

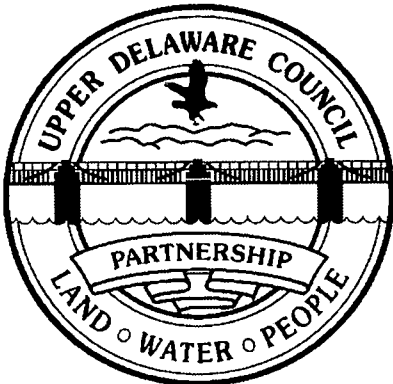
# The Upper Delaware

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

Volume 9 Number 1

Published by the Upper Delaware Council, Inc.

Spring, 1996



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*Where do the fish go when the river rampages? (No, they don't all wind up downstream at Trenton!)*

*Highlights of the UDC's annual awards dinner*

*Flood plain development and management issues*

*...and much more!*

**Do we have your ZIP+4?**  
Please check your address label. If it does not include your ZIP+4 zipcode, please send it to us using the form on page 7. Thanks.



UDC Conference attendees listen to guest speakers from NYS DEC talk about shad, trout, and bass conditions in the Upper Delaware River and its branches. Staff photo

## UDC Conference Addresses Fisheries Issues

The Upper Delaware Council and Upper Delaware Citizens Advisory Council sponsored an all-day Fisheries Conference on Saturday, April 20th in the Tusten Town Hall, Narrowsburg, NY. Declining shad populations, migrating trout, and warmwater fisheries issues were discussed by speakers from both NY and PA, as well as by the more than 30 attendees representing public and private fishing interests on the Upper Delaware River.

Norm McBride, Fisheries Biologist with the NYS DEC - Region 4, started off the morning program by discussing the radiotelemetry program presently underway in the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters. In 1995, the NYS DEC implanted radio transmitters in approximately 50 large brown and rainbow trout in the East Branch, West Branch and Main Stem of the Delaware River and the Beaver Kill to determine the extent of inter-river movement, movement patterns within the river, and to identify critical habitat necessary for fish survival and spawning. Additional trout are also being tagged and monitored in 1996.

Each tag costs about \$200 and has its own unique radio frequency which is picked-up as a beep on the DEC's portable scanner. The New York

State Trout Unlimited is funding the equipment. The batteries in the transmitters are expected to last up to two years, so much more data will be forthcoming.

### Traveling Rainbows

One particular rainbow trout, tagged on May 25, 1995 near Lordville on the Main Stem of the Delaware, was located in the West Branch at Stilesville near the Cannonsville Reservoir on August 28th (a distance of almost 40 miles) and later at the Equinunk Creek Pool (Main Stem) on November 18th. It was reported that the trout also traveled up one of the tributaries of the Delaware to spawn.

Other rainbows and browns also traveled from the lower East Branch and the Main Stem of the Delaware into the West Branch, and generally speaking, one species did not move more than the other. The travels are thought to be thermally related, although spawning plays a factor. Rainbow trout spawn in the spring, while brown trout spawn in the fall. Cold water releases from the Cannonsville Reservoir made during the summer months acts as a magnet for the trout. The trout tagged in the Beaver Kill for the most part remained in the Beaver Kill, as the conditions

--- Conference, continues on p. 6 ---

## ---The View from the Chair ---

Lewis Schmalzle is the UDC Representative from the Town of Highland, NY, and is the 1996 Chairman of the Upper Delaware Council. As he assumes the duties of Chairman, Lew agreed to share with us his goals for the UDC for the upcoming year.

Dear Friends,

This year will prove to be a very exciting and rewarding year. It started with a new NPS Superintendent. Cal Hite is well known to many members of the UDC. He worked on the River Management Plan with the COUP (Council of Upper Delaware Townships) group before he went to the Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, PA. He will be easy to work with. Also, he is a person you can trust and you can believe what he has to say. Welcome back, Cal!

This year we at the UDC will bring our five-year operating plan up to date and running, as this is one program which we are contracted to the National Park Service to do.

Our fisheries conference is being well received and should be well attended. (Ed. Note: The Conference was held Saturday, April 20th.) I am sure we all

will receive much needed information from this conference. (See related article on page 1.)

