

The Upper Delaware

The quarterly newsletter about the environment and people of the Upper Delaware River

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Summer/Fall



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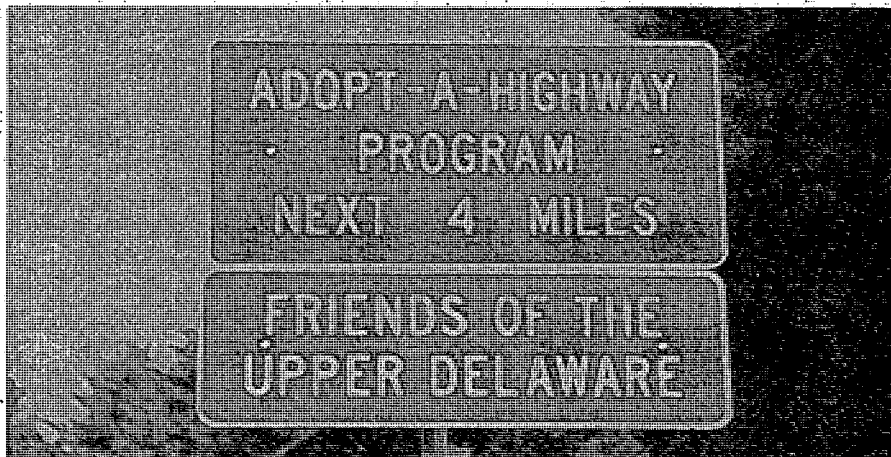
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animal you saw????

Most land along the
Upper Delaware River is
privately owned. Please be
considerate and don't litter
or trespass. Thank you.



The first of its kind! This Friends of the Upper Delaware sign can be seen on NYS Route 97 in Cocheton. If you spot another one in your travels, take a picture and send it to us (be sure to write the location on the back!).

Friends of the Upper Delaware Reorganizing with New Activities

Are you a Friend of the Upper Delaware?

Would you like to have fun, meet new people, learn about the area in which you live (or escape to) and discover why the Delaware is considered by many to be the finest river in the world?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, then you want to join the Friends of the Upper Delaware—the only FREE volunteer organization (that we know of!) on the river that lets you tailor your volunteer activities to your own community!

Several years ago, the Friends was conceived by the UDC as a group who would undertake the Adopt-a-Highway and Adopt-a-Stream programs in the river corridor. For whatever reason, the group as a whole has been somewhat inactive for the past few years—although individual members have been quietly going about the Friends' business on their own.

So, during this past summer, former Friends were surveyed to find

out the level of interest in reviving this volunteer group, and to determine where peoples' interest lay.

As it turns out, interest is very high—and is highest in a number of surprising areas! First, nearly everybody is in favor of having a quarterly newsletter devoted entirely to the Friends and to their activities up and down the river corridor. In addition, quarterly meetings were favored by a good portion of the respondents, providing there was something worthwhile going on like an educational speaker, an informative demonstration or training session, or something along those lines.

Second, the Adopt-a-Stream and Adopt-a-Highway programs remained very popular, with most people feeling that a once or twice a

River Ramblings...

Driving to work on these lovely, foggy Fall mornings, I find myself smiling every time I see or pass a school bus. I look at the kids waiting for their ride by the side of the road...books, knapsacks, and lunch bags scattered on the ground, moms standing by sipping coffee while keeping a watchful eye on the goings-on...and I marvel that nothing seems to have changed since my own daughter waited to board the bus. The kids look the same, the clothes and the hairstyles look the same—even the moms look pretty much the same as I did not so many years ago.

It's comforting to know that, amid the recessions and depressions, the wars and the peace, and the ever-increasing price of coffee and gasoline, some things will always remain the same.

Take kids, for instance. No matter how you feel about them—no matter if you have kids of your own or not—one thing is certain. The kids of today are the adults of tomorrow. They hold your future and my future in their sometimes grubby little hands...and they hold the key to the future of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River as well.

That's why I was especially surprised to learn, first in chatting with Lori McKean of the NY Audubon Society, and later in talking to kids of all ages at river festivals up and down the valley this summer, that many of the youngsters who live in the corridor had never been down to the river!

Oh, they knew it was there. And they were aware that people came to fish, camp, hunt and canoe...but they themselves had never been canoeing. Or fishing. Or hunting, hiking, camping, tubing, swimming—in short, they had never been introduced to the river at all.

They had no idea that eagles nested here...or that eels swam gracefully through the rocks...no inkling of the rich history of the region, or its importance to the growth and prosperity of this country. More than a few were greatly surprised to learn about the Zane Grey House, the Roebling Bridge, and the Minisink Battleground.

People, listen up! If you care about the future of the river valley, then teach a kid to fish. My own daughter learned to fish because neighbors and family friends included her when they went. She is now nineteen, and an enthusiastic angler, who not only understands the mechanics of fishing, but also appreciates the quiet times she spends standing knee-deep (or higher) in the waters of the Delaware, surrounded by the sights and the sounds that many of us take for granted.

Or take a kid canoeing. Or on an eagle hike. Or camping. Do something to show a youngster why it's important to keep the Delaware clean and free-flowing. While you're at it, you'll be teaching a child to respect both the rights of nature and the rights of people; showing them *by your example* how to enjoy—but not destroy—this beautiful region in which we live.

People tend to preserve and protect that which they love. Those of us who are committed to conserving the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, and protecting this national treasure should never lose sight of that fact...or of the fact that it is up to us to help foster a love of the Upper Delaware in the youngsters we know, because we are the only ones who can.

