

A Shared Commons

SCHUYLKILL RIVER
NATIONAL & STATE HERITAGE AREA

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\$500,000 Paves the Way for A New Riverfront Academic and Heritage Center

The SRHA is partnering with Montgomery County Community College to create a new, regionally significant Schuylkill Riverfront Academic and Heritage Center in the SRHA building in Pottstown.

In October, plans for the center got a financial boost when Sen. John Rafferty presented a \$500,000 check to officials from MCCC and the SRHA.

The money will help pay for renovations to a 5,000-square-foot unused section of the building, adding four classrooms and an interpretive center, while retaining the SRHA offices.

When the transformation is complete, the site will become a tourist destination and regional hub for river education.

The \$500,000 grant from the state's Redevelopment Assistance Program, secured and presented by Rafferty, represents only a portion of the money needed for the project. An additional \$500,000 grant from the Department of Education's Higher Education Assistance program is also forthcoming, secured by Sen. Vincent J. Fumo.

That \$1 million must now be matched by SRHA and MCCC funds.

A Unique Partnership

The proposed Riverfront Academic and Heritage Center represents a unique



L-R: Kurt Zwinkl, Dr. Karen Stout-MCCC, Senator Rafferty and Representative Tom Quigley at check presentation

partnership between the SRHA, MCCC and the Borough of Pottstown (which owns the SRHA building),

"To our knowledge, this is the first partnership of its kind in the nation—where a community college partners with a designated national heritage area to benefit the greater community," remarked MCCC President Karen Stout.

"This will complete the transformation of this site into a hub for culture, recreation, conservation and education, as is in line with the Pottstown Borough's revitalization plans."

The center will provide space for four classrooms and a science lab for the MCCC

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Celebrating the Past

SRHA and the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center Present an Exhibition of Bradley Hendershot

An exhibition of the watercolor paintings of Bradley Hendershot is on display from November 12 to January 14 at the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center, at 105 Seminary Street in Pennsburg. The show was underwritten with a grant from Harleysville National Bank, and is being held in partnership with the Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area.

Hendershot, of Upper Hanover Township, Montgomery County, is primarily a painter of rural Pennsylvania and coastal Maine. His Pennsylvania paintings—many of the Oley Valley, in Berks County—depict stone and timber barns, mills, houses and outbuildings that reflect the region's heritage.

His work is defined by an intense devotion to realistic detail, while creatively emphasizing features that evoke a certain mood or effect.

"Brad is a well known artist who grew up and still lives in our local area," said Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center Executive Director David Luz. "He helps to interpret the local heritage as well as being a part of that heritage himself."

The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center is truly a regional treasure, dedicated to collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting the heritage of both the Perkiomen region and the Schwenkfelders.

The Schwenkfelders were religious followers of Protestant Reformer Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig. They came to Philadelphia from Silesia in 1734 seeking religious tolerance and freedom. They settled predominantly in the Perkiomen region, where their presence and customs had a strong influence on the area and its way of life.

The library and heritage center features a number of different exhibits and collections related to the Scwhenkfelders and the Perkiomen region. Those include:

- A permanent exhibit that tells the



Artist Bradley Hendershot, Harleysville National Bank Red Hill Branch Manager Carol Daniels, Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center Executive Director David W. Luz, and Schuylkill River Heritage Area Executive Director Kurt D. Zwirl during the opening reception for A Sense of Place: Paintings by Bradley Hendershot. Photo by Steve Pestrock

Schwenkfelder story, beginning with the founder's role in the Protestant Reformation and including the tale of the persecution of the Schwenkfelders and their flight to Pennsylvania.

• The Fraktur Gallery features two to three different folk art exhibits a year. Fraktur is a colorful and often complex combination of words and elaborate decoration, commonly used by Schwenkfelders and other Pennsylvania German groups in records, such as birth certificates, or as rewards for students.

• The Local History Gallery features two to three different exhibits a year of objects that reflect the growth of local towns, industry and institutions. A first floor art gallery hosts the work of local artists.

• The Library and Archives contain approximately 30,000 volumes, and serve as an excellent resource for genealogical and local history research.

