





# HERITAGE AREA 101

The Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area celebrates the Schuylkill River watershed as one of America's most significant cultural, historical and industrial regions. The boundaries of the Heritage Area cover the Schuylkill River watershed in Schuylkill, Berks, Chester, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties. This region is nationally significant for the role it played in the American, Industrial and Environmental Revolutions.

### What is a Heritage Area?

A National Heritage Area is a place designated by the United States Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive and distinctive landscape that is important to our nation's story. The Schuylkill River received this designation in 2000. Prior to that, in 1995, it was designated a Pennsylvania Heritage Area.

As a National & State Heritage Area we seek to connect people and communities to the Schuylkill River. In 2017 we adopted a new 10-year strategic plan, (Re) Turn to the River, that renews our mission, vision and values, and lays out a road map for our future.

The plan sets goals that call for completing the Schuylkill River Trail, connecting communities to the river, restoring and protecting the watershed, engaging new constituents, and improving our organization. In the pages of this Annual Report, you will see that we have worked throughout 2019-2020 on each of those goals.

## 2019-2020 BY THE NUMBERS



# ENGAGEMENT

Building Constituencies That Value and Protect the River

Connecting people and communities to the Schuylkill River and the Schuylkill River Trail through enjoyable programming and education is the center of all we do.

The global pandemic presented a unique set of challenges to us in engaging with our partners, members, and constituents in a personal way. However, our board and staff rose to the occasion and developed new and creative ways to further our mission and connect with individuals, families, and communities.

### 22ND ANNUAL SCHUYLKILL RIVER SOJOURN

The 22nd Annual Schuylkill River Sojourn went virtual for the first time in 2020 and featured two evening video live streams as well as three days of in-person paddling as we hosted 25 paddlers each day from August 14 to August 16.

### PEDAL & PADDLE

Our successful Pedal and Paddle program proved to be a perfect fit for the challenges presented last year by the pandemic. With only 15 participants and biking and kayaking serving a great way to recreate while social distancing, we were able to hold four Pedal and Paddles in 2020.

### RIDE FOR THE RIVER

The 2020 Ride for the River was a Do-It-Yourself cycling ride on the Schuylkill River Trail with 10 interpretive tour stops where participants learned about mysteries, bridges and historical sites. At the closing celebration, Sly Fox presented SRG with a check of \$7,910.50 from the sales of this year's SRT Ale.

### SERVING THE SCHUYLKILL & PADDLING FILM FESTIVAL

We combined our annual Serving the Schuylkill recognition event with our first-ever hosting of the International Paddling Film Festival and 150 people attended the dual event, which took place at a drive-in theater and allowed everyone to view the award ceremony and the films together while socially distancing.

# SRT

Building, Maintaining and Promoting the Schuylkill River Trail.



Completing the Schuylkill River Trail is a top priority goal of SRG's strategic plan. Currently about 75 miles of trail are completed, and the finished SRT will be just over 120 miles. In 2019 and 2020 we moved closer to the goal of finishing the trail with progress on three construction projects and two planning projects.

### MILL CREEK SECTION IN SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

This 5-mile trail section north of St. Clair will feature a relocated historic truss bridge over Mill Creek at Coal Creek Plaza, Final Design for this section will occur in 2021 and 2022.

### THE WHITTAKER BRIDGE

This new trail bridge will allow cyclists and pedestrians to cross over Route 724 in Union Township and will eliminate an unsafe road crossing.

### THE AUBURN BRIDGE

The rehabilitation of this historic railroad bridge and a new trail section will connect Schuylkill and Berks Counties and complete the SRT from Hamburg to Auburn.

### PLANNING FOR NEW TRAIL IN SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

SRG completed two feasibility studies in 2019 examining the potential alignment of future trail for two sections: from Auburn to Landingville and from Mount Carbon to Schuylkill Haven.

