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# SAN CONNECTIONS



## A "Green" City Plan to Reduce Storm Water Runoff

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*Edited by the SAN Editorial Staff*

Storm water is nasty and dirty and can cause flooding. So the sooner it gets off a property, the better.

But it's about to become valuable stuff in Philadelphia. Businesses can make money by embracing it. Or face losing money if they let it go. [in February], the Water Department [sent] notices to 79,000 commercial customers about a new billing structure for storm water that will begin in July.

As always, there will be winners and losers. By the end of a four-year phase-in period, at least 1,500 customers could see an increase of \$500 or more a month in their bills, said Joanne Dahme, public affairs manager for the department's Office of Watersheds.

About three dozen unlucky customers could see hikes of more than \$10,000 a month.

But the program isn't just a stick. As a carrot, it's offering discounts for those who reduce runoff.

The program will not affect residential customers. Currently, storm-water charges are embedded in sewer bills, which are based on water use.

But everyone knew this wasn't fair. It didn't account for storm water's gushing from a site into the sanitary-sewer system - which costs the city more than \$100 million a year to maintain.

Plus, 40,000 city properties that have no water meter - vacant lots, parking lots, and



utility rights-of-way - get sewer service for their storm-water runoff for free.

Now the city is factoring in storm water not only as a way to make billing fair, but also to encourage ways to reduce the flow every time it rains.

It's separating out the storm-water charge and basing it on the size of the property plus the amount of "impervious" surface, which prevents the absorption of rain into the ground.

The potential losers are those

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## Schuylkill River Sojourn – June 5th to June 11th



Registration is now open for the 2010 Schuylkill River Sojourn. The Sojourn is a 7-day (June 5th to June 11th), 112 mile guided canoe and kayak trip with a wealth of activities, learning opportunities and fun on the Schuylkill River and in riverside communities. It begins in Schuylkill Haven and ends in Philadelphia. Participants can register for the entire trip, or as many days as they like.

This year's sojourn will feature programming developed by the National Park Service (NPS) and will be presented by various NPS personnel from three NPS units in the Schuylkill River Heritage Area: Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, Valley Forge National Historic Park and Independence National Historic Park. The Schuylkill River Sojourn is an excellent way to discover America's "Hidden River", Pennsylvania's first Scenic River.

For more information or to register, please visit the Schuylkill River Heritage Area:

<http://www.schuylkillriver.org/Sojourn.aspx>

## SAN Drinking Water Scholastic Awards

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will recognize four schools in the Schuylkill River Watershed for developing educational environmental projects that promote awareness of students and communities about the importance of protecting drinking water sources. Each school will be presented with the Schuylkill Action Network Drinking Water Scholastic Award as part of EPA's celebration of National Drinking Water Week, May 2-8, 2010.

The award recipients for 2010 are spread throughout the Schuylkill River Watershed. Each of the schools took a unique approach to educating the students and community about source water protection. Projects included creating a campus rain garden, replacing concrete and rubber paving in a schoolyard with recycled porous paving materials and planting native species in riparian buffers.

The Schuylkill Action Network Drinking Water Scholastic Awards will be presented to recipients at the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association at 10:00 am on Monday, May 3rd in celebration of National Drinking Water Week.



### The schools receiving the awards include:

- ◆ Worcester Elementary School (Methacton School District)
- ◆ Albert M. Greenfield School (Philadelphia School District)
- ◆ Perkiomen Valley High School (Perkiomen Valley School District)
- ◆ Philadelphia University School of Science and Health

## Covanta Energy Offers Free, Safe Destruction Of Unwanted Drugs To Protect Waterways

To reduce pharmaceutical pollutants being discharged into the nation's waterways, [Covanta Energy](#) is launching an important collaboration with municipalities.

As more and more communities establish collection centers for unwanted medications, Covanta will offer, for 2010, a free disposal and destruction service designed to keep these products out of the nation's waterways.

Covanta Energy, a world leader in the development, ownership and operation of energy-from-waste facilities and other renewable energy projects, is rolling out a national program to process pharmaceuticals collected by local governments in drug take-back programs.

In Pennsylvania, Covanta Energy operates energy-from-waste facilities in Dauphin, Delaware, Lancaster, Montgomery and York counties.

