



Volume 2012

Issue 3

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SAN CONNECTIONS

Summer 2012



SAN Kicks Off New Schuylkill Photo Contest

Schuylkill Shots Photo Contest

Give us your best shot



The [Schuylkill Action Network](#) is showcasing the beauty, fun, and purity of the Schuylkill River with this week's launch of the [Schuylkill Shots Photography Contest](#).

Photographers of any age and skill level can submit up to nine pictures, or three per category. These categories include Wild & Scenic, Fun on the Schuylkill, and Tip Top Tap.

"Many people only see the river from cars while driving

over bridges or past refineries," said [Tom Davidock](#), Schuylkill Action Network coordinator at the [Partnership for the Delaware Estuary](#). "What they don't see are the forests, fun seekers, and wildlife; all of it made possible by water clean enough to quench the thirst of most Philadelphians."

The deadline for entries is Oct. 30. This gives photographers four months and two seasons to capture what artists have tried to depict for

centuries. During this time, those who follow [the SAN on facebook](#) can watch and comment on each entry as it is uploaded to the Internet.

A panel of judges affiliated with the SAN will select 10 finalists per category by Nov. 15. The public will then have one month to vote for their favorites. Those with the most votes will be selected as the winning photos

GREAT PRIZES

1st Place Winners

- Wild & Scenic - \$300 Gift Card to [Calumet Photographic](#)
- Fun on the Schuylkill - \$300 Gift Card to [REI](#)
- Tip-Top Tap - \$300 Gift Card to [Amazon.com](#)

2nd Place Winners for each category will receive a - **\$100 Gift Card**

Honorable Mention Winners for each category will receive a - **\$50 Gift Card**



Schuylkill Scrub Boasts 90 Cleanups

The 2012 Schuylkill Scrub was a huge success, registering 90 cleanups that involved 2,200 volunteers. The cleanups occurred throughout the watershed from the headwaters in Schuylkill County to the city of Philadelphia. To see the complete list of cleanups, check out the

Google map at the Scrub website at www.SchuylkillScrub.com.

I would also like to congratulate our Rain Barrel winner: Norristown Borough, who has decided to proudly display it outside of their Borough offices downtown.

Thank you for all of your wonderful efforts to keep the Schuylkill Watershed looking beautiful and keeping our water clean for all to use.



Planting a Meadow: Seed Driller Available

If you're installing a meadow and are located in Southeast PA, a new resource is available that you may want to take a look at. Last year, the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association (WVWA) purchased a drill seeder to install a meadow. Hiring a company to do this can be quite expensive.

According to Bob Adams, the Director of Stewardship for WVWA, The drill seeder is " a piece of equipment customized to plant both hard seed (wild flowers) and the "fluffy seed" that is characteristic of most native grasses. It cuts a small furrow through the dead sod grass (you need to herbicide the sod grass to eliminate competition), drops the seed into the furrow and closes it up, giving a much higher germination rate for that expensive meadow seed".

If your meadow project is in the Wissahickon Creek Watershed, the WVWA will make the equipment available for a very reasonable price. Outside of the watershed, it will just cost a little more.

Bob Adams says that the WVWA decided to offer this because they think meadows are an important tool in the environmental toolbox, and they want to promote their creation.

For more information on the drill seeder and inquire about renting it for one of your projects, contact:

Bob Adams, Director of Stewardship, Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association
215-646-8866, Bob@wvwa.org



On the hunt for disappearing fresh water mussels

WHYY, Newsworks Tonight

May 18, 2012

By Carolyn Beeler

The freshwater mussel is considered among the most imperiled of all plant and animals in the U.S.

Of nearly 300 species nationwide, it is estimated that at least 70 percent are extinct, endangered, or in need of protection.

Now, the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary is recruiting volunteers to take stock of populations in the Delaware River Basin.

On a sunny Saturday morning, Danielle Kreeger stood in a parking lot at Ridley Creek State Park in rubber boots and water-resistant overalls.

Bent over at the waist, she demonstrated how to spot freshwater mussels.

