



# Greenbelt

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## City Gets \$900,000 in Grant Funds to Help “Buckle the Belt”

In mid-January the City of Harrisburg received a \$750,000 grant from the state Department of Community and Economic Development in support of the initial phase of a project to relocate the Greenbelt in south Harrisburg. Then, in late January, the City was informed of another \$150,000 grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund for the same project.

Both grant applications were submitted by the City in support of the Capital Area Greenbelt Association (CAGA). The City will serve as the grant recipient and work closely with CAGA on the administration and implementation of both grants.

The project aims to get Greenbelt users off the current detour that uses heavily travelled Cameron and Sycamore Streets and onto private property, shielded from traffic, onto a safe, attractive, and environmentally sound off-road trail. The plan tentatively calls for the trail to be rerouted onto a widened sidewalk on the north side of Sycamore Street, then make a hairpin turn onto property currently owned by Pennsy Supply, going under the Sycamore Street bridge and onto a trail to be developed on what used to be South 9<sup>th</sup> Street, then joining the Greenbelt at Shanois Street near the old Lochiel Hotel.

The project is still in the design process and Phase 1 includes the completion of the design and the widening of the sidewalk on Sycamore Street. Phase 2, calls for the acquisition of the property needed and the completion of the trail including engineering, paving, and landscaping.

CAGA President Doug Hill was delighted to hear of the grants being approved and voiced appreciation for the cooperation of Mayor Williams and City Council in their work with CAGA to bring the grants to fruition. He also thanked State Senator Patty Kim, and State Representatives Nate Davidson, Tom Mehaffie, and Justin Fleming for their advocacy for the grant’s approval.

CAGA members and Greenbelt users are reminded the money from the grants will only cover part of the cost of this project. CAGA has launched a campaign to “Buckle the Belt” with a goal of \$300,000 to bring the project to completion. You can make contributions by visiting the “Buckle the Belt” link on CAGA’s website, [www.caga.org](http://www.caga.org).

***Save the Date: Sunday, June 7, 2026 Tour de Belt***



Paxtang Parkway Work Continues

## Paxtang Parkway Work Continues

At the end of the year “Trail to be Closed” signs went up on both ends of the Paxtang Parkway section of the Greenbelt as the multi-year project to improve the trail continues. Through 2025 Greenbelt users saw dramatic improvements to the

landscape along the Parkway including replacing top soil, new plants and trees planted to control erosion, and improvements to Spring Creek, including reinforcing some of the stream’s banks. Now underway are improvements to the trail itself, with the milling of the existing pavement, creation of four-foot grass shoulders, the paving of a 12-foot surface for .4 mile of the Parkway’s length, and the replacement of culverts and sewers under the trail.

It is expected all of the work on this section of the Greenbelt will be completed before people mount their bikes for the 2026 Tour de Belt on June 7. During the project, the Parkway will be closed in the construction zones, but the rest of the Parkway will be open. CAGA has created an unofficial detour for cyclists to bypass the Parkway. Click here for directions:

<https://caga.org/unofficial-bicycle-detour-paxtang-parkway/>

## Saluting Faulkner Subaru Harrisburg

### for Supporting the Greenbelt



The Greenbelt is truly fortunate of have the support of Faulkner Subaru Harrisburg. Not only have they been a major sponsor of the Tour de Belt since 2019, their Paxton Street showroom includes prominently displayed signs promoting the Greenbelt and their employees regularly pick up the litter along the trail between the Five Senses Garden and their showroom. It is reported they often suggest that customers who bring their cars in for maintenance take a walk on the trail, weather permitting.

**Subaru of Harrisburg President Doug Jones in his showroom.**



## Lochiel Clean-up

On Sunday, December 14, a crew of seven CAGA volunteers cleaned up fallen trees and branches on the stretch of the Greenbelt along Cameron Street between the old Lochiel Hotel and the crossing at Cameron Street. Shown are Will Webster, Jane Webster, George Knehr, Steve Deck and Rocky Gleason. Not shown, Bill Cologie and Becky Schuchert.



Pictured from left: Shaela Ellis, Cathy Hart, and CAGA VP Diane Kripas.

## Two Recognized for Volunteer Service

At CAGA's December 3<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting, two CAGA members were recognized with Volunteer Service Awards for their outstanding service to the association.

