



SCHUYLKILL RIVER NATIONAL & STATE HERITAGE AREA

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For Immediate Release
October 5, 2010

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New Schuylkill Highlands Grant Program Round One Awards Total over \$99,000 Given to 10 Area Tourism and Conservation Projects

POTTSTOWN—The Schuylkill River Heritage Area together with Natural Lands Trust recently awarded \$99,104 in mini-grants for 10 Schuylkill Highlands CLI projects that benefit tourism and conservation efforts in the Schuylkill Highlands.

The grants are the first round of the newly established Schuylkill Highlands Mini-Grant Program, given through the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative (CLI), and funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the William Penn Foundation. A second round was announced October 1.

The Schuylkill Highlands is an area encompassing parts of Berks, Bucks, Chester, Lehigh, Montgomery, Lancaster and Lebanon counties containing the Schuylkill River watershed and the PA Highlands, both landscapes with nationally significant resources. The vision of the Schuylkill Highlands CLI is to preserve, restore and enhance the natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while encouraging sustainable practices and compatible economic development to create healthy and vibrant communities in this landscape.

The new Schuylkill Highlands Mini-Grant Program funds projects in two categories: natural resource-based conservation projects that conserve, protect or restore the natural resources in the Schuylkill Highlands, and nature-based tourism projects that aim to promote economic development.

“The Schuylkill River Heritage Area is pleased to partner with DCNR, Natural Lands Trust, the William Penn Foundation and the Schuylkill Highlands CLI to jointly administer these grants. Projects funded all promote conservation and enhance nature-based tourism in the Schuylkill Highlands, enabling more people to experience and value these critical natural lands,” said Kurt Zwinkl, executive director for the SRHA.

The 10 awards given as part of the 2010 Spring Grant Program are:

- \$20,000 to Union Township for installing links to area trails, including the Schuylkill River Trail, thereby promoting use and appreciation of open space and the Schuylkill River.
- \$10,000 to the City of Reading for improvements to Angelica Creek Park, including trail construction, stormwater and erosion improvements and an educational garden.
- \$20,000 to Berks County Conservancy for realigning a section of the Schuylkill River Trail from its current location along active railroad tracks to a safer location.
- \$3,424 to Friends of Hopewell Furnace to update a brochure on the Hopewell Big Woods to reflect enhanced nature-based tourism opportunities.
- \$3,200 to Hay Creek Watershed Association to secure permits for two pedestrian bridges over Hay Creek.
- \$10,000 to Phoenixville Borough for easements to complete the Schuylkill River Trail within the borough.
- \$10,000 to Amity Township to remove two invasive plant species in the Monocacy Hill Recreation Area to improve the forest’s health and unique biodiversity.
- \$9,980 to Montgomery County Lands Trust to undertake a feasibility study on the Daniel Hiester House and property located at the confluence of Ridge Valley Creek and the Unami Creek—an exemplary site for natural resource conservation and historic preservation.
- \$5,000 to the Delaware Riverkeepers to submit a stream upgrade petition to the Pennsylvania Environmental Quality Board for Mill Creek flowing through Union Township.
- \$7,500 to the Perkiomen Watershed Association for a long-range management plan involving education, outreach and action to curb the spread and eradicate the invasive water chestnut infestation in Delmont Lake and Unami Creek.

“The Schuylkill Highlands Grant Fund is a great way to encourage the advancement of strategic project work in this globally significant regional area, and we’re happy to hear about any potential projects of interest that align with our program goals,” said Schuylkill Highlands CLI Director Carol DeWolf.

Applications for the second grant round, announced October 1, are due on November 15. Grant guidelines and applications can be found online at the Schuylkill River Heritage Area (www.schuylkillriver.org) or Natural Lands Trust (www.natlands.org) websites.