



**Upper Delaware Council  
33rd Annual  
River Valley Awards**

**September 12, 2021**

**Central House Family Resort  
Beach Lake, Pennsylvania**

Upper Delaware Council, Inc.  
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## PROGRAM ITINERARY

- 3:00 p.m. - Reception with hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar
- 4:00 p.m. - Welcoming Remarks by UDC Chairperson Jeff Dexter and Dinner
- 5:00 p.m. - Keynote Address: New York State Senator Mike Martucci (42nd District)
- 5:15 p.m. - Presentation of Awards by UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie
- 6:45 p.m. - Closing Remarks and Group Photographs of 2020 & 2021 Honorees

The Upper Delaware Council wishes to pay tribute to our slate of 2020 award recipients following the cancellation of last year's annual public ceremony due to the coronavirus pandemic. Details of their accomplishments are available in the "Tribute to 2020 Honorees" program posted at [upperdelawarecouncil.org](http://upperdelawarecouncil.org) under Publications.

**Distinguished Service Award ~ Harold G. Roeder, Jr.**, for his contributions to the Upper Delaware Council as Town of Delaware, NY Representative from 1997-2020, three-time UDC chairperson, and river valley advocate.  
**Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Awards (2) ~ Paddy McCarthy** and the late **Tim Freeman**, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Interpretive Rangers, for their July 5, 2019 boater rescue at Mongaup Rapids; and **James Moss, Johnny Smith, Andy Moss (Equinunk Volunteer Fire Company)**, and **Jeff Dexter (Damascus Township Volunteer Ambulance Corps)**, for a July 6, 2019 river rescue upstream of the Kellams-Stalker Bridge.

**Advocacy Award ~ Pennsylvania Representative Jonathan Fritz (111th District), Representative Mike Peifer (139th District), and Senator Lisa Baker (20th District)**, for securing a first-ever \$100,000 Pennsylvania grant investment in 2019 for the Upper Delaware Council and its five PA member townships.

**Partnership Award ~ Dr. Heather Galbraith, Carrie Blakeslee, Jeff Cole and Barbara White** for their partnership work at the USGS Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory with NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River for over two decades to advance numerous scientific research projects.

**Cultural Achievement Awards (2) ~ Big Eddy Film Festival**, directed by Tina Spangler from the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance, for the 8th annual event in 2019 featuring the premiere of the "Narrowsburg" documentary; and **Wayne County Historical Society's 1888 Spencer Tractor Restoration**, accomplished over three years by Fred Murray, Rich Robbins, Frank Ward, Rod Warner, Steve Weber, and Kim Erickson.

**Community Service Award ~ Nancy Furdock** for promoting regional tourism, economic development, arts appreciation, and cultural understanding in the Greater Hancock and Delaware County area.

**Recreation Achievement Awards (2) ~ Dan Plummer**, guiding force behind Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. from 2006 to 2019; and **Bill Streeter**, director of the Delaware Valley Raptor Center, Inc. since 1987.

**Volunteer Award ~ Star Hesse** of Lava, NY, for her active outreach on behalf of Town of Tusten residents, senior citizens, the environment, and community beautification efforts.

**Special Recognition Awards (2) ~ Carla Hauser Hahn** of Callicoon, NY, upon her 2019 retirement as National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Management Assistant with 39 years of government service; and **John Ogozalek** of French Woods, NY, for his advocacy to mark the Highest Elevation point along the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, impactful work as an educator at Sullivan West Central School, and substance abuse addiction education efforts through The Kingfisher Project.



The Upper Delaware Council, established in 1988, is a not-for-profit organization working in partnership with the National Park Service to coordinate implementation of the River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, designated by the U.S. Congress in 1978 as a unit of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Voting members are the two states (New York and Pennsylvania) and 13 local governments that border on the Upper Delaware River. These include the Towns of Hancock, Fremont, Delaware, Cohecton, Tusten, Highland, Lumberland, and Deerpark in NY; and the Townships of Damascus, Berlin, Lackawaxen, Shohola, and Westfall in PA. The Delaware River Basin Commission is a non-voting member.

# Keynote Speaker: Senator Mike Martucci

Michael R. Martucci was elected in 2020 to his first term representing the New York State 42nd Senate District, which comprises all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties.

He was named the Ranking Member of the Senate Standing Committees on Disabilities and Commerce, Economic Development, and Small Business.

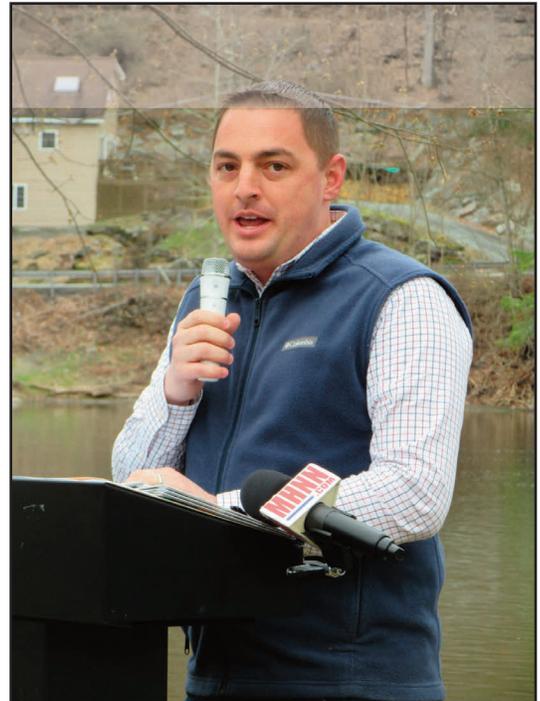
Mike grew up in Westtown and is a lifelong resident of Orange County. He obtained his Bachelor of Science and Master's degrees in Business Administration from Marist College after graduating with honors from SUNY Orange.

As an entrepreneur and small business job-creator, Mike started Quality Bus Service at just 22 years of age. With a startup business loan and his grandmother by his side, Mike began driving a school bus and providing transportation services for the Greenwood Lake Union Free School District. He grew the company to over 500 employees and more than 350 school buses before selling it in 2018 so he could spend more time with his family and focus on giving back to his community.

In 2015-2017, Mike was elected president of the New York School Bus Contractors Association and also forged strong partnerships with New York's school transportation unions in Albany.

Mike, his wife Erin, son Mike Jr., and daughters Elizabeth and Catherine live in New Hampton and have a family farm in Westtown. He enjoys volunteering for his church and is a supporter of the Community Foundation of Orange & Sullivan. Mike is a member of the Board of Directors and Treasurer for the SUNY Orange Foundation. He chairs the SUNY Orange Golfing for Scholarships event to raise money for the athletic scholarship fund.