In the early days of the Capital Area Greenbelt Association, Cathy Hart served as CAGA's Secretary. She came back on the Board to fill a vacancy in 2021, then served two full terms from 2022 through 2025. Since 2021 she's been coordinating CAGA's community outreach events

with a team of volunteers. Under her leadership, the team increased their presence from just two events a year to more than a dozen, including a booth at the 2025 Kipona, effectively raising community awareness of all the Greenbelt has to offer. In addition, concurrent with her board service, she served as CAGA's Membership Chairman and will continue to do so. If that weren't enough, since 2023 she has led the effort to recruit sponsors for CAGA's annual Tour de Belt, raising tens of thousands of dollars, keeping the Association financially secure.

Shaela Ellis, who wasn't able to attend the annual meeting, was presented with a 2025 Volunteer Service Award for her service as a CAGA Board Member, serving as CAGA's Secretary for three years. Her award was presented at the January 14 meeting of the Swatara Township Board of Commissioners where she serves as President. Both she and her father, Tom Connolly, who preceded her as President of the Township Board of Commissioners, have been strong supporters of the Greenbelt, about a mile of which



passes through Swatara Township along Spring Creek. In addition to arranging financial support from the Township for CAGA, Shaela arranges for the Township Fire Police to see that Tour de Belt riders safely cross Route 441, Paxton Street, and Derry Street. The township also hosts a rest stop during the Tour and Shaela also recruits volunteers to keep the Township's portion of the Greenbelt clean.

CAGA Vice President Diane Kripas, who presented the awards, voiced not only thanks for their outstanding service, but also expressed admiration for their hard work, dedication, and leadership.

## First 2026 Walk With A Doc Slated for March 19

This year's first *Walk With A Doc* will begin in the parking lot of the National Civil War Museum on Thursday, March 19. The one-hour walk, from 6 to 7PM, will be led by the Hershey Medical Center's Dr. Everett Hills who will be talking about heart health. Dr. Hills specializes in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. The entire walk will take place in

Reservoir Park and include the grounds of the Civil War Museum and part of the Greenbelt.

The *Walk With A Doc* program is designed to provide general health information and a moderately paced walk with the fellowship of others. It is an education program and not meant to replace the advice of your physician. Walks are free, but we ask that you pre-register so we know how many to expect and are able to notify you in the event of a weather-related cancellation. The walks are typically 2 to 3 miles in length, always with options to turn around to make it shorter. All ages are welcome, as are children and leashed dogs. Walkers are advised to bring water.

These walks are coordinated by Susquehanna Township Parks & Recreation, the Capital Area Greenbelt Association, Penn

State Health, and Dauphin County Parks and Recreation. They are part of the Park Rx series of wellness programs sponsored by Highmark Blue Shield and supported by Penn State Health.

To register for the walk, visit the Dauphin County Parks and Recreation website <https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/dauphin-county-parks-recreation/2025-park-rx-walk-with-a-doc-at-reservoir-park>, click on the "Add" button and provide your name and email address.

The April walk will be on Tuesday, April 7, from 6 to 7PM at Veterans Park and the topic will be Children's Health. Register here: <https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/dauphin-county-parks-recreation/2026-park-rx-walk-with-a-doc-at-veteran-s-park>





## Industrial Road Clean-Up Project Slated for March 14

Kick off the spring season with litter clean-up along Industrial Road. Last year's clean-up collected more than a ton of garbage. Tools and work gloves will be provided, refreshments will be available. Pre-registration required. Sign up at this link to volunteer for the litter clean-up along Industrial Road from 10AM to 1PM on Saturday, March 14:

<https://events.ticketleap.com/events/dauphincountyparksandrecreation/volunteer-work-day-litter-clean-up>

## Volunteer Profile: Rebecca “Becky” Schuchert

A woman with vivid childhood memories of the first Earth Day, and as the daughter of a serious recreational bicyclist, Becky's been passionate about the environment and cycling since her youth: two attributes that made her a perfect fit for leadership in the Capital Area Greenbelt Association.

