

RIVER RAPIDS

The Delaware RIVERKEEPER® Network's Quarterly Newsletter

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Upcoming events

July 15 and July 22

Monitoring Study Design Workshop

The Schuylkill Center
Philadelphia, PA

Email faith@delawariverkeeper.org for more information.

July 26

Members' Day on the Bay

Cape Henlopen State Park
Lewes, DE

August 7

Jack Johnson Concert

Join DRN at the "Village Green"

Susquehanna Bank Center
Camden, NJ

We need your help now to protect the River!

A note from the Delaware Riverkeeper



Photo: T. Carluccio

If you've paddled the Delaware River in the reach from the Water Gap to Washington Crossing, you know this section of river deserves special protection. You might think that the states of the watershed, recognizing the value of this vital resource, would already have provided protection to this reach, but you'd be wrong.

Congress designated this reach, referred to as the Lower Delaware River, as Wild and Scenic *eight years ago*. The number one goal of this designation was to keep the River's clean waters clean. The best way to achieve this goal is for the Delaware River Basin Commission and the governors of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware to designate the Lower Delaware as Special Protection Waters, a designation with the teeth necessary to ensure the River remains clean for drinking, fishing, boating, swimming, ecotourism and more.

But for seven years, DRBC and the governors have given excuses for why the designation should be delayed. Finally, it was agreed that a vote would be taken at DRBC's May meeting. At the last minute, Governor Rendell ordered his representative on the Commission to delay a vote once again. Why? Because a group of pollution dischargers urged him to do so. If the Special Protection Waters designation is not granted, the River will fall victim to increasing pollution discharges in the future, degrading the health and quality of the River and all that rely upon it.

We need your help, and your voice, today. Please go to our website, www.delawariverkeeper.org, for a sample letter to DRBC and the governors demanding a vote for special protection at their July 15th meeting.

Maya K. van Rossum
the Delaware Riverkeeper

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DRN chosen for Johnson Ohana Challenge

As part of his 2008 World Tour, singer-songwriter Jack Johnson is collaborating with hand-chosen community groups around the world through *All At Once*, a social action network. DRN has been selected to be part of this effort and will receive a challenge grant from Johnson Ohana Charitable Foundation.

In addition, we will be present at the “Village Green” at the Jack Johnson concert on August 7th in Camden. Our staff will be on hand to share news about our projects, reach out to new members, and inspire local action to protect the River. Log on to www.jackjohnsonmusic.com/allatonce/ to learn more about how Jack Johnson and his crew are helping local organizations like DRN.

Garden State Growers mired in litigation

Garden State Growers, also known as Quaker Valley Farms, is a commercial horticulture operation of several hundred acres run by David den Hollander in Franklin Township, Hunterdon County, NJ. For several years, DRN has been involved in trying to bring Garden State Growers into compliance with environmental laws, but Right-to-Farm legislation and agency inaction has allowed the facility to continue as a source of pollution and environmental degradation.

Now the State Agricultural Development Board, Hunterdon County Freeholders and Franklin Township are suing the operation in New Jersey Superior Court for violation of the Deed of Easement that is supposed to protect the preserved property as farmland in perpetuity. Garden State Growers has destroyed acres of soil, excavated to bedrock, and compacted to dust the farm’s the high quality soils. The rest of the property is covered with plastic mulch and greenhouses, to the detriment of the aquifer, the Lockatong Creek, and the regional environment.

In addition to the court challenge, Franklin Township has filed a complaint with the Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board, or CADB. The requirements of a resolution passed by the CADB in 2003 have not been fulfilled by Mr. den Hollander. That resolution was the outcome of months of testimony and evidence developed by the Township (in which DRN took part) concerning why Garden State Growers should be required to follow municipal ordinances, including an ordinance that limits impervious coverage 10%.

On May 9th, DRN filed a letter with the Department of Environmental Protection informing them of numerous ongoing and newly reported environmental problems at Garden State Growers. A copy of the letter, an action alert for much needed citizen letters, and other updates can be found at www.delawareriverkeeper.org.

Looking for a good summer read?

Consider William Sargent’s *Crab Wars*. DRN is offering this book at a special summer sale price of \$10.00! Send your check payable to Delaware Riverkeeper Network, plus \$3.00 S/H to: Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 300 Pond St, 2nd Floor, Bristol, PA 19007.

UNIS trip challenged by River and weather

Mother Nature dished out three days of cold, wet weather for the 17th Annual United Nations International School Delaware River canoe and camping trip. As a result, the River was high and running fast. Despite these conditions, these 100 high school freshmen laughed, sang songs and enjoyed paddling 36 miles from Dingman’s Ferry to Portland, PA. Despite flipped canoes and wet clothing, spirits never sank for long.

Supported by our partners, the National Canoeing Safety Patrol and the American Canoe Association, this trip has been designed to foster camaraderie and introduce students from as many as 25 different nations to the “wilds” of the Delaware River valley. These students are now warm and dry back home, but their days on the Delaware River won’t soon be forgotten.



A scene from the '08 horseshoe crab census
Photo: F. Zerbe

Help protect and restore Delaware River shad



American shad, *Alosa sapidissima*

Photo: Kent E. Quain
Used with permission

The American shad has played a critical role in the history of the Delaware River. The oxygen dead zone that once plagued the Delaware River and severely impacted shad migration may no longer exist, but the River's shad population is still at historically low levels. We need your knowledge, experience and action to help us turn this around and restore their numbers to historic levels.

