

Winter 2010



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Ideas for the next edition of SAN Connections?

Contact Tom Davidock, SAN Coordinator: (800) 445-4935 x109 or email: Tdavidock@DelawareEstuary.org

SAN CONNECTIONS

Replanting Coal Lands

BY Stephen J. Pytak, Pottsville Republican; May 2, 2009

Edited by SAN editorial Staff

Last May, the first Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) project was completed in Schuylkill County. This coming spring, two more similar projects are being planned for the Schuylkill River Watershed.

Pottsville Republican Article:

Despite overcast skies and occasional drops of rain, Kathy Boyer, Tower City, pushed her fingers into rocky coal land in Foster Township...and planted hardwood seedlings.

"It will help stop erosion, keep the streams cleaner, provide some clean air and habitat for animals," said Boyer, 66, a retired Tri-Valley High School teacher. She and her husband, Terry Boyer, 67, are volunteers for the Schuylkill Headwaters

Association and Schuylkill Conservation District, which organized this project, a reforestation initiative which is the first of its kind in the anthracite region.

They were among the 25 volunteers who donned gardening gloves and rain ponchos and wielded dibbles, a hand-held gardening tool, to plant about 2,000 tree seedlings on land owned by Schuylkill County and leased by Mountaintop Coal Mining Inc., Elysburg. Wiping sweat and rain drops from their brows, the volunteers completed the planting in four hours, said Michael Myers of the Office of Surface Mining/Volunteer In Service To America for the Schuylkill Headwaters Association, Pottsville.

The Schuylkill Headwaters



(Photo by Eric Brummer) (From left) David Hamilton, OSM; Paul Lohin, Schuylkill County Conservation District; Bill Reichert, Schuylkill Headwaters Association; Frank Staudenmeier, Schuylkill County Commissioner; Tim Vought, Mountaintop Coal Mining Inc; and Michael Myers OSM/VISTA .

Association and Schuylkill Conservation District partnered with the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative, the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team and the Eastern Coal Regional Roundtable to make this project possible, Myers said.

George Rieger, chief of the U.S. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement's Pittsburgh Field Division, Harrisburg, was sweating in the

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Schuylkill Watershed Congress— March 13, 2010



The 2010 Schuylkill Watershed Congress will feature concurrent and poster sessions covering a broad range of watershed topics and exhibits by watershed organizations, environmental consulting firms and government agencies. With a focus on networking across disciplines and a goal of presenting new information about watershed restoration, the annual Schuylkill Watershed Congress has become a highly anticipated event for watershed citizens interested in understanding, protecting and restoring their local streams.

Whether you are a volunteer dedicated to improving your watershed, a municipal official who cares about water resources, a conservation professional charged with protecting our waterways, a teacher who wants to inform others about watersheds, or a student who wants to know more about stream function, the Schuylkill Watershed Congress offers something for you.

To register, visit: <http://delawareriverkeeper.org/aboutus/events.asp>

Ag Workgroup Kicks off New Program: Berks County Partners for Clean Water

The Types of Projects

- Streambank Fencing
- Animal Crossing
- Buffer Plantings
- Conservation Plans



Partners for Clean Water is a new initiative in Berks County that has been developed to assist local farmers and businesses to work together to protect our waterways. Clean Water is the lifeblood of a community, and everyone has a role in protecting this valuable resource. An important tool in protecting our water supply is the use of best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural properties to ensure pesticides, fertilizers, and animal waste is filtered out of stormwater before they reach

local waterways.

A new effort has been initiated in the Schuylkill River Watershed portion of Berks County. The *Partners for Clean Water* provides opportunities for local businesses to contribute to the implementation of projects that improve farm operations, and lead to a healthier environment. Many local farmers are interested in incorporating small BMPs (total cost typically less than \$2,500) into their operations. However, funding for these projects is often difficult to obtain. The goal of this program is to link

these farmers with area businesses interested protecting the region's water supplies.

