

## **Philadelphia's Schuylkill River** **Contributed by Marlene Brubaker**

**Suggested Grade Level:** 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>

**Class Length:** Field trip

### **Connection with Curriculum Standards and Skills:**

**Standard 14:** How Human Actions Modify the Physical Environment

**Standard 15:** How Physical Systems Affect Human Systems

### **Overview:**

On Marlene Brubaker's class field trip to historic Bartram's Garden, students learn about local natural resources. As part of the Peopling of Philadelphia Program, this field trip is designed to help them piece together how Philadelphia has changed over time, specifically in the local watershed area of the Schuylkill River. Bartram's Garden guide Debra Olsen reveals the falling water level of the Schuylkill River over the years, opening up a discussion on human impact on the environment. Additionally, students discuss the different effects of urban versus suburban lifestyles on the environment, thereby better understanding their own roles in preserving Philadelphia's natural resources.

On the field trip, students see and discuss the use made of the river by those living at Bartram's Garden in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, learn about underlying rock strata near Philadelphia and elsewhere in Pennsylvania, are exposed to various types of vegetation that grow in the river environment, gain insight into industry (particularly oil refinement) near Philadelphia, and the pros and cons of urban and suburban living on the area's water supply. Students are encouraged to see themselves as stewards and as part of the solution instead of part of the problem.