

# The Upper Delaware

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

Volume 4 Number 1

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Spring 1991



## In This Issue...

Welcome to the Spring, 1991 issue of *The Upper Delaware*! We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy putting it together for you. As always, please feel free to suggest any story ideas you think would interest our readers.

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## UDC Recommends Higher Water Quality Standards

**A**t its February 7 meeting, the Upper Delaware Council recommended that the river's water quality be managed so that it stays at its present high level, while allowing some new discharges and development consistent with the River Management Plan.

The action, a series of recommendations to the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), was taken in response to a DRBC staff report on water quality protection. In all, the Council adopted 11 recommendations, summarized in the graphic accompanying this article.



*Thomas Hill, Lumberland Town Supervisor, has been elected Chair of the Upper Delaware Council. See story on page 5. Photo by Gerri Schwarz.*

### What it Means

If the DRBC accepts the Council's recommendations, the DRBC and States would adopt management programs aimed at maintaining the river's water quality as it is. This would mean tighter controls on new sources of point source pollution (pollution out of a pipe) in the upper river basin. This could include tertiary treatment of wastewater discharges from new sewage facilities or the use of "Natural Systems."

A nondegradation management program could also mean tighter controls on nonpoint source pollution, which is carried into rivers and streams by water running off of the land. Projects needing DRBC approval would be required to submit a nonpoint source control plan

outlining the best management practices which will be used.

If adopted, the impact of the recommendations on those living within the Upper Delaware River Corridor would be minimal. This is because the area is already administered under Land and Water Use Guidelines, local zoning, and the River Management Plan, that are designed to protect water quality.

### Background

To understand the issues under discussion, it is important to understand the differences between water quality standards, existing water quality and

*(Please see "Water," page 4)*

## Special Report

### Private Lands Conserved in Manchester

**A** 687-acre parcel of land along the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is now under the protection of The Nature Conservancy, a national conservation organization. The property, located on the Pennsylvania side of the river in Manchester Township, is about halfway between the hamlets of Equinunk and Stalker.

This purchase marks the first of an anticipated 150 sites that The Nature Conservancy has targeted for protection throughout the entire 12,755 square-mile Delaware River Basin. Termed the "Campaign for the Delaware", this is an ambitious effort to protect virtually untouched natural areas in the basin through acquisition, conservation easements, and voluntary landowner registry programs. The estimated cost of the program is fifteen million dollars. These natural areas harbor the basin's rarest plant and animal species, protect watersheds, and help safeguard the integrity of the ecosystem.

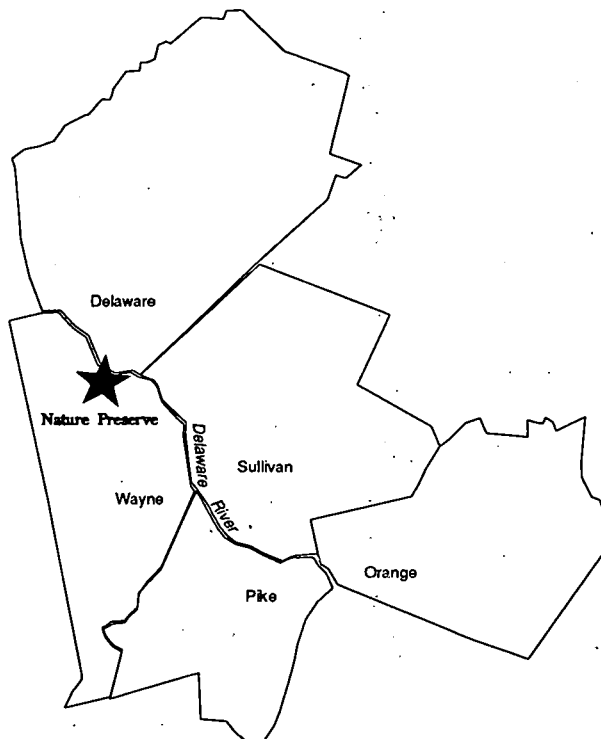
Protected partly through outright purchase and partly through conservation

easements, the Manchester Township site has been a priority in the Campaign. Given the name Dripping Cliffs in the draft report "Natural Areas Inventory of Wayne County, Pa.", the report describes the site as:

"...an Acidic Cliff Community, where a state-endangered plant species grows. This species is known from only two locations east of Minnesota, and both sites are along the Delaware River. The species requires wet shaded cliffs in undisturbed areas."

