



9/6/2006

Environmental and Animal Protection Groups Join Together To Stop Water Pollution from Foie Gras Factory Farm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 6, 2006

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Groups Announce Legal Actions to Address More Than 500 Violations of the Clean Water Act by Hudson Valley Foie Gras

WASHINGTON (September 6, 2006)—Today, the Humane Society of the United States and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network announced simultaneous efforts to end long-term water pollution at Hudson Valley Foie Gras -- a foie gras factory farm near Ferndale, N.Y., where approximately 250,000 ducks are intensively confined. The facility has violated its Clean Water Act permit more than 500 times in the past five years.

The Humane Society of the United States filed a lawsuit today in the Southern District Court of New York, seeking to halt Hudson Valley Foie Gras's illegal discharges and require the facility to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to the state in penalties for its past violations. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network filed notice of intent to sue, threatening to file its own lawsuit if Hudson Valley Foie Gras does not verify that it has remedied its persistent pollution problems within 60 days.

Hudson Valley Foie Gras discharges pollution into the Middle Mongaup River, a tributary to the Delaware River, which is popular for recreation and provides vital aquatic habitat for fish, waterfowl, and amphibians, as well as a nesting and forage area for the American Bald Eagle. Pollution released by Hudson Valley Foie Gras has at times reached levels that are 300 percent of what is permitted under state and federal law. Documented

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discharges from the factory farm include pollutants such as phosphorus, fecal coliform and chlorine. Chlorine is highly toxic to aquatic life even at small doses, and fecal coliform is associated with illness-causing bacteria. The company also frequently failed to report how much pollution it discharges, as required by its Clean Water Act permit.

“Hudson Valley Foie Gras has systematically ignored federal and state environmental clean water laws for more than five years,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper. “It’s time they take the Clean Water Act seriously. The facility must be made to fix all of their pollution problems and take action to restore the harm they have inflicted on our environment. Pollution of the Mongaup River cannot be tolerated.”

Hudson Valley Foie Gras raises and slaughters ducks to produce the controversial French “delicacy” foie gras. To produce the paté, birds are force-fed an unnatural amount of food through a pipe thrust down their throats until their livers expand to ten or more times their natural size, causing liver damage, blood toxicity, and death. This process not only results in extreme suffering for the birds, it also produces a significant amount of waste, including feces and slaughter waste. Despite animal welfare concerns and Hudson Valley Foie Gras’ dismal environmental record, the State of New York recently granted more than \$400,000 in taxpayer funds to the factory farm to expand its operations from 250,000 to 325,000 ducks.

“Like most factory farms, Hudson Valley Foie Gras is operating in total disregard of the welfare of its neighbors, the environment, and the animals confined in its facility,” said Jonathan Lovvorn, vice president of Animal Protection Litigation for The HSUS. “If this facility cannot operate in compliance with our most fundamental federal pollution laws, it should not be operating at all.”

Delaware Riverkeeper Network is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked since 1988 to strengthen citizen protection of the Delaware River and its tributary watersheds. An affiliate of the American Littoral Society, a national conservation group, the Delaware Riverkeeper and Delaware Riverkeeper Network work throughout the Delaware River’s entire 13,539 square mile watershed which includes portions of NY, NJ, PA and DE. Its programs include a watershed wide advocacy program; the River Resources Law Clinic enforcing environmental laws in the watershed; a stream restoration program, a volunteer monitoring program, and an active Pollution Hotline. On the web at www.delawariverkeeper.org.

The Humane Society of the United States is the nation’s largest animal protection organization with 9.5 million members and constituents. The HSUS is a mainstream voice for animals, with active programs in companion animals, disaster preparedness and response, wildlife and habitat protection, animals in research, equine protection and farm animal welfare. The HSUS protects all animals through education, investigation, litigation, legislation, advocacy and field work. The non-profit organization is based in Washington and has field representatives and offices across the country. On the web at www.hsus.org.

For more information, see the Fact Sheet "Hudson Valley Foie Gras Pollution Middle Mongaup River" here: <http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/newsresources/factsheet.asp?ID=42>