Mike and his family were directly impacted by the tragic events of 9/11 and established the Michelle Rene Bratton Foundation to provide college scholarships for children living in Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster Counties.



**At top, Senator Martucci spoke at U.S. Representative Antonio Delgado's April 12 press conference to announce establishment of the Delaware River Watershed Congressional Caucus to coordinate federal support and, at right, returned to the future Callicoon Riverside Park on August 5 for a "Day on the Delaware" rally to pledge his backing for the campaign seeking a New York State investment in the Upper Delaware River alongside NYS Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther. (Right photo by Shannon Cilento)**

## Greetings from Upper Delaware Council



**UDC BOARD:** Gathered at the June 3, 2021 Upper Delaware Council meeting were, seated officers: Chairperson Jeff Dexter (Damascus), Secretary-Treasurer Al Henry (Berlin); and Vice-Chairperson Susan Sullivan (Tusten). Standing from the left: Superintendent Joe Salvatore (National Park Service), Tom Dent (Delaware), Aaron Robinson (Shohola), Doug Case (Lackawaxen), Ginny Dudko (Deerpark), Fred Peckham (Hancock), Larry Richardson (Cochecton), Jim Greier (Fremont), and David Dean (Deerpark). Absent from in-person attendance were representatives for Highland, Lumberland, Westfall, New York State, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Delaware River Basin Commission. (UDC Photos by Laurie Ramie)

# Oaken Gavel Award ~ Larry H. Richardson

Having been appointed by the Cochection Town Board as its Upper Delaware Council representative in 1989, Larry H. Richardson now holds the title as the longest continuously-serving board member.

He also has the distinction of being the only four-time chairperson (1993, 2001, 2011 for 7 months, and 2020).

Count in serving as vice-chair in 1992, secretary-treasurer in 1990 and 2000, intermittently chairing the UDC's Project Review and Operations Committees, and his membership on many subcommittees, Larry plays a core, influential role with the Council that mirrors his dedication to serving his community at large.

Raised in Ferndale, NY Larry graduated from Liberty High School and Sullivan County Community College in 1968. He built a house in Cochection and settled down with his wife of 51 years, Peggy, to raise their family.

Larry recently retired as the Vice-President of Sales and Service for Yaun Company after 30 years.

He served on the Cochection Planning Board from 1988-1995 before 20 years as a Town Councilman.

Also benefiting from his attention have been the Sullivan County and

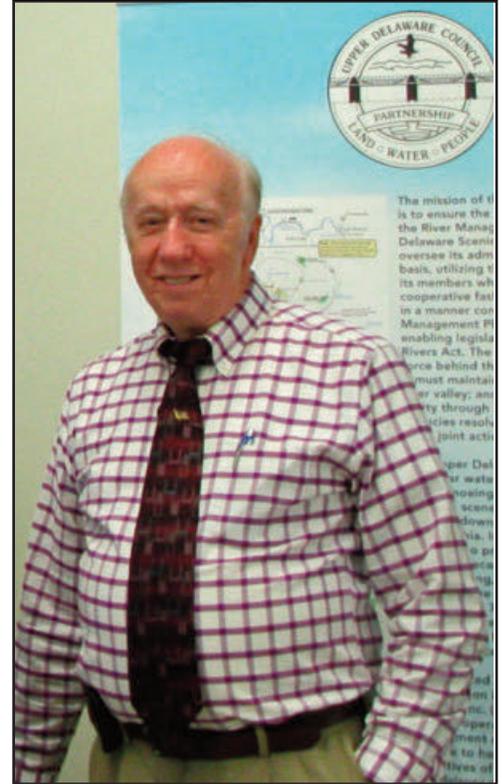
"I first met Larry when I came on to the UDC in 2000. He was a wealth of knowledge, always even-keeled, like a mentor to me ... and he still is. He has been a steady, stable individual on that board, always the voice of reason, and always striving to do the best that he could not only for his town but for the entire river valley. His continuity, connection, and history are unique. He is a special resource and we need to do everything we can to keep him on the board!"

~ *Nadia Rajsz, UDC Representative (Town of Lumberland) and Sullivan County Legislator (District 2)*

Town of Cochection Democratic Committee, Fosterdale Cemetery Association, Catskill Regional Medical Center Foundation, and Grover Herman Hospital Auxiliary. He's the former co-chair of the Sullivan County Charter Review Committee.

Since 2002, Larry has represented his town on the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Board focused on the NYS Route 97 corridor and volunteers as long-term treasurer.

Larry is also a founding member of the Cochection Preservation Society and has served as the history-loving group's treasurer since 1992.



In 1988, Larry received the Tom Hill Award for Excellence in Public Service from the Upper Delaware Heritage Alliance based on a heartfelt nomination submitted by his then 15-year-old daughter Erin for his dedication to his community, church, and local government, along with his "honesty, integrity and goodwill."

He's even the author of a 2017 book, "Poems for Children", illustrated by his son Russell who had found Larry's 25 years of poems tucked away in a drawer that now his five grandchildren can enjoy.

From sitting through countless meetings to organizing local litter clean-ups to keeping finances straight to providing respected leadership for so many entities, the UDC applauds Larry H. Richardson.

"I have known Larry Richardson since 1997 when I became the Town of Delaware Representative to the UDC. For the 23 years of my service, I can say that without a doubt, he is and continues to be a tireless and dedicated member. He could be counted on to present his ideas concerning issues that would come up, and he then would work with other members to see if a consensus could be reached. If there was much disagreement, he did not hold any anger against those who disagreed with him. He was able to move on and did so for the good of the UDC. That's a good thing! Thank you, Larry, kudos to you!" ~ *Harold G. Roeder, Jr., 2020 UDC Distinguished Service Award and Oaken Gavel honoree*



This 1990 photo from the Upper Delaware Council archives shows a board meeting in progress at the Tusten Town Hall meeting room with, from the left, Tom Hill (Town of Lumberland), Larry Richardson (Town of Cochection), Richard "Dick" Gutzzeit (the Cochection alternate), and Frank Hartmann (Town of Deerpark). Larry served as secretary-treasurer during his second year of membership.

# Special Recognition Award ~ WJFF Radio Catskill



The vision statement for the non-profit, non-commercial WJFF 90.5 FM is “to connect, reflect and involve diverse communities through enlightening, informative and entertaining content.”

Their commitment to focusing on the Upper Delaware River Valley’s cultural heritage, calendar of events, and issues of concern as an educational broadcaster earns Radio Catskill the UDC’s Cultural Achievement Award.

WJFF board member and Ballads and Banjoes show host Sonja Hedlund notes, “Farm and Country has a regular segment about the river. Rosie Starr produces that weekly show Saturdays for 30 minutes. It is one of our best shows.”

