

### This Winter, we:

- Received 5 barrels that will be turned into useable rain barrels
- Continued planning for the 2015 *Schuylkill Acts & Impacts* program
- Partnered with the Schuylkill River Heritage Area to bring Project SOLO to Schuylkill County
- Added two new members to our organization!

Photograph by Alexa Kramer.



Although they do not look like it now, these boring white barrels will eventually become brightly colored rain barrels!

### Thinking Spring...and Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels!

Over the past few months, Schuylkill Headwaters Association (SHA) has been working closely with teachers and students from the Blue Mountain School District in Orwigsburg, PA. Throughout the fall season, a bioswale containing three rain gardens was constructed in order to slow stormwater runoff and help prevent erosion on the school campus. To promote the use of rain gardens and other stormwater best management practices, Schuylkill Headwaters, with help from the Penn State Master Gardeners, will be holding two public information sessions for members of the community. These sessions will aim to inform attendees of a few general facts, such as how rain gardens are constructed, why they are beneficial, and how to select native plants. Another purpose of holding these sessions is to highlight the bioswale and rain gardens constructed on campus, so that locals can understand why the project took place and see how the students and teachers are using it for educational purposes. (See page 5 for more information.)

The information sessions will also highlight another form of stormwater management – rain barrels. The barrels are part of a greater collaboration with the Blue Mountain High School Art Club and Green Club. In early February, five barrels were donated to SHA by Yuengling Brewery. The barrels were delivered to the high school, where members from the Art Club and Green Club will be painting them. Proper fixtures will then be installed to turn them into usable rain barrels. At the close of each session, two barrels will be raffled off at no charge to two attendees. The last barrel will be given to the Art Club and Green Club as a thank-you for putting in the time and effort to paint them. Here at Schuylkill Headwaters we are looking forward to seeing the finished rain barrels and we're equally excited to see how the winners will utilize the barrels on their own properties!

Following the community information sessions on rain gardens and rain barrels, the Blue Mountain 8<sup>th</sup> grade class will be participating in four days of outdoor environmental programs. They will be learning about subjects such as soil biology, forestry, invasive species, wildlife management, and other related topics. The highlight of the program will be the actual planting of the three rain gardens with native plants, trees, and shrubs. The students will learn the proper way to plant the rain gardens and why particular native plants were chosen. Along with being excited about seeing the finished rain barrels, SHA is looking forward to seeing the rain gardens planted and attracting more wildlife.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Schuylkill Acts & Impacts Planning in Full Swing



Interested in supporting the Schuylkill Acts & Impacts program? Sponsor a student!

Following our highly successful pilot program of *Schuylkill Acts & Impacts* in June 2014, Schuylkill Headwaters is thrilled to announce that we will be launching a second expedition from July 11-17, 2015! We are also excited to announce that we are partnering with Fairmount Water Works and Take It Outdoors Adventures to make this 2015 expedition even more successful. The 2015 *Schuylkill Acts & Impacts* program will follow the same format as the previous year but will also include a few changes. One of the changes is that this year fifteen high school students will be participating in the expedition as opposed to the ten students who joined in the adventure in 2014. Three students will come from each of the five counties within the Schuylkill River Watershed. Much like last year, the expedition will involve a physical journey (by kayak and van) along the 120-mile Schuylkill River from its headwaters in the anthracite coal lands of Schuylkill County to its confluence with the Delaware River in Philadelphia. Team leaders from Schuylkill Headwaters Association and partnering organizations will guide students downriver, illustrating the array of issues impacting water quality of the Schuylkill River watershed through tours, programming, and applied service work designed to highlight these issues and offer hands-on solutions to the problems. Target issues explored on the expedition will include: the impact of legacy coal mining on water quality, agricultural impacts including erosion and manure management, the role of land preservation in watershed health, and the impacts of stormwater and impervious surfaces on water resources. Students will paddle stretches of the river with biologists and conduct basic water quality monitoring, tour abandoned and active coal mines, visit farms to examine stream bank erosion, and walk Philadelphia's streets to witness the city's pioneering work at mitigating stormwater. Daily reflection and discussion will challenge participants to think about their own habits and use of water and provide them with tools to take action in their own stretch of the watershed.

We are looking forward to the 2015 expedition, and can't wait to see the impact it will have on this year's participants.

**APPLICATION:** The formal application for students will be coming soon, so look for a future email including all materials and information.

**SPONSOR A STUDENT:** SHA is seeking local stakeholders and environmental organizations to support a student from their community. We would like to keep the expedition free for the students by providing full scholarships funded by donations from sponsor organizations. If you would like to join the network of *Schuylkill Acts & Impacts* supporters, please contact Education & Outreach Coordinator Alexa Kramer or contact Ellen Schultz, Associate Director for Education at Fairmount Water Works (Contact information listed on page 3).

