

# The Upper Delaware

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

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Articles written or edited by Laurie Ramie, unless otherwise indicated.

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**STRATEGY SESSION:** The Upper Delaware Council held a socially-distanced Strategic Plan Retreat October 3 at the Narrowsburg Union to identify priority issues and discuss action strategies to inform developing a new Five-Year Operating Plan. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

## Upper Delaware Council Strategizes Priority Issues for Next Five Years

The Upper Delaware Council (UDC) will soon articulate its operational objectives through 2025 based on a professionally-facilitated strategic planning process.

A new Five-Year Plan is due by the end of this year that will map out strategies to meet goals that have evolved over the non-profit organization's 32-year history.

On October 3rd, 20 people attended a Strategic Planning Retreat as a follow-up to a widely-circulated survey with a 34.9% return rate seeking opinions on the UDC's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; ranking priority issues; and reviewing a new draft mission statement.

A committee comprised of UDC 2020 Chairperson Larry H. Richardson, Shohola Township Rep. Roger Saumure, and Town of Tusten Rep. Susan Sullivan; Don Hamilton from the National Park Service; community member Steven Schwartz; Halle Van der Gaag from the National Parks Conservation Association; and UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie, teleconferenced five times with the facilitator team from Buck Moorhead Architect of Callicoon and New York City to shape the agenda.

Eight issues emerged as the Council's priorities. Rather than trying to rank them

### **Draft mission statement:**

*"Conserve, enhance and promote the Upper Delaware River corridor's natural and cultural resources and social and economic vitality, by fostering cooperation among public and private partners, to implement the River Management Plan."*

in any order of importance, participants agreed that each should be addressed as opportunities to fulfill them arise:

- ~ UDC Viability: Funding & Succession
- ~ Communication Infrastructure: Broad-band & Cellular for Commerce, Convenience, and Emergency Services
- ~ Economic Development of the Region
- ~ Maintaining Quality of the Resource
- ~ Education & Outreach
- ~ River Access & Recreational Opportunities
- ~ Relationship between UDC & NPS
- ~ Responding to Changing Demographics

Potential actions were discussed for each identified category. Those strategies will be reflected in the new plan.

"These could change over time and with

*Please see STRATEGIZE on Page 10*

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

## Upper Delaware Profile: Thomas H. Dent

From the Jersey Shore to the Delaware River, waterways have always been a source of pleasure for Tom Dent.

"Boating is my real passion," he says, whether it's on a luxurious 45-foot motorboat he once owned or paddling a kayak on the Upper Delaware that flows directly behind his house.

The Town of Delaware appointed Dent on June 10 of this year to serve as its Upper Delaware Council representative when 23-year UDC veteran Harold G. Roeder, Jr. opted to step back as alternate.

Town Supervisor Stephan Lundgren approached Dent to ask if he was interested. Indeed he was.

"I was curious about it. The river fascinates me. This organization has a different twist," he says.

While Dent has only been a full-time resident of Callicoon since 2011, the New Jersey native has immersed himself in the community that immediately impressed him for being "very comfortable, friendly, and anyone is willing to lend a hand."

The 75-year-old who was born in Bayonne, grew up in Point Pleasant, graduated from a Catholic Jesuit high school in 1963, and studied business at Monmouth College was lured away from his "beloved Jersey Shore" when a 2006 day trip introduced him to the historic Rohman's Inn in Shohola, PA.

His friend Sylvia had a family connection to Callicoon, Ireland and curiosity brought them to explore Callicoon, NY. When they were seeking a getaway three years later, an 1870's-era home on the aptly-named River Road was the first house they looked at and wound up buying in April 2009.

"Callicoon is just a nice place to be. It has what you need," he says.

Since 2014, Dent has owned the Callicoon Self-Storage business and an adjacent building with five commercial units and one apartment that he maintains.

He joined the Callicoon Business Association in 2015 and is its treasurer.

In 2016, Dent became an exterior support firefighter with the Callicoon Volunteer Fire Department and serves as company secretary. That followed his appointment as the town's representative to the Sullivan County Fire Safety Advisory Panel.

Dent, who finished his Bachelor's degree requirements in Business Administration in 1988 after a 25-year hiatus, earned valuable first-hand experience in the professional non-profit world.

He began employment with the international Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA) in 1968 in Red Bank, NJ when there were six employees, took over as executive director in 1980, and retired in 2006 when staffing



Tom Dent, Town of Delaware

had grown to 25 with a 19-member board of directors for the organization.

The CFA is the largest registry of pedigreed cats which licenses 400 cat shows worldwide each season and supports over 600 member clubs. Their mission extends to promoting the welfare of all cats through legislative advocacy and feline research.

"I was hired as a programmer with no computer experience, but I took to it. We developed our own registry software which essentially creates a family tree of cats. I loved the job. I was able to travel throughout the United States and meet a lot of interesting people. We produced an annual yearbook, a monthly magazine, held a national banquet, and gathered data from cat shows all over the country," he says.

Dent was the first president of the National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy focused on advancing scientific research to benefit shelter animals and he worked with the grantmaking Winn Feline Foundation. He served on the Humane Society of New Jersey's Board of Directors for many years.

With his background and skills, Dent is assessing how he can best contribute to the Upper Delaware Council. His observations as a riverfront property owner give him insight to the changing environmental conditions of the river and flood patterns.

Free time is spent kayaking and swimming seasonally. He enjoys tinkering in his so-called "Screw & Glue Workshop" he built behind his house. Dent takes inspiration from books and movies to visit European and other travel destinations, particularly to enjoy the native food specialties. His two adult children, Thomas and Trisha, and grandkids Donovan, 14, and Ginger, 17, all live in New Jersey.

