

RIVER RAPIDS

The Delaware RIVERKEEPER® Network's Quarterly Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

May 6

DRN's Annual Native Plant Sale
Prallsville Mill
Stockton, NJ

June 3

Camden Greenway
Bike Tour and Walk
Camden City, NJ

June 9 & 11

Horseshoe Crab Monitoring
Slaughter Beach, DE

July (date TBD)

Workshop: Monitoring and
Maintaining Restoration Projects
Morris Arboretum (tentative location)
Philadelphia, PA

September 28

DRN's Annual Dinner
Philadelphia, PA

For more news about Delaware Riverkeeper Network events, call 215-369-1188 or click on [Calendar](#) at www.delawariverkeeper.org

Saving red knots, horseshoe crabs

A note from the Delaware Riverkeeper

Every spring for thousands of years, the migratory shorebird red knot *rufa*, on its way to breed in the Arctic, has visited the Delaware Bay to feed on horseshoe crab eggs. Overfishing of horseshoe crabs for bait has severely reduced the number of crabs as well as the number of eggs to fuel the red knot's annual migration. As a result, the red knot faces extinction within five years.

Powerful business interests are opposing needed conservation measures. Your voice, your help are critically needed to save the Delaware Bay's red knots and horseshoe crabs. Remember, extinction is forever. Log on to www.delawariverkeeper.org to learn how you can help safeguard these species for our children and future generations. No access to the web? Call our office, 215-369-1188, and we'll mail you the info.



Photo courtesy of F. X. Browne, Inc., <http://www.fx-browne.com>.

Native plants like Swamp milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, help protect local streams. Be sure to get your native plants at DRN's plant sale on May 6th.

Tax-time is good for the River . . .

This past month, one of our members walked in to our office and handed us a check saying, "I just got my tax return - here's your portion!" What a great way to celebrate spring and support DRN's work to keep the River clean.

Tax-time may not be fun, but it can present a great opportunity for the River. We need contributions from our members now more than ever. We continue to face the threats of both dredging and VX nerve agent disposal, issues that impact everyone in the watershed. Tax-refund time is a great time to make an additional gift to the River, and we've even enclosed an envelope for you. Thank you from everyone at the DRN!



Maya van Rossum (right) investigates horseshoe crabs of the Delaware Bay. Photo by A. Bidwell.

Maya K. van Rossum
the Delaware Riverkeeper



The Voice of the River and its Tributary Streams

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Free Technical Assistance Available to PA Watershed Groups

Does your watershed group need help developing a volunteer monitoring program? Do you need help analyzing or presenting existing data you have collected? Could your group benefit from a presentation on a specific watershed topic? The Consortium for Scientific Assistance to Watersheds (C-SAW) can help you with these tasks and much more. C-SAW is comprised of watershed specialists, including DRN staff, who provide eligible watershed groups or local project sponsors with technical assistance. The C-SAW Program is made possible through a grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Program. The service is at no cost to eligible groups. For more information, visit <http://pa.water.usgs.gov/csaw/>.

Foam on the water?

People are often worried when they see foam on the Delaware River or their local stream. Most foam seen on streams is natural, the result of stream biology and physics. Aquatic plants release various oils, proteins, etc., into the water column. These collect in the micro-layer located just below the surface. Foam is created when surface tension changes due to changes in atmospheric pressure; water-air temperature differences; and wave action (riffles, rapids and wind). Expect to see the greatest amount of foam in spring and fall.

Foam tip: The foam trail seen running down a stream is usually the deepest part of the channel.

DRN featured on Delaware Sojourn's Cooper River day

DRN Citizen Action Coordinator Fred Stine will be joining river enthusiasts on the Delaware River Sojourn's Cooper River day. The Delaware Sojourn added a day on this urban tributary this year to explore the Cooper's history and rebirth. Plan to join Fred for a day of canoeing, food and fun on the Cooper River. For date, times, and more information about the event, visit the Sojourn website at www.delawareriversojourn.org.

DRN event focused on Schuylkill watershed

The 2006 Schuylkill Watershed Congress, held March 4th at Montgomery County Community College, Pottstown, PA, attracted nearly 180 participants from throughout the Schuylkill watershed, across PA, and from as far away as Wilmington, DE; Baltimore, MD; Ringoes, NJ; and Providence, RI. The event featured the PA Fish & Boat Commission's Executive Director, Douglas Austen, Ph.D., as keynote speaker. Also on the agenda were concurrent and poster sessions covering a broad range of watershed topics. Watershed tours were offered March 5th.

Heard about iGive?

iGive is a new way to support DRN while doing your online shopping – at no additional charge to you! Participating stores, such as Lands' End, Barnes & Noble, and PetSmart, contribute a percentage of your web-based purchase to the charity of your choice. Sign-up is free, too. Check out www.igive.com for details.



Assunpink Creek – It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas . . . At least for the bass and muskies in Mercer, Assunpink and other lakes in the Assunpink Creek watershed.

DRN volunteers teamed up with NJ DEP Fish and Game staff, local fishing clubs and the Boy Scouts to sink donated Christmas trees in these small lakes to establish aquatic habitat. The trees were tied to cinder blocks and dropped into deep water. After being submerged for several weeks, the waterlogged trees form an under water brush pile providing hiding places for both predator and prey.



Avid fisherman and DRN volunteer Mike Sentore understands the value of creating habitat to support fish populations. Knowing where the trees were placed come tournament time is just icing on the cake. Photo: Fred Stine.

Army pushes DuPont plan to dump VX nerve agent waste – DRN urges members to protest.

