

SCHUYLKILL RIVER GREENWAYS
**RIDE FOR THE
RIVER**



**Do-It-Yourself Cycling Tour
Pottstown - Birdsboro
17.5 Miles, 10 Tour Stops!**

October 24 - November 7, 2020

Thank You to Our Sponsors



Tour Stop 1: POTTSTOWN RIVERFRONT PARK



Who dumped the concrete here?

SRG Offices at 140 College Drive are shown as a Gas House on the 1877 Montgomery County atlas. Prior to Pottstown's purchase, It was owned by the Philadelphia Electric Company who would periodically alter the building to suit the needs. Since there were no other recorded uses of the property, the concrete was most likely dumped there when the Gas Works was reconditioned.

Why are industrial remnants by the river?

This is one of many industrial remnants found along Pottstown's riverbanks.

During its days as an industrial powerhouse, Bethlehem Steel, forges, furnaces, and Firestone called the Borough home.



Tour Stop 2: UPPER POTTS GROVE BROWNFIELDS



What is this mound?

The mound is actually a berm surrounding a lagoon which impounds runoff from what was at one time a hub of heavy industry bordered by the Reading RR (now Norfolk Southern) and the Pennsylvania RR (now the SRT) railroads from Riverfront Park in Pottstown to Grosstown Road in Stowe.

How did this site become a brownfield?

Coal and raw materials were brought in and stored; and ash, slag, and other wastes disposed of on-site over many decades. Consequently, the soil and groundwater were left significantly contaminated. Former industrial sites such as this which communities hope to redevelop are often called 'brownfields.'

Tour Stop 3: AMITY TOWNSHIP MORLATTON UNDERPASS

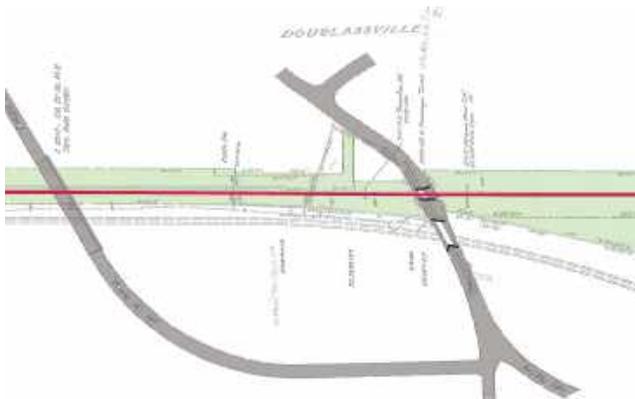


Why are there two railroads?

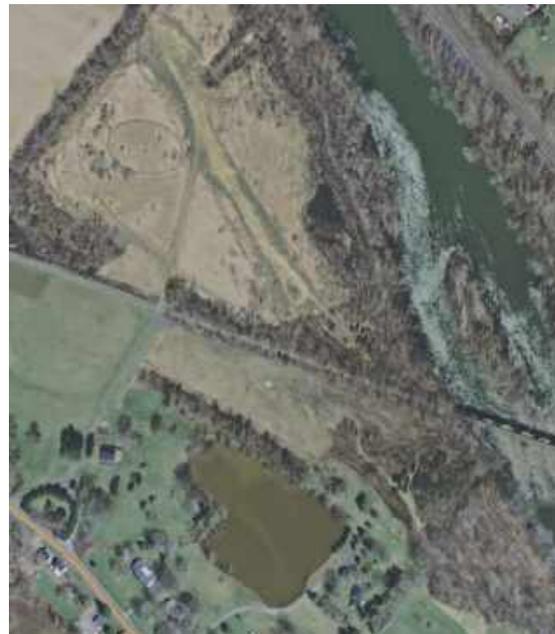
In response to the Reading Railroad's incursions into New Jersey, the Pennsylvania Railroad attempted to bankrupt the Reading Railroad by competing with its Schuylkill Valley main line for coal transport.

Why does the road end at the railroad?

The dead end Reading Philadelphia Pike was the original route between the two cities. Since other routes replaced this road, it was agreed that the Pike could be abandoned when the railroads were built.



Tour Stop 4: DOUGLASSVILLE DISPOSAL SUPERFUND SITE



The mound with the "No Trespassing" signs is where treated contaminated soils were placed, then lime-stabilized, and capped. The short vertical pipes you may see poking from the ground are the tops of monitoring wells to measure leached groundwater contaminants. More wells are located in the woods and field across the trail to assess possible contaminant flow into the river.