Donations to the program will support a wide array of projects. The program is run on a voluntary basis. Potential projects from interested property owners will be evaluated and prioritized. Tax deductible donations from area businesses will then be used to fund specific projects, selected by the donor, or will be pooled with other donations and used on the highest priority projects. The initial funding for the program has been provided through a grant from the William Penn Foundation.

For more information or to participate in this program, please contact:

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B-r-r-r-r-r-r-ave souls take polar bear plunge



Photograph courtesy
John Strickler/The Mercury

“75 people signed up for the plunge, making this an increasingly popular Pottstown New Year's tradition.”

By Evan Brandt, Mercury
January 2, 2010
Edited by the SAN Editorial Staff
"If this is the dumbest thing you do all year, then you'll be all right." It was with this sanguine observation that Todd Crosley of Pottstown apparently convinced four other friends to leap into the Schuylkill River on New Year's Day. "We figured we should start the year stupid," seconded Ed Curry, who, along with Brad Scherer and brothers Jarrod and Justin Wysock, joined Crosley in the Hidden River's frigid waters Friday.

Of course, they weren't alone. Seventy other brave souls, now officially "polar bears" all, jumped in as well — all part of a Pottstown tradition that is seemingly growing every year.

Last year's Polar Bear Plunge attracted only 57 people who thought jumping into a frigid river in January is a good idea. Also larger was the overall crowd that showed up in Riverfront Park, not only to watch the shivery spectacle, but also to warm their bones by the bonfire that now marks the beginning of every year in Pottstown. Perhaps it was the temperature of the air, which, at around 37 degrees, was distinctly warmer than the windy 20 degrees that characterized last year's celebration.

You can ask Mark Derix of Pottstown, who had "2010" written on his back and was joined by 11-year-old Michael Walker and Amanda Walker, also both of Pottstown. This was their second time in and, once out, Derix declared the

"air warmer than last year, but the water colder than last year."

Schlegel said 75 people signed up for the plunge, making this an increasingly popular Pottstown New Year's tradition. Ron Downie, who helped spearhead the efforts to make Riverfront Park a centerpiece of the borough's identity, was on hand Friday morning and said he is pleased by the growing turnout. "It has to have a constancy," Downie said of the bonfire and river plunge, "so people know it will happen every year and the business of jumping into the river has certainly added something to the event." "The objective is to get people to come down here and realize they can use and experience the park 12 months a year," Downie said.

[Click here](#) to read the entire article.

Schuylkill Scholastic Students Awards



Don't forget to start working on your project for the Schuylkill Scholastic Students Awards. The award recognizes schools, colleges and universities that protect water through educational programs, class projects or land management practices.

Awards will be given to elementary, middle, high school and college levels. Winning schools receive an award accompanied by a prize valued at \$200 and recognition at an award ceremony in May.

What are some actions that your school can do to help protect source water?

Create a Rain Garden- A rain garden is an area planted with wild flowers and other native vegetation that soaks up rain water, mainly from a roof.

Plant Trees- Trees reduce the amount of polluted stormwater that would normally flow directly into stormdrains and streams.

Buffer Your Stream- Establishing a "no mow" zone along the stream bank on your campus can offer protection from pollution and erosion.

For more info <http://www.schuylkillwaters.org/>
and click on **APPLY NOW: 2010 Drinking Water Scholastic Awards**

EPA Hosts Video Competition to Promote 'Three Rs' of Consumer Waste



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is sponsoring a video contest

that challenges filmmakers to produce short, creative videos that highlight the "Three Rs" of individual consumption: reduce, reuse, and recycle. The agency is accepting submissions for the contest, called "Our Planet, Our

Stuff, Our Choice," through Feb. 16.

Entries should be either 30 or 60 seconds in length. The video should creatively promote steps individuals and organizations can take to minimize negative environmental impacts within their communities on the topics of reducing and reusing, recycling, and composting, and

consumption and its effect on one's environmental footprint.

