

COLUMBIA CROSSING 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



24,369
visitors
in 2019



17 local teens
attended first
SUSQ Camp



53
programs or
events held



45 facility rentals
generated revenue



629 students attended
Canoemobile field trip

Columbia Crossing River Trails Center
is managed by Susquehanna National Heritage Area
for the Borough of Columbia.

VISITOR SERVICES

EXPANDING HERITAGE AND ECOTOURISM ALONG THE RIVER

In March 2019, Susquehanna National Heritage Area earned national designation from Congress. This prestigious designation broadens our relationship with the National Park Service and recognizes our place in United States history. In June, Senator Bob Casey and Congressman Lloyd Smucker, the National Park Service, and our Lancaster & York County partners came to Columbia Crossing to celebrate this momentous occasion. About the designation our elected Representatives said:

Maybe more important than history and heritage, this is a celebration of the future. This is a tomorrow day for Columbia, for Lancaster County, and for York County.

- Senator Casey

We're so proud of this community and utilizing the wonderful resources that we have in this district. It's now up to our local community to really leverage this designation to drive additional economic development and to drive people to our area.

- Congressman Smucker

Columbia Crossing River Trails Center is at the center of many of the stories of national significance. From the Underground Railroad to defending the Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge, Columbia is an amazing place to share our national story.

VISITATION NUMBERS

Staff and volunteers welcomed and guided 24,369 visitors to the Center in 2019, almost 4,000 more than 2018 and the highest ever. Most visitors sought information about outdoor recreation, but many others asked about local attractions.

Visitation is defined as an individual that enters the building and is greeted by our front desk staff or volunteers during regular operating hours, programs or facility rentals. Those who use the restrooms via outdoor access or come to the park outside our operating hours are not counted. This means that the number of visitors tracked will always be lower than the total number of persons benefiting from and enjoying the center.



HEAT MAP SHOWING VISITORS BASED ON THEIR HOME ZIP CODE

WHERE ARE THEY FROM

SNHA tracks visitors' home zip codes through our guest log. This log is analyzed every year and continues to show strong regional visitation. The heat map above shows the frequency of visitors from different zip codes in the region.

Visitors from twenty-six different states and eight countries were logged. Local residents bring their family and friends who are visiting and show them the center and the river; a great sign of the pride our community has in the center.

VOLUNTEERISM

Eighteen volunteers dedicated 430 hours of their time to Columbia Crossing. They welcomed visitors and helped us prepare for upcoming programs and activities. They worked community events like Ornament Making and paddled alongside SUSQ Camp. We are so grateful for our volunteers who commit their precious time to help us fulfill our mission.

24,369 VISITORS

2 & 1/2 STAFF

18 VOLUNTEERS

430 HOURS VOLUNTEERED

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

CONNECTING LOCALS TO THE RIVER FOR LEARNING & RECREATION

Since SNHA assumed management of Columbia Crossing in 2016, it has been our responsibility to engage young people with the river and its history. Our program development has always focused on drawing local families to the river in order to inspire a new generation of river users.

SNHA field trips connecting local public and private school students with the river have continued to expand. This year over 600 students participated in Canoemobile. SNHA and the National Park Service fund the entire field trip, including busing and transportation. Students learn about water quality, ecology, and the history of the river at land stations. Then they hit the water! Wilderness Inquiry brings giant canoes that hold up to ten students each. Students experience a safe, introductory paddle around the historic bridge piers.

Our popular Tadpole Time program has continued to thrive, hosting about a dozen preschoolers each month. A story, maker-project, and nature activity are presented around a different theme each month. From hibernation to fireflies, each SNHA theme encourages a child's curiosity about the world around them.

This summer, SNHA hosted its first ever summer camp session at Columbia Crossing River Trails Center. SUSQ Camp was created to get kids and teens ages 12-15 out and onto the river. Seventeen campers spent four days kayaking on the river, each day building on their skills to become more confident and comfortable with paddling. Along the way, they learned about water quality, history of the bridges and the wildlife, all while making new friends and having fun. When all was said and done, this group of kids and teens felt more confident in their kayaking skills and more connected to the river.