### TAKING CARE OF THE TRAIL

SRG owns and maintains over 33 miles of the Schuylkill River Trail in Berks and Schuylkill Counties. In 2019 our organization increased its commitment to keeping the SRT safe, clean and enjoyable and increased our maintenance budget dramatically. We couldn't manage all of this trail without our incredible volunteers, and in 2019-20 we grew our ambassador program to over 80 participants. We are incredibly grateful to all the volunteers who help us keep the SRT in top shape!

### FIXIT STATIONS

In 2019, SRG worked with partners up and down the SRT to install seven new Fixit stations at trailheads all along the trail. The program was funded by REI, DCNR and Sly Fox, and cyclists have enjoyed the convenience of access to minor repair tools and a bike pump when they need it most.



# CONSERVATION

Restoring and Protecting the Schuylkill River for future generations.

Schuylkill River Greenways prioritizes raising awareness and understanding of the significance of the Schuylkill River as a regional natural and recreational resource. We work to address water quality issues through public/private partnerships, outreach initiatives and funding programs aimed at promoting conservation and maximizing opportunities to educate children and adults through programs and events.

In 2020, SRG and our partners in the **Schuylkill River Restoration Fund** celebrated 15 years of grantmaking and project implementation. Since 2006, the Restoration Fund has provided a program that allows local nonprofits and government agencies to accomplish projects that will improve the water quality in the Schuylkill River watershed. This program has supported over 120 conservation projects thanks to the generous funding of our Restoration Fund Partners: Aqua PA, DTE, Exelon, Mom's Organic Market and the Philadelphia Water Department.

This past June, \$307,695 was awarded to nine projects in four Pennsylvania counties that will improve water quality in the Schuylkill River, a source of drinking water for almost 2 million people. These projects as well as the ones before them will impact communities, residents, and businesses throughout the region.

### 2019

Berks County Conservation District, Frontier Farm	\$13,625
Berks Nature, Love Farm	\$71,898
Berks Nature, Long Farm	\$55,000
Berks Nature, Ulsar Property	\$4,000
Maidencreek Township, Garcia Property	\$4,000
Northwestern Stables, Stormwater Project	\$50,000
Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Pink Creek Stormwater	\$65,000
Schuylkill Headwaters Association, Porter Floodplain	\$40,675
Wissahickon Sustainability Council, Phase 3 Schoolyard	\$22,161
TOTAL	\$326,359

### 2020

Berks County Conservation District, Grube Farm	\$61,625
Berks County Conservation District, Irish Creek Stables	\$51,420
Berks Nature, Gauker Farm	\$30,000
Berks Nature, Kunkle Farm	\$70,000
Charlestown Playhouse, Pickering Creek Stormwater	\$50,000
Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Smith Run	\$35,000
Berks Nature, Smith Property	\$4,000
Berks Nature, Olivet Blue Mountain Property	\$4,000
Lower Frederick Township, Reynolds/Cabin Craft Property	\$1,650
TOTAL	\$307,695

### PLANNED GIVING

# CREATE A LEGACY

Supporting Our Mission for Your Children, Grandchildren and Beyond.

The Heritage Legacy Society is a way that you can support the Schuylkill River Greenways for generations to come. By including SRG in your estate planning, there's no impact on your current lifestyle.

With more people than ever connecting with the Schuylkill River, the fabulous trail and beautiful natural settings, NOW is the time to ensure that all of the benefits, opportunities and experiences it offers are maintained and enhanced for future generations. However or wherever you connect to the Schuylkill River and Schuylkill River Trail, our story begins and ends with you and your support for our mission.

To join our Heritage Legacy Society please contact Elaine Paul Schaefer at ESchaefer@schuylkillriver.org or 484-945-0200

# EDUCATION

Fostering a love of nature.

SRG continues to build our watershed educational program, through which we seek to inspire children and young adults to appreciate, embrace and protect the environment. Our programming has been quite nimble and has adapted to the constantly changing parameters around group instruction.

