

The Upper Delaware

A newsletter about the environment and people of the Upper Delaware River Valley in NY & PA

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The Upper Delaware
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2023 HONOREES: Recipients at the 35th Annual River Valley Awards on Sept. 10 included, lower level from left: Dan Rutledge for the Damascus Township Parks and Recreation Committee (Outstanding Community Achievement); Tom and Cecilia Coacci (Community Service); with Heather Jacksy for the Highland River Access Upgrade (Partnership Award) between them; Rosie Starr of WJFF Radio Catskill's Farm and Country (Special Recognition); Ramona Jan and the Yarnslingers (Cultural Achievement); Jim Greier (Distinguished Service); Nathaniel Pereira-Mendoza (Special Recognition); and Cathy Daboul (Volunteer Award). Top level: Tom Zibinski and Nancy Lauby (Lifesaving Award); Andy Boyar (Oaken Gavel Award); Richard H. Lowe III (Community Service); and Mark Zakutansky for the Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee (Recreation Achievement). (UDC Photo by Scott Rando)

UDC Bestows 35th Annual Awards; Welcomes Congressman Molinaro

The Upper Delaware Council and 121 guests honored recipients of 35th Annual River Valley Awards in 11 categories at a banquet held on Sept. 10 at Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake, PA.

Earning accolades for good works were:

James A. Greier of Oernburg, NY, Distinguished Service Award for his decades of advocacy for the *River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River* as a Town of Fremont UDC representative from 2000-2004 and 2013-2023, and public service roles with town government and local organizations.

Nancy Lauby & Tom Zibinski of Beach Lake, PA, Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award for their August 13, 2023 rescue of a father and his nine-year-old son in danger of drowning after their canoe capsized and they couldn't swim.

Damascus Township Parks and Recreation Committee, Outstanding Community Achievement for their seven-year project to build a multi-faceted recreational facility on township property.

Highland River Access Upgrade, Partnership Award for revamping the Barryville site with federal, state, county, town, non-profit organizations, and grant agency help coordinated by Sullivan County Division of Planning & Community Development.

Ramona Jan and the Yarnslingers, Cultural Achievement for founding the true storytellers group in 2012 and her accomplishments as a multi-media artist, musician, writer, and roving Callicoon historian.

The Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee, Recreation Achievement for heightening stewardship through an annu-

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Upper Delaware Profile: Dennis Bernitt

As a dedicated preserver and student of American history, Dennis Bernitt is fully contributing to the present and future of the Upper Delaware region through his active community service roles.

The river valley native who was born in Callicoon in 1947 and has lived in the oldest house in Hankins for the past 53 years thought about becoming a history teacher as he proceeded through Holy Cross Catholic School and Delaware Valley Central School, but college wasn't in the cards after his father Willis passed away.

A year after graduating high school in 1965, Bernitt entered into the Army. He went through special training to become a supply sergeant, one of only two soldiers out of 1,000 to earn rank.

Sergeant Bernitt was deployed to Vietnam. His tour of duty with the 198th Infantry Brigade stationed in Chu Lai lasted from May 1967 to September 1968.

Despite enduring camp attacks, ambushes, and combat crossfire, "fortunately, my company didn't lose anybody while I was there," Bernitt says.

He came home to serve four years in the Reserves while applying his acquired supply skills to the grocery business.

Bernitt worked at Victory Supermarket as a produce manager then store manager before moving on to Peck's Market, also in Callicoon, and later worked in the meat department at Giant Markets in Liberty, NY.

After absorbing all that retail experience and taking business administration courses through Cornell Cooperative Extension, a dream came true in 1980 with the chance to open his own store.

Bernitt's General Store, located across the road from Red Barn Campground in Hankins, was a family-operated business for 19 years.

Open seven days a week typically from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., this community gathering spot served up hot food and expanded its offerings to meet customers' requests.

On Feb. 9, 1990, a fire broke out in an upstairs apartment that required a nine-month closure and rebuild of the store.

Bernitt says, although he enjoyed providing for people and has never shied away from hard work, the demanding business was taking its toll and they opted to close.

"We wanted a life for our family," he says.

That includes his wife, Kathy, who grew



Dennis Bernitt, Town of Fremont

up in Milanville, PA and married Dennis in 1969, four children - Kevin, Scott, Tonya, and Lara - and now seven grandchildren.

Bernitt worked for Dave's Super Duper in Honesdale before joining the Fox Ledge water delivery company, from which he retired on Dec. 22, 2022 after 21 years.

"It was totally different and I loved it," he says of his huge delivery route and chance to work alongside son Scott for 10 years.

Retirement hasn't slowed him down at age 76. He'd already been busy dedicating 30+ years as past chief and member of the Hankins/Fremont Center Volunteer Fire Department and multiple Sullivan County firematic committees; chairing the Town of Fremont Zoning Board of Appeals; and he currently serves as a Hortonville Presbyterian Church elder; helps at the Fremont Center Community Food Pantry; is treasurer of the Town of Fremont Memorial Day Parade Committee; and he's a VFW and Cocheton Preservation Society member.

Bernitt is also well-known for his three decades with the 143rd NY Infantry living history reenactment group, about which he says, "It's a joy to be able to learn and teach at the same time, plus make new friends. You want to read and know more."

On June 14, 2023, Bernitt was appointed as the Town of Fremont's Upper Delaware Council Alternate, happily "recruited" by Representative Jim Greier and immediately joining all of its committees on the belief that "the only way you're going to know what's happening is to be there."

"I spent all my free time as a kid along this river. Now it's my turn to give back. The UDC is here to voice our opinion of what's going on in our own backyard, protecting the river and the private land," he says.

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The Upper Delaware is a free publication of the Upper Delaware Council, a 501(c)(3) 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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Letters Inform on UDC State Funding

Recent correspondence to the Governors of New York State and Pennsylvania advises that failures to fulfill the 20% state funding shares anticipated in the 1986 River Management Plan jeopardize the Upper Delaware Council's sustainability as a functional organization.

UDC Solicitor Jason R. Ohliger directed letters to State of New York Governor Kathy Hochul and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro on October 5.