• Collections include furniture, textiles, machinery and more than 2,000 photographs illustrating both Schwenkfelder and local history from the mid-19th century to the present day.

The center also offers a number of educational tours and programs that bring history to life for students and organizations.

Location: 105 Seminary St. in Pennsburg. Hours: T, W and F: 9am-4pm; Th.: 9am-8pm; Sat.: 10am-3pm; Sun.: 1pm-4pm. Closed Mondays. To learn more call (215) 679-3103, or visit online at www.schwenkfelder.com.



Scenes of the Schuylkill 2006 Selected Painting:
Charles Cushing's Solitary Egret, Tinicum Marsh

from page 1: Riverfront Academic and Heritage Center

West Campus, located across the street. Those classrooms will be used to expand the MCCC's credit curriculum, and to introduce joint programming between the MCCC and the SRHA, with a series of non-credit courses that promote awareness of the river.

An area now used as a garage will also be revamped to create a new conference room, retail sales space, and additional office and storage areas for the SRHA. The existing conference room will be converted into an Interpretive Center which, similar to visitors' centers at state and national parks, will feature educational, historic and tourist information about the region.

"This will become a destination point for tourists," SRHA Executive Director Kurt Zwilk said of the Interpretive Center.

Cultural arts programming and an annual academic symposium will also be held at the new center, and an outdoor amphitheatre will support cultural events and live performances.

Meeting all the SRHA Goals

Zwilk called the project a "home run for the community and the entire region."

He pointed out that it addresses all the SRHA's five major goals of using "conservation, education, recreation, historic preservation and tourism as tools for community revitalization and economic development."

The check presentation at the SRHA headquarters was attended by a number of public officials, including Rafferty, State Rep. Tom Quigley, Pottstown Borough Council President Jack Wolf, Borough Manager Ray Lopez and Mayor Sharon Valentine-Thomas.

The building, which is currently owned by the borough, will eventually be transferred to the MCCC. It will become the third building on the West Campus, including the main facility at 101 College Dr., and the newly renovated former Vaughn Knitting Mill facility at 16 High St.

HERITAGE TIDBIT

Hamburg Public Library is the longest continuing library in Berks County, and the first in the county to be built with funds provided by industrialist Andrew Cargenie.

Scenes of the Schuylkill Art Show A Success

The Scenes of the Schuylkill Juried Art Show and Competition was a great success this year, featuring 37 original entries that captured the varied scenery of the river corridor.

The Montgomery County Community College West Campus' beautiful new art gallery, on 16 High St., in Pottstown, proved a perfect venue for the show, which ran from Sept. 8 through to its closing reception on October 27. This year's event was generously supported by a grant from the George and Miriam Martin Foundation.

The exhibit's purpose is to stimulate an awareness of regional artists and to foster an appreciation, through art, of the diverse attributes of the river and its communities.

The competition is in its fourth year, but this is only the second year all submissions have been publicly displayed. Internationally recognized watercolorist Jim McFarlane, AWS, served as the juror.

"I love the idea of this show. It has some very nice, strong pieces," said McFarlane.

The show contains a wide range of images from along the river, reflecting the fact that "there is so much going on in the Schuylkill River watershed," he added. "The different towns are coming back to life and the natural areas are unsurpassable. The river is really drawing people to live there, work there and play there."

About the 2006 Selected Artist and Painting

Charles Cushing graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1988, and has lived in Center City Philadelphia for over 20 years. Much of his art focuses on Philadelphia cityscapes and on landscapes, particularly of Nova Scotia and Maine. He is well-known locally for his large Philadelphia scenes, with over

400 original oil paintings in public and private collections.

Solitary Egret, Tinicum Marsh is one of a series of paintings inspired by Tinicum Marsh. "I'm interested in the juxtaposition of the natural beauty of the marsh and the kind of 'ugly beauty' of industrial wasteland. There's an environmental aspect to it, but I'm mainly thinking of the contrast between the fragile beauty of nature and the grittiness of the urban landscape that's strangling it," Cushing said.