In the spring and summer of 2020, we pivoted to provide our Schuylkill Explorers programming in a safe and accessible way. With the help of our 2020 Alliance for Watershed Education Fellow, Veronica Wynn, our education department created and distributed take-home environmental education kits to over 330 children and teens in the Heritage Area. These kits were offered at pick up days on the Schuylkill River Trail and in conjunction with live Zoom education sessions and pre-recorded videos of how to run the experiments at home. Schuylkill Explorers Kits included worksheets and experiment materials as well as magnifying glasses, binoculars, and nature journals to encourage exploration of nature offline. Our Education Director, Sarah Crothers, continued to utilize the kit model to connect with virtual students during the winter months.

In the fall, we hired Diana Maher as our Education Coordinator to help expand our pandemic-safe programming. From September to November, we led afterschool program sessions on Zoom for elementary students in Pottstown School District. Students participated in various activities together such as nature yoga, journaling scientific observations, arts and crafts, and bird watching.

We took our Schuylkill Environmental Career Opportunities (Schuylkill ECO) Program to an online platform and were able to engage high school and college students from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Connecticut. Participants met on Zoom for one-hour sessions over six weeks to learn and discuss different environmental topics, such as water pollution, ArcGIS applications, watershed management and career options.

### 2019-2020

# SPONSORS

All Type Fence Company  
Anonymous  
Aramark  
PA American Water  
Barbara Akins, CPA  
Bause Catered Events  
Berks County Bicycle Club  
Bikesport, Inc.  
Borough of West Conshohocken  
Boyer Engineering LLC  
Campbell Thomas & Co.  
Carl Landis  
Chester County Ciders  
Cyd Reider  
Desco  
Dodson Deitrich  
Dolan Law Group  
Duane Morris LLP  
DVRPC  
Evans Delivery Co.  
Exelon  
Explore Schuylkill  
Eye Consultants of PA  
First Energy Foundation

J. P. Mascaro  
James Parks  
Justi Group  
Kenneth and Jeanne Porter  
Lewis Environmental  
Liberty Environmental  
Longstreth Sporting Goods  
Lynx  
Margaret & David Langfitt Foundation  
MCCC  
MGK Industries  
O'Donnell, Weiss and Mattei, PC,  
Partnership for DE Estuary  
Peter Simone  
Rails to Trails Conservancy  
Reading Blue Mountain & Northern RR  
Rector Communications, Inc  
REI  
Robert Kuhlman  
Robert Thomas  
Rodger Krause, CPA Inc  
Sager and Sager Associates  
Schuylkill County Vision  
Schuylkill County Visitors Bureau

Simone Collins, Inc.  
Spotts Insurance Group  
Suburban Cyclists Unlimited  
Swisher Studios  
Sly Fox Brewing Company  
Take it Outdoors  
The Aranda Group  
The Hill School  
Thomas Troutman  
Toll Bros  
Tompkins Vist Bank  
Tooth of the Lion  
Trace Pheasantry & Family  
Traffice Planning & Designs, Inc.  
Turn 5, Inc.  
Vist Bank  
Warrick Jewelers  
Wells, Hoffman, Holloway & Medvesky  
Weaver, Reckner and Reinhart  
Wilson Consulting Group, PC  
Wrigley's Business Products  
and Services, LLC

# YOUR SUPPORT IS VITAL!

Donate to SRG and Invest in the SRT and the River.

Your tax-deductible contribution will help us preserve and enhance the Schuylkill River, finish building the Schuylkill River Trail, improve water quality, and support our residents and communities with educational and recreational programming on and beside the river and the trail.

You can participate in any one (or more!) of several ways: become a member, make a memorial gift, join the Heritage Legacy Society, or contribute to our Endowment Fund. Learn more about all of these options at [www.schuylkillrivergreenways.org/donate](http://www.schuylkillrivergreenways.org/donate).

Thank you for your support and belief in our mission!