"The UDC's existence is a unique collaboration between the States, the Federal Government, and the municipalities of the Upper Delaware River Corridor. Through its land use reviews and educational efforts, the UDC plays an important role in conserving and protecting the 55,574.5-acre Corridor. This role is to protect both the recreational and environmental values of the River, and it allows each member municipality to provide input reflecting its goals and values," he explains.

The *Final River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River: New York and Pennsylvania*, which both states signed Executive Orders directing their environmental agencies to uphold, outlined a 60/20/20% cost-sharing ratio for UDC operations.

It provided for a 1986 budget of \$300,000 from the federal government and \$100,000 from each of the two voting member states, without accounting for any inflationary adjustments.

"Annually since 1988, the United States (through the National Park Service) has allocated its \$300,000 share, which is the only reason why the UDC has survived until now. It has run on austerity, and is now in a dire financial situation due to this chronic under-funding," Ohliger writes.

Neither New York nor Pennsylvania ever contributed their shares, despite the UDC's repeated attempts to seek relief.

Ohliger concluded that the issue is properly directed to the governors due to the implied mandates of the Executive Orders, suggesting that the allocations should always have been line items in their environmental protection agency budgets.

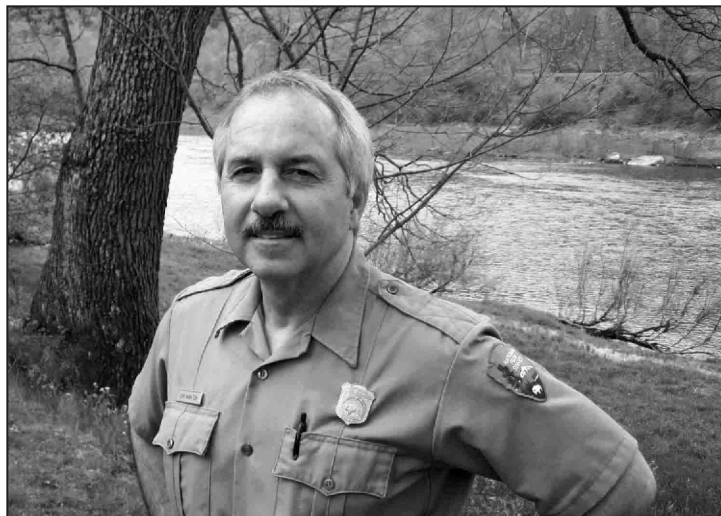
"It has been determined through an independent economic analysis that, if prompt attention is not given to this matter, the UDC will be required to cease its effective operations. This outcome would implicitly violate the River Management Plan, and would put an end to this meaningful collaboration amongst our river communities. Implementation of the RMP would then default to the Secretary of the Interior, and would be out of the hands of those municipal stakeholders most intimately familiar with their communities. This outcome would violate the core purpose of this important intergovernmental partnership," Ohliger states.

The UDC's capacity has been necessarily reduced over the years due to the flat federal allowance and lack of state contributions.

The requested funds would be used to cover the increasing costs to do business, fund important grants and educational programs, supplement services, and foster awareness of issues that benefit the river corridor.

"If your offices do nothing in response to this appeal, then the UDC will be rendered dysfunctional after 35 years of

See **UDC STATE FUNDING** on Page 5



Don Hamilton Retires from NPS After 30 Years at Upper Delaware

National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Natural Resources Program Manager Don Hamilton will cap off a nearly 45-year federal service career on Dec. 31, 2023.

The Michigan native worked at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (MI), Redwood National Park (CA), Lassen Volcanic National Park (CA), and Morristown National Historic Park (NJ) before joining the Upper Delaware staff 30 years ago.

The Upper Delaware Council presented Hamilton, as an advisory member of the Water Use/Resource Management Committee, dedicated cooperative partner, and environmental advocate, with its 2014 Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his "exceptional professionalism and ongoing commitment to study, manage, and protect the outstanding natural resources of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River since 1993."

As he prepares to retire, Hamilton said, "Working on the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, and with the people who care about it, has been an honor and a privilege. This river is a treasure. Flowing out of an upper basin that is still about 80% forested, it is a landscape and river that maintains ecological integrity, exceptional water quality, and superb natural resources. As the last major river on the Atlantic Coast undammed the entire length of its 330 mile mainstem, it also provides important historical habitat for a suite of sea-run migratory fishes that is essential for completing their life cycles. These resources and this water quality will become even more important to us all into the future."

"There aren't many rivers left like the Delaware, and we should all be mindful of that. Because of its exceptional qualities, it attracts people who want to study and sustain its high quality resources, who want to live and recreate here, and who want to have a livelihood here. The partnership approach to managing the river has always been a challenging arrangement, and will continue to be. I think that for the most part the people who've lived along the river have been good stewards of it, and care deeply about it. And I think if we are all mindful of maintaining the resources and values found here, and the needs of future generations, we'll find a way to make this partnership management work," he said.

Hamilton is particularly proud of the intensive water quality sampling work that has been done in collaboration with the Delaware River Basin Commission to ensure that the entire 197-mile non-tidal Delaware River maintains its Special Protection Waters designation.

He looks forward to having more time to fish, hike, bike, visit family and friends, travel, and volunteer for conservation organizations.

New Access for Lackawaxen River

The new White Mills Recreational Park became the first fully accessible Lackawaxen River access to open with a large gathering of federal, Commonwealth, county, and local officials; environmental agency representatives; project contributors; disability empowerment proponents; and recreation enthusiasts in attendance at the October 27 ribbon-cutting ceremony next to the Sports Factory of NEPA field.

The access offers a concrete boat ramp, walkway with stencils, restrooms, bench, trash receptacles, and signage.

This is the second of four river accesses which are part of a vision by the Wayne & Pike Trails & Waterways Alliance to develop or link multi-use recreational trails from Honesdale to Lackawaxen.

Construction on a third river access at Sycamore Point in Honesdale will begin in March 2024, with a fourth site located behind The Dime Bank at Indian Orchard in Texas Township to follow.

The first collaboration between the Lackawaxen River Trails group and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) completed a public access at Bingham Park in Hawley Borough in 2020.

