



Black Rock Sanctuary and Interpretive Trail

Phoenixville, PA



Over the course of ten years, KMS worked with Chester County's Department of Parks and Recreation to complete design and development of over 47 acres of wetlands and a highly interactive interpretive trail for the Black Rock Sanctuary.



The Sanctuary, one of 21 decanting basins located along the Schuylkill River, is a remnant of the industrial revolution. Initial design and development work included creation of over 47-acres of high quality wetlands. The trail, trailhead and interpretive stations provide visitors with a picture of the canal system and its aftermath. The trail also describes wetland environments and their inhabitants and follows the Pennsylvania Department of Education's goals for environmental education. The exhibits teach by encouraging users to manipulate display elements or participate in games explaining the complex interrelationships between humans and the natural environment.

This one-of-a-kind park also takes advantage of the site's location along the Atlantic Coast Flyway to create breeding and nesting habitat for rare and endangered migrating waterfowl.

In 2006, the Sanctuary was recognized by the American Society of Landscape Architects with a design award as a truly exceptional example of reclamation and education. In 2008, PA DCNR placed the Sanctuary on its list of case studies for sustainable Park design as an outstanding example of sustainable design. In 2010, this project was designated an "Exemplary Environmental Restoration Project" and highlighted on the National Park Service's website. In 2011, PA DCNR awarded the Sanctuary as the "Green Park of the Year".