This section of the Upper Delaware River has spectacular scenery. The parcel contains about 1 1/2 miles of river frontage and lies almost directly across from a 730-acre New York State Forest Preserve. The land in that region contains mature hemlock and northern hardwood forests which support osprey and bald eagles.

Those who have been fortunate enough to canoe that stretch of river appreciate the beauty and serenity to be found there. This acquisition will help to conserve that beauty for future generations.



#### Upper Delaware Council, Inc.

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## River History

# High on Hawks Nest

**A** TV commercial: Whoosh! The expensive European sedan slides around the S-curve, on a narrow road sliced out of a cliff wall. Suddenly - the road is blocked! Tires scream, great brakes stop the car in time ... buy this car *or else!* Perched high above a broad river, the dramatic location could only be in Europe ... or along the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

Hawks Nest, hundreds of feet high, is an almost sheer cliff traversed by NY Route 97 in the Town of Deerpark, near the Southern Terminus of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. It provides one of the most famous views in the river corridor. Featured in a number of television commercials, including the one described above, millions of people across the nation have seen it on TV. Beautiful, breathtaking, and with a European look and feel, Hawks Nest is a favorite destination for advertising film crews from nearby New York City.

### A Road Along the River

One can't talk about Hawks Nest without also talking about the road that crosses it. It was chipped out of the cliff wall in the 1930s by workers building Route 97 - the first modern road along the river.

Gordon Hobbs of Middletown, New York, worked on the stretch of the road just north of Hawks Nest. He describes what was there before Route 97 was built: "It was a little one lane dirt road, with three places to pass. If you met somebody [going the other way], someone had to back up to one of these spots. It was just a bad road along the ledge, that's all it was. There was no wall or anything. If you were coming out of Port Jervis and turned too hard to the left, you'd be in the river."

Some stretches of Route 97 were built by workers from the Work Projects Administration, a government jobs and



*The road across Hawks Nest when it was a one-lane dirt path. The man in the picture is William Allerton, a noted local photographer at the time. Photo provided courtesy of the Minisink Valley Historical Society.*

public works program that President Franklin Roosevelt created to fight the Great Depression. But much of the road was built by private contractors - including the stretch at Hawks Nest. The highway was officially opened at a gala event on August 30, 1939, when the mayors of Hancock and Port Jervis shook hands and cut a ribbon. A motorcade then drove the length of the road, stopping in places for celebrations and

speeches. Walter A. Schwarz, Supervisor of Lumberland and a big supporter of the road, was master of ceremonies.

Boosters of the road, who lobbied hard for 30 years to get it, claimed that it would bring "untold, vast development for the valley, not alone those towns or cities where the road will pass, but for miles on each side." But while development did follow, it was modest

*(Please see "Hawks Nest," page 8)*

sewage *treatment* requirements.

Existing *water quality* in the Upper Delaware River is generally considered to be excellent. It is better by a substantial margin than that which existing DRBC *water quality standards* call for. The existing *standards*, however, do protect river uses including fishing, swimming, and public water supply.

Minimum wastewater *treatment* requirements established by the States, DRBC, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, defined as "secondary treatment," are sufficient to maintain quality represented by the current *standards*, but may not maintain the existing, excellent *water quality* levels.

### **What Happens Next?**

The Upper Delaware Council's final recommendations were submitted to DRBC for consideration. A response document is now being prepared by DRBC staff. All of the reports, comments, and other information will then be presented to the five DRBC members (the States of Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania and the Federal Department of the Interior) for their review.

If a general consensus can be reached, the DRBC members would then direct their staff to write up official proposed rule making to amend their Administrative Manual, Water Code, and other documents. Public notice would then be given of public hearings on these proposals. This would start another round of public involvement. Any individual or group would be allowed to present oral or written testimony at a hearing, or submit written statements. The DRBC members will then review the hearing record and take action.

If you are interested in being involved and wish to learn more, contact the UDC office or correspond directly with DRBC at P.O. Box 7360, West Trenton, New Jersey 08628; telephone - (609) 883-9500; fax - 883-9522.

## **Main Points of UDC Recommendations**

- Allow new discharges and development, provided they do not cause a measurable change to existing water quality.
- The Upper Delaware River segment should be considered separately from the Middle Delaware, with new water quality stations added at Hancock and Cherry Island.
- Improve monitoring and enforcement of water quality laws.
- Support DRBC adding requirements for use of best management practices to control nonpoint source pollution for projects requiring DRBC approval.
- Don't increase local property taxes to pay for expansion of water quality program.
- The use of natural treatment systems should be evaluated for all projects.
- Wastewater plants should use alternatives to chlorination for disinfection.
- Eliminate visual effluent impacts.
- Prepare and implement emergency management plans for wastewater treatment facilities.
- Alternatives A and B in the DRBC report should not be considered viable alternatives.