Grant Genzlinger and Molly Rodgers from Lackawaxen River Trails said that a



DEDICATION: National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Superintendent Lindsey Kurnath, left, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn, and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Tim Schaeffer pose with a golden paddle at the new river access in White Mills after the October 27 dedication ceremony. (Photo Contributed by David B. Soete)

feasibility study initiated by the Wayne County Commissioners and funded by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources triggered all this, work-

ing in close collaboration with the PFBC to select the best sites to develop, and with Woodland Design Associates to turn their vision into reality.

Lackawaxen River Conservancy Proposes National Designation

The Lackawaxen River Conservancy is pursuing a federal Wild and Scenic River designation to protect and preserve the Lackawaxen River's "beauty, unspoiled charm and special character" in perpetuity.

Christine Foland represented the non-profit organization in a Sept. 19 presentation to the Upper Delaware Council's Water Use/Resource Management Committee.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act dates back to 1968. The 73.4-mile bi-state Upper Delaware River's designation came in 1978 and the River Management Plan for its cooperative management was finalized in 1986.

Foland said that while they began conversations with the National Park Service (NPS) in 2021, they had paused efforts and are now starting to reintroduce the concept with awareness of the "heavy lifting" that's involved to secure an Act of Congress.

"The Lack" flows without impoundments over 31.3 miles from south of Prompton Lake to the Delaware River. The hydroelectric plant at Lake Wallenpaupack is not a disqualifying factor since it contributes to the river's flows. For a preliminary documentation of outstandingly remarkable values, Foland cited the river's recreational use and its historical connections to the Delaware & Hudson Canal, the Stourbridge Railroad, Dorflinger Glass Factory Museum, and the Zane Grey House and Museum.

The first step is to gain the backing of U.S. Representative Matt Cartwright and at least one of their U.S. Senators (Bob Casey or John Fetterman), along with ample evidence of local support, to request Congressional approval of a study. A locally-comprised committee of stakeholders would work with NPS to verify eligibility as a Partnership Wild and Scenic River and draft a river management plan.

While describing the national prestige, potential economic boost, technical assistance opportunities, and protections against projects with adverse river impacts as designation benefits, Foland emphasized that local control and private property rights would be maintained. They welcome the experienced advice of the UDC. W&SR tributaries in the Delaware Basin include the Morris River, White Clay Creek, and Musconetcong River.

PFBC partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to provide Wayne County with a \$120,290 Boating Facility Grant; DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program provided \$158,000; and local fundraising efforts contributed \$37,000 of the project costs.

PFBC Executive Director Tim Schaeffer said, "This work has become a model for the Delaware Watershed. As an agency, we are 'all in' and that starts here on the Lackawaxen. When communities recognize the value of the natural resources in their own backyards...and embrace fishing and boating accesses along these waterways, the benefits are undeniable."

DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn predicted that the string of ADA accessible and connected accesses "will drive the economy beyond your imagination."

PFBC Board President William Gibney, PA Senators Lisa Baker and Rosemary Brown, PA Representatives Jonathan Fritz and Joe Adams, Wayne County Commissioners Brian Smith and Jocelyn Cramer, representatives from the Human Resources Foundation and Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, and family of the late Rudy Schemitz to whom the White Mills recreational park is dedicated also spoke during the ceremony.

Conferences Focus on River

By Kerry Engelhardt, UDC Resources & Land Use Specialist

This fall, UDC staff attended two conferences focused on the Delaware River.

The 11th Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum hosted by the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed was held September 28-29 in Wilmington, Delaware at the Chase Center on the Waterfront, on the Christiana River.

Over 300 people attended the event, which featured keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and field trips. Attendees represented organizations working within the Delaware River Watershed, from the states of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

UDC Resources and Land Use Specialist Kerry Engelhardt attended a breakout session on State Revolving Fund (SRF) Investments in the Delaware River Watershed, which discussed how SRFs are funded and distributed, and where participants discussed successes and challenges in securing and using the funds.

Another breakout session on funding, Enhancing Water Quality and Water Flow Management, discussed the Delaware River Conservation Fund and how that funding is made available to local programs. Discussions among small groups of participants led to a conversation among the larger group regarding personal experiences with the programs.

A field trip to the First State National Historical Park was educational and illuminating. It is the first and only national park unit in the state of Delaware, and shares some commonalities with the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. Superintendent Josh Boles led a 1.5 mile hike throughout the park and entertained the participants with valuable information, insight, and humor.

On Friday, a session on Equitable Collaborative Partnerships in Addressing MS4, Flooding, and Green Infrastructure involved presenters discussing how to establish collaborative partnerships, and what can be accomplished when different groups work together towards a common goal.

In a session on Stories and Strategies: Communicating Issues Facing the Watershed, communications managers from various non-profit organizations within the watershed took part in an exercise on what sort of messaging to present in the short-, medium-, and long-term after a significant flooding event, and how those strategies could be applied to different events.

Overall, the Forum was once again a source of education, illumination, and inspiration.

The 2023 Water, Water Everywhere Conference was hosted by the Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) on October 24 and 25.

Held both in person and online, the WWE conference featured presentations on a wide array of topics affecting the Upper Delaware River Watershed, such as stream restoration, climate resilience, and the role of the National Park System in the watershed.

Educational presentations on macroinvertebrates, the Flexible Flow Management Program, and the UDR Wild Trout Management Plan were also featured. Visit www.fudr.org for copies of the presentations.

UDC STATE FUNDING, continued from Page 3

proven success, and the municipalities would lose their collective voice and role in protecting the River Corridor," the letter reads.

This was never the intention of the Congressional sponsors of the 1978 legislation which added the Upper Delaware River to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in recognition of its outstandingly remarkable values.

Sponsoring Congressional members, U.S. Representatives Matt McHugh, Ben Gilman, and Joe McDade, wrote a letter to the incoming Upper Delaware Council dated January 11, 1988 which stated:

"We urge you to take this conservation plan seriously and make the most of it. If you do, fifty years from now when the Upper Delaware is still a quality river, your children and their children will thank you for the steps you are taking today."

Ohliger's letter concludes, in part, "The UDC has heeded this warning and now

humbly asks that the participant States do as well."

At press time, no replies had been received from either state.

Recent media coverage includes an editorial in the Oct. 16 issue of Delaware Currents and article in The Epoch Times published Nov. 9.