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# National Park Service Names Superintendent

National Park Service (NPS) Regional Director Gay Vietzke has named Joseph A. Salvatore as the new superintendent of Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. His new role is expected to begin on December 20.

"We are very excited to have Joe Salvatore join us in Interior Region 1," said Vietzke. "Joe has an exceptional record as a leader and we believe in his ability to address the deferred maintenance challenges at the site. Recently, he served six months as the acting deputy superintendent at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Joe will bring great energy, passion and a strong commitment to the mission of the park, partners and community."

"I am honored to have been selected to serve as the superintendent of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River," said Salvatore. "I am just as proud to wear the National Park Service uniform as I was to wear the United States Navy uniform."

"I am excited by the opportunity to work with the staff to solve park issues and will strive to reduce the maintenance backlog. I look forward to serving this park and working with our partners and neighbors in this new role," he added.

Since 2016, Salvatore has served as the deputy chief for the Park Facility Management Division in the NPS Washington Support Office. In this position, he is responsible for facility management policies, programming, and planning across the ser-

vice.

Salvatore enlisted in the Navy when he was 18 years old. He spent six years on active duty and made six strategic deterrent patrols out of Holy Loch Scotland on the nuclear submarine, USS George Washington Carver, SSBN 656, Gold Crew, including patrolling during Operation Desert Storm.

After leaving the Navy, Salvatore spent nine years as a defense contractor.

He returned to government service in 2001, spending 10 years with the Joint Warfighting Center, Joint Forces Command. Here he received the Joint Civilian Service Award.

After spending two years at Commander Navy Region Japan as the director of strategy and future requirements, he assumed his first NPS position as chief of facility management for the National Mall and Memorial Parks.

Salvatore is a graduate of Saint Leo University in Florida with an Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration, specializing in management (Cum Laude) and a Master's degree in Business Administration.

In his free time, he likes to spend time



**ENTER ON DUTY:** Joseph A. Salvatore will begin his Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River superintendent assignment on Dec. 20, 2020. (Contributed Photo)

with his two adult children, Alicia and Joey, along with his two young grandchildren, Lena and Jack.

He is a big movie buff, loves to watch and play sports, is a big Baltimore Ravens fan, and an outdoors enthusiast. You will often see him on the park's hiking trails and river.

## Great American Outdoors Act Tackles Deferred Maintenance

Over \$10 billion to fund deferred maintenance projects in 421 national parks was authorized through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), which Congress passed with bipartisan support July 22 and President Trump signed into law on Aug. 4.

The Upper Delaware Council sent letters to Congressmen Antonio Delgado (NY-19), Matt Cartwright (PA-8), and Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18) on Sept. 3 informing them about the iconic, federally-owned properties of Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct and the Zane Grey House in this NPS unit.

"Our non-profit organization recognizes that these unique historical assets and the

facilities for NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River operations depend on an investment of funds to maintain and improve infrastructure needs," wrote UDC Chairperson Larry H. Richardson.

"This is a landmark legislative package to fund access to and maintenance of the nation's public lands by permanently funding the highly successful Land and Water Conservation Fund," Rep. Maloney said in an Oct. 5 response letter.

That will expand public access to natural areas and provide an economic boost for the outdoor recreation industry.

The Act also establishes a new National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund, subsidized by royalties from offshore oil and gas drilling.

The Federal Highway Administration recently sent a contracted survey crew to assess the condition of the framing, stonework, and ice breakers on the 1848 wire suspension Delaware Aqueduct.

Their report will form the basis for a potentially multi-phase, multi-million dollar rehabilitation package for GAOA consideration, according to NPS Upper Delaware Chief of Facilities Loren Goering.



**Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct** (Ramie Photo)

### UDC Board Changes

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn appointed Christine Detorre to serve as the Commonwealth's UDC alternate representative effective August 13, 2020.

Detorre has served as a DCNR Regional Advisor for the past five years. She supports local communities and stakeholders in the Northeast region to advance their conservation and recreation initiatives.

The alternate role was previously filled by PA Department of Environmental Protection River Basin Program Coordinator Rhonda Manning from Feb. 20, 2014 until her Dec. 1, 2019 retirement.

In other board changes, Town of Tusten 2nd Alternate Dan Paparella resigned on October 3, 2020 as he prepared to relocate. He had served since Sept. 10, 2019 as an active committee member, coordinator of the UDC's Upper Delaware Litter Sweep, and founder of the non-profit Upper Delaware Recreation Project.

# UDC Reintroduces Project Review Workbook

By Shannon Cilento

This fall, the Upper Delaware Council launched the Project Review Workbook 2.0, a reorganized version of the original document published on January 28, 1988.

This long-awaited update is particularly timely given the 2020 start of UDC's new Resources and Land Use Specialist and National Park Service's new Community and Land Use Planner, both of whom will use the workbook frequently, and an incoming Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (UPDE) Superintendent.

One of the UDC's primary responsibilities is to review land use, zoning, and development activities in its member municipalities in order for NPS to determine "substantial conformance" with the Land and Water Use Guidelines (LWUG).

The Project Review Workbook 2.0 outlines the substantial conformance review process from start to finish, and also provides useful forms, checklists, and tables to assist those submitting their river corridor projects to the UDC and NPS.

The spiral-bound Workbook includes a foldout map of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River corridor, color-coded sections on reviewing local laws, plans, ordinances, zoning maps and amendments, challenges, variances, and significant projects; corresponding forms; and appendices with additional information.

The launch of the new workbook coincides with a new page on the UDC website dedicated to the project review process. W Design of Barryville, NY was responsible for the graphic design of the Workbook and the website page. Here, municipal officials and other project partners can download fillable PDF forms, maps, and the workbook in digital format.