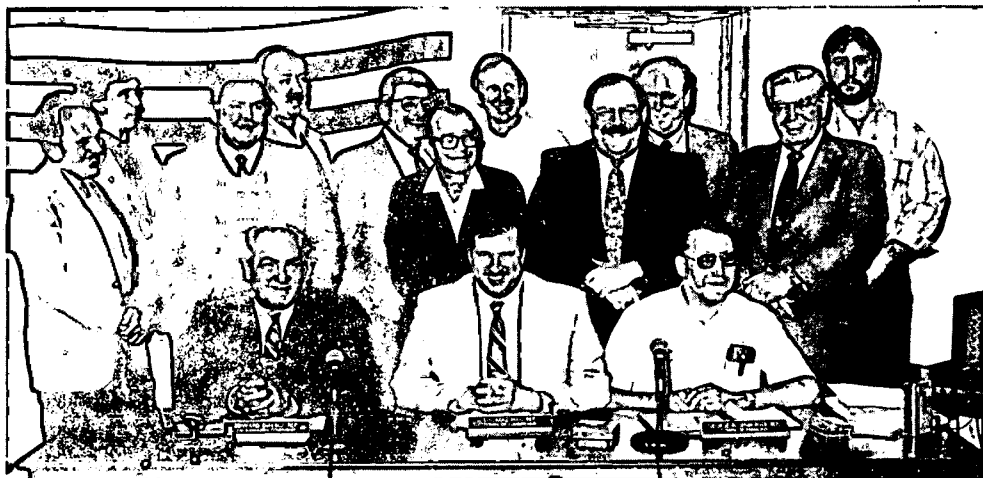
# UDC Elects Officers for 1991

## Tom Hill is Chair

**A**t its January 3rd meeting, the Upper Delaware Council elected officers for 1991. Thomas Hill, Supervisor of the Town of Lumberland, was elected as the UDC's fourth Chairman. Hill has been Town Supervisor since 1984, and has helped shape the Council from the beginning. Says Hill, "I look forward to serving as Council Chair. But, I really want to thank those who preceded me, because they built the Council into such a strong organization." Ed DeFebo of Lackawaxen served as UDC Chair in 1990.

George J. Fluhr, Township Supervisor and Secretary-Treasurer for Shohola Township, was elected to serve as Vice Chairman. Fluhr has served on the Shohola Township Board of Supervisors for many years, and is the Township Historian.

Serving as Secretary-Treasurer will be George Rosenberger, Councilman



*Some of the 1991 representatives to the Upper Delaware Council. Shown seated, left to right: Ed DeFebo (Lackawaxen); Tom Hill (Lumberland); George Rosenberger (Fremont). Second row, left to right: Bob Everest (DRBC); John Hutzky (NPS); LaRue Elmore (CAC); Phil Fitzpatrick (Westfall); Ed Sykes (Delaware). Third row: Rick Lander (Tusten); Larry Richardson (Cochecton); Frank Hartmann (Deerpark); Bruce MacMillan (New York); Al Norris (Highland); Andrew Bartsch (Shohola). Photo by Dave Soete.*

from the Town of Fremont.

The Honorable Lawrence H. Cooke, Chief Judge of the State of New York, Retired, delivered the oath of office to

the new officers. Father Anthony McGuire, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church in Narrowsburg, offered a prayer for guidance.

## UDC Local Government Directory Available

The Upper Delaware Council has published the 1991 edition of its popular Local Government Directory. The directory lists the phone numbers of county, town, and township officials throughout the river corridor. It also in-

cludes numbers for emergency services. The directory has proven valuable to many valley residents, especially second homeowners who may not always be familiar with their local officials, or know how to contact them.

For a free copy of the directory, contact the Upper Delaware Council, P.O. Box 217, Narrowsburg, New York, (914) 252-3022.

## Lordville Bridge Saga Continues

### (Yet Another Update)

The on-going saga of when construction will start on the replacement bridge linking the hamlets of Lordville, New York and Equinunk, Pennsylvania, continues to move ever-so-slowly forward.

This vital connection across the Upper Delaware River, dating from the mid-1800's, was closed to traffic in February of 1984 due to structural problems with the abutment on the Pennsylvania

side. In November, 1986, the bridge was torn down and plans to replace it began.