LOGGING DAY: Woodchips were flying during a chainsaw cutting contest at the Narrowsburg Chamber of Commerce's Logging Day: Celebrating Our Heritage on October 7 as the New York State Lumberjack Association put on 12 competitive events along with vendors, live music, food trucks, and a riverside bonfire for the public to enjoy. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

"TIMBER!" Filming Locally

Internationally recognized photographer and director Paul Aresu commenced shooting for the documentary "TIMBER!" in the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River area of NY and PA in early October.

"Because this is where 'TIMBER!' had its genesis, thanks to the annual Logging Days Festival in Narrowsburg, NY, we will begin by documenting this year's festival and then on locations through the region. But the scope of the project is global," Aresu said.

"TIMBER!" will illuminate the powerful presence of trees and forests throughout our world in a quest for a deeper understanding of how one of our greatest natural resources can be sustained in an era of increasing demand for natural products that are also a main source of the air we breathe and part of the landscapes we treasure.

Cynthia Nash of Milanville, PA, a producer and writer for "TIMBER!", noted, "Paul is preeminently qualified to shoot and direct this project because of his relentless energy coupled with his incredible ability to capture the essence of subject matter that involves action and passion."

To watch the project's progress, visit www.paularesu.com.

Upper Delaware Council Activity Highlights

Highlights of UDC and river valley issues from late July to late November 2023, not mentioned elsewhere, include:

COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

The UDC passed two resolutions at the 10/5 meeting: 2023-06 Approving Technical Assistance Grants for Fiscal Year 2024; and 2023-07 Approving Newsletter Contract Award for Fiscal Year 2024.

PROJECT REVIEWS

Review of the proposed renovation of the 223-acre Kittatinny Canoes and Campgrounds facility along NYS Route 97 in Barryville into the Camp FIMFO Catskills camping resort continued as the Town of Highland Planning Board on 9/27 voted to require the preparation of a full Draft Environmental Impact Statement under the NYS Environmental Quality Review Act.

The UDC submitted its comments on the draft EIS Scoping Document by the 20-day deadline of 11/22.

In the interim, the UDC commissioned the principal author of the River Management Plan Land and Water Use Guidelines, consultant Tom Shepstone, to conduct an analysis of the substantial conformance reviews prepared by the UDC and NPS which reached different conclusions.



UDC PADDLERS: The Upper Delaware Council's 35th Annual Family Raft Trip attracted 95 guests on August 6th to paddle a scenic six-mile stretch of the Upper Delaware River from the Staircase Access in the Town of Lumberland, NY to Matamoras in Westfall Township, PA, with Kittatinny Canoes providing the boats, life vests, shuttles and safety briefings. Above, Dennis & Mayra Sacco from Dingmans Ferry, PA, and Manny & Marisol Martinez from Old Bridge, NJ prepare to launch. The event promotes stewardship of the river. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)



CORRIDOR MAP: UDC Vice-Chairperson Virginia Dudko presented a map depicting the Town of Deerpark property within the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River boundary that Town Supervisor Gary Spears accepted October 2nd as the latest Upper Delaware Council recipient among all member towns and townships. Daniel Munoz of Orange County Geographic Information Systems prepared the map file for the UDC. (Photo by UDC Deerpark Alternate Bill Dudko)

Copies of his 9/18 opinion paper are available upon request.

The Council completed these Substantial Conformance (SC) reviews this period:

Lackawaxen Township - 2022-11: Zoning Ordinance Amendment on Boat, Golf Cart & RV Storage Businesses: NPS final determination on 8/17 concurred with UDC 7/6 recommendation.

Town of Tusten - 2023-04: Narrowsburg Veterinary, NPS concurred 8/17 with UDC 7/6 recommendation; 2023-08: Narrowsburg Car and Dog Wash, and 2023-09: Green Acres Gunsmith, NPS concurred 10/24 with UDC 9/13 recommendations.

Shohola Township - 2023-06: Advanced Recycling, NPS concurred 8/17 with UDC 7/6 recommendation.

Town of Highland - 2023-07: Eve Fisher and Andrew McGrath retail wine shop; NPS concurred 8/17 with UDC 7/6 recommendation; 2023-10: The Loosey Kit cannabis cultivation and processing; NPS concurred 10/24 with UDC 9/13 recommendation for both projects in Barryville.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The joint UDC/NPS Telecommunications Subcommittee continued work sessions to explore emerging technologies as alternatives to cell towers in the scenic river valley to guide development of a position paper.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

In addition to liaison roles with commit-

tees including NPS Water Safety, Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Delaware River Sojourn, DRBC's Water Management Advisory, Pike/Wayne Conservation Partnership, Local History Roundtable, Delaware Highlands Conservancy's Eagle Conservation, and the D&H Transportation Heritage Council, UDC staff attended the: 7/26 NYS Environmental Bond Act session; 8/16 DRBC's Regulated Flows Advisory Committee; 8/22 first meeting of the Upper Delaware River Watershed Plan Steering Committee; 9/11 Northern Snakehead Management Strategies meeting; 9/29 first-ever Upper Delaware Post-Season Water Safety Partners meeting; 10/17 first Housing Solutions in the Upper Delaware Region Advisory Group; 10/27 informational session on a request by Holbert Quarry of Lackawaxen to amend the special conditions of its PA Large Non-coal Quarry Mining Permit; 11/13 Upper Delaware BioBlitz 2024 event feasibility meeting; and 11/15 Climate Resilience in the Upper Delaware webinar.

The UDC provided presentations or remarks for the 8/2 Day on the Delaware in Barryville; 9/17 Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Leadership Sullivan class visit to Narrowsburg; 10/4 "Chatskill" WJFF Public Radio program; and 10/24 Friends of the Upper Delaware

Please see HIGHLIGHTS on Page 7

HIGHLIGHTS, continued from Page 6

River conference in Hancock.