The 2nd annual Delaware River Sojourn is scheduled for June 8th -- June 15th, with the last three days being in the Upper Delaware. This year, the UDC's summer picnic and raft trip will coincide with the end of the Sojourn. Please keep this date open or you will miss a good time!

Then there's the strand issue. I left this for last because of its controversial nature. We hope to have a brochure out sometime in the near future on "do's and don't's" when it comes to using the strand of the river. We have contacted the New York State Office of General Services with our discussion paper, and have met with them recently to discuss this very important issue. They will be getting back to us with some more definitive answers in the near future. Then, hopefully, we can put this to bed.

If we can get half of this done, it will be a very busy year for the UDC!



The 1996 Upper Delaware Council: (Seated, L to R) Charles Wieland, Secretary/Treasurer; Lewis Schmalzle, Chairman; Alan Bowers, Vice Chairman; (Standing, L to R) Brian Acciavatti; Tom Hill; Phil Chase; Bruce MacMillan; Marian Hrubovcak; John McKay; Dave Lamereaux; Scott Haberli; Dave Everett; George Frosch; Larry Richardson; George Fluhr; Ed Sykes. Photo: The River Reporter

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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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# Just What Do the Fish Do When the River Overflows Its Banks?

by Tom Fegely

Several years back, a friend living near Montgomery Alabama, whom I'd joined for a turkey hunt, pointed to a spot where he'd "caught" a 42-pound blue catfish. The spot was in the middle of a cottonfield along the Alabama River.

When I questioned him further, he explained the fish had been washed into, or swam into, a flooded cottonfield when the river jumped its bank. As the water receded, pools formed in the low spots and trapped some fish, including the big cat.

While there were no similar reports of fish being stranded following the raging floods on the Upper Delaware River and local streams in January, I've always wondered just how they adapt when the rivers spill over their banks and silted currents rush into their livingrooms. Birds seek seclusion from wind, snow, and cold in the thickets and conifers. Most mammals "hole up" in any haven from rockpiles to trees to burrows. Deer remain bedded in protected areas. Smart people stay indoors.

But what do fish do?

"To a fish, a flood feels like walking up an alley during a strong windstorm feels to us," said Dick Snyder, a fisheries biologist with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

"They react in pretty much the same manner as we do. Just like we'll duck into a doorway to get out of the wind, fish will seek out those areas where the force of the water isn't that great."

Rocks and logs to hide behind, calmer eddies, the stream bottom where the current is slower than "up top," and other refuges are sought by everything from trout to smallmouth bass. Following the turmoil, most will find their way back home. But some, said Snyder, may get stranded in puddles and sinkholes if the flood waters recede quickly.

Adult fish tend to fare better than juveniles with streams supporting populations of wild trout the hardest hit. On wild trout waters, damage to both the stream and fish may be severe, because of the siltation that occurs during a flood or high-water event.

"Trout fry are now in gravel, still feeding on their yolk sacs," said Mike Kaufmann, southeast regional fisheries manager for the PA Fish and Boat Commission, shortly after the flood waters receded in February, "or they may have just begun to emerge."

"Heavy silt either suffocates the fry or clogs their gills and kills them."

Adult and yearling trout, while hardy, could also suffer abrasion of their gills, exposing them to disease, according to Kaufmann.

"It becomes harder for them to fend off pathogens," he said. "If siltation is really severe it could suffocate them."

Trout lay their eggs and spawn in the fall and many recently-hatched fish probably perished, Kaufmann and Snyder agree. In rivers, bass and other species were probably not as severely affected since they don't

spawn until spring. However, the impact of this year's flooding is not likely to be felt by anglers as subsequent year-classes of wild trout will fill the voids.

Even Pennsylvania's state hatchery program took a jolt. However, it's not believed the losses due to flooding at several fish culture stations will have a significant effect on springtime releases.

Snyder cautions that trout anglers seeking familiar hotspots during the season starting in April may not find them as they were on their last visit. The river has changed dramatically in some sectors.

"Gravel and rocks have been swept downstream," said Snyder, "Stream banks have been washed away and silt has been redeposited in different locations."