**SPEAKERS/PRESENTERS:** If you or your organization are interested in being a speaker or presenter during the expedition, please contact Alexa Kramer or Ellen Schultz (contact information listed below) for more information on how to get involved.

**SPONSOR A LUNCH OR DINNER:** This year, we are also looking for local organizations to sponsor a lunch or dinner for each day of the expedition. If interested, please contact Alexa Kramer or Ellen Schultz (contact information listed below) for more information on how to get involved.

**CONTACT INFO:** Alexa Kramer, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Schuylkill Headwaters Association [outreach@schuylkillheadwaters.org](mailto:outreach@schuylkillheadwaters.org) or 570-622-3742, ex. 119.

Ellen Schultz, Associate Director for Education, Fairmount Water Works  
[Ellen.Schultz@phila.gov](mailto:Ellen.Schultz@phila.gov) or 215-685-0721



Photographs  
by Sierra  
Gladfelter  
and Alexa  
Kramer.

## Cold Weather? No Problem

This winter sure has been cold and windy! The snow is here and shows no sign of leaving. Despite the not-so-favorable conditions, collecting water quality data and performing system maintenance must continue on a weekly basis. The flow rates of several mine discharges throughout the Schuylkill River Watershed, as well as the Swatara Watershed, are calculated weekly by members of SHA and the Schuylkill Conservation District. Maintenance of several AMD treatment systems is also performed weekly in order to ensure that they are effective at improving the quality of water. The weather may be less than ideal, but the work must go on.

## Reminder: Watershed Conservation Award Funds Now Available

The Paul Lohin Schuylkill River Watershed Conservation Award and the Dave Derbes Watershed Conservation Award are available to graduating seniors of Minersville Area High School and Pottsville Area High School, respectively. These funds provide an award to a graduating senior from each school who has demonstrated a commitment to the community by participating in environmental and conservation projects or programs outside the classroom and maintained a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0 or greater for five consecutive semesters over the last three years. Applications for the awards are available at <http://www.sacfoundation.com/awards.htm>. The deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup>. Contact Eileen Kuperavage at [ekuperavage@verizon.net](mailto:ekuperavage@verizon.net) with any questions.

## Schuylkill Outdoor Leadership Odyssey (SOLO) Collaboration

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Education and Outreach Coordinator Alexa Kramer traveled to the Schuylkill River Heritage Area in Pottstown to take part in a trail clean-up with fellow VISTA Victoria Garrick, Trail Sustainability Coordinator with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association. Unfortunately, due to icy conditions the trail clean-up had to be rescheduled. The trip was not in vain, however. Alexa and Victoria had the opportunity to discuss Project SOLO, or Schuylkill Outdoor Leadership Odyssey, which is an environmental education mentoring program created by the Schuylkill River Heritage Area (SRHA) that aims to introduce students to careers related to the environmental sciences and outdoors while simultaneously increasing their knowledge and awareness of the world around them. Since its inception, Project SOLO has been adopted in schools in Berks and Montgomery Counties, and discussions are currently underway with a school in Chester County. Victoria is looking to extend the program into all five counties of the Schuylkill River watershed, which is why Schuylkill Headwaters is assisting in bringing the program to Schuylkill County. Project SOLO is an 8-10 week class for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students that combines in-class presentations, activities and field trips to teach the students several different perspectives. The program requires a space for students to meet for about an hour once a week for 8-10 weeks, depending on the partner school's schedule. Each week includes 2 speakers, also called mentors, who are professionals in the topic of discussion for the week. Topics include geology, watersheds, ecosystems, local flora and fauna, environmental sustainability and responsibility, and other various related subjects. These topics can be modified as needed to better fit school curricula. SHA will be targeting a local school district to adopt this project for the start of the next school year. SHA will also be looking for different mentors to speak to the class each week, so if you are a professional in the environmental field and would like to be involved in the project, or would like more information about the program, please contact Alexa Kramer at [outreach@schuylkillheadwaters.org](mailto:outreach@schuylkillheadwaters.org) or 570-622-3742, ex. 119.

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## Call for Spring & Summer Programming



Are you an educator looking for an opportunity to get your students outdoors? Are you looking for a field trip that is hands-on? Look no further. Schuylkill Headwaters Association offers environmental programming and tours at two of our abandoned mine drainage treatment systems, namely Silver Creek Environmental Education Trail and Recreation Park, and Mary D treatment system. Contact Education and Outreach Coordinator Alexa Kramer at [outreach@schuylkillheadwaters.org](mailto:outreach@schuylkillheadwaters.org) or 570-622-3742, ex. 119 for more information or to set up a tour.

