



Pictured from l to r: Tom Drogalis, Dave Derbes, Paul Lohin, Bill Reichert

### This Autumn, we:

- Held **4** tours at our different treatment systems
- Attended **2** environmental field days
- Finished construction on the Blue Mountain rain gardens!
- Created **2** Watershed Conservation Awards in honor of 2 founding members!

### Founding Members Honored on Memorable Night

On Wednesday night, October 29, 2014, Schuylkill Headwaters Association and the Schuylkill County Historical Society partnered to hold the event titled “Remembering and Recognizing the Schuylkill River” at the Majestic Theater in downtown Pottsville. The night started with the honoring of two founding members, Dave Derbes of Pottsville, and Paul Lohin of Minersville. Both Dave and Paul are current members of the SHA Board of Directors and have generously contributed their time and expertise over the years to ensure that SHA remains a leader in the watershed and in the community. William Reichert, President of SHA, thanked both Dave and Paul for everything that they do and have done in the past. Also present to thank both men were Thomas Drogalis, Executive Director of the Historical Society, and Eileen Kuperavage, Executive Director of the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation. It was announced that two awards will be set up: the Dave Derbes Schuylkill River Watershed Conservation Award and the Paul Lohin Schuylkill River Watershed Conservation Award. A committee has been formed of members from SHA who will review submissions and choose the recipients of the awards. In order to apply, students must participate in environmental or conservation programs or projects outside of the classroom. The award will be granted on an annual basis with the first one hopefully being given this spring 2015.



Following the recognition of Dave and Paul, Adam Levine, a historian with the Philadelphia Water Department, spoke about the history of the Schuylkill River. His thought-provoking presentation focused on the effects of different pollutants such as coal silt and abandoned mine drainage, raw sewage, and industrial waste that entered the river through time. Levine provided many examples that illustrated the condition of the river at various times, including old newspaper articles and photographs, historic maps, and current research data relating to the river. Levine discussed the once unhealthy condition of the river and also highlighted the efforts taking place to clean it up. The Schuylkill River has come a long way over the years. It is being used more and more for recreation and was even named the 2014 River of the Year! With the help of committed groups such as watershed associations, conservation districts, and individual volunteers all working to improve the quality of the river, the future holds only good things.

\*See page 5 for more details concerning the Watershed Conservation awards.

## Blue Mountain Green Vision Project Progresses

On October 21, 2014, construction started once again on the Blue Mountain School District campus for the final phase of the “Blue Mountain Green Vision: Planting Rain Gardens for Community Change” initiative. The existing stormwater swale was retrofitted into a bioswale, which now contains three new rain gardens that will support increased infiltration. Before construction, the swale served as the main pathway for stormwater running off of the school parking lots and recreation fields into Mahannon Creek, which eventually flows into the Schuylkill River. The water, which ran in a concentrated flow, caused the existing swale to become heavily eroded. The new bioswale will allow the stormwater to slow down and be absorbed into the ground, eliminating the erosion problem that was caused by high-velocity water flowing over the previous grass swale. The three new rain gardens will be planted with native vegetation in spring 2015 by over 240 eighth grade students in the district. Also taking place in the Spring will be the installation of two new informative signs; one located at the existing rain garden constructed this past Spring, and one at the newly constructed bioswale. Members of the Blue Mountain High School Green Club and Art Club are currently working on the designs for the signs. The two signs will be a part of the interpretive trail being installed in Albright’s Woods on the Blue Mountain campus. In conjunction with the planting of the rain gardens, SHA and the Master Gardeners will be holding two Community Information Sessions which will aim to educate the local public on the purpose and benefits of having storm water best management practices, such as rain gardens, on their own properties. Watch for more information regarding these sessions. SHA is very excited to see the final phase of this project taking place.

Photographs by Bill Reichert.



Watch for more improvements coming Spring 2015!

Different phases of construction at the Blue Mountain Green Vision project.