NPS PERSONNEL

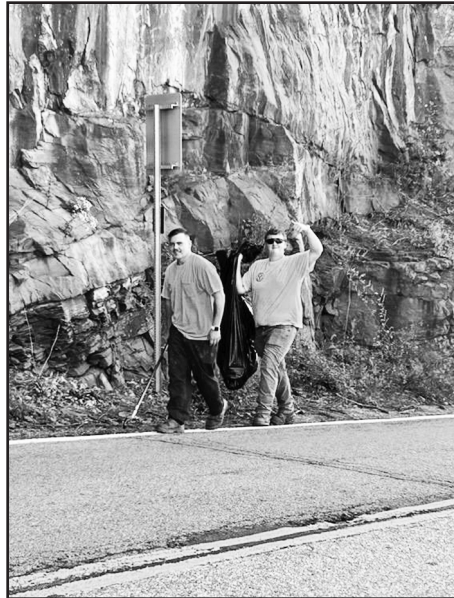
The NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River recently onboarded two new positions, Corrine Hinton as the Community Volunteer Ambassador intern effective 10/1 and Jasmine Leung as the Visual Information Specialist on 11/19, while filling the Community Planner vacancy on 12/3 with Carly Marshall, who previously worked as planning director at Gettysburg.

2024 UDC EVENTS

Save the dates of 8/4 for the 36th Annual UDC Family Raft Trip, with the river segment to be determined, and 9/22 for the 36th Annual River Valley Awards at Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake.



PLAY BALL! The Upper Delaware Council was the featured "Community Organization of the Game" at the Aug. 1 Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders Minor League Baseball game at the PNC Field in Moosic, PA, allowing for prime exhibit space on the concourse shared with the National Park Service Upper Delaware Water Safety team, a pre-game interview, radio promotion, a small share of proceeds from the sale of 25 reserved seats, and the chance for Town of Tusten UDC Representative Evan Padua, above, to throw out the ceremonial first pitch. See the video on Facebook! (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)



CLEANING UP: Town of Deerpark Highway Department crew members Chris Morgan and Tim Brehm picked up debris along the NYS Route 97 Hawk's Nest, while Town of Lumberland contractor Ann Steimle scoured the river and its banks for trash to fulfill 2023 UDC River & Shoreline Clean-up Grant projects. (Contributed Photos by the Towns of Deerpark and Lumberland)

UDC Grants Awarded and Completed

The Upper Delaware Council approved \$12,822 for two Fiscal Year 2024 Technical Assistance Grants on October 5, bringing the cumulative amount awarded since 1988 to \$943,096 to fund 264 municipal projects to further goals of the River Management Plan.

The Council granted \$10,000 to the Town of Tusten toward the development of an Open Space and Recreation Plan and \$2,822 to Damascus Township to revamp an Emergency Preparedness brochure. They have until August 16, 2024 to complete the work.

The Fiscal Year 2023 round wrapped up with an \$8,622.50 payment to the Town of Tusten for fulfilling its Technical Assistance Grant project to collect all recent zoning law amendments into an online, indexed document. The Tusten Town Board hired General Code and Peter Manning from Genius Loci Planning to integrate separate zoning revisions from 2017-2022 into a single source that is publicly accessible on the town website.

The Towns of Deerpark and Lumberland completed their projects under the UDC's 2023 River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants Program for reimbursement payment of \$5,640.13 and \$1,400, respectively, that were approved on September 26.

Deerpark conducted three multi-day litter sweeps of the iconically picturesque Hawk's Nest area of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway New York State Route 97 after Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day along a 2.9-mile section to the Lumberland town line. Their costs were for labor, transportation, supplies and disposal fees.

Lumberland contracted with Ann Steimle of Glen Spey to collect trash every other week during the summer along the town's river banks from Camp Tel-Yehudah to the Mongaup River Access at the Deerpark town border.

Since initiating this grant program in 2014, the UDC has awarded \$48,403.13 to participating member municipalities as an investment of the Council's operating funds to help keep the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and its banks pristine.

Watershed Conservation Funds to Benefit Local Projects

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation announced a sixth round of 36 Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund awards totaling \$14.9 million on Aug. 31.

Regional recipients include:

Town of Tusten - \$75,000 for *Creating a Recreation and Open Space Plan* to develop GIS maps, update inventories of species and habitats of concern, and engage the public in a planning process that will identify areas and tools for protection, and set implementation strategies.

National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River - \$86,200 for *Evaluation of the Endangered Dwarf Wedgemussel Population in the Delaware River (NY, PA)* to design a framework to conduct qualitative and quantitative surveys in the mainstream.

Delaware River Basin Commission - \$498,200 for *Assessing the Factors that Impact Water Quality in the Upper Delaware* to conduct three water quality studies to yield data in support of future

monitoring and management efforts.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission - \$1 million for *Improving Public Access and Recreation in the Pennsylvania Portion of the Delaware River, Part III*, which will provide grants to public entities and nonprofit groups for the planning, acquisition, development, expansion, and rehabilitation of boating facilities.

Additional funds were provided by the William Penn Foundation, AstraZeneca, and via the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Round-up of Presentations to the UDC

AUGUST 3: “Introduction of Sullivan County Commissioner of Public Safety Scott F. Schulte.” Having assumed administration of Sullivan County’s Office of Emergency Management, Homeland Security, the Bureau of Fire, the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, Probation Department, 911 Center, and Emergency Operations Center on May 30, Schulte described his responsibilities, answered questions, and encouraged the Council to summarize river valley concerns for follow-up, which did occur.

SEPTEMBER 7: “Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!” Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) Watershed Steward Program Team Leader for Sullivan County, Leeann Bruetsch, and Assistant Program Coordinator Mary Keefe discussed why it’s important and how to thoroughly clean, drain, and treat boats and fishing equipment before and after visiting every waterbody to avoid the spread of harmful animal and plant invasive species.

OCTOBER 5: “Fall Dewatering Exercise for the 2024 Delaware Aqueduct Repairs Shutdown.” Jennifer Garigliano, director of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Water Supply, returned to the UDC with an update. For three weeks starting Oct. 16, the aqueduct was temporarily shut down as a planned test ahead of the anticipated eight-month period in October of 2024 when NYC DEP will make final connections with the 2.5-mile bypass tunnel under the Hudson River to fix a section known to



TUNNEL INSPECTION: New York City Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Commissioner Paul Rush, left, and Water System Capital Program Director Sean McAndrew, P.E., inspected progress on the Delaware Aqueduct Bypass Tunnel in this May 16, 2018 photo. The UDC received a project update on the Fall 2023 dewatering exercise ahead of the scheduled 2024 Aqueduct leak repairs at the October 5 monthly meeting. (Photo copyright: NYC WATER)

be leaking since the 1990s that wastes upwards of 35 million gallons per day.

