In This Issue...
This issue of *The Upper Delaware* features one of the strangest and most entertaining stories from our region's lumber rafting era. See page three for details.

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Most land along the Upper Delaware River is privately owned. Please don’t litter or trespass.

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Teacher Jean McMahon's seventh graders at Delaware Valley Central School near Callicoon practice using pH and dissolved oxygen test kits as part of a UDC-funded Water Quality Education Program. The students will use their new knowledge to monitor a stream on school property this spring. Photo by Lori McKean.

**Water Quality Education Program Launched in Schools**

The Upper Delaware Council and New York Audubon Society are working to add another "R" to education's basic three. In addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, some Upper Delaware Valley students are learning about a fourth "R"—the River.

A Technical Assistance Grant awarded to the Town of Delaware is helping to fund a 10-month pilot program run by New York Audubon at Delaware Valley Central School near Callicoon, NY. There, a group of enthusiastic seventh-graders are learning about water conservation, the Delaware River Watershed, nonpoint source pollution, water quality monitoring and the history, culture and natural resources of the Upper Delaware River Valley.

The lesson plans and materials will be compiled into a packet that any secondary education teacher in the watershed can duplicate for classroom use.

The program addresses one of the UDC's major goals outlined in its current five-year operating plan: "to develop and carry out an aggressive educational program...(with) one facet designed for school children."

Outgoing UDC Chairman Larry Richardson, Town of Cochecton Representative, championed education during his tenure as Chair during 1993. "We are very much in favor of any educational program that will heighten young people's awareness," he says. "We in the river valley want to protect the quality of life that we have here. We have to..."
Special Report

River Partnerships Subject of Conference

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will host a three-day conference on the direction of Pennsylvania’s river conservation initiatives into the next century. The conference will be held June 19-22 at the Harrisburg Hilton.

The Pennsylvania Rivers 2000 conference, with the theme “Building Partnerships for River Conservation,” will present technical and educational topics to guide interested individuals in river conservation strategies and objectives.

The conference will feature discussion on how business, industry, agricultural and community leaders can work together to enhance Pennsylvania’s river resources. Participants will review case studies of partnership efforts that have led to the conservation of rivers and river values.

The Upper Delaware: A Model for Success

Naturally, the Upper Delaware, one of the best examples anywhere of a partnership that works, will be featured at the conference, where UDC Executive Director Bill Douglass will make a presentation.

Conference attendees will be able to exchange ideas on the future of river conservation in focus groups on the final day of the conference.

The conference will be kicked off with an evening welcoming reception on June 19. For more information about the conference, call (814) 234-4272.

June 19-22, 1994
Hilton Hotel
Harrisburg, PA

To inspire a vision for the future of Pennsylvania’s rivers.

To highlight the contribution of rivers to the quality of life.

To conserve and restore Pennsylvania’s rivers through education, awareness and stewardship.

To develop partnerships among diverse interests to enhance Pennsylvania’s river resources.

Call: (814) 234-4272 To receive the conference brochure
River History

The Elephant in the River

In 1764 Daniel Skinner began a new regional industry by binding logs into rafts and maneuvering them down the Delaware River to markets in Philadelphia, and other river towns. For almost one hundred and sixty years men risked their lives to steer these huge vessels of pine or hemlock downstream on spring's high water or on summer storm “freshets.”

Many amazing stories and much folklore surround these raftsmen. But perhaps no true story is as bizarre as the tale of the elephant Tippoo Sahib’s encounter with two rafts while fording the river. The version of the story related here is excerpted from Mary Curtis’s publication “Rafting Tales—A Storyteller’s Collection,” published by the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance in 1983. The article first appeared in the December 13, 1910 edition of the Port Jervis Evening Gazette, and is based on the forty-year-old recollections of local residents.

There are several minor variations on this story. Sometimes the elephant’s name is Romeo, an elephant with another circus that likely visited the area. Sometimes the raftsmen stay on the raft and jab the elephant with poles. While there is no way of knowing the details of what happened on that day, many of the facts in this particular version of the story have been verified. Newspaper accounts from 1869 do mention an elephant-raft collision involving Tippoo Sahib. And we know that the elephant’s bones ended up near Richmond, Indiana, as the article states.

