

The Upper Delaware

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

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CAUSEWAY CONSTRUCTION: As two more trucks carrying stone arrive at right, another load is dumped on the New York side of the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge to build out the causeway where equipment will be staged for the 1902 bridge's removal by explosives. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation must complete the demolition project by May. (UDC March 27, 2025 Photo by Stephanie Driscoll)

End Near for Exceptional Upper Delaware Bridge

The 1902 Skinners Falls, NY-Milanville, PA Bridge will soon be demolished in the interest of public safety, leaving behind only the PA abutment and accusations of preventable neglect by its disgruntled and skeptical preservationists.

"A January 2025 [independent Quality Assurance] inspection confirmed the New York abutment and upstream (left) truss bearing areas are actively moving. It is necessary to remove the bridge as quickly as possible to prevent an uncontrolled collapse," PennDOT announced as a follow-up to an October 2024 inspection that rated the superstructure as "2-critical" and the substructure as "0-failed".

Plans to dismantle and salvage the rare, National Register of Historic Places-listed steel truss bridge for potential reuse as announced on Nov. 14 abruptly flipped to explode and eliminate on Dec. 17.

That public notification came a day after

PA Governor Josh Shapiro issued a declaration stating that PennDOT "has identified an emergent need to remove" the bridge due to its rapid deterioration posing "risks to those below and downstream from the structure" that has been closed to motorists and pedestrians since Oct. 17, 2019.

Construction crews mobilized on the NY side on March 10, improving access roads then beginning to build a stone causeway that will extend 120 feet into the river.

The National Park Service's permit orders the river to be completely cleared and work site restored by May 25, 2025.

The NYS Skinners Falls Fishing Access and parking lot is closed. During the demolition, river users are directed to exit at Damascus and re-enter at Narrowsburg. Further restrictions and closures will be posted at www.nps.gov/upde.

Once the causeway is complete, crews

Please see DEMOLITION on page 11

Upper Delaware Profile: Cathleen Breen

Cathleen Breen's journey to becoming a central figure in the Delaware River region reflects a deep appreciation for the natural world and a strong commitment to serving others. Initially moving to the area as a weekend visitor, Cathleen quickly found herself captivated by its tranquil sunsets, tree-lined roads, pristine waterways, and serene vistas. Trading the energy of Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood and the hustle and bustle of Manhattan for this idyllic setting, she proudly calls Narrowsburg her home.

Cathleen says, "The water was so still, and the sky was painted with oranges and purples. I just stood there, breathing in the quiet, and knew - this is where I'm supposed to be."

This connection to the land continues to inspire her work in the community.

Cathleen brings over 20 years of experience from her time at a statewide not-for-profit research and advocacy organization. She specialized in environmental preservation, consumer protection, and government accountability; her work encompassed tasks ranging from preparing environmental reviews for NYC Watershed projects to testifying at hearings and leading public education efforts.

She formerly sat on the Watershed Protection and Partnership Council (WPPC). The WPPC, created by the historic New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement, serves as a regional forum to aid in the long-term protection of New York City's drinking water while supporting the economic vitality of Upstate Watershed communities. She collaborated across sectors, coordinating with government, nonprofit, business, academic, and community groups to achieve meaningful results. This work underscored her passion for protecting resources and empowering communities.

Cathleen's academic background laid a strong foundation for her environmental advocacy and has provided her with critical knowledge and skills that have informed her professional and community-focused work throughout her career.

Cathleen's dedication to community and



Cathleen Breen, Town of Tusten

environmental stewardship naturally informed her transition into real estate, where her values continue to guide her approach.

Licensed in New York and Pennsylvania, Cathleen was recently honored with the Sullivan County Board of Realtors' Realtor of the Year award. Her philosophy emphasizes perseverance, humor, and patience, along with recognizing and celebrating the attributes of others. This outlook defines her work, whether advocating for her clients or contributing to her community.

A memory encapsulating Cathleen's commitment to community occurred during one of the ecumenical luncheons she organized in Narrowsburg. She recalls, "I watched an elderly gentleman laughing with a young family he had just met. It hit me that this wasn't just a meal but a place where people felt they belonged. Seeing those connections being made was worth every ounce of effort we put in." The luncheons provided an inclusive space for neighbors of all backgrounds to share food and companionship.

Along with being appointed on April 30, 2024 as First Alternate on the Upper Delaware Council for Tusten, Cathleen sits on the town's Conservation Advisory Council, where she advises on natural resource management and protection, and sits on the Board of Directors of the Tusten Historical Society as well as Growing Older Together, a charity that provides seniors support to live independently and with dignity, fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing their quality of life.

Reflecting on her journey, Cathleen said, "There's something humbling about giving back to the community that has given me so much. Whether it's protecting the natural resources that drew me here in the first place or helping a neighbor find their dream home, it's about making sure this place thrives for generations to come."

(Contributed article)

Upper Delaware Council, Inc.

P.O. Box 192, 211 Bridge St.,
Narrowsburg, NY 12764-0192

Phone: (845) 252-3022; FAX: 252-3359

www.UpperDelawareCouncil.org

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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Elizabeth Koniers Brown-Alternate

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[firstname]@upperdelawarecouncil.org



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Outreach Between Issues

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The UDC also offers a monthly e-update of latest news and meeting minutes sent on the first Monday. To freely subscribe, send your email address to: newsletter@upperdelawarecouncil.org.

Don't Be Trashy! Upper Delaware Litter Sweep is On

A refreshing spring cleaning of the bi-state river valley is being powered by volunteers through the Upper Delaware Council's 5th Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep, underway throughout the Earth Month of April.

It's as simple as individuals, family, and friends tackling trash in their neighborhoods and favorite public spaces to a more elaborate coordination of municipal-wide clean-ups in the 15 towns and townships surrounding the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

The 2025 event is dedicated to honor Ruth M. Jones, dubbed "The Queen of the Delaware", who passed away on Feb. 13 at the age of 92.

In 1990, this second-generation owner of Kittatinny Canoes and Campgrounds organized the first "On and Under the Delaware River Clean-up" to give back to the resource that was her livelihood and lifelong love. It went on to win two first-place Take Pride in America Awards bestowed at The White House and several UDC Recreation Achievement honors.

