

Please join us for these and other programs during our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. Visit [www.nps.gov/upde/planyourvisit/events.htm](http://www.nps.gov/upde/planyourvisit/events.htm) for a complete listing of programs.

**Delaware River Sojourn: Conserving Our Wild and Scenic River** will kick off in the Upper Delaware with paddling on June 22 and 23. See [www.delawareriversojourn.org](http://www.delawareriversojourn.org).

**Upper Delaware Expo:** Join Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River in celebrating 30 years of “Partnering to Protect the River.” Learn about our partners and the natural and cultural resources of the Upper Delaware River Valley with demonstrations, exhibits, activities, and fun. October 25, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Damascus Elementary School, Damascus, PA

**Upper Delaware Symposium:** Celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the legislation establishing Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River with a look at what has been accomplished and what is yet to come. November 8, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, The Central House, Beach Lake, PA

#### **For More Information:**

#### **Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River**

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#### **Upper Delaware Council**

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Upper Delaware  
Scenic and Recreational River



The year 2008 commemorates the 40th anniversary of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This law made possible the Upper Delaware's Scenic and Recreational designation, which is marking its 30th anniversary this year.

This year also commemorates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Upper Delaware Council which was incorporated to facilitate local participation in natural and cultural resource conservation and the protection of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

Together we are “**Partnering to Protect the River.**”



#### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) was signed into law by President Johnson on October 2, 1968. The Act protects the free-flowing waters of many of our nation's most spectacular rivers. It is notable for safeguarding the special character of these rivers while also recognizing the potential for appropriate use and development.

The WSRA strives to balance river development with permanent protection for the country's most outstanding free-flowing rivers. Today, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System protects more than 11,000 miles of 165 rivers in 38 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

When it was enacted in 1968, the WSRA included the Upper Delaware as a “study river.” The Upper Delaware River qualified for inclusion in the National System because “the river and its immediate environment possesses outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, natural and cultural values.”

In addition to defining the values that qualify the Upper Delaware for inclusion in the National System, the first studies made recommendations that included acquisition of river frontage and

proposed purchase and development of recreational access “nodes” along the river.

Given the region's history of large public land acquisition – to the north in the 1950s by New York City and in the south in the 1960s by the Army Corps of Engineers – local residents wanted to prevent more government land purchases in the Upper Delaware River Valley. Various community-based river associations formed to oppose the land acquisition proposals in the qualification study. The members of these community action groups studied the WSRA and found passages that pointed to a different way of protecting the qualifying values.

#### **A New Approach**

The approach taken in the Upper Delaware legislation relies on local land use controls to protect the scenic, recreational, cultural, and fish and wildlife resource values that qualified the Upper Delaware for designation within the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. In 1978, Congress designated a 73.4-mile stretch of the Upper Delaware as the 19th component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Only a few Wild and Scenic Rivers are managed like the Upper Delaware, as a unit of the National Park Service but with the cooperation of local governments.

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

On November 10, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed the legislation establishing the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River as a unit of the National Park System. Special Provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act applied to the Upper Delaware and included the following requirements, all to be carried out with **maximum public and intergovernmental participation**:

- Establishment of a **Citizens Advisory Council** to encourage maximum public involvement.
- Development of a **Management Plan** for the Upper Delaware River that “shall provide for as broad a range of land and water uses and scenic and recreational uses as shall be compatible with protecting the ‘qualifying values’.”
- A **program** for providing **coordinated implementation** and administration of the Management Plan.

Passage of the Upper Delaware Legislation brought more controversy. In 1981, the Conference of Upper Delaware Townships (COUP) formed to provide a forum for local response to the planning effort.

After two drafts of a river management plan were rejected by the public, the National Park



Service entered into a cooperative agreement with COUP in May of 1984 to write a more acceptable version.

For the next year and a half, more than 100 individuals representing local governments and interest groups pitched in during often contentious meetings to shape the plan. The River Management Plan was released for public review in January 1986 and adopted by COUP in November of that year. Approval by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior followed in October 1987. After Congressional review, the plan became effective on January 4, 1988.

The final River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River completely reversed the traditional concept of federal land ownership in virtually all units of the National Park Service and Wild and Scenic River System.

In the Upper Delaware, approximately 95 percent of the land is privately owned. The legislation limits the National Park Service to managing its facilities, enforcing laws pertaining to the river’s surface and assisting local governments with resource protection. Land acquisition by the NPS, on a willing seller basis only, is specifically restricted to 124 acres out of the 55,575 acres in the river corridor.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: The Upper Delaware Council

A proposal to create an Upper Delaware Council (UDC) as an alternative to sole federal management of the river corridor was the paramount recommendation of the River Management Plan.

The UDC evolved from a nucleus of concerned river valley residents and the many grassroots organizations which formed in response to federal overtures made in the 1960s to stake a presence in the Upper Delaware region.

Rooted in the desire to retain local control over the Upper Delaware River Valley’s land use while securing federal protection for the treasured New York-Pennsylvania border river, the UDC was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization on Feb. 18, 1988 and held its first official meeting on Feb. 22, 1988.

Eligible for membership were the eight New York towns and seven Pennsylvania townships bordering the river; the State of New York; the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; the Delaware River Basin Commission; and the Upper Delaware Citizens Advisory Council. The UDC’s governmental members would use their existing authorities to cooperatively implement

the Plan’s goals, aimed at protecting the river through ongoing reviews and recommendations pertaining to any relevant actions, developments, ordinances or laws in the corridor.

Members appoint representatives to serve on the UDC board. The full Council and three standing committees – Operations, Project Review, and Water Use/Resource Management – each meet monthly at the UDC’s Narrowsburg office. The UDC also administers an annual Technical Assistance Grants Program.

The UDC’s role in overseeing the various entities tasked with implementation of the River Management Plan’s goals and objectives represents a working partnership that has been nationally recognized and emulated.

Prepared to act as advocate, critic or facilitator, the UDC continuously monitors proposed legislation, new developments, studies, and governmental policies to assess potential impacts on the Upper Delaware’s resources, to protect private property rights, and to uphold the far-sighted vision of the River Management Plan to work with the National Park Service to protect and conserve the area for present and future generations.