Segments produced on Farm and Country have included interviews with Ed Wesely about the importance of preserving the historic Skinners Falls, NY-Milanville, PA Bridge; LeRoy and Jennifer Canfield about haying and tending to their horses at the Canfield Farm along the Delaware River banks in Damascus, PA; a presentation on knotweed management hosted by Friends of the Upper Delaware River at the Skinners Falls demonstration site with remarks from Steve Schwartz and Jessica Newbern; “Birding Along the Delaware River” produced by Pat Sanders and featuring Kathy Dodge from the Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society; an interview with Beverly Sterner of Milanville, PA, founder of the Upper Delaware Community Network on-line social connection resource; and a special 2019 Labor Day weekend presentation of Trout Unlimited’s “Trout Release Day” celebration in Jeffersonville.

Recently, Farm and Country paid tribute to monarch butterfly expert and UDC 2017 Distinguished Service Award honoree Ed Wesely after his May 25 death when Christine San Jose, Marcia Nehemiah, Sheila Dugan, and Nancy Wells read selections of the natural world aficionado’s favorite passages from Emily Dickinson.

Humbly downplaying her show’s particular contributions, Rosie turns the spotlight onto the entire station, saying, “It’s an honor to volunteer for Radio Catskill. They deserve recognition; the staff has worked continuously to serve the

listening community.”

Jason Dole and Patricio Robayo from The Local Edition have interviewed Trust for Public Land’s Francis O’Shea about the Callicoon Riverside Park, UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie about the Upper Delaware’s interstate bridges, and National Park Service staff members about locally threatening invasive species.

Regularly featured on Radio Catskill has been journalist Meg McGuire, founder/publisher of Delaware Currents.

Her subjects have included the impacts of Delaware River Basin reservoir releases on flood control, recreation, and downstream salinization during droughts (1/20/20); Basin Water Quality (2/17/20); and federal funding that Congressman Antonio Delgado helped secure for Upper Delaware River restoration projects (3/30/20).

“From progressive voices and local programming like ‘Staying Home with Josh Fox’ (writer/director of Emmy Award-winning film ‘Gasland’), to the NPR tried-and-true favorites like ‘Fresh Air’ and ‘All Things Considered’, Catskill Radio - WJFF 90.5 FM - helps us to be informed citizens of the big wide world and engaged citizens of our local communities,” Meg reflects.

Evan Padua, a member of the Upper Delaware Council’s Water Use/Resource Management Committee and alternate representative for the Town of Tusten, is also a WJFF contributor. He provides a “Hooked on Fishing” segment that airs during the Farm and Country show.

“I am happy to hear that Radio Catskill WJFF is receiving this Cultural Achievement Award from the UDC. It is important to keep the Delaware River a constant on the radio airwaves. By Radio Catskill doing this, it brings river awareness to the general public and radio listeners all over. I myself educate and support conservation of the Upper Delaware River. The more knowledge and information for the general public, the better. Thank you Radio Catskill for having me on your station and always following through with river-related issues,” Evan says.

WJFF started hydro-powered operations Feb. 12, 1990.

# Special Recognition Award ~ Bonnie Sheard

Few people in the Upper Delaware National Park Service office can say they were involved in the establishment of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Corridor.

Throughout a 40-year period, Bonnie Sheard spent 20 years as a full-time employee and another seven as a volunteer with the National Park Service before retiring in June 2021.

This commitment to the mission of the National Park Service, conservation, and the environment earns Bonnie the UDC's 2021 Special Recognition Award.

In October 1980, the Western Wayne High School graduate assumed the role of Secretary of the Upper Delaware Planning Team, the group responsible for the formation of the NPS unit. In this role, Bonnie prepared administrative documents, committee meeting minutes, memoranda, and more to support this process. She also typed the first draft of the River Management Plan and fielded many phone calls to the office from concerned residents about the new NPS presence in the corridor. Bonnie then became permanent secretary for the unit, and later became a purchasing agent and administrative clerk until 1989.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Bonnie served as a part-time Volunteer-In-Parks, continuing to assist in a variety of operational capacities to maintain consistency in the park unit throughout many changes in superintendents and administrations.

In 2010, Bonnie returned full-time to NPS as the Secretary in the Superintendent's Office and the Commercial & Special Uses Program Manager. She served as a resource for many and this part of the job is what she recognizes as her greatest accomplishment.

"Even though I was involved from the beginning with the planning team, which was a privilege, I would have to say that my proudest moments were to serve the area in any way I could whether it be the visitors, landowners in the river valley, town and/or townships, the Upper Delaware Council, the Superintendents here at the Upper Delaware, other new Superintendents across the country that needed assistance with getting Special Park Uses programs started, or the Upper Delaware staff however needed," she says.

Bonnie is also an associate pastor at River Fellowship Church in Cochection and locally known for being a natural medicine guru. Now retired, Bonnie says she looks forward to having more time for her grandchildren, painting, quilting, conducting herb classes, and finishing her book. She will remain in the area for now, and remarked that her family has been in the river region for generations.

"We knew by living here for generations that the water, the land, the flora, fauna and fish needed to be protected because our lives and futures depended on it," she says. "The river always inspired my work and my role as a landowner, wife, and mother."

"This is where our families live and hopefully generations to come. Yes, we will be glad to share, but require others to respect it as we do as our homes, and the Upper Delaware legislation, [Upper Delaware] Council and staff help us do that. The Upper Delaware legislation helps us protect the area, the Council gives us representation to express our views and needs, and the Upper Delaware staff helps us to keep our visitors safe, protect the vital resources and institute the legislation for the enjoyment of current and future generations," Bonnie reflects.



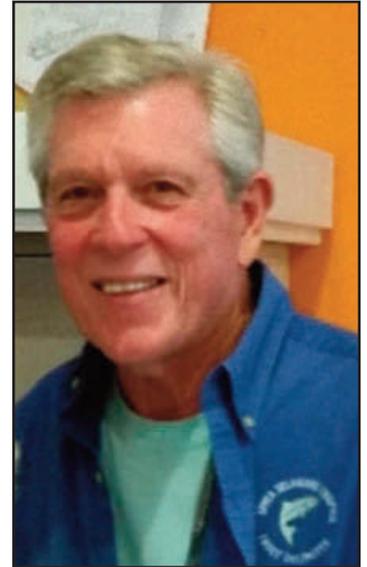
# Community Service Award ~ Andy Boyar

"Andy has been and continues to be a dedicated advocate and friend of the Delaware River. Everyone at the UDC knows Andy and is aware of his fervor in assuring that the river is clean, healthy and able to support a diversity of life. Whether as a UDC member, president of Trout Unlimited, or Town Supervisor, Andy can be counted on to step up, organize and lead when it comes to the safety and health of the Delaware River. Other accomplishments include: advocating for scientific water releases in order to maintain cold water for the fish populations; commitment to keeping fracking out of the Delaware River Basin; and organizing and leading numerous river clean-ups similar to the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep that he conceived and presented to the UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee in fall of 2019." ~ Nomination submitted by Town of Highland UDC Representative and Councilman James Gutekunst.