UDC has also partnered with NPS and the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) to create an approximately 50-minute-long orientation video.

Produced by Quiet Light Films of Bushkill, PA, the video features 2020 UDC

Chairperson Larry H. Richardson offering a brief introduction of the UDC's role, former NPS UPDE Community and Land Use



**FILMING VIDEO:** Quiet Light Films, LLC Managing Director Jordan D. Lewis films UDC Resources and Land Use Specialist Shannon Cilento for the Project Review Workbook Version 2.0 orientation video on Aug. 26 in the Council's Narrowsburg, NY office, and captured footage of UDC 2020 Chairperson Larry H. Richardson along the river in Lackawaxen, PA. (UDC Photo above by Laurie Ramie; below contributed by Peggy Richardson)

## NPS Hires Community and Land Use Planner

After working as the City Planner for Milton, GA (population of 45,000), Cody Hendrix will join the staff of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Dec. 7 as Community & Land Use Planner.

Hendrix says it has been a lifelong dream to work for the National Park Service.

"I fell in love with the idea of preserving America's waterways and mountains. It's all part of a great mission," he says.

Hendrix, who will soon turn 28, grew up in the Atlanta suburbs and wasn't all that familiar with the Northeast when he saw the position opening following the July departure of Jennifer Claster.

He visited and then became eager to relocate with his girlfriend Autumn Johnson, a registered nurse, initially

to a temporary rental in Lake Ariel, PA.

"It's insane how beautiful that part of the country is. I'm actually very excited to experience a true winter. I've always wanted to live in a colder place," he says.

Hendrix graduated from the University of Alabama in 2015 with a Bachelor's degree in Geography and earned a 2018 Master's in Public Administration from the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND.

Past employment included serving as a Forestry Technician in Alabama for one year and a project manager for Gwinnett County Public Schools in Suwanee, GA for two years, before he became manager of the 15-member City of Milton Planning Department in September 2017.

Hendrix has been busy reading through the Upper Delaware River Management Plan, discussing responsibilities with new colleagues, and he participated remotely in the UDC's Strategic Plan Retreat, saying, "I'd like to make an impact right away."

He enjoys hiking, hunting, fishing, cooking, college football, and staying active.



Cody Hendrix

Planner Jennifer Claster explaining the Workbook contents and functionality, planning consultant Tom Shepstone providing a historical account of the LWUG development, and UDC Resources and Land Use Specialist Shannon Cilento demonstrating use of the website features.

The video is available at [upperdelawarecouncil.org](http://upperdelawarecouncil.org) and social media channels.

The renewed outreach with the new Project Review Workbook 2.0 is intended to make the project review process more accessible, digestible, and easier to understand and use. It also serves to streamline the process and allow for better efficiency and project planning. The publication of the workbook and subsequent training video reenergize this process, which at its core aims to protect the river and its resources.





# High Use of Public Lands: Challenge & Opportunity

The Upper Delaware Council and National Park Service witnessed a documented increase in visitation to public recreational sites this season, undoubtedly spurred by the coronavirus pandemic.

With restrictions on travel and available activities since approximately the March 13, 2020 national emergency declaration, natural resources close to home have been experiencing a dramatic rise in popularity which fulfills goals for more appreciation and usage on one hand... but has also created capacity and safety issues.

The UDC held a River Traffic Public Safety forum on Aug. 18 to discuss impacts from congestion, traffic, trash, and potential degradation of resources.

The Council reached out to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on Sept. 25 to explore options for a particularly impacted river access located on NYS Route 97 at the Lumberland/Deerpark town border.

"One challenged facility to experience an ongoing growth in popularity, even before the COVID-19 era, is the Mongaup River Access...NPS visitation counts for the Mongaup Access from May to September 2019 recorded 11,551 contacts. This compares to 16,216 contacts from May through August 2020, slightly over a 40% increase to date. However, these counts are minimal at best in that they do not include those who gain entry from outside the DEC's designated vehicle parking area. That includes parking illegally on the state highway shoulders and across the road on vacant property...owned by Eagle Creek



**FULL LOTS:** Discussing overflow parking at the Mongaup River Access on Sept. 3 were, from the left, Sullivan County Legislator and Town of Lumberland UDC Representative Nadia Rajs, Lumberland Supervisor Jenny Mellan, Town of Lumberland Chief Constable Patrick Cahill, and Town Highway Superintendent Don "Bosco" Hunt, Jr. (UDC Photos by Laurie Ramie)

Renewable Energy. The open lot has become an attractive and habitual make-shift parking area due to the excessive demand of available parking spaces at the access. This in turn creates an additional hazard of people crossing the highway while often carrying boats and equipment," wrote Executive Director Laurie Ramie.

NYS DEC Region 3 Natural Resources Supervisor Bill Rudge said he is amenable to working with its co-management partners at the National Park Service to develop a plan to improve the parking situation.

"We recognize the increase in public use of this access and are willing to consider a redesign/expansion of the parking area to accommodate more visitors," Rudge said.



The upswing reflects an observed trend. The NPS traffic counter at the Mongaup Access recorded 3,089 vehicles during the 2018 season. By July 31 this year, the count was 10,783.

Visitor contacts at staffed NPS river access kiosks in Lackawaxen, Mongaup, Skinners Falls, and Ten Mile River increased from 35,771 in 2019 to 50,438 through August of 2020.

The Town of Deerpark, NYS DOT Region 8, Deerpark Police Department, and Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Committee have joined forces to address excessive crowds, reckless driving, and graffiti vandalism at the NYS Rt. 97 Hawk's Nest Drive as well.