These programs provide residents with a safe and proper way to dispose of unwanted medications, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter and veterinary medications and nutritional supplements. When flushed down the drain, or disposed of in landfills, such prod-

ucts contaminate surface waters and have an adverse effect on the environment.

"Studies have shown that pharmaceuticals are present in our nation's streams and rivers. We want to help prevent the discharge of these drugs into the waters that we drink, the waters where we fish and the waters where we swim," said John G. Waffenschmidt, Vice President, Environmental Science and Community Affairs. "Our facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art combustion controls and air pollution control equipment to ensure the destruction of these drugs in an environmentally sound manner, one that protects the water we depend upon day in and day out. Our facilities ensure that any pharmaceuticals processed in them do not end up in surface waters."

Covanta is a Sustaining Partner of the [Product Stewardship Institute](#), a non-profit group which has been spearheading national efforts to define steps for appropriately handling unwanted drugs. Covanta has worked with PSI, various regulatory agencies, and with municipa-

lities to reduce the potential for contamination of waterways by discharged pharmaceuticals.

"Drugs that are disposed of down sinks and toilets, or simply thrown in the trash, can cause environmental harm," said Scott Cassel, Executive Director of the Product Stewardship Institute. "Take-back programs can lower the environmental and health risks associated with waste pharmaceuticals. Covanta's offer will reduce the cost of take-back programs in municipalities that choose this kind of destruction. Thermal destruction at Energy-from-Waste facilities, hazardous waste incinerators, or medical waste incinerators, provides for the ultimate destruction of these unwanted drugs."

Municipalities interested in participating in the program must obtain appropriate regulatory approvals in order to ensure that such wastes are not classified as hazardous waste from a federal, state, or local perspective. Each program would be subject to a due diligence review by Covanta Energy.



Municipalities interested in participating should contact Larry DellaVecchia, Director, Covanta Secure Services at 973-882-7310.

## Watershed Events are SPRINGing up all over!

The Schuylkill is budding with many opportunities to get out and experience the watershed this spring. Below are some of the different opportunities. Be sure to also check the SAN website's news stories for up-to-date event announcements.

April 15-May 31, 2010

### Schuylkill Scrub

[Sign-up your cleanup or Volunteer for one](#) See article on page 4

April 18, 2010 4pm-9pm

### Manayunk Fest

**FREE** Earth Day Event with a focus on water with music, food, and educational exhibits.

[http://www.manayunk.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&id=22](http://www.manayunk.com/index.php?option=com_content&id=22)

April 24, 2010 9:00 AM -1:00 PM

### Wissahickon Creek Annual Clean Up

[Volunteers Needed](#) Call Bob: 215-646-8866

<http://www.wvwa.org/calendar.htm>

April 30 and May 1, 2010

### Schuylkill County ARRI Tree Planting

[Volunteers needed](#)

[http://bit.ly/Schuylkill\\_ARRI\\_program](http://bit.ly/Schuylkill_ARRI_program)

May 22, 2010 9:00 – 2:00 PM

### Perkiomen Creek Canoe Sojourn

[Pre-registration required](#) and additional fees apply.

[www.perkiomenwatershed.org](http://www.perkiomenwatershed.org)

June 5-11, 2010

### Schuylkill River Sojourn

[Registration Required](#) See article on page 1

<http://www.schuylkillriver.org/Sojourn.aspx>

June 5, 2010 9:30 AM

### Birds: Courtship and Songsters Program

Marcia Clouser, Ursinus College.

[www.perkiomenwatershed.org](http://www.perkiomenwatershed.org)

July 12-16, 2010 (Register NOW)

### 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Delaware Estuary Watershed Teacher Workshop

[Pre-registration required](#)

[http://www.delawareestuary.org/acivities\\_teachers\\_watershed\\_workshop.asp](http://www.delawareestuary.org/acivities_teachers_watershed_workshop.asp)

Find more events at  
[www.SchuylkillWaters.org](http://www.SchuylkillWaters.org)

Contact [tdavidock@DelwareEstuary.org](mailto:tdavidock@DelwareEstuary.org) to list your events in future publications

## A "Green" City Plan to Reduce Storm Water Runoff (continued)



with low water use, and thus low bills now, but big roofs or parking lots.

...The problem is that more than half the city has "combined" sewers - pipes that carry both storm water and sewage. When it rains, the system fills quickly. The surplus, which includes raw

sewage and road oil, backs up into basements and gushes untreated into rivers through 164 overflow pipes.