It is possible that an elephant-raft collision happened more than once. Traveling circuses were common in the latter half of the 1800s. Rafting on the Delaware was in its heyday during much of that time. Any animal fording the stream during the spring time, when most rafting occurred, would have had a good chance of encountering a passing raft.

The Van Amburgh show had exhibited at Port Jervis, N.Y., and was billed for Milford and other places down the Delaware in Pennsylvania. To get down there the show had to cross the Delaware at Port Jervis. There was a big wooden bridge and heavy loaded wagons were using it every day, and had been using it thus for years.

When they got Old Tip to the New York side of the bridge he gave one look at the structure, balked and trumpeted his decision not to risk his royal bulk on it so emphatically that they had to give up the idea of getting him over that way, and took him downstream to where the river was fordable, although there was a rafting freshet running at the time. I may say in passing that the big bridge tumbled into the river of its own weight and years only a couple of days after Old Tip’s refusal to go upon it.

The Upper Delaware
UDC News

UDC Hires Werkheiser

The Upper Delaware Council is pleased to announce that it has hired Karl L. Werkheiser as part-time bookkeeper. In this position, he will be responsible for tracking revenue and expenses and will work with Council members to develop and revise annual budgets.

Karl has extensive experience in the areas of financial and business services and served as Financial Administrator for Lafayette College, Northampton Community College, and Lehigh University.

Werkheiser is no stranger to planning issues, and has served on governing, planning, and environmental advisory boards for local governments. This interest in planning and the environment is one of the reasons he applied for the UDC position after he saw it advertised in local newspapers. Says Karl, “I moved to this area in 1989 and I’ve been reading about the Council’s activities ever since. What attracted me to this position is the opportunity to be involved with a group whose primary task is protecting a river.”

“I used to be a member of the Lehigh-Northampton Counties Joint Planning Commission, and on other planning boards. So planning has been in my background for quite a long time.”

For Karl, his new position is more than just a job—it’s a source of personal satisfaction. “Every time that the Council takes an action to improve or protect the river, I can feel some satisfaction that I’ve had some small part in that,” he notes. — KF

Survey Shows that Readers Like this Newsletter

We have tabulated the results from the survey conducted in our Spring, 1993 newsletter. Some 119 of our readers responded to our survey (a big thanks to every one of you). As promised, here’s a brief report on the results.

When asked to rate the newsletter overall, respondents were overwhelmingly positive. Over 92% of respondents rated the newsletter overall as “very good” or “good,” and 88% rated it as “very enjoyable” or “somewhat enjoyable.” Over 94% reported that the newsletter is “very informative” or “somewhat informative.”

Frankly, we were a bit flattered by the praise that came through in the written comments. “It’s a great little paper, very informative,” said one respondent. “We read it cover to cover,” wrote another. “A thorough and comprehensive newsletter that targets relevant information. Terrific educational information; excellent news that merits passing on to others as a model. Keep up the good work,” said another respondent, who often reprints The Upper Delaware articles in his own organization’s newsletter.

One thing that came through loud and clear, though, is that readers want to see more articles on history and the environment. Some 80% of respondents read these types of articles “always,” and only 35% think that we do a “very good” job of being informative about river history—by far the lowest rating we received in the entire survey. Some 45% did report that the newsletter is “somewhat informative” about history, which tells us that there is room for improvement here. You may have noticed that we have already started to respond to these statistics, boosting our coverage on history and the environment by including at least one feature article per issue, starting with the “Hole in the River” article (Summer, 1993).

We may do more surveys in the future to help us refine and improve the newsletter. Even without a survey, your comments on the newsletter are welcome any time—just call or write the Upper Delaware Council. — KF
Lackawaxen In Substantial Conformance

Good News for Both Residents and The River

At its November 4th meeting, the Council approved a resolution finding Lackawaxen Township, Pennsylvania to be in substantial conformance with the River Management Plan and Land and Water Use Guidelines. By way of letter received December 9, 1993, B.J. Griffin, Mid-Atlantic Regional Director of the National Park Service, concurred with the Council's review and recommendation.