After all, someone, at some time, introduced you to canoeing, to fishing, to any one of a number of enjoyable activities here in the valley—and helped instill in you a deep and abiding love and respect for this area. Think about it. Don't you owe it to yourself, and to future generations, to pass on this priceless heritage?

Do you have an airplane?
Would you be willing to donate
an hour or so of flight time so we
could get some aerial photos of the river
for future use?
If so, call Nancie at the UDC!

Upper Delaware Council

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The Upper Delaware is the free quarterly publication of the Upper Delaware Council, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization comprised of member governments from New York and Pennsylvania directly affected by the River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

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UDC Grant Awards Total \$23,500 and Counting in 1994

To help further the goals and objectives of the River Management Plan, the Upper Delaware Council has awarded Technical Assistance Grants to the following member towns and townships for fiscal year 1994:

- Town of Lumberland, NY \$6,700.00** to help fund an Elementary School Water Conservation Education Program being developed in cooperation with the school district.
- Shohola Township, PA \$2,500.00** to update the township's Comprehensive Plan.
- Town of Delaware, NY \$2,450.00** to update the town Master Plan and amend the town's zoning and subdivision laws.
- Town of Highland, NY \$3,350.00** to help fund a Bird Identification Guide for the river corridor.
- Town of Lumberland, NY \$500.00** for a feasibility study of the New York State Scenic Highway Program and its applicability to NYS Route 97 in the river corridor.
- Lackawaxen Township, PA \$2000.00** to help fund an inspection of the railroad infrastructure located in the township to determine its condition and define what action should be recommended to the rail road in the interest of community and environmental safety.
- Town of Highland, NY \$3,000.00** to help fund a Bald Eagle Education Program and Brochure being developed by the NY Audubon Society and produced in conjunction with the NPS.
- Town of Lumberland, NY \$3000.00** to prepare a bicycling guide and map for the towns of Tusten, Highland and Lumberland.

In addition, a grant request in the amount of \$1,500 is still pending at press time for the Town of Fremont, NY to fund a feasibility study for a new Long Eddy water system.

Since 1988, the UDC has awarded more than \$300,000 in technical assistance grants to various organizations through member towns and townships, providing necessary funding for more than four dozen civic, educational and community projects. Nonmember towns/townships are not eligible for UDC Technical Assistance Grants.

For more information about how your group, organization, town or township can qualify for a UDC grant in 1995, contact the UDC office, 211 Bridge Street, P.O. Box 217, Narrowsburg, NY 12764, (914) 252-3022.

THE STRAND.

WHAT IS IT...WHO OWNS IT...AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

UDC holds meeting to open dialogue.

To many people, the strand is nothing more than the name of an old movie theatre, or perhaps a line dance from the 1950s. But, according to Webster, the strand is ... "the land bordering a body of water; a beach; the shore."

Sounds simple enough...and with a tidal body of water, it is. The strand is that area between the high tide (or high water-mark), and the low tide (or low water) mark.

But now, take a look at the Upper Delaware River. What with the rise and fall of the river due to reservoir releases, the strand or foreshore can appear and disappear. So, just what constitutes the high and low water marks—and when should those marks be determined? Before the reservoirs were built? At the 500 year, or 100 year—or several times a year—flood plain? At today's level—or tomorrow's?

Some feel that the strand runs to the top of the bank, but not everyone agrees as to just where the top of the bank starts. At the grass? At some arbitrarily-determined boundary? At the top of the ridge? If you're scratching your head right now, and wondering just how this issue can ever be settled, you're not alone.

The strand controversy has simmered for years

—occasionally flaring up into nasty confrontations, and always sparking lively debate. Old deeds, reaching back to Colonial times and the Hardenberg, Minisink and Waywanda Patents, grant certain rights to the owners of land bordering, or running underneath, the river. The State of New York and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania each have their own determinations of who owns what, and what kinds of activities are allowed on strand ground.

Of particular importance to the Upper Delaware Council is determining what exactly are the rights of the private landowner along the river. However, at the same time, the UDC is concerned, too, with the rights of canoeists, anglers, rafters, tubers, and other river aficionados.

For instance, can you as a recreationist stand on the banks of the river? Can you camp or build a campfire? If there is no clear determination of what constitutes the strand and who owns it, then you cannot be sure what your rights are. That is why, on September 30th, the UDC hosted a meeting among representatives from the Council, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the

---"Strand" continued on page 7---

(Not) Going Overboard

It was a normal day on the Upper Delaware River. Conditions weren't rough, and an average amount of water was flowing down Skinners Falls. Still, a canoe flipped, and a young boy washed down the river and found himself caught under a boat which was pinned by a rock.

What could have been a tragedy instead turned quickly into a well-executed rescue by staff of the National Canoe Safety Patrol, who spotted the boy in trouble and saved him. One member swam out to the child, extricated him from underneath the boat and stabilized him, while another member threw out a line of rope to bring the pair to shore.

Chris Nielsen observed the dramatic rescue from the shore. As a founding member of the patrol, he too has helped bring in many inexperienced canoeists who suddenly find themselves in trouble on the white water of the Upper Delaware River. Those memories are why he is on the river nearly every weekend of the canoe season.

"People come out of New York City and Philadelphia looking for a weekend away doing something different," says Nielsen, 67, the patrol's vice president. "They get involved in



something they really don't know about and are not aware of the skills needed."

Nielsen speaks from experience. He first paddled a canoe in 1973, and early on, he learned there was a lot more to canoeing than he thought. So, he joined a canoe club and bought the right equipment before taking his two sons out on the water.

