



The Delaware RIVERKEEPER® Network's Quarterly Newsletter

Printed on 100% recycled paper



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March 1

Schuylkill Watershed Congress

Montgomery Co. Community College
Pottstown, PA

May 3

DRN's Annual Native Plant Sale

Location TBD

July 26

Members' Day on the Bay

Cape Henlopen State Park
Lewes, DE

ALSO . . .

DRN's Restoration Program has a busy schedule this Spring with gravel road and culvert mapping planned for our Tinicum Creek Restoration Project in **Ottsville, PA**, and stream flow monitoring planned for our Saddlers Run Restoration Project in **Haddonfield Township, NJ**. For more information, e-mail dave@delawareriverkeeper.org.

A community battle in the artificial turf war

A note from the Delaware Riverkeeper

Radnor Township, PA, residents were shocked when they learned that, after investing millions in a certified "green" school with a living vegetative roof and a state of the art infiltration system underlying its sports and recess fields, the School Board was cutting a back-room deal to rebuild these fields with artificial turf.

Installing artificial turf on the one field available for all middle school children in Radnor to play on was going to cost another three-quarters of a million dollars. It would also threaten a local creek with toxic pollution, raise health concerns for parents, subject children playing there to excessively high temperatures, and force them to play on plastic grass devoid of life. The community felt betrayed.

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network, responding to a phone call from a concerned member living in Radnor Township, got involved. We worked to get the community informed, organized, and inspired to speak out and challenge the turf plan. We supported the passionate concerns of the community with facts, figures and a higher profile for the issue. The result? Within months, the School Board committed to a natural grass field at the middle school.

Now, citizens and communities from around the country have been contacting us to share information and learn the secret of our success. What was the secret? We partner with citizens in a community. We rely on sound science. And we speak loudly and clearly for the River, making sure its voice is heard and its needs are considered in decision-making. The same thing we do with every battle we wage for the River.

This wasn't a complete win for DRN and our members in Radnor. The commitment to grass at the middle school was accompanied by more back-room deal-making. The School Board may now try to install artificial turf elsewhere in the community, but DRN will be there, standing with our members and this community to inform a debate that is facing so many communities throughout our region.

To learn more about artificial turf check out the fact sheet and comments posted on our web site, <http://www.delawareriverkeeper.org>.

Maya K. van Rossum
the Delaware Riverkeeper

Sign up for E-Activist . . . Get the latest on our efforts to stop the **Delaware Deepening**. Be the first to hear about incidents like the **October 10th oil spill from the oil tanker *Tigani***.

E-Activist is a free service available through our website. Click on **Take Action** and then on **E-Activist Sign-up** to register.

The Voice of the River and its Tributary Streams

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Riverwalk Development Looms, Falters

Residents of Easton, PA, have joined with the Delaware Riverkeeper Network to protect the Delaware River floodplain and the neighborhoods of Easton and Phillipsburg from a government-sponsored transportation facility and private condo development known as "Riverwalk" that is proposed for the flood-prone Easton riverfront. Residents actively fought the proposal at the city level for over a year, but special interests continued to move the project forward.

DRN filed a federal lawsuit in June '07 against the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Lehigh and Northampton Area Transportation Authority (LANTA) and the Easton Parking Authority for violating the National Environmental Policy Act by funding the project without required environmental analysis. The FTA quickly caved and ordered LANTA to produce an Environmental Assessment, which was issued October 22. Residents came out in full force to the EA hearing and hundreds of letters were submitted as public comment. The FTA will now decide if an Environmental Impact Statement is needed (DRN and the public have vigorously argued that it is). The Easton Parking Authority continued to put out bids and move ahead with construction plans despite the FTA order that no further federal funds should be spent. This action by the Easton Parking Authority required DRN to file for an injunction. Federal Judge Petrise Tucker granted DRN a hearing on our preliminary injunction request on December 13th and will soon rule.

Riverwalk includes a bus depot and a 5-story parking garage with 7 floors of private condominiums to be developed above the parking garage. The mammoth building would tower over the historic districts of Easton and Phillipsburg and the Wild and Scenic Delaware River on a site that has been repeatedly under 8 feet of water in recent floods. The recently opened construction bids were several times greater than the amount budgeted for the project, graphically calling into question its economic viability.

For more information, go to www.delawareriverkeeper.org.



Best wishes for a Happy New Year from all of us at the Delaware Riverkeeper Network!

In Memory

Rivers run through and enrich all of our lives. John [Jack] Conlow's life illustrates this connection. He worked on the Delaware River after high school, shoveling coal on tugs and ferries. Jack served in the Merchant Marine during World War II. He began his professional career in the insurance industry as a marine specialist. He served two terms, from 1973 to 1978, on the Riverton Borough Council, a town for which the Delaware River and Pompeston Creek are municipal boundaries.

Jack Conlow was surrounded by his family when he passed away on Christmas Day after an extended illness. He was 85. Jack's family asked that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

We are sorry to hear of Jack Conlow's passing -- he was a good man. It is so kind of his family to ask others to honor him by helping to protect the Delaware River and its streams. We remember Jack Conlow and honor him and the rivers that ran through his life.

Interested in commenting on a topic in this issue of River Rapids? Or do you want to receive future issues of River Rapids via e-mail? Let us know. Simply send your e-mails to: riverrapids@delawareriverkeeper.org.

Maya van Rossum's Blues

The response to the 2004 Athos I oil spill got lots of attention, but you may have missed the response by Philadelphia-based band The Donuts. Look for "Maya van Rossum's Blues" on their acclaimed 2005 CD "The Monkey Wrench Gang." Lyrics to the song can be viewed at <http://www.thedonuts.com/>. First click on [Lyrics](#) and then on *The Monkey Wrench Gang* album.

