

## Mission

Susquehanna Heritage's mission at Columbia Crossing is to share the river's historic, scenic, and recreational stories and experiences with residents and visitors, with a special focus on bringing river heritage to life for young people.

## 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- Visions of the Susquehanna River Art Exhibit
- Community Railroad Safety Day in partnership with Norfolk Southern
- National Trails Day in partnership with Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape
- Hosted the National Park Service Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail Advisory Council Meeting
- Railroading at the River Exhibit & Lecture Series
- Yoga on the Deck
- Petroglyphs & Printmaking with Susquehanna Center for Creative Arts
- Creative Coloring at Columbia Crossing
- Hosted the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Water Trail Managers Meeting
- Public Art Station Showcase Exhibit
- Susquehanna Saturdays Pumpkin Party
- Susquehanna Saturdays Leaf Hoopla
- Susquehanna Saturdays Ornament Making



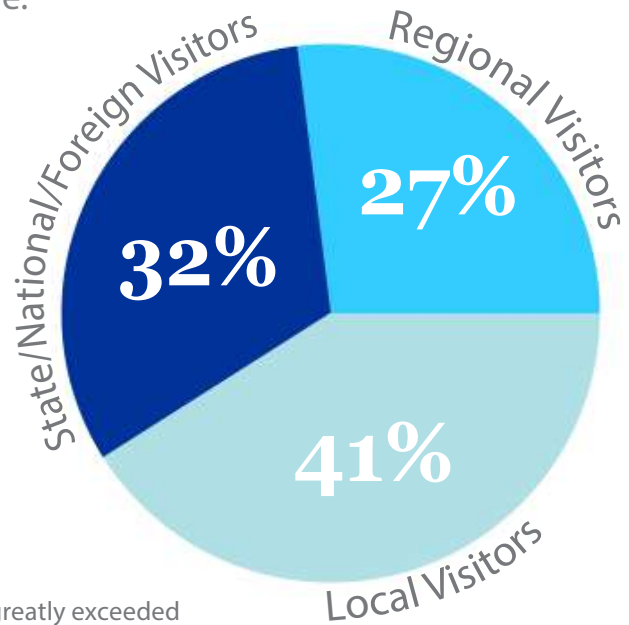
# VISITATION

Visitation to Columbia Crossing was greatly increased by the completion of the southern portion of the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail as well as engaging programs, events, and exhibits presented by Susquehanna Heritage.

In 2016, the most popular reason to visit Columbia Crossing was curiosity. Many local and regional visitors had heard of us through the newspaper, television, or driving by, and wanted to learn more. As a new facility opened and promoted to the public, the center had a great opportunity to share our story. Recounting the hard work and funding that made the center possible was a popular story at our front desk, along with our vision and goals under Susquehanna Heritage's management.

We also were greeted with trail users. The new connection to the NW River Trail spurred many people to begin their outdoor adventure at Columbia Crossing. Helping visitors find, use, and enjoy the trail also became a major talking point. Local and regional residents applauded the trail and its plans for expansion.

Visitation is defined as an individual that enters the building and is greeted by our front desk. Those individuals who visit the restroom via outdoor entrances or who park and go directly to the park, trail, or water access points are not counted. All those that visit after operating hours are also not counted. This means that the number of the visitors tracked will always be lower than the total number of persons benefiting from and enjoying the center.



## BY THE NUMBERS

Susquehanna Heritage greatly exceeded our expected visitation in 2016. Last year, the center was visited by 5,800 people. We had that many visitors by the end of May! Our total 2016 visitation was 22,350 people. Let's explore more information about these visitors.

## WHO ARE THEY

Columbia Crossing had a diverse mix of visitors including rugged outdoor enthusiasts, casual bicyclists, families, history buffs, and active seniors. Because we offer a variety of experiences there is a variety of visitor types. Regular conversations with our visitors helps us to gauge the needs and wants of our different visitor groups and develop proper exhibits and programs.

## WHERE ARE THEY FROM

Susquehanna Heritage tracked visitors' home zip code through a guest log at our front desk. Almost 800 zip codes were collected and analyzed to help us understand how to best serve the visitors.

We define a local visitor as an individual that lives within 10 miles of the center. A regional visitor lives between 10 and 25 miles of the center. Finally, a state/national/foreign visitor comes from beyond 25 miles to visit the center.

## WHEN DO THEY VISIT

Susquehanna Heritage, with the support of Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce Marketing Intern Ben Burner, tracked the most popular times of visitation. Our results show that our busiest day of the week is Sunday. Whether it is during our in-season, extended hours or our shorter, off-season hours, Sunday trumps all other days of the week. Our slowest day is Tuesday. We are only open on Tuesdays during the in-season. This trend will likely continue as people will assume we are closed.

Our busiest in-season month was July, when visitation totaled over 3,700. June was a close second with 3,500 visitors. Visitation is most affected by weather. The extremely hot August this year lowered that month's visitation considerably. However, a warm fall kept visitation high through September and October. Winter visitation is sought through programs and facility rentals. However, construction has restricted programming this winter.

# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A major part of Susquehanna Heritage's mission at Columbia Crossing is to offer a variety of programs and events related to a broad spectrum of river related themes.