Northgate Resorts has continued the tradition in which volunteers paddle 8-10 mile river sections to gather trash from the shoreline, islands, and river bottom, with canoes, shuttles, breakfast, and camping provided, since assuming ownership of the company in December 2020.

Starting at the Barryville base, it's slated for Sept. 7. Visit www.kittatinny.com/river-clean-up or call (845) 682-3539 for details.

The UDC selected a whimsical design by Bonnie Matthews of Narrowsburg, NY that is featured on the 400 t-shirts that every participant in the land-based Litter Sweeps



CLEANING UP: Four-year-old Jack Driscoll of Yulan, NY shows how it's done, sporting the UDC's 2025 t-shirt and a new, custom Litter Leader trucker hat. (UDC Photo by Stephanie Driscoll)

receive in addition to needed supplies including garbage bags, gloves, pickers, and safety equipment.

Matthews submitted the winning design in the UDC's first-ever artwork contest held over the winter to correspond to the 2025 theme of "Don't Be Trashy!" conceived by Town of Highland UDC Representative and Litter Leader Christine Martin.

Her friendly deer and bird design is emblazoned on the front of the safety-bright t-shirts, with the UDC's "Land-Water-People" slogan on the back and its

media sponsor 90.5 WJFF Radio Catskill's logo on the left sleeve.

After moving to Narrowsburg from Southern California about 15 months ago, Matthews has been looking for meaningful ways to get involved in the river valley community.

Her 25-year career as an artist, children's books illustrator, and food photographer, combined with her interests in kayaking, hiking, snor-

keling, and wildlife preservation, offers a creative outlet to contribute to her new home base.

Having studied Communication Arts and Design at Virginia Commonwealth University and worked as an art director in the Washington DC area while practicing her art illustrations at night, her work has appeared in over 100 publications, licensed products, and signage.

Read more about Matthews' background and local aspirations in a March 4 article posted at upperdelawarecouncil.org.

Coverage of the 5th Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep clean-ups and contributions will appear in the next issue.



IN RUTH'S MEMORY: The 2025 Upper Delaware Litter Sweep is dedicated to Ruth M. Jones, who founded Kittatinny Canoes' On and Under the Delaware River Clean-up in 1990 that will continue in her memory on Sept. 7. A surprising item volunteers pulled out of the river one year was 18 sticks of dynamite! (Contributed Photo by Dave Jones)



Art contest winner Bonnie Matthews



2025 BOARD: Gathered at the UDC’s March 6 meeting were, seated from the left, 2025 Secretary-Treasurer Al Henry (Berlin), Chairperson Jim Rodgers (Fremont), and Vice-chair Evan Padua (Tusten). Standing from the left: Larry Richardson (Cochecton), Aaron Robinson (Shohola), Jeff Dexter (Damascus), Harold Roeder Jr. (Delaware), Doug Case (Lackawaxen), Lindsey Kurnath (National Park Service partner), Ginny Dudko (Deerpark), Ryan Coulter (State of New York), Bill Dudko (Deerpark), Beth Brown (Delaware River Basin Commission), and Cathleen Breen (Tusten). Absent from the photo were Fred Peckham (formerly representing Hancock), Christine Martin (Highland), Nadia Rajsz (Lumberland), Michael Barth (Westfall), and Tim Dugan (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania). (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

Upper Delaware Council Reorganizes for 2025

The Upper Delaware Council elected Town of Fremont, NY Representative James R. Rodgers to serve as its 2025 chairperson at the Jan. 2 annual meeting. UDC Representatives Evan Padua, Town of Tusten, NY, and Alan F. Henry, Berlin Township, PA, were elected vice-chair and secretary-treasurer.

“Jim” Rodgers rejoined the UDC board effective Jan. 10, 2024 after the Fremont Town Board had previously appointed him an alternate from Nov. 10, 2004 through January 2013.

Born in Brooklyn, an eight-year-old Rodgers and his family moved to West Milford, NJ in 1960. He attended high school at St. Joseph’s Seraphic Seminary in Callicoon, NY from 1966-68 before finishing his secondary education in Wayne, NJ and

then studying Sociology at Montclair State College.

Fond memories of his time in the Upper Delaware River Valley brought him back to Sullivan County in October 1974, originally living in Kenoza Lake before settling in an area historically known as Fernwood, between Long Eddy and Basket Creek.

He was an original staff member of the Delaware Valley Job Corps Center in Callicoon when that federal vocational facility opened in 1979. After a year as sports editor for the River Reporter, Rodgers worked in the areas of staff training and development, and taught high school level history and English before retiring in 2009.

Rodgers is a member of the Adirondack Mountain Club Mid-Hudson Chapter and the Natural Resources Defense Council, among other conservation groups. He’s a former Sullivan County Youth Board member, basketball and soccer referee, and a water safety and First Aid/CPR instructor with the American Red Cross.

He enjoys kayaking and canoeing on the Upper Delaware River, social and natural history, and hiking. Jim has been married since 1980 to Mary Ellen, a Registered Nurse. They have two daughters, Eve and Kathy, and three grandchildren.

2025 saw these changes on the UDC board to date:

Town of Delaware - Flies for Fish professional fishing guide Bob Lindquist was appointed alternate representative Dec. 11, 2024.

Town of Hancock - Fred Peckham, who served on the board for 17 years since 2008 and was 2016 UDC chairperson after his Uncle George Frosch originated the role from 1988-2002, retired on April 1, 2025, at which time newly-appointed Katt Judd began. “I hope for continued success of the UDC in the future, protecting the scenic beauty of the river, rights of riverfront landowners, as well as achieving financial stability to continue to carry through these important responsibilities,” Peckham wrote, adding he will cherish the positive memories.

National Park Service (federal partner) - North Atlantic-Appalachian Regional Director Gay Vietzke retired on Feb. 28, with Acting Region 1 Director Cinda Waldbuesser taking over as UDC representative.



TAKING OATH: Town of Fremont Town Clerk Jody Schanil congratulates Jim Rodgers after swearing in officers at the Feb. 6 meeting following their Jan. 2 election. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

Sojourn Down Pennsylvania's River of the Year

By Kerry Engelhardt

Before we know it summer will be upon us, and time for the 30th Annual Delaware River Sojourn! This year we'll be celebrating not only the Sojourn's thirtieth year, but a special event is planned to celebrate the river's designation as Pennsylvania's River of the Year!

