



Pennsylvania News



William Dick School students celebrate the launch of schoolyard greening in Philadelphia. Photo: NPS

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2013



- NPS Unit
- ★ State Capital

CURRENT PROJECTS

1. Dunkard Creek Water Trail - PA section
Greene County Watershed Alliance
2. MPMC Connectivity-People, Trails & Environment
Montgomery Peters Mercersburg Connectivity
3. Ohio River Trail
Ohio River Trail Council
4. Metropolitan Urban Greening
Trust for Public Land, Western PA Conservancy
5. Schuylkill River Water Trail Strategic Plan
Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area
6. September 11th National Memorial Trail
September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

Recent Successes

Schoolyard Greening in Philadelphia

Students at the William Dick School are exercising their basic right to play! The students, with the help of the Trust for Public Land (TPL), are working to transform their asphalt-paved, schoolyard into an inviting space for outdoor recreation. Using a 10-week participatory design curriculum, TPL and RTCA Fellow Sophie Sarkar engaged 50 students in the design of their own improved green schoolyard, including lessons on play culture, lighting and shadows, stormwater management, and playground design. These lessons helped students develop the tools necessary to design a safe, ecologically beneficial, and economically feasible schoolyard. At the end of ten weeks, the students had developed several alternative designs, which informed the final professional design of their new schoolyard.



Students design their new schoolyard. Photo: NPS

ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides 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.

Current Projects

1. Dunkard Creek Water Trail

Project Partner: Greene County Watershed Alliance
NPS Contact: Peggy Pings
Location: Greene County, PA
Congressional Districts: PA - 18

Project Goal

A 19-mile water trail from Mason-Dixon Park, WV to the confluence with the Monongahela River and the Friendship Hill National Historic Site.

NPS Role

Assist with water trail planning, inventory of access sites, mapping and brochure development; assist with partnership building, public involvement, education, outreach, and fundraising.

2. MPMC Connectivity- People, Trails & Environment

Project Partner: Montgomery Peters Mercersburg Connectivity
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Peters, Montgomery, and Mercerburg, and Franklin, PA
Congressional District: PA - 5, 9, 10, 18

Project Goal

Establish a healthy community through social, economic, and environmental actions including trail development and restoration of Johnston's Run.



Beaver County Rowing Association holds a "Learn To Row" event on Beaver River in June 2012. Photo credit: Raymond Tabay. Photo: Raymond Tabay, Beaver County Rowing Association

NPS Role

Facilitate a collaborative process to develop action plans, outreach and education programs, and recruit citizen volunteers; build organizational capacity, and leverage funding for implementation.

NPS Role

Assist with development of a water trail map and guide; startup of a youth paddling program; assist with fundraising and implementation of a grant for land trail development within Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area.

3. Ohio River Trail

Project Partner: Ohio River Trail Council
NPS Contact: Peggy Pings
Location: Ohio River, PA
Congressional Districts: PA - 4, 14, 18

Project Goal

A 41-mile land trail and 63-mile water trail along the Ohio River in PA, from Coraopolis to Point of Beginning at the PA-WV-OH state line.

4. Metropolitan Urban Greening

Project Partners: Trust for Public Land, Western PA Conservancy
NPS Contact: David Lange
Location: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, PA
Congressional Districts: PA - 1, 2, 14

Project Goal

Improved green streets, schoolyards, and recreation centers in underserved neighborhoods in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

NPS Role

Assist with participatory design process and stewardship planning with students and community residents in schools and recreation centers.



Wells Appell Architects and Trust for Public Land review the re-design of Collazo Park with the local community. Photo: NPS



Students at William Dick School participate in a schoolyard clean-up day. Photo: NPS

Current Projects

5. Schuylkill River Water Trail Strategic Plan

Project Partner: Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area
NPS Contact: Sherry Peck
Location: Schuylkill River and key tributaries between Tamaqua and Philadelphia, PA
Congressional Districts: PA - 1, 2, 6, 7, 13, 15, 16, 17

Project Goal

Improved river safety, riparian stewardship, local economies, and appreciation of the River. A public access plan, communications plan, and manual for water trail partners to evaluate, plan, and maintain landing locations and facilities.

NPS Role

Facilitate public participation; guide improving landing and launch facilities; assist with strategic plan.



Members of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, RTCA, and the Dragon Boat Association participate in a boat access site reconnaissance. Photo: NPS

6. September 11th National Memorial Trail

Project Partner: September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance
NPS Contact: Peggy Pings
Location: Seven state triangle including Shanksville, PA (Flight 93 National Memorial), New York City (World Trade Center), Washington DC (Pentagon)
Congressional Districts: PA - 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

Project Goal

A 1,100-mile hiking, biking, and driving trail physically connecting the three national memorials commemorating the tragic events that occurred in 2001.

NPS Role

Assist with strategies for board development, public awareness, and public involvement to scope routes.

“The RTCA has been invaluable to me as I have worked to put together multi-state workshops about land and water development. Their facilitation and project management expertise are assets to community organizations.”

Hannah E. Hardy, Director of Recreational Infrastructure, PA Environmental Council



The first 9/11 Trail group bike ride, starting out at Flight 93 National Memorial, fall 2012. Photo: NPS

We're Here For You.

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



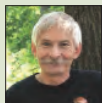
Sherry Peck
215.597.6478
sherry_peck@nps.gov



Peggy Pings
304.293.7528
Peggy_Pings@nps.gov



David Lange
215.597.6477
david_a_lange@nps.gov



Wink Hastings
410.260.2481
WHastings@chesapeakebay.net

2012 Nationwide Partnership Success

2,154 Miles of Trail Developed

1,074 Miles of River Conserved

70,385 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

94% Percentage of Community Partners Satisfied

Find more information online at
www.nps.gov/rtca



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Recent Successes cont.

Monongahela River Towns Program goes Paddling!

The Monongahela River Towns Program, an initiative of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, got off to a quick start, thanks to a 3-year Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation grant. RTCA was asked to assist in the development of a public involvement strategy for guided paddling trips. RTCA staffer, Peggy Pings, led a short series of paddling events on Dunkard Creek and the Mon River in fall 2011 to spring 2012, many with the assistance of the Harry Enstrom Greene County Chapter of Izaak Walton League. Trips were successful, and usually boasted 12 – 33 participants. The River Town Program, in partnership with the Student Conservation Association, developed two more trips on the Mon during the summer and fall of 2012, complete with a guide service and volunteer lunchtime presenters.

“RTCA staffer Peggy Pings started implementing a series of paddling events, that we then carried forward. It was amazing that over 50 people were interested in being on the Monongahela, and experiencing our river towns. What a great way to raise awareness and involvement!”

- Cathy McCollom, Project Director, Mon River Towns Program



Student Conservation Association (SCA) staff help paddlers enter the Monongahela River at Rices Landing in summer 2012. Photo: Ryan Fielden, SCA

One of these day-long Sojourns was funded by a \$900 grant from Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR). These events resulted in a greater appreciation for how River Towns can capitalize on their riverfronts to attract more paddlers. A database of over 200 people has been compiled due to this fantastic interest in the serene river experience, and some interested paddlers are now buying boats of their own. As time goes on, additional public access sites will be developed and promoted as part of the River Town Program offerings.