

THE 6TH ANNUAL DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED FORUM

SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2018 | THE GRAND HOTEL, CAPE MAY, NJ

Conference Report





Published in 2018 by

The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed

118 W State Street

Trenton, NJ 08608

USA

The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed unites organizations working throughout the region to enhance their capacity to effectively advocate for protecting and restoring the Delaware River Basin.

We work to achieve this mission by coordinating communications, messages, and actions to foster accountability for success at the federal, state, and local levels.



Organizations and individuals from **New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware** gathered in The Grand Hotel of Cape May, New Jersey to explore opportunities for collaboration and share capacity-building tools for advancing conservation.

Contents

Overview of the Forum	5
Plenary: Cross State Collaboration for the Delaware Bay	7
50th Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act	9
4 the Delaware	10
Speakers, Breakout Sessions, & Workshops	11 - 15
❖ Aligning Conservation Action in the Watershed	16
❖ The Future of the Watershed	17
❖ Growing a Conservation Ethic in the Next Generation	18
❖ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	19
Field Trips	20
Moving Forward	21

Overview of the Forum

The 6th Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum welcomed 246 attendees to Cape May, New Jersey from September 25th to 26th to discuss critical issues, strengthen partnerships, and share best practices to advance protection and restoration efforts in the Delaware River Watershed. Participants represented non-profit organizations, businesses, government agencies, funders, engineering firms, and academic institutions.

About the Watershed

The Delaware River Watershed is a vital region that provides drinking water to 15 million people, supports unique wildlife, and contributes over \$25 billion in annual economic activity. The watershed is also home to the Delaware Water Gap (one of the country's most visited National Park units), more than 400 miles of National Wild and Scenic Rivers, six National Wildlife Refuges, and one of the largest systems in the National Estuary Program.

Sandra Meola, Director of the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, introduced Sue Myerov, Program Director of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, as the new steering committee co-chair for the Coalition. The Coalition also welcomed three new steering committee members: Appalachian Mountain Club, Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, and Trout Unlimited.

The event commenced with guest speakers Wendi Weber, Northeast Regional

Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Debbie Mans, Deputy Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and Shawn Garvin, Secretary of the Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. The plenary panel discussed collaboration efforts for the Delaware Bay between the two states.

The Forum celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which works to preserve certain rivers with outstanding, natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Keynote speaker, Tim Palmer, award-winning author and photographer, presented an illuminating portrait of the world's premier system for the protection of natural rivers. The Delaware River Watershed has six National Wild & Scenic Rivers – the Upper Delaware, the Middle Delaware, the Lower Delaware, the Maurice River, the Musconetcong River, and the White Clay Creek Watershed.

Breakout sessions throughout the event featured experts who shared knowledge, inspired, and led discussions the watershed's most pressing issues. Workshops provided attendees with tools to build their organization's capacity for advocacy, outreach, and management. In addition to breakout sessions and workshops, participants enjoyed visiting unique sites in Cape May to learn first-hand about conservation efforts occurring within the community. Attendees enjoyed an evening reception to reconnect with old friends, meet new people, and dance the night away.



Plenary: Cross State Collaboration for the Delaware Bay

Moderator

Wendi Weber
Northeast Regional Director
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Panelist

Debbie Mans
Deputy Commissioner
NJ Department of Environmental Protection

Panelist

Shawn Garvin
Secretary
DE Department of Natural Resources &
Environmental Council



Plenary: Cross State Collaboration for the Delaware Bay

State agency leaders Shawn Garvin and Debbie Mans kicked off day one of the Forum discussing opportunities for collaboration between the two states to restore the Delaware Bay. Wendi Weber, Northeast Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) introduced each panelist and moderated the discussion.

Earlier this year the federal agency received historic new funding for the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program, a program dedicated to advancing and coordinating conservation efforts in the Delaware River Watershed. The USFWS has partnered with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to administer the new competitive grant and technical assistance program (the Delaware River Basin Conservation Fund), which will support over \$4 million locally-driven conservation action projects aimed at achieving the program goals of restoring and preserving habitat, improving water quality, enhancing recreation, and reducing flooding.