Late in 1989, just as plans were to go out to bid, it was discovered that Pennsylvania had bumped the project down to a low priority - effectively killing it. After eight months of factual presentations and hard lobbying by local governments, citizens, and the Upper Delaware Council, Pennsylvania restored the

project to a high priority.

As this newsletter goes to press, final construction plans were complete and bids were to be opened on February 28th. If all goes well, contracts should be signed by mid-April. Construction should begin soon after that. The work should be finished by the end of the 1992 construction season - we hope!

## Eagle Habitat Secured

**A**fter years of studies and extensive negotiations, New York State has acquired rights to nearly 12,000 acres of land within the lower Mongaup River Valley in Sullivan and Orange counties. The state bought the land to protect habitat for the American bald eagle, which roosts in the area during the winter. And recently, the eagles have done more than just roost. On May 14, 1990, two eaglets were born in the area - the first known eagle births in that part of the state.

About one-half of the 12,000 acres was bought outright; conservation easements and development rights were obtained on the rest. Some of the purchased land is within the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Corridor.

The land was purchased from the Orange and Rockland Utilities (O&R) company and Clove Development Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of O&R. Funds for the purchase, about \$15

million, came from the State's 1986 Environmental Quality Bond Act. The complex deal was facilitated by The Trust For Public Land, a private, non-profit organization that acted as an intermediary in the sale.

There has been mixed reaction to the state's acquisition. Local officials and residents are concerned about losing some \$50,000 in annual tax revenue from the property, especially during a recession when budgets are already being squeezed. Others are concerned about whether the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has the resources to manage the land properly and about DEC plans to develop much of the land for public recreation.

### Management Issues Wait Ahead

DEC Acknowledges that the newly acquired public land presents challenges as well as opportunities. Recreational uses must be balanced with endangered

species considerations. Traditional uses such as hunting and fishing will be continued with appropriate seasonal and/or area restrictions. Some probable new recreational demands, such as whitewater boating in the Mongaup River below Rio, may result in competition between user groups. Interim regulations are being developed to guide important activities in the area over the next year or two. Ultimately, DEC will develop a comprehensive management for the area, and will seek public input into the process.

An additional complicating factor in management is O&R's pending application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to relicense three hydroelectric power plants at Swinging Bridge, Mongaup Falls, and Rio Reservoirs. FERC has the power to regulate downstream releases of water and recreation at hydroelectric projects they license. An environmental assessment is presently being developed by FERC staff.

## Callicoon Sewage Project Update

Work on the central sewage project in the hamlet of Callicoon, Town of Delaware, is proceeding ahead of schedule, according to the engineering firm overseeing the project. Begun in July, 1990, after more than a decade of planning and delays, the new system will correct the problems of failing septic systems, especially in the downtown business district, now thought to be polluting the Upper Delaware River and Callicoon Creek.

A representative of the Town's engineering firm, Kelly Engineering of Lib-

erty, New York, stated recently that "The contractors are doing a very good job. There has been minimal disturbance and disruption caused by the construction, and so far no problems have been encountered."

Bids for the construction costs on the collection system and treatment plant came in at \$3.67 million, some one million dollars less than the first round of bidding one and one half years earlier. The one million in savings was a result of a re-design of the original engineer's plans by the Kelly Engineering firm.

This re-design was funded in part through a \$10,000 grant from the Upper Delaware Council. The total design flow of the treatment plant is 120,000 gallons per day, big enough to handle the residences and businesses of Callicoon and the Delaware Valley Job Corps Center facility.

Although contracts call for completion of the project by the end of December 1991, the project seems to be ahead of schedule and the treatment plant could be on line by this fall. It is estimated that work is about 50% completed at this time.

# NPS Employee Honored for Recycling Efforts

## Angus Ross Receives Award

**I**n recognition of his efforts to promote recycling within his community, Mr. Malcolm (Angus) Ross, National Park Service Resource Management Specialist, has recently received the first place award under the "Take Pride in Pennsylvania" environmental awareness program. The award was presented in Harrisburg, Pa., by the wife of Governor Robert P. Casey. Mr. Ross becomes a finalist in the national "Take Pride in America" program as a result of his recognition by Pennsylvania.

In 1988, Mr. Ross decided to determine if a recycling program in a rural area could remove a significant amount of material from the local waste stream, with a minimum of labor and expense. He started by placing large, closed garbage cans with a hole cut in the top to allow only cans or bottles to be deposited, at all Park Service administration buildings in the region. Additional containers were placed at three local stores in Damascus Township, Pa., with the owners' permission. Signs such as, "Starve a Dump, Recycle Cans Here,"



Angus Ross, "Take Pride in America" award winner. Photo courtesy NPS.

helped attract attention to the program.

