

COLUMBIA CROSSING ANNUAL REPORT

2017

MISSION

Susquehanna Heritage's mission at Columbia Crossing is to share the river's historic, scenic, and recreational stories and experiences with residents and visitors, with a special focus on bringing river heritage to life for young people.

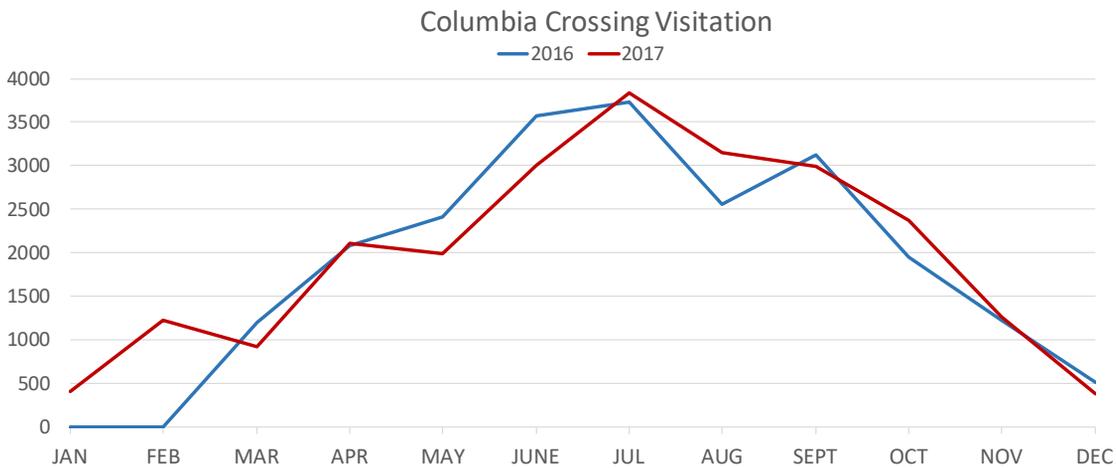
2017 HIGHLIGHTS

- Hosted the National Audubon Photography Exhibit
- Displayed exhibit of local river history
- Developed two new reoccurring children's programs
- Canoemobile Field Trips with 400 local students
- Earned GetOutdoorsPA Grant to supply binoculars and GPS units for wildlife and geocaching programs
- Rivertowns Walk Weekend that brought 500 visitors to Columbia, Marietta, & Wrightsville
- Ten FREE Yoga programs with SWAY YOGA
- Co-hosted a new Duck Decoy Contest with Delta Waterfowl
- Increased facility rental revenue
- Hosted over twenty meetings for community partners
- Installed gallery hanging system and panels



VISITATION

Columbia Crossing assisted over 23,000 visitors this year, slightly more than last year.



	2016	2017
JAN	0	404
FEB	0	1230
MAR	1201	915
APR	2082	2102
MAY	2414	1984
JUNE	3566	3001
JUL	3725	3838
AUG	2553	3156
SEPT	3122	2994
OCT	1950	2377
NOV	1220	1263
DEC	516	378

Columbia Crossing welcomed many trail visitors to the center in 2017. The continued popularity of the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail has helped us retain and attract visitors. Helping visitors find, use, and enjoy the trail became a major talking point. Construction on the trail in Marietta and in Conoy township were important to our visitors. Local and regional residents applauded the trail and its plans for expansion.

Visitation is defined as an individual that enters the building and is greeted by our front desk. Those individuals who visit the restroom via outdoor entrances or who park and go directly to the park, trail, or water access points are not counted. All those that visit after operating hours are also not counted. This means that the number of the

visitors tracked will always be lower than the total number of persons benefitting from and enjoying the center.

BY THE NUMBERS

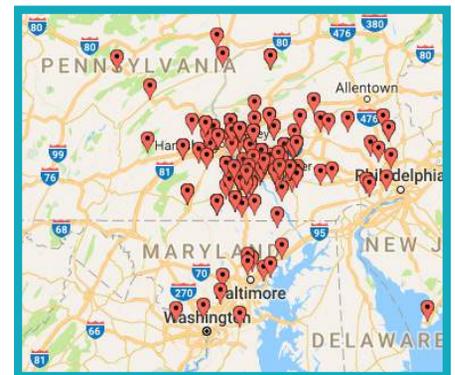
Our total 2016 visitation was 22,350 people. In 2017, we helped over 23,642 visitors.

WHO ARE THEY

Columbia Crossing had a diverse mix of visitors including rugged outdoor enthusiasts, casual bicyclists, families, history buffs, and active seniors. Because we offer a variety of experiences there is a variety of visitor types. Regular conversations with our visitors helps us to gauge the needs and wants of our different visitor groups and develop proper exhibits and programs.