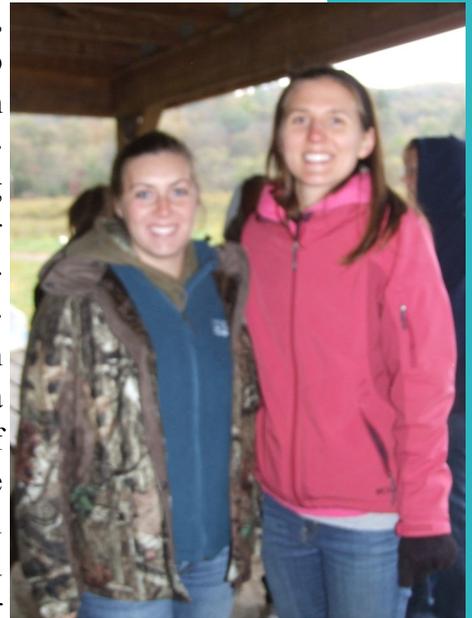
## Gaining Inspiration from Tanoma and Lucerne Wetlands



### A Crooked Creek/Evergreen Conservancy volunteer educating about water quality

in New Philadelphia. Tanoma Wetlands is a passive AMD treatment system that consists of a series of ponds and wetlands. The land surrounding the system has been transformed into an environmental education center complete with a walking trail, plant and tree identification signs, a pavilion and storage shed, and examples of different types of renewable energy. At Tanoma, they actually harvest some of the energy they produce on-site and use it as electricity for the pavilion and shed. Bill and Alexa had the opportunity to talk with Brooke and her supervisor about some of the successes they have had at their site. They were able to make some recommendations as to what really works for them and would be helpful to have at our own project site. Overall it was a very successful trip and the information learned will be kept in mind and applied to the Silver Creek site in order to make it a more effective resource for teachers and educators to use in the future.

SHA president Bill Reichert and VISTA member Alexa Kramer traveled to Indiana County, PA on October 3-4, 2014, to visit two sites – Tanoma Wetlands and Lucerne Wetlands. They met with Brooke Esarey, fellow VISTA for Crooked Creek Watershed Association and Evergreen Conservancy in Indiana, PA. Bill and Alexa originally met Brooke in June at the AMR Conference, where they learned about the projects that Brooke was working on. Brooke does a lot of education and outreach programs at Tanoma Wetlands, which is very similar to SHA's Silver Creek system



VISTA members Alexa Kramer and Brooke Esarey

Photographs  
by Bill  
Reichert.

## Field Day Fun!

Schuylkill Headwaters Association has been involved in several environmental field days this Autumn. In the beginning of September, SHA President Bill Reichert and Outreach & Education Coordinator Alexa Kramer were at Tuscarora State Park with Environmental Educator Robin Tracy teaching students from a K-8 virtual charter school about watersheds, water pollutants, macroinvertebrates, how runoff occurs, and what they can do to conserve water. The students were from several different counties around the area.

In late September, SHA assisted the Tri-Valley School District in their fall Environmental Day by educating 7th grade students about macroinvertebrates and stream quality. SHA joined the Schuylkill Conservation District in informing students about how to identify macros, how they can be used to determine stream quality, and how to use a kick net to collect them. The program progressed to the stream where they got to collect their own specimens, identify them, and use them to determine the quality of water running through the Pine Creek.

## Passing On the Legacy of Coal Mining

Contact  
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schuylkill-  
headwaters.  
org or 570-  
622-3742  
Ext 119 to set  
up a tour!

This Autumn, the Schuylkill Headwaters Association participated in a two-day education program with Mr. Adrian Portland's science classes at the Pottsville Area High School. Outreach and Education Coordinator Alexa Kramer contacted Mr. Portland at the end of summer to follow up on the program started last fall with Mrs. Rachael Kubick's science classes. Mr. Portland was very interested in getting his students involved in similar programming and agreed to meet with SHA President Bill Reichert and Alexa Kramer on site at the Silver Creek Abandoned Mine Drainage Treatment System in New Philadelphia. Many topics and ideas were discussed for a future program and it was decided that SHA would come into Mr. Portland's classroom and educate about the effects of legacy coal mining for two days and then take the students to Silver Creek for a hands-on day of learning.

On the first day of presentations, Alexa Kramer and Bill Reichert educated about the history of coal mining in Schuylkill County, what abandoned mine drainage is and how it is formed, how reclaimed mine land is replanted with native trees and grasses, and various other clean-up efforts done by SHA on abandoned mine land. The second day the presentation focused on the effects abandoned mine drainage has on water quality, how treatment systems such as Silver Creek are built, and how these systems treat the water. The students remained interested and had some very good questions to ask during the two days.

A field trip to Silver Creek was supposed to follow the classroom presentations but the trip was cancelled due to poor weather conditions. The trip will be rescheduled for Spring when the warmer weather will allow the students to be more involved in water quality testing and macroinvertebrate sampling.

### Autumn: A Busy Season of Tours!



Hamburg HS students test water quality.