"I got involved in canoeing like a lot of people do things—just to get my kids away from the TV," he says.

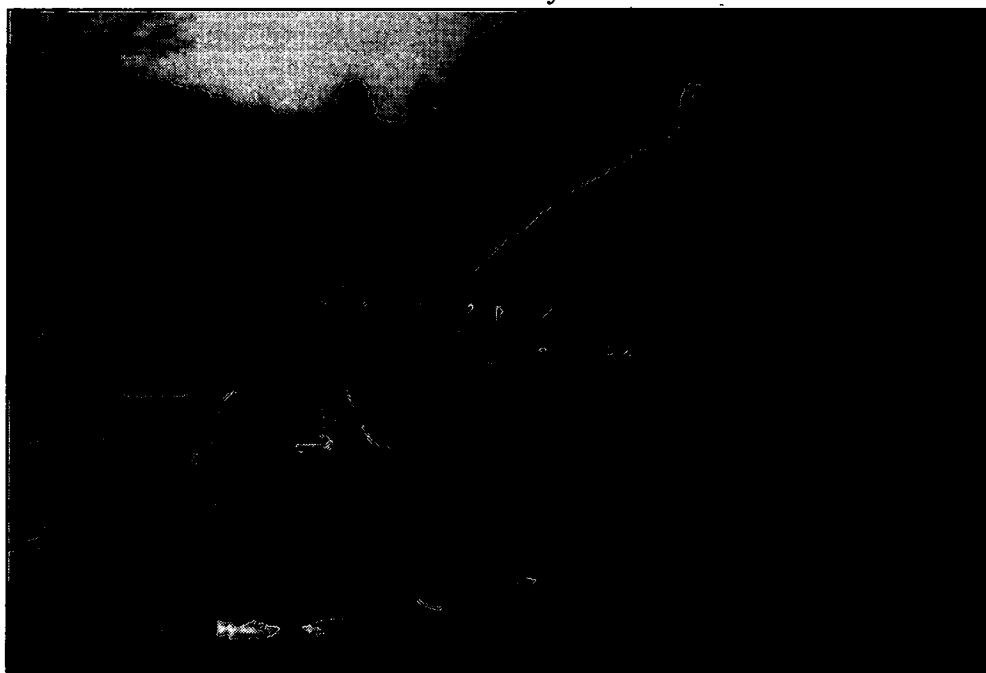
It worked. The Nielsen family became avid canoeists, and 20 years later Chris still finds himself in a canoe on all but the coldest weekends, paddling about 1,000 miles a year on rivers from New York to Virginia, and especially on the Upper Delaware. "It's been a way to meet an awful lot of nice people over the years and a great way to see the scenery," says Nielsen.

Helping Novice Canoeists

Nielsen turned his attention to helping novice canoeists in 1977 as an instructor with a pilot program run by the Mohawk Canoe Club on the lower Delaware River in Lambertville, NJ. The program was an immediate success.

"There was a lot of inexperienced use of canoes," Nielsen recalls. As the number of people on the water rose, club members initiated a volunteer safety patrol as a way to discourage government intervention in the sport. "We were concerned regulation might shut down the river for us if we didn't do something to police it ourselves."

In 1978, the patrol shifted its locale to the more crowded Upper Delaware (soon to be designated a



Scenic and Recreational River), and formed the National Canoe Safety Patrol, based at Skinners Falls.

The Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is "the largest stretch of the wild and scenic river system administered by the Park Service on the East Coast," according to John Hutzky, the National Park Service superintendent. The total area covers 73.4 miles of river from Hancock, NY to Mill Rift, PA. In 1993, more than 260,000 people visited the area, and about 187,000 (or more than 70%) of them went boating, canoeing, rafting and tubing on the river's pristine waters.

Skinners Falls, one of several Class II rapids on the Upper Delaware, is a popular spot for canoeists and, therefore, for the National

hours on the river, providing services that would have cost more than \$543,000 if the Park Service had to use paid rangers to do the work.

The patrol officially linked up with the Park Service and their VIP (Volunteers in Park program) in 1980—and today they are the only volunteers on the river sporting jaunty yellow hats (other VIPs wear green). In that first year, there were nine drownings on the Upper Delaware River. By 1985, that number had dropped to zero. In years when fatalities did occur, most can be attributed to swimming—rather than canoeing—accidents. Hutzky attributes the drop in fatalities in large part to the patrol. "Undoubtedly, they have probably saved many more lives that may have been lost as a result of

lene rope—which are used alone or tied together if the imperiled canoeist is far from shore.

"It's quite effective and gets right out to people," says Nielson. "We pull in a lot of people with those."

Sometimes patrol members must swim out to the endangered boaters, stabilizing victims by instructing them to lie calmly on their backs and hold onto the rope while being pulled to safety. Once the canoeists are ashore, the patrol also rounds up the errant boat and gear.

When not cruising the Upper Delaware—the only river where the volunteers formally patrol—some of the members volunteer their rescue skills at prominent white water races including the Olympic trials on the Savage River in western Maryland, World Cup races and the well-known white water slalom races on the Tohickon in Point Pleasant, PA.