Andy Boyar is responsible for a lot of firsts. He was the longest-seated supervisor in the Town of Highland over non-consecutive terms dating back to 1981, the first to previously serve as town justice and town attorney, he oversaw adoption of the town's first zoning code, was the first town representative appointed to the Upper Delaware Council when Highland joined in 1990 (becoming chairperson in 2014), an early architect of Sullivan County's recycling program when he chaired the county's Board of Supervisors in 1993-1994, the first UDC delegate to earn a Lifesaving Award after he and his son Matt rescued two 18-year-old men from drowning in 2003, the first to propose an ambitious bi-state clean-up surrounding the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, and perhaps inevitably, Highland's first "Litter Leader."

"I've known Andy since he moved into town from Oyster Bay, Long Island and we became friends," says Jeff Haas, his town supervisor successor after

"We congratulate Andy on receiving this well-deserved award. Andy has given countless number of hours teaching youth the art of fly fishing, whether it be at Trout Release Day (Sullivan West Elementary School), NYSTU Youth Fly Fishing Camp, Sullivan County Federation of Sportsmen, Boy Scouts or any other youth organization. Andy is right there to help the Girls Scouts on Earth Day do stream cleaning. In addition, Andy has been an advocate for preserving and protecting our coldwater fisheries through his work with Trout Unlimited, writing for the local paper, and his service in local government." ~ *Members of the Upper Delaware Chapter Trout Unlimited*



Andy stepped down in 2015 and whom he credits for mentoring him.

"He has great leadership skills. He could be very persuasive when he had to be. He was a great champion for our town and forged good relationships with other supervisors in the county. When he has a task in front of him, he completes it. He's a very respected member of the community," Jeff says.

Andy says it's his love of nature and the outdoors - particularly river activities and fishing - that inspires his environmental activism.

Ron Urban of Port Ewan, past president of New York State Council Trout Unlimited, praises Andy as "a dedicated TU leader as president of the Upper Delaware chapter and protector of our coldwater fisheries."

He appreciates the time that Andy has spent engaging youth in the sport of fly fishing, tying, and conservation issues as the future stewards of the Delaware River, the Upper Delaware Chapter's enthusiastic participation in the Trout in the Classroom program and Trout Release Days on the Callicoon Creek, and Andy's dedication to educating himself and filing letters on the local and state levels against issues that would adversely impact communities and habitat in the Catskills.

"On behalf of his TU friends and partners, I am extremely honored that it is safe to say that Andy certainly represents the mission: To Conserve, Protect, Restore and Sustain the Habitats of Trout in New York State and especially the Delaware River System," Ron says.

Andy pitched the concept of a litter sweep within all 15 NY and PA corridor municipalities to mark the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in 2020. When COVID-19 canceled that year's plans, Litter Sweep was resurrected in April 17-25, 2021 with Andy's organizational and funding assistance.

In Highland alone, 48 volunteers pitched in to sweep 6.5 miles of river banks and roadways, gathering 87 bags of garbage, dozens of tires, furniture, mattresses, and debris estimated to weigh 1.7 tons.

As the proud grandfather of five, Andy says he "is concerned that our society must work harder to curtail assaults on our environment and to leave a healthier planet for future generations."

The UDC expresses gratitude for Andy always stepping up to do his part.



Andy Boyar, at the podium, chaired the Town of Highland's 9/11 Memorial Task Force and spoke at the Sept. 10, 2011 dedication of the Town of Highland Heroes' Park, which features a 200 lb. steel I-beam recovered from the World Trade Center. Heroes' Park in Eldred also honors military veterans and emergency service providers. (UDC Archives Photo by Laurie Ramie)



# Cultural Achievement Award ~ The Delaware Company



Robert Land, aka The Delaware Company Vice-President Bill Chellis, responds to the Declaration of Independence on "Patriots and Loyalists" Day at Fort Delaware Museum of Colonial History on July 10. (Photo by Ruth Huggler)



The Delaware Company founders, President and Sullivan County Historian John Conway, and Executive Director/Town of Highland Co-Historian Debra Conway, flank Sullivan County Legislator Nadia Rajsz, with Preston the Newfoundland sitting by, at the June 12 dedication of a historic marker to commemorate the first Upper Delaware River suspension bridge at the site of its circa 1855 abutment along River Road in Barryville now on private property. (Photo by Laurie Ramie)

## GROWING OUR FUTURE FROM THE ROOTS OF OUR PAST.

The Delaware Company formed in 2012 as a non-profit history education group that, less than a decade later, is turning that vision into reality.

In the name and spirit of the hardy Connecticut farmers who in 1755 overcame inestimable hardships to establish Cushetunk, the first permanent European settlement in the Upper Delaware River Valley, The Delaware Company has significantly expanded its scope.

The organization recently entered a three-year, no-cost contract with the Sullivan County Legislature to take over management of the Fort Delaware Museum of Colonial History and the Minisink Battleground Park.

They introduced new programming this summer in anticipation of reopening Fort Delaware in Narrowsburg to its more traditional public operating schedule, while also attracting visitors to the Battleground Park in Minisink Ford that offers a picnic pavilion, trail system, and restrooms. Both properties remain owned by Sullivan County with oversight provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Delaware Company has always had the promotion of Upper Delaware River Valley history and support for its historic landmarks through education, outreach, and fundraising at the core of its mission.

Founded by Sullivan County Historian John Conway and Town of Highland Co-Historian Debra Conway of Barryville, The Delaware Company has sponsored presentations, programs, and narrated Magical History Bus Tours.

They also provide consultation and advocacy for historic causes, issue publications such as the NYS Press Association award-winning "Celebrating Women's Suffrage" for the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment that appeared in the Sullivan County Democrat, and have been on a roll with procuring or refurbishing historic markers since 2019 for the D&H Canal, the Barryville Suspension Bridge, and Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct.

On July 10, they coordinated Patriots and Loyalists Day at Fort Delaware then organized the 1779 Revolutionary War Battle of Minisink commemoration July 24 at the park where they had raised funds in 2017 to build a monument naming the 46 American patriots who lost their lives there.