On Oct. 22, Catskill Mountainkeeper hosted a webinar to address "hot spots" at trails and public recreation facilities throughout the Catskills and Adirondacks.

NYS DEC Deputy Commissioner of Natural Resources Katie Petronis said that COVID-19 visitation has amplified increases that were already evident, such as a 78% increase in hiking from 2007 to 2017.

"It's presenting challenges but also fantastic opportunities with so many new visitors to develop a conservation ethic. Education is a big part of the solution," she said, while adding, "Please go outside. Please explore!"

Rocci Aguirre of The Adirondack Council and formerly the NPS Upper Delaware said he hopes citizens will engage decision-makers about the need for recreation services and infrastructure investments.

NPS Upper Delaware Chief of Interpretation Ingrid Peterec agreed, "Resources are finite. Being a steward for public lands is very important. We can't do it alone and have to bring in all sorts of partnerships."



**HAWK'S NEST:** In mid-October, the New York State Department of Transportation changed the speed limit along the New York State Route 97 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Hawk's Nest Drive in the Town of Deerpark from 55 to 35 miles per hour. Signs have also been installed to limit parking at the scenic overlooks to 15 minutes. (UDC Photo by Shannon Cilento)



# Upper Delaware Council Activity Highlights

Highlights of UDC and river valley issues from mid-July to mid-November 2020, not mentioned elsewhere, include:

## TMR BOAT RAMP

Challenged by the National Park Service to develop options to counter the ban on trailered boat launching at the Ten Mile River Access in the Town of Tusten, the UDC retained JHA Companies of Honesdale, PA under a \$5,000 contract to conduct a feasibility study following an 8/3 site visit to scope out potential ramp locations with the Greater New York Council, Boy Scouts of America, as property owner and NPS as co-manager of the public access.

The three-phase study included preparing sketches of the existing conditions and boat ramp features shared with the Water Use/Resource Management Committee on 10/20 and an explanation of the structural engineer's design on 11/17. Next up will be preparing cost estimates for funding consideration and listing permit requirements.

## PROJECT REVIEWS

UDC Resources and Land Use Specialist Shannon Cilento finalized and turned over to NPS on 7/29 the 2019 Annual Code Enforcement Report summarizing all river corridor zoning activity based on the final member data submission in June 2020.

Cilento also created master databases to track Substantial Conformance reviews since the start of her tenure in mid-July and Technical Assistance Grants since 1988; and drafted a Land Use Complaint Policy



**UDC RAFT TRIP:** The Upper Delaware Council's 32nd Annual Family Raft Trip attracted 40 intrepid paddlers August 2nd after intermittent morning showers and a threatened thunderstorm that didn't materialize resulted in cancellations by an additional 52 pre-registered guests. The Cabrera group from Middletown, NY brought 20 people, including from left to right: Julianna Cabrera; Sarah Steed; Makayla Cabrera; Pattie Cabrera; and Joseph Cabrera, who launched from Lander's River Trips' Minisink Base and floated eight miles down to Pond Eddy, NY. Thirty adults and 10 kids ages 4-12 participated. (UDC Photo by Shannon Cilento)

with a log form to outline procedures for handling UDC investigations into enforcement of local laws and ordinances impacting the river corridor and its resources.

Town of Tusten - The UDC sent a 7/29 letter supporting the town board's lead agency role for the SEQRA review of the Narrowsburg Water System Improvement

Project and an 8/25 letter endorsing future grant applications to fund it. The town board's passage of a parking ban on Bridge Street between the interstate and railroad bridges prompted a UDC 8/12 Letter to the Editor of the *River Reporter* reminding all that the Council's parking lot is privately-owned. The UDC recommended the substantial conformance of two special use permits for the Tess retail store at 25 Main St. and the Narrowsburg Motors Cafe at 174 Bridge St., which received NPS concurrence on 9/2. Cilento participated in a 10/19 Planning Board preliminary site plan workshop for a private residential development with 20-25 homes proposed around Feagles Lake.

Town of Highland - A setback variance for a garage construction at 19 Whalen Road was approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals after a 7/16 hearing, and the ZBA ultimately on 9/18 dismissed a violation against the Stickett Inn in Barryville for allegedly operating without a permit or site plan approval. The town did not respond to either of UDC's documentation requests.

Shohola Township - The Project Review Committee conducted a favorable 7/28 substantial conformance review of the Zoning Ordinance Update that was subject of a \$5,000 encumbered 2019 Technical Assistance Grant to release those funds.

Town of Lumberland - The UDC supported the town board's declaration of lead

*Please see HIGHLIGHTS on Page 7*



**TRAINING DAY:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Pocono Field Office provided training on identifying the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) to nine staff members from the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and Upper Delaware Council on August 14. Four field visits included a stop along the Callicoon Creek tributary in Hortonville (Town of Delaware), above. The OHWM, which is the physical boundary between water and upland area, marks the aquatic extent of federal jurisdiction in the Upper Delaware unit. Its location does not fluctuate after a high water event or flooding. (UDC Photo by Shannon Cilento)



## HIGHLIGHTS, continued from Page 6

agency status for its 2020 Solar Local Law review, with a six-month moratorium.

A "Draft Supplement to the River Management Plan and Land and Water Use Guidelines: Utility-Scale Solar Energy Systems Compatibility" that the Project Review Committee directed Executive Director Laurie Ramie to write as a potential method to incorporate the position paper's conclusions for official guidance was introduced at the 10/27 meeting and subjected to further discussion on 11/24.

### EVENTS & MEETINGS

UDC staff regularly participates with the DRBC's advisory committees for Water Management and Regulated Flow, the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, NPS Water Safety Committee, D&H Transportation Heritage Council, Catskills Regional Invasive Species Partnership, and steering committees for the 2021 Upper Delaware BioBlitz, the 2021 Delaware River Sojourn (tentatively planned for June 18-26), and the Callicoon Riverside Park.

Other meetings and events were:

9/3 - NPS Transitional Management Assistance Program team interview of Ramie to help inform selection of the new Upper Delaware superintendent;

9/14-17 - 8th Annual Delaware River Watershed Virtual Forum;

10/21 - Alliance for the Upper Delaware River Watershed's Virtual Hill Day meetings with NYS Executive Branch, Senate and Assembly members, and DEC administrators, for Environmental Protection Fund budget line introduction discussions;

11/2 - National Parks Conservation Association's Scenic Wild Delaware River Geotourism virtual roundtable: "The Successes and Challenges of the Middle and Upper Delaware River."

### UDC RESOLUTIONS

2020-11: Amendment to UDC Bylaws to Allow Teleconference Voting (8/6); 2021-01: Approving Technical Assistance Grants for Fiscal Year 2021 (10/1); 2021-02: Approving a UDC Social Media Policy (10/1); 2021-03: Awarding the Printing of "The Upper Delaware" Newsletter to Courier Printing Corp. for Fiscal Year 2021 (11/5); and 2021-04: Approving a Land Use Complaint Policy (11/5).

### IN THE NEWS

The Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River was selected to be featured among five National Park Service sites in Airbnb's nation-wide "Go Near" campaign that began 8/18 to support local economies through local travel.

NPS Acting Superintendent Darren Boch facilitated the promotion after staying in Airbnb properties during his 6/8-10/2 tenure, for which the UDC presented him with a Letter of Commendation on 10/1.

## Invasive Fish Caught Locally

Characterized by some as a "Frankenfish" due to its ability to breathe air and travel short distances on land, the northern snakehead has reared its ugly head in Upper Delaware waters.

Licensed fishing guide Dustin Mason and his 14-year-old client hooked the first identified northern snakehead in placid water between Callicoon and Narrowsburg on July 31, keeping and consuming the 20-inch-long fish.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) staff caught another snakehead on September 17 near Callicoon while electrofishing.

"This is of great concern because these non-native invasive fish are predators that potentially threaten important native species and recreational fisheries in the Delaware River," said NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Chief of Natural Resources Don Hamilton.

"These fish are native to Asia but have been showing up with increasing frequency in other parts of the world recently," he said.

Northern snakeheads are long, thin fish with a single fin running the length of the back. They are generally brown with large, dark blotches along their sides and can grow up to three feet in length. They have a somewhat flattened head and a large mouth with many teeth. Juveniles feed on a wide variety of microscopic organisms, insect larvae, and crustaceans that native fish rely on for food. As adults, northern snakeheads feed mostly on other fish species, but also crustaceans, reptiles, mammals and small birds.

They can tolerate water temperatures from 32 to 90 degrees and survive in very low dissolved oxygen water. When they spawn, snakehead can lay 22,000 to 115,000 eggs.

NYS DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said, "Northern snakeheads are listed federally as injurious wildlife, and New York State law prohibits their live possession. Any snakehead caught should be killed immediately and not released back into the water."

Pennsylvania also prohibits the possession, sale, or live transportation of northern snakehead, which had been deliberately imported from Asia as a culinary delicacy prior to 2002.

Removal methods such as netting, electrofishing, or applying piscicides have been used in ponds and lakes, but these approaches are considered futile in a river system.

The National Park Service, NYS DEC, and PA Fish and Boat Commission are collaborating to monitor the situation, agreeing that the best method for dealing with northern snakeheads is preventing their spread and establishment.

Anyone who may have caught a northern snakehead is asked to:

- Kill it and freeze it in case fisheries agencies request to identify and/or sample it.
- Note where it was caught (waterbody, landmarks, or GPS coordinates).
- Take close-up photos of the fish, including mouth, fins and tail, if possible.
- Report it to: NPS, Don\_Hamilton@nps.gov or 570-493-1022 (cell/texts); NYS Invasive Species Bureau, 518-402-9425 or isinfo@dec.ny.gov; PFBC Aquatic Invasive Species, via [www.fishandboat.com/ais-reporting.htm](http://www.fishandboat.com/ais-reporting.htm), or via [www.iMapInvasives.org](http://www.iMapInvasives.org) for NY or PA.



**2ND CATCH:** This northern snakehead was caught by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in Upper Delaware River sampling near Callicoon on Sept. 17, following an angler's July 31 catch of the invasive fish. (Contributed Photo by Alex Martin)

### Aquatic Invasive Species: Northern Snakehead





# Mongaup Wildlife and Japanese Knotweed Discussed

Educational presentations kicked off the September and October meetings of the Upper Delaware Council.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Wildlife Biologist Kevin Clarke discussed the 11,855-acre Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Area (WMA) which includes 6,313 acres owned by the State and 5,542 acres in conservation easements located in the Towns of Bethel, Lumberland, Forestburgh and Highland (Sullivan County) and Deerpark (Orange County).

The property was acquired in 1990. WMAs provide opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation by the public.

In a 10-year Habitat Management Plan, the State defines target species that will benefit from responsible management practices within the WMA and outlines acreage goals for each type of habitat.

Clarke said that the Mongaup Valley WMA includes 97% forested lands and 4.5 miles of rivers and streams. Small percentages of wetlands and utility rights-of-way comprise the rest of the area.

Target species include the Bald Eagle, Golden-winged Warbler, Ruffed Grouse, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and Timber Rattlesnake.

The Mongaup has been designated a Bird Conservation Area due to its diversity of bird species. It hosts one of the largest bald eagle wintering sites in the State and several active eagle nests in the spring.