"You want to gradually work upstream," Kreeger said. "I just sort of inch along, and I look at the sand and silt and I'm basically looking for what I call a line in

the sand."

About 50 volunteers were circled around Kreeger. After a quick lesson on hunting techniques and how to document mussel finds on data sheets, they hiked down a path into Ridley Creek, walking in water up to their thigh-high waders searching for mussels.

For 11-year-old Ben Sniegowski, the survey is an underwater Easter egg hunt.

"They told us to look in areas where it's slow-moving water," Sniegowski said. "They can just bury themselves in silt or sand."

He scanned the stream floor near the bank, one eye pressed against the narrow end of a viewing bucket. It looked like an orange safety cone, with a plexiglass window covering the big opening.

"There it is, that's, that's a mussel!" he said, disappointed when he realized another friend had already counted it.

Diminishing diversity

A century ago there were about a dozen types of mussels in streams that drain into the Delaware.

A comprehensive survey hasn't been done since then, which is why Danielle Kreeger said the partnership is calling on volunteers to hunt for mussels in their free time.

But preliminary studies by Kreeger and



On the hunt mussel article continued...



are surprisingly healthy and diverse - survive in smaller streams.

But before they start to relocate lots of mussels, they need to know where they should put them.

"We need help to learn where mussels are, and particularly where they're not," Kreeger told the

plant."

Scientists started to realize how bad the prognosis was for freshwater mussels back in the 1970s, when the endangered species act drew attention to diminishing mussel species. Since then, restoration projects have been launched around the country, with mixed success.

Dave Strayer, a freshwater ecologist with the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in New York State, said this is the first time he has heard of amateurs getting involved.

"There isn't a huge level of awareness about freshwater biodiversity and the threats to freshwater biodiversity," Strayer said. "By engaging the citizenry in these scientific projects like monitoring mussel populations, I think that makes people more aware of this issue."

Back at Ridley Creek, Ben Sniegowski said the only thing he found all by himself was man-made.

"I found a golf ball eventually," Sniegowski said. "It's the only worthwhile thing I found in the whole time, a golf ball."

Danielle Kreeger hopes that will not be the case for long.

her colleagues show only one variety of mussel is easily found in these waters, due in part to pollution and dam-building.

"We've hit about 70 places, which would be a couple miles of stream that we've surveyed," Kreeger said. "Out of those 70 places we've only found three that have freshwater mussels of any species, and it's only really just one species."

In 2007, the partnership launched a freshwater mussel restoration project. The group is rebuilding stream banks, growing baby mussels in hatcheries, and testing how mollusks transplanted from the Delaware River -- where populations

group.

They are asking volunteers to hunt for mussels in their free time, and submit data sheets documenting their finds to the Partnership to aid in their restoration efforts.

Freshwater mussels are not good to eat like their marine counterparts, but their pearly inner shells were historically used to make buttons. Today, they still provide other environmental benefits.

"During the warm time of year, from spring to fall, each adult mussel will filter 5 to 15 gallons of water per day," Kreeger said, "and if you have a bed of a half million animals, that would be equivalent to a small waste treatment

Berks County Conservation District Awarded Pennvest Funding

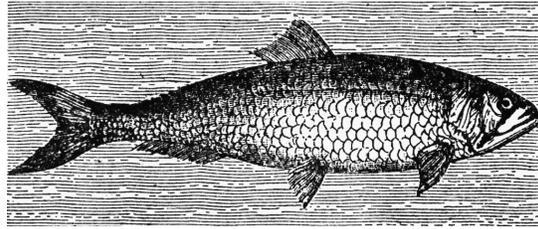


The Berks County Conservation District (BCCD) was awarded \$1,985,032 by PENNVEST to install various Agricultural Best Management Practices on four Berks County Farms. Two farms are located in the Chesapeake Bay and the other two farms are located in the Schuylkill River Watershed. "The funding from PENNVEST will be used to aid in better storage of manure and help keep clean rooftop and other barnyard stormwater clean," stated Kate O'Brien Berks County Conservation District's Watershed Specialist and Environmental Educator. The two farms that are located in the Schuylkill River Watershed are located in Tilden Township and Maiden Creek Townships. O'Brien added, "In particular the one farm is located in the Maiden Creek Watershed -Willow Creek subwatershed,- which has been a priority watershed for the Berks County Conservation District and the Schuylkill Action Network." Work is

