



This Spring & Summer we:

- Completed *Schuylkill Acts & Impacts 2016*
- Brought a new AmeriCorps VISTA on board
- Reforested 2 acres with **1,000** native trees

Students from SAI 2016.

Schuylkill Acts & Impacts 2016

As most of you already know, Schuylkill Acts & Impacts is a weeklong watershed expedition along the 120 miles of the Schuylkill River, from its headwaters in the anthracite coal lands of Schuylkill County to its confluence with the Delaware River in Philadelphia. Twelve select students from all 5 counties in the watershed came together to experience first-hand the impact of human development on water quality through guided tours, fieldwork, and water sampling with professional mentors. Throughout the week, students studied 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.

This summer, the trip lasted from June 18-25 and we had a great group of 12 students. Participants included: Corbin, Courtney & Marlena, Schuylkill County; Joi & Alanna, Berks County; Joe, Lauren & Lindsay, Montgomery County; Megan & Colby, Chester County; and, Mikal, Philadelphia. We also welcomed Vanessa, a student from SAI 2015 along on the trip to serve as a mentor for the 2016 participants.

(Story continued on page 2)

Photographs by David Dannenberg



Schuylkill Acts & Impacts 2016

We welcomed a few new additions and changes to the schedule this year, all of which helped to enhance the educational goals of the program. Stroud Water Research Center, located in Avondale, came on board as a partner this year and dedicated a lot of time and effort to train and assist the SAI participants with water quality sampling throughout the watershed. The students first learned from Stroud educators about water chemistry and how it is related to the overall quality of water in the river. They were taught how to use the Stroud water test kits which had the ability to determine pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, and nitrates. Stroud also taught the students how to use the Water Quality app to record and share their data. Stroud left their water quality kits with the students for the week and samples were taken at four different locations on the river. At the end of the expedition, Stroud educators graphed the water quality data and discussed with students how the water quality of the river changed as they moved downstream. We thank Stroud for coming on board and adding such a valuable component to the trip!

**SAI 2016
participants
kayaking, testing
water, and posing
for a photo op!**

Photographs by
David Dannenberg

Without partnerships, this trip would not be possible. We extend our sincerest thanks to all the individuals, organizations, and everyone else involved in making this a life-changing experience for the student participants.



Say Hello to our New VISTA

Nathaniel Hafer (Nate) is our new AmeriCorps Volunteer In Service to America (VISTA). Nate is a local resident of Schuylkill County residing in the Tamaqua area. “I feel extra inspired to act locally within my own community to enhance environmental integrity and I’m very grateful to serve,” says Nate. His first day of service was July 25th and he will be serving SHA for one year.

Graduating from the Environmental Sustainability program at Philadelphia University in 2014, Nate is excited to be utilizing his academic expertise in service. Nate has also spent considerable hours working local part-time jobs in Schuylkill and surrounding counties so he knows the community well.

Together with his studies of Sustainability and knowledge of the community, Nate will be offering volunteer service to the SHA and the people of Schuylkill County by improving environmental educational outreach and catalyzing economic redevelopment initiatives. Nate can be reached via email at vista@schuylkillheadwaters.org.

SHA looks forward to a great year working with Nate.



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Website Updated with Newsletter

If you’ve missed any of our previous newsletters or are new to our mailing list, you can now find past newsletters on our website at www.schuylkillheadwaters.org. They can be found under the “Organization” and then “Newsletters” tab. We hope you enjoy reading about Schuylkill Headwaters’ projects and programs.

SCEETR Updates and Improvements

Volunteer Service Event—On April 29, 2016, SHA partnered with Penn State Schuylkill to hold a service project at the Silver Creek Environmental Education Trail and Recreation Park (SCEETR) in New Philadelphia. Prior to this event, SHA identified the lower parking area at SCEETR as a location that could use some maintenance in order to make it more functional. The parking area, which was just a big open lot with a lot of coal silt and rock, was turned into a parking loop with an area in the center that was designed to be planted with native plants. Fresh topsoil was delivered to the site and spread throughout the center of the loop to provide a better growing medium for the plants. Once all of this was complete, four volunteers from Penn State Schuylkill came to SCEETR to help install native plants in the area. We worked for a few hours and got all of the plants in the ground and then welcomed the rain showers that came later that day and the following day. Thanks to all volunteers and businesses who helped us turn this parking area into a much more functional and aesthetically pleasing part of SCEETR.



