PROTECTING & CONNECTING

Our mission is to 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.
Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present the Schuylkill River Greenways NIA 2018 Annual Report. Our work to protect the Schuylkill River and connect people to it continues to drive all that we do as we expand our reach and engage new audiences in the region. We have seen our sights on completing the Schuylkill River Trail and diversifying our programming, educational opportunities and our following. Our new endeavors include the Heritage & Hops Brewery Tour program, movie nights by the river and our informal Greenways Get-Together visits with members to partner sites. Meanwhile, we are proud of the enduring success of our existing programs: the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund, the incredibly popular Schuylkill River Sojourn, Ride for the River, Pedal and Paddles, and our Scenes of the Schuylkill Art Show, which attracts ever more talented artists each year.

This year marked the 13th year of our tremendous Schuylkill River Restoration Fund program, which awards grants to projects that focus on reversing the negative effects of stormwater runoff, abandoned mine drainage and agricultural pollution. The program is funded through public/private partnerships, and since its inception in 2006, the fund has distributed over $3.6 million and leveraged another $6 million. For more than successful 100 projects. This work is more imperative today than ever as government at all levels has decreased investment in regulation and enforcement.

As you flip through the pages of this report, keep in mind that all of our work—from printing and distributing trail maps to teaching environmental lessons for summer camps—is carefully designed to encourage stewardship of our environment, history and culture. We are grateful for your support because now, more than ever, we rely on member donations and private funding to finance all the projects and programs that truly make this region a better place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

Elaine Paul Schaefer
Executive Director

Wendi Wheeler
President, Board of Directors
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?

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 2018 on each of these goals.
In keeping with that goal, we administer the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund, providing grants to government agencies and nonprofit organizations for projects that improve the quality of water in the watershed. The fund is the result of a unique public/private partnership, with funders from a variety of entities, including Exelon Corp.’s Limerick Generating Station, the Philadelphia Water Department, Aqua PA, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, MOM’s Organic Market and DTE. A number of partners oversee the fund and its projects.

In 2018, we distributed Schuylkill River Restoration Fund grant awards totaling more than $379,000 to 9 projects that improve water quality in the river and its tributaries. Six of these projects focused on water quality improvement projects and three were land transaction grants providing protection of priority watershed parcels. Since being established in 2006, the fund has distributed over $3.6 million— and leveraged another $6 million— for over 100 projects that protect and restore the Schuylkill River.

FOCUS ON CONSERVATION
Restoring and Protecting the Schuylkill River for future generations.

A primary mission of the Schuylkill River Greenways NHA is to protect and conserve the Schuylkill River, which is a source of drinking water for over 1.5 million people. In 2018, we distributed Schuylkill River Restoration Fund grant awards totaling more than $379,000 to 9 projects that improve water quality in the river and its tributaries. Six of these projects focused on water quality improvement projects and three were land transaction grants providing protection of priority watershed parcels. Since being established in 2006, the fund has distributed over $3.6 million— and leveraged another $6 million— for over 100 projects that protect and restore the Schuylkill River.

Schuylkill River Greenways Receives 2018 Conservation Organization of the Year Award: The Schuylkill Conservation District honored Schuylkill River Greenways for making preservation a priority and for trail connections made in Schuylkill County. The award was presented during the Conservation District’s annual awards ceremony at Sweet Arrow Lake in August.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION
Fostering a love of nature.

Children are our future. Through our educational programs, SRG seeks to inspire children and youths to appreciate, embrace and protect the environment.

In 2018, over 540 children participated in the Schuylkill Explorers program. They engaged in trail walks, nature crafts, birding, fishing, journal making and other activities that foster a love of nature. In addition, our Education Coordinator developed programming in two Philadelphia high schools through our Schuylkill ECO Career Training program and introduced scores of young adults to the many possible career opportunities in the environmental and sustainability sector.

In addition to our Schuylkill Explorers program, we hired Summer Fellows Samantha Walters and Erin Moran to expand our summer programming. These young adults were two of 46 fellows hired by the 23 centers that make up the Alliance for Watershed Education (AWE) of the Delaware River. Over the summer, Samantha and Erin organized and held a successful community Ecofair in Royersford Borough and put on two movie nights by the river.

