

RiverStewards

Education | Science | Exploration

RiverStewards brings together those interested in the river to make a significant, collective social impact. We recognize the value of the Susquehanna River's social return on investment, which considers the environmental and social values that the river gives to us all, in addition to the economic benefits. Through our continued collective efforts and communication, we will raise awareness of the river's importance and how we can sustain it.

RiverStewards was created to bring together the disparate organizations and individuals currently working to protect and enhance the Susquehanna River watershed within Pennsylvania to work collaboratively on mutually beneficial solutions.

Many times, organizations work within their own "silo" and don't communicate and work with those with similar goals. Even worse, nonprofits compete against each other for a limited pool of grant dollars. These individual efforts make those dollars less effective than they could be if shared among organizations with similar end goals. RiverStewards works to remove these barriers and create an atmosphere that encourages collaboration and collective impact.

RiverStewards is made up of two separate entities, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit called RiverStewards Collaborative, and a for-profit called River Stewards Benefit Corporation (*see image on right*). All profits from the benefit corporation will be put toward the work of the nonprofit. In that way, the work of the nonprofit will become self-sustaining and not reliant on limited, competitive grant funding.



Product commercialization: finding inventions created at colleges, investing in them, and then scaling them up for sale

Investment funding advisory services: helping organizations make their money do good for the world

Collaborative process management: working with municipalities and others via meeting facilitation and other services

River economic curation: analyzing the total economic benefits of the river and providing that data to others

Research and education: to include storytelling, public outreach events, "guiding the science" efforts, and other activities

Data repository: all data collected on the health of the river will be contained in a publicly-accessible database



RiverStewards Initiatives: A Few Examples



Shared Database for Susquehanna River Data - There is considerable useful data on the health of the Susquehanna River, yet it is housed within various “private” computers. This creates redundant studies, data gaps, and confusion. Having a shared database, created by and housed at Harrisburg University, will advance our knowledge of the state of the Susquehanna and come up with solutions to address issues.



Bringing Beneficial Products to Market – The RiverStewards Benefit Corporation will work with the Social Enterprise Institute (SEI) at Elizabethtown College to bring products developed at institutes of higher education to the market to benefit water quality and quantity. There are several products currently being looked at that would benefit farmers, water treatment plant operators, municipalities and others. The profits from these endeavors will help pay for the work of the RiverStewards Collaborative nonprofit.



Susquehanna Storytelling – Beginning in Fall 2017, a professor at Millersville University involved his students in writing stories that focus on the people, cultures, and natural history of the Susquehanna River. Many great short stories and videos were developed by his students. RiverStewards highlights these via social media and events where the students can gain public speaking experience. We are now working with Elizabethtown College to expand this effort and intend to bring other colleges onboard in the future.



Blueprint for One Water - We propose a regional governance structure for the management of municipal water quality and quantity, based upon this Blueprint that was developed by the Watershed Research Foundation. The pilot project that began in Spring 2018 involves the University Area Joint Authority (UAJA), the Spring Creek Commission, RiverStewards, and others to address water quality and quantity issues within the Spring Creek watershed (near State College, PA). RiverStewards has written a white paper based on this effort to be able to take this concept to the EPA and other watersheds throughout the state.



River Economic Data Curation – An economics professor and his students at Elizabethtown College started this effort to map out the economic benefits of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania in Fall 2018. In 2019 we began working with economics professors from other institutes of higher learning in the watershed on this effort, with the goal of creating a report showing the economic benefits of the whole watershed in PA that will be used to build support for the river at the grassroots and legislative levels.



Guiding the Science - River guides’ expertise of the Susquehanna River would provide invaluable data on the health of the river and its inhabitants to state agencies and academia, if only it could be captured in a manner useful to those groups. We propose training a select group of river guides to enter data into the shared database mentioned previously through the use of a Google doc or the development of a smartphone application. We are looking for funds and partners to begin this effort.

Visit us at <https://riverstewards.info>