



## **SCHUYLKILL RIVER** NATIONAL & STATE HERITAGE AREA

Schuylkill River Heritage Area  
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[www.schuylkillriver.org](http://www.schuylkillriver.org)

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### **Grant Provides Funding for Construction of Schuylkill River Trail Segment in Leesport**

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area was awarded a \$142,630 grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) for design and construction of a 2.2-mile section of the Schuylkill River Trail in Leesport.

The project is one of 14 trail projects throughout the southeastern Pennsylvania region to receive a total of \$5 million in funding through the DVRPC's Regional Trails Program, which is funded by the William Penn Foundation.

The new trail in Leesport will eventually connect to the larger Schuylkill River Trail (SRT), and will be located along what has been recognized as a high-priority gap in the SRT—the 20-mile Reading-to-Hamburg section. The Leesport piece will consist of a 10-foot wide, 2.2-mile, ADA-compliant, multiuse trail with a gravel surface, connecting Bern and Ontelaunee Townships through Leesport Borough.

The project calls for constructing two off-road trail segments connected by an on-road piece. This includes a northern trail segment, to be built along a former canal bed, stretching from Belleman's Church Road to Canal Street in Leesport. From Canal Street, signs will direct trail users to follow an on-road route that takes them to Wall Street, across the Schuylkill River along an existing bridge to South Schuylkill Avenue, and finally to Washington Street. From Washington Street it will become an off-road trail again, following an improved, existing footpath through a vacant field along the river and ending at Herbine's Lock, a remnant of the former Schuylkill Canal.

The new section will represent one of the first off-road pieces of the Reading-to-Hamburg segment of the Schuylkill River Trail. Currently, the Reading-to-Hamburg section is the largest remaining gap in the Schuylkill River Trail, measuring about 20-miles. Last year, the Schuylkill River Heritage Area created a signed, on-road route for cyclists wishing to continue along the trail from Reading to Hamburg. Plans call for constructing an off-road trail along that route as funds and resources become available.

When complete, the Schuylkill River Trail will total about 130 miles and stretch from Philadelphia to Pottsville.

Total cost of the project, which could begin as early as next year, is estimated at \$330,623. Remaining funds are being sought through a Community Conservation Partnership Grant from the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Schuylkill River Heritage Area will also supply a portion of the money.

For information on other trail projects awarded funds through the DVRPC Regional Trails Program visit [dvrpc.org](http://dvrpc.org).

*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.*