Preventing Injury

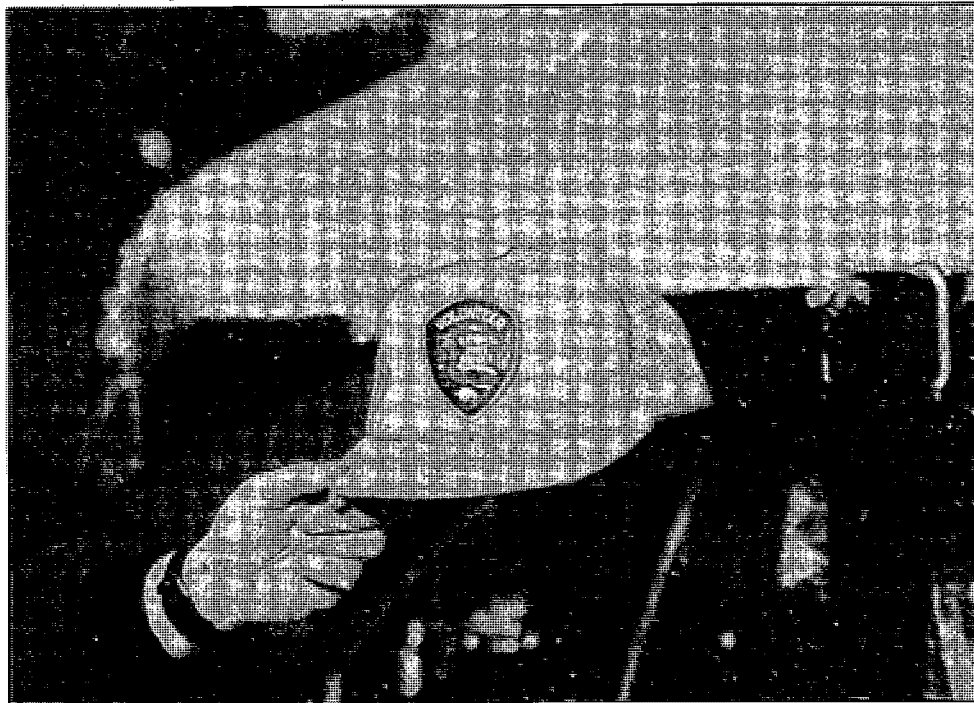
On the Delaware, the patrol has found that inexperience is what leads to most accidents. Not knowing the basic paddling techniques or how to sit in a canoe is "like someone going to a ski area and trying to go down hill without knowing what to do," says Nielsen.

The patrol found a long time ago that the best time for them to instruct people on some of canoeing basics and safety tips is after their first day on the river. (All 22 canoe liveries licensed by the Park Service on the Delaware must provide safety orientation on canoeing and rafting to participants before they take off on the water.)

Patrol volunteers go around to the area's campgrounds to tell the first-day canoeists what they saw them doing wrong, and, in a nice way, give them pointers for the next day out. Just about all, says Nielson, are receptive. "They had to get involved to realize they needed more information," he adds.

It only takes about 15 to 20

---"Canoe" continued on page 7---



Canoe Safety Patrol. The rapids, with rushing waters, hidden rocks and other obstacles, does not provide a straight run through but rather requires canoeists to maneuver from side to side for a successful run.

Hutzky is convinced that lives have been saved by Nielsen and other devoted patrol members, who number between 70 and 90 and last year contributed 2,240 volunteer hours in peak-season weekends. Hutzky estimates that since the volunteer program began, patrol members have put in more than 66,000

their not being here," Hutzky says.

Training for the Rescue

The patrol members train annually to reinforce their rescue skills as well as their knowledge of CPR and first aid before the canoe season, which runs from April through October. For most of their rescues, rope is used to pull overboard boaters to shore.

"We use rope extensively," says Nielson. "Throwrope bags"—60-foot white, highly-visible polypropy-

THE PRINCE AND THE RIVER

A fable for our times...

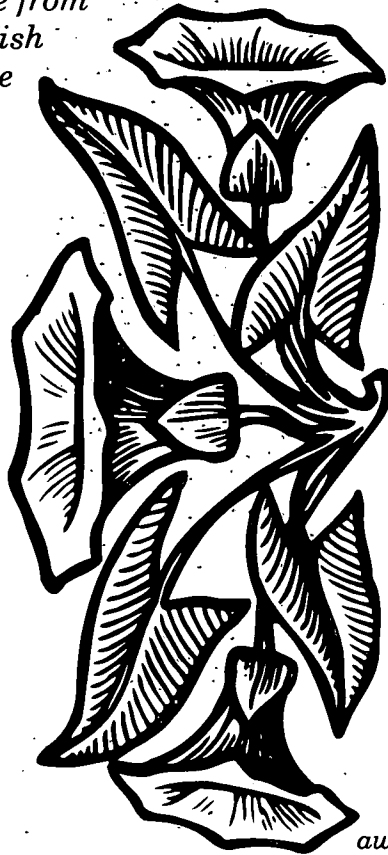
Once upon a time, in a country far, far away, there was a peaceful, little valley with a beautiful, crystal clear river flowing through it. Birds of every size and color lived in the leafy branches of the many trees that rose from the banks of the rippling river. Fish thrived in the cool waters of the river, shaded from the hot rays of the sun. All along the banks of the river, wildflowers grew and insects buzzed as they busily went about their business. Butterflies flitted through the golden sunbeams, and beavers, squirrels, deer...even panthers and bears...lived in harmony with each other, and with the river.

One summer day, a handsome prince from over the mountain happened upon the peaceful valley. "Gadzooks!" He exclaimed when he saw the river, and the trees and the flowers and all of the birds and animals. "What a sweet spot this is! And how fortunate it is for me that I found it!"

The prince, as it turns out, had been searching high and low for a place to build his castle. He decided on a glen set back from the water. In the fall of the year, he brought in his royal contractors and set them to work. In no time, a cedar-sided bi-level castle, replete with skylights and a wrap-around deck rose in the glen. The animals looked on in amazement, but were not concerned, because the prince's castle was situated well-back from the river bank, so the trees, flowers and grasses along the water's edge were not disturbed. The river continued to run clear and sweet and cold, and all was happy in the valley.