Photograph by Sierra Gladfelter.

## Meet New SHA Members Timothy Stahl and Jenna Fehr

Join us in welcoming new Schuylkill Headwaters members Timothy Stahl and Jenna Fehr.

Timothy M. Stahl, PE is a lifelong resident of Schuylkill County and licensed civil engineer employed by the PADEP, Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation. Growing up as an avid outdoorsman and seeing the legacy of coal mining, he is thankful to have the opportunity to assist in the restoration of the region. He states that affiliation with SHA and sharing knowledge of techniques and methodology will be mutually beneficial to mine reclamation and river restoration alike.

Jenna Fehr is the Conservation Program Coordinator at Schuylkill Conservation District. In this capacity, she reviews erosion and sediment pollution control plans and administers the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting program and Dirt, Gravel, & Low Volume Roads Program.

Jenna holds a degree in Environmental Resource Management from Penn State University, where she was a member of the Schreyer Honors College. After graduation, Jenna served as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with the Appalachian Coal Country Team in Beckley, West Virginia. She was lead researcher for the *Volunteers for Rural Watersheds Research Project*, in which Schuylkill Headwaters Association was a participant. She then created the *Toolkit for Working with Rural Volunteers* workbook and website ([www.ruralvolunteer.org](http://www.ruralvolunteer.org)) to enable rural watershed organizations to improve volunteer management with the least amount of time, people, and money.

Outside of her work at the Conservation District, Jenna is a youth mentor for the ReDCo Group SEED Mentoring Program, and volunteers for the Ducks Unlimited Pine Grove Chapter and Hospice of Central PA's Camp Dragonfly.

Timothy and Jenna are both valuable assets to SHA, and we look forward to the advice and perspective they will each bring to our organization. Welcome!

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## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, March 14, 2015, 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**

### **Watershed Congress Along the Schuylkill River**

Montgomery County Community College, West Campus, Pottstown, PA

The annual Watershed Congress is a highly anticipated event for people interested in understanding, protecting and restoring their local streams. The 2015 program will offer an empowering keynote, information packed breakout sessions, one-on-one poster discussions and more.

**Registration is required.** <http://www.delawareriverkeeper.org/about/event.aspx?Id=63>

**April 11, 2015, 9:30-11:00 a.m. and April 28, 2015, 5:30-7:00 p.m.**

### **Blue Mountain Rain Garden Community Information Sessions**

Blue Mountain Middle School Campus, Orwigsburg, PA

If you want to learn more about the recent construction of rain gardens on the Blue Mountain campus or just some general information about rain gardens, these sessions are for you. Join SHA and Penn State Master Gardeners for information-packed sessions. Free to the public.

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Are you interested in becoming a member? Contact outreach@schuylkillheadwaters.org or 570.622.3742 ex. 118 or ex. 119.



**CONTACT US:**  
P. O. Box 1385  
Pottsville, PA 17901  
570-622-3742, ex. 118

outreach@  
schuylkillheadwaters.org

### **Upcoming Events...**

#### **Saturday, April 25, 2015, 9:00 a.m.-Noon—Seedling Sale**

Orders are due by April 1. Pick-up is April 25 at Sweet Arrow Lake Park Clubhouse. Proceeds benefit Sweet Arrow Lake County Park. Contact Porcupine Pat at porcupinepat@yahoo.com or 570-622-3742, ex. 113 for an order form.

#### **Sunday, May 17, 2015, 12:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.—Bear Creek Festival**

Schuylkill County Fairgrounds, 2270 Fair Road, Summit Station, PA.

Come learn about all things environmental, outdoors, natural, and agricultural in Schuylkill County. This is a family fun day filled with free activities, free admission, and free parking! Contact Schuylkill Conservation District at 570-622-3742.

#### **Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year, various times**

Schuylkill on the Move 2015 Walks. Schuylkill on the Move (SOM) promotes positive steps towards good health through walking. For a schedule of guided walks, please contact Porcupine Pat at porcupinepat@yahoo.com or 570-622-3742, ex. 113.

#### **Saturday, June 6, 2015—Friday, June 12, 2015**

17th Annual Schuylkill River Sojourn—A 7-day, 112-mile guided paddle from Schuylkill Haven to Philadelphia organized by the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. Participants can register for one day or the entire week. Registration opens April 1 for the full trip and April 15 for single days.

### **Schuylkill Headwaters Association, Inc.**

P. O. Box 1385  
Pottsville, PA 17901  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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REQUIRED