The \$1 billion capital repair project was delayed for a second year after a March 2023 two-week dewatering revealed a more extensive, faster infiltration of groundwater than projected.

A more robust pumping system to ensure the safety of workers that will be 700 feet below ground is being installed, with new engineering calculations pending from the longer, deeper test.

Garigliano will make a new presentation to the UDC before next fall’s shutdown that will address advance



Kaylan Hubbard,
Land Protection
Coordinator, Delaware
Highlands Conservancy



Scott F. Schulte,
Sullivan County
Commissioner of
Public Safety,
Homeland Security,
Emergency Mgmt.

release drawdown plans to be based on current hydrological conditions.

NOVEMBER 2: “Delaware Highlands Conservancy: Conservation, Education & Partnership.” Land Protection Coordinator Kaylan Hubbard offered information on the non-profit Delaware Highlands Conservancy land trust’s work in the target service area of Wayne and Pike Counties, PA and Delaware and Sullivan Counties, NY.

She explained how conservation easements work on a voluntary basis to protect the natural beauty, clean water and wildlife of the region, maintain connections between habitats, support sustainable agriculture and forestry, and achieve permanent conservation without removing land from private ownership or requiring public access. These legally binding agreements are tailored to the landowner’s goals and can provide tax credit benefits.

Since 1994, the accredited organization has protected nearly 19,000 acres. The only property they own is their donated headquarters at the Van Scott Nature Reserve at 517 Perkins Pond Road, Beach Lake, PA.

Zoom recordings of these presentations are typically available as links to the corresponding meeting minutes posted on the UDC website.



AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS: Leeann Bruetsch and Mary Keefe represented the CRISP Watershed Steward Program at the July 15 NPS Zane Grey Festival in Lackawaxen, PA. (Contributed Photo)

Day on the Delaware at the Highland Access

With the backdrop of a refurbished Highland River Access in Barryville as a tangible example of what Upper Delaware River funding investments can accomplish, the Day on the Delaware brought advocates together to celebrate and recommit.

"Years of coalition building, public outreach, and policy advocacy efforts are starting to pay off, and we need to keep up the momentum," said Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. Executive Director Jeff Skelding.

Since 2018, the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program has awarded over \$5 million in grants in the New York portion of the watershed; a \$15 million appropriation was sought this year.

"The Delaware River Basin Conservation Act [H.R. 1395] unlocked tremendous federal resources, and with it, the full potential of the Delaware River Basin. We now have the ability to undertake impactful initiatives to improve water quality, climate resiliency, flood mitigation, wildlife protection, and building projects like this boat launch to support recreational activities," said U.S. Representative Marc Molinaro.

"While today is a celebration of this progress, it's also a recognition that there's more to do. We must reauthorize the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act to ensure this natural treasure is here long into the future, and I'm proud to be advocating in Congress to get this done," he



RIVER ADVOCATES: Sullivan County Legislator and Town of Lumberland Upper Delaware Council Representative Nadia Rajsz spoke during the August 2nd Day on the Delaware held at the refurbished Highland River Access, as New York State Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, Friends of the Upper Delaware River Executive Director Jeff Skelding, and U.S. Congressman Marc Molinaro (NY-19) looked on. (UDC Photos by Laurie Ramie, above and below right)

added.

The importance of a continued commitment from New York State was stressed.

"Two years ago, we broke into the Environmental Protection Fund with

\$300,000 as the first ever line item in the NYS budget for Upper Delaware watershed planning and projects, then got \$350,000 this year. That's a symbol of what we can all accomplish together. We take care of this river and I will continue to fight in Albany," said Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther (100th District).

Sullivan County Legislator Nadia Rajsz praised the efforts of County Senior Planner Heather Jacksy to doggedly seek improvements at Upper Delaware river accesses through building partnerships.

"The federal government, state, and county needs to continue these investments and the Upper Delaware Council also needs to be funded," Rajsz said.

Jacksy detailed how the Highland Access was upgraded for ADA compliance with a more gently sloping path, launch pad, paved and striped parking, new safety guiderails, and knotweed remediation.



DAMASCUS PARK: Damascus Township held a ribbon-cutting ceremony August 14 for Phase 1 of the Township Park project and a Community Grand Opening October 7 for the new playground, at right. The Damascus Parks and Recreation Committee raised \$570,000 over 7 years through grants and donations to develop the property located at 60 Conklin Hill Road, including \$15,000 from the Upper Delaware Council through its "Townships, Technology & Sustainability" grant administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The park includes safe playsets, accessible walkways, a ballfield, natural amphitheater, pavilion, benches, parking, and will have a nature trail in Phase 2. Participating were, bottom row: Amos Valenti, Barry Isett Associates; Paul Macknosky, PA DCED; Bryan Smith, BIA; Christine Dettore, PA DCNR; Dan Rutledge, Parks & Rec chair; Brian Smith and James Shook, Wayne County Commissioners; PA Rep. Jonathan Fritz; PA Senator Lisa Baker; PA Rep. Joe Adams; and contractor Jerry Chlewski. Top row: Maureen and John Tucci, Parks & Rec Committee; Damascus Supervisor Scott Rutledge; UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie; Damascus Supervisor Joe Canfield; Wayne County Commissioner Jocelyn Cramer; and Damascus Supervisor Steve Adams. (Contributed Photo)



al paddling excursion with programming since 1995.

Richard H. Lowe III, Community Service Award for his legacy contributions to Hancock's economic development, beautification, historical and cultural rebranding initiatives.

Tom and Cecilia Coacci of Damascus, PA, Community Service Award for offering their time, talents, labor, materials, and fundraising assistance to quietly support numerous events in the Town of Tusten and beyond.

Cathy Daboul of Barryville, NY, Volunteer Award for providing her helping hand to the Town of Highland Lions Club, Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce, New Hope Manor, St. Ann's Church, wellness, health and community projects.

