

# The Upper Delaware

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

Volume 33 Number 2

Published by the Upper Delaware Council, Inc.

Summer 2020



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**BLACK LIVES MATTER:** A "Peaceful Gathering to Show Support and Solidarity" attracted nearly 500 people to Callicoon-on-the-Delaware on June 7 as "Nonviolent Demonstrations for Racial Justice and Equality" took place almost daily since June 1 on the Narrowsburg, NY-Darbytown, PA Bridge, showing the spirit of small local communities to confront systemic racism issues spurred by the Memorial Day killing of George Floyd even in the midst of coping with the coronavirus global pandemic. (UDC Photos by Laurie Ramie)

## In Summer Disrupted by Virus, Natural Resources Appreciated

As the region attempts to navigate through the COVID-19 public health crisis, the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River keeps flowing and the valley's natural resources beckon.

The list of cancellations and postponements may be longer than what's still going on these days, but as of press time, the New York and Pennsylvania sides of the river had each entered the final stages

of most businesses reopening and upward adjustment of gathering limitations, with CDC guidelines still in effect.

"The health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners continues to be paramount," said NPS Upper Delaware Chief of Interpretation Ingrid Peterec. "Details and updates on park operations will continue to be posted on our website [www.nps.gov/upde](http://www.nps.gov/upde) and social media channels."

River accesses are open. The Zane Grey Museum in Lackawaxen, PA is closed. No summer programming is currently scheduled by limited NPS staff. River patrols and water safety are the operational focus.

For those staying home, the NPS website offers an Upper Delaware virtual tour.

The Upper Delaware Council's office in Narrowsburg, NY closed on March 22 and reopened on June 9, with all of its meetings proceeding by teleconference and staff working remotely. In-person meetings cautiously resumed in July.



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

## Upper Delaware Profile: James Gutekunst

After working in the New York City-based financial industry for 35 years, James Gutekunst now applies his savvy to his Town of Highland community and a family legacy of small business ownership.

Gutekunst retired in 2008 as a partner with the Hamilton Securities Group but never quit working.

Twenty years ago, he built the Wurtsboro G-Mart and currently logs 50-60 hours per week overseeing the 35-employee supermarket's operation in the eastern Sullivan County Town of Mamakating.

Gutekunst is also the Deputy Supervisor for the Highland Town Board, to which he was elected 10 years ago.

Since January of 2020, he has served as the Town of Highland's appointed voting representative to the Upper Delaware Council, succeeding Councilwoman Kaitlin Haas in that role.

Gutekunst has deep roots in the Town of Highland where his parents met. He was born in Callicoon and grew up in Barryville.

Starting around 1948, his grandfather and family members ran the Riviera Theater known as "Delaware Valley's Radio City" on River Road in Barryville.

The popular movie theater was located in a 3-story Greek Revival farmhouse that at one time also housed a dining and dancing hall called Clouse's Casino.

The family businesses extended to the grocery trade, including his father's purchase of the A&P Supermarket in Eldred which he ran from 1975 until 1990, when Gutekunst took it over before selling it to Peck's Markets.

Gutekunst attended Iona Prep School in New Rochelle, Fordham University, and the University of Wisconsin with a focus on banking and finance.

He started his career at Chase Bank in Manhattan, focusing on U.S. government securities and primary dealer activities.

Jim and his wife of 43 years, Carol Reynolds, bought their current old farmhouse with eight acres of land and a boathouse in Highland Lake in 1984.

They keep an apartment in Manhattan as well, where Carol works as a substance abuse counselor and treatment supervisor for the Mount Sinai Hospital System.

Gutekunst said former Highland Town Supervisor and UDC Alternate Andy Boyar recruited him to join the local government.

His goals as a Town Councilman are to provide "good services, keep the taxes low, and stay out of people's way."

Gutekunst is proud that the Town of Highland achieved designation as a Clean Energy Community. He sits on the town board's Energy, Insurance, Personnel and Grants Committees in addition to the UDC.



James Gutekunst, Town of Highland

He recalls the concerns that greeted the announcement of the National Park Service's interest in establishing the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River which occurred in 1978.

He applauds the agreement that was reached to allow federal jurisdiction on the river for safety and resource protection while the vast majority of the land remains privately owned.

"I see the UDC's role as being a buffer between the towns and the park service. I'm a property rights person. I was in that river all of my life. There is probably less use of the river now than then, but we did have problems with people camping in the woods and lots of drinking," he says.

He is dismayed that the National Park Service has diminished its financial support for local municipalities. Absent the law enforcement assistance that the Town of Highland once received to offset costs for its constable program, the town has opted to continue it for the sake of public safety.

Three years ago, Gutekunst was asked to serve on the eight-member board of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network by its Chief Executive Officer Maya van Rossum, who he met during the Millennium Compressor Station controversy in Highland.

"Everyone should have the right to clean water and clean air" sums up his philosophy of environmental activism.

Gutekunst is a member of the New York Caledonians and Ardsley Curling Clubs. Friends introduced him to the ancient Scottish game. His team competed internationally and got as far as the playoffs for the 1988 Olympics.

He belongs to the Eldred Central School Audit Committee, St. Ann's Church in Shohola, PA, enjoys traveling and history.

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*The Upper Delaware* is a free publication of the Upper Delaware Council, a 501(c)(3) organization comprised of member governments from New York and Pennsylvania directly affected by the River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

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Shannon N. Cilento (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

## ***UDC Welcomes Resources And Land Use Specialist***

The Upper Delaware Council is pleased to announce the hiring of Shannon N. Cilento as Resources and Land Use Specialist, effective July 15, 2020.

In the full-time position, Cilento will provide technical support to the non-profit organization and coordinate reviews of land and resource management activities to help ensure proper implementation of the River Management Plan in accordance with the Land and Water Use Guidelines for the Congressionally-designated Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River in New York and Pennsylvania.

Cilento was employed by Sullivan County from September 2017 through May 2020 as the Community Development & Grants Planner with the Division of Planning and Community Development. She resides in Monticello.

