

RIVER RAPIDS

The Delaware RIVERKEEPER® Network's Quarterly Newsletter

Printed on 25% recycled paper

Upcoming Events

October 28

Deadline: Call for Presenters
Schuylkill Watershed Congress

November 15

Alexauken Visual Assessment Meeting
West Amwell Township Building
Lambertville, NJ

December 1 & 2

Monitoring Study Design Workshop
Stokes State Forest
NJ School of Conservation
Branchville, NJ

December 2 & 3

DRN's Craft Show
Prallsville Mill
Stockton, NJ

For more news about Delaware Riverkeeper Network activities, go to www.delawareriverkeeper.org and look for the latest information under **News/Calendar** on our homepage.



Déjà vu all over again

A note from the Delaware Riverkeeper

We've been here before. The Delaware River Deepening, the Salem Nuclear Generating Station, threats to the Delaware Bay horseshoe crabs and red knot populations, all issues that I have worked on since joining the Delaware Riverkeeper Network back in 1992.

The enduring nature of corporate and government machines, so often behind the threats to our River and region, fuels a drive to see through even poorly conceived projects. Corporations and federal boondoggles have staying power, thus their projects are kept alive.

Making matters worse, a river has no right to defend itself in a court of law. Corporations can pursue legal actions on their own behalf in court. As regulator, the government's voice predominates; the quietly flowing River cannot compete.

Unless a person, who can show he or she has been injured, is willing to take legal action on a river's behalf, its needs go undefended and its enemies unchallenged. In our watershed, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network works to ensure our River is heard and defended.

But to be truly heard, the River needs us all to speak together in a voice as enduring as the River's flow and as lasting as the threats it faces. Our new website and e-activist e-mail action alerts strengthen our collective ability to defend the River and to ensure it is heard. Please go on line and join with all of us to make sure our river is heard.

Maya K. van Rossum
the Delaware Riverkeeper

Event volunteers needed!

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is in the process of forming a group of DRN Ambassadors, folks who help at weekend events and watershed celebrations, handing out materials and information to spread awareness of River issues.

The time commitment will be small, just a few Saturdays a year. An initial training session is tentatively scheduled for January. Please call Katy Diana, Development Associate, for further information. She can be reached at katy@delawareriverkeeper.org.

Invasive plants tackled by DRN Volunteers

Recently, our volunteers helped control plant invaders threatening the riparian corridors of our local streams. Japanese knotweed, Asiatic bittersweet and Japanese hops were cut down and bagged to make room for native plants. Special thanks go out to **Temple University, Gamma Iota Sigma-Sigma Chapter, #623 Rainbow Hollow Girl Scouts, and Wendy Lathrop** for all of their help and hard work.



A volunteer removes Japanese knotweed.
Photo: M. Jozwiak.

The Voice of the River and its Tributary Streams

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Sign up for a DRN-led stream workshop

Friday, December 1
1 PM – 5 PM

Saturday, December 2nd
8:30 AM – 4 PM,

DRN will lead this two-day workshop at the **Stokes State Forest in Branchville, NJ**, to help local watershed groups develop monitoring studies and quality assurance quality control plans. A study design and quality assurance plan, which should be part of every monitoring program, will help volunteers to better monitor and protect their local streams. For more information, contact Faith Zerbe at 215-369-1188 ext. 110, or faith@delawareriverkeeper.org.

Take a course in good water and air; and in the eternal youth of Nature you may renew your own. Go quietly, alone; no harm will befall you.

- John Muir

Response to floods bodes ill for rivers

The frequency of recent floods over the past 2 years, particularly those along the main stem, is fueling efforts to dredge, dam and encase our streams and rivers. In some cases, the floods are being used by those seeking to push pet flood control projects.

Numerous communities in New York are literally reaming out their streams without challenge from – and in some cases with the support of – the State. The justification is debris removal, but the result is polluted water, destroyed habitats, degraded ecosystems, and ironically the threat of increased flooding. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is investigating these projects, identifying those the State has supported as well as those that have move forward illegally but without government challenge.

Dam advocates are also using the opportunity to press for a new dam across the Delaware River. Recognizing that the infamous Tocks Island Dam project is unlikely ever to be revived (a fact sheet is available on our website), dam advocates are now looking for a dam across Walpack Bend. They want to dam the Delaware River and Flat Brook Creek and divert water from the Bushkill Creek in PA to a reservoir in NJ. A dam at Walpack Bend is another old time project that cannot be defended.

Keep tuned to our website for actions you will be able to take to help stop these damaging and counterproductive practices.



Cadosia Creek, showing the affects of a "debris removal" project.
Photo. M. van Rossum.

Get involved with E-Activist

Recently we re-launched our website and it's loaded with terrific new features. One of the most important features is **E-Activist**.

E-Activist is a web-based communication system that enables us to keep you informed about hot topics. Through **E-Activist**, we can update you about urgent situations that need your action. And best of all, **E-Activist** is free when you sign up on our website.

Don't be left out of the loop when river news is breaking. Go to <http://www.delawareriverkeeper.org/takeaction/eactivist.asp> to register. Have you signed up yet?

Update: CDC okays sending VX to NJ

The long-awaited report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, concerning the U.S. Army's plan to bring VX nerve agent waste to DuPont's Chambers Works facility in Salem County, NJ, was released in July. The report does greenlight the proposed project, but it also raises many questions that have yet to be resolved. DRN and others have called for a 180-day public review period.

For over 2 years, a battle has raged over the Army's proposal to truck VX nerve agent waste over 1,000 miles from Indiana, to be put through the DuPont hazardous waste plant and discharged into the Delaware River. Opposition continues to grow, among the public, local governments, elected representatives and agencies.