When the castle was complete, and the first hint of spring was in the air, the prince brought his fair princess to see his estate. She immediately fell in love with the valley, and decided she wanted to live there always...

Meanwhile, many of the prince's subjects had decided that they, too, would build their houses in the valley. All up and down the river, every manner of castle, home and hut sprang up. All sat well back from the river bank, just like the prince's castle.



One warm evening in late spring, as the happy royal couple sat out on their deck, watching the sun set, sipping on iced cappuccino and remarking once again on the loveliness of their valley, the princess looked out towards the river—and suddenly shrieked!

"The river! Where is the river! I can't see it! The new leaves are blocking my view!"

Alas, the trees in all their leafy splendor were in the way. So the prince called his workmen back and instructed them to cut down every tree that was in the way so that the princess could see the water. Up and down the river valley, the prince's subjects did likewise until less than half of the original trees remained along the river bank.

No one seemed to care that the trees were gone...Except for the birds, who flew away in search of new homes, never again to return to the valley... And the fish, accustomed to swimming in the tree-shaded river, who swam off in search of cooler waters...And the bears and raccoons and other predators who fed on the fish and the birds, who abandoned their burrows and nests and went off in search of food.

Soon the summer days lengthened into autumn and the air grew chilly and cold. The leaves on the remaining trees turned copper and gold and brilliant red, then fell to the ground. But the prince did not like to rake leaves, so he ordered the rest of the trees cut down. His subjects, thinking that the prince had a "splendid" idea, likewise cut the remainder of their trees down, too.

When spring came once again, the rains washed

the dirt from the river bank into the river, making the water brown and murky. The few fish left in the river either died or swam off in search of clean water. The birds and animals had already retreated from the river bank before the first frost last winter, once the protective cover of trees was gone. And the spring flowers, which had once bloomed along the banks of the river, were washed away with the top soil.

The princess stood on her deck and surveyed the valley. "Ugh," she moaned. "All these people have built houses in this beautiful valley, and now it looks awful! The birds and the flowers are gone and I no longer like it here." She turned to the prince. "Let's find another spot on the river that hasn't been spoiled by others, and we'll build a new dream castle there!" The prince agreed, and the two rode off into the sunset in search of a new valley, with no understanding as to why their first dream castle had turned into such a nightmare....

This may sound like a fairy tale—but it's not. The riparian zone—or that area of land that separates the river in its bed from the main body of land—is a fragile and complex ecosystem that must be maintained to adequately protect the river it borders. Those who are fortunate enough to own a portion of the riverbank or streambank should bear in mind that they are the vital custodians of a scarce and important resource.

Trees and shrubs stabilize erosion and provide habitats for food and wildlife. At the same time, this growth filters out nutrients from ground (and below-ground) water flows and provides escape cover and shade for wildlife and fish. Riverbank vegetation retains the natural beauty of the river corridor by screening development so that residents and river travelers alike can enjoy beautiful, unspoiled views. Once the riparian zone is destroyed, it takes years—even decades—for it to grow back. And the effects on the river and its environs can be disastrous.

However, this does not mean that you as a landowner have no rights when it comes to what you can and cannot do on the riverbank that you own. Water quality, wildlife habitats and scenic beauty can actually be improved through selective pruning and thinning of trees and by additional plantings of native grasses, sedges, rushes, shrubs and trees. And the River Management Plan allows for sensible cutting of wood and vegetation.

The River Management Plan also allows for building, growth and economic development within the river corridor, and indeed, encourages sensible and reasonable growth through cooperative zoning and voluntary conformance. For the citizens and taxpayers in townships like Lackawaxen, Shohola and Westfall in Pennsylvania, and towns from Hancock to Deerpark in New York, this means that their tax base can grow while at the same time the river that runs through them can continue to remain as clean and as pure as it is today.

For more information about what you can do to conserve the riparian zone on the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River contact the UDC, the NPS, or your local USDA Soil Conservation Service.

Many thanks to Dave Soete, Resource Specialist for the Upper Delaware Council, for initiating an article on the riparian zone, and to Angus Ross, Chief of Resource Management for the National Park Service for his valuable input and assistance. Additional information was supplied by Jim Mays, Pennsylvania Scenic Rivers Program Coordinator.

Strand continued from page 3—
State of New York, the National Park Service and other invited parties to begin to reach a workable determination and mutually agreeable solution to this important issue. It is hoped that, by bringing all parties together at the UDC's negotiating table, a consensus can be reached that is equitable to all, and, perhaps most importantly, easy to facilitate and enforce. We will keep you informed of the progress being made in future issues of *The Upper Delaware*.

Canoe continued from page 5—
minutes to impart some of the basics needed not to get hurt. Advice on how to keep the boat pointed downstream, and warning that canoeists should always wear life jackets and kneel in a boat, not sit, are included in those brief talks. Patrol members also illustrate basic paddling techniques to go forward, stop, move to the side and slow down.
With several thousand canoes rented on the Upper Delaware on a summer weekend, Nielsen knows the patrol's work is important and that he could be busy for a long time to come. "There are an awful lot of people out there who just don't understand what they're doing, and we're here to help."
This article, written by Dory Devlin for *New Jersey Outdoors*, Summer 1994 edition, appears here with the magazine's permission, for which we are grateful. Photos are courtesy of the UDC photo file. For more information about the National Canoe Safety Patrol, contact District Ranger Mike Rueber at the NPS South District Station, Shohola, PA. Phone (717) 559-7527.