WHEN DO THEY VISIT

Susquehanna Heritage tracks visitation every day, keeping note of weather and any special events that may effect visitation. Our results show that our busiest day of the week is Sunday. Whether it is during our in-season, extended hours or our shorter, off-season hours, Sunday trumps all other days of the week. Our slowest day is Tuesday. We are only open on Tuesdays during the in-season. This trend will likely continue as people will assume we are closed.



WHERE ARE THEY FROM

Susquehanna Heritage tracked visitors' home zip code through a guest log at our front desk. Only 300 zip codes were collected and analyzed this year. However, the results show strong regional visitation.

It also shows that locals are bringing their families visiting from out of our area. We noticed that many out-of-state visitors were guided by their local family members. Residents from twenty-one different states visited Columbia Crossing. These states included Idaho, Nevada, Texas, Mississippi and Connecticut among others.

International visitors came from countries like Canada, Belgium, France, and Scotland.



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A major part of Susquehanna Heritage's mission at Columbia Crossing is to offer a variety of programs and events related to a broad spectrum of river related themes.

Program development at Columbia Crossing focuses on engaging young people in our local history and our river. We are proud to announce that in January 2018 Allison Aubrey will transition from part-time to full-time allowing for further program development.

In 2017, Columbia Crossings hosted a mix of educational, health, history, recreational, and children's programs for our visitors and community members. Hosting two or three monthly events keeps our community engaged.

50 programs or activities were offered to the public in 2017. Including

- Yoga on the Deck
- Susquehanna Saturdays
- Birding Field Trip
- Rivertowns Walk Weekend
- National Trails Day
- Printmaking & Petroglyphs
- Canoemobile
- Pumpkin Party
- River Crossing Lecture
- Geocaching in the Riverlands
- Ornament Making
- Railroad Safety Day
- Creatures of the Night
- Ranger Hour
- Art Painting Event
- Conejohela Duck Decoy Contest
- Audubon Birding Talk
- Nature Photography Workshop



EXHIBITS

Susquehanna Heritage displayed five different exhibits at Columbia Crossing in 2017. The year started with a display of all the Public Art Station creations made by our local community members. In February, we hosted the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership's 2016 Photography Contest Award Winners. As a result, more entries from the lower Susquehanna were sent to this year's contest.

A partnership with the York Audubon

Society helped us to bring the National Audubon Photography Winners to the exhibit gallery in March. These stunning images were only expected to stay for three weeks. Luckily, a new set was printed allowing us to keep the images up through Memorial Day.

In June, a custom designed local history exhibit was premiered. Manager, Hope Byers worked diligently all winter and spring researching information, collecting photographs, and designing panels for the display. It was well received by the local community, who appreciated the River Crossing history.



Finally in September, Columbia Crossing welcomed the river paintings of local artist Diana Thomas. Her Current Color collection showcased the Lower Susquehanna in fifty-two paintings.

We will continue to bring compelling exhibits to Columbia Crossing.

GENERATING REVENUE

Susquehanna Heritage revised facility rental policies in 2017 to reflect policy changes made by the Borough of Columbia. Allowing the consumption of beer and wine inside the building created an opportunity to generate more revenue from rentals. Events included anniversary dinners, birthday parties, bridal showers, wedding ceremonies, strategic planning meetings, christmas parties, and luncheons. Columbia Crossing was also used by our community partners at no cost for a variety of reasons. Many local associations, chambers of commerce, and committees held important meetings and increased visibility of our facility. We continue to offer discounts to not-for profit and/or partner organizations.

Facility Rental Revenue

	2016	2017
# Rentals	14	28
Revenue	\$5,587	\$10,655



MERCHANDISE SALES

In addition to facility rentals, Susquehanna Heritage has expanded merchandise sales at Columbia Crossing. We have partnered with local suppliers like Grumpy Bear Granola and Gorman Distribution to sell water, iced tea, and trail mix. We have also added new products like stickers, postcards, and t-shirts. Gross profits from these products was \$2,575 in 2017. Only about 50% of that was profit but sales encourage us to expand our options.



REGIONAL EFFORTS

Susquehanna Heritage has always envisioned the Columbia Crossing River Trails Center as the hub for the Susquehanna Riverlands. Multiple meetings and conferences were held for the Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape Initiative, which was created by DCNR and is led by a coalition of communities, organizations, and agencies.

Susquehanna Heritage leads the Tourism Development effort for the Susquehanna Riverlands. In 2017, Columbia Crossing hosted a Familiarization Tour to help local hotels attract more visitors (or get them to stay longer) using the Riverlands regional attractions. Additionally, Columbia Crossing has been the distribution site for over 35,000 Map & Guides that orient

visitors to the Riverlands region. In 2018, Susquehanna Heritage plans to improve our relationship and engagement with the York and Lancaster visitor bureaus to attract more out-of-state visitors to our area.

Columbia Crossing continues to have a strong role in two important local committees: the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail Committee and the Columbia River Park Advisory Committee. Staff regularly attends meetings of the groups to help with trail projects and river park expansion plans. These meetings also make sure staff can share the most accurate information about trail access, improvements, and usage.