Our Annual Dinner has been rescheduled for September 28th, 2006. See the Summer RIVER_{RAPIDS} for details.

Residents say “No!” to dumping VX into the River

The U.S. Army and DuPont are traveling New Jersey in an attempt to gain support for their plan to bring VX nerve agent waste from Indiana to DuPont’s Chambers Works facility in Salem County, New Jersey, for processing and disposal into the Delaware River.

Residents are rejecting the concept of bringing chemical weapon waste to NJ. For example, citizens in Maurice Township in Cumberland County grilled the Army and DuPont for hours at a meeting March 16th. Local residents raised concerns that local shell fishing businesses will be hurt by the perception that nerve agent waste could contaminate oysters and fish that people who live there make their living harvesting; that recreation and tourism will be hurt because of pollution concerns; that DuPont does not have the public’s trust to safely handle the toxins.

DRN urges you to write your elected officials and to advocate for your community passing a resolution against the DuPont plan, which has yet to be permitted by federal and state regulators. For a sample letter and sample resolution go to www.delawariverkeeper.org. For more information download “Facts and Questions, The Proposal to Treat and Discharge VX Nerve Agent Hydrolysate into the Delaware River.”

A Ground Swell of Citizen Support for the Alexauken Watershed

Thanks go out to over 60 volunteer monitors and local citizens of the Alexauken Watershed and surrounding area who stepped up to be part of an important visual assessment of the Alexauken Creek. Volunteer citizens attended training workshops led by Delaware Riverkeeper Network and have adopted 30 one-mile sections of the Alexauken Watershed to assess this March and April. Their data will be a big part of a Protection Plan for the watershed that will help characterize, improve and protect this C1 stream. The tremendous support from local townships, environmental commissions, and local citizens and landowners is a great sign that the plan will be put to good use and we anticipate a bright future for this beautiful Hunterdon County (NJ) stream!

DRN would like to thank Hope Sauppe, our tremendous Water Quality Intern, who has been instrumental in accomplishing our monitoring work conducted this winter. We will miss you Hope!

RRLC interns help DRN safeguard the River

This semester’s River Resources Law Clinic interns are investigating a number of issues affecting the Delaware River, including the legality of a proposed Delaware River dredge project being promoted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the enforcement of stormwater controls throughout the region. Our interns are contributing significant time and talent to their cases and are making a difference in the protection of our environment. We thank them all!

The RRLC was established with support from the George & Miriam Martin Foundation and the Fund for New Jersey.



RRLC interns: Adam Storm (left) and Peter Baker (Megan Morey is not pictured). Photo: C. Hendrick.

It’s Spring . . . and the smell of garlic is in the air

April is marked not only by the return of warm weather and ephemeral wildflowers, but also by the flowering of invasive garlic mustard, *Allaria petiolata*. This plant is commonly found in wet woods and floodplain forests. Its small, white flower clusters that appear in April and May make it easy to identify.



Garlic mustard, *Allaria petiolata*. Image courtesy of the Kentucky Native Plant Society.

Garlic mustard is one of the few exotic species capable of invading a closed canopy forest. Rapid growth in late fall/early spring allows it to dominate nutrients, space and light. It also uses phytotoxins to inhibit the growth of other plants. A garlic mustard invasion reduces food and cover sources for insects, amphibians and small mammals; it prevents the establishment of well-rooted plants that could provide better soil stability.

Pulling garlic mustard where you see it - in yards and forests - is a simple, hands-on and effective way of helping to protect the Delaware River watershed’s lands and waters.



Garlic mustard in the Crosswicks Creek (NJ) watershed. Photo: D. Salas.

Delaware RIVERKEEPER® Network

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Spring is in the air

As we turn our attention to the out-of-doors, many of us have begun to contemplate our gardens. As the weather warms and we welcome April showers, you should know that the decisions we make for our gardens and back yards can have tremendous impacts on our River and our neighbors. Grassy lawns contribute to increased flooding, drought, and water pollution. Lawns provide little food and no habitat for the birds and wildlife that are becoming increasingly desperate for safe havens to rest, feed and simply coexist.

This year, consider replacing some or all of that lawn with native trees, shrubs and flowering plants that will help to capture and soak rainfall back into the soil to recharge aquifers and provide needed flow to streams, rivers and wetlands. Native plants will help filter pollution that runs off of neighboring properties or that falls with the rain from the sky. They will provide needed food and shelter to resident and migratory birds and wildlife. They enhance your privacy, peace and even the value of our properties.

A garden restored to natural conditions will provide amazing benefit for the River and for us all. Share the joys of a native garden with your family and community – come to our native plant sale May 6th to buy some of these natural beauties.



Photo courtesy of F. X. Browne, Inc.,
<http://www.fxbrowne.com>.

DRN's Native Plant Sale

**Saturday, May 6th,
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

Prallsville Mill, Stockton, NJ

DRN's native plant sale offers a wide selection of beautiful plants, ferns, grasses, shrubs and trees, all gathered from regional nurseries. Our stream restoration staff and plant experts will be on hand with a wealth of information on choosing, planting and growing native species. So whether you are a first time customer or an avid gardener, you'll be able to find out design, cultivation, and care techniques.

DRN's Native Plant Sale is known for offering top quality, hard-to-find plants native to this region at affordable prices. The catalog for the sale (with planting tips) is online at www.delawareriverkeeper.org.

Prallsville Mill is conveniently located on Rt. 29 at the north end of Stockton in the Delaware & Raritan Canal Park, just five minutes north of New Hope, PA, and Lambertville, NJ. For more information, please call us at 215-369-1188.