Wielding a pen in the good fight

You know the words of folk musician Woody Guthrie's famous song, "This land is your land, this land is my land." As a Pennsylvanian, I believe firmly in this concept. In a Commonwealth, all the resources of the state are held in trust for the people. Resources such as our Delaware River; it belongs to us.

So what's a small town outdoor writer to do when he learns that one state agency has been dumping all types of wastes as well as burying hazardous wastes on public lands managed by another state agency? Lands that include wetlands smack-dab in the middle of the Upper Delaware River Watershed?

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has operated a stockpile yard on State Game Lands 180 in Pike County for the past 40-years. The land was leased by PennDOT from the Game Commission. The lease was to expire in July 2007 and PennDOT was in the process of mulching it all in when I received an anonymous call last spring. I visited the yard and began writing about it.

PennDOT had turned the site into a clandestine dump and a hazardous mess requiring a clean-up. To date hundreds of tons of contaminated soils

have been removed along with drums of paint and road tars, but PennDOT wants to pull out of the clean-up far too prematurely.



PennDOT stockpile yard on State Game Lands 180, Pike County, PA.

Photo: T. Carluccio

My efforts to steer the issue to a proper end has brought me face to face with many state agencies since last spring and PennDOT was always, let's say, spinning the reality of the issue. As I pushed the issue over the summer months, I began to feel like I was going up a hazardous creek without a paddle. Last fall, I sent out a call for help to the folks at the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and they responded. Finally, I was working with an organization that represented the people, an organization with only one item on the agenda: the Delaware River and its watershed.

Pat Camuso is a popular outdoor writer based in Northeast Pennsylvania. He is also a longtime DRN member and supporter and appreciated dearly by his readers. For nearly 20-years his weekly outdoor column has consistently received wonderful reviews in and around Pike County. Camuso has fished and hunted in the Upper Delaware Valley for more than 40 years and his love of the region and the river that defines it is evident in all of his work.

Schuylkill River dam removed

When Felix Dam breached in 1999, DRN staff thought removal of this earthen-filled timber crib, a remnant of the Schuylkill Navigation Company, would come swiftly. We had been advocating for removing this dam even before the breach, but it would be eight long years before the remains of this dam would finally be removed. On November 1st, 2007, heavy equipment moved into the Schuylkill River and began removing timbers and moving rubble from the upper dam built in 1823. Removal of the lower dam that everyone thought of as Felix, the 1855 structure, began a few days later. The dams are now, finally, gone.

DRN will be celebrating the first main stem Schuylkill dam removal in 50 years with a canoe trip. E-mail chari@delawareriverkeeper.org for information about a DRN canoe trip to paddle this section of the Schuylkill River in late spring 2008. Plan now to be among the first to paddle a section of river that was dammed for nearly 200 years.



The site of the former Felix Dam.

Photo: C. Towne

Guest Columnist Pat Camuso

The Delaware River is the life-blood of Pike County, but as our county grows in leaps and bounds that fact seems to get more and more lost. We can't take our river for granted; we all have to protect it. And now I know first hand that when the fight is tough, the Delaware Riverkeeper represents us all.

The abuse of public lands by a state agency is an affront not only to the environment, but also to the very core of our great Commonwealth and all that makes Pennsylvania a wonderful place to live. Now, with the involvement of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and all this wonderful network of people who share a love for the Delaware, I am satisfied we will see a proper clean up at the yard despite PennDOT's continuing attempts to downplay dumping and cover up the situation.

When it comes to the health and well being of the Delaware River, from the East and West branches to the bay, Maya van Rossum and her Delaware Riverkeeper Network get it. They represent the people who love this river, this natural gift, and they fight the good fight each and every day.

Delaware RIVERKEEPER® Network

The Voice of the River and its Tributary Streams

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Mark your calendars

The Schuylkill Watershed Congress
Saturday, March 1st, 2008
Montgomery County Community College
Pottstown, Pennsylvania
with Watershed Tours on Sunday, March 2nd, 2008

The annual Schuylkill Watershed Congress, with a focus on networking across disciplines and a goal of presenting new information about watershed restoration, has become a highly anticipated event for watershed citizens interested in understanding, protecting and restoring their local streams. Although focused on the Schuylkill River watershed, the Congress draws participants and presenters from throughout Pennsylvania as well as from Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey. Join us as a representative of your local stream.

This year's Keynote Speaker will be John K. Jackson, Senior Research Scientist, at the Stroud Water Research Center. His presentation is titled, *"Is a Cold Water Fishery by any other name still as clean a stream? A look at Pennsylvania's complex system for labeling streams and what these labels mean for a stream's biodiversity, management, and protection."*

Register by Friday, February 15th, 2008, to qualify for the \$40 Early Registration Fee. After February 15th, the Registration Fee increases to \$50 per person. For more information, call 215-369-1188. **The Congress is held rain, snow or shine.**

What are people saying about the Schuylkill Watershed Congress?

Excellent conference . . . The program and the field trips were very worthwhile . . . Great time, great people. I will be back . . . Such a wonderful event! I really enjoyed taking part in it . . . Every talk I attended was interesting and pertinent to what I'm doing . . . Great Congress on Saturday . . . once again [I was] very impressed . . . Thanks again for a great Congress event. Like always, it was most enjoyable and a good way to spend a Saturday . . . I thought it was a great conference. You know why? I wanted to go to nearly every session.