Upcoming programs are a Sept. 18 Highland History Hike at the Minisink Battleground Park and Oct. 9 Haunted History Lantern Tour at Fort Delaware (see Facebook.)

Following Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Vista Clearing work, The Delaware Company is poised to complete by this fall Phase II of extending the D&H Canal Towpath Trail at the Roebling Bridge a half-mile to the Barbara Yeaman Eagle Observation Blind river access with bluestone benches, interpretive signage, and snubbing posts installed. Phase III of "The Kate Project" is to build a life-sized bronze statue of a female hoggee leading a canal boat mule team along the towpath.



On July 22, 2017, The Delaware Company unveiled a monument at Minisink Battleground Park, with Debra Conway, Brian Scardefield, Elektra and Teresa Kehagias on hand. (Photo by Laurie Ramie)

# Cultural Achievement Award ~ Rocky Pinciotti

The accomplished French Fauvist painter Henri Matisse once said “creativity takes courage.” If that is true, Michael Rocco “Rocky” Pinciotti must be the bravest man in the Delaware River Valley.

The recently-retired gallery director at Delaware Valley Arts Alliance (DVAA) has enjoyed a prolific art career, earning him the 2021 UDC Cultural Achievement Award.

Originally from the Midwest, Rocky attended the University of Toledo for his undergraduate degree, and then went on to attend Pratt Art Institute in New York City where he received his MFA in 1981.

A mixed-media artist, Rocky has exhibited across the US, in Finland, and in South America.

Perhaps his most unique medium is neon, which he began using as a result of working with Let There Be Neon, a gallery in SOHO. Rocky has not only used neon in his own art to symbolize an inner life in the form of illuminating radiant energy, but he has curated neon-based exhibitions, writ-

ten publications, and lectured on the history of neon’s use in art.

From 2005 until late 2020, Rocky was the gallery director and curator at DVAA in Narrowsburg.

During this time, Rocky created DVAA’s “Radius” pop-up exhibition series; coordinated Riverfest as an annual celebration of art, music & ecology along Main Street in Narrowsburg; curated countless exhibits; and served as a resource for the arts community.

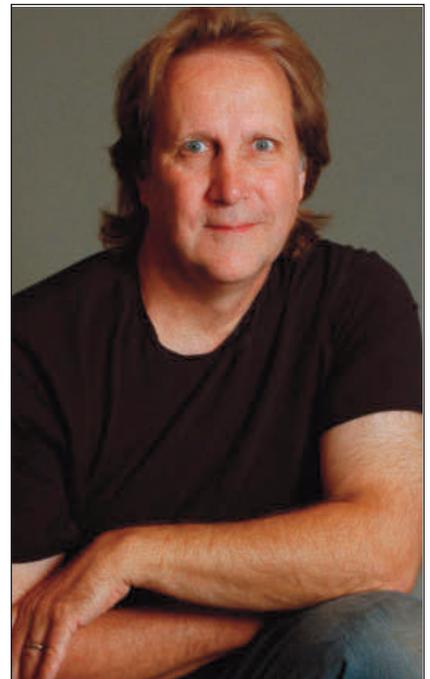
When asked what he considers to be his proudest achievement as gallery director, Rocky speaks of the “ART IN SIXES” exhibitions he created the very first year he served in the position.

This exhibit is comprised completely of artwork no larger than six inches in size and features hundreds of artists each year.

“It is an inclusive and exciting event with the community and for the hundreds of artists who participate each year from both sides of the Delaware River and beyond,”

Rocky says.

In his nomination submitted for this award, sculptor, exhibitor, and Sullivan County’s 2021 Poet Laureate Eric Baylin of North Branch, NY writes, “As the gallery director for DVAA, Rocky galvanized the art community in the area through his enthusiasm, his generously good nature, and by his admirable ability to step out of the artists’ way to let them shine.”



“[Rocky] would routinely go out of his way to support each of the artists selected to show in the gallery, always making each of them feel worthy and confident...His enthusiasm for the arts and his unflappable and positive energy were an inspiration for all he came in contact with,” Eric says.

Since 2009, Rocky has also been an instructor at SUNY Sullivan where he teaches fine arts, graphic design, and art history.

In 2020, he was awarded the prestigious State University of New York’s Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching and was recently promoted to a full professor, continuing to inspire a new generation of artists.

Rocky lives with his wife and son in Cohecton, NY, a place where he can be near the river.

He opines, “To quote Claude Monet: ‘The richness I achieve comes from nature, the source of my inspiration.’ I agree, we are all the richer because of the Delaware River.”



The Delaware Valley Arts Alliance’s popular “ART IN SIXES” annual exhibit was conceived by Rocky in 2005. (Contributed Photos)

# Volunteer Award ~ Ed Jackson

Anyone who's ever come before the Planning Board in the Town of Tusten knows Ed Jackson. Ed's steadfast leadership and sense of responsibility to the River Management Plan have characterized the board for nearly two decades. His commitment to community planning, continuing education, and veterans earns him the UDC's 2021 Volunteer Award.

The Great Neck, Long Island native originally visited the Upper Delaware region in the 1960s on a deer hunting trip. He immediately became enamored with the area and bought property in Tusten soon following the initial trip, making Tusten his full-time home shortly thereafter.

Ed has spent a lot of his time giving back to the community he chose as his home. One of his most important roles is that of Town of Tusten Planning Board Chair. He joined the planning board nearly 23 years ago and was appointed chair three years later.

Ed has seen countless projects come before the planning board over the last two decades, and his leadership and involvement in everything from the Town's comprehensive plan to the zoning law to site plan reviews has undoubtedly shaped the town many love.

Jane Luchsinger, Deputy Supervisor for Town of Tusten, says about Ed in nominating him for recognition, "To respect and protect the principles of the River Management Plan requires vigilance by all residents of the Upper Delaware Valley but this vigilance is especially significant when the resident is in a seat of influential authority."

However, Ed did not stop with learning about local planning issues. For the past 12 years, he has been involved with the New York Planning Federation (NYPF), whose mis-



sion is to provide training, educational and informational services to planning and zoning board members across the state, enabling them to better assist their municipalities with development and land use decisions.

Ed has served on the NYPF Board of Directors for ten years, two years as 2nd Vice President, two more years as Vice President, and he is currently fulfilling a 2-year term as President.

He also has worked closely with town leaders to obtain grants to install highway and byway signage, and to advocate for a Tusten Riverwalk project.

Though local and statewide service have defined Ed's more recent roles, perhaps his most important title is of national significance—veteran. Ed served in the U.S. Navy where he flew as an air crew member in the naval aviation field in the Pacific Ocean. This has led Ed to advocate for a variety of veterans issues on the local level, and he keeps the Town Board and public apprised of programs related to veterans.