This year the Sojourn will take place over seven days, from Saturday, June 14 to Friday, June 20. The Sojourn is a paddling and camping excursion where participants paddle a different section of the Delaware River each day and camp together at night.

Paddling sections of the Upper Delaware River and West Branch will be June 14 (Balls Eddy to Stockport), June 15 (Stockport to Northeast Wilderness Experience NEWE), and June 16 (NEWE to Callicoon).

Sojourners will camp at NEWE in Equinunk, PA.

From June 17 onwards, participants will journey further downstream, through the river's middle section, camping at Driftstone Campground in Mt. Bethel, PA.

On June 18, a River of the Year celebration will be held at Minisink Park in Smithfield Township, PA.

Registration is now open. A ticket includes a guided river trip; kayak, life jacket & paddle rental; camping & meals; livery transport and shuttling (to get you and your boat between take-in/take-out and the campsite), and educational programming in the evenings. Paddlers of all experiences and ages are welcome.

Visit delawareriversojourn.com for the full schedule and more information.

Join us this year to discover why the Delaware River was named the PA River of the Year after securing the most votes in a public competition held by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Pennsylvania Organiza-



tion for Waterways and Rivers (POWR).

"The Delaware River is a conservation success story, and this designation is a testament to its historical, cultural, and recreational significance," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn in a Feb. 13 news release announcing the third time that the Delaware has earned this title (previously in 2002 and 2011).

"From providing drinking water to millions to fueling economic growth and offering outdoor recreation, the Delaware River is a shining example of how communities can work together to protect and restore vital natural resources," Dunn said.

The Upper Delaware Preservation Coalition nominated the Delaware for this honor on behalf of the Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee.

The title comes with a

\$15,000 grant to the nominating organization to support 2025 Sojourn programming.

The public cast a total of 8,037 votes, with the Delaware River receiving 2,962 votes, followed by the Youghiogheny River (2,784) and Perkiomen Creek (2,291).

UPDE Visits Up 15%

The National Park Service (NPS) reported 377,061 recreational visits to the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (UPDE) in 2024, a 15% increase from the 327,266 visitors tallied in 2023.

As analyzed by the River Reporter newspaper, visitation has increased almost 75% over the past five years, from a low of 215,537 in 2019. The historic peak was 494,267 visitors reported in 1996.

Economic impact will be noted in a pending NPS Visitor Spending Effects Report. 2023 visitation had generated \$21 million in output for UPDE gateway communities.



(UDC 2023 File Photo by Laurie Ramie)

UDC Welcomes All on August 8 Raft Trip

The Upper Delaware Council's 37th Annual Family Raft Trip will take place on Sunday, August 8, paddling from Barryville to Pond Eddy. Advance public reservations at a deeply discounted rate of \$30 for ages 13+ and \$20 ages 4-12 are due by July 25. Add \$1 per ticket for online PayPal payments.

Host livery Kittatinny Canoes will provide the rafts with a minimum occupancy of four guests, paddles, mandatory-wear life jackets, safety instructions, and shuttle transportation at the end of the trip.

Arrive between 9-10 a.m. at their Barryville base located at 3854 NYS Rt. 97 to park, check-in, and launch. The average duration of this seven-mile paddle through quiet pools and two sets of rapids is four hours.

A registration flyer will be posted on the UDC website. Contact stephanie@upperdelawarecouncil.org or (845) 252-3022 to make reservations or ask questions.

DRBC Releases State of the Basin Report

The Delaware River Basin has released its 2025 "State of the Basin" report which provides an overview of the health of the water resources and key species of the Delaware River Basin, along with factors impacting the Basin including water pollution and climate change.

"I am pleased to say the state of the Delaware River Basin is generally good and improving in several key indicators," said DRBC Executive Director Kristen Bowman Kavanagh.

"This report - our fourth since 2008 - helps the Commission to benchmark conditions and track progress toward our water resources goals, ensuring we continue to meet the diverse needs of our region," she adds.

It provides a snapshot of 36 indicators for watersheds and landscapes, water quantity, water quality, and living resources, and includes a rating and a directional trend for most categories. Groundwater availability, for example, received a high rating, thanks to proactive management strategies. Lower rating or declining trend samples like impervious cover, salinity and invasive species, show where additional focus or study is needed.

Find the report at www.nj.gov/drbc/public/publications/SOTB2025.html.

Upper Delaware Council Activity Highlights

Highlights of UDC and river valley issues from Dec. 2024 to March 2025, not mentioned elsewhere in this issue, include:

UDC FUNDING

On 12/16, the NPS approved the UDC's \$300,000 funding request to cover Fiscal Year 2025 2nd-4th Quarters and Fiscal Year 2026 1st Quarter; however, access to its Bureau of Treasury online account was unexpectedly suspended on 1/27 due to a Federal Financial Assistance Freeze memo from The White House. After the order was judicially blocked on 1/28 and rescinded on 1/29, access was restored on 1/30. The Council is not authorized to carry over or draw down any extra operating funds beyond its direct monthly expenses.

CUA PERMITS

Several businesses impacted by the restructuring of fees for the Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) program implemented on 1/1/25 appealed to the UDC to provide a forum for additional discussion since NPS announced the decision aimed at achieving administrative cost-recovery compliance on 7/5/24.

Besides transitioning to a new nationwide mandatory online portal system, the management fee for the biennial permits is now based on park-dependent gross receipts: 1.5% this year and 2% in 2027-28. The UDC held a special work session on 3/18 after hearing public comments, exchanging correspondence with NPS, and weighing in on a new CUA category for Fishing Guides.

EPA APPOINTEE

The UDC was invited to and provided a quote for a 2/6 press release announcing President Trump's appointment of Mike Martucci, former NY Senator for river valley communities, as Regional Administrator for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 2, which covers NJ, NY, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and eight federally recognized Indian Nations.

UDC LETTERS

12/5, Commendation for Delaware River Basin Commission Executive Director Steve Tambini upon his 12/1 retirement from that position held since 8/1/2014; 1/15-16, UDC orientation letters to Senator Dave McCormick (PA), Congressmen Rob Bresnahan (PA-8) and Josh Riley (NY-19), Assemblymembers Paula Elaine Kay (District 100), and 2/24, Brian Maher (101); and 3/10, to Jennifer Garigliano, NYC DEP, inquiring about the 2025-26 status of the twice-postponed Delaware Aqueduct Repair project.

