

Schuylkill Action Network (SAN)

Scope: Local

Location: Schuylkill River Watershed, Pennsylvania

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Website: SchuylkillWaters.org

SCOPE:

- The Schuylkill River Watershed is 2,000 square miles of land, 130 miles of river, 235 municipalities, and a source of drinking water for 2 million people in Southeast Pennsylvania.
- **Mission:** To improve water resources through collaborative action in the Schuylkill River Watershed.

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- The SAN is a collaborative network of environmental partners and stakeholders working to protect drinking water sources. The Philadelphia Water Department, US Environmental Protection Agency, and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection founded the SAN in 2003 with a primary goal of creating a mechanism for regional coordination across geographic, regulatory, and jurisdictional boundaries.
- The SAN is now a network with over 300 partners and over 800 general members. It is not its own entity or non-profit organization. Anyone is [welcome](#) to participate in the SAN!

STRUCTURE/FUNDING:

- The SAN is currently funded by the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) and Aqua Pennsylvania, an Essential Utilities Company, with match support from various projects and programs.
- Implementation funding is secured from individual SAN partners from various funding sources, such as federal, state, and local grants, private foundations, and donations. In addition, the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund is a Schuylkill-specific fund that has funded and leveraged over 5 million dollars for on-the-ground restoration projects.
- Coordinated by: Partnership for the Delaware Estuary staff, Executive Steering Committee, Planning Committee, and Workgroup Chairs.
- The SAN consists of six workgroups: Abandoned Mine Drainage, Agriculture, Engagement & Stewardship, Pathogens & Point Source, Stormwater, and Watershed Land Collaborative. Each workgroup is open to all and has meetings or hosts workshops quarterly throughout the year.

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Aqua Pennsylvania, an Essential Utilities Company
- Delaware River Basin Commission
- Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Philadelphia Water Department
- Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area
- SSM Group, Inc.

[Full list of partners](#)

WATER CONCERNS:

- Abandoned mine drainage (AMD) acidity and pollutants (heavy metals, coal silt)
- Agricultural impacts on land productivity and water quality from runoff (nutrients, sediment, pathogens)
- Pathogens, contaminants of emerging concern, and pharmaceuticals in source water
- Stormwater runoff (flow, nutrients, sediment)
- Land use change and development


STRATEGIES:

The following four categories are ways that the SAN measures its progress and success in achieving its vision of clean water and a healthy Schuylkill River Watershed accessible for all through the various mechanisms outlined in the 2021-2025 Strategic Action Plan.

- Protect & Restore
 - Complete on-the-ground restoration projects
 - Preserve land
- Educate & Engage
 - Host public stewardship events, professional workgroups, trainings, and project tours
 - Develop education and awareness campaigns through compelling media that communicate uniform messaging, encourage positive action, and foster stewardship
- Collaborate
 - Support and bring together many diverse stakeholder groups and partners across the six workgroups
 - Participate in sub-watershed coalitions
- Finance
 - Secure funding for the SAN administration, coordination, and initiatives
 - Connect partners to funding opportunities

RESULTS:

- The SAN has many local successes across each of its 6 workgroups, and the following are just a few key summary highlights of these collective successes over the past 17 years.
- Water quality improvements from decreased heavy metals, pathogens, sediments, and other pollutants
- Over 500 acres of riparian buffers planted on agricultural lands
- Millions of pounds of trash removed by volunteers from the watershed via the Schuylkill Scrub initiative
- Outreach to every school in the Watershed, including involvement from 30 schools that have implemented green infrastructure
- An improved perception of the River and an increase in recreational and stewardship activities
- Creative, open, committed, and communicative cross-sector partnerships
- Dedicated full-time coordination staff member(s) at the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary
- Over \$15 million invested in abandoned mine drainage and reclamation projects
- Over \$5 million in on-the-ground restoration projects awarded and leveraged through the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund



Information current as of November 2020. Please check with the Collaborative contacts (or website if available) for the most up to date information. To find other source water collaboratives across the U.S. or to add yours to the list, visit the Source Water Collaborative's [How To Collaborate Toolkit](#)