



Update

WINTER 2006

www.schuylkillriver.org

SCHUYLKILL RIVER
NATIONAL & STATE HERITAGE AREA

PHOENIXVILLE'S COLONIAL THEATRE SITE OF AUTUMN RECEPTION



On a warm November evening members and friends of the Heritage Area visited Phoenixville's restored Colonial Theatre for the Heritage Area's annual Autumn Reception and awards presentation.

This year's awards were presented to:

Tamaqua Save Our Station and the Borough of Tamaqua (Schuylkill County) for the beautiful restoration of the 1874 Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Tamaqua Passenger Station.

Supervisors of the Township of Oley and the Oley Historical Architectural Review Board (Berks County) for designating the Township as a local historic district.

Schuylkill Canal Association and the Township of Upper Providence (Montgomery County) for the successful restoration and interpretation of Lock 60 of the Schuylkill Navigation System and the canal and locktender's house at Mont Clare.

Mill at Anselma Preservation and Educational Trust (Chester County) for the restoration of the Mill at Anselma and its designation as a National Historic Landmark.

Fairmount Park Commission and the Manayunk Development Corporation (Philadelphia) for the refurbishment and restoration of the Manayunk Canal Towpath

TrailKeeper volunteers were also recognized for their hours of work, as well as the River Sojourn volunteers.

After the presentations, Cory Kegerise, SRHA Program Manager, gave a sneak preview of the new webpage in development by Scheffey Integrated Marketing in Lancaster.

The new website is scheduled to "go live" the beginning of 2006, and will include many new and exciting features, including a custom trip planner. Look for it at www.schuylkillriver.org.



Annual Reception Awards were presented for stewardship and dedication of (Clockwise from upper Left): Oley Township's local historic district designation; Restoration of Mont Clare's Lock 60 and Locktender's House; Tamaqua's 1874 Train Station Restoration; Manayunk's Canal Towpath Trail's refurbishment and restoration; Mill at Anselma's restoration and National Historic Landmark designation.

NEW THUN TRAIL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE OPENS



L-R: Kurt Zwinkl-SRHA, Cindy Dunn-DCNR, Berks County Commissioner Judy Schwank and SRHA Board Member David Thun officially open the Thun Trail Pedestrian bridge.

that once stood at that spot until it was removed in the 1980s. It fills a major gap in the Thun Trail, leaving only three sections unfinished. Those include a 2,700-foot section south of the bridge, that will take bikers and walkers to the Brentwood Trailhead, a 1.8 mile section in Douglass Township, and a connecting section in Birdsboro. Some funding has already been committed for each of these projects.

Construction had been planned for the summer of 2004, but bids came in \$400,000 higher than originally anticipated, largely as a result of escalating steel prices.

The bulk of the project was funded by a federal grant that was distributed by the SRHA. SRHA managed to close the funding gap in the allotted amount by reallocating \$150,000 in the PennDOT administered federal Transportation Enhancement Funding. Another \$175,000 was procured from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Partnership Program, as the Borough of Phoenixville relinquished the grant which they were not ready to use in order for the bridge project to move forward. The Schuylkill River Heritage Area provided the remaining additional funds.

Construction of the \$938,000 structure began in April and took nearly eight months to complete. J.D. Eckman, of Atglen, served as the contractor.

We have been focusing on completing the section of the trail that runs from Pottstown to Reading. This bridge represents a vital link in the Schuylkill River Trail, which, when complete, will run from Schuylkill County to Philadelphia.

On Wednesday, December 7, a ribbon-cutting ceremony kicked off the opening of a new pedestrian bridge that takes the Thun Trail across Route 222.

Cindy Dunn, Director of the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation at PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; Judy Schwank, Chair of the Berks County Commissioners; and David Thun, Schuylkill River Heritage Area Board Member and Chair of the Reading RiverPlace Development Corporation, assisted with the ribbon cutting officially opening the structure to the public.

The 115 foot bridge, which cost just shy of \$1 million to build, connects a 2,000-foot isolated segment of the trail with a larger, heavily used section on the northern side of Lancaster Avenue (Business Route 222), in the western part of Reading. Hikers and cyclists will now be able to make their way over Lancaster Avenue, one of the busiest highways in Reading, and follow the trail across the Schuylkill River and into center city.