Rosie Starr of WJFF Radio Catskill, Special Recognition for producing and hosting the "Farm and Country" show about rural life in the Upper Delaware River Valley and the "Why [Eye] Farm" exhibit with Woody Goldberg and Pat Carullo.

Nathaniel Pereira-Mendoza of Narrowsburg, NY and Sullivan West High School, Special Recognition for designing and illustrating the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River's new Junior Ranger book and badge.

Andy Boyar, Town of Highland UDC representative, Oaken Gavel Award for chairing the Council in 2022 from which he and Jim Greier announced plans to retire at the end of 2023.

U.S. Congressman Marcus J. Molinaro, a former mayor, State Assembly member, and Dutchess County Executive who began representing New York's 19th District in 2023, delivered the keynote address.

"Thank you to the Upper Delaware Council for organizing this event and thank you to all the tremendous advocates that we are here to honor," Molinaro said.

"For decades, the work of community members like everyone here has helped preserve this landscape to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy it.

"In collaboration with local leaders, the UDC helps preserve over 55,000 acres of land in New York and Pennsylvania. This land provides over 250,000 people with unmatched outdoor recreation each year and generates tens of millions of dollars



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Upper Delaware Council 2023 Chairperson Aaron Robinson presents U.S. Congressman Marc Molinaro with a Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct photo taken by David B. Soete. (UDC Photos by Scott Rando)

in tourist revenue for local communities.

"The landscape is also essential for the environmental health of the Northeast. The watershed provides 17 million people with clean drinking water, supports a vibrant local agriculture economy, and the surrounding forests provide habitat to countless species of wildlife.

"I am proud to be able to advocate for such a valuable natural resources, and I am proud to represent passionate residents who go out of their way to take action," he said.

One of Rep. Molinaro's first actions in Congress was to introduce, with Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, the Delaware River Basin Conservation Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1395) which has funded nearly 150 projects through the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Delaware River Basin Restoration Program over the past eight years.

As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, Molinaro fought for conservation programs in the 2023 Farm Bill and introduced H.R. 5250, the Flooding Prevention, Assessment, and Restoration Act of 2023, which will allow for construction of more resilient flood prevention infrastructure through USDA programs and reduce cost shares for rural communities. Agriculture plays a major role in protecting water quality, improving soil health, and preserving the natural ecology.

"However, federal efforts are only as effective as the partners on the ground that help implement them," Molinaro observed.

"In that regard, we are lucky to have the UDC and the incredible network of grassroots partners through the Delaware Basin. It is going to take continued collaboration and persistence to achieve this mission in the future, but I have no doubt that everyone in this room is up to the challenge," he said.

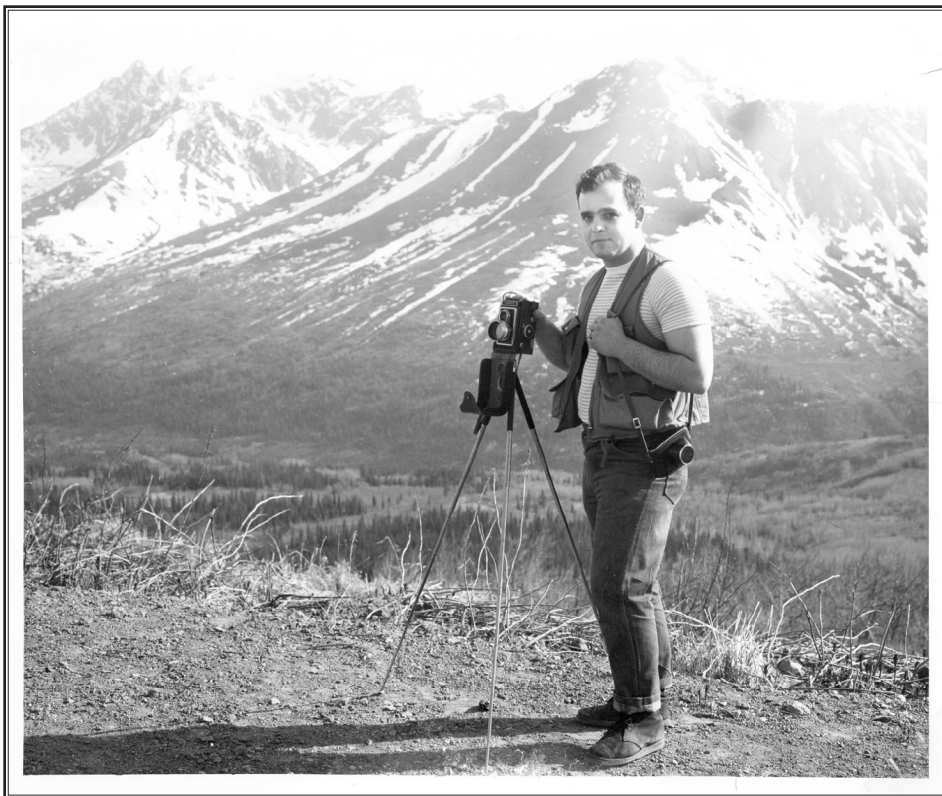
A program booklet with complete award descriptions and color photos can be found on the UDC website or requested by calling 845-252-3022.



LIFESAVERS: Nancy Lauby teared up as she described the impact of rescuing a father and son in danger of drowning, while her husband Tom Zibinski encouraged her to continue her remarks.



