallery, the Hill School Art Gallery, Gallery on High and artist Susannah Hart-Thomer. Support for *Scenes of the Schuylkill* has been provided by The George and Miriam Martin Foundation. For more information, contact Sue Fordyce, SRHA, at 484-945-0200.

SRHA Annual Meeting

Schuylkill River Heritage Area Annual Luncheon Highlighted by DRBC Guest Speaker Carol R. Collier

Did you know that the Delaware River Port Complex is the largest freshwater port in the world?

Or that the Delaware is the longest un-dammed river east of the Mississippi?

Those were just two of the many fascinating facts mentioned at the SRHA's May 2 annual meeting and luncheon by guest speaker Carol R. Collier, executive director of the Delaware River Basin Commission.

The event was highlighted by Collier's presentation on the Delaware River Watershed. The Schuylkill River is the largest tributary of the 330-mile Delaware River.

Collier spoke of the environmental and economic importance of the Delaware, which provides drinking and industrial water for nearly 15 million people, including about 7 million in the New York City area.

Each year, the SRHA luncheon includes a notable speaker who provides a novel perspective on the Heritage Area. Last year, Valley Forge National Historical Park Superintendent Michael Caldwell gave a presentation on Valley Forge. In 2004, author and river conservationist Tim Palmer served as the guest speaker.

To receive information about future events contact Cindy Kott at ckott@schuylkillriver.org or 484-945-0200.

SRHA Hosts 45 Upward Bound Students

Many inner-city Philadelphia kids drink water from the Schuylkill River, but most have never kayaked on it.

On July 19, the SRHA provided 45 high school students with the opportunity to do just that.

The students, part of a University of Pennsylvania-sponsored program called Upward Bound, visited our headquarters in Pottstown to learn about the Schuylkill River and the significance of the Heritage Area.

"It's important for us to reach out to any community along the river, and this gave us the opportunity to work with inner city students from Philadelphia, which we haven't done before," said SRHA Exec. Director Kurt Zwikl.

Divided into groups of 15, they spent the day in rotating activities that included kayaking the river with SRHA Board Member Ted Danforth, owner of Hidden River Outfitters, in Phoenixville. They also heard a presentation on the Schuylkill River by Park Ecologist Meghan Carfioli from Valley Forge National Historical Site, and learned about the Heritage Area from Zwikl and Trails Project Manager Madeline Cantú.



This marks the first time the SRHA has hosted Upward Bound, in conjunction with the program's theme this year, which centers around water.

"These students live in Philadelphia, and most of them don't realize where their drinking water comes from," said Penn's Upward Bound Program Director Judy Green.

Upward Bound is a program designed to motivate and prepare selected students to pursue a four-year college education. Penn's Upward Bound program boasts a high success rate, with 98-100% of participants going on to attend college.

Left: Upward Bound students try their hand at kayaking, and for many, their first time on a river.

Projects and Partners

- In June, the **Schuylkill River Development Corp.** in **Philadelphia**, launched Schuylkill River Tours, offering guided kayak tours and boat cruises of the Tidal Schuylkill. The Schuylkill Banks River Tours, presented by SCA Americas, features one-hour narrated tours on the RiverLoop that focus on Bartram's Garden, Fairmount Water Works and the Schuylkill River Trail. Professionally guided kayak tours are also available between Walnut Street Dock and Fairmount Water Works. For more information visit www.schuylkillbanks.org.

- **The Schuylkill Canal Association, Mont Clare–Montgomery County**, held its 24th Annual Schuylkill Canal Day on June 24. The event was expanded this year to a two-day affair that featured a number of activities, including a tour of the canal, pig roast, boat parade and vaulting. For more information visit www.schuylkillcanal.com

- **RiverPlace Development Corp., Reading–Berks County**, held its Solar Flair Solstice Celebration on June 21. During the event, over 1,000 people participated in a walk along the New Art Walk Trail from the GoggleWorks to the Reading Public Museum. For more information visit www.riverplacepa.org.

- **Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philadelphia**, recently installed a 10.2 kW Solar PV system that will save the Center about \$1,600 annually on electricity costs and reduce green house gas emissions by a total of 24,759 pounds per year. It was installed by Mesa Environmental Sciences, Inc. and funded by the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection's Energy Harvest as well as the Sustainable Development Fund. For more information visit www.schuylkillcenter.org.