In the summer of 1990, Mr. Ross set up an additional recycling program, with the help of his fellow employees, at five river access points where the Park Service seasonal personnel maintain small information booths. This effort, for the first time, gave the many thousands of urban visitors who recreate on the Upper Delaware River a chance to recycle their containers - rather than simply fill local landfills.

To date the programs initiated by Mr. Ross have recycled approximately 45,000 beverage or food containers, while using all-volunteer labor to proc-

ess materials collected. All expenses have come out of the money made from selling aluminum to local scrap dealers and returnable bottles and cans to local New York State merchants.

Over 600 lbs of aluminum yielded \$300.00, and over \$700.00 was raised by separating and redeeming five cent containers. Thanks to a lot of volunteer help, a surplus of \$136.00 from materials collected in Damascus Township, went to a fund drive to help the Damascus Ambulance Corps buy a new emergency vehicle. Over \$360.00 was raised in the program sponsored by the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, which was returned to the federal treasury to help balance the budget.

According to Ross, his motivation for promoting recycling comes from 25 years of living and working in pristine natural environments. "Over the years, I have seen environmental decay on a world-wide scale through the eyes of the media. Today pollution generated outside many national parks is damaging those places I know and love the most. Recycling is a way to get every citizen in America aware of their impact on, and responsibility to, the environment."

## Do We Have Your Correct Address?

If your address has changed or you no longer own property in the Upper Delaware River area, please help us to maintain the accuracy of our records. Fill in your new address or the name and address of the new owner of your property and return this part of the page to the: Upper Delaware Council, P. O. Box 217, Narrowsburg, NY 12764. Thank you for your assistance.

**Old Address**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**New Address**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check this line and return the form if you wish to have your name removed from the mailing list. \_\_\_\_\_

in scope, and the Upper Delaware valley has retained much of its rural, scenic character.

Far beneath the cliff road are the remains of an earlier, watery highway: the Delaware and Hudson Canal, built 100 years before Route 97 was begun. Another transportation era, the railroad age, is represented by the still-active train line that runs along the Pennsylvania side of the river.

### Perhaps, an Ancient Mystery

Before it was crossed by "a bad road along the ledge," Hawks Nest was traversed by an Indian trail that followed the river from Port Jervis to Cochecton, New York. Hawks Nest may well have been a special place to the Indians. It is known that they used to light signal fires from the rocks at the top of the cliffs.

Some even speculate that Hawks Nest was one of a string of Indian signal points that stretched thousands of miles. According to proponents of this theory, the main evidence for this lies in the "perched" boulders that stand at the top of the cliffs. Also called "lifting rocks," they stand on end or on edge,

seeming to defy time and gravity. There's also a collection of lifting rocks to the north in the Catskills, and more rocks to the south in High Point State Park. If Hawks Nest were shorn of trees, both of these sites would be visible from its summit. Similarly, from High Point one can see to the Poconos, where there are more lifting rocks, and so on down the eastern mountains.

Proponents of the signal theory claim to have surveyed a long series of such rock-crowned summits, that together could form the nodes of a vast communication network. Talk of such a signal system, like talk of early Celt or Iberian visits to North America, is met with much skepticism by the scientific establishment. But if you follow a map of the carefully surveyed lines with your hand, your fingers will trace an unbroken path from Maine to Georgia.

*The Upper Delaware Council thanks Peter Osborne of the Minisink Valley Historical Society, Gordon Hobbs, and Mary Curtis for providing information for this article.*

## Calendar of Upper Delaware Events

April 1991							May 1991							June 1991						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 UD	5	6				1	2 UD	3	4							1
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6 UD	7	8
14	15	16 RM	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23 OP PR	24	25	26	27	19	20	21 RM	22	23	24	25	16	17	18 RM	19	20	21	22
28	29	30					26	27	28 OP PR	29	30	31		23	24	25 OP PR	26	27	28	29
														30						

### Legend

- UD** Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm, Tusten Town Hall, Narrowsburg, NY
- RM** Resource Management/Water Use Committee, 7:00 pm, Tusten Town Hall
- OP** Operations Committee, 6:30 pm, UDC office, Bridge Street, Narrowsburg
- PR** Project Review Committee, 7:00 pm, UDC office (Upon adjournment of the Operations Committee)

### Upper Delaware Council

**P.O. Box 217  
Narrowsburg, NY 12764**

Address Correction Requested

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