The Mexico, NY native earned a Bachelor's degree in Global and International Studies and Anthropology, with a minor in Museum Studies-Art History Concentration, from SUNY Oswego in 2015 and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation Planning from Cornell University in 2017.

Growing up in Oswego County along Lake Ontario, Cilento became familiar with Sullivan County through her father Joseph's annual fishing trips to Roscoe, also known as "Trout Town USA".

Cilento's first job as a Research and Collections Assistant at the Fort Ontario

State Historic Site in Oswego fueled her interest in interpretation, museums, parks, and tourism.

Special projects during graduate school included serving as secretary for the Cornell University Women's Planning Forum, an internship with the Cleveland Restoration Society in Ohio, and work with the Richford, NY Historical Society to design adaptive reuse of a 19th century school building and with the New York City Parks system to update historical signage.

She worked as an assistant residence hall director at Cornell, and continues to serve as secretary of the Cornell Historic Preservation Planning Alumni and chair of its grants committee.

Prior to her move to Sullivan County, Cilento spent a summer in Maine as a planning intern for Discover Downtown Westbrook.

At the county, Cilento managed a variety of Planning Division initiatives including conducting land use reviews; implementing and overseeing small grant programs; communications including a monthly e-newsletter, news releases, social media, and a web page; and coordinating trainings for municipalities, professionals, and volunteers. She helped secure over \$2 million in grant funding through state and federal applications.

Working with the UDC offers Cilento the opportunity to focus her diverse skills to

benefit the Upper Delaware River Valley geographic region.

"As an avid fly fisher and amateur wildlife photographer, this position allows me to marry my two passions – conservation and planning. I've always been interested in the intersection between the environment and community development. I look forward to helping to protect and conserve this area, and promote its cultural resources. I'm excited to be here with all the projects going on; I thrive at being busy," she says.

Her parents helped instill in her a love for nature and being outdoors, from fishing with her recently-retired father to helping her mother Deanna, who is an elementary school teaching assistant, to manage a small farm and orchard.

Hobbies also include competitive snowshoeing, hiking, running (she completed her first half-marathon in March), and listening to audio books. In free time, she enjoys visiting her upstate hometown, and her sister Stephanie, brother-in-law Scott, and two nieces who live in Moravia, NY.

Cilento joined the Village of Monticello Planning Board in April 2018, participates as a member of the Leadership Sullivan Class of 2020, and belongs to the Rotary Club of Monticello.

The 27-year-old occasionally waitresses at Miss Monticello Diner.

Cilento is a member of the American Planning Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Northeast Chapter of the Association for Preservation Technology, and heritage trusts for Canada and several provinces.

The UDC team of Executive Director Laurie Ramie, Resources and Land Use Specialist Shannon Cilento, and Secretary Ashley Hall-Bagdonas represents the first all-female staff since the Council's inception in 1988. The position had been vacant since January 10 of this year following the re-location of Pete Golod to Seattle, WA.

Contact Cilento at (845) 252-3022 or [shannon@upperdelawarecouncil.org](mailto:shannon@upperdelawarecouncil.org).

### **UDC Board Changes**

The Delaware Town Board on June 10 appointed Thomas H. Dent as its Upper Delaware Council town representative.

Dent succeeds Harold G. Roeder, Jr., who will now be the alternate. Roeder has served on the Council since 1997.

Delaware's alternate position had previously been filled by David Peters since January 2012.

Michael Flaherty stepped down as UDC alternate for New York State on April 15, 2020 in conjunction with retiring from his 30-year career with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The Region 3 Inland Fisheries Manager served on the UDC since March 2007.

# Delaware Named 2020 River of the Year

American Rivers has recognized the Delaware River as its 2020 River of the Year, succeeding Ohio's Cuyahoga River.

"The Delaware River is a national success story," said American Rivers President and CEO Bob Irvin.

"The River of the Year honor recognizes the hard work of many local advocates who understand that a healthy Delaware River is vital to the health of millions of people. The Delaware shows how a healthy river can be an engine for thriving communities," he said in the April 14 announcement.

### A River Renewed

"Seventy-five years ago, the Delaware River was choked with sewage and industrial pollution. People were sickened by the smell. Parts of the river were dead zones, unable to support fish and other aquatic life. The river was slated to be carved up by dams for flood control and water supply, and the natural character of the Delaware was in danger of being lost forever," the designation states.

"Today, the Delaware River is on the mend and thriving. Through federal safeguards, state action and local initiative, the quality of waters in the Delaware have dramatically improved, fish and wildlife have returned in tremendous numbers, and the mainstem of the Delaware remains the longest free-flowing river in the eastern United States, with the most extensive National Wild and Scenic River protection of any watershed in the country. Today, communities along the Delaware River are setting a national example of river stewardship.

Keys to this success are the countless local individuals and groups who have worked for decades on the river's behalf. The progress on the Delaware illustrates the power of partnership and collaboration.

### The River's Future

But, important work remains to be done. Continued action is critical to address ongoing challenges, such as aging water infrastructure, urban development and climate change.



**SUMMER FUN:** In the shadow of Railroad Bridge No. 2, the Sparrowbush River Access is a popular recreation spot along the Upper Delaware River. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

Severe storms, which occur with increasing frequency due to climate change, threaten drinking water intakes with saltwater intrusion and can cause sewage overflows at ill-prepared water treatment plants.

Critical funding and additional restoration and protection projects are necessary to support the health of the river and its communities:

~ Congress must defend against rollbacks to the Clean Water Act to protect the Delaware and its tributaries, wetlands and small streams. In the basin, the Clean Water Act must be implemented to support 'fishable, swimmable' uses.

~ The Delaware River Basin Commission, partner states and federal agencies must implement the Flexible Flow Management Plan to protect the headwaters while serving communities and water needs downstream.

~ Congress must continue to provide federal funding for regional and state programs, including NOAA's Community-Based Restoration Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fish Passage Program; the Delaware River Conservation Fund and Delaware River Restoration Fund; and the Clean Water Act's State Revolving Funds.