Tinicum Marsh is the largest remaining freshwater tidal wetland in Pennsylvania, located near the Philadelphia International Airport. A National Wildlife Refuge, it is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, with over 300 species of birds nesting and feeding there. Egrets stop at the marsh during spring and fall migrations.

The selected painting has been produced into signed and numbered limited edition prints and note cards.

Previous selected artwork is also available for sale. Those include: Montgomery County artist William T. Ternay's Philadelphia's Columbia Bridge (2005); Julia Longacre's Mouns Jones House, (2004); and Berks County artist Linda Henry's Winter on the Schuylkill (2003).

To purchase prints and cards, visit the SRHA website - www.schuylkillriver.org or by calling the office, 484-945-0200 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Proceeds benefit the Schuylkill River Heritage Area, which sponsored the show in partnership with Montgomery County Community College, Gallery on High, The Hill School and artist Susannah Hart Thomer.

"I love the idea of this show. It has some very nice, strong pieces," said Jim McFarlane (Scenes of the Schuylkill juror)



Heritage Area Grants Announced

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area received \$162,000 in project grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in October.

The grants were awarded by the state's Heritage Areas Program, which is dispersing a total of \$1.5 million to 12 designated heritage areas throughout Pennsylvania. That money will be matched with private, federal and local funds to help promote cultural, natural, recreational and scenic resources across Pennsylvania.

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area received the largest share of the \$1.5 million allocation. The \$162,000 will be used to fund eight projects along the river corridor, in partnership with other organizations.

Projects selected all encompass one or more of the SRHA's goals of using conservation, education, recreation, historic preservation and tourism as tools for community revitalization and economic development.

"These small grants to regional partners allow organizations to undertake projects that really contribute to the region's cultural, environmental and recreational attractions," said Kurt Zwikl.

The projects funded are:

1. Historic Preservation Trust of Berks

County, Historic Morlatton Village Living History Study: \$ 20,000. Project Scope: To conduct a study to research and develop a living history and interpretive program for the Historic Morlatton Village region.

2. Once Upon a Nation, Valley Forge Interpretive Tour. \$25,000. Montgomery County. Project Scope: To support the implementation and expansion of a new interactive heritage tour program that encourages visitors to Philadelphia to visit Valley Forge National Historic Park.

3. Railway Restoration Project 113, Historic CNJ Locomotive 113 Restoration Project: \$30,000. Schuylkill County. Project Scope: To complete the final phase of the restoration of the historic Central Railroad of New Jersey Locomotive 113 to operational condition so that it can serve as a live steam engine exhibit.

4. Sovereign Majestic Theatre, Sovereign Majestic Theatre Improvements: \$20,000. Schuylkill County. Project Scope: To purchase and install the Theatrical Mechanical Components (sound, lighting, screen and projection) that will allow the facility to serve as a performing arts venue.

5. John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove, "Company is Coming" Project:

\$20,000. Montgomery County. Project Scope: To implement a series of improvements aimed at making the Audubon Center more tourist friendly, including the installation of brochure racks, directional signs, trail signs, bike racks and benches.

6. Borough of Ashland, Anthracite Museum Study: \$20,000. Schuylkill County. Project Scope: To develop an adaptive reuse plan for the Anthracite Museum as a multi-use facility that incorporates the community building for the Borough of Ashland into the museum building.

7. Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery, Laurel Hill Cemetery Audio Tour: \$20,000. Philadelphia. Project Scope: To develop and implement an audio tour that would allow visitors to this historic cemetery to engage in self-guided tours.

8. Schuylkill River Greenway Association, Gateway Information Center: \$7,000. Project Scope: To install a Gateway Information Center at Tuscarora State Park Visitors' Center, providing information about the Schuylkill River Heritage Area with maps, a video kiosk and tourist brochures.

For more information about the Heritage Area Grant Program, contact Tim Fenchel, Grants Coordinator, at tfenchel@schuylkillriver.org or 484-945-0200.

Autumn Reception Honors Three Partners



L-R: Kurt Zwikl, SRHA presenting to Bill Reichert, Schuylkill Headwaters Assn., one of three awards given at the Autumn Reception.