According to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, or ASMFC, American shad populations are at an all time low. Declines may be the result of a combination of over-fishing, pollution and habitat loss. In the 19th century, annual American shad harvests reached over 50 million pounds; today they are in the 1 to 2 million pounds range coast-wide. The Delaware River population may be stable, but stable at a low level. ASMFC believes that the Delaware River is in need of a shad management plan that would focus on recovery and restoration and they are seeking public input.

If you have information or thoughts to share, both ASMFC and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network would like to hear from you. Do you have information regarding the health of the Delaware River population of shad? Do you have ideas on actions that should be taken to restore their population to historic levels? We are looking to hear from you regarding:

- Changes you have observed in the American shad population and/or fishery,
- Impacts you think have taken place over recent decades that have affected the American shad population, positively or negatively, what those impacts are and how they were caused,
- Actions you feel should be taken to protect and restore the American shad in the Delaware River, and
- Any general concerns you have about American shad populations in the Delaware River and the reasons for your concerns.

Send your comments to: Erika Robbins, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, 1444 Eye Street NW, 6th Fl, Washington, D.C. 20005. Comments can also be emailed to: comments@asmfc.org, Subject line: American Shad. Please also share your thoughts with us so we can use your knowledge to ensure a strong protection and restoration plans for the shad of the Delaware River. Mail to your letters to: the Delaware Riverkeeper, 300 Pond St, Bristol, PA 19007.

Beginning in July, get DRN calendar updates by email

In July, we will be starting an effort to send by email a monthly calendar of our events to those members for whom we have email addresses. These notices will provide the latest information about upcoming membership activities. To be sure you hear first about our canoe trips, training programs, and volunteer days, send your email address to chris@delawariverkeeper.org.

GAO agrees to update review of proposed Deepening

In response to a request by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), the Government Accountability Office has agreed to conduct an updated review of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposed Delaware River Deepening project. The GAO accepted Senator Lautenberg's request, one vocally supported and also pressed by Congressman Rob Andrews (D-NJ 1st), in May. The review will likely begin in about six months.

In 2002, the first time the GAO reviewed the project, they found that the Army Corps had based its justification for the project on

miscalculations, invalid assumptions, and outdated information. In our most recent economic review of the project we found that the Army Corps had continued using deceptive economic manipulations in order to justify this bad project. It is critical that this project once again be subject to honest and independent review. We praise Senator Lautenberg for ensuring that our public policy decisions are based on facts and are protective of our environment. And we thank Congressman Andrews for his years of leadership on this issue which helped to bring about this new review.

In 2007, local sponsorship for the project, first proposed in 1992, transferred from the Delaware River Port Authority to the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority. Deepening the navigation channel has become a political prize that if undertaken would return no real winnings, but would result in big losses for the River and our region.

A copy of a joint Delaware Riverkeeper Network/National Wildlife Federation report challenging the Army Corps' most recent economic review can be found at www.delawariverkeeper.org.

Delaware RIVERKEEPER® Network

The Voice of the River and its Tributary Streams

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DRN's Members' Day

10:00 AM to 6:30 PM

Saturday, July 26th, 2008

Cape May, NJ, to Cape Henlopen, DE

Not traveling this summer? Join the Delaware Riverkeeper Network for a mini-vacation at our **Members' Day on the Bay** on **Saturday, July 26th**.

Our Members' Day is an opportunity for you and your friends and family to **explore the Delaware Bay with Delaware Riverkeeper Maya van Rossum** and Delaware Riverkeeper Network staff. Members' Day 2008 will begin with a ferry ride across the beautiful Delaware Bay. *Be sure to bring your camera!*

We'll travel from Cape May, New Jersey, to Lewes, Delaware and then on to Cape Henlopen State Park where we'll enjoy a catered lunch. After lunch, you can choose to take a guided nature hike, take part in a fish-printing activity with replica native fish, play horseshoes and board games or just kick back and enjoy some R&R on the beach.

To register by phone, call Chris Block at 215-369-1188, ext.115. Tickets for this fun-filled day are just \$20 per adult, \$10 per child ages 6 to 13. Younger children attend for free. Groups of 6 people or more get a 10% discount on their ticket price so bring your friends and family!

Members' Day Schedule

- 10:00 AM - Arrive in Cape May, NJ, to
- 10:30 AM - board the **Cape May-Lewes Ferry**. Please note: The boat cannot be held for latecomers.
- 11:00 AM - Ferry leaves Cape May for the 17-mile crossing to Lewes, DE.
- 12:20 PM - A bus will shuttle us from Lewes 1/2 mile to **Cape Henlopen State Park**.
- 12:30 PM - A **catered lunch** will be provided at the pavilion.
- 1:00 PM - **Relax on the beach and enjoy the Delaware Bay!**
- 4:30 PM - **Optional Guided Nature Walk.** (Limited to 20 participants)
- Fish-printing** with colorful paints!
- Horseshoes, Board Games**
- 4:45 PM - Board the bus for the ride back to Lewes for the Ferry.
- 6.35 PM - Ferry returns to Cape May.

Consider sponsoring our 2008 Members' Day. Call 215-369-1188 for more information.