"Some areas that may have been prime fish habitat before are now gone altogether. Other areas that weren't ideal before may have been scoured and look just great."

"The good news is," says Snyder, "that despite the serious flooding, the fish will probably adjust quicker than the anglers. We'll just have to work a little harder to find the new hotspots."

*Tom Fegely writes for the Allentown (PA) Morning Call. This article is reprinted here with the permission of The Morning Call. Copyright 1996, The Morning Call, Inc., Allentown, PA.*

## MOTHER NATURE IS THE FINAL WORD

I have lived in the Upper Delaware Valley for only sixteen years, but the flooding we experienced this past winter was definitely the biggest flood I have ever seen. Folks that I talk to will agree to a point. Evidently the flood of 1955 holds the recent record around here for mayhem and damage, but this one was not far behind AT LEAST IN WATER VOLUME.

My visual judgement for determining which flood was worse is not very scientific. Each time the water goes up, I

try to see how high it rises under the Roebing Bridge at Lackawaxen, Pa. In 1984, with a flood crest of twenty-two feet, the water was within eight feet of the road base on the Roebing Bridge. There were a couple of places below the bridge on NYS Route 97 that were flooded for a short time. In 1996, the flood waters got within five feet of the road base on the Roebing Bridge. It flooded long stretches of NYS Route 97 below the bridge for over twenty four hours. However, it is worth noting that in 1955, the water

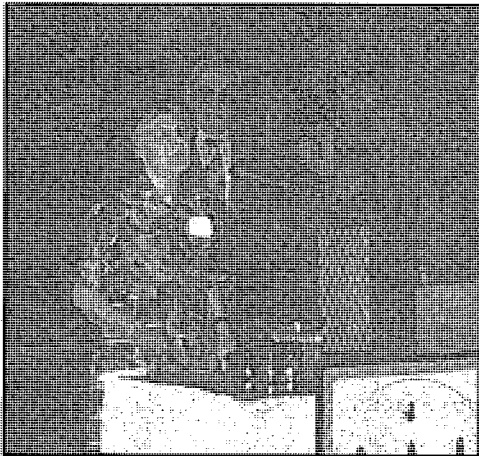
flowed OVER THE ROADWAY ON THE ROEBLING BRIDGE.

Finding a way to allow landowners to enjoy the river and prevent costly property damage and river pollution is important to all who love this area. Not allowing any development in Floodplains would be the simplest answer for limiting the horrendous cost in property damage and lives that can occur. Unfortunately, this solution would probably create a substantial number of legal battles over whether

---Flood, continues on p. 7 ---

## Council Honors More than Thirty Individuals, Organizations, and Agencies at Annual Awards Banquet

On Saturday evening, March 30th, the Upper Delaware Council (UDC) recognized and honored those citizens, organizations, and government agencies whose actions during 1995 helped further the goals and objectives of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Management Plan. More than 150 guests joined the UDC and the honorees for dinner at the Eldred Preserve in Eldred, NY. Following the dinner, Ms. Marie Rust,



Gertrude Elmore accepts the Distinguished Service Award on behalf of herself and her husband, Larue, as UDC Chairman, Lew Schmalzle looks on. Staff photo

Director, North East Field Area, National Park Service delivered the keynote address, stressing partnerships--such as the very successful one enjoyed by the NPS and the UDC--as the wave of the future for resource conservation in the 21st Century.

UDC Chairman Lew Schmalzle joined with UDC Executive Director Bill Douglass in presenting this year's awards to the following recipients:

The Distinguished Service Award, the UDC's highest honor, was given to Larue and Gertrude Elmore, of Damascus, PA. Larue has been actively involved with the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River for more than 30 years, and has served on the Upper Delaware Citizens Advisory Council since its inception. Throughout the years, Gertrude has accompanied her husband to Council and Committee meetings, and is actively involved in the

Upper Delaware Heritage Alliance and other Upper Delaware River concerns. Mrs. Elmore accepted the award on behalf of her husband and herself, as Larue was at home recuperating from surgery.

Sandra Schultz, NPS Management Assistant, received the Community Service Award for her work in the river corridor, particularly in the area of resource protection and conservation. Schultz played a major role in the renovations of the Roebling Bridge.