New in 2018 we partnered with Stroud Water Research Center to install a Mayfly water quality monitoring system in the Schuylkill River at Towpath Park in East Coventry, Chester County. This device measures the turbidity, conductivity and dissolved oxygen levels of the water. Working with our Education Coordinator, high school students from the Hill School in Pottstown participated in the installation of the device and continue to monitor and interpret its data.
The Schuylkill River Greenways’ signature project is working with partners to construct a 120-mile Schuylkill River Trail from Philadelphia to the river’s headwaters in Frackville. Completing the trail is a priority goal of our strategic plan.

Beginning the Process of Building a New Bridge
SRG was awarded a PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources grant totaling $196,501 to build a Schuylkill River Trail pedestrian bridge over Route 22 in Lower Township. To fund the estimated $1.6 million project, an additional $336,200 has been secured from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission along with a private donation of $50,000. All necessary easements and permits have been secured for this bridge, and final design, engineering and construction will occur in 2019.

Closing the Auburn Bridge Trail Gap
In partnership with Schuylkill Headwaters Association, Schuylkill River Greenways began a $2 million project through which a former Pennsylvania Railroad bridge in Auburn will be rehabilitated as part of the extension of the Schuylkill River Trail. The final design drawings are expected to be completed by fall 2019 with bids being accepted in spring 2020. The target date for the project completion is winter 2020.

Trail Construction in St. Clair, Schuylkill County
Working with our Sustainability Coordinator, LeSantha Naicker, we partnered with the Great Appalachian Valley Conservation Corps to lay the groundwork for trail extension at the very headwaters of the river in St. Clair.

Planning for Two New Sections of the SRT in Schuylkill County
In addition to the three construction projects listed above, SRG worked with several communities in Schuylkill County and consultant Simone Collins to create a feasibility study for two separate sections of trail in Schuylkill County—one section from Auburn to Landisville and one section connecting Mt. Carbon to Schuylkill Haven.

Volunteers
We don’t take care of the trail without volunteers. In 2018 we continued to grow our volunteer programs, with over 75 Trail Ambassadors providing a presence on the trail, and 455 people engaged in trail workdays, donating 5,176 work hours.

SRT AIE
In September, Sly Fox Brewing Company presented us with $5,630 to benefit the Schuylkill River Trail. The money was culled from the sale of the seasonal SRT AIE, bringing to over $730,000 the funds raised over four years from the “AIE for the Trail.” These funds are being used to improve signage and markings at road crossings. SRT AIE is released annually in April with the SRT Sprue, a series of events that celebrate the trail. We hosted three trail cleanups during the SRT Sprue, engaging 80 volunteers who spent a combined 120 hours cleaning the trail.

20th Annual Schuylkill River Sojourn
Over 200 paddlers from 12 states paddled the river during the 20th Annual Schuylkill River Sojourn, with 75 making the full trip from Schuylkill Haven to Philadelphia’s Boathouse Row. Over the years nearly 4,000 people from 25 states and four countries have paddled the sojourn.

Ride for the River
Nearly 300 cyclists rode a 16- or 40-mile route between Pottstown and Reading during our 3rd Annual Ride for the River. The ride, which both benefited and introduced people to the Schuylkill River Trail, began and ended at the Sly Fox Car Jam Festival.

Pedal & Paddle
We held five Pedal & Paddle events from May through September. Each event offers a mix of education and recreation that aims to foster a sense of stewardship for the river and the trail.

Scenes of the Schuylkill
The 15th Annual Scenes of the Schuylkill Art Festival featured 98 original works inspired by the Schuylkill River corridor. The event drew over 105 friends, supporters and members and touched a unique element of the community.

Throughout the year, we host events that enable us to connect people to the Schuylkill River & the Schuylkill River Trail. Our events all seek to mix recreation and fun with a message of conservation and stewardship, and we have introduced a few new programs to reach out to new constituencies.

Heritage & Hops
SRG introduced a new programming concept in 2018 called the Heritage & Hops series. This program brings our members to the many historic breweries in the Heritage Area and combines the history and culture of the brewery industry with tasty samplings of this burgeoning sector today!