SHA has been very busy this Fall season leading tours around our various AMD treatment systems. First there was tour with Mrs. Andrea Hardick, Environmental Science teacher at Hamburg High School, and her 18 students. Andrea wanted to get her students out on a tour to see the Silver Creek system, since abandoned mine drainage will be a part of her curriculum this school year. This particular tour inspired a few students to take action at their own school, as they have a rain garden project that was proposed the previous year but never completed. The students and teachers would like to get the rain garden project back in action to help improve storm water management and water quality closer to home.

Next was a tour led with Charles Cravotta of USGS and Dr. Bill Burgos, Penn State University Professor of Environmental Engineering, and his 20 students. The tour visited the Oak Hill Borehole site, Pine Knot Discharge site, Pine Knot mine shaft, and Pine Knot and Oak Hill confluences with the West Branch Schuylkill River. The purpose of this tour was to give students on-site familiarity with the discharges they are working on under the PSU Environmental Engineering class. The students will be designing a concept plan for remediation of the two discharges which contribute a significant portion of metal loading into the Schuylkill River. In terms of the new proposed treatment system, the students discussed future site location in relation to river elevations and proximity to homes, businesses, and roads.

Photograph  
by Alexa  
Kramer.



In November, SHA led a day-long tour with students from Blue Mountain High School at the Silver Creek treatment system. The day started with an overall tour of the system and then the students were broken into two groups for the rest of the day. The first group stayed at the treatment system and performed various water quality tests to determine how the water improves through the system. The second group was taken

**PSU Environmental Engineering students.** into the borough of New Philadelphia at a site right on the Schuylkill River to perform a flow measurement and collect macroinvertebrates to assess stream quality below the discharge of the treatment system. This was the first time SHA held a tour like this and it was very successful thanks to the help of Blue Mountain teachers Anne Cryer and Randy Metzger and volunteers Terry and Kathy Boyer.



**Blue Mountain HS students holding iron oxide.**



Closing out the Autumn season of tours was a group of educators from Fairmount Water Works in Philadelphia. The day consisted of a tour of the Route 309 Discharge, Newkirk Mine Tunnel, and the Mary D AMD treatment system. The teachers had the opportunity to perform several water quality tests, as well as some macroinvertebrate sampling.

**Philadelphia teachers learn about Mary D.**

Photographs  
by Alexa  
Kramer and  
Bill Reichert.

## Details About Watershed Conservation Awards

Schuylkill Headwaters Association has established two endowment funds with Schuylkill Area Community Foundation (SACF). The Funds will honor founding members Paul Lohin and Dave Derbes. Schuylkill Headwaters Association is grateful for the support and effort of these two fine men who prove that by working together we will make a difference in our communities. The awards will be distributed to qualified students who demonstrate a commitment to the community by participating in environmental and conservation projects or programs outside the classroom and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater for five (5) consecutive semesters over the last three (3) years.

The **Paul Lohin Schuylkill River Watershed Conservation Award** will be granted annually to a graduating senior at Minersville Area School District. The **Dave Derbes Schuylkill River Watershed Conservation Award** will be granted annually to a graduating senior at Pottsville Area School District. Schuylkill Area Community Foundation will accept donations for both funds at any time throughout the year and in any amount. If your preference is to make the contribution anonymously, the SACF staff will honor your request. If you are interested in establishing a charitable bequest or need more information about making a contribution, please contact Eileen Kuperavage at (570) 624-7223 or visit SACF's website at [www.sacfoundation.com](http://www.sacfoundation.com) and complete the donation form.



**CONTACT US:**

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**Upcoming Events...**

**Wednesday, December 10, 2014, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**

Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed Member Meeting

This members-only meeting, held at the Washington Crossing Historic Park, is an opportunity to learn about Coalition initiatives and priorities, discuss future directions, and meet other coalition members.

**February 1-April 1, 2015**

“Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest” sponsored by the Schuylkill Conservation District and Schuylkill County Conservancy. For more info contact “Porcupine Pat” McKinney at porcupinepat@yahoo.com or 570-622-4124.

**Thursday, March 12, 2015, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**

Ag Day - Topics included will cover farming and forestry practices. Pesticide Application credits will be available. **Please note new location: Penn State Schuylkill Campus.** More information to come.

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

Watershed Congress Along the Schuylkill River

Held at Montgomery County Community College—West Campus Pottstown, PA  
The watershed congress melds science, policy and practical applications into one program and is a highly anticipated event for people interested in understanding, protecting, and restoring their local streams.

**Schuylkill Headwaters Association, Inc.**

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS  
POSTAGE  
REQUIRED