After graduating from Kutztown State College with a degree in Art Education, she and a friend pedaled the Trans-America Bicycle Trail in the summer of 1982. Just three years later, after two teaching jobs made it clear teaching wasn't her calling, she and another friend cycled from their homes in Syracuse, NY, east to New Hampshire, then south to Charlotte, NC. For Becky, with paint and brushes in her saddlebags, it was a working vacation. She would spot signs on businesses along the route that could use repainting and a new career was born.

In Charlotte she found a sign shop that could use some help. Under the tutelage of the shop owner, she learned much more about producing signs professionally and developed an attraction and interest in the making of neon signs. That led her to a five-week program in Salina, Kansas where she learned the art of neon signage.

This Pottstown, Pennsylvania native brought her new skills back to her home state and moved in with her grandfather in Reading. There, she got a job with a neon sign company where she honed her



skills. One of the shop's primary clients was the Reading-based Boscov Department Store chain. Becky produced the signs for their then new stores in Camp Hill and Colonial Park. She also became a member of the Reading Bicycle Club. Cyclist friends invited her to ride the country's largest one-day bicycle tour of New York City's Five Boros. With a brother with a NYC apartment she, along with thousands of other cyclists, did it several more times.

Visiting a college friend in Harrisburg, Becky met the man who would be her husband. She relocated to Harrisburg, actually Steelton, and found work at a neon shop in uptown Harrisburg. She commuted by bicycle, usually through Riverfront Park, which was her first experience on the Greenbelt. At the time, Harrisburg's "Restaurant Row" was coming into its own and Becky worked on signs for Stock's, Neato Burrito, the Midtown Cinema, and others. Over time, Becky had her own shop and also worked for others until the development of LED lighting put most independent neon artists out of work.

She and her then husband owned a house adjacent to the Abrams and Weakley pet food store. Becky, who was still making neon art and selling her pieces at craft shows, started working part-time at the pet food store which eventually led, in 2009, to her current full-time employment there. She loves the interaction with the public and says she's amazed at how much she's learned about our furry friends over the years. She gladly shares that information with the shop's clientele and now lives with two contented cats and three happy dogs.

Becky's involvement with the Greenbelt started in 1993. She was on the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg's Environmental Task Force when the church got a call from CAGA looking for volunteers. She served a couple of terms as CAGA's president before the current board structure was established. CAGA was involved in a lawsuit to block McDonald's from building a restaurant where the Dock Woods now stand along Paxton Street. A compromise was reached before any court ruled on the matter, keeping McDonald's off the Greenbelt. Still, CAGA needed to find a way to raise funds to pay the legal bills. Becky, recalling her Five Boro Bike Tour rides, suggested a tour around the Greenbelt, now known as the Tour de Belt, which has financially sustained the organization since the Tour's inception 26 years ago.

Becky is the sole person who has served on the Tour de Belt committee since the tour's inception. Since 2019 she has chaired CAGA's Maintenance Committee, which makes sure signs are up, fallen trees are cleared, grass is mowed, litter is removed, and the trail remains rideable. She also has been heading the Tour de Belt's Logistics Committee with responsibility for recruiting volunteers, posting signs, getting permits, arranging for police from all the municipalities involved to make sure everyone crosses the busy intersections safely, and more. She says what she loves most about the Greenbelt is that "It allows me to forget I live in a city. I love seeing the deer, rabbits, wild turkeys, King Fishers, muskrats, and other creatures that live along the trail."

When asked what she knows about the Greenbelt that might surprise others, she replied, "I first thought doing routine maintenance work along the Greenbelt would be drudgery, but it's fun." She reflected how Norm Lacasse, one of CAGA's founders, taught her to plant trees. "I am most grateful for having been taught how to plant trees by Norm. It's one of my favorite things to do! And I've benefited from working with folks who have a lot of knowledge about native plants, I've really enjoyed learning about those kinds of things!"

Becky's work on behalf of the Association has not gone unnoticed. She has been honored with the Mira Lloyd Dock Award, one of only four people to be so recognized since CAGA's founding.

## ***Along the Greenbelt*** **The Five Senses Garden**     *by Bill Cologie*

I often see people on the Greenbelt with earbuds and can't help but think they're missing the rustling of leaves, the calls of birds, the babbling of streams, and, most importantly for cyclists, the sounds of the traffic around them. While a short walk on any section of the Greenbelt provides beautiful views of natural and historic sites, there's one section of the Greenbelt designed to engage all your senses through its rich array of native plants and sensory experiences.