The SRHA held its annual Autumn Reception on November 16, at the Historical Society of Schuylkill County's restored Pottsville Female Grammar School.

Despite heavy storms, about 40 people attended. The event included an award presentation honoring three of the SRHA's partners, and an inside peek at two of Pottsville's wonderful historic buildings.

The reception's venue, the former Female Grammar School, was built in 1863 and now houses the Historical Society

of Schuylkill County's library and museum. Attendees explored the ground floor of the building and viewed the society's fascinating collection of Schuylkill County artifacts.

Later, after the storm passed, they walked to the nearby Sovereign Majestic Theatre, currently under renovation. One of only two reverse screen theatres left in Pennsylvania, it functioned as a silent movie theater from 1910 until 1930. Gutted in 1939, it primarily served as a farmer's market until 1995. Renovation by the Sovereign Majestic Theatre Association began in 2001, exposing the original façade, restoring beautiful tin ceilings and a Palladian window in the lobby, and refurbishing the entire theatre and seating area. When it opens next year, it will do so as both a movie theater and performing arts venue.

At the reception, three organizations were honored for their valuable contributions to the region. The three partners recognized were:

- Schuylkill Headwaters Association, for their commitment to protecting, preserving and restoring the quality of the Schuylkill River and its tributaries in Schuylkill County through acid mine drainage mitigation projects.

- Pottstown Rotary Club, for an extensive volunteer effort that included donating many man hours and materials in constructing a trailhead pavilion at Riverfront Park in Pottstown this summer.

- Berks County Conservancy, for their dedication in preserving open space and protecting the region's water supply. The Conservancy has served as the leading agent for environmental conservation in Berks County, since 1974.

Each were presented with a signed, limited edition print of the 2006 Scenes of the Schuylkill art print, Solitary Egret, Tinicum Marsh, by Charles Cushing.

Projects and Partners

Manayunk and East Falls Development Corporations, Philadelphia, have combined forces to form The Schuylkill Project, which will study and enhance navigation and access issues with the Schuylkill River. For more information: ksykora@manayunk.org.

The Historial Society of Phoenixville, Chester County, has arranged for atlases from 1873 and 1883 to be digitized for researchers to limit damage to the originals. For more information: (610) 935-7646.

Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia, founded in 1836, is branding their site as "The Underground Museum", answering the question 'why would anyone want to visit a cemetery'? For more information: (215) 228-8200.

The Greater Reading Convention & Visitors Bureau, Berks County, is promoting the Hex Barn Art Tour along the "Hex Highway" in Northern Berks County. The tour takes you by 20 hex barns and ends at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. For more information: (800)443-6610.

HO Model Train Engineers can add Reading Railroad pieces to their collection from the **Reading Company Technical & Historical Society, Berks County**. New pieces available include a laser cut wood model of the Rushland station on the New Hope Branch and Reading Company XMy Steel box cars. For more information: (610) 777-3764.

The Fairmount Park Art Association, Philadelphia, unveiled its newest public art project: Manayunk Stoops: Heart and Home created by artist Diane Pieri, consists of nine mosaic "stoops" along the Manayunk Canal Towpath. The stoops serve not only as public art, but also as seating elements, interpreting the front steps and entryways marking the neighborhood's architecture and street life. For more information: (215) 546-7550.

Black Rock Park, Chester County, was certified as an official National Wildlife Federation backyard habitat in September. Alice Lang, member of the Upper Providence Township Parks and Recreation Committee, is working to get more habitats created in the area. For a space to be certified, it must contain a place for animals to enjoy food, shelter and water. Chester County Parks & Recreation – (610) 344-6415

A new raptor-observation platform was dedicated at **Fort Washington State Park, Montgomery County** at an event attended by DCNR Secretary Michael DiBerardinis. The

platform provides a panoramic viewing area for visitors who come to see all 16 species of raptors migrating along the Atlantic Coast. For more information – (215) 591-5250

Hopewell Furnace National Historical Site, Berks/Chester County dedicated the newly restored 22-foot waterwheel, culminating a three-year challenge of funding and reconstruction work. The waterwheel lifts leather bellows that blast air into the cast house's furnace. For more information – (610) 582-8773.