Greenways Get-Togethers
During the SRT season, SRG staff arranges for a visit to one of our Heritage Area partners each month and invites our members and supporters to join us for a tour. This low-key and free program has included visits to the Mason Landfill and recycling center, the Allegheny Aqueduct, the Philadelphia Sewage Treatment Center and Montgomery County’s Pennypacker Mills.

Movies by the River
During the summer of 2018 SRG introduced a new family activity by the river—movie watching! We hosted a screening of Wonder Woman Phoenixville and The Lorax in Schuylkill Haven and hope to expand upon this well-received program in 2019.
2018 SCHUYLKILL RIVER RESTORATION FUND

In 2018, we distributed Schuylkill River Restoration Fund grants totaling $704,727 to nine projects to improve water quality in the Schuylkill River, including six projects that focused on stormwater runoff, abandoned mine drainage and agricultural pollution. Also awarded were two land transaction grants that assisted with protection of a priority watershed parcel.

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.

PLANNED GIVING

CREATE A LEGACY

Supporting Our Mission for Your Children, Grandchildren and Beyond.
Inspired and guided by the bold vision set out in our new strategic plan, the following funding opportunities outline specific impacts achievable by Schuylkill River Greenways with your support:

The Schuylkill River Trail
- To build a trail and construct bridges $5 million over the next 5 years.
- For trail maintenance and emergency repairs $300,000 annually.
- To establish a fund for land acquisition as opportunities arise $1 million.

Economic Development Collaborations
- To promote and advance fledgling projects along the Schuylkill River and the Trail, Schuylkill River Greenways seeks to establish a Community Investment Fund as a means to inject seed funding into early-stage projects and foster collaborative public-private efforts that positively impact local communities and advance our mission.
- In 2019 we entered into a partnership with two private outdoor outfitters to work together and grow the recreation industry in the many river towns up and down the Schuylkill River. We strive to invest in this sector and bring positive economic activity to all of these areas.

Protecting the Schuylkill Watershed and Improving Water Quality
- The River Restoration Fund currently funds projects totaling approximately $500,000 annually. However, due to higher levels of funding requests, the annual goal is $500,000.
- Schuylkill River Greenways seeks to contribute to this goal by establishing a $2 million endowment for the Restoration Fund that will ultimately provide an additional $20,000 per year for grants to be awarded from the River Restoration Fund and leverage additional support from our partners.

Community Engagement and Education
- To support our annual operating budget for education, engagement and outreach.
- To enable growth and expansion of our educational programming initiatives. In 2018 over 500 schoolchildren visited our facility and participated in our nature-based programming. The demand is much higher and we seek to provide even more opportunities.

2018 EVENT SPONSORS

Schuylkill River Sojourn Sponsors
- A.D. Meyer
- Receiv-Celebration Events
- Borough of West Conshohocken
- Campos-Caravan-Knight
- Delaware River Basin Commission
- Duane Morris LLP
- DVRCP
- Event Network of Companies
- Eye Consultants of Pennsylvania, PC
- J. M. Swank & Sons
- Liberty Environmental, Inc.
- Montgomery County Community College.

Ride for the River Sponsors
- B&B Glass
- Barbara Aben Certified Public Account
- Berks Nature
- Biking PAs
- Campbell, Thomas & Company
- Carbona Engineering Group, LLC
- Chester County Color Works
- D&B
- Delaware Regional Planning Commission
- Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
- Giant Food Stores (in-kind) $25 gift card

Scenes of the Schuylkill Sponsors
- Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
- Dallas Law Group, LLC
- Hubbard’s Inn
- MCC.

Above & Beyond Donors (Contributions of $1,000 or more)

2019 PRIORITIES

Funding Allocation Priorities for 2019 and Beyond.

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.
improve access and promote use of the development; drive economic growth; Your support for Schuylkill River possibilities of living, working commercial and residential wherever or wherever you connect to the Schuylkill River and Schuylkill River Trail, we believe in your support for Schuylkill River protecting & connecting protecting & connecting