**Summer
Picnic
Highlights!**

CONGRATULATIONS!

Many thanks to all those who correctly identified the young man in last issue's "Who's This Guy?" contest. For those of you who just couldn't place the face, the fishing lad was George Frosch, UDC Representative from the Town of Hancock. Shiny, brand new Friend of the Upper Delaware bumper stickers were awarded to Barbara Yeaman, Callie Brunelli, David Hulse, Carla Hahn, Harry Gerega, Eleanor Keesler, Peter Rossi, Richard Cramer, Norma Johnson, Bob Campis, and Beverly Cicio.

More Kudos for Dave Soete!

Dave Soete, Resource Specialist for the UDC, added to his list of photography awards recently when he captured Best of Category (Scenic) and Best of Show at the PA Rivers 2000 Conference Photography Contest held this past June. Dave's photo of the Masthope Creek in Lackawaxen, PA (see photo at right) can be viewed in full color at the UDC office along with his award plaques and blue ribbon.

Because he captured first prize, Dave was asked to submit a selection of slides of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. One of these will *definitely* be used on a poster in 1995. We'll let you know when they're available and tell you how you can get a copy as soon as we know all the details. Meanwhile, "Way to go, Dave!"



UDC Summer Picnic Highlights

The UDC Annual Summer Picnic and River Trip featured good times, good food, and great weather. Held upriver at the Equinunk Fire Hall, attendees were treated to a choice of activities that included a walking tour of Equinunk guided by local historian Wellington Lester, or a lazy raft trip down the Delaware from Buckingham to Lordville.

Reviews of the walking tour were enthusiastic, and even long-time residents of the area said they learned something new from Lester and his lively narrative. River rafters were treated to an eagle sighting and were escorted most of the way by a Great Blue Heron who bounced along in front of the flotilla.

The chicken barbecue, put on by Bonnie Davis and her crew from Kelly's Korners Katering, was enjoyed by all, and the weather proved to be most cooperative, too. Even though it stormed in Honesdale, the skies over Equinunk remained blue and dry until the last of the picnickers got in their cars and headed for home.

If you joined us this year, thanks for your support of this popular Council activity. If you didn't, we hope to see you next year. In any event, we hope you will take a few minutes and complete the short questionnaire below and return it to Nancie at the Council Office at your earliest convenience. Your input will help us plan an even better 1995 summer outing!

-Clip and Mail Today!-

1. Did you attend the 1994 UDC Summer Picnic?

Yes No

If you checked "No," why not? (Check as many as apply)

- Too far away Too expensive
 Too boring Too late in the summer
 Didn't know about it Had other plans
 Other _____

2. Whether or not you attended this year's picnic, what activities would you like to see featured next year?

(Check 3)

- Canoeing Rafting
 Softball Game Volleyball Game
 Road rally Dancing
 Talent Show Bird watching
 Nature Hike Walking Tour
 Other _____

3. Would you like to see a different format, (i.e., wine and cheese party, brunch, "lunch on an island," moonlight picnic) instead of a chicken barbecue, and if so, what would you like to see?

- No, I like the barbecue format.
 Yes, why not try a _____

4. What part of the river would you like to canoe or raft next?

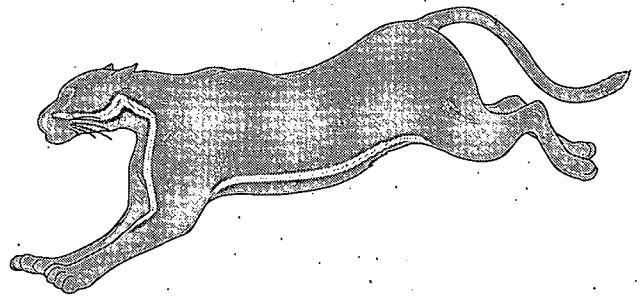
5. Any other comments and suggestions for next year?

Thanks for your input. Clip and mail this form to Nancie Robertson at the Upper Delaware Council, P.O. Box 217, Narrowsburg, NY 12764. And remember: **WE WANT TO SEE YOU AT NEXT YEAR'S PICNIC!**

Cat Tales

Cougar. Puma. Mountain Lion. Panther.

Call them what you will...but a cat by any other name would still cause quite a stir!



For more years than anyone cares to remember, authorities have been denying the existence of "big cats" in and around the Upper Delaware River corridor, and indeed in the entire eastern part of the United States.

Yet mountain lion sightings have become increasingly common in the East, and surprisingly, a large number of sightings have been reported in the Hancock, NY area up to around the Cannonsville Reservoir, and even as far south as Pike County, PA.

Roger Cowburn is the Eastern Puma Research Network (EPRN) representative for northern PA and southern NY. According to him, the Eastern Puma (a.k.a. mountain lion, cougar, and panther) really does exist.

"You bet they do," Roger is quoted in an article that appeared in the January 1993 edition of *The Trapper and Predator Caller*. The EPRN has recorded upwards of 567 sightings in just one year alone. "We investigate these reports very closely...question people hard, even try to trick them up. But the stories are very consistent. When they all describe a long tailed, long-bodied cat with a small head and pointed ears, it's obvious they saw a puma.

"Many of these people have excellent reputations and nothing to gain from saying they saw a cat. In fact most are reluctant to talk about it at all for fear of being laughed at. It's like claiming you saw Bigfoot, or a UFO."

"...No doubt in my mind..."

George Frosch, UDC Representative from the Town of Hancock, NY, agrees with Cowburn. "I saw a big cat on my property on the 24th of March," Frosch told us. "People viewed my statements skeptically, so I'm going around trying to collect other peoples' recollections of

what they saw and when."