With these actions, we will ensure the Delaware River continues to shine as a national example for clean water and river health, as well as an economic and recreational asset to the millions of people who call this remarkable river home," AR states.

American Rivers offers a historical overview, short video, and a GIS Story Maps virtual tour of the river over five days which includes interviews with local conservation leaders along the way. Visit <http://americanrivers.org/2020/04/river-of-the-year-for-2020-the-delaware-river/>.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania since 1983 has also honored the Delaware as its statewide River of the Year in 1995 (specifically the Upper Delaware portion), 2002, and 2011.

## Land Trust Embarks on \$2.5M Capital Campaign To Establish an Environmental Education Center

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy (DHC) will convert its largest ever land trust property donation into a new headquarters and public nature reserve.

The Van Scott family gifted its 140-acre former dairy farm at 571 Perkins Pond Road in Beach Lake, PA to DHC to develop as an environmental learning center.

The property includes diverse habitats of

large open meadows, forested areas, two ponds, a tributary to Beach Lake Creek, and wetlands.

There will be abundant opportunities for conservation, environmental education, and outdoor recreation on self-guided trails.

The residence will become a headquarters for Conservancy staff.

Farm structures will be adapted over time to allow for enhanced programming.

While the property is located outside Berlin Township's river corridor boundary, the UDC was pleased to support a DHC grant application to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources through an April 2 letter.

The Conservancy has protected more than 18,000 acres in the Upper Delaware River region over the past 26 years.

For more information on the Van Scott Nature Reserve Fund for the Future, please visit [www.DelawareHighlands.org](http://www.DelawareHighlands.org) or call (570) 226-3164.



**NATURE RESERVE:** The 140-acre Van Scott property in Berlin Township will become the headquarters for the Delaware Highlands Conservancy. (Contributed Photo)

## Banquet Postponed to April 25, 2021:

# UDC Announces River Valley Awards

The Upper Delaware Council has cancelled its 32nd Annual Awards Ceremony on August 30 with plans to honor the intended 2020 slate next spring.

The banquet has been held without fail since the UDC's inception in 1988 to recognize those who have enhanced the quality of life or protected the resources of the Upper Delaware River Valley.

Traditionally for decades, it was held on the 4th Sunday of April.

When that date wasn't available this year for the preferred venue and keynote speaker, the UDC moved the event to May 3. Encroachment of the coronavirus pandemic prompted postponements to June 7 then Aug. 30 before the decision to cancel was regrettably made.

While Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake, PA has implemented stringent measures to help protect guests against COVID-19, the UDC is exercising caution in gathering members of the public for an indoor social hour, dinner, and award presentations that would be challenged by wearing masks and physical distancing. Average attendance is 85-100 people.

The UDC looks forward to paying the proper public tribute to its honorees next April 25 at the Central House.

Pennsylvania Representative Jonathan Fritz (111th District) has been invited back as keynote speaker.

In early May, the UDC announced its latest roster of honorees.

Distinguished Service Award – **Harold G. Roeder, Jr.**, for his contributions to the Upper Delaware Council as the Town of Delaware, NY Representative since 1997, a three-time UDC chairperson including earning the Oaken Gavel Award for 2019, and river valley advocacy.

Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Awards (2) – **National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Interpretive Rangers Paddy McCarthy and the late Tim Freeman**, for a July 5, 2019 boater rescue at Mongaup Rapids; and **James Moss, Johnny Smith, Andy Moss (Equinunk Volunteer Fire Company) and Jeff Dexter (Damascus Township Volunteer Ambulance Corps)**, for a July 6, 2019 river rescue upstream of the Kellams, NY-Stalker, PA Bridge.

Advocacy Award – Honorable **Pennsylvania Representatives Jonathan Fritz (111th District) and Michael Peifer (139th District), and Senator Lisa Baker (20th District)**, for securing a first-ever

\$100,000 Pennsylvania grant investment through the Department of Community and Economic Development in 2019 for the Upper Delaware Council and its five PA member townships.

Partnership Award – **Dr. Heather Galbraith, Carrie Blakeslee, Jeff Cole, and Barbara White**, for their work at the USGS Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory partnering with the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River for over two decades to advance numerous scientific research projects.

Cultural Achievement Awards (2) – **Big Eddy Film Festival**, directed by Tina Spangler from the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance, for the 8th annual event in 2019 featuring the premiere of the "Narrowsburg" documentary; and the **Wayne County Historical Society's 1888 Spencer Tractor Restoration**, accomplished over three years by the volunteer team of Fred Murray, Rich Robbins, Frank Ward, Rod Warner, Steve Weber, and Kim Erickson.

Community Service Award – **Nancy Furdock** of Hancock, NY, for promoting regional tourism, economic development,

arts appreciation, and cultural understanding.

Recreation Achievement Awards (2) – **Dan Plummer**, the guiding force behind the Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. from 2006 to 2019; and **Bill Streeter**, director of the Delaware Valley Raptor Center in Milford, PA since 1987.

Volunteer Award – **Star Hesse** of Lava, NY for her active outreach on behalf of Town of Tusten residents, senior citizens, the environment, and community beautification efforts.

Special Recognition Awards (2) – **Carla Hauser Hahn** of Callicoon, NY, upon her 2019 retirement as National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Management Assistant after 39 years of government service; and **John Ogo-zalek** of French Woods, NY, for his advocacy to mark the Highest Elevation Point along the NYS Route 97 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway and substance abuse addiction education work through The Kingfisher Project.

Reservation details will be shared in the new year through [www.upperdelaware-council.org](http://www.upperdelaware-council.org) or call (845) 252-3022.

## National Park Service Staff Transitions

Darren Boch arrived at the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River on June 8 to serve as acting superintendent of the National Park Service (NPS) unit through October 2nd.

Boch is currently the superintendent at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park, a role he originated when that park was established in 2011.

It honors Paterson, NJ which was founded by Alexander Hamilton in 1792 as America's first planned industrial city.