As a follow-up to their 11/7/24 presentation on a proposal to designate the Lackawaxen River as a National Wild and



NYS BUDGET: The Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce hosted New York State Budget Director and Sullivan County native Blake Washington to deliver a State of the State Address from Governor Kathy Hochul's office at Resorts World Catskills in Monticello on Feb. 12. UDC Chairperson Jim Rodgers, at right, Sullivan County Legislature Chairperson and Town of Lumberland UDC Representative Nadia Rajsz, 2nd from right, and Deputy Sullivan County Manager Michelle Huck, at left, discussed issues with Washington. (Contributed Photo)

Scenic Partnership River, the Lackawaxen River Conservancy sent a 1/24 letter to the Council stating that there was "insufficient local support" to pursue it at this time.

PROJECT REVIEWS

Shohola Township - Substantial Conformance (SC) Review 2024-07: Saint Shohola Deli, a proposed sandwich shop and deli in Shohola hamlet. UDC recommended 10/7/24, NPS final determination 12/13.

Town of Highland - SC Review 2024-08: Hamlet Dream, a proposed mixed-use building with an addition of residential use on the second floor. UDC recommended 12/10/24, NPS determination 1/22.

Town of Highland - SC Review 2024-09: Robinson Garage, a proposed accessory building on a vacant lot which requires a special use permit. UDC recommended against substantial conformance 2/7, NPS agreed in a letter dated 3/18 while stating that the project does not present a clear and direct threat. The UDC will recommend a zoning ordinance change.

Damascus Township - SC Review 2025-01: Willow Wisp Barn, an agricultural barn, event and educational space, which use had evolved since the original application in 2016; UDC recommended 2/7, NPS determination 3/7.

Town of Tusten - SC Review 2025-02: The Yard Sale Store, a proposed business in Narrowsburg that required a special use permit; UDC recommended 2/7, NPS determination 3/7.

Damascus Township and Town of Cocheton - SC Review 2025-03: Skin-

ners Falls-Milanville Bridge demolition and removal, reviewed under an emergency declaration by the Governor of PA; UDC recommended 1/31, NPS concurred.

Town of Tusten - SC Review 2025-05: Hudson Valley Credit Union, to be located in an existing professional building on State Route 97. Recommended at Project Review Committee meeting 3/25, pending full Council action on 4/3.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions 2025-01: Authorizing Signatories for UDC Bank Accounts in 2025; -02: Amending the UDC Bylaws (formerly requiring that the chair and vice-chair represent different states); -03: Adding a Direct Deposit Payroll Authorization Policy to the Organizational Handbook; -04: Approving a Five-Year Operating Program for 2025-2029; -05: Approving UDC-NPS Cooperative Agreement P25AC0016 for 2025; -06: Enter into a Contract with Eckerley and Davis LLP for the UDC's Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Review, approved 1/2; -07: Amending the UDC's Employee Retirement Plan Policy, approved 2/6; and -08: Reaffirming a Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy for 2025, approved 3/6.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Beyond regular liaison committee assignments, UDC staff participated in:

1/14: Managing Our Rivers with Less, River Management Society roundtable

1/15, Navigating Change: Insights into Finalized New York State Freshwater Wetlands Regulations webinar

Please see HIGHLIGHTS on Page 7

HIGHLIGHTS, continued from Page 6

1/16, USGS National Water Availability Assessment Report Release

2/11-3/18 weekly course, Human-Centered AI: Unlocking the Potential of AI for Non-profits

FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The UDC adopted a Five-Year Operating Program for Calendar Years 2025-2029 on 12/19 to coincide with a 1/1/25 renewal date for its Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service. It is available for website review under Publications.

UDC GRANTS

The UDC is accepting member municipal applications until 4/18 for its 2025 River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants program, with awards to be approved on 5/1 and project completions due by 9/12.

This year's Technical Assistance Grant projects must be completed by 8/22.

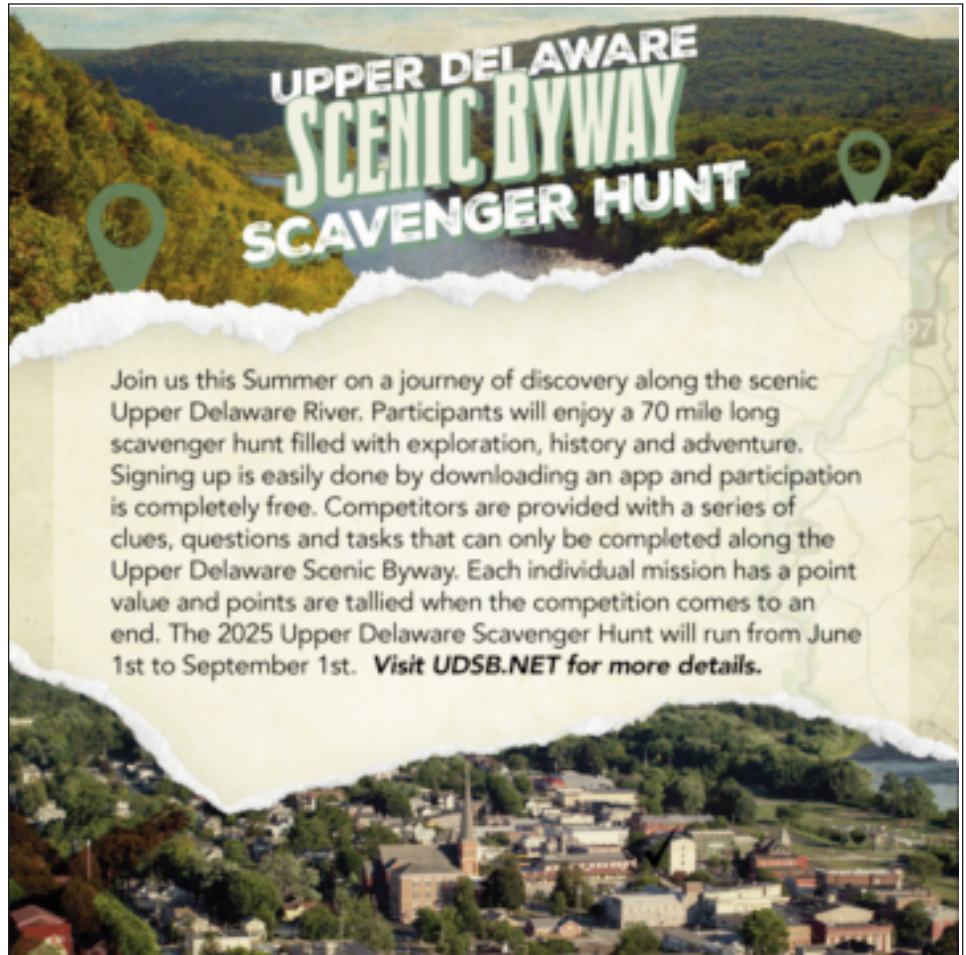
NPS STAFFING

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River staffing departures included Volunteer Coordinator Corrine Hinton on 1/3 and IT Specialist Mike Lybolt on 3/4.