Here's what George found out when he put out some initial feelers:

In April of last year, Greg Konchar, who lives in Montana, but was back home for the summer at his house in Cadosia, NY saw "...a big black cat come out of the woods. It had a big long tail and walked just like a mountain lion. It was pretty obvious what it was."

According to Konchar, the cat was about 3-1/2 to 4 feet long and weighed about 75-85 pounds. "The tail was about 3 feet long—maybe longer. It was curled up in the back ...I saw him for about a minute and half. I was about a hundred yards away, so I had a real good view of him. He came to, within 75 yards of me...crawled under a fence and went back into the woods."

"I know what a mountain lion looks like, because I've been in the west," Konchar told Frosch as he showed him where he first saw the cat. "This was catlike, and there's no doubt in my mind that it was a panther."

"Hard to Believe!"

Frank Brown and his wife, Pat, of Hancock, NY told Frosch about their sighting in September of 1993 while driving on the Boucheaubrook Road about a mile from NYS Route 97. "A cat suddenly jumped from the lake side of the road in front of our truck, then jumped from there into the woods. The cat was approximately the same size as our fully-grown black Lab. It was tan in color with heavy legs and big paws. It had a long, slim tail with a slight curl at the end of it. It appeared to us to be a cougar."

With Frank and Pat in the truck at the time was Frank's sister and Frank and Pat's son. "Each of us saw it distinctly and...to us it was a definite thing that it had to be

a cougar.

"Comparing it to my dog," Frank went on, "I'd say it weighed about 70 pounds, maybe more because of the heavy size of the legs. That's basically what we saw. Hard to believe."

When asked if he reported the sighting to anyone, Brown grinned. "During deer season I talked to two Conservation Officers about it. One of them was a Lieutenant and he told me, 'No we didn't see a cougar, because there aren't any around here.'

"I laughed to myself because I've been hunting in this area since I was a young boy and I'm 54 years old. I'm a retired Police Officer, I was in the Police Department for 21 years, and I'm pretty sure what I saw."

Kim Speziale saw a cat on the Lordville Road on her way home from the Roscoe Diner towards the end of deer hunting season last year. "I was on the road about 11:30 at night and I saw a beige colored mountain lion run across the road. It looked like a long German Shepherd stretched out. It was pretty large but it was real fast, and by the time I pulled over it was long gone. I honestly think it was a panther which I'm told aren't in the area any more.

Other people have told Kim about sightings, too. "Up on the mountain near Boucheauville, there's a pond that was man-made, and an older gentleman and his daughter and dog were walking and they saw a big black cat coming out of the pond. The dog ran up to it. The thing took one swat at it and the dog got scared and ran away. They had a video camera, but they didn't have the lens cover off, so they missed the whole thing, but they said it was pretty wild!"

"Definitely not a bobcat!"

Clair Keerl was jogging on

the Boucheauville Road about three years ago around 6:00 or 6:30 on a hot summer evening. "Just as I got to Camp Delaware I stopped because I saw an animal move slowly out into the road. It stopped in the middle of the road, and then it moved on.

"It was really beautiful...very graceful, and tan in color, with a long body and a long tail and a small head. Its tail was probably as long as its body, and it was very lean. It had short ears like a cat and a round head. I was expecting it to be a dog, but it certainly was not a dog because the head was too round and small. I've never seen anything like it before! I thought it was a bobcat but I was talking to a friend who showed me a picture of a bobcat and it was definitely not a bobcat.

"I was about fifteen feet away when I saw it, so I got a very good look. It was coming from the river and moved off up into the mountain. I wasn't concerned that it was going to come toward me or at me, but I did decide to turn around and run in the other direction!"

Last May Bill Clark of Fishes Eddy was sitting in his living room, overlooking the banks of the Delaware ("I have a clear shot because my lawn is mowed to the river!") when he glanced up and saw a red animal weighing about 45-50 pounds with a long tail leaping across his lawn, covering 8-10 feet per leap. "I know because the scrub grass and weeds are 6-8 feet high and this animal cleared them. I knew it wasn't a fox—it didn't have a pointed tail, it didn't have a bushy tail. It had a long, thin tail and a snub nose. The only thing I could think that it could be was a huge cat.

"After describing it to other

people I found that they had seen similar cats in this vicinity. I'm 64 years old. I'm retired. I have been hunting since I was 18 years old and am very familiar with what is in the woods in this area of New York State and this is a first. I have never seen a cat—not even a bobcat.

"My wife and I go to the zoo every year to see the cats and when I was describing what I saw to the manager of the zoo, she told me I had seen a panther."

Sightings to the South

We called Roger Cowburn and spoke to him for about an hour on the phone. He confirmed to us that from 1990 through 1993 there have been five sightings of panthers in the Porters Lake/Bushkill Road area of Pike County, PA. Also cats have been spotted off PA Route 402 near Resica Falls and near Shohola Falls, as well. These sightings were made by hunters who are fairly certain that what they saw was, indeed, a big cat of some kind. Most characterized the animals as panthers or mountain lions.

Interestingly enough, some wildlife managers contend that, when people report seeing a panther, what they've really spotted is a fisher, a member of the marten family. A large, but somewhat unknown furbearing animal, fishers once roamed the forests of the northeast and have recently been reintroduced by trap and transfer programs. According to wildlife managers, fishers survive in the same type of terrain as the big cats people have reported seeing.