Boch joined the NPS in 2006 as Chief of Public Affairs for the National Parks of New York Harbor.

His assignment picks up from the Feb. 3-May 30 detail of Acting Superintendent Jessica Weinman, Chief of Facilities at Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton and Pleasant Mount, PA resident.

Former Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Superintendent Kristina M. Heister accepted the deputy superintendent position at Gettysburg National Military Park and Eisenhower National Historic Site on June 7, 2020 after working there in two acting capacities from April 5-August 12, 2019 and Jan. 30-May 30, 2020.

The Upper Delaware Council approved a Resolution of Commendation for Heister on May 7, expressing appreciation for her six-year tenure that began July 14, 2014.

Leaving her April 29, 2018-July 18, 2020 position of Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Community and Land Use Planner was Jennifer Z. Claster, who will move to Philadelphia to become project manager in the NPS Northeast Regional Office's Line Item Construction Division. She was recognized in a July 2 UDC commendation.



Darren Boch

# Upper Delaware Council Activity Highlights

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

## UDC FUNDING

A UDC Fiscal Year 2021 1st Quarter (covering 10/1-12/31/20) budget and work plan package for \$75,000 was approved on 6/4 to help bridge an expected funding delay as the National Park Service transitions to a new financial management software system for Cooperative Agreements and grants starting 10/13.

## FIVE-YEAR PLAN

A 5/30 strategic planning retreat to develop a new Five-Year Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025 that was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions is being rescheduled for this fall. The UDC issued a Scope of Services and retained Buck Moorhead of Callicoon, NY as facilitator for pre-planning activities, the workshop, and report preparation and presentation.

## PROJECT REVIEWS

Town of Tusten - The UDC participated in a 4/13 meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals as an adjoining property owner for an application by Wayne Bank at 93 Main St., Narrowsburg, for three variances in the Downtown Business Zoning District to create a public parking area with right-of-way access on a non-conforming lot. The approved variances were forwarded to the Tusten Planning Board.

Town of Tusten - The Town Board issued a lead agency notice under the NYS SEQRA process for the Anaerobic Digester



**NEW SIGN:** In June, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission fulfilled the UDC's long-standing request since 2015 to change the sign which listed a non-existent "Narrowsburg, PA" to the historically accurate name of Darbytown for the river access along PA Rt. 652 in Damascus Township at River Mile 289.6. The new sign, which had been ordered in December 2019, also provides the 911 address to facilitate emergency dispatch. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation maintains a river access in the Hamlet of Narrowsburg across the Narrowsburg, NY-Darbytown, PA Bridge at River Mile 290. (UDC Photos by Laurie Ramie)

Community Supported Bicycling Unit project, for which the UDC sent a 5/14 support letter noting its outside-boundary location.

Town of Highland - The NPS concurred 3/31 with the UDC's 3/5 Significant Project substantial conformance recommendation for improvements to the Highland River Access as submitted by Sullivan County.

Town of Lumberland - The town extended a six-month moratorium on permitting solar farms and power plants through 9/23 and granted a one-year special use permit for a hemp farm on Kerr Road.

Highland & Lumberland - The Millennium Pipeline Co. applied to the NYS DEC for various permit to perform maintenance activities that will involve constructing a temporary access road through a wetlands using wooden timber mats and crossing two streams, with all disturbed areas to be restored to their original condition.

Damascus Township - A manufactured home application for a River Road, Beach Lake property was deemed not reviewable following an analysis by UDC planning consultant Tom Shepstone, as was a River Road shed construction site plan.

Lackawaxen Township - A 4/22 application to amend the 2016 Conditional Use Permit of Holbert Bros. Bluestone Quarry regarding truck hours and operational days was on the Planning Commission's hearing docket 6/17 before the application was withdrawn 6/16. The UDC with legal consultation denied a Freedom of Information

Act request for records filed by a citizen complainant, while seeking and receiving documentation from the township and PA Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Mining to research the issue.

Shohola Township - An update of 2016 Zoning Ordinance No. 79 was the subject of a 7/28 substantial conformance review.

## EVENTS & MEETINGS

Besides UDC liaison roles 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, Callicoon Park Steering Committee, and planning for partnership projects with the NPS and National Parks Conservation Association, special meetings and events not mentioned elsewhere included:

3/30 - Delaware River Watershed Needs Assessment interview of Laurie Ramie

4/10 - COVID-19 Guidance and Resources for Partners teleconference hosted by NPS Interior Region 1

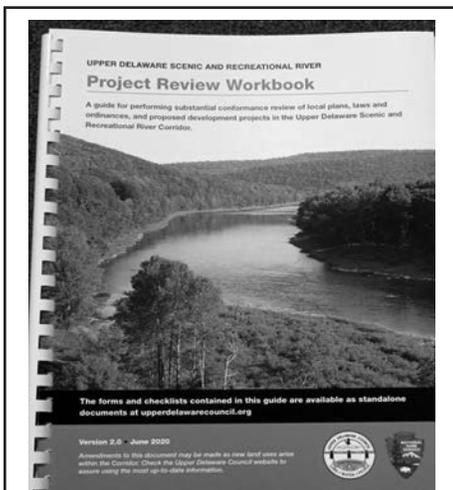
5/5 - Delaware River Watershed Signs in NYS tele-press conference

8/2 - 32nd Annual UDC Family Raft Trip (see coverage in the next newsletter).

## GUIDERAILS REPAIR

NYS Department of Transportation Region 9 Director Nicolas Choubah replied on 7/7 to a UDC 5/7 letter seeking an expedited solution to large sections of missing

*Please see HIGHLIGHTS on Page 7*



**VERSION 2.0:** The UDC and NPS completed a user-friendly repackaging with updated resources of the 1988 Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Project Review Workbook in June with support from the National Parks Conservation Association. An online version with fillable forms and an instructional video are in production.

## HIGHLIGHTS, continued from Page 6

guiderails and eroded pavement along the NYS Route 97 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway in the Towns of Cocheton and Delaware that raise safety concerns.

