



# Pennsylvania News



Urban Blazers engage in a splash fight at Child's Park in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Photo: NPS/Sophie Sarkar

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2015



### CURRENT PROJECTS

1. Mantua Greenway
2. Living Classrooms Partnership Program
3. Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association Trail Stewards
4. Delaware River Urban Waters Federal Partnership
5. Emerald View Park and Trail
6. Power of 32+ Regional Trails Network
7. September 11th Trail – Great Allegheny Passage to Flight 93 National Memorial
8. Washington's Trail 1753
9. MPMC Connectivity – People, Trails, and Environment

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

### ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program staff provide technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.

## Recent Successes

### Mantua Greenway

The Mantua Greenway is an exciting grassroots revitalization effort in Mantua, one of the nation's five Promise Zones. The vision behind the greenway is to create a vibrant and compelling recreational space that reconnects residents to area assets. The project was inspired by a pop-up garden created by Miss Bessie Washington, a lifetime Mantua Resident who now acts as the project's resident team leader. Other community members took notice of Miss Bessie's garden and developed the idea for a full revitalization of Mantua Avenue as part of the We Are Mantua! Neighborhood Transformation Plan, which was completed in June, 2013.

The Mantua Greenway has the potential to address some of the greatest challenges—vacant land, abandoned housing, and a lack of connectivity—that impact the quality of life for residents. The concept design features a shared-use side-path that allows for biking and pedestrian activities along the same right of way; enhanced transportation stops and lighting; a vibrant landscaped buffer between the community and the unattractive rail yard; signage to identify the community and direct trail-users; and public art to illustrate Mantua's history and culture.

# Current Projects

## 1. Mantua Greenway

Project Partner: Philadelphia Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Mantua Greenway Resident Advisory Committee  
NPS Contact: Sophie Sarkar  
Location: Philadelphia  
Congressional District: PA - 2

### Project Goal

Plan and renovate a community greenway along Mantua Avenue and Parrish Street from the Spring Garden bridge at 31st Street to the 40th Street bridge, adding trees, permeable pavement, and other stormwater management infrastructure, murals and art installations, and a tribute to Mantua history and community leaders.

### NPS Role

Serve as a facilitator and advisor; organize community members and stakeholders to conduct a feasibility study; work with resident advisory committee to coordinate outreach events, develop a long-term maintenance plan, and implement a leadership and job training program.

## 2. Living Classrooms Partnership Program

Project Partner: Urban Blazers  
NPS Contact: Sophie Sarkar  
Location: Philadelphia  
Congressional District: PA - 2

### Project Goal

Expand the Living Classrooms Program at the St. James School to engage participants in active learning and character development through recreation, conservation, and nature exploration in their communities and at nearby NPS sites.

### NPS Role

Assist Urban Blazers with the design of the Living Classrooms Partnership program and outing schedule; act as liaison with local and regional national park sites; help connect students to potential service and employment opportunities in the outdoor conservation and recreation sectors.

## 3. Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association Trail Stewards

Project Partner: Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association  
NPS Contact: Sherry Peck  
Location: Ambler, Fort Washington, Upper and Lower Gwynedd  
Congressional District: PA - 13

### Project Goal

Improve stewardship, public awareness, and use of the Green Ribbon Trail.

### NPS Role

Plan and conduct stakeholder workshops on trail marketing and programming, help develop an action plan, and establish working committees.

## 4. Delaware River Urban Waters Federal Partnership

Project Partner: US Forest Service  
NPS Contacts: Dave Lange, Sophie Sarkar  
Location: Philadelphia and Chester, PA; Camden, NJ; Wilmington, DE  
Congressional Districts: NJ - 1, PA - 1, PA - 2, PA - 8, PA - 13, DE - 1

### Project Goal

Reconnect urban communities with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts to improve waterways and promote their economic, environmental, and social benefits.

### NPS Role

Act as a co-lead with the US Forest Service; assist the partnership with cataloging and directing federal resources to address locally identified needs and priorities; coordinate the Lower Delaware Canoemobile program to provide an opportunity for thousands of youth to experience their local urban rivers.

## 5. Emerald View Park and Trail

Project Partner: Mount Washington Community Development Corporation  
NPS Contact: Peggy Pings  
Location: Pittsburgh  
Congressional District: PA - 14

### Project Goal

Expand community awareness, support, use, and development of 257-acre Emerald View Park with 20 miles of linking trails.

### NPS Role

Guide public involvement in conducting a park use study and finalize the consensus-based draft sign implementation plan; seek funding and public recognition opportunities.