Forty acres of the State land are defined as Young Forests, achieved through cuttings. While there are none currently, the DEC aims to have at least eight acres of Permanent Wildlife Openings that are used by turkeys for brooding and strutting, white-tail deer for feeding, and insect-eating songbirds.



**KNOTWEED PROLIFERATION:** Property owners in Callicoon, NY surrounded on all sides by Japanese Knotweed cut a path through the invasive plants to access the Delaware River bank. This view is from the Callicoon, NY-Damascus, PA Bridge. (UDC Photos by Laurie Ramie)

There are several parking areas, trails, boat launches, and eagle viewing blinds within the Mongaup Valley WMA. Hunting, trapping, and fishing are allowed in season with the proper permits.

At the October 1 UDC meeting, Steve Schwartz summarized the "Upper Delaware River Watershed Knotweed Project".

Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. received a 2019 Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grant to study the extent and impacts of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and help landowners establish feasible objectives to manage this invasive plant species.

"Japanese Knotweed is pervasive and pernicious. It rapidly colonizes riparian areas through rhizome and root growth, seed production, and fragments of rhizome distributed in high water events.

Where knotweed establishes, it shades out all other native riparian vegetation. It's taking over the banks and the landscape of the Upper Delaware. It grows so wildly that many people just give up and don't do anything," Schwartz said.

Research is underway to document the distribution of three Japanese Knotweed species to tailor management recommendations. Shippensburg University has been converting aerial and infrared light photography into digital maps, while Stroud Water Resources will do soil sample analyses.

Public demonstration sites will be set up in 2021 at Skinners Falls River Access in the Town of Cocheton, Deposit Village Park, and the Hancock Firemen's Park.

At the first two locations, five different management techniques will be put to the test: repeated mechanical cutting; two forms of herbicide application; covering with an impermeable textile; and foraging by goats. On-site workshops are planned.

Schwartz recognizes that there are some benefits to Japanese Knotweed.

The rhizomes provide a good source of resveratrol used for medicinal purposes such as treating Lyme disease. Pollinators thrive on its nectar and pollen when it's in bloom. It provides nesting habitat for Red-Winged Blackbirds, and cover for deer and bear. Its young shoots are edible with sweet and savory recipes available.

Containment is the overall objective.

For details, visit [www.fudr.org/knotweed](http://www.fudr.org/knotweed).



**HABITAT PLAN:** NYS DEC Wildlife Biologist Kevin Clarke presented to the UDC on the Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Area's habitat management plan on Sept. 3.



# Upper Delaware Council Grants Round-up

The Upper Delaware Council (UDC) will award \$25,000 to fund three projects through its Fiscal Year 2021 Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) program.

That brings the cumulative amount that the UDC has provided to its member municipalities and counties to \$916,952 since 1988. Since the Council's inception, 260 projects have been funded.

Approved on Oct. 1 for the FY 2021 round (Oct. 1, 2020-Sept. 30, 2021) were:

Town of Hancock - \$10,000 to create a Joint Master Plan between the Village and Town of Hancock.

Town of Tusten - \$9,000 for a Phase II update of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.

Town of Delaware - \$6,000 to hire a consultant to conduct a Recreational Access Study along the Delaware River to assess the feasibility of developing a walking trail through the town, and improving access to the river for fishing and boating.

Mid-term progress reports will be due by Feb. 26 and the deadline to submit projects for reimbursement is Aug. 20, 2021.

## 2020 TAGs Finalized

Four Technical Assistance Grant projects were completed in Fiscal Year 2020, totaling \$17,011.17 in the final payouts.

Those included two projects by the Town of Tusten: \$10,000 for Comprehensive Plan Update Part 1; and \$906.50 to pre-



**GET TRASHED:** Secretary Ashley Hall-Bagdonas, pictured above, and Resources and Land Use Specialist Shannon Cilento represented the Upper Delaware Council in the 4th Annual "Get Trashed" River Cleanup Battle on August 15 organized by Pig Farm Ink and based at the Delaware River Club in Starlight, PA. Sixty volunteers floated 5.8 river miles from Hancock to Buckingham, logging 300 hours to clean up several dumpsters' worth of garbage and a record haul of 96 tires. The UDC donated \$500 to co-sponsor the 2021 river cleanup to supplement its land-based Upper Delaware Litter Sweep planned next April. (UDC Photo by Shannon Cilento)

pare Draft Local Laws for Zoning & Subdivision Amendments, Noise, and Mass Gathering Ordinances, both with the

assistance of consultant Peter Manning from Genius Loci Planning.

The Town of Delaware created and printed 1,000 copies of a "Guide to Permits" brochure to answer frequently asked questions about building requirements for \$1,104.57, with graphic design services by W Design of Barryville.

Working with Shepstone Management Company and the Friends of the Upper Delaware River, the Town of Hancock did a Recreational Access Study along the main stem of the Delaware River from Hancock to Long Eddy for a \$5,000 award.

## River & Shore Cleanups

The UDC also invested in keeping the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and its banks pristine through its 2020 River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants.

The Town of Deepark Highway Department picked up debris along a 2.9-mile section of the NYS Route 97 Hawk's Nest Drive after Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. Total costs were \$3,898.47 for labor, transportation, dumping fees, and supplies.

The Town of Lumberland contracted with Ann Steimle to collect trash every other week during the summer along the town's river banks from Camp Tel-Yehudah to the Mongaup River Access for \$1,100.

Since initiating this grant program in 2014, the UDC has awarded \$31,932.81 based on member municipality proposals.