scheduled to begin mid to late August 2012 and be completed within one calendar year. O'Brien informed her Board of Directors at a recent Meeting that "With increasing regulatory approaches to addressing nonpoint source pollution, the BCCD and its partners has opened the door for the Berks County's agricultural community to not only comply with regulations, but exceed them in keeping waters of Berks County Clean." Besides the BCCD, this effort is a collaboration of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Berks Conservancy, and the Schuylkill Heritage Program. The PENNVEST funding will be able to bring all of these joint efforts together so that they are able to succeed in preventing pollutants from entering Berks County streams.

SAN Dates to Remember

- August 2nd 10:00am
SAN Planning Mtg
- August 24th 2012
E&O Workgroup Mtg
- Aug. 28nd 1:00pm
WLC Workgroup Mtg
- Aug. 29th 10:00am
SAN Pathogen Mtg
- Sept. 6th 10:00am
SAN Planning Mtg



This Past June, Cataia Ives, an Americorps Vista Volunteer with the Schuylkill Headwaters Association, participated in the Schuylkill River Sojourn and worked to organize a journaling project with several fellow sojourners. Throughout the Sojourn, four 'Stanley Shad' cut-outs travelled the length of the Schuylkill taped to kayakers' boats. Following are the journals following Sammy's diverse experience on the river.

You can read about their experiences on the [Schuylkill Stories](#) section of the SAN website.

American Shad on the Schuylkill

The American Shad was once a valued sport fish on Pennsylvania's waterways and coastal waters. An anadromous fish, shad migrate thousands of miles up river to spawn in fresh water. While native to the Schuylkill River and its tributaries, American Shad have not ascended the Schuylkill since 1820, when the Fairmount Dam was constructed (Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission). In recent years efforts have been made to remove the dams and restore shad populations on the Schuylkill. Ten dams once blocked shad migration on the river. Four of

the dams now have fishways or fish 'ladders' in place.

Since 1999, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission have stocked juvenile shad to the Schuylkill. A long term goal is to eliminate the need to stock shad and create a self-sustaining fishery. Spring runs averaging between 300,000 to 850,000 returning American shad will be considered a restored fishery. PA Fish and Boat Commission tags shad before stocking to rivers. Since 2003, a large number of tagged shad have returned to the Schuylkill, indicating the success of stocking efforts.

- What can you do to conserve the Shad? Support strong conservation measures for river and commercial fish by contacting your state representative.
- Be aware of recreational fishing limitations- for recreational fishers, the current limit on shad established by PFBC is one shad per day on the Lehigh and Schuylkill Rivers, to be changed to catch and release only in January 2013.

For more information, see:

<http://fishandboat.com/shad.htm> and
http://fishandboat.com/shad_schu.htm

For more information about the Schuylkill River Sojourn, see

www.schuylkillriver.org/sojourn

Schuylkill Bike Tour Registration Now Open

**Schuylkill River Trail Bike Tour Series:
Rails and River Towns Ride
September 22, 2012**

Support the Schuylkill River Heritage Area with a round-trip bike ride along the Schuylkill River Trail from Pottstown to Birdsboro that includes optional walking tours and a presentation on railroad history.



Register online today at <http://railsnrivertownsride.eventbrite.com>.

Or download a [registration brochure](#) for mail-in registration form

This is the first ride in the [Schuylkill River Trail Bike Tour Series](#), a new multi-year series that supports the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. Each event will feature a unique combination of biking and history. This year, we're hosting the [Rails and River Towns Ride](#).

Ideas for the next edition
of SAN Connections?

Contact Tom Davidock,
SAN Coordinator:
(800) 445-4935 x109
or email:

tdavidock@DelawareEstuary.org