- **Valley Forge National Historical Park, Montgomery & Chester County**, hosted a celebration and Trails Fair in honor of National Trails Day on June 3. More than 1,000 people attended the event, held at the Betzwood Picnic Area, which provides access to the Schuylkill River and two multi-use trails, including the Schuylkill River Trail. For more information visit www.nps.gov/vafo.

- **Fairmount Park, Philadelphia**, was designated an Important Bird Area last summer by the Pennsylvania Ornithological Technical Committee. One of the most unique things about the Fairmount Park IBA is that it lies

within the nation's fifth largest city and offers an example of the importance of urban landscapes to the birds, wildlife and people who live there. For more information visit www.fairmountpark.org or pa.audubon.org.

- Once again, **Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau, the Chester County Historic Preservation Network and Chester County Parks and Recreation** have teamed together to present Town Tours and Village Walks. This summer long program visits historic villages in Chester County where guides, some in period dress, will bring to life the people who lived in these towns and the history of one of Pennsylvania's first named counties. For more information call (610) 344-6415.

Fairs and Festivals for All Interests

With the launch of the revised SRHA website, www.schuylkillriver.org, one of the new features is the ability to search by interest or activity. The mapping feature will provide driving directions to the events listed below.

Selecting Fairs and Festivals under Activities will bring up some very interesting events for the next couple of months:

August 11-12 the Goschenhoppen Folk Festival celebrates PA German culture, folklore and food.

August 18-20 is the Philadelphia Folk Festival in **Schwenksville**, the granddaddy for good folk music.

Like old cars? On September 2 is the 41st Annual Duryea Day sponsored by the **Boyetown** Museum of Historic Vehicles. The Great **Pottsville** Cruise-In is August 12-13, hosted by Jerry's Classic Cars and Collectibles.

Food festivals also abound. September 2 marks the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival in **Hamburg**. September 8-9 is the Chile Pepper Food Festival in **Bowers**.

September 8-10 are the dates for the Scottish Irish Festival at **Green Lane** Park in Montgomery County, the 7th annual.

If you missed any of these great events, more are listed on the SRHA website.

SRHA Partners with Exelon Nuclear to Improve the Watershed

The SRHA has teamed up with Exelon Nuclear's Limerick Generating Station to improve the Schuylkill River Watershed.

Exelon established the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund with a nearly \$160,000 allocation in January, and partnered with the SRHA to oversee it.

Exelon will contribute money annually to support projects that will enhance the quality and quantity of water in the Schuylkill River and its tributaries. The SRHA will distribute the money to non-profit organizations and government agencies seeking to undertake such projects as repairing eroded stream banks or restoring polluted waterways.

This year, priority was given to projects aimed at mitigating problems with water quality and quantity resulting from acid mine drainage and agricultural run-off. What's more, 10 percent of available funds were targeted to the Perkiomen Watershed.

Projects chosen for the 2006 Exelon Schuylkill River Watershed Restoration Program Grants were:

Berks County Conservation District – Irish Creek Agricultural Improvements - \$65,000

Berks County Conservancy – Maiden Creek Agricultural and Stream Bank Restoration - \$50,931

Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy – Unami Creek Headwaters Restoration - \$20,175

The fund is part of a demonstration project for the water diversion program at Exelon Nuclear's Limerick Generating Station and is under the purview of the Delaware River Basin Commission. As part of Limerick's water diversion program, Exelon Nuclear pumps water daily to operate the plant from various water sources, in order to minimize the environmental impact. Exelon's annual contribution to the fund is based on the amount of water that is not required to be pumped from the Delaware River to support the Limerick Generating Station's cooling water needs.

SRHA Welcomes New Staff Members



L-R: Laura Catalano, Brian Hansbury, Tim Fenchel, Kara Wilson

The SRHA added three new staff members recently. Those include Trail Steward Kara Wilson, Grants Program Coordinator Tim Fenchel, and Staff Writer Laura Catalano. We were also joined this summer by Kutztown University intern Brian Hansbury.

Kara Wilson

Kara, a native of England who immigrated to the United States in August 2005, joined SRHA in April. As Trail Steward, she will be responsible for improving signage along the trail, marketing the trail as a unified system, and supporting a maintenance management study.