Austin Smith received one of the two Cultural Achievement Awards for his lifelong commitment to the history and heritage of the Delaware River Valley. The other award went to the historical pageant, "Center of the Universe?". The pageant, written by Sandra Schultz and produced by Gloria Krauss and the Valley Chorus, was staged last year in Lackawaxen, PA as part of the first annual Delaware River Sojourn, which received the UDC's Recreation Achievement Award this year. The Sojourn focused attention on the Delaware River's nat-



Former NPS Superintendent of the Upper Delaware, John Hutzky (right), introduces NPS North East Field Director, Marie Rust, and Cal Hite, the current Upper Delaware NPS Superintendent. Staff photo

ural, cultural, recreational, and environmental attractions, potential, and concerns from Hancock, NY to Trenton, NJ.

The Outstanding Community Achievement Award went to Manchester Township, PA and the Manchester Township Sewer and

Water Authority for completion of the sewer plant at the Reflection Lakes recreational community in Manchester Township.

The Volunteer Award was given to the Wayne County Dive and Rescue Team, based at Welcome Lake, PA, for their Treasure Hunt, Night Dive, and River Cleanup held last August. The event attracted 20 dive teams from five states, and prizes for the two-day event were donated by local



The UDC awarded ten Lifesaving Awards this year for acts of heroism both on and off the river. NPS Rangers Ralph Huebner and Wes Gillingham (at left) were among this year's recipients. Staff photo

merchants.

Richard and Carolyn Egan, of Damascus, PA, received the Best Friend Award for their support of the Friends of the Upper Delaware program.

The National Park Service North East Field Area received the Council's Certificate of Merit for their prompt attention to the special management needs of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River by reaffirming that the Upper Delaware will remain a separate unit within the NPS with its own superintendent.

Awards of Recognition went to:

The Basket Historical Society, Long Eddy, NY for their commitment to telling the story of the Upper Delaware River Valley and preserving much of the region's history. The award was accepted by John Niflot, president of the society.

Fort Delaware, Narrowsburg, NY, for

more than twenty-five years of celebrating the colonial and modern history of the region. Josephine Burbank, who with her late-husband, Jim, started the Fort, Elaine Breutsch, the Fort's Director, and the Sullivan County Department of Public Works, were all recognized with awards.

the importance of protecting our watershed.

This year the UDC gave ten Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Awards for acts of heroism both on and off the river. Wes Gillingham and Ralph Huebner, both NPS Rangers, were cited for their dramatic river res-

a lifesaving award for rescuing a neighbor from his burning trailer on July 23, 1995.

In addition, George Frosch, 1995 Chairman of the Upper Delaware Council, received the Oaken Gavel Award given to the previous year's



Among those honored at this year's Awards Dinner were (rear, left to right), George Frosch--outgoing UDC Chairman, Marie Rust--NPS, Don Stalker--Manchester Twp., Dawn Joyce--Hancock Bluestone Festival, Austin Smith--Historian, John Hutzky--former Upper Delaware Superintendent, Lee Brown--Wayne County Dive Team, (front, left to right), Richard and Carolyn Egan--Friends of the Upper Delaware, Kyle Meyers--Cornell Cooperative Extension, Gloria Krauss--Valley Chorus, Sandra Schultz--NPS, and Anthony Seccia--Manchester Twp. Sewer and Water Authority. Staff Photo



Accepting the Award of Recognition for Fort Delaware are Elaine Breutsch (left), Director of the Fort, and Peggy Macintyre, whose family started the Fort in the 1950s. Sullivan County Dept. of Public Works, who administers the operations of the Fort, was also recognized. Staff Photo

Dawn Joyce, Equinunk, PA, for her work on behalf of the Hancock Bluestone Festival, held the first weekend in August in Hancock, NY, and for her ongoing activities with the Hancock Chamber of Commerce to focus attention on the northern end of the Upper Delaware River.

Kyle Meyers, Water Specialist with the Cornell Cooperative Extension, for her efforts both on and off the job to educate the people of the Upper Delaware River Valley about the dangers of nonpoint source pollution and

cue of a family of five at the Mongaup Rapids on August 27, 1995.