Additionally, as a former volunteer firefighter in Great Neck, Ed lost fellow firefighters in the 9/11 terrorist attacks and knew many other Sullivan County residents had lost loved ones that day.

To commemorate this, Ed got in touch with the September 11th Families' Association to bring a piece of a steel beam from the World Trade Center to Tusten's Veterans Memorial Park in Narrowsburg.

After securing grant funding from Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther's office, Ed worked with the Town to design a memorial permanently reminding those who visit the park of that tragic day in history.

"I just enjoy giving back because I love it so much here," Ed reflects when asked why he volunteers. "Most of these roles are thankless jobs and you do it because you're dedicated to the town and to your neighbors."



Ed Jackson arranged to obtain a steel beam preserved from the World Trade Center to display in Narrowsburg at the Tusten Veterans' Memorial Park in tribute to 9/11 victims. (Top photo contributed, above photo by Shannon Cilento)

# Recreation Achievement Award ~ Keep Hawley-Honesdale Beautiful



It's near impossible to drive around the greater Hawley and Honesdale areas and miss the signs that tell you the very road on which you're driving is being kept clean by Keep Hawley-Honesdale Beautiful (KHHB).

KHHB started with small roadside cleanups. They now maintain over 60 miles and have expanded to sponsor river cleanups. This volunteer-led force is passionate about keeping our roads and waterways beautiful and healthy, and for that, Keep Hawley-Honesdale Beautiful earns the 2021 UDC Recreation Achievement Award.

It all started in summer 2017 with Mike Coppola, a high school English teacher in East Stroudsburg and Hawley/Honesdale area resident since 1987. Mike led cleanup efforts along Route 6 but at first felt defeated by not being able to keep up with all the litter. Fast forward to 2021, Mike and volunteers are now known as Keep Hawley-Honesdale Beautiful and work with PennDOT's Adopt-a-Highway program.

As of summer 2021, KHHB is comprised of 32 groups and 64 miles of adopted roadways.

"I was originally motivated by the lack of attention and action with regards to the discarded litter along my route to and from work for so many years," Mike reflects. "When I discovered that local correctional facilities, jails/prisons were no longer having their inmates clean the roads, I decided to take action."

*"Keeping the feeders to the Delaware River clean is crucial to reversing the flood of man-made plastics, trash and other degrading and unsightly waste and environmentally damaging materials from our waterways. This is an initiative being recognized all over the globe as man-made waste has become a worldwide problem. The cure starts locally by getting these products out of our waters at the point of entry. Think globally, act locally." ~ Nominator Andy Boyar*

However, the group didn't stop with cleaning roadside litter.

"After reading up more about the harmful effects of roadside litter on our waterways and how much of this litter eventually finds its way into our streams and rivers, I decided to get a little more involved in river/lake clean ups," he says.

Mike says he owes his increased interest in our local rivers and lakes to Harrison Balthasar and Dan Santoro, who he describes as his "two river cleanup specialists."

"They both have extensive experience in litter collection along our waterways, and I have gained much knowledge by working with each of them," he says.

The joining of forces of KHHB and the local fly-fishing and river cleanup communities has resulted in an even greater impact, most recently a hugely successful Lackawaxen River cleanup on June 26th. KHHB partnered with Housefly Fishing in Hawley, the Lake Wallenpaupack Sea Scouts, and the UDC to host this event. The KHHB group started at the Honesdale CVS and proceeded along the Lackawaxen River towards White Mills, while a group of several dozen started at Housefly Fishing in Hawley and focused on the Lackawaxen from there. The cleanup netted around 25 tires, dozens of bags of litter, rusted scooters and bikes, and even a parking meter.

It's said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. KHHB's journey to adopting 64 miles of road began with just a half mile, and it's doubtful they'll stop until every last mile of the area's roads and rivers is clean.

*Keep Hawley-Honesdale Beautiful spread its anti-littering message at this year's Memorial Day Parade, top, and had some fun with their trash haul from the June 26 Lackawaxen River Clean-up. (Contributed Photos)*



# Recreation Achievement Award ~ Knotweed Management Project

Knotweed is a highly pervasive and opportunistic invasive plant that is rapidly spreading throughout the Upper Delaware River watershed. Through crowding out native riparian vegetation, it can destabilize stream banks, cause soil erosion, reduce plant diversity, and affect habitat for pollinators, insects, and animals.

"It grows so wildly that many people just give up and don't do anything," says Steve Schwartz.

Complete eradication isn't feasible or even desirable since the plant does offer some natural benefits, but containment is.

Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. (FUDR) partnered with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Park Service, New York League of Conservation Voters, Stroud Water Research Center, and Shippensburg University to win a 2019 Delaware Watershed Conservation Grant for research and outreach.

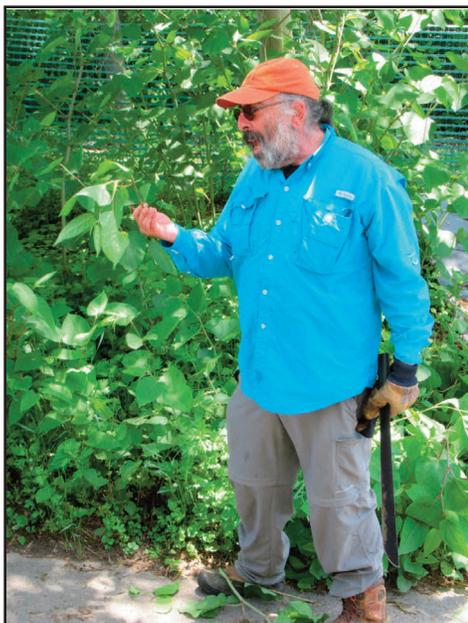
"This exciting project includes both scientific and public education components to address one of the most pressing ecological threats to the Upper Delaware River watershed," says FUDR Executive Director Jeff Skelding. "It will take a concerted and collaborative effort by all watershed stakeholders to gain ground on this rapidly proliferating threat to our river system."

Step one is to understand Knotweed in terms of its three species types, growing methods, and distribution.

Knotweed has existed in the United



*Former National Park Service Biologist Jessica Newbern, above, explains foliar herbicide and stem injection techniques to manage Knotweed, while Friends of the Upper Delaware River Project Leader Steve Schwartz, at left, shows cutting techniques at the Skinners Falls Access Demonstration Site on June 5. (Photos by Laurie Ramie)*



States since the 19th century, introduced for ornamental landscaping.

"No one really has a good sense of how much Knotweed there is. We know it's everywhere, but what percentage of the floodplain does it cover?" Steve asks.

Mapping its extent from aerial flights above, scientists are also digging below to study the shallow root system and soil.