Schuylkill River Birding Trail

A statewide Birding Trail information network has become a main focus for Audubon PA and PA's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and will include the proposed Birding Trails from the Schuylkill River Heritage Area, Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Area and The Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania.

Audubon PA and DCNR worked together to create the Susquehanna Birding and Wildlife Trail, published in 2004, and the newer birding trails will use elements from the Susquehanna Guide to present a unified look for users in printed form and on the Audubon PA/DCNR web page - www.pabirdingtrails.org.

The Schuylkill River Birding Trail is collaborating with the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Area's bird trail project to create a Southeastern Pennsylvania Birding Trail.

The counties in the S.E. Birding Trail project are: Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Luzerne, Montgomery, Monroe, Northampton, Philadelphia, Pike, Schuylkill.

The project is managed by Susan Fordyce, SRHA, and Dan Kunkle, Wildlife Information Center in Slatington, PA (www.wildlifeinfo.org). Contact Sue Fordyce at sfordyce@schuylkillriver.org, Dan Kunkle at dkunkle@ptd.net.



Before (upper) and after (lower) pictures of the restored Cliffside Path leading from the Fairmount WaterWorks to the Philadelphia Art Museum

Cliffside Path

The Fairmount Park Conservancy has completed phase one of the central Cliffside Path restoration, making it possible to follow the historic path from Fairmount Water Works to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The \$615,000 project was funded in part by a \$25,000 Heritage Parks Grant from the Schuylkill River Heritage Area.

The path is an important historical resource. Along with the Southside Garden, it was a popular destination in the 19th and early part of the 20th Century. In fact the Cliffside Path and surrounding garden were once considered one of Philadelphia's most beautiful places.

In those years, the elegant paths ascended the cliffs from the garden to the reservoir, which is now the site of the art museum.

But after the Water Works was closed and the reservoir was demolished between 1913 and 1921, the area was neglected and the paths deteriorated.

With completion of the first phase of restoration, the central Cliffside path has been fully restored and resurfaced with asphalt brick pavers. Overgrown vegetation has been removed, and new landscaping installed. Lighting has been added to ensure easy evening passage.

What's more, the path's most striking feature, a stone bridge, has been restored and lined with an ornamental, cast iron railing identical to the 1870s original. The Fairmount Park Conservancy's ultimate goal is to line the entire path with that railing, at an additional cost of \$500,000. However, a temporary railing has been installed in the meantime to ensure safe passage.

For more information contact the Fairmount Park Conservancy at (215) 988-9334.



Reconnections 5K Helps Local Parks

About 100 people participated in the Third Annual Reconnections 5K Walk/Run on October 1. Not only did they get a beautiful fall morning for the event, they also were able to see some of the results of last year's race.

They ran right past safety improvements made to North Coventry soccer fields, thanks, in part, to funding garnered from the 2005 Reconnections event.

Every year, the Schuylkill River Heritage Area organizes the race as a fundraiser, not only for themselves but to support the parks departments of Pottstown and North Coventry. According to North Coventry Parks and Recreation Department Chairman Jay Erb, a \$1,000 donation from last year's Reconnections 5K helped pay for a wooden guard rail, erected along the edge of the soccer fields on River Road.

The guard rail, which lies along the 5K route, prevents cars from parking on the side of the road. The fields are used heavily by Coventry Soccer Association and parked cars have posed a hazard to young players running between them into the roadway.

This is the third year that the Schuylkill River Heritage Area has sponsored the 5K, a race that takes participants through Riverfront Park, across Hanover Street Bridge, onto River Road in North Coventry and back again.

In addition to raising money, the race also raises awareness. Reconnections is a program that seeks to "reconnect" Pottstown and North Coventry to one another and to the Schuylkill River. By bringing runners and their families

into parks on both sides of the Schuylkill River, it reminds participants of the recreational attributes of the riverfronts in both communities.

