

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 19, 2011

Press Contact:
Erin Pierce
Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
Phone: 570-522-7244
Email: epierce@susquehannagreenway.org



Photo Captions:

Tour Stop 2 – Shikellamy Overlook gives eye-stretching views of the confluence of the North and West branches of the Susquehanna River.

Tour Stop 15 – On the rural back roads of the tour you will see a number of barns with Mail Pouch Tobacco advertisements, a little bit of Americana that can still be enjoyed today.

Driving Tour Explores Cultural and Geological History of Susquehanna River

The cultural history of the Susquehanna River is centuries long and the impact of the river is longer still when you consider geological time. A new driving tour takes you back through time with a rich narrative history of human settlement, geological formations, the river, and surrounding landscapes. This tour will guide you on a 95-mile exploration of the Susquehanna Greenway to scenic view points and through charming river towns, where you are encouraged to stop, listen, and learn about the sites you are seeing. Historic, economic, and geographic connections between the Susquehanna River corridor and the Chesapeake Bay are revealed through a guide booklet and audio narration for each of 22 recommended stops. The guide booklet and audio narration can be downloaded at www.susquehannagreenway.org.

The story of the Susquehanna River is one of an extremely ancient river, often regarded as the oldest or second oldest major river system in the world. The mystery of how the river carved its way through its surrounding younger mountains is revealed in theories given voice on the tour by Jennifer Elick, Chair of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Susquehanna University, and Ben Marsh, Professor of Geology and Environmental Studies at Bucknell University.

The Susquehanna River is named for its earliest inhabitants, the Susquehannock people who were Iroquoian-speaking Native Americans. Bucknell Professor of History and Humanities Katie Faull gives a fascinating oration of the cultural ties and conflicts between Native Americans and early European settlers, information which she has gleaned through years of research and translation of diaries from the first Germanic speaking settlers. You'll learn about Chief Shikellamy, the French and Indian War, and the building of Fort Augusta in what is now modern day Sunbury.

You will also hear stories about how the River has been a corridor of commerce to the Chesapeake Bay since Native American times. The Susquehanna Watershed is rich in natural resources and the river was used to transport products of timber, farm products, coal and minerals. The shallow depth of the river led to building of the Pennsylvania Canal and subsequent building of railroads and highways. Stories of the canal and railroad era are told by residents of local river towns.

Stops in Northumberland and Sunbury reveal how the resources of the river drew inventors Joseph Priestly and Thomas Edison to its shores to advance their work. Other stops along the way include the Millersburg Ferry, Duncannon's Old Sledworks, and drive by narration on the beautiful sycamore tree allée near Halifax that is a memorial to soldiers of World War I.

The tour covers 95 miles and you can expect 2.5 hours of just driving time from start to finish. The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership developed the tour and suggests spending half or all of a day to have enough time enjoy the stops. Tour stops are numbered 1 – 22, beginning with Stop 1 the Packwood House Museum and historic district in Lewisburg. From there the tour heads south on Route 15 to the Shikellamy Overlook, then crosses the river with stops in Northumberland and Sunbury. You'll drive down the east side of the River on Route 147 South for approximately 40 miles. You will head west on Route 22/322 where you will cross the Susquehanna River and stop in Duncannon. Then you will head back up the west side of the river on Route 11/15 North for the 35-mile drive back to Selinsgrove. However, because the audio tracks can be downloaded from www.susquehannagreenway.org for use on MP3 players or CDs, the tour can be started at any point along the way. The online guide booklet can be downloaded from the same website and contains QR codes that can be used by smart phones to download the audio narration at each stop, so skipping stops is not a problem. The booklet also gives the geographic coordinates of each stop for those who like to navigate with a GPS unit.

According to Trish Carothers, Program Director of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, "We produced this driving tour to tell just a few of the stories of this ancient and tremendous resource that has always been the life blood of our region. While the length and shallowness of the river makes it our nation's longest non-navigable river, the depth of influence the Susquehanna has had on building, feeding and nurturing a fledging country in the New World, remains true even today. We hope that this tour will connect people through story and visual context with our regions greatest natural and cultural resource -- the Susquehanna River.

"The Susquehanna Watershed provides half of the fresh water entering the Chesapeake Bay and drinking water to over six million people. The Susquehanna Greenway protects and enhances this resource with riverfront parks, trails and conserved areas stretching over 500 miles along the River. It is Pennsylvania's longest greenway, and a special place to live, learn about, and explore."

To learn more about the Susquehanna Greenway, please visit www.susquehannagreenway.org. Funding support to develop the Susquehanna Greenway Driving Tour was provided by the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and in-kind contributions of many local supporters.

###