We urge you to write your officials and to advocate that your town pass a resolution against the DuPont plan, which has not yet received any permits. A sample letter, a sample resolution and a fact sheet about the proposed project can be downloaded from our website, www.delawareriverkeeper.org.

Update: Petty's Island preservation efforts

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is continuing to fight for preservation of Petty's Island and responsible redevelopment of mainland Pennsauken and Camden by urging that an environmental impact study, or EIS, be conducted and that the developer, Cherokee, and their consultants be fully prosecuted for alleged violations of the New Jersey's endangered species regulation.

The Cherokee proposal constitutes the construction of a new city along 11 1/2 miles of waterfront. The project includes 13,000 new homes, over 1 million square feet of commercial space and miles of new roads including a new bridge.

DRN is part of a coalition that is urging Governor Corzine and Congressman Andrews to require an EIS in order to fully weigh the cumulative impacts of this full-scale development. To date, New Jersey has refused to require an EIS and, while Congressman Andrews has said he agrees with the need for an EIS, he has not taken any steps to require it.

In addition, DRN has also formally asked the NJ Attorney General's office not to negotiate a settlement with Cherokee and their consultant regarding the death of the baby Bald Eagle. Cherokee's consultant is alleged to have disrupted breeding, prevented feeding, caused the adults to abandon the nest and spooked the eaglet — actions that ultimately resulted in the bird's death. A hearing judge has found enough evidence to warrant a trial. DRN has urged the AG to take the developer to court. This prosecution is necessary to send a strong message to Cherokee and other developers throughout the state that our environmental regulations will be enforced.

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

- Aldo Leopold



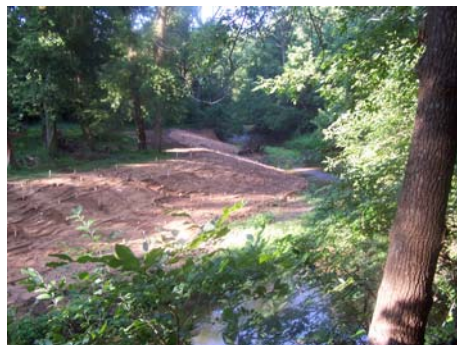
Valley Creek banks before re-grading.

A stream is restored

DRN's Restoration Program and the Open Lands Conservancy recently completed a project along Valley Creek, an Exceptional Value, Class A trout stream. The project, funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, stabilized 270 feet of severely eroding banks and restored stable stream dimensions.

First, a survey was conducted to determine stable stream dimensions. Then the 6-8 foot vertical banks were re-graded to a 3:1 slope and a bankfull bench was added where the stream narrowed. The excavated soils were used to restore adjacent woodlands invaded by Japanese stiltgrass by placing a 4-6 inch layer of soil overtop it and seeding with native grasses.

The project has been adopted by Scott Toebe as his Eagle Scout project. BSA Troop 50 from Devon, PA, and the Valley Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited contributed four days of labor to install coir mat, remove invasive plants and plant 150 native trees and shrubs. Also, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary contributed \$600 for additional native plants.



After re-grading, ready for trees and shrubs. Photos: D. Williams.

Writing history: the Schuylkill River Project

The Philadelphia area is famous as the birthplace of "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness," but did you know that it may also have been the birthplace of modern river restoration? The story of the landmark effort to clean up the Schuylkill River has never been told.

Once regarded as "waters of uncommon purity," by the early 20th century the Schuylkill was grossly polluted by untreated sewage, industrial discharges and coal sediments. Ultimately, residents of the watershed called for the pollution to stop and for damages to the river to be repaired. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a remarkable program, The Schuylkill River Desilting Project, was undertaken to clean up the river.

The river cleanup, from Port Clinton to Philadelphia, was accomplished through determination, ingenuity, and sweat. The clean-up made history and changed attitudes about degraded waterways. *Rivers could be restored!*

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is enthusiastically preparing to write a book on this untold story, but **we need your help!**

Memoirs. If you lived on or near the river during the restoration (1940-1950), do you have memories or photos you'd be willing to share?

Volunteered time. Can you spare a few hours to collect memoirs and record oral histories before they are lost?

Financial support. We need funding to initiate and underwrite this project. Can you donate toward our startup funds?

Help us tell the story of the Schuylkill River Project and of the eventful beginning of river restoration. For more information or to lend support in any way, please contact Chari Towne at 215-369-1188, ext. 109, or chari@delawareriverkeeper.org.

Delaware RIVERKEEPER® Network

The Voice of the River and its Tributary Streams

300 Pond Street, 2nd Floor
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American Littoral
Society Affiliate



Mark your calendars

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network's Fourth Annual Holiday Craft Show

Saturday, December 2nd
10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Sunday, December 3rd
10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Support local crafters and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network with fun holiday shopping at **Prallsville Mill on River Road in Stockton, NJ.**

Our Craft Show and Sale has become one of the best seasonal shopping events in the region! Please join us for the chance to find great handwork and beautiful crafts by over 35 highly talented local artisans. You will find jewelry, glass, ceramics, clothing and accessories, handmade boxes, paper, photography, cards, soap, and much more.

Suggested donation to attend: \$4.00



*Red knot carving by craft show exhibitor Ron Dombrowski.
Photo: R. Dombrowski*

Update: Protecting the red knot rufa

In direct response to a petition filed by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network's River Resources Law Clinic, the red knot *rufa* has been listed as a candidate species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The red knot *rufa* is threatened to go extinct by the year 2010 as a direct result of the decline of horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay, a decline due largely to over-harvesting for use as eel and conch bait.

Candidate species listing does not provide the red knot the protection needed by the Endangered Species Act, but it does put it on a path that could lead to this heightened and needed level of protection.