Yearly Maintenance Update—Throughout the summer months, SHA visited SCEETR a few times to perform much needed maintenance. With the help of the Schuylkill Conservation District's summer interns and local volunteers, SHA was able to mow sections around the trail and educational signs, weed the garden that was planted in April, and do some other maintenance activities on site. SCEETR is open to the public and we encourage local residents to visit and use the walking trail around the system.



Programming Opportunities—Are you an educator looking to get your students out for some hands-on experience? SHA's abandoned mine drainage treatment systems offer a great tour and programming location. Learn about the history of coal mining in the area, how the legacy effects of mining have an impact on our waterways, how the treatment systems are engineered and built, and have your students do some real water quality tests on site to see how the treatment systems work. Treatment systems are located in New Philadelphia, Mary D, and other locations in Schuylkill County. Please contact AmeriCorps VISTA Nate Hafer at vista@schuylkillheadwaters.org to schedule a tour.

L: Penn State Schuylkill volunteers lay out a planting design.

R: The newly planted area after a much needed rain.



Photographs by Alexa Kramer

SHA Brings Total Reforested Acres to 38

On May 24, 2016, Schuylkill Headwaters Association (SHA), the Pine Grove Borough (PGB), and the Schuylkill Conservation District (SCD), along with many great volunteers, reforested two acres of open land with 1,000 native tree seedlings. The planting took place on a plot of land owned by the PGB in Adams Run near Ravine. Roughly 15 volunteers from the partnering organizations and the local community dedicated their time and skills for about 4 hours to get the seedlings in the ground. Although this planting did not occur on abandoned mine lands, the same method was used for ground preparation. This Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) planting used the Forestry Reclamation Approach (FRA) in order to ensure the success of the tree planting. By using the FRA approach, SHA has achieved over a 90 percent survival rate in these plantings over a span of 7 years. To date, this brings the total acres reforested to approximately 38 with over 43,000 trees planted across the county! SHA would like to thank all the volunteers involved, as well as the PGB for providing a lunch following the event.

Photographs by Bill Reichert



Volunteers get planting instructions and then are sent out with a bucket of trees to put into the ground.



SHA Named Non-Profit of the Year!

This past spring Schuylkill Headwaters was honored to be named “Non-Profit Organization of the Year” by the Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce. SHA was in great company with the other award winners and would like to say congratulations to all of those individuals and businesses. It is quite an honor and we are grateful to the Chamber of Commerce for selecting SHA as the 2016 Non-Profit Organization of the Year.





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Upcoming Events:

September 7, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.: SAN Upper Schuylkill Tour

The Schuylkill Action Network (SAN) will be holding a FREE tour of several restoration sites at multiple locations throughout the Upper Schuylkill Watershed. Starting at 12:30 p.m. the Schuylkill River Heritage Area will announce the 2016 Schuylkill River Restoration Fund grant awards at a special press event. Registration is required online.

September 19-20: Delaware River Watershed Forum

Normandy Farm Hotel & Conference Center, Blue Bell, PA

In addition to informative presentations, interactive discussions, and visits to nearby sites that highlight different conservation issues and approaches, this year's Forum will also include workshops for a more practical and in-depth exploration of key topics. Registration is required and space is limited. Go to delriverwatershed.org for more information or to register.

October 22: Fall Trash Clean-up

Kernsville Dam and surrounding areas.

Join Schuylkill Headwaters Association and Blue Mountain Wildlife for the annual fall clean-up around the Kernsville Dam area. Contact Alexa at outreach@schuylkillheadwaters.org for more information or to sign up a group of volunteers.

**Schuylkill Headwa-
ters Association, Inc.**

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