He provided an update on three contracted projects to occur this season and 2021, as well as immediate replacement of safety barrels that had rolled down hills.

### UDC RESOLUTIONS

2020-08: Adopting a Temporary Voting Rules Change for Teleconferences (4/2)

2020-09: A Resolution of Commendation for Kristina M. Heister, NPS (5/7)

2020-10: Approving 2020 River Clean-up Grant Applications (6/4)

### RENEWABLE ENERGIES

The UDC issued a 6/5 memo to its voting members seeking comments by 8/3 on a proposed minor amendment to the Land and Water Use Guidelines to integrate conclusions of its Utility-Scale Solar Energy Systems position paper into the River Management Plan.

Adoption requires a unanimous vote.

Commercial solar would be incompatible in scenic segments of the river corridor, and compatible in recreational and hamlet areas with implementation of conditional use (PA) or special use (NY) criteria.

The Cocheton, Lumberland, and Delaware Town Boards passed resolutions opposing The Accelerated Renewable Energy Growth and Community Benefits Act, which was ultimately approved as a 2020-21 New York State budget amendment, citing Constitutional home rule incursions.

It creates a new Office of Renewable Energy Siting for major industrial wind and solar projects with expedited application review and approval times. Local opposition to projects will not be considered as a substantive or significant adverse impact. Incentives will be offered to communities that host renewable energy facilities. Public comment will be solicited to develop new regulations for uniform standards and mitigation measures.

### FRACKING UPDATES

New York State codified its 2015 ban on natural gas hydrofracturing on 3/31 as part of its FY 2021 budget approval.

Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro released a 235-page Grand Jury report 6/25 with analysis and recommendations on natural gas drilling following a two-year investigation of impacts. Request a copy at [fracking@attorneygeneral.gov](mailto:fracking@attorneygeneral.gov).

### 2021 PLANNING

These events will be rescheduled to next year: the UDC's Upper Delaware Litter Sweep in April, Delaware River Sojourn on 6/19-26; Kittatinny Canoes' On and Under the Delaware River Clean-up in June; the Battle of Minisink Commemoration and the NPS Zane Grey Festival in July.



**TMR LAUNCH:** The Upper Delaware Council objects to a decision made to prohibit trailered boat launching at the Ten Mile River Access in the Town of Tusten, shown above, based on the unilateral determination and variable nature of muddy conditions. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

## NPS Bans Launching Trailered Boats at Ten Mile River Access

The National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River's announcement through a May 7 news release that the Ten Mile River (TMR) Access will be closed to trailered boat launching and retrieval beginning this recreation season has raised objections from the Upper Delaware Council (UDC).

The access at River Mile 284 located on Crawford Road in the Town of Tusten is owned by the Greater New York Councils, Boy Scouts of America, and is leased to NPS to provide public access to the river.

Public use and hand-carry launching of boats is still allowed, in concurrence with the Boy Scouts organization.

The official rule change was added to the Upper Delaware Superintendent's Compendium and will appear in NPS materials.

"The closure is in response to muddy conditions that are encountered regularly at the access, particularly early in the boating season and during high water years," the news release stated.

"Because of the site's location in a depositional area of the river, deep silt has naturally accumulated in the launch area over a period of many years. When the water is high and rains are frequent, the silt remains soft and muddy with new depositional events. The access is not conducive to use by trailered boats and was originally envisioned as a river rest stop - an area where paddlers can make a short-term lay-over for informal picnicking, sanitary facilities and a break from paddling," it explains.

The UDC has discussed the TMR Access situation intermittently since at least 2015.

The NPS rejected potential mitigation measures proposed by the UDC such as constructing a cement ramp or installing stone as "unworkable" due to the hydrology, citing erosion concerns and damage.

The 1986 River Management Plan assigns the UDC the key decision-making role as "the coordinating entity" with "overall responsibility for achieving the goals and objectives of the Water Use Program."

No advance notice of the regulation change was provided to the Council.

The action prompted the UDC to object to both the decision and its implementation method in a June 4 letter to NPS Northeast Regional Director Gay Vietzke, urging the agency to "rescind this premature rule and reframe it as a proposal to allow for substantive input from Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River partners, businesses, and the public sector."

"We also feel this is an over-reaction to a variable situation prompted by an isolated complaint. It would be better handled through educational signage advising access users of the silty terrain that can occur," wrote UDC Chairperson Larry H. Richardson. The anaerobic mud is not hazardous to human health.

Vietzke replied on July 1 that they are willing to consider the prohibition as temporary and enforcement will be implemented over a two-year period, with an educational wayside exhibit to be installed.

# How Did the Ten Mile River Get Its Name?

Glenn Pontier promised, “This is a long wind-up to a short punch line” as he posed the historical head-scratcher: how did the Ten Mile River get its name?

His July 14 program was among a series of free, interactive webinars organized by the Ten Mile River Scout Museum this summer and available to the public.

Pontier was a co-director of the TMR museum last summer. The Barryville resident has also worked with the Catskill Fly Fishing Center Museum and Sullivan Renaissance, while serving on the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway board and others.

The scout reservation in Beaver Brook developed starting in the late 1920s with a major push by former NYS Governor then President F.D. Roosevelt was named after the Ten Mile River, but where did that tributary name originate?

Pontier said answering that question requires looking back at “the rich history” of lumbering and rafting in the river valley.

Since the 1700s, Catskill forests were coveted for their quality trees.

After logs were cut manually and transported by horses and oxen, streams and rivers became the runway to get them to Philadelphia, Easton and Trenton markets.

Daniel Skinner hatched the idea in the



**RAFTING TRADITION:** The Upper Delaware River Valley’s lumbering industry plays a critical role in explaining how the Ten Mile River got its name. (Contributed Postcard)

1760s to build rafts out of the logs, 60-80 feet wide and 100 feet long, on which men rode for 7-10 days to deliver the lucrative

product, then walked home for 2-3 weeks.