The Tenth Town In

Lackawaxen becomes the tenth town/township in the river corridor to achieve such a determination. Only Berlin, Buckingham, and Manchester Townships in Wayne County, which are not participating members in the UDC, have been found not to be in substantial conformance. A determination has yet to be made for the Towns of Cochecton and Hancock.

Ms. Griffin states in her letter that "We commend the Upper Delaware Council and Lackawaxen Township for the thoroughness, diligence and sound judgment reflected in its review and recommendation. Efforts such as this confirm the valuable role of the Council in enhancing and protecting the special attributes of the Upper Delaware Valley for present and future generations."

Towns Enjoy Many Benefits

A town or township found to be in substantial conformance benefits in many ways.

When a town or township is in substantial conformance, land use decisions continue to be made at the local level, without interference by the National Park Service. This is especially true if the town or township participates in the Upper Delaware Council.

Local control is the hallmark of the township-developed River Management Plan, which seeks to protect a true national treasure—the Upper Delaware—through local action.

When your town or township is in substantial conformance, there is also the satisfaction of knowing that future development will be sensitive to the environment and the need to protect the River.

Also, in towns and townships that are in substantial conformance, the land acquisition authority of the Secretary of Interior is greatly reduced.

Making Partnership Work

David Soete, Resource Specialist with the UDC, comments, "Although the Council's reviews may seem to be long and drawn out, there is a good reason behind the process. This is a partnership, and it is better to establish a good working relationship and come to a consensus on various issues, than to be confrontational or make one party or the other feel like they are being forced into something. The most important thing is to conserve the resources. That is everyone's main goal. But you also have to allow for compatible economic development and growth. So far, we have been able to do all of these things successfully."

— DS
by sucking up water in his trunk and throwing it on the crowd of spectators, the contrary old elephant concluded to take the trip, and he went into the water and waded on toward the Pennsylvania shore. He had gone but a few steps, though, when he started with such a rush through the water that he almost drowned his keeper, who was in a row-boat. Old Tip had suddenly become mad all the way through.

He had got about half way across the river, trumpeting savagely at every step, when a raft hove in sight around the bank at the bridge. It was bearing directly down with its unsuspecting crew toward Tipoo Sahib and his escort.

The ugly old brute saw the raft and stopped and gazed at it in angry surprise. He was in a fighting mood. Waving his trunk and giving a blast that woke the echoes in the surrounding hills, he turned his front up stream and awaited the charge of the raft. All the efforts of his keeper and others in the escort to turn him out of the channel seemed only to increase his determination to have a bout with that thing coming down upon him.

An Unusual Obstruction

Before the men of the raft understood the situation, the raft had made more than half the distance between the bridge and the ford. As soon as the nature of this unusual obstruction in the channel became apparent to them, they were one and all panic-stricken, and every one of them, pilot and all, leaped from the raft and struck out for the New York side. The deserted raft rushed helplessly on. Old Tip never moved out of his tracks. His fury was a sight to see.

The raft was made of hemlock logs and was at least 100 feet long and 40 wide. The water was swift and so deep where Tip stood that it reached above his belly. Everyone expected of course to see the elephant, as big as he was, carried away and done for by the ponderous raft—the wrecking of a $10,000 elephant by $600 worth of hemlock logs.

But when the shock came the raft trembled and its speed was greatly diminished. If Old Tip could have had a secure footing on the stones there is not telling what he wouldn't have done to that raft then and there, but the stones on the river bottom were slippery, and the elephant moved down, not as if he had to, but as if he were merely seeking more stable footing.

He got a foothold now and then, and every time he did so lessen ed the speed of the raft until its momentum was so much overcome that the hind end of the raft began to swing with the current. This soon turned the hind end around so that it became the front end; and it ran away. When his keeper and the others in the escort to turn him out of the channel seemed only to increase his determination to have a bout with that thing coming down upon him.