The winning submissions will be announced in April 2010 in time for the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. Awards will be given to the top three videos, as well as a special "Student Winner" category exclusively for submissions by persons 13 to 18 years old at the time of entry.

PRIZES:

1st Place - \$2,500

2nd Place - \$1,500

3rd Place - \$1,000

2 Student Winners (13 to 18 years old) - \$500 each

For more information on the contest:

<http://www.epa.gov/waste/wycd/video>

Abandoned Mine reclamation...continued



field Friday, ripping up earth with a dibble.

"We've taken the initiative to go out and do public tree plantings only in the past four or five years. Before that, surface mining operators were encouraged, particularly in

areas where they deforested an area, to put it back to forest. We're just encouraging them to use hardwoods more," Rieger said.

Mountaintop Coal, which leases the land from the county for a strip mine operation, has donated time and equipment to prepare the land for the project. Bill Reichert, president of the Schuylkill Headwaters Association, said the project is cost-free. Organizations including the American

Chestnut Foundation and the Pennsylvania Game Commission are donating trees. They will include American chestnut, Washington hawthorn, crab apple, white oak, sawtooth oak, Norway spruce and white pine.

The Schuylkill Headwaters Association will be giving a presentation on this project at the Schuylkill Watershed Congress in March. Information about the upcoming ARRI projects will be posted on the [SAN website](#) as soon as more information becomes available.



2009 SAN Annual Workshop Success

SAN Members Plan for the Future

Dates to Remember

- 1/26: SAN E&O Meeting
- 2/3: SAN WLC meeting
- 2/9: SAN Planning Meeting
- 3/9: SAN Planning Meeting
- 3/13: Schuylkill Watershed Congress
- 3/16: SAN Steering Comm. Conference Call
- 3/24: SAN Ag meeting
- 4/8: SAN Planning Meeting

The SAN annual meeting was held on December 7th at Reading Area Community College in Reading, PA. Over 80 individuals participated in the event.

The workshop started off with an optional tour of the Berks Community Foundation's LEED certified office building. Participants on the tour had an opportunity to see many of the building's low impact features, including it's rainwater harvest and reuse system.

During the morning portion of the meeting, workgroup chairs presented information on their 2009 accomplishments and upcoming projects and goals.



SAN Members tour the Berks Community Foundation LEED Certified office building.

During the afternoon, SAN members separated into three groups and participated in a planning session to help identify SAN-wide priorities. This information from the breakout sessions will be

used to assist in developing the new 5-year strategic plan for the SAN. The SAN Planning committee will be holding follow-up listening sessions throughout 2010.



SAVE THE DATE!
Schuylkill River Sojourn
June 5-11, 2010

The 2010 Sojourn
Program Partner is the
National Park Service

Registration forms will be on the website starting April 1st.

Questions? 484-945-0200
or info@schuylkillriver.org



Can you **digg** it?
Schuylkill Stories

As part of the latest updates to the SAN website, you can now share the Schuylkill Stories through some of the popular social media sources on the web. Visitors can upload text, pictures, videos, or links to tell their story and then share them through both the Digg and Delicious social networking sites. Users can also subscribe to a RSS feed and be alerted to the addition of new stories. To share these stories, simply click on the link below the story.

Also— SAN is now on **facebook** ! To become a fan of SAN, simply search for the "Schuylkill Action Network" on facebook and click "become a fan" or simply follow the facebook link on the SAN website. We're looking forward to seeing you in the virtual world!

Celebrating Schuylkill Waters is a special section of the SAN website where the public is invited to share personal stories, photos and videos about the river or one of its tributaries. Have you spent some time on, in or by the Schuylkill River? Share your story at www.schuylkillwaters.org/schuylkill_celebrate.cfm or visit the site to read how other people share a for passion the river.