When they reached the spot where this tributary intersected with the Delaware River, “they knew they were 10 miles from Barryville, which was widely known as a party town. Getting to Barryville was a high point of the trip for many of the rafters. So it’s a mile marker name. It’s not the length. It’s the distance to Barryville,” Pontier said.

## Watch and Learn

Each webinar moderated by Museum Chairman Michael Drillinger is recorded for later viewing on a YouTube channel.

Prior or upcoming topics also include:

7/7: “The American Bald Eagle and its Comeback in the Upper Delaware River Valley” by NPS Ranger Susie Kaspar;

7/23: “How to Begin Your Patch Trading Hobby” by Dr. Gene Berman, founder of the TMR Scout Camp Museum;

8/4: “Knotweed: A Tough Love” by NPS Biologist Jessica Newbern;

8/11: “Improv” by Kenn Adams, artistic director of Synergy Theater in California;

8/13: “Bats in the Upper Delaware River Valley” by NPS Biological Science Technician and Ranger Erica Spiess; and

8/18: “Uncovering Unconscious Bias” by Lorne Epstein, Human Resources expert.

The Scouting and local history museum is located on the grounds of the Ten Mile River Scout Camps’ headquarters at 1481 County Road 26 in Narrowsburg.

Visit [www.tmmuseum.org](http://www.tmmuseum.org) or call (845) 252-2063 to find out when the museum is open or take the virtual tour.

## Scenic Byway Committee Elects Chair

The Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) Committee elected John Pizzolato (Town of Highland) as its chairperson at the non-profit organization’s annual meeting on April 27.

Rosemarie “Rosie” DeCristofaro (Town of Delaware), who owns Callicoon Real Estate, LLC, was named vice-chair, while Larry H. Richardson (Town of Cohecton), semi-retired as vice-president of sales and service for the Yaun Company, continues his role as secretary-treasurer. Both have served on the committee since its 2002 incorporation.

Since 2012, Pizzolato has co-owned the Stickett Inn, a boutique hotel located along the byway in Barryville, which also produces its own brand of cider.

He and husband Roswell Hamrick purchased the D&H Canal era house in 2010 after

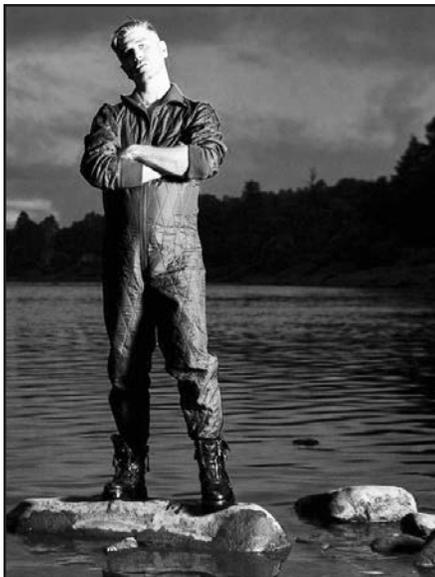
Hamrick had bought the circa 1835 Congregational Church and Cemetery property in 1997 to adapt into a residence.

Pizzolato is also director of the public relations & consulting agency, International Playground, and was the 2019 lead teaching artist for the PLAY youth theater program at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts.

His community service extends to the Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and as president of the Barryville Farmers’ Market.

The New York State-designated UDSB Route 97 extends from the Orange County City of Port Jervis and Town of Deerpark, through the Sullivan County Towns of Lumberland, Highland, Tusten, Cohecton and Delaware, and resumes in Delaware County’s Village of Hancock.

An updated website is being created at [www.upperdelawarescenicbyway.org](http://www.upperdelawarescenicbyway.org).



John Pizzolato (Photo by Noah Kalina)

# New York State is First to Install Delaware River Watershed Signs

For the first time in New York's history, signage has been erected to highlight the boundaries of the Delaware River Watershed, a significant region that is home to 8 million residents and provides drinking water to 13.3 million people in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

Congressman Antonio Delgado (NY-19), Senator Jen Metzger (NY-42), Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther (NY-100), the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, Friends of the Upper Delaware River, the Upper Delaware Council, and the Delaware River Basin Commission hailed the placement of 14 "Entering the Delaware River Watershed" signs in Broome (2), Delaware (7), Sullivan (3), and Orange (2) Counties by the New York State Department of Transportation during a tele-press conference held on May 5.

The Coalition initiated New York stakeholder meetings in June 2019 for the partnership effort, with the Upper Delaware Council (UDC) hosting the first meeting.

Congressman Delgado called the watershed "the lifeblood of our community" and said that the new signage offered "a bright spot" during the coronavirus pandemic.

"The Delaware River headwaters originate in the Catskill Mountains, creating the beginning of a four-state watershed essential for drinking water, wildlife habitat, and jobs," said Rep. Delgado.

Senator Metzger said that the watershed's free-flowing disregard for political boundaries "shows us that we're all connected. Everything we do in this watershed affects the rest of it."

Assemblywoman Gunther said we often don't consider how vast the watershed is.

*"The Delaware River watershed sustains our region in so many ways - economically, recreationally, and ecologically - and the new signage marking its boundaries will raise awareness of its immense value and promote good stewardship practices among residents and visitors alike."*  
 ~ Senator Jen Metzger (NY-42)

The Delaware River consists of 13,539 square miles in four states and is fed by over 2,000 tributaries,

"These 14 new signs will act not only as a gateway to the Delaware River Watershed, but also as a gateway for people to learn about the watershed. The signs are meant to educate, and to foster a sense of appreciation and a sense of place," added Assemblywoman Gunther.

"Water basin boundaries do not typically show up on road maps or navigation systems; these new roadway signs will connect residents and visitors to their location in the Delaware River Watershed as they travel through New York," said Steve Tambini, executive director of the Delaware River Basin Commission.

The Delaware River Watershed encompasses 2,390 square miles of New York land area in the Southeastern portion of the state. It's the least developed section of the watershed.