Tour Stop 5: UNION TOWNSHIP VERNAL PONDS

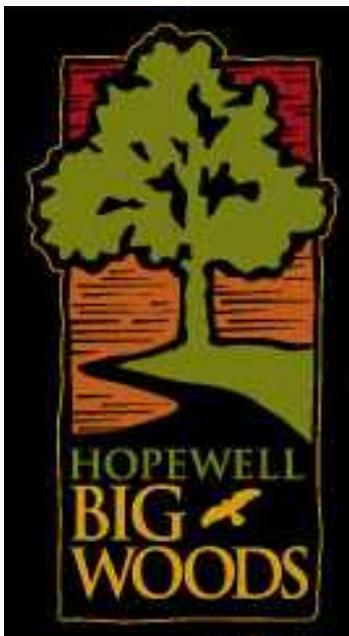


What's going on here with the water?

These are vernal ponds (also called 'vernal pools'). They are shallow depressions of standing water that collect during the spring and early summer before drying up. Vernal ponds play an important role in stream hydrology. Because they store snow melt and rain runoff for months at a time, they can reduce

the flooding of nearby streams and rivers. Soil microbes in the sediment of the ponds remove polluting contaminants. With unusually heavy summer rains they may become inundated again. This photo taken in September 2020 shows standing water from the runoff of Tropical Storm Isaias six weeks earlier.

Tour Stop 6: HOPEWELL BIG WOODS TRAIL



Why is there a trail here?

This trail connects the Schuylkill River Trail to the some 15,000 acres of protected woodlands that comprise of the Hopewell Big Woods.

Why are the Hopewell Big Woods important?

It is the last large, unbroken forest left in southeastern Pennsylvania. Hopewell Big Woods is an exceptional resource with hundreds of plant and bird species, pristine forest, unique wetlands, and clean streams. The woods provide open space and drinking water, as well as unique scenic, cultural, and natural resources.

This conservation area encircles French Creek State Park and the Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, and is greatly valued as an asset for public recreation. An expanse of over 73,000 acres, or 110 square miles, Hopewell Big Woods is a rarity in our landscape.

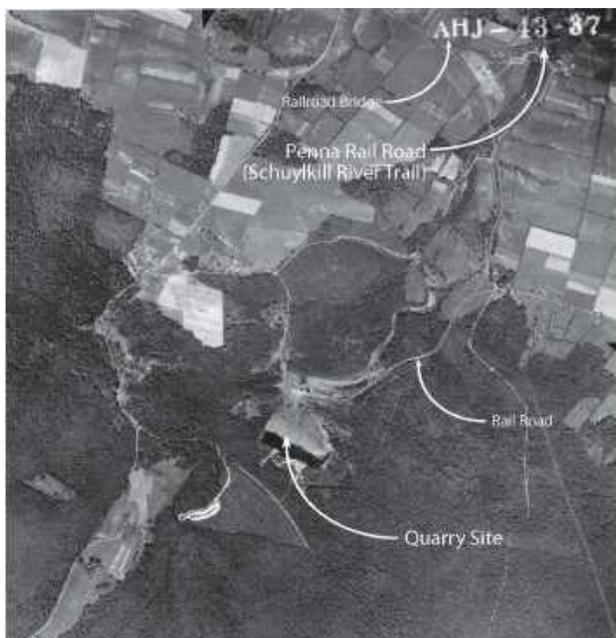
Tour Stop 7: OLEY VALLEY AND MONOCACY HILL

This is a great view!



From this location you can see many miles across the Oley Valley to the north, surrounded by the weather resistant Reading Prong metamorphic rocks which form the distant horizon. By contrast, the Oley Valley is underlain by much weaker limestones and red siltstones and shales along the Schuylkill River. Prominent in the near distance to the east is Monocacy Hill. Monocacy Hill superficially resembles a volcano, but it's not. It is composed of hard basaltic composition volcanic rock which is more resistant to erosion than the red siltstones and shales that it intruded.

Tour Stop 8: ABANDONED BRIDGE



Why is there a bridge next to the trail and not under it?

The bridge supported a side track connecting the Pennsylvania Railroad (now the SRT) across Six Penny Creek to a quarry organized by Schuylkill Valley Stone Company in 1907. A railroad spur was built from the Pennsylvania Railroad to the quarry in the 1910s. The John T. Dyer Quarry Co. bought the quarry in 1915 as part of a consolidation of five area quarries.

Tour Stop 9: UNION MEADOWS PARK



How was this property used?

This photo shows a dredge operator. This area was used as a desilting basin to remove coal silt from the Schuylkill River. The desilting basin, a big tub with a drain weir at one end, was constructed to receive coal silt, called

culm, that was sucked from the dredge's cutting heads through steel pipes. The silt was later retrieved and recycled for bricketts, fuel, and charcoal filters. This public works effort, called the Schuylkill Project, was one of the first ever Federal and State funded environmental clean up projects in the 1940s. The project was to dredge the coal silts from the Schuylkill River to improve water quality for drinking and for wildlife habitat.

Tour Stop 10: HAY CREEK AQUEDUCT



What was the extent of the Schuylkill Navigation System?

At many points along the Schuylkill, the river is too shallow for boats to navigate through. The Navigation System consisted of 18 dams, 53.73 hand dug canal miles, 120 locks, 17 stone aqueducts, one 450 foot long tunnel, 50.50 miles of slack water pools, and 31 houses for toll and lock keepers when it was completed in May 1825.