Kara has an MBA, as well as an MS in Land and Water Management from the Cranfield Institute. Wilson brings with her a treasure trove of experience, both in the public and private sector, on land use studies, program management and systems support.

She now lives in the Boyertown area with her daughter, Alix, 10, and her husband Ray, a US citizen, formerly of Pottstown.

Tim Fenchel

Tim joined the SRHA staff as the Grants Program Coordinator in March. He is responsible for managing all our grant programs including the DCNR Heritage Parks grants and various National Park Service grants. He

will also work with local governments, non-profits, and community groups to develop and implement heritage projects in our area.

Tim received his undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Messiah College in Harrisburg, PA. He has a broad range of experience in the non-profit sector and recently spent several years as a self employed contractor. He resides in Lederach, PA with his wife Jess, and two daughters, Hayley (3 years) and Brooke (3 months).

Laura Catalano

Laura has been working for the SRHA as a freelancer for four years, writing and sending out press releases about events and projects. She began working part-time in April to help publicize our many undertakings. Laura, who has her MA in English from West Chester University, has worked as a freelance writer for many years. She lives in North Coventry with her husband and three children.

Brian Hansbury

Brian, a Kutztown University graduate student seeking his masters of Public Administration, proved himself a valuable asset to the SRHA this summer. In addition to assisting with the labor-intensive work of the Sojourn, he helped with trail projects, and willingly lent a hand wherever it was needed—and it was always needed!

Brian, who lives in Hamburg, is also working this summer on another part-time internship studying heritage tourism in Upper Schuylkill County with Kutztown University Professor Paula Holoviak.

Surviving the Flood



Taken on June 29, this photo shows the high-water mark at the top step into the SRHA office.

When the Schuylkill River flooded on June 28, the SRHA building narrowly escaped being inundated. The river spilled into our parking lot and gushed over the roadway. It reached the top step of our building and filled a crawl space under the first floor. Just inches away from seeping into the carpet, the river crested and the floodwaters receded.

Had predictions proved true, and the river crested at 26 feet instead of 21, there would have been five feet of water in the 1st floor. To prepare for the worst, everything was moved to the second floor.

We are grateful to the members of Goodwill Fire Co., Phillies Fire Co. and the Pottstown Borough Code Enforcement Office who all sent men over to assist the staff. In particular, we thank Cpl. Charles McClincy of the Pottstown Police Department. He arrived on scene that morning, saw the river encroaching and called the local fire departments to send volunteers. All together, 15 men turned up and hand carried all of our computers, documents, filing cabinets and other equipment—much of it very heavy—to the second floor. Also on site and willingly carrying boxes were SRHA members Jack and Mary Ann Gindlesperger. Two days later, the Borough sent over two Code Enforcement Officers to help the SRHA staff move it back down again. Thank you.



Looking west on College Drive towards the Montgomery County Community College West Campus.

Eighth Annual Schuylkill River Sojourn a Success

Over 170 paddlers participated in this year's Schuylkill River Sojourn, which, by all accounts, was a great success.

Participants had fun, made friends, ate terrific food and paddled a minimum of 14 miles each day. They also learned a lot about the region, stopping at parks, cities, towns and historic sites along the way.

The event kicked off on a rather rainy Friday, June 2, with sojourners registering at Schuylkill Haven Island Park, in Schuylkill County. It ended 113-miles and seven days later, on Friday, June 9, at Historic Bartram's Garden, in West Philadelphia.

Paddlers came away with wonderful memories and a new appreciation for the river as an environmental, recreational and historic resource.

Below is a sampling of some programs and places that were new to the sojourn this year.

- Jim Dietrich Park, Muhlenberg Township: This was a new overnight stop and it featured a very entertaining performance on "Music Dance and Instruments of the Pennsylvania Germans" by Keith Brintzenhoff, from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council.



Sojourners stay for the evening at Jim Dietrich Park in Muhlenberg Township where the Muhlenberg Lions Club helped Muhlenberg Township Parks & Recreation with landing captain duties. Photo by Ed Brennan.