Local youth learn how to fish at the Community Canoemobile Event at Bartram's Garden.  
Photo: NPS/Sophie Sarkar

# Current Projects

## 6. Power of 32+ Regional Trails Network

Project Partner: Pennsylvania Environmental Council

NPS Contact: Peggy Pings

Location: Southwestern PA, north central WV, eastern OH

Congressional Districts: PA - 9, WV - 1, OH - 6

### Project Goal

Develop 800 miles of trails to complete a 1,600-mile connected shared-use trail system in 53 counties and five states.

### NPS Role

Participate as regional core team member and assist with the organizational development of the "PA/WV/OH corridor working group." Assist in community and stakeholder engagement, gap analysis, development of the name/brand, and community outreach/participation strategies.

## 7. September 11th Trail – Great Allegheny Passage to Flight 93 National Memorial

Project Partner: September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance

NPS Contact: Peggy Pings

Location: Somerset County

Congressional District: PA - 9

### Project Goal

Create a 24-mile trail to connect the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and Great Allegheny Passage with the Flight 93 National Memorial. This will complete the bicycle, pedestrian, and auto touring links to commemorate the 9/11/2001 tragedy at the New York City, Washington DC, and Shanksville sites.

### NPS Role

Help to acquire and develop the trail corridor, align with NPS Centennial, and engage numerous stakeholders.

## 8. Washington's Trail 1753

Project Partner: Washington's Trail-1753, Inc.

NPS Contact: Peggy Pings

Location: Western Pennsylvania

Congressional Districts: PA - 3, PA - 5, PA - 9, PA - 12, PA - 14, PA - 18

### Project Goal

Extend the trail route through western Pennsylvania and on to Virginia.

### NPS Role

Assist the Board to advance its trail development mission, develop goals for the trail, and build capacity through community outreach.

## 9. MPMC Connectivity- People, Trails, and Environment

Project Partner: Mercersburg Area Council for Wellness (MACWell)

NPS Contact: Wink Hastings

Location: Mercersburg Borough, Townships of Montgomery and Peters

Congressional District: PA - 9

### Project Goal

Build a healthy and sustainable community through social, economic, and environmental actions centered on developing trails for recreation and wellness, restoring the health of Johnston Run, and fostering citizen stewardship through environmental education.

### NPS Role

Facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration to guide on-the-ground action, recruit volunteers, design outreach and education programs, build organizational capacity, and leverage funding.



Fall, 2013: Bikers prepare for a road ride from Flight 93 National Memorial to Rockwood PA, scoping out the route for the official trail corridor. Photo: David Brickley

## We're Here For You.

Could your project benefit from NPS Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.



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## 2014 Nationwide Partnership Success

3,278.74 Miles of Trail Developed

2,046.25 Miles of River Conserved

9,411.06 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at  
[www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)



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## Recent Successes cont.

The project is a collaborative effort of the National Park Service, the Philadelphia Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, and the Mantua Beautification Committee. Within one year, the team has completed a resident-driven concept plan, organized a resident advisory committee and selected a resident team leader, obtained state funding for a feasibility study, created a list of priority traffic safety improvements along Mantua Ave (several of which have already been addressed by the Streets Department), and engaged local residents in as many as six community clean-ups along Mantua Avenue.

### Dunkard Creek Water Trail: Come Back Creek!

In September of 2009, the entire 40-mile stretch of Dunkard Creek in Pennsylvania and West Virginia suffered a pollution disaster that resulted in a complete die-back of all aquatic life.

Community alarm resulted in renewed focus to clean up Dunkard Creek and care for it, use the mitigation money to improve habitat for the aquatic life, restock the mussels, develop public access, and watch-dog and enforce industry regulations. Artist Ann Payne led an initiative to create a traveling art show entitled "Reflections: Homage to Dunkard Creek" from 90 artists' renditions of 90 lost species

For the past two years, the National Park has worked with Greene County Watershed Alliance, Friends of Dunkard Creek, and Dunkard Creek Watershed Association to develop the Dunkard Creek Water Trail concept. NPS staff led community members in identifying and paddling five river stretches over the lower 23-mile river to assess the creek for suitability and safety for paddling. On Mother's Day, 2014, NPS staffer Peggy Pings was requested to lead a community paddle, which was then featured in the June issue of Greene County Living Magazine. Since then, a 23-page Dunkard Creek Water Trail Concept Plan has been drafted by committee members.

The project continues to gather interest and access sites will need to be formalized for public use. As more people get out on new sections of river and experience its beauty and natural setting, they become river stewards to rally together to paddle and care for Dunkard "Come-Back" Creek.



Mother and daughter start down Dunkard Creek on their shredder on Mother's Day, 2014.  
Photo: NPS/Peggy Pings