This navigation system was used to ship mainly coal and other industrial goods to towns and cities along the River.

Are these stone abutments part of a bridge?

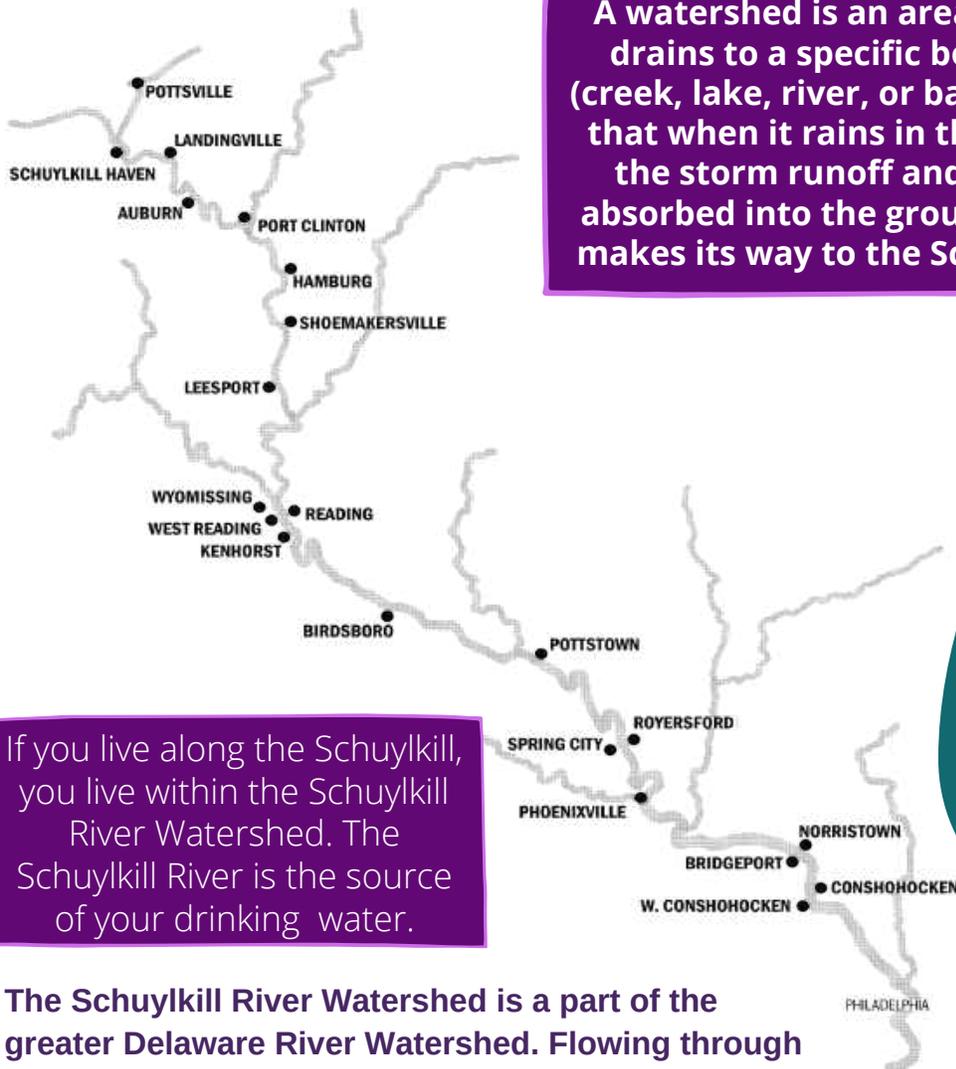
Yes, they were built before 1825 by the Schuylkill Navigation Company to accommodate a canal aqueduct to float cargo boats over Hay Creek. It looked similar to the restored Alleghany Aqueduct at Seyferts.



SCHUYLKILL RIVER GREENWAYS

NATIONAL
HERITAGE
AREA

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a specific body of water (creek, lake, river, or bay). This means that when it rains in this area, all of the storm runoff and rain that is absorbed into the ground eventually makes its way to the Schuylkill River.



If you live along the Schuylkill, you live within the Schuylkill River Watershed. The Schuylkill River is the source of your drinking water.

Did you know that the Schuylkill River provides drinking water to almost 2 million people?

The Schuylkill River Watershed is a part of the greater Delaware River Watershed. Flowing through four states (NY, PA, NJ, DE) This web of rivers and streams provides drinking water for 15 million people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
IMAGES, AND MAPS VISIT
schuylkillriver.org/ridetour

Scan QR Code



Thank you for participating and supporting our mission.

We connect residents, visitors and communities to the *Schuylkill River* and the *Schuylkill River Trail* by serving as a catalyst for civic engagement and economic development in order to foster stewardship of the watershed and its heritage.

Donate now at schuylkillriver.org