



# Schuylkill River Towns Volunteer Welcome Kit





## From Executive Vice President Patrick Starr:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), I want to thank you for your interest in the Schuylkill River and the Schuylkill River Trail. The Schuylkill River, voted “2014 River of the Year” is an exceptional resource for paddling, fishing, birding and the trail provides xxx miles for walking, running and cyclists of all levels and is the spine of our regional outdoor recreation community.

The Schuylkill River Town Program (SRP) focuses on four former industrial towns along the Schuylkill River, Manayunk, Conshohocken, Norristown and Phoenixville to promote the use of the river and adjacent trail in a variety of ways to residents and visitors. By volunteering, you help protect the river and trail while building a personal relationship with these assets resulting in active stewardship.

The Schuylkill River Town Program welcomes volunteers of all ages and backgrounds to assist with programs, events and a variety of activities.

Volunteers are true partners in our Program. We cannot be successful without you.

# Welcome to the Schuylkill River Town Program (SRTP)

This Volunteer Welcome Kit has been produced to introduce you to the opportunities for volunteering with the Schuylkill River Town Program and help you enjoy your time more. This overview probably doesn't answer all your questions about the Program but we hope you will take the time to attend one of our local action teams to learn our immediate and long-term goals first hand. Get involved and help communities improve the quality of life for people who live, work and play in the River Towns; transform your community and have fun doing it!

We want you to feel comfortable with us. We depend on you—your success is our success. This pamphlet has been organized to help you find information quickly and we encourage you to reach out to us with questions, suggestions or comments in general.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook and look for our “soon-to-be-announced” web connection for all the latest information!

The Schuylkill River Program is managed by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and funded by William Penn Foundation

Thank you for giving your time and talents to this dynamic and important program.

## The Schuylkill River Town Program

Connects people, residents and visitors alike with the river and trail through a variety of programs and immersive experiences.

Foster stewardship for the environment by providing interaction with nature and nature based resources

Provide access to nature for people of every age and demographic.

Facilitate events like clean-ups, art displays and programs that appeal to broad and diverse populations

Conserve, leverage and complement the expertise and resources of existing community residents and their passions





## The Schuylkill River Town Program

The Schuylkill River has shaped our region, the state and even the nation, playing a significant role in our collective histories.

As a key component in the industrial revolution, the river became home to towns that evolved into hubs of manufacturing, mining and transportation. These “river towns” were the life-blood of our country but rivers paid a high price. Pollutants poisoned the water and when manufacturing declined, left buildings shuttered and empty, a sad commentary on once thriving communities. Our river died and with it, local economies.

However, with a growing awareness of lost resources like birds, fish and drinking water, the rebirth of the Schuylkill River began; with it, an increase interest in outdoor recreation and nature based activities. The Schuylkill River provides an exceptional opportunity to bike, hike, bird watch, fish and paddle – in your backyard – in your community. As our population lives longer lives and pursues healthier lifestyles the number of people seeking outdoor experience is significantly growing. More and more residents and businesses locate in towns where there is access to the Schuylkill River and adjacent trail.





In addition to personal health, the Schuylkill River and trail is a potential economic engine, attracting service providers like restaurants, coffee shops, bike and kayak rental operators and lodging. To address and leverage the growing recreational market and fully realize the economic impact, a strategic initiative was developed to draw on community engagement, build on assets and leverage regional relationships.

The Schuylkill River Town Program (SRTP) is based on a cooperative, collaborative approach that fosters closer connections to the river that potentially engages local residents; attracts visitors and businesses to spur economic and environmental revivals.

We focus on four former industrial towns along the Schuylkill River: Manayunk, Conshohocken, Norristown and Phoenixville. Each town has an active action team dedicated to improving access and enjoyment with the river and adjacent trail.

As you read this pamphlet of information, you will discover our dynamic partnerships, programs, activities and details of what we do and why we do it!





## Action Team Member Information

The SRTP depends on Action Team volunteers to make the program successful. We value your passion for community and individual skills to help create and implement a program that will benefit the health of you, your neighbors' and town's economic vitality.

Your responsibility as an action team member:

Attend monthly meetings whenever possible

Participate in events when your schedule permits

Provide feedback and ideas to enhance the goals and objectives outlined by SRTP

Be realistic in accepting your committee participation considering your interests, skills and availability as well as the needs of your community.

