

# 2018 SUCCESS STORY

## Schuylkill River Sojourn

### SUMMARY

The annual Schuylkill River Sojourn begins each year in Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania and ends a week later in Philadelphia. The 112-mile and seven-day sojourn draws attention to the river as a valuable natural and recreational resource. Participants use a canoe or kayak to paddle 14 to 18 miles per day. Participants have the option to register for the entire journey down the river or they can register for just certain days. Registration includes three meals a day, expert guides, camping arrangements, transportation through shuttle services, and educational programs. The sojourn has evolved into a popular paddling event that has introduced over 4,000 people from 25 states and four foreign countries to paddling the river. Although the Schuylkill River Sojourn is clearly a recreational endeavor, its primary purpose is to draw attention to the river as this region's most critical natural resource, and as a source of drinking water for over 1.5 million people.

### SOJOURN HIGHLIGHTS

In 2018, participants hearkened from 11 different states, some from as far away as Washington and New Mexico. A total of 67 paddlers made the full 112-mile journey, and over 100 more joined for one or more days. Two full-trip paddlers, Carl Raring and Jim Showalter have participated in every sojourn since 1999 when the first Schuylkill River Sojourn launched. We also had a paddler that has participated in every sojourn since 2000.

We kicked off the 2018 event with a pre-sojourn celebration at Schuylkill Haven Island Recreational Park. Many paddlers checked in the evening of the celebration and camped out at the park. There was a barbeque dinner, live music and the coal fired steam Locomotive 113 was on site and allowed sojourners to climb aboard and learn more about the Railway Restoration Project 113.

To encourage participants to better understand the river, educational programs were provided at all lunch and evening stops. This year's program theme, "Celebrating 20 Years," featured presentations that gave a 20-year perspective on the river corridor.

The sojourn introduces beginner paddlers to the beautiful treasure that is the Schuylkill River every year and this year was no different. Several Reading Area Community College students joined the sojourn and paddled for the first time on June 5 from Allegheny Aqueduct Park to Pottstown Riverfront Park.

June 5 was also the day of the special 20th Sojourn Celebration which included dinner by the river followed by live music. Several presentations and speeches were given during the celebratory dinner including a few words from Cindy Adams Dunn, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources secretary.

On the final day of the sojourn, participants enjoyed a presentation from Dotty Brown, author of "Boathouse Row, Waves of Change in the Birthplace of American Rowing" and former editor and reporter for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Sojourners also enjoyed an auction for a previous version of a water trail sign and proceeds will go toward next year's mentorship program to encourage even more beginners to paddle along the river.

Overall, the 2018 Schuylkill River Sojourn was another great event and that was enjoyed by participants. Schuylkill River Greenways will use this year's survey to make next year's event even better.

### FUNDING

Grant Award: \$4,500.00

Total Match: \$98,079.00

Total Project Cost: \$102,579.00



**SCHUYLKILL RIVER GREENWAYS** NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds & Rivers



**pennsylvania** DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES