

RIVER RAPIDS

The newsletter of the DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK

Printed on 100% recycled paper



Upcoming Events

For more details on these events and activities, contact the Delaware Riverkeeper Network staff person indicated.

November 19th & 20th
Earthwork's National People's
Oil and Gas Summit
 (Cosponsored by DRN)
 Pittsburgh, PA
tracy@delawareriverkeeper.org

December 11th, 10 am to 5 pm
& December 12th, 10 am to 4 pm
DRN's Annual Holiday Craft Show
Eagle Fire Company Ballroom
 New Hope, PA
tim@delawareriverkeeper.org

March 12th, 2011
Schuylkill Watershed Congress
 Pottstown, PA
chari@delawareriverkeeper.org

Members get creative to support DRN

A letter from the Delaware Riverkeeper

I always enjoy hearing from our members about how they are working to spread the word about DRN and how they are taking action on our issues. Members like you make up the backbone of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. Your support provides strength and resolve for all of our efforts and accomplishments.

Recently, some members shared with me news of their creative efforts to help us raise the financial support we need to operate. I was so excited and inspired that I wanted to share with you some of their efforts:

- In April, the Dancers of the Dawn Troupe held their "Harmony of Nature" recital at Grace Episcopal Parish Hall in Wayne County where they collected donations to assist our gas drilling fight.
- In May, member Lydia from Bethlehem sold photographs at the Easton Farmer's Market, donating 5% of the proceeds to DRN.
- In September, members Judy and Linda from Radnor held a garage sale with proceeds benefitting DRN.
- In October, Redbud Native Plant Nursery, Glen Mills, provided DRN with a two-day opportunity to share information about our issues and donated a percentage of sales to support our efforts.
- In November, member Andrew from Drexel Hill is running the Philadelphia Marathon to raise money for our River protection work.

I am so grateful to have the support of these good people. Members like these remind me every day of the people and streams we're fighting for, particularly now as the Delaware River and its tributaries face such difficult threats (dredging, gas drilling, volume of unnatural polluted runoff).

We are coming to the end of the year, always a critical time for us financially, especially this year. We are facing off against the Army Corps, energy companies, and development interests. Their pockets may be deeper, but we believe in our members. With our members behind us, we know we can prevail because we have in the past (against the Army's plan to dump VX, for the Special Protection Waters designation, saving Petty's Island).

Your bake sales, garage sales, movie nights, dinner parties, and importantly, your individual donations make our work possible. Thank you for your support and all of your efforts and energy to help us leave a legacy of healthy, vibrant rivers to future generations.

Maya K. van Rossum
 the Delaware Riverkeeper

Help Stop Deepening Boondoggle Now

We can stop the Delaware Deepening now, today. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is lead plaintiff and attorney on two federal cases against the project, but there may be another, better way that we can stop the project in its tracks. The best way to stop the Deepening is to get Congress to stop funding the project. The federal budget process is underway and, with your letters, perhaps we can inspire some much needed leadership in Congress.

The Government Accountability Office, an investigative arm of Congress, determined that the Deepening would return only \$0.49 of every dollar spent on it. It's time for New Jersey's and Delaware's senators to take a stand against more federal funding for deepening our Delaware River.

Go to the Urgent Help Needed section of our website to create your letter. Please send it now.

The Delaware Deepening: *You Should Know*

The Delaware River is the vital center of our region's economy and ecology. The Delaware Deepening puts at risk:

- Drinking water for millions with salt water intrusion.
- Fish species critical to aquatic food chains, sport fishermen and a thriving commercial fishing industry.
- Delaware Estuary oyster harvests which now generate up to \$80 million in economic benefit annually.
- Food supplies for tens of thousands of migratory shorebirds and other wildlife that support a world-renowned ecotourism industry valued at almost \$70 million annually.
- Marshes and wetlands that provide storm protection to our communities.
- Communities in southern New Jersey and Delaware that will have toxic dredge spoils dumped on them.

When coupled with its economic shortcomings, there is no justification for spending tax dollars to undertake the deepening of the Delaware River.

Newton Creek Buffers under Siege

Riparian buffers—areas along streams planted with trees or herbaceous plants—play a key role in protecting water quality. However, in Haddon Township, residents with properties along Newton Creek and some park users are objecting to the riparian buffers that surround the chain of three-lakes collectively known as Newton Lake, located in Camden County, New Jersey. The objections? Those opposed to the buffers claim that they block views of the lake and that the tall vegetation is unsightly and creates a public safety concern. But Riparian buffers can be managed so as to alleviate these concerns while not sacrificing the many valuable benefits they provide to our streams and communities.

DRN has teamed up with Haddon Township's Environmental Commission to address concerns about the buffers through public education and better management of the buffer around Newton Lake. DRN staff assessed the buffers and found they were poorly maintained. Mowing was occurring as close as 10 feet from the top of the bank and trees were in need of pruning. DRN staff will present buffer management recommendations at an upcoming public meeting with Camden County Freeholders and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Burlington Island: *Update*

DRN continues to work with other groups interested in preserving Burlington Island as a nature preserve accessible for environmental education and limited passive recreation. However, the Board of Island Managers has selected a developer, Woolman Community Development Corporation, with plans to build a hotel and bridge.

DRN and our partners in this effort met with Senator Diane Allen and learned first-hand her intent behind her legislation calling for the island to be used only for "recreational, conservation, educational or cultural uses." Senator Allen's position, and that of DRN and our partners, is that the bridge and hotel are not acceptable uses.

Additionally, Woolman has reported to have contracted with consultants to conduct both an environmental resource inventory and an archeological assessment on the island, largely in response to demands by DRN and our partners. Stay tuned.



Vegetated buffers help to protect streams from erosion, polluted runoff, flooding and drought. This creek, which lacks a healthy buffer, is suffering from streambank erosion. Photo: F. Zerbe.

Help Stop Southport River Fill, Dredging

The dredging, deepening and filling of the Delaware River that has taken place since the 1940s is taking its toll. It has changed the amplitude of the tides, it has caused erosion of important riverside lands, it has damaged important fish and wildlife habitats. One would think, with all we now know about the harms of filling in and dredging out portions of the River, that such damaging projects would stop. But they haven't.

Right now, the River faces two major fill proposals: Taking 25 acres of the River to expand the Philadelphia Airport (more on this project in future issues): e.g., filling 12 acres of the River while dredging 35 acres to make room for more port development, a project called Southport.

The Southport project, proposed by Pennsylvania and championed by Governor Rendell, requires filling 12 acres of the Delaware River as well as nontidal wetlands, tidal drainage area, and floodplain; dredging 35 acres of the River to a depth 40 feet; impacting nearly a mile of existing shoreline; the permanent loss of submerged aquatic vegetation; and the development of 116 acres of riverside lands. It also requires cutting down a bald eagle nesting tree.

While the Army Corps is not a primary project sponsor, they are very much Southport supporters, even offering to provide the spoils needed to undertake this major river fill. And they are greasing regulatory wheels, even proposing to violate major federal legal requirements, to make this project happen.

DRN has been working hard to gather the information and evidence needed to push this project back. But it is time for the Environmental Protection Agency, our primary federal environmental regulatory agency, to finally take a stand on behalf of the Delaware River. The EPA allowed the Army Corps to strong arm our federal and state agencies on the Delaware Deepening project, sitting silently on the sidelines despite the project's environmental damage and the Army Corps' legal violations. Now it seems they are doing the same on Southport.

We need your voice to help secure EPA vigilance on this project. Please go to our website and write your letter to the EPA today.

Atlantic Sturgeon proposed for listing as an endangered species

The Delaware River's genetically unique Atlantic sturgeon population may number less than 100. Stay tuned to our website so you can get your letter supporting their listing and help save our local Atlantic sturgeon population.

Who's coming to dinner? The Delaware Riverkeeper

The Delaware Riverkeeper is once again offering to come to your home and your community to talk about River issues of concern to you.

If you would like Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, or other DRN staff, to come to your home to sit with friends and neighbors to talk about the Delaware River and to answer any questions you may have about the issues facing our River and region, all you have to do is ask.

Simply invite your friends to an informal (or, if you prefer, more formal) gathering at your home. We will happily come speak with you directly about the issues of greatest interest and concern, and talk about the ways you can help make a difference.

DRN's River Shop

The holiday season is fast approaching. Looking for ideas for meaningful gifts? Consider DRN merchandise.

We have books, DRN T-shirts, baseball caps, stainless steel water-bottles, canvas tote bags, and more.

Or consider a gift membership, a great way to honor someone's appreciation for the River.

Visit DRN's River Shop online for more information.

The Delaware RIVERKEEPER Network

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DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK
300 Pond Street, 2nd Floor
Bristol, PA 19007



Shop DRN's Annual Holiday Craft Show

Saturday, December 11th, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Sunday, December 12th, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

The Eagle Ballroom, Eagle Fire Company in New Hope, PA

Escape from the malls this holiday season. Instead, shop local artists and crafters while supporting the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. You can do it all the second weekend in December at our Eighth Annual Holiday Craft Show at the Eagle Fire Company Ballroom in New Hope.

Every year, DRN's craft show highlights a wide variety of high quality, locally made handmade crafts. This year's quality crafts include jewelry, wearable art, ceramics, wood, glass, mixed media, watercolors, oils, pastels, photography, and homemade chocolates for all occasions. Don't drive from store to store looking for the perfect gift; it's waiting for you at our craft show. And when you shop our craft show, you'll be saving gas, reducing your carbon footprint, and supporting local economies, all while helping to protect the River.

Don't miss one of the best seasonal shopping events in the region. This year's entry fee is \$5.00 per person. Entry fees help support programs such as our River Resources Law Clinic, water quality monitoring and awareness-to-action training. So come out and support DRN because every dollar donated makes a difference for the River.

Our annual craft show is an indoor event and held rain or shine. For more information, call Tim at 215-369-1188, ext. 116.

Broadcast the Delaware River . . . DRN on YouTube

Did you know that the Delaware Riverkeeper Network has an official YouTube channel? You can find it at: www.youtube.com/user/DelawareRiverkeeper. We'll be using our YouTube channel to post public service announcements, calls to action and more. Subscribe to get an email alerting you when new resources are posted.



Hooded Merganser carving by craft show exhibitor William Cowen. Photo: W. Cowen.

Do you have suggestions to help the Delaware Riverkeeper use social media to reach you and your community? If so, we'd love to hear them. Send your ideas to: keeper@delawariverkeeper.org.

RIVERRAPIDS is published for members of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.