



SCHUYLKILL RIVER NATIONAL & STATE HERITAGE AREA

Schuylkill River Heritage Area
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National Grant Awards \$50,000 for an Environmentally Inspired Art Project Along the Schuylkill River Water Trail

The money will fund a project intended to inspire community involvement in protecting and enhancing the environment. The artwork will be placed along the Schuylkill River in Berks County, the only National Recreation Trail chosen nationally to participate in the Art & Community Landscapes Program.

READING, Pa.—The Schuylkill River Heritage Area and RiverPlace Development Corporation have been awarded a \$50,000 Art & Community Landscapes Grant. The grant, which will be matched locally, will enable the design and installation of public art totaling over \$100,000, to be located along the Schuylkill River Water Trail in the area of RiverPlace, in the urban heart of Berks County.

Art & Community Landscapes is an artist-in-residency program created by the National Park Service, National Endowment for the Arts, and the New England Foundation for the Arts. It is intended to support public art that will become a catalyst for environmental awareness and stewardship in selected communities.

“This program celebrates and continues our nation’s rich tradition of artists who inspire environmental awareness and stewardship,” said Charles Tracy, National Park Service Director of Art & Community Landscapes. “The National Park Service is excited to partner with the arts community and the Schuylkill River Heritage Area in preserving and restoring ecologically vital areas for recreation and education.”

Grant applications for the 2005 round of the Art & Community Landscapes Program were solicited nationally for projects directly related to National Recreation Trails. The Schuylkill River project was the only such project to receive grant funding this year. A second Art & Community Landscapes project will be undertaken in Boston with sponsorship from a New England-based funder.

“This award is a national honor for this region” said SRHA Executive Director Kurt D. Zwinkl. “The project has significance on so many levels--locally, regionally, and nationally. This will be a great addition to the Schuylkill River Water Trail and the Heritage Area.”

The artwork will be located along a section of the Water Trail known as RiverPlace. RiverPlace is a nonprofit, community-based planning and development initiative that incorporates the City of Reading and six adjacent municipalities, including Wyomissing, West Reading and Kenhorst, as well as Spring, Bern and Cumru Townships. Led by the Berks-County based RiverPlace Development Corporation., its goal is to use the power of the river to unite communities and foster economic development.

“The Art and Community Landscapes project will be a key element of the revitalization program that is presently bringing new life to our community and the Schuylkill River,” said David L. Thun, Chairman of RiverPlace Development Corporation and a member the SRHA Board of Directors.

Key partners in this project, along with the Heritage Area and RiverPlace Development Corporation are the Berks Arts Council and GoggleWorks Center for the Arts. The fact that the proposed project integrates a number of municipalities and partners is a primary reason that RiverPlace was selected for the grant.

Ultimately the project will help communicate the nationally significant story of the Schuylkill River and its watershed within a local context, celebrating the area's rich natural, cultural, and industrial heritage. Possible projects could include such things as a mural, sculpture, exhibition, or other works informed by the site.

Using public art to enhance trail experiences has emerged as a high priority for the National Park Service and various trail advocacy organizations.

"Trails and public art are perfect complements, providing connections to the environment and community that inform, inspire, strengthen identity and provide opportunities to enjoy healthful, scenic places" said Pam Gluck, Executive Director of American Trails, a California-based trail advocacy organization. "The Schuylkill River Water Trail proposal exemplifies this convergence of the elements and sets a new standard for future projects throughout the nation."

The 128-mile long Schuylkill River Water Trail connects the headwaters of the Schuylkill River in Schuylkill County with the Delaware River in Philadelphia. In 2002, it became the first river-based trail to be designated as a National Recreation Trail by the National Park Service.

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area is comprised of the Schuylkill River Watershed in Schuylkill, Berks, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. The Heritage Area is home to over 3.2 million people and celebrates the contributions that the region's people and places have made to the history of Pennsylvania and the nation.

Applications will be available beginning June 3, 2005 and will be accepted by the New England Foundation for the Arts, administrator of the Art & Community Landscapes program, through August 15.

For artist application materials please contact the following organizations:

New England Foundation for the Arts
www.nefa.org
(617) 951-0010

RiverPlace Development Corporation
www.riverplacepa.com
(610) 685-4609

Berks Arts Council
www.berksarts.org
(610)655-6374

Schuylkill River Heritage Area
www.schuylkillriver.org
(484) 945-0200

The Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area is dedicated to assisting communities, organizations and citizens of the Schuylkill River region to preserve and sustain their cultural heritage and natural environment for future generations.