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Epilogue

Old Tip's bones became part of a display at the Joseph Moore Museum in Earlham College's Lindley Hall. He was one of the largest elephants ever brought to this country, and so became a popular attraction in a museum that drew as many as 5,000 nonstudent visitors per year. In 1924 a fire at the museum badly damaged the bones, and they were eventually discarded.
How to Build a Timber Raft

These illustrations show the bow and pin method of raft construction as practiced in the 1850s. The top view shows a piece consisting of three platforms, coupled end to end. Large rafts were made by joining two or more pieces. Lash poles were pinned into place at either end of each platform. Bottom view is a cross section showing the method of pinning, by inserting a white oak bow (bottom, left) into holes drilled in a log on both sides of the lash pole. The lash pole was drawn down tight with square ash pins driven alongside the ends into the holes (bottom, right). The side view shows heavy oars, balanced and secured to head blocks with oar pins. The end view shows the method of securing head blocks to logs by pinning the center hole pin and two wooden side pins.

Both logs and cut lumber were rafted on the Delaware. Sometimes rafts also carried hemlock bark or local bluestone as cargo.

This illustration is reprinted from Rafting on the Delaware, published in 1967 by the New Jersey Agricultural Society. The sketch, by J.D. Tonkin, first appeared in The Last Raft, Harrisburg, 1940.
The UDC Banquet Set for Saturday, March 19

We've had months of short days, long nights, cold weather and slushy roads. Don't let 'em get you down! Shake those late winter blues, and break out the new dress or that fancy tie 'cause it's time for the Council's annual awards banquet.

This banquet has turned into one of our region's major annual events, and for good reason. It's always fun, the food is fine, the company's great, and there's nothing better than spending an evening honoring friends and neighbors who have worked hard to make our valley a better place to live, work and play.

This year, the banquet will be held at the club at Villa Roma resort near Callicoon, New York, on Saturday, March 19, at 6:00 PM. The guest speaker is U.S. Congressman Maurice Hinchey (NY). For reservations call the Upper Delaware Council at (914) 252-3022, or write us at P.O. Box 217, Narrowsburg, New York, 12764. Please make reservations by March 11. Space is limited, so please make your reservations soon!

(“Education,” continued from page 1)

teach the children to be the stewards of the land.”

“Hands-On” Projects Stressed
Lori McKean of New York Audubon designed the program to keep students' interest by using many “hands-on” projects. Says McKean, “Students will conduct home water-use audits and recommend ways to cut down on water use in the school. They will adopt a stream that runs through school property and conduct water quality monitoring tests for pH, dissolved oxygen, and macroinvertebrates. In addition, the students will learn about the Delaware Watershed and how their actions can affect water quality.”

Students also will gain an appreciation for some of the Upper Delaware Valley’s historical and cultural resources, such as the Roebling Bridge and Zane Grey Museum, and for its natural resources, including rare plants, animals and birds.

According to McKean, the program’s content is specifically geared towards the Upper Delaware River Valley. “This is not a generic program about water conservation and water quality,” says McKean. “Rather, it introduces students to the distinct qualities of the Upper Delaware River valley.”

Learning for Life
“This is information these students can use in their everyday lives,” says McKean. “It covers everything from how to save water at home to how to avoid polluting a tributary. It exposes them to some of the River Valley’s natural and cultural resources. Most importantly, these kids will gain an appreciation for how their actions can affect these resources. This is something they can carry with them forever.”

McKean wanted to design a program for schools because she feels that working with youth is an important, but often overlooked, part of environmental planning. “These kids are our future politicians, planning board members, concerned citizens and caretakers of the land,” says McKean. “This is the perfect time, and they are at the perfect age to foster an appreciation of this precious natural resource.”

The UDC meets on the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm in the Tusten Town Hall in Narrowsburg, NY. Committees meet on the third and fourth Tuesdays of every month at the UDC office on Bridge Street, across from the Town Hall. Call the UDC at (914) 252-3022 for further information.

Upper Delaware Council
P.O. Box 217
Narrowsburg, NY 12764

Address Correction Requested