Rob Arms, Stephen Donahue, Kevin Walsh, Oscar Ortis, Cynthia Curtis, Dennis Doherty, and Joseph Elmendorf--all visitors to the river from various points in New York and New Jersey--joined with Wes Gillingham again to be cited for their lifesaving rescue of a near-drowning victim July 26, 1995, near the Ten Mile River Access.

Tara Hargraves, formerly of Cohecton Center, NY, also received

Chair. John Hutzky, who retired as Upper Delaware Superintendent for the National Park Service, received a Special Award to recognize his sixteen years of service to the river valley.

The UDC annual awards dinner is traditionally held the last Saturday evening in March. The annual call for awards goes out each January, although nominations for awards may be submitted any time by calling or writing the Upper Delaware Council, PO Box 192, Narrowsburg, NY 12764-0192; phone (914) 252-3022.

## Upper Delaware Partnership Honored with Tourism Award

On May 17th, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania presented the Upper Delaware Partnership with its Rural Sustainable Tourism Award. The Partnership is composed of the Upper Delaware Council (UDC), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Upper Delaware Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). Lawrence Lenz, program manager for the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, made the presentation at an afternoon reception at the Roebing Inn on the Delaware in Lackawaxen, PA. PA State Representative Jerry Birmelin was also on hand to congratulate the award recipients. Pictured at right are (from left to right) Bill Douglass, UDC Executive Director; Cal Hite, NPS Superintendent; Rep. Jerry Birmelin; Martin Borko, CAC Chairman; Lew Schmalzle, UDC Chairman; and John Hutzky, retired NPS Superintendent.

Photo: Sandra Schultz



appeared to be to their liking.

McBride stated that the trout had a distinct winter and summer range. Ten fish monitored over the winter months remained, for the most part, where they were last fall. Most of the large movements occurred during the summer months.

The monitoring data could lead to future refinements in the opening and closing dates for trout fishing so that spawning is protected. The most recent data for 1996 indicates that rainbow trout were still in the tributaries of the Delaware River as of April 16, after the opening date for fishing which is intended to protect the spawning trout. Continued monitoring may indicate that they stay in the tributaries even longer.

The DEC asks that any angler catching a large trout with a tag and a 9" to 12" wire sticking out of the underside of it record the number of the tag. If you release the fish, record the tag number but do not remove the tag.

Then the DEC-Region 4 should be contacted with the information. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to provide information to protect this valuable resource.

### **Where are the Shad?**

Fisheries Biologist Kathy Hattala, with the NYS DEC - Region 3's Hudson Fisheries Unit, spoke about the shad fishery on the entire east coast, and the Delaware River in particular. In recent years, landing of shad and river herring have declined dramatically along the east coast, although Hattala said the population in the Delaware River appears to be fairly stable.

All the east coast shad spend most (about 5 years) of their lives in the Atlantic Ocean. In the warmer months they travel north together off the coast of Maine and Canada. They over-winter off the Mid-Atlantic states. In the Spring, the spawning population moves northward and further into shore and up into the rivers. A typical shad could easily travel about 10,000 miles in its lifetime. Unfortunately, it is during these travels in the ocean that they fall prey to commercial fishermen, which is thought to be the major reason for the shad decline.

Historically, American shad were an extremely important resource along the east coast of both the United States and Canada, supporting very large commercial fisheries. However, the status of American shad stocks today is depressed compared to historical levels. For many years, pollution in the Philadelphia area of the Delaware River prevented the shad from traveling up it to spawn. Those lucky enough to pass through the pollution to spawn were unable to again reach the ocean and died, along with their offspring. The pollution has largely been cleaned up and no longer presents a barrier, but other problems remain.

### **Reasons For Decline**

Several hypotheses have been offered to explain the shad decline along the Atlantic coast. They include overharvest by inriver and ocean-intercept commercial fisheries, water quality degradation, and loss of essential spawning and nursery habitat due to blockage by dams and other impediments. Recently, colder ocean water temperatures which could disrupt normal migration patterns has also been suggested to explain recent declines. With the increase in striped bass numbers, it is also thought that predation plays a role.