"These Delaware River Watershed signs in New York State will not only bring attention to the entire watershed, but also to the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, a true national treasure," said Laurie Ramie, UDC executive director.

"The signs will promote a watershed-



**WATERSHED BOUNDARY:** The NYS Department of Transportation installed 14 signs in late April 2020 (Contributed Photo by NYS DOT)

wide identity and as people become more aware of the watershed, we would like to see increased environmental stewardship. While much improvement has been made to the Delaware River in recent years, challenges like development, flooding, and invasive species persist," Ramie added.

The DOT agreed to fabricate and install the signs at approved locations bisected by State highways based on the application submitted by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Sept. 3, 2019 on behalf of the project partners.

Having succeeded in the headwaters, the Coalition is continuing the signage initiative in the other three basin states.

## UDC Grant Benefits Westfall Township

The Upper Delaware Council presented a reimbursement check for \$12,123.09 to Westfall Township on June 23 from its "Townships, Technology & Sustainability" \$100,000 PA Department of Community and Economic Development grant secured by PA Rep. Jonathan Fritz, Rep. Mike Peifer, and Senator Lisa Baker.

Westfall applied for a resurfacing and paving project for its Municipal Building parking lot, which also accommodated the Dec. 10, 2019 move by the Eastern Pike Regional Police Department into the facility's lower level.

Warner Paving and Excavating of Milford, PA handled the 8,427 sq. ft. job.

Further grant awards will be announced.



**PAVING PROJECT:** Westfall Township Municipal Building at 102 LaBarr Lane in Matamoras is also home base for the Eastern Pike Regional Police Department. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

# NY-PA Bridge Commission Approves Annual Plans

The New York-Pennsylvania Joint Interstate Bridge Commission approved \$200,000 to study alternatives for the 1901 Skinners Falls, NY-Milanville, PA Bridge, which was closed “indefinitely” on Oct. 16, 2019 after failing a safety inspection.

Capital projects and maintenance plans for the 10 Upper Delaware Bridges under the commission’s purview were discussed at a May 27 WebEx annual meeting.

The \$200,000 expenditure’s approval “to initiate a planning study for the rehabilitation, replacement, or whatever it will be” for the historic single-lane bridge, as reported by Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) District 4 Bridge Engineer Gerard Babinski, raised alarm by several public meeting participants.

While no specific timetable was offered, an outside consultant will be hired.

“I’m upset to hear about this study,” said Wayne County Commissioner Brian Smith.

“I hate to see lost time and money on a study when it’s evident that the bridge has outlived its useful life. I think it’s pretty obvious what to do next. That bridge needs to be replaced by a modern structure,” he said, describing the bridge’s importance for the local economy, emergency response, commerce, and the daily convenience of residents.

He said he favors replacing it with a two-lane structure that can carry substantial weight loads, versus the four-ton limit now on the 467-foot-long, timber deck bridge.

National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Acting Superintendent Jessica Weinman, however, asked the Commission to be cognizant



**DECK STUDY:** A \$30,000 analysis to potentially replace the open metal grid deck system of the 1939 Port Jervis, NY-Matamoras PA Bridge will be funded this fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)

of the bridge’s listing on the National Register of Historic Places since 1988.

“It is one of our outstandingly remarkable cultural resource values,” she said.

A March 4 position statement signed by municipalities, organizations, agencies, and emergency responders on both sides of the bridge supports the shared goal to keep this river crossing intact following its repetitive temporary closures.

While steering committee members expressed different perspectives, one recommendation with universal agreement was to seek a design-build contract. Engaging the same firm to develop and implement the solution to address the bridge’s deteriorating condition would save on the time-consuming solicitation of professional services.

Last fall, PennDOT estimated a \$5.1 million repair cost to reopen the bridge at the 4-ton weight limit. They pegged full reha-

bilitation to bring it up to a 10-ton posting at \$14.1 million. Construction of a new “signature arch” style bridge could cost \$13.4 million, while building a new four-span girder beam bridge capable of carrying legal loads was an \$8.7 million estimate.

Removing the bridge entirely would require a legislative amendment to NY-PA Joint Bridge Commission agreements.

PennDOT reported an average daily traffic bridge count of approximately 325 cars.

In addition to allocating \$200,000 for the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge study, the Commissioners approved \$4.95 million to rehabilitate the 1953 Cocheton, NY-Damascus, PA Bridge.

That construction is set to begin next spring and last for two seasons. It includes repairing the deck, railing, sidewalk, and pedestrian fence.

After presenting options to local officials and emergency responders at a March 4 meeting for a full bridge closure with a 22-mile off-site detour and a quicker timetable versus staged construction to maintain traffic in one lane, NYS DOT announced that they will repair half of the bridge at a time with a traffic signal in place. During winter months, both lanes will be open.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Cocheton Fishing Access will be closed to the public to stage equipment during the project, but DOT will provide signage for an alternate pathway to the river with temporary parking. The Damascus River Access on the Pennsylvania side will not be affected.

Read a complete account under the News Releases tab of the UDC website.

## Trust for Public Land to Develop Riverside Park

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has purchased the former Upper Delaware Campgrounds property in Callicoon, vacant since 2006, to create a multi-purpose community park with river access.

Public meetings will begin Aug. 6-8 to imagine plans for the 47.5 acres with nearly a mile of Upper Delaware River frontage.

For details, visit [www.tpl.org/givecallicoon](http://www.tpl.org/givecallicoon) or contact Project Manager Francis O’Shea at (917) 710-5061.

The UDC sits on the steering committee that toured the site on June 19.

Partnerships with the Town of Delaware, Sullivan County, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation are underway. Environmental Planning & Design, LLC is leading the public design process.

This TPL project has received a \$50,000 Community Fund Award by L.L. Bean.