Wendi expressed the significance of the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed (representing over 130 nongovernmental organizations) in achieving dedicated funding for the region and as an essential partner in developing the program. She reiterated the need to continue working together:

“I’ve been thinking a lot about conservation. And whether that’s your mission or not, there are so many places where we can find common ground and move forward. Whether it’s keeping working lands working, bolstering the economy, achieving conservation at the same time – it doesn’t have to be an either or.”

Secretary Shawn Garvin and Deputy Commissioner Mans echoed the message that



the environmental protection is critical for communities’ economy, health, and resiliency. Garvin emphasized the significance of the restoration efforts for Delaware – investment in parks alone contribute \$40 million to the state’s economy. The agency representatives additionally dug into how they’re working protect shared coastlines from climate change impacts through green infrastructure, wetlands restoration, and shellfish restoration.

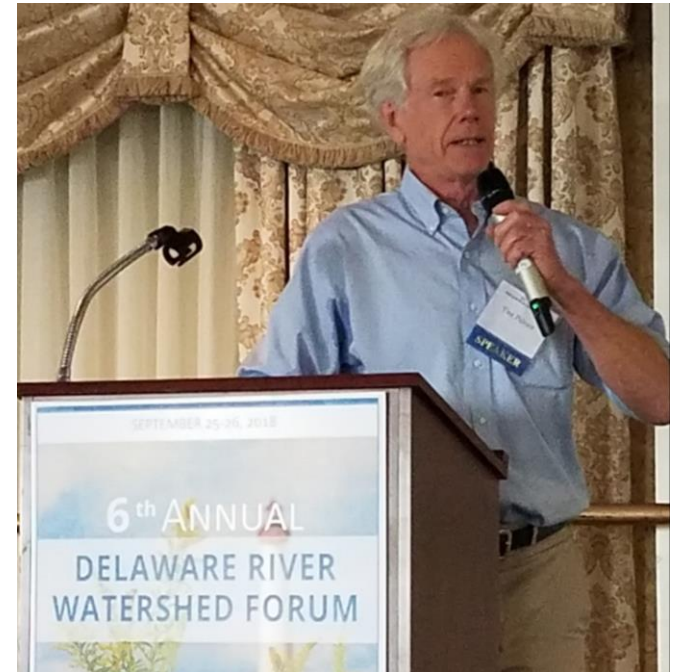
They concluded with the message that they can’t do this work alone. Partnerships are key for states to leverage knowledge and resources and nonprofit organizations play a key role in advancing science, educating the public, and advocating for the environment.

50th Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act



On day two Keynote Speaker, Tim Palmer, presented an illuminating portrait of the world's premier system for the protection of natural rivers – the Wild & Scenic Rivers Program. 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, legislation responsible for preserving 12,754 miles of rivers throughout the country. The award-winning author and photographer has been involved in the Wild and Scenic Rivers systems almost since its founding. Attendees learned about the programs history, unsung heroes, and protected rivers as Tim showed photos and told their stories.

“The 50th Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act holds special significance to the Delaware River Basin, as nearly 400 miles of its waterways are included in the national system. Wild and Scenic designations ensure that these waterways will be preserved in their free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations, which is essential for such a large four-state basin that provides drinking water and recreation to so many,” stated Tim Palmer.



The Forum also included a breakout session that took a deeper dive the history of the program, the Delaware's story of shared management of Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers by the National Park Service and local citizens, and how to designate new rivers through the National River Inventory.

15 MILLION REASONS

to STAND UP for CLEAN WATER

The Delaware River is shared by four states – New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. We need them to stand up and protect our vital natural resource.

\$70+
MILLION
in revenue from river recreation above the Delaware Water Gap benefits our economy

81%
of residents that live within the Delaware River Basin get their drinking water from the river

250+
migrating bird species are supported in the Delaware River area

48
species of fish live in the tidal area of the river

4 the Delaware

Partners throughout the region have joined forces #4theDelaware, a campaign aimed at getting the governors of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware to commit to working together to protect the Delaware River Watershed for current and future generations. These four states share the river and ultimately the responsibility for taking care of it.

Lead organizations representing each state of the campaign presented their governor's position on restoration efforts, unique challenges of each state, and strategies for advocacy. Attendees explored how to engage diverse partners in the campaign as leads continue to develop multi-faceted teams to increase the campaign's support.