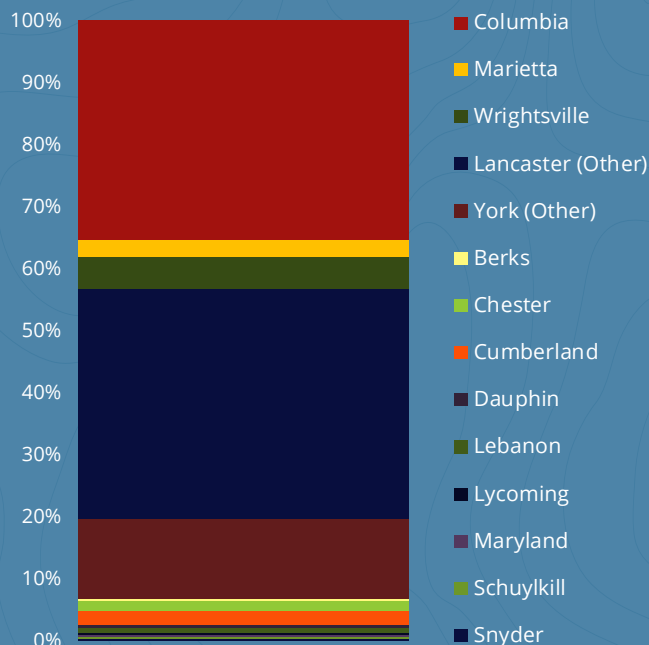
SNHA engages exceptional regional partners to offer high-quality programs. We work with the National Park Service to provide field

trips and bring the Chesapeake Roving Ranger to the area for events. Our summer-long Ranger Hour program works with a DCNR State Park Ranger.

We've also partnered with:
African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania
Astronomy Enthusiasts of Lancaster Co.
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chiques Rock Outfitters
Columbia Historic Preservation Society
Lancaster Birding Club
Raven's Ridge Wildlife Center
Rivertownes PA USA
Sway Yoga

Columbia Crossing hosted four exhibits this year. *Ice Harvesting along the Susquehanna* partnered with local amateur historian Lynn Smoker. Columbia artist Diana Thomas showcased her *Current Color* collection in the Spring. Over the summer two traveling exhibits were on display: photography from Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, and a regional art from the PA Arts Council collection called WATER ER.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS HOME ZIP CODE ANALYSIS



VISITOR REVIEWS

THE CENTER WAS GREAT. I DON'T USUALLY SPEND A LOT OF TIME READING DISPLAYS BUT I DID HERE. EVERYTHING WAS SO INTERESTING. THE CENTER WAS VERY CLEAN AND WELL ORGANIZED. THE PEOPLE WORKING THERE WERE FRIENDLY AND READY TO HELP WITH ANYTHING THEY COULD.

- CHERYL, DURHAM, NC
TRIPADVISOR

PASSPORT TO ADVENTURE. THE STAFF INSIDE HAVE A VARIETY OF THINGS FOR SALE BUT WHAT THEY OFFER IS MUCH MORE VALUABLE. THESE EXPERTS ON THE AREA CAN PROVIDE ADVICE ON RESTAURANTS, LODGING, AND EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN TO DO. ANY VISIT TO THIS AREA SHOULD START HERE TO ENSURE YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TRIP.

- ANTHONY, CHARLESTON, SC
TRIPADVISOR

SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE HAS EXCELLENT TRAVEL INFO IN THE CENTER AND ONLINE TO EXPLORE THIS REGION.

- DAVE, GREENCASTLE, PA
TRIPADVISOR

TADPOLE TIME WAS A PERFECT ACTIVITY FOR MY 3 YR OLD! HIGHLY RECOMMEND AND WILL BE COMING BACK!

-CELESTE H.

WE HAD A GREAT TIME PAINTING PUMPKINS AND PLAYING GAMES AND SOCIALIZING WITH OTHER PUMPKIN PAINTERS. CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER EVENTS.

-DEBRA S.

WHAT A FANTASTIC FIELD TRIP TODAY LEARNING SOME LOCAL HISTORY ABOUT COLUMBIA! THANKS SO MUCH!

- LISA D.

ATTENDED THE YOGA CLASS HERE LED BY DAWN HERSHEY OF SWAY YOGA... SO BEAUTIFUL! THE VIEW IS SO PERFECT!

- PATTI F.

I AM A NEWBIE KAYAKER AND WANTED TO GO OUT ON THE RIVER WITH A GROUP, AND THIS EVENT WAS VERY AFFORDABLE, UNLIKE SOME OTHER GROUP OUTINGS. WELL ORGANIZED WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE AND CARING STAFF.