### **What Next?**

Possible commercial fishery management measures include a variety of harvest restrictions: gear restrictions and limits, size limits, and/or seasonal or area closures. Restrictions on ocean-intercept fisheries, up to and including a closure, are also to be considered. Possible recreational fishery management measures include size limits, seasonal or area limits, and/or possession limits.

One problem is that commercial fishing beyond 3 miles of the coast does not require a license. Because there are no licenses required beyond this limit, there are no records to indicate how many fish are being taken. That leaves a large void in the data.

Under the proposed shad management plan, there would be fishing regulations in all the east coast states. New Jersey, for example, which does not presently have any restrictions on catching shad by recreational fisher-

men, would be required to impose a creel limit.

Hattala described the shad declines on the east coast as "disturbing." She said that the key to the shad population is controlling fishing through regulation. Commercial fishing has the most impact on the fishery, recreational fishing is secondary.

The 1995 shad run in the Delaware River was later than usual, so fishermen not catching any shad gave up early. When the major push of shad finally did pass through, there were few fishermen to take notice.

Research continues and anglers are reminded that there is a reward for American shad tags by calling 1-800-448-8322 and reporting the date, location, method of capture and tag number. Hattala also stated that they would like to hear from anglers about their catches and lengths of fish. The size of the fish being caught appears to be declining, which indicates a problem with the population. Angler help is needed to help monitor the situation.

### **Big Stripers**

In the following session, Hattala described the comeback of the striped bass as one of the great success stories on the east coast. The striped bass have almost the same life pattern as the shad.

Striped bass take a long time to mature. As a result of commercial over-fishing, the population collapsed in the late 1970's and early 1980's in the Chesapeake Bay which had the largest population of striped bass. Through the efforts of a striped bass management plan and a subsequent act requiring the 15 member-states of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) to comply with the plan, regulations were imposed to allow the population to recover. Both commercial and recreational fishing were restricted. As a result, the striped bass population has increased all along the east coast, including the Delaware River. Through a series of phases, the regulations are gradually being lessened.

There is not a lot of historical data on striped bass in the Delaware River, so it is really not known what populations were supported before the pollu-

preventing development is justified for the good of the whole, or if it would be a taking of private land requiring compensation to the landowner.

As a compromise, land management standards and construction restrictions in designated flood zones have been established by the federal government in concert with communities having a long history of flood disaster problems. Since the mid-1980's the Federal Emergency Management Agency, (FEMA) has worked with local communities nationwide to establish "Rate Maps" that show floodprone areas and to set up and implement standards for any development in such areas.

The key to making this program work is finding a way to provide low-cost flood insurance for new or existing

homes in known floodprone locations. To encourage communities to incorporate floodplain standards within local zoning, the federal government provides access to reasonably priced flood insurance for all floodprone development in each community. In return, local community zoning is required to incorporate AND ENFORCE certain building standards to limit flood damage. These standards include such precautions as:

- a. Building the lowest floor at least 18 inches above the 100-year flood elevation
- b. Floodproofing basement appliances, and
- c. Having the capability to seal your sewer system to prevent pollution.

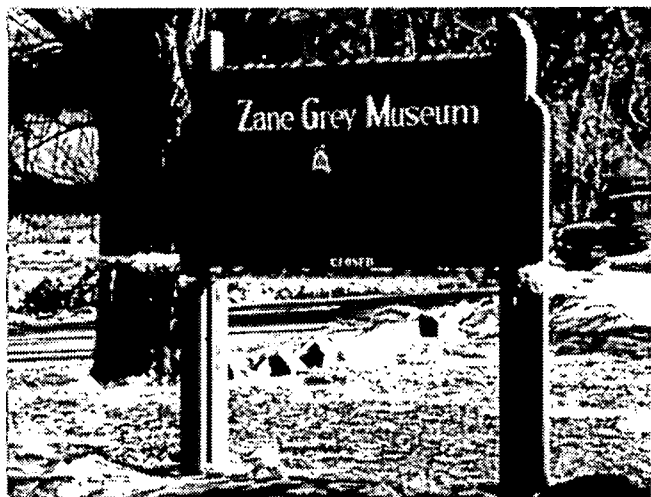
The minimal amount of property damage in this most recent flood is testi-

mony to local knowledge and skill for knowing where not to build a new home along the river edge. Most of the new homes constructed, since the FEMA program was set up in the valley, were just beyond the waters reach. Several travel trailers, lots of livery canoes, and equipment, and a few old houses and trailers bought the farm and will need to be retrieved from the river. Now would be an excellent time for each community to reassess its flood management program to insure that everything possible is being done to limit property damage and save lives when the next big one hits.