Both panthers and fishers are graceful, elusive predators with long—albeit decidedly different—

tails. When callers report a dark brown panther or cougar in an area known to harbor fishers, wildlife managers assume the caller has seen the latter, since panthers, cougars or mountain lions are typically light tawny or blue-grey in color. Not surprisingly, according to wildlife managers, the incidence of reported panther sightings has risen as fisher restocking programs have increased.

According to The Complete Field Guide to American Wildlife, East, Central and North, Harper & Row, Publishers, the two animals are really not all that similar. Fishers have long, slender bodies, short, rounded ears, and short legs. Their tail is full and bushy, and they have five toes on their front and back feet. They grow to an average length of 40 inches, with an average tail length of 15 inches.

Panthers, cougars, or mountain lions, on the other hand, can grow to 7 feet in length with a tail as long as 36 inches. These big cats have short faces, small, rounded ears, and a long, slim tail. Panthers tend to live in mountains, hilly woodlands or deep swamps, while fishers favor large forests. Their diets differ also, with fishers devouring squirrels, mice, raccoons and rabbits, while big cats prefer mainly deer. Panthers sport five toes on their front feet and four on their hind feet.

Informal Survey

We here at The Upper Delaware would be very interested in knowing if you have seen what you suspect to be a panther, mountain lion, or cougar anywhere in the river corridor or watershed area. If you

-See "Cats" page 12-

Do We Have Your Correct Address?

If your address has changed, or you no longer own land in the Upper Delaware River area, please help us to update our records. Fill in your new address, or the name and address of the new owner of your property, and return this notice to The Upper Delaware Council, P.O. Box 217, Narrowsburg, NY 12764.

New Address:

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Old Address:

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Check here for free facts on how you can be a Friend!

Check here if you wish to be removed from our mail list.

-- "Friends" continued from page 1--

a year clean-up would be sufficient. The overwhelming majority of people—and especially out-of-the-area residents who visit frequently—were in favor of one-day site cleanups. A few people expressed interest in doing water quality monitoring on streams running near or though their property and many more just wanted to do "something" to ensure that the Delaware River stays as beautiful and pristine as it is now. (That's why we're introducing an all-new program: Water Watch—the fun, easy way to do something good for the River, and for yourself!)

We also asked about other activities—such as compiling a catalog of the unique landforms (including waterfalls, rock ledges, etc.) in the corridor, exploring the history and delving into the architecture, archeology, geology, flora and fauna of the region. Again, the response was very favorable. In addition, we found that people are interested in organized social activities, such as canoe trips, hikes, camp-outs, walking tours—even dances, picnics and road rallies!

So! In order to get things off to a rousing start, there will be an initial meeting of the new Friends of the Upper Delaware

on Sunday afternoon, November 13th, at 2:00 p.m. at the UDC headquarters,

--"Cats" continued from page 11--

have a photo of the animal, or suspected tracks, or a video, we'd like to view it as well. Officials in both Pennsylvania and New York are reluctant to give big cat sightings any credence, since these animals are thought to be extinct in the east. However, concrete evidence—like a photo or video or a kill remains—would be rather convincing evidence that these beautiful and graceful animals are again roaming our river valley. If you have any information, or you just want to tell us your "Cat Tale" give us a call at the Council office. And watch future issues of *The Upper Delaware* for updates on this intriguing story.

For more information about the Eastern Puma Research Network, write to them at EPRN, P.O. Box 3562, Baltimore, MD 21214. Our thanks to The Trapper and Predator Caller magazine, Roger Cowburn, George Frosch, and all those who were willing to tell their stories to us for this article.

The UDC meets on the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the Tusten Town Hall, Narrowsburg, NY. Committees meet on the third and fourth Tuesdays of every month at the UDC Office, 211 Bridge Street, Narrowsburg, NY. Call (914) 252-3022 for details.

Upper Delaware Council
P.O. Box 217
Narrowsburg, NY 12762-0217

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At this meeting, we'll discuss who wants to do what—and where! We'd like to get at least one or two Adopt-a-Stream and/or Water Watch programs up and running, in addition to adding to the Adopt-a-Highway program already in place. Plus, we'd like to get some of the special interest groups organized, too. So if you have an interest or a special area in mind—or you just want to find out what the Friends is all about—bring yourself and some friends and come to the meeting.

We chose Narrowsburg for the first meeting site because of its central location. However, our goal is to have active Friends groups working in every community in the river corridor. So if enough people from up or down river indicate an interest, we'll be glad to hold a separate meeting closer to where you live!

Please give us a short call to let us know if you'll be attending so we can plan the refreshments accordingly. If you'd like to come, but can't, let us know that, too, so we can include you in future meetings. RSVP by calling Nancie at the UDC office (914-252-3022) anytime before the meeting. See you November 13th!

Look what the Friends of the Upper Delaware are up to now!

- o Adopt-a-Stream
 - o Adopt-a-Highway
 - o Water Watch
 - o Identifying and Cataloging Unique Landforms
 - o Identifying and Cataloging Historical Sites
 - o Walking Tours
 - o Nature Hikes
 - o Water Quality Monitoring
 - o Identifying Past and Potential "Hot Spots"
 - o One-Day Site Cleanups
 - o Environmental Education
 - o "Learning-by-Doing" Demonstrations
 - o Social and Fun Activities
 - o Just about anything you can think of!
- Quarterly meetings with a purpose.

an interesting, informative newsletter devoted strictly to the Friends of the Upper Delaware and plenty more good stuff awaits when you become a Friend of the Upper Delaware!

Find out more!

**Sunday, November 13th
2:00 p.m. at the UDC --
RSVP (914) 252-3022!**