-SNHA PADDLE PARTICIPANTS
SURVEY MONKEY



LOOKING AHEAD

2020 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

5K Run & Paddle



SNHA is planning a 5K Run & Bridge Paddle in 2020 to draw regional visitors for Riverfest on the last Sunday in June. SNHA is working with Columbia partners to make this possible since the Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce has discontinued the Chiques Challenge.

Columbia FIRE Field Trips



In 2019, SNHA applied earned grant funding from the Junior League of Lancaster to host Columbia Borough High School's F.I.R.E. (Females Inspiring Real Empowerment) Group for three sessions at Columbia River Park. These sessions include a Student Action and Restoration workshop with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, a STEM workshop and discussion about careers in environmental science and conservation at Columbia Crossing, and an on-water paddle trip on the Susquehanna River.

River Park Improvements & Trail Connection Study



SNHA staff have been participating in the Columbia River Park Expansion Project. The Columbia River Park Advisory Committee (CRPAC) has submitted an application to the PA Outdoor Corps to have an Adult Crew come to the park expansion area to remove invasive species and clear trail paths. CRPAC and SNHA are working together to raise the funding to pay the crew for their work. Manager Hope Byers remains the member-at-large for the Northwest River Trail Committee. She also was invited by Manor Township and LCSWMA to participate in the Enola Low Grade - NW River Trail Connection Feasibility Project. This will help inform the best path to connect these two popular trails.

Tourism Product Updates



SNHA staff at Columbia Crossing are working with a local web development firm to update and improve the Susquehanna Riverlands website, which hosts all of the outdoor recreation and heritage sites information for the region. SNHA will also be updating brochures for the NW River Trail and Enola Low Grade Trail which will be printed in early 2020.

On Water Activities: SUSQ Camp & Public Paddling



SUSQ Camp will once again hit the water in late July. SNHA plans to seek funding to subsidize the camp and offer scholarships to campers. We hope to host twenty 12-15 year olds for a week of outdoor recreation and environmental sciences. SNHA has received funding to offer six public paddling excursions in 2020. We expect that three of those will launch from Columbia Crossing.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

GENERATING REVENUE TO SUPPORT THE BUDGET

Raising Columbia Crossing to its full potential as a community and visitor center has been the shared goal of Susquehanna NHA and the Borough of Columbia partnership since 2016. Response to the center's services, programs, and NW River Trail were beyond everyone's expectations. SNHA had to quickly add staff and resources to manage all the needs of the public. As we enter our fifth year of operation, we can confidently share a fiscally responsible budget going into 2020.

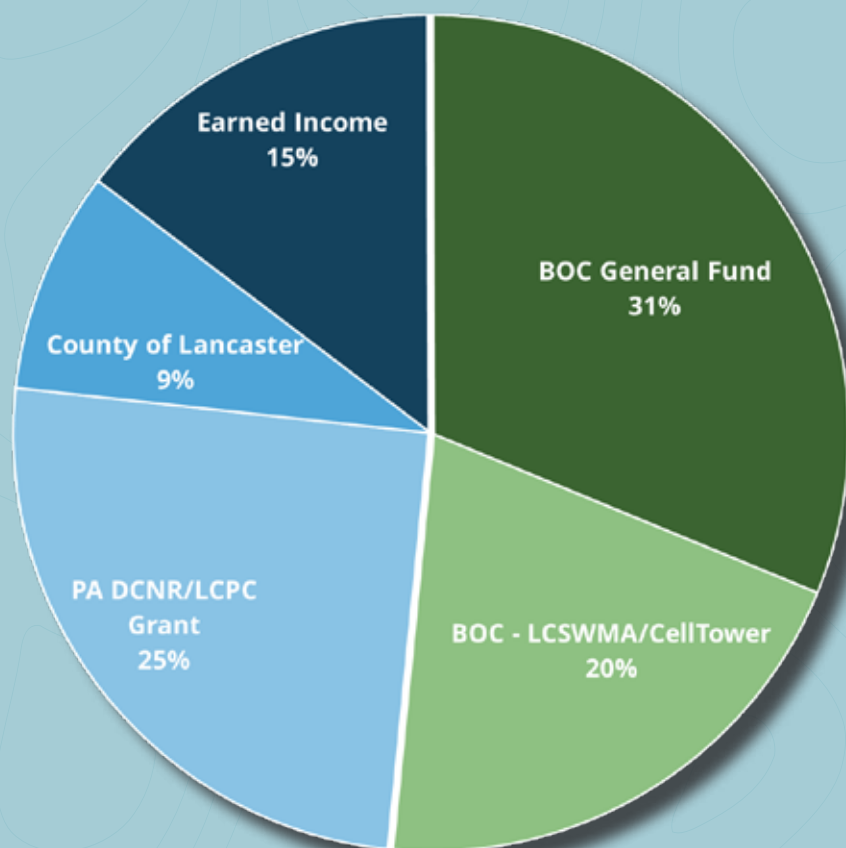
SNHA has increased revenue generated from programs, merchandise, and facility rentals steadily from \$8,400 in 2016 to \$43,059 in 2019. Over \$3,000 of 2019 funding is deposits for 2020 rental events. Our full-time Program Coordinator and part-time Visitor Services