2023 Distinguished Service Award winner
James A. Greier, Town of Fremont



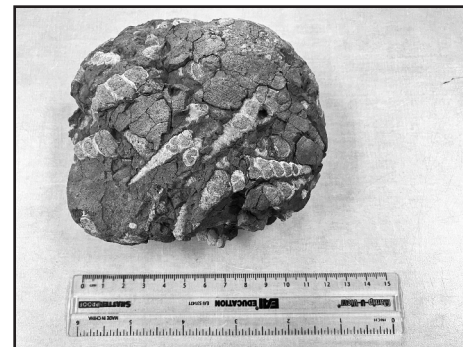
REMEMBERING JACK: The Basket Historical Society (BHS) of the Upper Delaware Valley published this May 1959 image of Jack Niflot, taken by photographer Don Polath when Jack was stationed in Alaska with the U.S. Army Infantry Radio Signal Corps, in "The ECHO" newsletter to commemorate the 10th anniversary of their founder's June 22, 2013 death. Some Alaska scenes were discovered in one of his photo albums stored in BHS's Long Eddy museum. Jack was the Town of Fremont's appointed Upper Delaware Council alternate then representative from 1994-2013 and served as the board's secretary-treasurer for 10 non-consecutive terms. He was also a Town of Fremont councilman for 19 years, worked for the *Sullivan County Democrat* newspaper for 28 years as well as a freelance photographer, and was co-author of "Dear Sister: The Civil War Letters of the Brothers Gould" among other memberships and accomplishments. Contact the BHS of the Upper Delaware Valley at P.O. Box 198, Long Eddy, NY 12760 or baskethistorical@gmail.com. (Photo reprinted with permission)

Memorial Contributions Benefit UDC

The Upper Delaware Council expresses gratitude to the families of Robert Cella (8/25/42 to 2/10/20), formerly of Barryville, NY, for a second donation of \$5,000 received Nov. 1 following a \$10,000 charitable trust foundation gift on Jan. 4 of this year, and Phyllis "Grammy" MacKinney (11/17/35 to 10/25/23) of New Jersey for listing the UDC as a beneficiary for memo-

rial contributions based on Mrs. MacKinney's enjoyment of spending time at their cabin on the Delaware River.

The Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. donated \$1,500 to the UDC which Treasurer Larry H. Richardson presented on Nov. 2 in appreciation for the non-profit volunteer organization's use of UDC meeting and storage space in 2023.



Fossil Found at Ten Mile River

After storing an unusual rock in their Narrowsburg garage for decades that their then teenage son Doug had found near the Ten Mile River, Ed and Doreen Kraus brought the relic in a plastic container to the Upper Delaware Council office one day to see if it was of interest to anyone before tossing it.

Turns out a preliminary determination by a National Park Service paleontologist in Washington, D.C. indicates that this fossil is nearly 400 million years old!

The embedded fossils are Gastropods (snails) that have a general high-spined shape in the order of *Palaeozygopleura* found in Devonian rock formations.

That's consistent with the Upper Delaware region's rock formations, which date back to Late (383-359 million years) and Middle (375-349) Devonian ages.

While this type of fossil is not particularly rare, additional expert consultation was recommended.

NPS Upper Delaware Natural Resources Program Manager Don Hamilton told the *River Reporter* in late September, "Depending on the provenance of it and how that can be documented, it may end up in the park's collection of artifacts."

That would be a thrill for the Kraus family, especially considering that Doug went on from his nature-exploring youth to work for the National Park Service in Search & Rescue out west.

Please Help the UDC to Update Our Mailing List

The Upper Delaware Council offers its free newsletter online at www.upperdelawarecouncil.org or via postal mail. Please advise us if you wish to discontinue your mail copy, would like to sign up as a new mail subscriber, or if there are any changes to your name or address for our records. Return this notice to: Upper Delaware Council, P.O. Box 192, Narrowsburg, NY 12764; or call (845) 252-3022 or email info@upperdelawarecouncil.org.

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The Upper Delaware Council, Inc. meets on the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Three standing committees meet monthly as follows: Water Use/Resource Management, third Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.; Project Review and Operations, fourth Tuesdays at 6:30 and 7:30 p.m., at the UDC office, 211 Bridge St., Narrowsburg, NY. All meetings are open to the public. Call (845) 252-3022 or visit www.upperdelawarecouncil.org for details.

Upper Delaware News, Views and 'To Do's'

Visitors Increase

The number of tourists recreating in the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River increased in the most recent National Park Service Visitor Spending Effects Report, also raising the economic impact.

2022 statistics found 270,718 visitors spent \$13.5 million, up from 2021 counts of 269,810 visitors and \$13.3 million.

That visitation supported a total of 129 jobs which generated \$7 million in labor income and \$11.3 million in value added income. The four largest sectors were: lodging (27.29%); restaurants (22.44%), gas (17.7%), and groceries (14.06%).

In total, 2022 visitation to the Upper Delaware generated \$17.1 million in economic output to gateway communities.

Eagle Watch Time

Join the Delaware Highlands Conservancy on a guided Eagle Watch bus tour this winter.

Trips will depart from the Winter Field Office at the Zane Grey Museum in Lackawaxen, PA on the following dates: January 6, 20, 27, and February 3, 17, and

24 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tickets are \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members. Kids under 12 are free. Visit delawarehighlands.org/events or call (570) 226-3164, ext. 2 to reserve seats.

Those preferring to take their own driving tours may consult delawarehighlands.org/eagles for information on "eagle etiquette" and to download a map with GPS coordinates for Eagle Observation Areas located throughout the Upper Delaware River region. Main monitoring areas are the Mongaup Reservoir, and the Delaware River at Minisink Falls and the Zane Grey boat launch in Lackawaxen.

On weekends in January and February, the viewing areas are staffed by Conservancy volunteers.

The Upper Delaware River region is one of the largest wintering habitats for eagles in the northeastern United States.

Recycle Food Scraps

The Sullivan County Department of Solid Waste & Recycling has started a program to recycle food scraps into compost to capture and return their nutrients and energy to the environment rather than create

methane in the landfill.

Interested participants can register to attend an information session and receive a starter kit by calling (845) 807-0291 or email recycling@sullivanny.us.

Drop-off sites are at the landfill transfer stations in Eldred, Livingston Manor, Monticello, Ferndale, and Wurtsboro.

The goal is to have enough participation to build a composting facility in Sullivan County. The diverted scraps will currently be taken to Ulster County for processing.

New Art Gallery

Zane Grey Plein Air now has a basecamp in the Upper Delaware after opening a new gallery in Narrowsburg on December 2.

The Zane Grey Gallery is located in the Narrowsburg Union at 7 Erie Ave. in Suite 105A. See www.zanegreypleinair.com.

There, they will host demonstrations, exhibitions, and year-round, theme-based workshops with a large classroom to extend their open air season. A shop within the gallery will be stocked with artists' essentials. It will be open on Saturdays and Sundays or by appointment.