Program development at Columbia Crossing focuses on engaging young people in our local history and our river. In August of 2016, Susquehanna Heritage hired Allison Aubrey as the Part-time Program Coordinator for Columbia Crossing. Allison's previous experience working in science centers and museums as an educator prepared her for the position. Allison coordinated a number of programs throughout the fall while continually building a long-term program strategy. Susquehanna Heritage chose to develop two major types of programming in the future: Core Programs and Event Programs.

Core programs - a developed set of activities that can be offered at any time per request; focus on nature, environment, river, and heritage. This includes programs for birthday parties, Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups, and school field trips. Susquehanna Heritage staff has recently connected with local Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups as well as local public and parochial schools to begin development of these programs.

Event Programs - programs offered on a regular basis to the general public. These event programs are great for building a community at Columbia Crossing. They vary in subject and style to attract different audiences and increase interest.

Event programs being developed and implemented in 2017 include a monthly early childhood story time, trail 101 programs like fishing, birding, biking, etc., and a heritage lecture series. The wide variety of programs in 2016 have helped us to plan for programming in 2017.

***New ways of presenting our cultural and natural heritage are essential to attracting and engaging visitors.***

Our programming brought in about two thousand visitors, or about ten percent of our total visitation. We hope to increase that number in 2017 by engaging new partnerships with local businesses and organizations.

## EXHIBITS

***Revolving exhibits allow us to explore a wide variety of topics that engage new audiences***

Susquehanna Heritage launched Columbia Crossing in 2016 with our Susquehanna River Art Collection. Normally displayed at the Zimmerman Center for Heritage, part of this one-of-a-kind collection was displayed at Columbia Crossing through May. This first exhibit invited visitors to think of Columbia Crossing as a great place to view local art and explore the beauty and inspiration of the river.

In May, as the art exhibit was preparing to return to the Zimmerman Center, Columbia Crossing Manager Hope Byers designed an exhibit related to Columbia's vast rail history. Our successful launch of *Tracks to Trails: The Expansion, Decline, and Rebirth of Columbia's Rail Lines* displayed Susquehanna Heritage's ability to quickly and efficiently create captivating content. We worked with local citizens, the Columbia Historic Preservation Society, and LancasterHistory.org to acquire

images and resources to tell the story of Columbia's rail industry.

In mid-summer, Susquehanna Heritage worked with locals Roche and Fran Fitzgerald to install a Public Art Station on the riverfront deck. The station displayed art created on site by visitors. Watercolors and paper were provided and maintained. The popularity of the station inspired us to display the public art in a formal exhibit. Over 200 pieces of the public art are currently displayed in the exhibit hall of Columbia Crossing. The exhibit will remain through January.

Exhibits planned for 2017 include nature photography from Susquehanna Greenway and the Audubon Society as well as a heritage exhibit exploring how our community has crossed the Susquehanna throughout our history.



# FUNDING

Susquehanna Heritage developed a budget for Columbia Crossing for 2016 based on expected expenses and dedicated funding. Our funding streams this year were primarily from Columbia Borough, PA DCNR and Lancaster County. Expenses in 2016 were lower than projected since the Columbia Crossing Manager did not begin until March and the Program Coordinator did not begin until August. Our funding through PA DCNR has been received differently than anticipated, which has changed our revenue levels. Susquehanna Heritage invoices Lancaster County Planning Commission, who is managing the PA DCNR grant, and is then reimbursed for spending. Note that Private Contributions and Sponsorships as well as Facility Rentals did not meet their fundraising goal. Facility Rental policies were not completed until the end of the April, because of delayed hiring. This caused the center to have less opportunities to advertise facility rentals during the peak season. However, we did host fifteen paid facility rentals in 2016. Procedure and policy making also distracted from a coordinated effort to seek private contributions and sponsorships for Susquehanna Heritage's services and programs at Columbia Crossing. We expect in 2017 that facility rental revenue will increase as we have purchased more chairs and new tables to appeal to renters. Susquehanna Heritage has also advertised in Engle Printing's Wedding Planner 2017. Our Development Committee has also started a concerted effort to obtain corporate sponsorships, which will benefit Columbia Crossing.

	Revenue	2016	2017
	Columbia Borough	50,000	50,000
	LCPC/PA DCNR C2P2 Partnership Grant	35,000	50,000
	County of Lancaster	15,000	15,000
	Private Contributions & Sponsorships	1,200	10,000
	Facility Rentals	5,000	10,000
	<b>Columbia Crossing Management Funding Total</b>	<b>106,200</b>	<b>135,000</b>
	Expenses	2016	2017
	Salaries and Benefits	49,601	84,534
	SVCC Visitor Information Services	5,625	7,500
	Program Supplies, Materials, Training & Travel	7,000	6,000
	Custodial & Other Facility Services	12,000	12,000
	SH Administration Support	6,411	11,753
	Capital Expenses	12,118	7,500
	<b>Columbia Crossing Management Expenses Total</b>	<b>92,755</b>	<b>129,287</b>
	<b>Contingency Reserve</b>	<b>13,445</b>	<b>19,158</b>