An exception to the 90-day federal hiring freeze order announced by NPS at the 2/6 UDC meeting was granted to allow the hiring of seasonal staff for 2025.

WATER SAFETY

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee provided comments for a newly available brochure by NPS Upper Delaware targeted to riverfront property owners and rentals, "Water Safety Makes for a Five-Star Experience", while the Council agreed to administer for the second year a water safety billboards campaign with Adams Outdoor Advertising to start in May on I-84, Rt. 6, and PA Rt. 652.



Join us this Summer on a journey of discovery along the scenic Upper Delaware River. Participants will enjoy a 70 mile long scavenger hunt filled with exploration, history and adventure. Signing up is easily done by downloading an app and participation is completely free. Competitors are provided with a series of clues, questions and tasks that can only be completed along the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. Each individual mission has a point value and points are tallied when the competition comes to an end. The 2025 Upper Delaware Scavenger Hunt will run from June 1st to September 1st. **Visit UDSB.NET for more details.**

JOIN THE JOURNEY: A first-ever Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Scavenger Hunt will motivate participants to explore historical landmarks, beautiful valley views, and small town charm along the New York State Route 97 designated corridor from Hancock to Port Jervis all summer long. The playful game will encourage both new visitors and local residents to check out attractions and businesses that may be unknown to them and to learn fascinating trivia about the Upper Delaware region as they compete for various prizes. It's a self-guided road trip challenge with photo ops and fun riddles galore. To offer host location sites, prize donations, and sponsorships, please contact info@UDSB.net or call the toll-free hotline of (866) 511-UDSB. (UDSB, Inc. Graphic by David Krantz, dookindustry.com)

Individual Donations Fortify Upper Delaware Council Mission

The Upper Delaware Council is grateful for contributions received to support the non-profit organization's mission to 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.

Eight donors generously contributed a collective \$22,099.94 during calendar year 2024. That amount includes the single largest individual donation that the UDC has ever received in its 37-year history of \$20,000 on Dec. 12 by a former river valley resident who wishes to remain anonymous.

Monetary gifts were also given by the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. of \$1,500 in gratitude for the UDC providing meeting space, records storage, and mail pick-ups; and David R. Chant Real Estate, Inc. based in Milford, PA of \$50 for sending 50 copies of each new issue of "The Upper Delaware" to distribute to clients.

Individual contributions were offered by Chuck Hoffman of Union, KY, a professional management consultant to the UDC during its formative years; Joseph Bradshaw of Lavallette, NJ in memory of Phyllis MacKinney; Edward Winters, a former Matamoras resident now living in Bangor, PA; former Town of Delaware UDC Alternate Rebekah Creshkoff of Callicoon, NY; and journalist Meg McGuire,

the publisher of "Delaware Currents".

In 2023, \$17,303.03 worth of donations were received.

That tally included a \$10,000 check in January and \$5,000 in November from a private charitable trust associated with 2024's \$20,000 anonymous benefactor, along with repeat contributions of \$1,500 from the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway and \$50 from Chant Realtors.

A collective \$332.52 was sent by five different donors in memory of Phyllis MacKinney of Highland Park and Bridgewater, NJ, whose family listed the UDC for memorial donations due to her love for the Delaware River upon her Oct. 25, 2023 passing.

The Council similarly received a \$50 gift in memory of Diane Banach from the Cyrena Gurth family of Lake Hiawatha, NJ. Mrs. Banach served as UDC alternate for Westfall Township from 1995 to Oct. 24, 2001. She passed away Feb. 18, 2023 at age 87.

Contributions also came from Edward Winters as an annual gift, Samuel and Agnes Bonfante of Hackettstown, NJ; Annemarie Schuetz of Damascus; and Joan & Seth Koven of Equinunk.

The UDC's base federal funding has been frozen at \$300,000 per year since the Council's inception in 1988, while neither the State of New York nor the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania having ever contributed their anticipated 20% shares of operating aid.

Round-up of Presentations to the UDC

December 5, 2024: “The National Park Service Submerged Resources Center and its Recent Survey along the Upper Delaware River” by NPS SRC Archeologists David W. Morgan and Matt Hanks

The National Park Service owns or manages more than 3.5 million acres of underwater lands, with half the land it’s responsible for associated with a significant body of water. Therefore, the SRC was created in 1980 for work that encompasses archeology, photography, biology, maintenance, and dive operations for such purposes as cultural and natural resource management data, installing scientific equipment, and search and recovery details.

For the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, the SRC crew was tasked with doing an underwater survey of 5.7 miles (299.7 acres) focusing on Callicoon, Damascus, Narrowsburg/Darbytown, Ten Mile, and Lackawaxen river accesses. The goal was to develop a baseline inventory and evaluation of potential archeological sites.

They used sidescan sonar and magnetometry remote sensing technologies to document two features linked with the area’s 19th century transportation history: remnants of a canal-era slack water dam at Lackawaxen and a 1950s bridge abutment footing in Damascus.

The archeological divers found another 19 sonar contacts of interest, along with 129 magnetic anomalies, that will require further investigation after completing Phase I in September 2024. They also came across several tires, railroad ties and other submerged objects.

February 6, 2025: “History of the Erie Railroad in the Callicoon Area and the Upper Delaware River Valley” by Randal Bushart

Callicoon Depot Historian Randy Bushart has been Manager of Passenger Operations for CSX with a territory covering 3,600 rail miles in 19 states and Washington, D.C. for over 25 years of his 36-year railroad career that began as a track laborer while in college.