- Allegheny Aqueduct Park, Gibraltar: At this new overnight stop in Berks County, Sojourners learned about Historic Beidler's Mill and the elaborate waterworks built to support it.
- West Conshohocken: This new campsite made Thursday's paddle easier than it has been in past years. It was provided through the generosity of Five Tower Bridge Associates, partnering with the Borough of West Conshohocken.
- Philadelphia: Sojourners lunched at Fairmount Water Works and, afterward, toured the Interpretive Center. Then they took a three-mile paddle down the Tidal Schuylkill to their final destination, Historic Bartram's Garden.

The sojourn is made possible thanks to the generous support of many people and organizations along the river that provide food, entertainment, amenities, and funding.

Major sponsors included: the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the American Canoe Association, Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and

Rivers, PA American Water, Mainline Financial, Exelon, Simone Collins, Emotion Kayak and Kelly's Canoe and Kayak.

Trail Update

When complete, the Schuylkill River Trail will run from Philadelphia to Schuylkill County, totaling approximately 140 miles, and connecting with a network of other trails. Work is in progress on several sections of the trail. Below is an update of work recently completed or under construction.

• Oaks-to-Mont Clare

A 4.5-mile section from Oaks to Mont Clare is expected to go to construction in the fall. It will take about eight weeks to complete.

This Montgomery County project will pick up where the existing trail ends, in Oaks, as a paved, multi-use trail. It will extend about 2.5 miles, to the point where it meets Longford Road. There trail users will continue along the road for about 2 miles, up to the Route 29 Bridge, where the trail crosses into Phoenixville.

The shared-road section is a temporary measure only. Eventually, the trail will connect to the canal towpath.

• Pottstown-to-Berks County

Montgomery County recently completed a 1.5 mile paved segment that runs between Pottstown's Riverfront Park and Douglass Township, at the Berks County line.

• Pottstown RiverFront Trail Head

See article on next page.

• Douglass Township

At the Berks County line, a 1.8-mile segment of gravel trail in Douglass Township was recently constructed bringing the trail from the Berks County line to Morlatton Village, in Douglassville. There, a trail head will be constructed, providing parking for about 10 cars.



The borough of West Conshohocken was a great host to Schuylkill River Sojourners. Many thanks go to Borough Manager Michael Leonard (right of sign in white t-shirt) and Five Tower Bridge Associates who made this possible.

Continued on next page



PA Greenway Sojourn bicyclists start arriving at Pottstown Riverfront Park

• Monocacy Crossing

This spring, improvements were made at Monocacy Crossing, where the trail crosses Route 724. The trail was re-graded to avoid a steep embankment that was dangerous to cyclists approaching the roadway.

• Reading to Hamburg

An alignment study is now being done on a 20-mile section of trail that will run from Reading to Hamburg and connect with the Bartram trail in Schuylkill County. A draft of the alignment will be completed this summer.

• Schuylkill County

Construction of 8.5 miles of the John B. Bartram Trail is expected to begin in the fall, and will include a 7-mile section from Hamburg to Auburn and 1.5 miles to Landingville.

Trailhead a Volunteer Effort

The shelter pavilion at the new Schuylkill River Trail trailhead at Pottstown's Riverfront Park was built in July, thanks to an impressive volunteer effort involving several area businesses and the Pottstown Rotary Club.

That effort was spearheaded by Pottstown orthopedic surgeon and Rotary Club member Richard "Doc" Whittaker. After learning of plans by the SRHA to install the trailhead at Riverfront Park, Whittaker brought the matter before the Rotary Club, who agreed to help sponsor it.

Fellow Rotarian Al Kutz, owner of Kutz Builders Inc., managed the project. The H&K Group donated stone from their Douglassville quarry, and Hank Saylor, owner of Pottstown Roller Mills, hauled the stone at no cost.

The newly-laid footers survived the recent floodwaters that tore through the park, thanks to the quality of workmanship of the volunteers.



The Pottstown Trailhead Ribbon Cutting was performed by Bill Grun, the Greenway Sojourn's oldest participant. Joining him are the younger members on the Sojourn and Pottstown area leaders.

"This is an ideal example of private businesses partnering with a non-profit agency to benefit the entire community," observed Madeline Cantú, Trails Project Manager for the SRHA.

Whittaker also brought the staff of Pottstown Memorial Medical Center on board. They contributed funds for a whimsical fish-shaped bike rack. The Rotary Club is also seeking sponsors for benches, brick pavers, and shrubs at the site.