Representative made it possible to host more paid rentals in 2019.

National Heritage Area designation will also benefit Columbia Crossing as SNHA begins to receive federal funding through the National Park Service. In 2020, SNHA has allocated \$10,000 of NHA funding to support visitor services at Columbia Crossing.

SNHA has built a reserve fund to sustain continued, multi-year support for our program staff and other operational expenses. Maintaining reserve funds is a standard operating practice for non-profit organizations. SNHA will continue to strive to diversify our funding for Columbia Crossing to supplement the ongoing investment by the Borough of Columbia.

2016-2019 FUNDING PARTNERSHIP



Susquehanna NHA 49%

- Earned Income
Facility Rentals, Merchandise Sales, and Program/Exhibit Income
- County of Lancaster
Annual grant from Lancaster County Commissioners
- PA DCNR/LCPC Grant
Start-up funding from DCNR through County Planning Commission grant

Borough of Columbia 51%

- General Fund
Ongoing investment also used to match DCNR 2016-2018 funding
- LCSWMA/Cell Tower
Proceeds from electric distribution and cell phone tower also used to match other public funding.

COLUMBIA CROSSING 2019-2020 BUDGETS

	2019 Budget	2019 Final	2020 Budget
REVENUES			
Columbia Crossing Operations & Programs	150,863	167,922	175,863
Columbia Borough	114,863	114,863	114,863
Professional Services Agreement	50,000	50,000	50,000
LCSWMA/Cell Tower Funding	64,863	64,863	64,863
National Park Service	---	---	10,000
County of Lancaster	10,000	10,000	15,000
Program/Exhibit Income	9,000	13,986	12,000
Sales - Merchandise	3,000	4,333	4,000
Facility Rentals	14,000	24,740	20,000
EXPENSES			
Columbia Crossing Expenses	182,397	185,190	179,738
Salaries & Benefits	140,179	139,264	136,816
Program & Interpretative Supplies/Services	10,000	12,079	11,200
Merchandise Purchases	1,500	2,464	1,700
Travel & Training	2,000	555	1,500
Custodial & Other Facility Services	12,000	12,191	12,000
SHC Admin. Support	16,718	17,017	16,522
Columbia Trolley Income Paid to Borough	0	1,620	---
Operating Net	(31,534)	(17,268)	(3,875)
Prior Year Reserve Carry-Over	89,928	101,720	82,453
Capital Expenses	1,500	1,998	2,000
Operating Reserve	56,894	82,454	76,578

FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - CHESAPEAKE BAY/STRATEGIC GATEWAY HUB

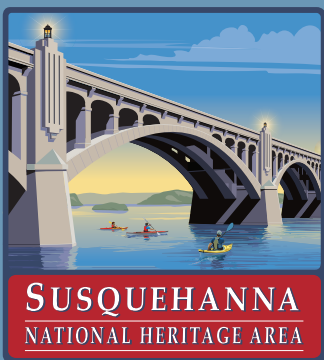
This funding could support cost of staff and services to operate programs that connect local residents to river recreation, environmental science, and river history.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA VISITOR SERVICES

This funding could support projects like brochure development, distribution, and website/social media management.

PA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Although PA DCNR start-up funding has ended, there may be opportunities to earn funding from this important regional partner in the future.



www.SusquehannaHeritage.org

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717-252-0229

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