He has acquired an extensive collection of railroad memorabilia, and enjoys doing historical railroad research and presentations to share his lifelong interest that began with his grandfather working for the railroad near Rochester, NY and now his son is a Locomotive Engineer for Norfolk Southern Railroad.

In 1832, the New York and Erie Railroad was chartered by New York



WORKING ON THE RAILROAD: Randal Bushart brought an exhibit of memorabilia to his UDC presentation. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

State to run from New York City to Lake Erie. Once they started surveying, they discovered a better route along the Delaware River. They broke ground around 1835 in Deposit. The first train came all the way through in May of 1851. One notable passenger to travel through Callicoon in 1860 was Abraham Lincoln, then a young lawyer heading to speak at a conference in

Norwich, CT a year before being elected president. In 1861, the name changed to the Erie Railway then to the Lake Erie and Western Railroad in 1878, enduring through bankruptcies, mishaps, and fires, like the original Callicoon Depot that burned on Nov. 5, 1895 and the current station that opened in December 1896 and narrowly avoided the same fate in 1913.

Bushart shared operational anecdotes, local tales, rare photos, documents, and Delaware River Valley “Summerland” promotional materials the railroad produced.

The last passenger train from Callicoon ran in 1966, after becoming unprofitable.

In 1978, there was a 21 train car pile-up just beyond the Callicoon Depot.

In 1976, Erie Lackawanna Railroad became part of Conrail, which began to demolish depots to save money but Callicoon’s citizens adopted theirs, then and today. It is currently being restored for new life as the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitor Center and community use.

Find these recorded presentation videos on the UDC’s YouTube channel.



NEW TO OFFICE: New York State Assemblymember Paula Elaine Kay (100th District) addressed the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association’s Catskills Legislative Networking Breakfast Feb. 21 at Resorts World Catskills in Monticello, with Deborah Stevens, a Government Law and Policy specialist with the Greenberg Traurig international law firm and NYSHTA President Mark Dorr seated on the dais at left, and Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association Vice-President Herb Clark at right. UDC representatives Jim Rodgers, Ginny Dudko, Larry Richardson, and Laurie Ramie then met with Assemblymember Kay on Mar. 21 at her Monticello district office to inform her of the Upper Delaware Council’s history, mission, accomplishments, and funding challenges. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

Northeast PA Representatives Reopen ‘Fracking’ Conversation for Delaware River Basin at Forum

By Liam Mayo, River Reporter (reprinted with permission, edited for space, see riverreporter.com for full article and follow-ups)

Local reps and members of the Trump administration have discussed ways to fight the ban on fracking in the Delaware River Basin, in order to return drilling rights to property owners in Wayne and Pike counties.

Representative Rob Bresnahan, the newly-elected congressman for Pennsylvania’s 8th district, convened a roundtable on Sunday, March 2 with local pro-fracking industry figures, advocates and elected officials. Together with Lee Zeldin, newly appointed head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), they talked about the need to unleash the natural gas resources in the Delaware River Basin and throughout the country.

Fracking, a process of fracturing rock to extract oil or natural gas from beneath the Earth’s surface, is currently prohibited in Wayne and Pike counties, PA, as well as in neighboring Sullivan County, NY and the rest of the lands within the Delaware River watershed. (Fracking is also banned separately throughout New York State by the NYS government.)

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), an interstate body charged with protecting the Delaware River, placed a moratorium on fracking in 2010, and banned it permanently in 2021.

The resolution banning fracking cited “scientific and technical literature...conclusions of other government agencies” and “more than a decade of experience with high volume hydraulic fracturing in regions outside the Delaware River Basin” to decide that allowing fracking would “pose significant, immediate and long-term risks to the development, conservation, utilization, management and preservation of the water resources” of the Delaware River.

Elected officials and property owners in the Wayne and Pike area have fought the moratorium - then the ban - since the beginning, so far without success.

Fracking supporters see the DRBC’s ban as “overreach” and as the “taking of property rights,” Senator Lisa Baker (R-Wayne/Pike) told the March 2 roundtable.

“We have been fighting through the legislative process, through the courts and other [methods],” said Baker. “And we see such a tremendous unfairness to the landowners here who have been harmed.”

Representative Jonathan Fritz (R-Wayne) agreed. “We have tried six ways from Sunday, legislatively and legally, to correct this wrong,” he said.

Supporters of fracking see it as unfair that landowners in Wayne and Pike counties have been left behind as drilling has taken off elsewhere in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania has three river basins - the Delaware, the Susquehanna and the Ohio - which currently operate under contrasting rules for fracking, Fritz said. “So I’m saying yes to drilling in two of these, but the third

- the Delaware River Basin - we’re saying no. This speaks to this fundamental unfairness. If it’s safe enough to be done in two river basins, why not in the third? It deprives people of their property rights, and speaks glaringly of hypocrisy.”

This difference in regulations creates a difference in economic outcomes between Wayne and Pike counties and the rest of the state. Curt Coccodrilli, former state director of USDA rural development, called it “an economic Iron Curtain, almost 52 miles inside of Pennsylvania.”

Wayne County Commissioner Brian Smith spoke to the difference in finances from Wayne County, where drilling is prohibited, to its free-to-frack neighbors.

Susquehanna County Commissioner Alan Hall took representatives from Wayne to see Susquehanna’s new, \$21 million emergency 911 center, Smith told the roundtable. “If we tried to build a building in Wayne County that was that expensive, the taxpayers would be all over us, because we don’t have gas drilling dollars to put toward something like this.”

“Brian, I think you make a great point,” said Bresnahan. He said that, in preparing for this roundtable, he had reviewed a 2019 study which projected the potential economic impact of fracking in Northeast PA would be close to one billion dollars.

“You’re talking about ways that we could fund schools and parks and pave roads and critical infrastructure systems,” said Bresnahan. “This would be an incredible opportunity to do that.”

It’s unclear what actions the federal government could take to try and overturn the DRBC’s fracking ban. The DRBC is an interstate commission, with each of the states bordering the Delaware River as



FRACK IS BACK?: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin appeared at a “Future of Natural Resources in PA” roundtable organized by Rep. Rob Bresnahan March 2 in Swiftwater. (River Reporter Photo by Liam Mayo)

well as the federal government having an equal vote, not a federal agency.

