



## News for Immediate Release

**Aug. 17, 2014**

### **Governor Corbett Kayaks Schuylkill River in Berks, Chester and Montgomery Counties; Local Tourism Contributes \$2.7 Billion to Local Economy**

Events part of two days of activities to promote Pennsylvania conservation and tourism

**Pottstown** – Governor Tom Corbett today joined state and local officials, and local tourism and conservation partners to kayak the Schuylkill River in Berks, Chester and Montgomery counties as part of a two-day tour to promote Pennsylvania's tourism industry.

"In 50 years, the Schuylkill has been transformed into a popular recreational destination for anglers, boaters, hikers and today, kayakers," said Gov. Corbett. "By continuing to protect our environment, we can ensure our children and grandchildren can enjoy Pennsylvania's diverse and historic waterways. Today, we kayaked the historic Schuylkill through Berks, Chester and Montgomery counties. As part of a statewide industry that supports more than 470,000 jobs, outdoor recreation and tourism in these three counties contributes \$2.7 billion to the local economy."

In 2012, the state's travel and tourism economy continued to expand with travel and tourism industry sales rising 3.8 percent to \$38.4 billion. The number of travelers visiting Pennsylvania posted the highest growth rate since the recession, with the state hosting an estimated 192.3 million domestic and international travelers. Travel and tourism related economic activity supported 470,953 total jobs, both directly and indirectly, representing 6.5 percent of the state's total employment.

"Right here in Montgomery County, tourism invests \$1.2 billion into Pennsylvania's economy and supports more than 13,000 jobs" said Gov. Corbett. "With so many ways to see Pennsylvania, I encourage all Pennsylvanians to 'stay-cation' and explore all that our wonderful Keystone State has to offer."

Following the paddle, Gov. Corbett visited the River of Revolutions Interpretive Center, managed by the Schuylkill River Heritage Area, to view educational exhibits that discuss the Schuylkill River's rich history.

"The Schuylkill River Heritage Area uses conservation, recreation, education, cultural & historic preservation and tourism as tools for community revitalization and economic development," said Schuylkill River Heritage Area Executive Director Kurt Zwikl. "We were glad to host the governor today as he promoted the Schuylkill River and surrounding area."

The governor also presented red oak seedlings to the Schuylkill River Heritage Area for planting in the area. The seedlings were grown by DCNR's Penn Nursery from acorns gathered at the Governor's Residence.

"DCNR's investments in recreation and conservation – including river access and conservation like what we are seeing emerge and succeed along the Schuylkill – go a long way in supporting regions with their vision for revitalization that grows hand in hand with conservation and recreation; providing a better quality of life for their citizens; and improving amenities that attract visitors to the area to spend money and create an atmosphere where new businesses have an opportunity to spring up. We know this leads to more jobs and workforce retention," DCNR Secretary Ellen Ferretti said.

Gov. Corbett was also joined today by members of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau, the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board, local elected officials and families.

"Having relocated to Chester County from the western part of the country, I was amazed at the amount of open space and outdoor adventure available to both residents and visitors," said Susan Hamley Executive Director, Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau. "Chester County's commitment to open space is part of its rich history. The outdoor landscape of Chester County also includes national, state and county parks, regional trails and natural preserves. We are a veritable playground for outdoor enthusiasts with over 5000 acres offering hiking and biking trails; swimming, fishing and boating; bird watching and more."

"We are excited to join with Governor Corbett in bringing awareness to the many unique places and wide-open spaces where you can get outdoors and explore your freedom in Montgomery County," said Bill Fitzgerald, president, Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board. "From the Schuylkill River, to our lakes, trails and parks, Montgomery County offers abundant year-round recreation adventures for families, outdoor enthusiasts and those looking to unplug, "

Since 2011, the commonwealth has invested nearly \$1 billion of federal, state and local funds and low-cost loans to protect and enhance the Schuylkill River Watershed. This includes technical support and grants for hundreds of projects that supported scientific research, flooding and storm water management, public access for recreation, upgrades to wastewater treatment and drinking water plants, habitat restoration, educational activities and restoration of historical sites and structures.

The governor has previously kayaked the Susquehanna River several times, as well as the Delaware, Allegheny, Juniata, and Conemaugh Rivers.

For more information on Pennsylvania tourism, go to [visitPA.com](http://visitPA.com).

For more information the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, visit [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us).

**Media contacts:**

Valerie Caras, Governor's Office, 717-783-1116  
Christina Novak, DCNR, 717-772-9101

Steve Kratz, DCED, 717-783-1132

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