The bulk of the project is being funded by the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation, who awarded the SRHA a \$100,000 grant for several projects. Those projects include building the trailhead at Riverfront Park, and another at Morlatton Village, in Douglassville, as well as constructing a 1.8-mile section of trail from the Berks County line to Morlatton Village.

The Rotary Club is continuing to raise funds for trailhead amenities. Interested donors can contact Len Gieseler at (610) 780-1878.

Pennsylvania Greenway Bicycle Sojourn

The Pennsylvania Greenway Sojourn, sponsored by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, brought 260 cyclists to Pottstown on July 26.

On the fourth day of their 200-mile journey, riders traveled along a newly built section of the Schuylkill River Trail that extends from Morlatton Village to Pottstown.

When cyclists arrived at Riverfront Park, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the newly constructed trailhead pavilion. The Sojourn's oldest rider, 86-year-old Bill Grun, of Warrington, cut the ribbon.

The sojourn was led into Pottstown by "Docs on a Roll," a group of local doctors organized by orthopedic surgeon Richard Whittaker, MD, who intend to use the trail to promote physical fitness.

Speeches were given by a number of area leaders including Pottstown Mayor Sharon Valentine-Thomas, Pottstown Rotary Club President Sandy Albitz, Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation Executive Director Dave Kraybill, and Schuylkill River Heritage Area executive director Kurt Zwilk.

"Docs on a Roll" kicked off a new coalition, Town and Trail: Partnership for a Healthier Pottstown, which will develop a plan to

create increased awareness of the new trail in Pottstown.

The Pennsylvania Greenway Sojourn is a mostly off-road bicycle ride which promotes the northeast region's growing network of rail-trails – multi-use trails created from former rail corridors. Organized by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Northeast Regional Office, the 2006 Sojourn celebrates newly opened rail-trails and promotes the completion of gaps in the larger regional trail system in PA.

For more information about RTC, visit their website at www.railstotrails.org. There you will also find a daily log of this year's Greenway Sojourn.

Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area

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Schuylkill River Spawns Two New Businesses

"The attractiveness of the river will draw people back." That is what the SRHA-sponsored Outdoor Recreation Business Study stated in 2004, when it listed canoe rental services among suggested "Potential Business Startups." The Kutztown University study, which was funded in partnership with the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, determined that "there is great potential for new business development along the SRHA," and noted an "impressive" increase in kayaking.

Now, two new businesses are taking advantage of that potential.

In 2004, SRHA Board Member Ted Danforth launched a new business, Hidden River Outfitters, in Schwenksville, which features kayaking tours on the Schuylkill River.

John Pearson owner of Fitzwater Station restaurant, in Port Providence, began offering kayak and canoe rentals in spring 2005.

Pearson has helped with the Schuylkill River Sojourn's Mont Clare landing for the past seven years. He decided to begin operating a canoe and kayak rental business from

Fitzwater Station after noticing an increase in paddlers on the river.

"My restaurant is right on the canal. I had the waterfront, and the facility, so I bought a couple of crafts and it just took off," said Pearson.

Without even advertising his new business, he's largely paid off his entire investment of 12 canoes and 12 kayaks. People who rent from him paddle a five-mile loop that takes them along the Schuylkill Canal, into the river and back into the canal again.

Hidden River Outfitters specializes in creating "custom kayak experiences." In addition to holding classes and individual instruction (primarily at Marsh Creek State Park), the company also sponsors kayaking programs for corporate development, women, children, couples and the disabled.

Danforth said he formed Hidden River Outfitters "with the purpose of rekindling the natural outdoor connection and yearning for adventure in all of us." The company offers tours regularly on the Schuylkill River in Pottstown, Phoenixville, Valley Forge and Philadelphia, and

has planned overnight trips to Virginia, Maine and New Jersey. For more information visit www.hiddenriveroutfitters.com.

Newsletter Has a New Look

Our newsletter has a new design, and it's in color!

The new look was prompted by SRHA Project and Communications Manager Susan Fordyce, who organized a Newsletter Focus Group in February. The focus group agreed a new design was warranted.

Sue then applied to the Kutztown University 2006 Designathon. Her application was accepted, and students in the Communications Design department produced our exciting new look.



The Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area is dedicated to assisting communities, and citizens of the Schuylkill River region to preserve and sustain their cultural heritage and natural environment for future generations.

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