The Five Senses Garden, located where the Greenbelt crosses PA Route 441, allows you to hear all the things mentioned above and more. The vegetation provides a lush palette of shapes and colors, but there are works of art here as well, in addition to insects, birds, and animals native to this habitat. You can touch the bark of trees and experience the texture of flowers, leaves, and seedpods. You can smell flowers in bloom and the fragrance of shrubs and herbs. And, as parts of many plants are edible or used as herbal remedies, reflect on your last taste of mint tea or any fresh fruit you may have



enjoyed as you walk this garden's well-maintained paths.

Wandering through the site you'll find gardens dedicated to each sense.

- The Sight Garden features plants distinctive in their sizes shapes, and colors.
- The Sound Garden along Spring Creek lets you hear the babbling of the brook as it flows over stones, the buzzing of bees, the chirping of birds, as well as the sound of the wind rustling through the tall ornamental grasses.
- The Touch Garden enables you to experience the rough bark of trees, the fuzziness of plants like Lamb's Ear, soft pussy willows, sandpaper hops, and the prickly pear cactus.
- The Taste Garden is filled with herbs and fruits when in season.
- The Smell Garden is full of aromatic plants ranging from sweet smelling phlox and Joe Pye weed, spicy

spicebush, minty mountain mint, and more.

In all, there are about 25 different garden areas all planted with various Pennsylvania native pollinator plants, trees, and shrubs, most of which are host plants to support native lepidoptera (butterflies, moths, and skippers) as well as bees and other pollinators. The native insects feed the birds and other animals up the food chain. You'll

also find a variety of groundcovers surrounding many of the mature trees and benches on which to sit or have a special photograph taken.

This sensory experience is made possible by a small army of dedicated groundskeepers headed by Capital Area Greenbelt Association volunteer and Master Gardener Cindy Hogeman. They labor in the shadow of Shirley and Sid Disend who first conceived the garden in 1995 on land that in the early 1990s served as a dump. After removing countless tires and other debris from the site, with the help of landscape architect Craig Bachik of Ed Black and Associates, the garden began to take shape.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help maintain this beautiful garden should contact Cindy Hogeman at [chogeman@gmail.com](mailto:chogeman@gmail.com). One can make a cash donation to the garden at the Greenbelt's website, [www.caga.org](http://www.caga.org), or contact Cindy to contribute any surplus native plants you may have.

## **2025 Winners of Friends of Wildwood Photo Contest Announced**

Each year the Friends of Wildwood sponsor a photo contest. The contest is limited to amateur photographers and the photographs must be taken in one of the following Dauphin County Parks: Wildwood Park, Fort Hunter Park, Fort Hunter Conservancy, Detweiler Park, Wiconisco Creek Park, or Lykens Creek Park. The 2025 winners are as shown below. If you would like to submit a photo for the 2026 competition, there's information at the link below:

<https://explorewildwoodpark.org/photo-contest>



Beginner: *Lunch Time!* By Suzanne Smith



Youth: *Back to the Ice Age* by Lydia Lubold-Skema



Experienced:  
*Takes Two to Make a Home*  
by Venkataram Venkatakrishnaiah

## From the editor:

It has been many years since the Capital Area Greenbelt Association has published a newsletter. I recently volunteered to create a new quarterly publication in an effort to bring news about CAGA activities directly to your inbox. We'll try to keep it interesting and welcome your suggestions on how to make it more meaningful to you.

It appears CAGA has many members who don't regularly check CAGA's website:

[www.caga.org](http://www.caga.org)

or blog:

<https://caga.org/greenbelt-gazette-2>

or follow the group on Facebook, and are therefore unaware of recent developments, like the progress of the "Buckle the Belt" campaign, the detour necessitated by the improvements on the Paxtang Parkway, and upcoming events. All that info is here. In addition to news updates, each issue will include a profile of a CAGA Board Member or other Greenbelt volunteer, as well as an appreciative note about Greenbelt supporters in the community. You can also expect to find calls for volunteers to help the organization fulfill its mission as well as information about recent and upcoming events that may be of interest to you.

Bill Cologie

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