Follow through on assignments or tasks, reporting back to the action team on a monthly basis

Action Teams meet on the following day & times:

Phoenixville	1st Monday of the month @ 5:30	KMS offices - Bridge Street
Conshohocken	3rd Monday of the month @ 7:00	Great American Pub – Fayette St.
Norristown	4th Wednesday of the month @ 3:00	Barton Partner -Main Street

Minutes are distributed shortly after the meeting to keep everyone apprised of project status and other activity. The meetings are informal; we respect your time and typically the meeting last one hour.

We recognize that schedules may conflict with monthly meetings so if you cannot be an active member of your local action team, please consider joining a committee that can “meet” weekly or monthly via phone or email to collaborate with action team members and accomplish goals.



## Skills, assets and unbridled creativity welcomed!

If you have a special skill, equipment or are wildly creative, we could use your help!

SRTP always needs:

Artists and Musicians

Connections with civic groups, clubs or students to participate in clean-ups or events

Environmentalists & Naturalists

Gardeners or botanists who can contribute to trail and riverfront gardens

Grant writers

Folks of all ages who hate litter to help with bi-annual cleanups

Historians to research a topic or lead a tour

Photographers & videographers to help show the world our beautiful River Towns

Outdoor recreationalists (walkers, bikers, hikers, paddlers, birders, geo-caching fanatics)

People with trucks or vans to help with heavy lifting

Techie type folks

Bloggers and journalists to get the word out to our communities





## Programs and events

SRT works with each town to determine the needs and venues to offer dynamic, interactive and fun programs. Sometimes we partner with existing events, bringing value and diversity; other times, we create programs for a specific audience. Below is a partial listing of our 2014 programs with more great things to come!

### Birds of a Feather-

**Birds of Prey** – What sets a raptor apart from your average visitor to the backyard feeder? Keen vision, talons, beaks are just a few characteristics but you can learn more at one of our Birds of Prey shows presented by Audubon or Great Valley Nature Center. These shows feature magnificent live birds and cool items used in demonstrations.

**Crows ... the smart bird!** – Crows are one of the smartest birds in existence. They have been known to attack bald eagles, use tools, and even sing opera! Their brain-to-body ratio is equivalent to that of a chimpanzee so join us the next time Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education present a program about these fascinating and clever birds.





### Take me to the River

SRT offers several programs to get folks on the river in a kayak or Dragon Boat providing a different perspective of the river and trail. Learn about the manufacturing history of the towns, the effect it had on the water and the incredible come-back story to where it is today! Our partners, Hidden River Tours and Norristown Dragon Boat Club provide the boats and instruction to create a memorable day on the river.

### Walking tours through towns

SRT with partner Fairmount Water Works and Montgomery County Historical Society have created easy, informative walking tours around our River Towns to highlight history and architecture. These tours are always a hit with local and regional residents. See the towns through a different prism and learn the insiders view on how towns developed.

### Much more for all ages

Book tours, art exhibits, workshops and festivals are taking place and continue to pop up on our calendar so don't wait. Like us on Facebook or sign up for the seasonal newsletter to make sure you don't miss the fun.

# Partnerships

SRT has reached out to local and regional partners to support our program content and marketing. Through collaboration, we are able to build robust experiences and broaden our reach throughout the city of Philadelphia and along the Schuylkill River. Each partner brings something special to the table; we will continue to diversify our partnerships and add to the mix and activities we offer to visitors and residents alike!

ACPPA (a community arts center in Norristown)  
Art clubs Conshohocken,Whitemarsh, Norristown & Phoenixville  
Audubon Society of Pennsylvania  
Barton Partners  
Cabrini College  
Conshohocken Municipal Government  
Conshohocken Rowing Center  
Creative MontCo  
Fairmount Water Works  
Hidden River Outfitters  
Montgomery County Foundation, Inc.  
Montgomery County government  
Montgomery County Historical Society  
Norristown Arts Council  
Norristown Dragon Boat Club  
PECO  
Phoenixville Community Health Foundation  
Phoenixville Municipal government  
Phoenixville Green Team  
REI  
Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education  
Schuylkill River Heritage Area  
Villanova University

In addition to the above, we are also cultivating relationships with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau, multiple chambers of commerce, Independence Blue Cross and Einstein Medical Center Montgomery.

Know of an organization or company that we should be talking to? Drop us a line and we can reach out to include them in the initiative.

[www.facebook.com/SchuylkillRiverTowns](https://www.facebook.com/SchuylkillRiverTowns)