



Philadelphia residents fighting to gain access to the new Schuylkill River Park Trail

Free Schuylkill River Park is officially incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation called the Lower Schuylkill River Park Users Association (LSRUA).

Our mission is "to advocate on behalf of all users for the preservation and enhancement of safe and accessible access to Philadelphia's Schuylkill River Trail and to promote responsible development, management and enjoyment of the Park."

Lower Schuylkill River Users Assn. Board:

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Reaching The Hidden River

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

WINTER 2007

We Did It! Park Crossings Are Saved

After three long years of hard work and patience, a tentative agreement about the crossings has been reached. While it has not yet been completely finalized as of press time, CSX has agreed to permit the installation of at-grade crossings at both Race and Locust Streets and to facilitate funding a pedestrian bridge connecting the two Schuylkill River Parks below Locust Street. CSX has also agreed to reroute its garbage-only trains.

This agreement embodies the position we as a community took from the beginning:

street level access into the Park had to be preserved and made safe for all park users. We won that and more !

By sending emails, making phone calls, signing the petitions, coming to rallies and hearings, and by using the Park in overwhelming numbers, we convinced CSX to keep open the most popular access points into the Park.

By working together, we did something extraordinary. This campaign rallied support across ideological lines and throughout the Philadelphia civic community. Everyone



who loves the Schuylkill River Park Trail and who has taken action on its behalf, should feel proud.

"We convinced CSX to keep open the most popular access points into the Park."

Promenade Risers Safety Problem Resolved

After six months of being cordoned off due to the safety risk they posed, the risers on the "Promenade" (the section of the park between the two ramps at Market and Chestnut) were removed and replaced with a smooth slope in January 2007. We thank SRDC, the Army Corps of Engineers and Fairmount Park for recognizing this safety problem and coming up with the best solution.

Free Schuylkill River Park identified the contractor, Professional Construction, and helped to facilitate the work for the job. SRDC installed bollards to prevent motorized vehicles traffic on the slope.



Risers causing accidents in June 06



Gradual slope replaces risers in Jan 07

October 2006 brought: Runnin'



Runners head north toward Race Street

October 1st. The first footrace ever held on the Park was a great success. Despite early morning rain, the weather lifted in time for 75 runners to partake in the 1 Mile Sprint and 5K, which went off without a hitch.

The 5K course started at Locust and used the trail and sidewalks to go behind the Art Museum before looping back.

Congrats to all finishers and many thanks to all volunteers!

Top Winners

1 Mile Sprint

- Al Dong (5:39)
- James Statler (6:48)
- Jessica Anderson (7:02)
- Charles Anderson (7:02)

5 K Run

- Matt McNally (20:05)
- Martin Mastascusa (20:14)
- Virginia Friedman (20:29)

*Runnin' On
the River
2007 is
planned for
Sunday,
September
30*

..Walkin', Cruisin', Paradin' on the River

October 3rd. In conjunction with the Powelton Village Civic Association, Free Schuylkill River Park's board member Robert Thomas guided the first walking tour of the soon-to-be-constructed West Bank Greenway and Schuylkill River Park. Twenty or so walkers met at 30th Street station and walked up to the Spring Garden bridge and down the trail to end at Bistro St. Tropez, which provided hungry participants with a bite to eat.

October 5th. We hosted our second cruise fundraiser on boat docked at the Walnut Street Street bridge. The cruise took passengers down to Bartram's Garden, where it turned around, then traveled up to the Waterworks and turned around under the dam before returning to the dock.

October 29th. Over a hundred spooky kids, adults and dogs came to the third annual Halloween Parade on the River. Fairmount Park's Executive Director, Mark Focht, assisted by architect Charles Loomis, judged the entrants. Next year, we promise to better coordinate this event so people will not be late for the Fitler Square party!

*Join us on
Saturday, June 9th for
The next
Cruisin' on the River
Fundraiser*



Parade began at Locust St. crossing



Fairmount Park's Mark Focht hands out a prize to a winner

Status of Park Extension

Locust to South Street. The Schuylkill River Development Corporation (SRDC) gave URS, the lead firm of the project design team, their “notice to proceed” on December 15th. The design phase of the project should take about eight months. The design team will produce a preliminary design for the entire stretch of the trail from Locust to South Street.

The concept for this section of the Park is to create a “boardwalk” type trail over the water because the land between the railroad tracks and the water is so thin. This innovation will

allow a green screen of the existing trees to remain and be in between the railroad tracks and the trail. SRDC has raised half the money needed to build the full extension, so it will build as much as it can with the funds in hand. This will likely result in an initial extension that runs from the Locust Street “donut” to a point approximately across from the community gardens. SRDC is planning on holding a public meeting during the design phase to inform the community and garner their input.

When the rest of the money is raised,

the trail will be extended to the South Street Bridge. As part of the ongoing South Street Bridge renovations, a ramp off the north side of the bridge will be built to meet the path. A set of stairs will be built on the south side of the bridge to the trail. Construction of the extension is expected to start in late 2007 or early 2008, which is pushed back from previous estimates of start dates. The bridge is scheduled to close to traffic either this November 2007 or early spring 2008. The Streets Department just recently posted a new weight limit on the bridge, prohibiting buses and trucks.

Dupont Crescent. SRDC selected a design team, led by Urban Engineers, and is negotiating a contract for the design of this section of the Schuylkill River Park Trail, which runs between 34th Street and Wharton Street along the east bank of the Schuylkill River. The design of this part of the trail is expected to be done by end of 2007 or early 2008. SRDC will hold a community meeting during the design phase of this project.

Landscape between Race and MLK Drive. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s (PHS) Philadelphia Green Program has contracted with Lager, Raabe, and Skafte Landscape Architects to design the landscaping of the trail from Race Street north to MLK Drive and a new MLK plaza area. This is being done in conjunction with Fairmount Park and SRDC. A public meeting was held on November 16, 2006 where approximately ten people attended to review and make comments on draft designs. Fairmount Park and the

Art Commission each approved the plans at their winter meetings. PHS is working in tandem with Fairmount Park on clearing and planting the entire area in the vicinity of MLK drive. If all proceeds smoothly, construction will begin on the MLK plaza and other amenities (an overlook and fishing pier) during Summer 2007, with plantings installed in the fall. The bare slopes are expected to be covered in wild meadow grass this spring. SRDC does not anticipate the construction to require closing the trail. To see drawings of the plans, go to www.freetheriverpark.org

Bridge



Work

SRDC is working with PennDOT and the Streets Department to improve the sidewalks of the bridges that span the Schuylkill River and the entrances into the Park.

JFK Blvd. Bridge. PennDOT put out to bid a proposal to renovate the streetscape of the bridge between 30th Street Station and the

Peco building. The plan is to widen the sidewalks and make the bridge more amenable to pedestrians and cyclists. SRDC is exploring additional access from the bridge into the Park. Construction is expected to begin in mid 2007.

Market Street Bridge. The sidewalk will be enhanced with

benches. A portal will be constructed at the top of the entrance ramp down to the Park and a “bump out” and curb cut will be constructed at the sidewalk in front of the portal. This will facilitate getting to and from Market Street to the Park’s ramp. Construction is expected to begin during 2007.

Thanks to all 2006 supporters of Free Schuylkill River Park

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