Overall winners in this year's race both broke past course records. Taking the top female prize was Deena Andrus, of Reading, whose time of 20:14 broke her 2005 record of 21:58. The top male winner was Larry

Levy, also of Reading, who finished at 16:35, beating Mike Precopio's record of 17:16 last year.

Winners received matted limited edition prints of the 2006 Scenes of the Schuylkill Art Show selection "Tinicum Marsh, Solitary Egret."

Boat Ramp Built at Pottstown Park

Pottstown's Riverfront Park has boasted a lot of positive changes lately: a new trailhead, a beautiful pavilion and attractive landscaping.

Add to the list a small watercraft ramp installed and landscaped compliments of Eagle Scout Adam Hampton.

Hampton and 20 other volunteers, including his fellow Troop 129 Boy Scouts, spent several Saturdays in October constructing the stone ramp and landscaping it with native plants that will stabilize the banks.

"This is something that makes the river more inviting," observed John Hampton, Adam's father.

Hampton, 17, is a senior at Pottsgrove High



Canoe ramp site after excavation



Scouts put into place the reinforcing GeoWeb

School. He organized the project through the SRHA, which has a grant from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to improve access to the river.

Hampton said he chose the ramp as his Eagle Scout project because he believed it would provide a valuable amenity to Riverfront Park.

"The ramp is now available to anyone who has a kayak," he said. "It makes people more aware of the park and the river."

The stone landing is intended for use by small watercraft, such as canoes and kayaks, which can be hand carried to the water.

To build it, the area was first excavated by landscaper Jim Powers, who donated his time. Then, the scouts took over. They laid a geotextile fabric over the area, then topped it with a 6"-deep plastic confinement system used to lock the stones in place.

Afterwards, large stones were laid, and smaller stones were placed on top.

Adam Hampton arranged to have the stone donated by the H&K Group, and delivered, free of charge, by Hank Saylor, owner of Pottstown Roller Mills. It was spread using a front-loading tractor, provided by SRGA board President Ron Downie.

Once the stone was laid, the planting began.

"We used colonizing native plants that will send out roots to stabilize the banks," said Trails Projects Manager Madeline Cantú, who helped facilitate the project. "We had so many plants, I never thought we would get them all in. But these kids were amazing, they just kept plugging away."

For more information, contact Maddy Cantú, Trails Project Manager, at mcantu@schuylkillriver.org, or 484-945-0200.

“Handshake Across the County Line” Opens Trail Segment



Dave Kraybill-Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation, Jeanne Trivellini-Douglass Township Supervisors’ Chairman, Commissioners Ruth Damsker-Montgomery County, Judy Schwank-Berks County, Jim Matthews-Montgomery County and SRHA Executive Director Kurt Zwikl officially open the Montgomery to Berks County section of the Schuylkill River Trail.

The SRHA opened a 1.8 mile stretch of the Thun Trail section of the Schuylkill River Trail in August—a vital link that connects Pottstown to Berks County.

People can now hike or bike along the river following a continuous path that begins at Riverfront Park in Pottstown, crosses the Berks County line into Douglass Township and leads unbroken to Birdsboro—an 8-mile journey.

The event was celebrated with a “Handshake Across the County Line,” by Montgomery and Berks County officials. Also in attendance were representatives from Douglass Township, West Pottsgrove Township, the Schuylkill River Heritage Area and the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation, which provided funding for the project.

The new packed gravel trail section begins where the existing trail once ended, at the Berks/Montgomery County line, and connects to



Novice kayakers wait their turn to get their (kayaks’) bottoms wet in the Schuylkill River.

another existing section of trail at Morlatton Village, in Douglassville.

In planning for the trail, the SRHA agreed to purchase a new state-of-the-art police bicycle for Douglass Township police. The \$1,200 bike helped address security concerns raised by township officials.

“This speaks to our concern for safety and security along the trail,” said SRHA Executive Director Kurt Zwikl.

The new Douglass Township section is one of many recent improvements to the Schuylkill River Trail. A 1.5 mile section extending from Riverfront Park to the Berks County line was completed in May by Montgomery County. And, in July, a new trailhead pavilion was built at Riverfront Park with the assistance of the Pottstown Rotary, behind the Schuylkill River Heritage Area’s headquarters at 140 College Drive.

The newest trail segment was built with a \$100,000 grant from the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation that provided funding for several projects along the Schuylkill River Trail.

By next year, it is expected to be possible to follow the trail, unbroken, 19 miles from Pottstown to Reading.

Kayak Lessons and Tours in Pottstown

This year’s Reconnection 5K had something a little different to offer. After the runners were finished, and after all the awards were given out,

Hidden River Outfitters brought in 20 kayaks and offered lessons and tours to interested, beginning paddlers.

The event provided the perfect opportunity for novices to try their hands at kayaking. It also gave Hidden River Outfitters owner Ted Danforth a chance to “test the waters” in Pottstown. The kayaking waters, of course.

Kayaking is one of the fastest growing outdoor sports in the nation. Danforth would like to develop a regular

scheduling of paddling in the Pottstown area. He held two kayaking sessions in Riverfront Park, behind the SRHA building, in conjunction with the 5K, in an effort to determine the level of interest in Pottstown.

“Hidden River Outfitters has a mission of getting people back in touch with the outdoors. We just love to get people out,” said Danforth. “Kayaking is great exercise and a great way to get away from the hustle of everyday life.”

About 14 people took advantage of the lessons, learning the proper method for holding a paddle and practiced several strokes before launching into the river. Participants then spent about an hour on the water, testing out their newly-learned skills and enjoying the warm fall day.

Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area

140 College Drive • Pottstown, PA 19464

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www.schuylkillriver.org

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Heritage Partners Program

We are always accepting new members into our Heritage Partners Program. If your organization is not already participating in this program, please consider joining.

What is it?

The Heritage Partners Program allows us to foster beneficial connections among the many organizations and sites within the Heritage Area.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to any site, tourism agency or membership-based organization within the five-county Heritage Area.

What are the benefits of joining?

Once you have become a Heritage Partner, we will provide information about your organization on our Web site and include links to your site. You will also be granted membership into our organization at no cost. As a member of the SRHA, you will receive all our mailings and information, as well as invitations to special events. You will also receive a Schuylkill River Heritage Partner cling window decal.

What type of information will appear on your Web site?

Our Web site at www.schuylkillriver.org.

org is a perfect spot for people to learn more about your group and events. Visitors are able to search for information based on activities, location or type. They can also click on Find a Heritage Partner to find an agency with a specific mission.

Are there any other perks?

We have recently begun devoting a page of our quarterly newsletter to a Heritage Partner in an effort to introduce our members to the many valuable places and organizations within the Heritage Area. Each issue highlights one Heritage Partner, featuring photos, a general description and any other pertinent information.

Is there a fee to join?

No, there is no fee. However, we ask that you provide us with a reciprocal membership into your organization, as well as a reciprocal Web site link.

How do I sign up?

Fill out a form providing us with all necessary information. To obtain a form, contact Sue Fordyce at 484-945-0200, or by email at sfordyce@schuylkillriver.org.

Kayak Building Class Scheduled

Hidden River Outfitters, of Schwenksville, is hosting a six-day kayak building class from January 12-18 at the Schuylkill River Heritage Area headquarters, in Pottstown.

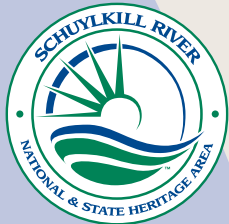
Under the tutelage of Brian Shultz, of the Oregon-based Cape Falcon Kayaks, participants will spend six 10-hour days building their own custom-sized, skin-on-frame 1935 Greenland replica kayaks and Greenland paddle. On the final day, they will test out their kayaks at the Pottstown YMCA pool. Cost is \$1,300 and class is limited to five.

All are welcome to come out and watch the process. For more information visit www.capefalconkayak.com, or call Hidden River Outfitters at (610) 287-7401.

Support the Schuylkill River Heritage Area

Join or renew online at www.schuylkillriver.org

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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