Other major cities have opted to build miles-long, multibillion-dollar tunnels to hold storm-water overflows, pumping it back into the system when the rain stops. Philadelphia's plan envisions transforming the city into an oasis of rain gardens, green roofs, treescapes, and porous pavements.

Advocates say it's cheaper than the tunnel and has many other benefits, including a prettier city, which leads to higher property values.

The new storm-water rates help bring the vision closer, said environmental lawyer Joseph M. Manko, chair of the

Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority, which has approved a \$30 million low-interest loan for the Water Department's greening.

"If you tell people whose bills that may go up, 'You have the right to reduce them, and four years to phase it in,' I think there's going to be a real impetus" to change, he said.



For more information on the Philadelphia Green Cities initiative, visit:

[www.phillywatersheds.org](http://www.phillywatersheds.org)

Read the entire article at the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

## \$664,000 awarded for Schuylkill County AMD Project



*Mary D Borehole Discharge*

More than \$664,000 has been awarded to the Schuylkill Headwaters Association (SHA) for the Mary D Borehole Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Remediation Project in Schuylkill County. To improve the Schuylkill River's water quality, the SHA needed to mitigate the Mary D borehole discharge, but the adjacent Mary D Ball Field was the only viable location to create wetlands required for the planned passive AMD treatment system. Determined to improve the area's waterways but unwilling to eliminate Mary D's only recreational facility, SHA needed to obtain an alternative site, funding, design, and

construction services to relocate and restore this prized community asset.

With nearly \$600,000 in grant monies and 10 acres of abandoned mine land donated for the relocation of the ball field, SHA and RETTEW (the project engineer) worked with 18 stakeholders to identify and effectively manage a wide variety of expectations for the new sports facility. The new Mary D Fire Company Sports Complex includes a regulation Little League field, an all-purpose field, an ice-skating pond, a walking path, and parking area.

Just recently, the Mary D Borehole AMD portion of the project was awarded more than \$664,000 through the EPA Section 319 program. The passive treatment system will

reduce non-point source pollution, improve water quality, and improve wildlife and fishery habitats. AMD loadings will be reduced from the Mary D borehole discharge to the Schuylkill River and a proposed dry hydrant will also be installed for the Mary D Fire Company to obtain water for fighting fires in the area.

In the end, SHA provided the village of Mary D with a new sports venue that enhances the community's recreational opportunities and the former ball field site will be used to improve the area's waterways.



### SAN Dates to Remember

- 4/21: SAN AMD meeting
- 4/30 & 5/1 AMD ARRI Planting
- 5/13: SAN Planning Meeting
- 5/25: SAN WLC meeting
- 6/16: SAN Picnic
- 6/16: SAN Ag Meeting
- 6/16: SAN Planning Meeting



## APRIL 15<sup>th</sup> – MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>

For years, conscientious groups in beautiful Southeastern Pennsylvania have charged into spring to diligently clean up a little piece of paradise. Now, thanks to the collaborative efforts of many individuals and organizations, an improved united effort is being launched as the Schuylkill Scrub.

The Schuylkill Scrub will register existing and new waterway cleanup efforts from the headwaters of the Schuylkill River down to the confluence of the Delaware River in Philadelphia. We expect that the cumulative amount of trash removed through this campaign will be very impressive and immediately benefit the entire Schuylkill River watershed!

- ◆ **More effective**, with planned activity to positively affect the Schuylkill Watershed!
- ◆ **More visible**, featuring collaborative promotions before and during the Schuylkill Scrub!
- ◆ **More accountability**, with an organized effort designating specific areas to specific groups!

Ideas for the next edition of SAN Connections?

Contact Tom Davidock,  
SAN Coordinator:  
(800) 445-4935 x109  
or email: [Tdavidock@DelawareEstuary.org](mailto:Tdavidock@DelawareEstuary.org)

### TO PARTICIPATE AS AN INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION CONTACT SCHUYLKILL SCRUB:

**GREEN VALLEYS ASSOCIATION** EMAIL: [jhoekstra@greenvalleys.org](mailto:jhoekstra@greenvalleys.org) | CALL: 610-469-2596

**HAY CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION** EMAIL: [info@haycreekwatershed.org](mailto:info@haycreekwatershed.org) | CALL: 610-404-HCWA