The 10-foot-wide steel and concrete bridge replaces an old railroad bridge

Congressional Delegation

United State Senators

Rick Santorum
Arlen Specter

United State Representatives

Robert Brady
Charles Dent
Chaka Fattah
James Gerlach
Tim Holden
Joseph R. Pitts
Allyson Schwartz
Curt Weldon

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Edward G. Rendell, Governor

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Michael DiBerardinis, Secretary

Board of Directors

President Ronald C. Downie
Vice President.....David Schmit
Treasurer..... Mark T. Major
Secretary..... Alice W. Ballard
Raymond Abbott Carl Landis
Theodore S. Danforth John M. MacPhee
Jane L.S. Davidson Christy Martin
Robert Folwell Carl V. Raring
Bryan Hanson Rita Stevens
John A. Koury, Sr. David Thun

Scott Wails

Ex-Officio

The Honorable David G. Argall
Dennis DeMara..... DCNR
Patricia L. Elkins.....DVRCP
William Hanley .. Rep. Holden's office
Thomas Harris....Rep. Gerlach's office
Barbara L. PollarineVFNHP

Staff

Executive Director.....Kurt D. Zwinkl
Sheridan R. Allen Susan K. Fordyce
Madeline Cantú Cory Kegerise
Cindy Kott

Consultants:

Wayne L. Bowen, Jr. Dwight R. Powell, P.E.

Trail Volunteer Coordinator:

Greg Marshall

Schuylkill River Heritage Area

Managed by the Schuylkill River Greenway Assn.
140 College Drive • Pottstown, PA 19464
484-945-0200 • fax 484-945-0204
www.schuylkillriver.org

MISSION: To conserve, interpret and develop the historical, cultural, natural and recreational resources related to the industrial and cultural heritage of the Schuylkill River Valley.

VISION: We envision a Schuylkill River region fully revitalized and restored: A region whose citizens understand, value and are fully committed to preserving and sustaining their cultural heritage and natural environment for future generations.

APPROPRIATION PRESENTED TO HERITAGE AREA



Federal appropriation presentation in August was attended by L-R: Joe DiBello—National Park Service, Rep. Tom Quigely, Congressman Jim Gerlach, Kurt Zwikl—SRHA Exec. Director, Senator John Rafferty and Ron Downie—SRGA Board President.

On August 31 Congressman Jim Gerlach announced the 2006 Federal Appropriation for the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. At a ceremony held at the Heritage Area's office, Congressman Gerlach said he was pleased with all the good work the Heritage Area has been doing in the communities it serves.

Executive Director Kurt Zwikl thanked Mr. Gerlach for the appropriation. Kurt said, "We would not be in business today to the extent that we are if not for the National Park Service's direct appropriation from the Congress. Some projects we plan to complete within the next three years include the Thun Trail with additional grants from Berks County, the Wyomissing Foundation and Pottstown Health & Wellness Foundation. A unigrid brochure for just the Schuylkill River Heritage Area is also being planned.

SRGA Board President Ron Downie thanked Rep. Gerlach for bringing the check, and said, "This money will allow us to do what is necessary for people to have a better quality of life."

Other officials attending the presentation were Joe Dibello, National Park Service, State Senator John Rafferty (R-44) and State Representative Tom Quigley (R-146).

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY ETHNIC HERITAGE STUDY PUBLICATION RELEASED



The public meetings for the Ethnic Heritage Study were enhanced by the offerings of local ethnic foods.

The Schuylkill County Ethnic Heritage Study came to a rousing conclusion in November when folklorists Michael and Carrie Kline presented the findings of their year long journey through the county's past and present at three public presentations. More than 150 people attended the presentations in Orwigsburg, Mahanoy City, and Tamaqua and enjoyed a feast of foods from various cultural communities each night. During the presentations the Klines shared photographs and stories from their times spent meeting and interviewing people from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The study looked at the food, music, artistic, and architectural traditions of groups that historically populated the county and more recent immigrant groups including growing Muslim and Latino communities.

Among the findings that Michael and Carrie reached was one powerful, though not surprising observation... Schuylkill County is like no place they have ever been before. People across Schuylkill County are eating foods, speaking languages, and practicing artistic traditions that may no longer be found in their land of origin. "Here people wear their ethnicity on their sleeves; they hang it in their windows, beautifying their communities with textures of the Old World" says

Carrie Kline. The Klines recommend a number of ways that communities and organizations can use this unique cultural identity to help strengthen their communities and encourage heritage tourism, while simultaneously passing the traditions on to future generations.

Audio recordings of more than 60 life-story interviews, church services, and cultural events collected during the project will be made available at the Pottsville Free Public Library and the Historical Society of Schuylkill County in early 2006. The 71-page report will be sent to all public libraries, schools, and historical societies in Schuylkill County, as well as to study participants. Individual copies can be obtained for \$8 each by contacting Cory Kegerise at (484) 945-0200 or may be downloaded for free at www.schuylkillriver.org.

SCENES OF THE SCHUYLKILL RECEPTION



The October 7 Scenes of the Schuylkill Closing Reception and local Wine Tasting was held at the recently restored First Fidelity Building at High and Hanover in Pottstown with over 70 people attending.