This article was written by Malcolm Ross, Jr., National Park Service, Chief, Resource Management, for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. Ross is a frequent and welcome contributor to *The Upper Delaware*.

## Just How High Was the Water?

These photos by Debbie Qualey, Assistant South District Ranger for the National Park Service, show the level the river reached both at the Zane Grey Museum and at the Ten Mile River access. Snow lines on the photos point out the highest water level reached.



## 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 192, Narrowsburg, NY 12764-0192

*New Address:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

*Old Address:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Check here to be removed from our mailing list

Check here for info on Friends  
 Check here for info on Sojourn

tion block prevented them from entering the river. The striped bass run follows the shad run. It is thought that the larger striped bass are in the river from May into June, but there have been reports that they may stay much longer if water conditions and food supply are favorable. Unlike the shad, which reportedly do not eat at all during their spawning run, the striped bass do "non-stop feeding" during spawning. There is a concern that the stripped bass are eating a lot of trout in the river.

Presently for striped bass, the Delaware River is categorized as a "producer area that is not restored." Unfortunately, without historical data, no one is sure what "restored" means. More study needs to be done to determine what is occurring with the stripped bass in the Delaware River and what impacts it will have on other species. Hattala added that as the striped bass regulations continue to be lessened, the population should decline.

### Warm Water Fish

In the last session, Bob Angyal, Senior Aquatic Biologist with the NYS DEC - Region 3, and Dave Arnold, Area Fisheries Manager with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, described how each state is involved in the monitoring and management of smallmouth (black) bass and walleye. Both species of fish are stocked regularly in the main branch of the Delaware River.

Monitoring data for smallmouth

bass goes back to 1926. Angyal stated that sampling the Delaware River is difficult because of the rifts. Electroshocking sampling methods used by both states were described in detail.

It was noted that the black bass attain larger sizes in the Susquehanna River and in lakes and ponds, than in the Delaware River. In the Delaware River the largest fish are found in the deepest pools and there is a significant increase in fish sizes below the Port Jervis area. A typical black bass, six years or older, in the Pond Eddy or Narrowsburg pools in the Upper Delaware River averages about 16 inches in length. Arnold stated that there does not appear to have been any significant changes in the black bass population with the recent change in the size limit from 9 inches to 12 inches. There is no closed season on small-mouth bass.

The walleye season runs from the first Saturday in May to midnight December 31 on the portion of the Delaware River between New York and Pennsylvania. The minimum size is 18 inches and the limit is 3. The walleye is a very mobile fish, but the states primarily sample fish in the river pools because the rifts are not easily accessible with their equipment. The Narrowsburg pool regularly produces the highest yield and size of fish in their sampling. Other pools also produce good results.

Some people would like to see an

increase in the catch rate for walleye, but most fishermen would prefer to catch a few larger fish than a lot of small ones. It was noted that the number of walleye fishermen also appears to be increasing, which could mean fewer fish in the future.

### Science vs. Politics

The speakers stated that fisheries management is a balancing act between scientific data and politics. It is really a value judgment on how the resource should be managed, from those that want to protect and those who want to use it.

The conference offered ample time for comments from the audience and extensive question and answer periods. Judging from the positive response from those who attended, fisheries is a hot topic in the Upper Delaware and interest in learning more is high, since the Upper Delaware River is blessed with excellent fisheries habitat and water quality, it contains a good variety of species, and it must be managed for multiple species.

*This article was written by Dave Soete, Senior Resource Specialist for the Upper Delaware Council. For more information about the UDC or fisheries issues on the Upper Delaware, please contact the Council office.*



### River Valley Trivia: Why was the Roebling Bridge originally built?

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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, across from the Town Hall. Call (914) 252-3022 for details.

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