**REPLACE ROOF:** Shohola Township used a \$15,000 share of the Upper Delaware Council's "Townships, Technology & Sustainability" Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development grant from Reps. Fritz, Peifer and Senator Baker to offset the \$32,300 cost of replacing the deteriorated roof of the township building at 159 Twin Lakes Road, retaining Summit Exteriors of Milford, PA on Sept. 10. (Drone Photo by Summit Exteriors)

# Keeping Focus on the Upper Delaware River

The 11th Annual “Water, Water Everywhere” conference coordinated by Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. (FUDR) and co-sponsored by the Upper Delaware Council brought 59 people to their virtual screens on October 14.

FUDR Executive Director Jeff Skelding reflected on what a difficult year 2020 has been with the coronavirus pandemic and some challenging weather conditions impacting the angling and river recreation community negatively.

“If there’s a silver lining in all this, I’d say that the Upper Delaware River continues to receive increased attention on the national level,” he said.

American Rivers designated the Delaware as its 2020 River of the Year and Congress increased the investment in the Delaware River Watershed Fund from \$5 million in 2018 to \$9.6 million in 2020.

Congressman Matt Cartwright (PA-8), who joked about fishing with Skelding and driving around with his FUDR bumper sticker, provided the keynote address.

“I’m very proud to have the Upper Delaware River in my district now. We’re all united by our deep concern for the Delaware River. We are passionate about protecting it and how it’s a resource for outdoor tourism and recreation,” he said.

Rep. Cartwright said it’s no wonder that so many people escaped to this serene region during the COVID-19 crisis.

“I don’t blame them. You know that I strove mightily to get on the House Appropriations Committee. Funding these important initiatives never comes without a battle. I’m proud to team up with Congressman Delgado and we will continue to bring in federal dollars to address issues threatening the watershed,” he said.

Topics covered at the conference included presentations on Stream Restoration and Research, state and federal Upper Delaware River funding campaigns, the NYS Trout Plan, the flexible flows thermal relief program, and “speed round” updates on the High Definition Stream Survey, development of a Citizens’ Guide to the Flexible Flow Management Program, substitutes for single-use plastic, and FUDR’s Japanese Knotweed study.

New York City Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Commissioner Paul Rush provided an update on reservoir management under budget restrictions.

Request a link to view the recorded program at [info@fudr.org](mailto:info@fudr.org) or (607) 637-4499.



**FIVE-YEAR PLAN:** Facilitator Buck Moorhead lead the group through a visioning exercise, above, while UDC Berlin Township Representative Al Henry offered a historical perspective of the Upper Delaware’s early years. (UDC Photos by Laurie Ramie, above, and Shannon Cilento, below)

## STRATEGIZE, continued from Page 1

perceptions,” Buck Moorhead agreed.

Much discussion hinged on the UDC’s stagnant federal funding since 1988.

“The UDC isn’t structured to be a grant-seeking organization. A five-year plan is nice in theory but without additional funds, what are we pursuing?” asked Shohola Township Representative Aaron Robinson.

To provide historical context, participants heard from Beach Lake, PA native Al Henry, who worked for the National Park Service Upper Delaware (NPS UPDE) unit for 30 years; local planning consultant Tom Shepstone, who helped craft the River Management Plan, Land and Water Use Guidelines, and many river communities’ zoning laws; and the UDC’s longest serving active board member since 1989, Larry H. Richardson (Town of Cocheton).

Henry was hired by the original UPDE Superintendent John Hutzky in 1979 to set up operations here and went on to retire as Chief Ranger in 2009.

He recalled facing organized opposition, hostility manifested in the anti-NPS signs “plastered all over the corridor” and worse, the blocked attempts to merge the Upper and Middle Delaware, an unfortunate 10 drownings that first summer, no radio communications for the first year, and the 18 drafts that it took over a decade at a reported cost of \$2.7 million to hammer out an acceptable 1986 River Management Plan.

Shepstone attended the first Bureau of Outdoor Recreation meeting in July 1973 when federal designation for the Upper Delaware River was broached.

He believes all of the mis-steps, do-



overs, and public engagement paid off by producing a visionary Plan and cooperative management model that remain in use.

“I think it has lived up to the image of a partnership. This is not your normal park. It’s a situation where the federal government, two states, and the local governments all work together,” Shepstone said.

The Council provides a forum for joint decision-making, which he said can require a lot of discussion and compromise.

“The UDC’s ultimate authority doesn’t come from the legislation or the Park Service. It comes from the strength of the local partnership. If the National Park Service takes the position that it ultimately controls everything, nothing is going to happen. Moving forward on an intergovernmental basis: that’s the key,” he said.

The update of the Five-Year Plan that expired on Sept. 30 was delayed from its March initiation by coronavirus restrictions.

The UDC operates under a Cooperative Agreement with NPS, with the most recent renewal covering Oct. 1, 2020-Sept. 30, 2025. The new Five-Year Strategic Plan will be posted online when it is complete.



# UDC Launches Social Media

By Shannon Cilento

UDC is ushering in a new era of public outreach with recently-launched social media accounts and a refreshed website.

During the pandemic, many organizations were forced to go digital with meetings and communications to adapt to the changing landscape. UDC seized this opportunity to increase its public outreach and engagement efforts, as well as its digital footprint.

UDC staff worked with Dorene Warner of W Design to update [www.upperdelawarecouncil.org](http://www.upperdelawarecouncil.org) over the summer. Since many of the updates improve back-end and editing functionality, the website doesn't look very different. However, several new sections, including Project Review and Staff pages, were added.

Features to improve accessibility in line with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) have also been added. Tools including a screen reader, larger text, a dyslexia-friendly option, keyboard navigation, contrast adjustment, and more are easily located on the website for instant use.

