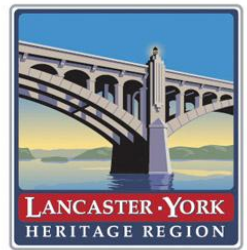


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Susquehanna River Water Trail Recognized as National Recreation Trail

Wrightsville, PA – Yesterday, at Shank’s Mare Outfitters overlooking the Susquehanna River, the Lancaster-York Heritage Region Board of Directors hosted a lunch and program attended by the National Park Service, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership and special guests, to celebrate the recent designation of the Susquehanna River Water Trail as a National Recreational Trail.

The section of the Susquehanna River Water Trail from Sunbury to the Maryland border was one of only two National Recreation Trails designated this year in Pennsylvania. This Water Trail section, which is a 103-mile part of the larger 440 mile long Susquehanna Greenway in Pennsylvania, is one of only three water trails in the state to achieve National Recreation Trail status, and joins a statewide network of 51 land and water-based trails totaling more than 1500 miles.

"The Lower Susquehanna water trail is one of the finest water trails in Pennsylvania and it is a model for what a world-class water trail experience can be all about. The work the communities in the Heritage Region have been doing with the water trail and along the Susquehanna River is truly exemplary and the reason for the recognition and National Recreation Trail designation," said Joe DiBello of the National Park Service.

The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, on behalf of the Susquehanna River Trail Association and the Lancaster–York Heritage Region, spearheaded the effort to seek recognition of the Water Trail as a National Recreation Trail. According to Gary Bloss, Executive Director of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, “the designation of the Middle and Lower Sections of the Susquehanna River Water Trail as a National Recreation Trail highlights the significance of this important recreational resource not only at the local level but elevates its importance to the state-wide and national level.”

The Lower Section of the Susquehanna River Water Trail, from Harrisburg to the Maryland Line, is managed by the Lancaster-York Heritage Region. This segment of water trail has a system of 21 interpretive signs and includes exciting features such as the Conejohela Flats—a series of low islands that provide habitat and foraging sites for a wide variety of breeding and migratory birds. The Lower Section passes through a tremendous diversity of natural and built environments and cuts through the heart of the Susquehanna Piedmont Gorge. The river has a variety of unique geologic features including river potholes and deeps and important cultural resources including Native American river rock art (petroglyphs). The Water Trail passes by a number of key power generation utility areas, including four hydroelectric facilities, two nuclear power plants, a pumped-storage plant, and a steam-electric station. A map and guide is available for the Water Trail at local retailers and outfitters.

“With its regional scope, numerous partners, proven ability to leverage resources, and its connection to our themes and mission, the Susquehanna River Water Trail is a model project in the Lancaster-York Heritage Region—we’re pleased to have the National Park Service recognize the significance of the Water Trail,” said Mark Platts, President of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region.

National Recreation Trails are components of the National Trails System and recognize already existing trails that connect people to resources and improve their quality of life. National Recreation Trails benefit from the prestige and increased visibility of being a part of the National Trail System. New designations are announced annually by the Secretary of Interior as part of the nationwide celebration of National Trails Day on the first Saturday in June, and recognized at the National Trails Symposium. All National Recreation Trails are included in the on-line National Registry of Trails on the www.AmericanTrails.org website, which includes descriptive information, maps, and pictures for trail users. Other benefits of National Recreation Trail designation include:

- Access to technical assistance from National Recreation Trail Program partners (such as the National Park Service Rivers and Trails program);
- Access to networking and training opportunities;
- Assistance with recognition and special events highlighting the trail;
- Letters of support for fundraising and trail protection efforts, and
- Access to funding opportunities available from the National Recreation Trail Program partners. For example, trails with National Recreation Trail designation are eligible for funding support from the National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program.

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region is a non-profit organization based in Wrightsville that helps raise awareness and appreciation of the cultural & economic value of the Susquehanna Gateway region, and preserve, enhance and celebrate its most significant heritage assets as economically vital attractions for residents and visitors alike. For more information about our mission and programs please visit www.StoriesoftheLand.com .