Five management techniques are being put to the test this summer at demonstration sites set up at Skinners Falls Access in the Town of Cochetton, Hancock Firemen's Field, and Will Smith Memorial Park in Deposit, where public workshops took place and signs explain the methods to be judged by effectiveness and costs.

Mechanical cuttings, impermeable membrane coverings, foliar spraying herbicide applications, herbicide stem injections, and even goat grazing with foragers provided by the Grant Farm in Waymart, PA are under evaluation.

"Containment is feasible with repeated attention each year," Steve believes.

"Our waterways are one of our most vital environmental resources, especially the Upper Delaware River. Combating invasive species helps improve water quality and promotes a healthy aquatic habitat," says Julie Tighe, president of the New York League of Conservation Voters.

# Outstanding Community Achievement Award ~ Town of Highland, New York

*"For a lifetime I have enjoyed the river; shad fishing, swimming, and floating down the Delaware. I believe we have an obligation to share our great resource with others."* ~ Jeff Haas, Supervisor, Town of Highland

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Great communities do not just appear, they are made through community advocates who lead the charge to create them. The Town of Highland with its hamlets - Eldred, Highland Lake, Yulan, Barryville and Minisink Ford - is one of these great communities.

For their initiative on numerous beautification and recreational river access efforts, support for projects highlighting the Town's rich river history, and leading an extensive effort to update their zoning code to substantially conform to the River Management Plan, the Town of Highland earns the UDC's 2021 Outstanding Community Achievement Award.

"We are all so excited that our efforts to support beautification, thoughtful zoning regulations, and preservation and appropriate use of the Delaware River are being recognized," states Kaitlin Hass, Town of Highland Councilwoman.

One of the Town's most recent accomplishments was the result of a three-year Zoning Rewrite Committee to return the Town's lengthy zoning law to substantial conformance with the River Management Plan's Land and Water Use Guidelines. The committee, comprised of elected Town officials, planning and zoning board members, with NPS and UDC partners, completed an overhaul of the code with protection of the river and its resources at the forefront.

In a statement from the Zoning Rewrite Committee, they wrote, "We are lucky to have the scenic Delaware



River within our town—a remarkable resource for recreation, leisure, nature, wildlife, and tourism...We strive to keep in line with the Town's Master Plan supporting conscientious, appropriate, and respectful development. We are happy to support environmental stewardship and to be good neighbors to all."

Barryville is one of the Town's bustling river corridor communities and boasts one of the county's most abundant farmers' markets, engaging public spaces, and vibrant shops and businesses, all oriented around the river. The Town's success is also due to its partnerships with community partners such as the Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce (GBCC), the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB), Sullivan Renaissance, The Delaware Company, Barryville Farmers' Market, and more.

"This award furthers our mission to promote a positive environment that preserves the special character of our community in order to attract new businesses, new residents, and creates a welcoming environment for tourism," says Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce President Roswell Hamrick. "Working with generous grants from Sullivan Renaissance, we have enhanced the natural and inviting beauty of our Town with ongoing community gardens, improving accesses to our scenic Delaware River, and establishing our award-winning Farmers' Market. We are proud of our Town and happily thank the UDC for honoring our community."

The Town and its partners aren't done yet. They have big plans through a Sullivan Renaissance Silver Feather Award and other sources for a newly-designed and updated Delaware River Access, Barryville cul-de-sac improvements with public art, improved eagle observation areas, and more. They collectively assure that residents and visitors make the most of opportunities to enjoy creativity and river appreciation in Highland



*Town of Highland scenes: River view from the NYS DEC Fishing Access and gazebo with interpretive panels in the Barryville cul-de-sac area adjacent to the interstate bridge. (Top photo by Shannon Cilento, bottom photo by Laurie Ramie)*

# Partnership Award ~ Callicoon Riverside Park

What happens when you put some of Sullivan County's brightest professionals and most dedicated community advocates together to envision a future for a defunct 40-acre riverside campground property?

The result is Callicoon Riverside Park, a multi-agency municipal project spearheaded by the Trust for Public Land (TPL), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Sullivan County, and the Town of Delaware.

This collaborative project earns UDC's 2021 Partnership Award. This initiative is creating a much-needed park and recreational area in the growing hamlet of Callicoon, Town of Delaware.

The design plans will transform the vacant property into a vibrant public facility with a half-mile of Delaware River frontage.

The creation of this park will not only provide new recreational opportunities and public river access, but will conserve and enhance the natural resources present at the site.

The future park property was purchased originally by TPL who led the project, and will be purchased back and operated as a County park when completed.

NYS DEC will be responsible for the implementation of the boat launch section, while the Town of Delaware will be relocating its nearby waste-



Park designs include features such as walking trails, a children's educational nature trail, a playground, a new river access with a trailered boat launch, a dog park, swimming area, meditative meadow, pavilions, a river overlook and wildlife viewing platforms, restroom facilities, parking areas, and stormwater retention features.

water treatment plant that is now in a floodplain to a more feasible location.

"Access to healthy recreational opportunities such as river-related activities is an important component in vacation plans and has contributed greatly to making the Town of Delaware more and more a magnet for tourists," Town of Delaware Supervisor Stephan Lundgren reflects.

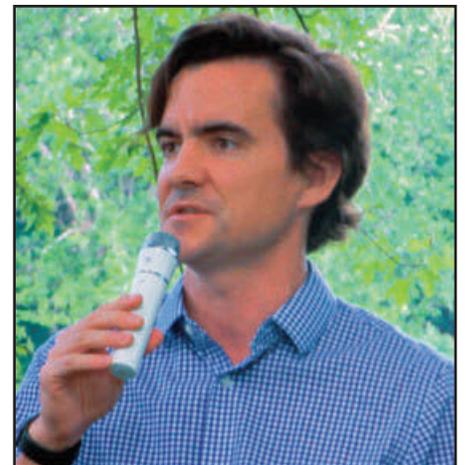
"The proposed new large County park along the Delaware River is within easy walking distance to the shops and restaurants in nearby Callicoon and is certain to become a

popular destination for both locals and visitors," he predicts. "We are honored to share this award with our partners. The Delaware River is one of our country's great natural resources, but for too long it has been hard to

access and, as a result, is relatively unknown. Thanks to a design process that engaged the community every step of the way, it's a park created for and by the people who make this place so special." "With Callicoon Riverside Park becoming a reality, residents of Sullivan County will have a new park to hang out with friends and family. And visitors will have another reason to visit Callicoon, boosting the tourism economy just a few hour's drive from the largest metro area in the United States," he says.



Contributed Photo by Freda Eisenberg, Sullivan County Commissioner of Planning and Community Development



Contact Project Director Francis O'Shea at (917) 710-5061 or Francis.OShea@tpl.org.

# Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award ~ Sparrowbush Engine Company



As beautiful and enjoyable the Upper Delaware River and New York State Route 97 Scenic Byway are, they can also be dangerous. Fortunately, the Sparrowbush Engine Company is well-prepared and willing to respond to every emergency call.

“Last year there was a motorcycle that hit the Hawk’s Nest wall and the rider flew over the wall and landed down toward the river. The volunteers manned the upper part of the Hawk’s Nest, while the river crew had to actually find the rider, rescue him from where he landed, and prepare him to be flown out by med-evac; surely not an easy rescue. Also this year, Sparrowbush volunteers had to handle the dump truck that hung precariously over the Hawk’s Nest wall, another fatal Hawk’s Nest motorcycle accident, a Corvette accident with two other vehicles, and just last weekend two river rescue/recoveries. I know our volunteers don’t seek praise when going out on calls at all hours, but they are always there when needed,” says Town of Deerpark UDC Representative and Deputy Supervisor David Dean.

The Sparrowbush Fire District covers 50 square miles in the Orange County Town of Deerpark, but the specialized teams of the Sparrowbush Engine Co. (SECO) get dispatched county-wide and beyond to the Hudson River for mutual aid as needed.

That includes the SECO Swift Water Rescue & Recovery Team, also known as the Dive Squad, and the High-Angle Technical Team which started operations around 1970 based on increased recreational use of the Delaware River. They are an outgrowth of the Sparrowbush Fire Department that was organized on April 24, 1917 with one hand-pulled chemical fire truck.

The best practices written protocols, certification regimens, and equipment have become far more sophisticated, of course.

“Volunteerism is very difficult these days. The training is extensive. You have to be prepared to go out at all different hours of the night and day in all sorts of conditions. It’s a lot of work but there is also excitement and camaraderie. When you save somebody’s life, that feels really good. When it goes wrong, you have to proceed forward and learn something from it if you can,” says SECO Deputy Chief and Safety Officer Jack Flynn, a 51-year fire department member, three-time past chief, airboat trainer, and Emergency Management director for the Town of Deerpark.

SECO fielded 157 calls in 2020. As of August 2021, they’ve already had 118, breaking down to approximately 52% fires, 26% medical, 11% motor vehicle accidents, and 11% rescues.

SECO developed its own training program to qualify volunteers to serve on its airboat which can be navigated over land and through the roughest river conditions. However, the best skills and equipment can’t overcome reckless human behavior.

“It’s so sad and unnecessary when people drown because they weren’t wearing life jackets,” Jack says.

The June 2020 incident with the motorcyclist ejected 200 feet over the Hawk’s Nest wall had a positive outcome for him when the airboat crew located the victim clinging to the jagged rock cliff, severely injured but alive. Four months later, SECO responded to a Hawk’s Nest call for a motorcyclist racing at 100 mph who violently hit the mountainside rockface. Ironically, the same survivor from June was sitting in the pull-off and narrowly escaped being hit by the shattered debris that fatally struck a bystander taking fall foliage photos.



*Sparrowbush Engine Company’s High-Angle Rescue Team in action at the New York State Route 97 Hawk’s Nest, and their 565-HP V8 airboat awaiting the next call. (Contributed Photos)*

# Distinguished Service Award ~ Kevin Reish

Starting his National Park Service (NPS) career at the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River in 1987, Kevin Reish came full circle after his 34 years of federal government service took him to many parts of the country to retiring from the Upper Delaware on May 31, 2021.

The Stroudsburg, PA area native's first NPS role after graduating from Paul Smith's College of Forestry in NY was as a seasonal interpretive ranger at UPDE through 1990.

He then headed to the Seasonal Law Enforcement Training Academy in North Carolina and worked for three seasons at Kingsley Plantation within the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve in Florida before receiving a permanent law enforcement position at UPDE in 1993.

Kevin graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Academy in Georgia and never stopped increasing and diversifying his skills.

He became UPDE's Health and Fitness coordinator, an American Canoe Association and American Red Cross Swiftwater Canoeing instructor, Department of the Interior Motorboat Operator instructor, trained in high-angle ice rescues, and served on the NPS Special Events Team and the All Risk Management Team which responds to national emergencies such as hurricanes.

He also provided security post-9/11 at potential terrorist target sites in Philadelphia and Boston, as well as for presidential details and at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics.

Collateral duty as a Wildland Fire Coordinator took him to nearly 40 literal hot spots as a firefighter, squad boss, sawyer, and security manager.

Kevin became UPDE's first Water Safety Program Manager in 2011.

Under his decade of leadership, the interdisciplinary team introduced new concepts such as researching causal factors, tracking demographics, installing Life Jacket Loaner Stations, and developing bilingual messaging.

The Water Safety Team won the national 2017 Achieving Relevance



**"If I were asked who I feel embodies and epitomizes what a National Park Ranger is, the answer would be simple: Kevin Reish. Kevin has poured his heart and soul into making sure that park visitors are safe, and the Delaware River is protected. From educating the public about water safety and the park's stories, to performing law enforcement duties, and performing boat patrols, Kevin did it all. Kevin's shoes will be hard to fill."**

~ Ingrid Peterec, Chief of Interpretation, NPS Upper Delaware (UPDE) Scenic and Recreational River

unteers, and his direct participation in two UDC Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award dramatic incidents in 2006 and 2018.

Noting that drowning is the #1 cause of unintentional visitor deaths throughout the National Park Service, Kevin diverted attention from discussing his post-retirement plans in a *Pocono Record* article by Kathryn Rubright to offer these warnings: "It's not a swimming pool. It's an open water environment. Don't swim alone. Don't swim across the river. Wear a life jacket. Nobody drowns with a life jacket on."

Kevin Reish's service to the Upper Delaware was distinguished, indeed.

Through Safety, Health & Wellness Award in recognition of their scientific, educational and practical multi-pronged approaches to reduce drowning fatalities.

Kevin did his part through his patrols, water safety partners' outreach, coordination with National Canoe Safety Patrol vol-

**"Along with the impact Kevin has had on countless visitors, the National Canoe Safety Patrol has benefited from Kevin's expertise and dedication in a myriad of ways. It has been an honor for us to work alongside him these many years, in some of the most challenging, life-saving situations. Kevin could be counted on for his generous balance of professionalism, steadiness, and a light touch to the moment, when it was needed most." ~ Marc Mangus-Sharpe, NCSP Commodore**



With roots as an interpretive ranger, Kevin was drafted to perform canal songs for fourth grade students participating in the National Park Service's annual D&H Canal Days at Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct. (Photo by Laurie Ramie, above contributed)