UDC has also created Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts to reach additional audiences and promote projects activities to the public.

So far, 2020 UDC Annual Award winners have been featured, along with updates on current projects, events, meetings, and informational alerts.

The pages have also been used to educate the public about the Upper Delaware's remarkable resources and history, utilizing thematic hashtags like #MarkerMonday to feature historic markers along the river.

Find UDC on: Facebook at [www.facebook.com/UpperDelawareCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/UpperDelawareCouncil);

Instagram at [@upperdelawarecouncil](https://www.instagram.com/upperdelawarecouncil); and LinkedIn at [www.linkedin.com/company/upper-delaware-council](http://www.linkedin.com/company/upper-delaware-council).

Tag UDC or use #LandWaterPeople to submit photos to be featured.



**CULTURAL VALUE:** The 1896 Ten Mile River Stone Arch Bridge, shown above, along with the 1902 Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge, and the 1905 Hankins Creek Stone Arch Bridge, have been added to the Cultural Resources category of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River by determination of the National Park Service and concurrence of the historic preservation offices in NY and PA following a reevaluation of eligibility criteria. This identification provides extra protection for these resources under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. (UDC Photo by Shannon Cilento)

## Delaware and Hudson Canal Gets NPS Grant

The National Park Service secured \$50,000 to update the 1968 National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination for the Delaware and Hudson Canal.

Today's documentation standards are much more specific and descriptive, and include Geographic Information System data and photographs.

Richard Grubb & Associates of Cranbury, NJ was awarded the contract to prepare the updated nomination by May 2023 in consultation with a committee of historians, site stewards, and enthusiasts.

Five areas were cited in the 1968 designation as especially noteworthy because they were well-preserved and could best illustrate the history of the canal that was constructed between 1825-28 and operational until 1898.

Those canal corridor features are located in Honesdale and Lackawaxen, PA, and in Cuddebackville, Allgerville, and High Falls, NY.

"Updating [the D&H Canal's] Landmark designation will help bring its stories to a wider audience, assisting the D&H Transportation Heritage Council in fulfilling its mission. All Americans should know all about this important part of our shared heritage," said Bill Merchant, chair of the DHTHC. Visit [www.dhthc.org](http://www.dhthc.org) or the National Park Service website at [www.nps.gov/upde/learn/historyculture/dhcanal](http://www.nps.gov/upde/learn/historyculture/dhcanal) for more information.



## Please Help the UDC to Update Our Mailing List

The Upper Delaware Council offers its free newsletter on-line at [www.upperdelawarecouncil.org](http://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 e-mail [info@upperdelawarecouncil.org](mailto:info@upperdelawarecouncil.org).

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*Working together to conserve the Upper  
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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 7 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](http://www.upperdelawarecouncil.org) for specific meeting dates.

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

### Litter Sweep Revived

After being forced to cancel plans for an Upper Delaware Litter Sweep in 2020 due to coronavirus restrictions, the Upper Delaware Council is gearing up over these winter months to host the land-based, volunteer cleanup in April 2021.

Community organizers - whether individuals, businesses, or beautification groups - are asked to step forward to assist the UDC with coordinating the Litter Sweep in all 15 Upper Delaware River Valley municipalities in Pennsylvania and New York.

Supplies and instructions on litter drop-off locations will be provided.

If interested in helping, please contact Ashley Hall-Bagdonas at (845) 252-3022 or [ashley@upperdelawarecouncil.org](mailto:ashley@upperdelawarecouncil.org).

### Bridge Renamed

On Nov. 1, 2020, the Basket viaduct bridge located on NYS Route 97 in the Town of Fremont was officially renamed in memory of Specialist Allan Milk, who was killed in action in Vietnam on Nov. 1, 1966.

Members of the Milk family were present at a small ceremony at the Long Eddy

Firehouse hosted by the VFW Post 7276 and the Marine Corps League.

Supported by the Fremont Town Board and Basket Historical Society, the legislative bill was sponsored by State Senator Jen Metzger and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, who also presented resolutions.

If conditions permit, a larger dedication ceremony will be held in April 2021.

### UDC Offers 2020 Award Booklets, Benefit Shirts

The Upper Delaware Council's "32nd Annual River Valley Awards: Tribute to 2020 Honorees" 16-page color booklet is available to view on the UDC's website or request a print copy.

Thirteen winning projects and individuals are described with articles and photos.

T-shirts featuring a map of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Valley and the UDC's Land-Water-People partnership logo offer an attractive, affordable gift for river enthusiasts.

The 50/50 heavyweight cotton blend shirts, royal blue with white screen printing, are available in all adult sizes for a \$15 donation to support the non-profit

organization's conservation mission.

Payment must be by check or cash. Please add \$2.50 per shirt to cover postage costs if mailing is requested. Visit [www.upperdelawarecouncil.org](http://www.upperdelawarecouncil.org) to order.

### Invasive Species Alert

The Spotted Lanternfly is encroaching on the Upper Delaware region through recent sightings near I-84 in Port Jervis and Lake Superior Park in the Town of Bethel.

This invasive insect from Asia destructively feeds on Tree of Heaven as well as maples, fruit trees, hops, and grapes.

The pest was first discovered in Pennsylvania in 2014. While freezing temperatures kill off adult SLF, egg masses laid on flat surfaces are a concern in the winter.

An Asian invasive vine, Mile-a-minute, has had eight documented occurrences in Sullivan County (including Skinner's Falls), 1 in Pike County (Lackawaxen), and 1 in Wayne County. Weevils are a biocontrol.

Native white-tailed deer are dealing with an outbreak of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) caused by biting midges. The infection can be fatal within 36 hours.

Search these topics online to be aware.