Next year's Scenes of the Schuylkill will be held in the gallery at Montgomery County Community College West Campus's new building on High Street.

Thanks and gratitude for making this a successful event go to John Wolfington, the Borough of Pottstown, auctioneer Dana Knowlton, Pennsylvania Premium Wine Group, Pottstown Florist, Gallery on High and Bause-Landry Catering.



ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS VISITS SCHUYLKILL RIVER HERITAGE AREA

During the first week of October the Alliance for National Heritage Areas (ANHA) held its annual 3-day meeting in the Schuylkill River Heritage Area.

The first day was used to introduce the National Heritage Area directors and staff members and National Park Service personnel to the upper part of the Heritage Area. After a tour of the Yuengling Brewery in Pottsville, the group visited Hawk Mountain Sanctuary where HMS's new Executive Director, Lee Schisler, presented a

live bird demonstration.

A hike to Hawk Mountain's North Lookout was followed with a visit to the Reading and Northern Blue Mountain train station in Port Clinton.

The next two days were spent in meetings, with a welcomed break late Wednesday afternoon when Valley Forge National Historical Park's Barb Pollarine and Diedre Gibson provided a personal bus tour of the Park.

For more information about the ANHA, visit their website at www.nationalheritageareas.com.



Front Row L-R: Annie Harris, Essex NHA (MA); Hydie Friend, Wheeling NHA (WV); Michelle McCollum, South Carolina NHA; Nancy Morgan, Cane River NHA (LA); Kurt Zwikl, SRHA; Joe DiBello, National Park Service; John Burns, National Park Service.

Middle Row: Christy Bailey, National Coal HA (WV); Suzanne Copping, National Park Service; Brenda Barrett, National Park Service; Allan Sasche, Delaware-Lehigh NHA; Marcia Garcia, Mississippi Gulf Coast NHA; Liz McConnell, Blackstone River Valley NHA (MA/RI); Peter Samuel, National Park Service; Erin Cooley, Paths of Progress (PA); Augie Carlino, Rivers of Steel NHA (PA)

Back Row L-R: Cory Kegerise-SRHA; Dayton Sherrouse, Augusta Canal NHA; Howard Kittel, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields NHA (VA); Grant Larsen, Mississippi Gulf Coast NHA; Jesse Ergott, Lackawanna Heritage Valley NHA; Dan Rice, Ohio & Erie NH Canalway; Tina Shumate, Mississippi Gulf Coast NHA; Louise Redding, Blackstone River Valley NHA (MA/RI); Don Short, Silos and Smokestacks NHA (IA).

Missing from Photograph: John Cosgrove-AHNA and Sue Fordyce-SRHA.



In other AHNA news, National Park Service (NPS) Director, Fran Maniella, visited the Lackawanna National Heritage Area in August. Executive Directors from nearby Heritage Areas were invited to an afternoon reception. In front, L-R: Allan Sachse-Delaware Lehigh NHA; Fran Maniella; Natalie Solfanelli-Lackawanna NHA; John Cosgrove-Alliance for National Heritage Areas. L-R in back are Kurt D. Zwikl-Schuylkill River NHA and Brenda Barrett-NPS.

RECONNECTIONS 5K 2005



This year's Reconnections 5K had almost 100 participants who ran or walked from Pottstown to North Coventry and back. The 5K's reach is increasing, and we had several runners from Schuylkill County.

With help from Pottstown's and North Coventry's Parks and Recreation Departments, Pottstown and North Coventry Police Departments, Goodwill Ambulance, Phillies Fire Company, and North Coventry Fire Department, the race went off without a hitch.

We'd like to thank this year's sponsors— title sponsor Sovereign Bank, and RSZ Orthopedics, The Cardinal Group, Pottstown Police Officers Association and Douglas B. Breidenbach.

Next year's 5K will run October 1. If you know someone who likes participating in 5Ks, contact us and to add their information to our mailing list.

For more information contact Sue Fordyce at sfordyce@schuylkillriver.org or 484-945-0200. Results of this year's 5K are available at our website: www.schuylkillriver.org.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS,
TELL YOUR FRIENDS!**

**SCHUYLKILL RIVER
SOJOURN 2006**

JUNE 3-10

PRE-SOJOURN JUNE 2



GREENWAY BIKE SOJOURN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Over the past several months the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has organized recon rides and meetings to determine the route for next year's bicycle Pennsylvania Greenway Sojourn, to be held July 22-28. The details of the route are still being worked out, and it's looking like this will be a multi-experience event, with bicycling, rafting and a train ride included.

The current planned overnight locations will be Jim Thorpe, Wyomissing, Pottstown and Oaks, PA.