Asked if there’s a commitment from the Trump administration to try and open up drilling in Northeast PA, Zeldin said that “President Trump is someone I feel confident we can approach [with] any good idea [and] his response is going to be that he wants to get it done as quickly as possible.”

If there’s a “specific localized ask for this area”, members of the administration could “add a little bit of muscle behind” the local support in approaching the President, he said. An EPA spokesperson later clarified that Zeldin was not talking about the DRBC but making a broader energy statement.

“President Trump heard loud and clear from the American people last November that they had some concerns they felt were being left behind on, one of which being a desire to unleash energy dominance,” Zeldin said.

Prior to being named as the head of the EPA, Zeldin ran for governor of New York. While on the campaign trail, he called for the state to lift its wholesale ban on fracking. The difference between NY and PA is a frequent topic of conversation at the federal level, Zeldin told the roundtable.

“A lot of people on the other side of the state border are looking over into PA, and President Trump talks about this all the time. I’ve been in this position now for, I don’t know, four or five weeks? I’ve heard President Trump talk about what we’re talking about right now, and the dynamic of what we’re seeing in PA and what we see on the NY side, I’ve probably heard him bring it up six, seven, eight times. I’m happy that you have some tapping into it but I really think that our country needs to be smarter and tap into it more,” he said.

In Memoriam...



PUBLIC SERVICE: Dave Dean was named 2024 Deerpark Republican of the Year, with the proud moment captured by his friend and fellow UDC delegate Aaron Robinson.

DAVID M. DEAN

May 30, 1950 ~ December 28, 2024

David M. Dean of Sparrowbush, NY passed away with his loving family by his side on Dec. 28, 2024 at the age of 74 after a brave battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Dave represented the Town of Deerpark on the Upper Delaware Council for 10 years from Oct. 21, 2011 through Dec. 31, 2021. He served the Town of Deerpark for over 25 years on the planning board, town council, and as deputy supervisor.

He was a 4th generation resident of the town, born in Port Jervis, attended the Sparrowbush Schoolhouse, graduated from Port Jervis High School in 1968, studied architecture and land use at the University of Miami for two years, served in the U.S. Navy, and worked as a project manager for Garden Homes before owning and operating Dispoz-A-Blade Inc. with his partner and wife since 1977, Michele.

The couple have two daughters, Alyson Rutigliano and Erin Kyne. Dave is also survived by sons-in-law, four grandchildren, two sisters, and other relatives.

Family, community and the great outdoors were the most important facets of Dave's life. He enjoyed hunting as a member of The Cahoonzie Club, teaching the younger generation to honor the land, wild game and firearms through his work as a NYS Hunter Safety Course Educator, fishing, long rides with Michele in their Z with



the top down, Bethel Woods concerts, and reveling in the local scenery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation or a charity of choice. Arrangements were by Gray-Parker Funeral Home of Port Jervis.

GEORGE J. FLUHR

March 27, 1935 ~ February 7, 2025

George Joseph Fluhr, who represented Shohola Township on the Upper Delaware Council for 30 years from its 1988 inception to 2018, died on February 7, 2025 at the age of 89.

He played an influential role in the establishment of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, the River Management Plan, and the Council, which he chaired in 1992 and 2009, as well as twice receiving the Distinguished Service Award in 1989 and 2018.

George was born in the Bronx and would stay at the Shohola home his grandparents had purchased in 1909.

After studying at Fordham University, Manhattan College, and abroad, George taught school and became an assistant principal in the Bronx and later a State Education Department supervisor.

In 1969, he built his Shohola house where he and his wife Carmen raised six children: John, George C., Mary, Anne, Joseph, and Thomas. After retir-



UDC HONOREE: George J. Fluhr, center, was surprised by Phil Fitzpatrick and Frank Hartmann at the Feb. 4, 1989 banquet to receive the UDC's first Distinguished Service Award. After presenting a UDC 25th anniversary speech at the 2013 banquet, he was delighted to unwrap a Pond Eddy Bridge photo by David B. Soete. (UDC File Photos)

ing in 1977, he was elected Shohola Township Supervisor which continued 31 years.

George was also the appointed, passionate historian for Shohola and Pike County.

He sought to preserve history by recording stories of elderly locals, lecturing, writing books, articles, and his "By George!" News Eagle column, adding properties to the National Register, obtaining historic markers, saving and commemorating sites like the Grave of the Unknown Soldier, Zane Grey House, Minisink Battleground, Shohola Civil War Train Wreck, and the Shohola Caboose Museum.

He belonged to Shohola Volunteer Fire & Rescue, Lions Club, St. Ann's Church, Shohola Railroad and Historical Society, and Lackawaxen Missions Men's Club.

Stroyan Funeral Home arranged services and St. Ann's Cemetery burial.



BOTH GONE: Pictured fly fishing on the Upper Delaware River in September 1984 were 39th U.S. President Jimmy Carter, left, who signed the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River into legislative existence for its federal protection in 1978 during his 1977-1981 term, and legendary angler, conservationist, author, and 40-year NYS DEC professional Ed Van Put of Livingston Manor. Carter died on Dec. 29, 2024 at the age of 100 and Van Put passed away on Dec. 14 at 88. (Photo by Barbara Yeaman, originally published in the River Reporter)



MOVING MASONRY: Engineers cite cracks in the New York abutment of the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge as problematic. (UDC Photo by Kerry Engelhardt)

DEMOLITION, continued from Page 1

will install a turbidity curtain and debris containment boom. Light explosive charges will be placed so that the span from the cracked New York abutment to the center pier of the 466-foot, single lane, timber decked bridge will drop onto the causeway. The PA span will be dropped into the river, dragged onto the causeway, cut up with hydraulic shears, hauled away, and scrapped. Both bridge approaches will be removed and revegetated, inspections of the river bottom will be done, and the riverbanks will be restored. The PA abutment will be stabilized for use as a scenic overlook, with a safety railing installed.

PennDOT's subcontractor JD Eckman, Inc. of Atglen, PA, with local company Leeward Construction supplying the stone, has been providing bi-weekly construction updates.