**ENVISIONING POSSIBILITIES:** Consulting engineer Bryan Clement, left, and NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Chief of Natural Resources Don Hamilton tour the pavilion at the former Upper Delaware Campgrounds in Callicoon. Drawn on an exterior wall is a line showing how high flood waters reached in Jan. 1996. (UDC Photo by Laurie Ramie)



David Hulse, right, is pictured with his friend, John Hutzky, who served as National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Superintendent from 1979 through 1995, at the Upper Delaware Council's 1994 awards banquet. (UDC Archives Photo)

## In Memoriam: David Hulse

The Upper Delaware Council observed a Moment of Silence at its July 2 monthly meeting for the passing of local journalist David Hulse of Barryville, NY, who died at the age of 72 on June 20 at Achieve Rehabilitation Center following a bout with cancer.

"Dave" Hulse joined the *River Reporter* in 1980. His coverage focus included the Upper Delaware Council, as well as Wayne, Pike, and Sullivan Counties, the Towns of Highland and Lumberland, Shohola and Lackawaxen Townships, and the Delaware Valley School District. He earned many New York Press Association awards for his writing and photography throughout his career, and served a stint as editor of the *Pike County Courier*.

Dave had also recently worked as site manager for Sullivan County's D&H Canal Linear Park in Summitville. He was an active member of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council and a former member of the Friends of the Roebling Bridge.

As a past seasonal ranger for the National Park Service, Dave struck up a 40-year friendship with the first superintendent of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, John Hutzky.

Following news of his death, John Hutzky wrote a tribute that was published in the *River Reporter* mentioning Dave's passion for baseball, especially the Mets; visits to Cooperstown; their day trips to all manner of historic sites from Annapolis to Ticonderoga; his enjoyment of cigars, trying out new culinary dishes and wine; and electronic gadgets.

A lifelong resident of the Town of Highland, David was born on May 12, 1948 to Millard L. and Kathryn Rose Hulse. Cremation was private.

A *River Reporter* obituary stated, "He had an eclectic interest range from art and history to photography and roses. He is survived by his dear friends and the community who appreciated his work."

## UDC Sets Deadlines For Grant Programs

August 28 is the deadline for both the completion of Fiscal Year 2020 Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) projects and submission of applications for the next round.

Four TAG awards totaling \$23,377 were made this year to the Towns of Hancock, Delaware, and Tusten (2). The outcome will be reported on in the next issue.

Proposals for the 33rd Annual TAGs for Fiscal Year 2021 from member municipalities and river valley counties received by Aug. 28 will be reviewed at a special meeting of the Project Review Committee on Sept. 8 at 6:30 at the UDC office.

A vote on awarding TAGs is expected at the Oct. 1 UDC meeting. Applicants will then have 10 months to complete their projects and submit for reimbursement by August 20, 2021.

Since 1988, the Council has awarded \$891,952 in grants for 257 projects.

The UDC approved two applications submitted for its 2020 River and Shoreline Clean-up Grants program on June 4.

The Town of Deepark (\$3,285.71) and Town of Lumberland (\$1,100) have until Sept. 18 to finish their clean-ups.

The UDC has disbursed a total of \$26,934.34 since 2014 to support its member municipalities in efforts to maintain the pristine quality of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River by removing trash from the river and its banks.

## Tires Trashed in River

Joint efforts by citizens and National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River staff recently removed around 50 tires dumped in or near the river.

Piles of tires were discovered underneath the Callicoon and Cochetcon bridges that both adjoin Damascus Township.

Brad Molusky of Damascus, Craig Stewart and Tom Dent from Callicoon, and NPS personnel including Acting Superintendent Darren Boch came to the rescue to retrieve and properly dispose of the various tires.

## 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  
Delaware Scenic and Recreational River*

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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'

### Nature Photos Wanted

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy invites submissions through Aug. 31 for its 3rd annual juried photo contest under the theme of "Nature Heals: Restore, Renew, Reconnect."

New this year is a youth category for photographers under age 18, with free entries. There is a \$10 fee for other entries.

Photos must be taken in the Upper Delaware River region to be eligible and can be in any season.

Winning photos will be hung at the ARTery gallery in Milford, PA in November. The ARTery is a cooperative owned and operated by emerging artists and artisans from the Tri-State area.

Visit [www.delawarehighlands.org/photo-contest](http://www.delawarehighlands.org/photo-contest) for rules and further details.

### Watershed Forum Will Go Virtual Sept. 14-17

The 8th Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum will go virtual Sept. 14-17.

Sponsored by the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, registration for the four-day forum is \$100.

Sessions include: Town Hall with a Member of Congress; Delaware River Basin Restoration Program; Environmental Advocacy for the Delaware River Watershed; The Watershed-Wide Importance of the Flexible Flow Management Plan; Explore Partnership Wild and Scenic River Designation; Power and Privilege in the Workplace; State-based workshops; and breakout topics such as drinking water, plastics, stormwater management, watershed education, media attention, elected officials, and leadership.

Email [Olivia.LeWarn@njudubon.org](mailto:Olivia.LeWarn@njudubon.org) for information or find #DelRivForum2020.

### NPS Visitation Count

The latest National Park Service Visitor Spending Effects Report has been released, showing the economic impact of tourism.

In 2019, 215,537 visitors to the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River spent \$9.6 million in recreational dollars.

This visitation supported a total of 102 jobs in tourism-based industries.

Those jobs generated \$4.6 million in labor income and \$7.8 million in value-added income.

Overall, gateway communities surrounding the Upper Delaware unit of the National Parks System saw an economic output of \$11.6 million.

The public can access the Upper Delaware's statistics, such as traffic counters at various corridor sites, by visiting <https://irma.nps.gov/STATS/reports/park/>.

### PA Updates Forestry Plan

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry is in the process of writing a new Strategic Plan that will guide how the Bureau provides leadership in forest management and conservation on both public and private lands, as well as setting the mission and overarching goals.

A survey is available to request input by answering critical strategic questions. The link will remain active until August 31: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/BOFplan](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BOFplan).

### FUDR Will Clean Stream

Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. will hold a volunteer stream clean-up day on Aug. 7 from 10 a.m.-noon. Email [info@fudr.org](mailto:info@fudr.org) for location and logistics.