As work continues on the final route and daytime stops, a legion of volunteers needs to be developed and trained. A list of our volunteer needs follows. Volunteers who can help the entire week provide continuity of tasks and information, but this isn't a requirement. All meals will be provided for the volunteers and full event registration for those who can commit to the six-day event. References will be requested.

Volunteers are also encouraged to attend an introductory orientation that will be held in Perkiomenville January 27-28, 2006.

VOLUNTEER DESCRIPTIONS:

Route Signage: Place signs to direct riders at all turns and questionable areas. Remove signs at end of day. Volunteers needed: 2/day, 7am-5 pm. Prefer knowledge of local area, will use personal vehicle.

Safety Patrol: Spread through the group and assist riders as needed. Some bike mechanic knowledge is preferred. Assist riders at trail/road hazards. In emergency must be able to ride to nearest location for help. 7 am-5 pm daily.

Site Assistants: Be at evening camp site by 10:30 am and assist site manager (RTC staff person). Provide local information and familiarity. Assist with set-up of various site services and all other site needs including the sign board and sound system, and keeping water coolers filled. Need 4/day, 10 am-3 pm daily, needs knowledge of local area and possible use of personal vehicle.

Luggage Truck Drivers: Pick up 24-foot truck(s) from rental agency and drive to Philly. Drive trucks from site to site each day. Return trucks to rental agency at end of event. Need 2+/day, needs knowledge of local area.

Gofierge: A combination of "Gopher" and "Concierge," the Gofierge will assist participants with local off-site needs such as non-emergency medical needs. One person can be the Gofierge for the entire trip, or at the minimum 1 per day. 7 am-9 pm daily, needs knowledge of local area and will use personal vehicle.

Sag Vehicle: Drive a van to carry riders who cannot continue. Assist with other route emergencies as needed. Carry water and supplies. 2 per day, 7 am-7 pm daily, prefer knowledge of local area.

Medical Team: Assist with all medical emergencies on the route or at any site. Should have a basic first aid or higher certification. Wear a designated medical jersey. Jerseys and first aid supplies will be provided by RTC. A 3-day minimum event commitment for the medical team is encouraged, prefer 6-day commitment.

If you want to help with this event or have more questions about the volunteer activities, contact Pat Tomes, Program Coordinator for Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, at pat@railtrails.org or 717-238-1717.

SUPPORT THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER HERITAGE AREA



Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area
140 College Drive • Pottstown, PA 19464 • 484-945-0200 • fax 484-945-0204
Managed by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association, a 501(c)3

I want to support the Schuylkill River Heritage Area:

- Student/Senior: \$25
- Individual: \$50
- Household: \$75
- Donor: \$100 up to \$499
- Patron: \$500 up to \$999

Schuylkill River Society Levels

- Bronze: \$1,000 up to \$2,499
- Silver: \$2,500 up to \$4,999
- Gold: \$5,000+

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email (optional): _____

Amount enclosed: _____

Check enclosed (payable to SRGA) Charge my Visa/Mastercard

Credit card #: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Signature: _____

Call me about Planned Giving

Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Official registration and financial information can be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. SRGAs registration number is 2155. Registration does not imply endorsement.

SCHUYLKILL RIVER WATER TRAIL ONE OF 12 RECOMMENDED BY ACA

The Schuylkill River Water Trail has been named a recommended water trail by the American Canoe Association

The river was one of only 12 water trails throughout the United States and Canada to receive the first-time designation; at the same time, the ACA also named the Schuylkill River Heritage Area as Champions of Water Trails for 2005.

As an ACA Recommended Water Trail, the SRHA has earned the right to use a special ACA seal of approval in maps, signs, and other printed materials related to the trail.



“This is our way of saying that the trail has met certain requirements and that this is a particularly good destination for paddlers and even for non-paddlers,” said Paul Sanford, director of stewardship for the American Canoe Association. “We want people to know this as an indication that this is a trail worth seeing.”

The recommendation assures that the trail has met certain requirements. It must have public access points for paddlers; it must be covered by a map, guide, signage or website of reasonable quality; and printed materials must communicate low-impact ethics for trail users.

The quality of the maps offered is one key reason the trail was chosen. Also, the commitment to “Leave No Trace” is

well communicated in all SR water trail materials.

In addition, Sanford observed that the SRHA had recently won a \$50,000 grant for an environmentally-inspired art project along the water trail. By having a public art component, the SRHA has the potential to attract many more people to the river than just paddlers.

For more information on ACA water trails, log onto www.acanet.org. Information on the Schuylkill River Water trail can be found at www.schuylkillriver.org/maps



140 College Drive
Pottstown, PA 19464



Managed by the
Schuylkill River
Greenway Assn.