"Regarding witnessing the actual demolition, safety is most important. It is not determined yet if the site can accommodate public access for viewing, but photos [and] videos will be accessible afterwards and made available," PennDOT Assistant Engineering District 4 Executive-Design Susan Hazelton, P.E., told the Upper Delaware Council (UDC).

Reactions and Resistance

UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie said this was not the outcome anyone wanted for this beloved local landmark.

"We are extremely disappointed over the loss of this bridge after steadfastly advocating for the preservation of this unique, historical gem which we believe could have been rehabilitated based on all the studies done for millions of dollars, had it not been left to deteriorate for six years of closure with a questionable inspection schedule. Currently, we don't know what the future holds for a crossing there, but we do know that the landscape will be forever changed. There's no true mitigation possible," she said on the Council's behalf.

The disassembly option went away after engineers concluded that deterioration was progressing to the point that it would not be feasible, safe, or timely. "It's unfortunate, we have a bridge that's dying and dying rapidly," said PennDOT District Executive Rich Roman on Dec. 17.

PennDOT has paused the Planning and Environmental Linkages study

of alternatives to handle the emergency action and focus on mitigation of the adverse effects from loss of this historic property. While officials suggest the PEL study will resume after the bridge is gone, many express doubts.

"We've been blindsided again and again by these plans. You've built no trust with us to say it has to come down," Milanville resident Josh Fox said at a Feb. 11 meeting called by PennDOT's Cultural Resources staff to discuss mitigation measures, echoing the majority of commenters who did not accept the premise that there is an actual emergency.

Both the UDC and the NPS included "a thoughtfully designed replacement bridge aesthetically consistent with the existing truss bridge and corridor" as a condition of their emergency-expedited approvals of PennDOT's bridge demolition plans which they found to substantially conform with the Upper Delaware River Land and Water Use Guidelines. The UDC board voted 10-1-1 on Jan. 31 on its recommendation. NPS issued its Special Use Permit on Feb. 7.

The plans also received concurrences by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Highway Administration, Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and PA and NY State Historic Preservation Offices among the consulting parties under the various required federal and state historic, transportation, and environmental consultation reviews and regulations.

A proposal by Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS) to purchase the bridge for \$1, assume its liability, and for PennDOT to invest the \$16 million cost estimated in a May 2023 Historic Bridge Rehabilitation Analysis to restore the bridge to a 10-ton weight limit was rejected as "unworkable".

"An emergency action to remove the bridge needs to be completed before the start of the river recreational season for the safety of the river users. PennDOT cannot delay that emergency response," said PennDOT District 4 Community Relations Coordinator Jessica Ruddy, adding that transferring ownership from the New York-Pennsylvania Joint Interstate Bridge Commission would require legislative action.

PennDOT also countered each recommendation that DCS offered from Wrought Iron Bridge Works for a "cost-effective and non-destructive" stabilization and rehabilitation plan using techniques that have preserved other historic bridges.

Even as construction proceeds, protesters have encouraged a campaign of calls, letters, and social media posts to petition Governor Shapiro to "stay the execution", while producing original music, videos, films, radio programs, portraits, and artwork to express sentiments about the bridge, inspired by a well-attended Jan. 12 community rally in Narrowsburg.

State Police have been intermittently stationed on the NY and PA sides, with one arrest occurring on March 21 when 86-year-old Sheila Dugan of Milanville repeatedly crossed the construction zone barrier in defiance of trooper warnings.

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 for our records. Return this notice to: Upper Delaware Council, P.O. Box 192, Narrowsburg, NY 12764; call (845) 252-3022 or email info@upperdelawarecouncil.org. To receive UDC monthly emailed updates, sign up via newsletter@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 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'

The British Are Coming!

The non-profit history education group, The Delaware Company, will host "The British Are Coming!" on April 26 at Seminary Hill Catskills in Callicoon.

This event marking the 250th anniversary of the start of America's War for Independence begins with a 3 p.m. social hour, dramatic reading of the Longfellow poem, "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" by local performing artist Oliver King, dinner, the one-woman play, "Rendezvous with Rachel Revere" by Judith Kalaora of History at Play, a Q&A with Judith, and more. Tickets are \$75 and must be purchased online in advance. To request the link, email info@thedelawarecompany.org.

Give Input on Climate

The Delaware River Basin Commission will hold a public input session on the development of a Climate Resilience Plan (CRP) on April 30 at 7 p.m. at the Cornell Cooperative Extension at 64 Ferndale-Loomis Road in Liberty, NY.

This workshop will allow partners and community members to give feedback on the CRP planning process, which is

focused on prioritizing actions to evaluate impacts of climate change and formulating management approaches to improve water resilience and adaptation.

Advance registration is appreciated. Contact Kate.Schmidt@drbc.gov for information. Additional in-person and virtual sessions will be held in April, May and June, or provide an online comment at <https://tinyurl.com/ClimateCommentCard>.

Some Summer Events

June 8 - Food of the Delaware Highlands, a Delaware Highlands Conservancy fundraiser, at The Inn at Woodloch, Hawley, PA. Call (570) 226-3164 for sponsorship and ticket information.

July 12 - 19th Annual Zane Grey Festival, hosted by the National Park Service, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. at the Zane Grey Museum, 135 Scenic Dr., Lackawaxen, PA. Call (570) 685-4871.

July 27 - 34th Annual Riverfest, 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. along Main Street, Narrowsburg, celebrating the art, music, and ecology of the Delaware River as produced by the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance. Unique vendor applications will be accepted through

April 30. Call (845) 252-7576.

August 11 - Public nominations due for the Upper Delaware Council's 37th Annual River Valley Awards; reserve tickets by **Sept. 2** for the **Sept. 14** banquet at Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake, PA. Call (845) 252-3022 or visit UDC website.

'Lack' River Projects

The Wayne County Community Foundation received a \$32,500 grant to create a new pedestrian plaza/parklet over the West Branch Lackawaxen River through Neighborhood Assistance Program funding administered by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development, announced Representative Jonathan Fritz and Senator Lisa Baker in January.

The Wayne County Commissioners on Feb. 27 approved purchasing a 0.37-acre parcel of state-owned land on Rt. 6 in Indian Orchard adjacent to The Dime Bank to help develop a new Lackawaxen River boating access. It will be the last of four Lackawaxen River Trails associated projects, which include Hawley's Bingham Park (2020), White Mills (2023), and Sycamore Point Park in Honesdale (2024).