Forum attendees were able to write postcards to send to their governors, take photos, and other actions to encouraging them to lead restoration efforts in the region in support of the 4 the Delaware campaign. Visit 4thedelaware.nwf.org to learn more or take action.



15 MILLION
PEOPLE GET THEIR DRINKING WATER FROM THE DELAWARE RIVER

NY	8,000,000+	PA	5,000,000+	NJ	1,500,000+	DE	625,000+
----	------------	----	------------	----	------------	----	----------



Breakout Sessions and Workshops

Breakout Session One

Aligning Conservation Action in the Watershed	<p>Moderator: <i>Sandra Meola, Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed</i></p> <p>Mile Slattery, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Nathan Boon, William Penn Foundation Dave Golden, New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife Joy Oakes, National Parks Conservation Association Jen Adkins, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary</p>
Capitalizing on Partnerships through the Wild & Scenic Program	<p>Moderator: <i>Karla Rossini, Citizens United Maurice River</i></p> <p>Fred Akers, Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association Paul Kenney, National Park Service Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Kristina Heister, National Park Service</p>
Scaling Up Agricultural Best Management Practices	<p>Moderator: <i>Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC</i></p> <p>Laura Tessieri, New Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Grant DeCosta, Brandywine Conservancy Kristen Meistrell, New Jersey Audubon</p>
Crossing State Lines for Watershed Protection	<p>Moderator: <i>Grant La Rouche, National Wildlife Federation</i></p> <p>Emily Baumbach, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Doug O'Malley, Environment New Jersey</p>
Water Users and Water Use Trends in Our Watershed	<p>Moderator: <i>Jane Rowan, Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin</i></p> <p>Steve Tambini, Delaware River Basin Commission Daniel J. Van Abs, Rutgers University Vincent Monaco, New Jersey American Water</p>

Breakout Session Two

Breaking the Green Ceiling	<p>Moderator: Mariah Davis, Choose Clean Water Coalition</p> <p>Kevin Moore, Urban Environmental Group Julie Slavet, Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership Inc</p>
Place-Based Climate Solutions	<p>Moderator: Marjorie Kaplan, Rutgers Climate Institute</p> <p>Paul Rush, NYC Department of Environmental Protection Saleem Chapman, Mayor's Office of Philadelphia</p>
25,000 Miles of Swimmable, Fishable Waterways	<p>Moderator: Nathan Boon, William Penn Foundation</p> <p>Faith Zerbe, Delaware Riverkeeper Network Steve Tuorto, The Watershed Institute Alice R. Baker, PennFuture David Kinney, Trout Unlimited</p>
Building State Leadership 4 the Delaware	<p>Moderator: Halle Van der Gaag, National Wildlife Federation</p> <p>Danielle Dick, Delaware Nature Society Alex Cupo, PennFuture Jeff Skelding, Friends of the Upper Delaware River Kelly Mooij, New Jersey Audubon</p>
Water Infrastructure – Jeopardy!	<p>Moderator: Alex Ambrose, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters</p> <p>Peter Marx, Federal Affairs Contractor Ed DiFiglia, New Jersey Future</p>

Breakout Session Three

Growing a Conservation Ethic in the Next Generation	<p>Moderator: Sarun Chan, Audubon Pennsylvania</p> <p>2018 RiverGuides and Staff, Urban Promise Holly Gallagher, National Wildlife Federation</p>
Everything is Local	<p>Moderator: Abigail Jones, PennFuture</p> <p>Ellen Kohler, University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center Chris Linn, Delaware Regional Planning Commissions Christopher Obropta, Rutgers University</p>
Building an Inclusive Watershed	<p>Moderator: Lori Braunstein, Environmental Leadership Program</p> <p>Tykee James, House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Jamie Gauthier, Fairmount Park Conservancy John Sykes, Delaware Interfaith Power and Light</p>
Clean Water is Good for Business	<p>Moderator: Richard Lawton, NJ Sustainable Business Council</p> <p>Gerald Kauffman, University of Delaware Fran Lawn, Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia Ed Clerico, Natural Systems Utilities Jezabel Careaga, Jezabel's</p>
Conservation through Public Recreation	<p>Moderator: Mark Zakutansky, Appalachian Mountain Club</p> <p>Todd Pride, Mid-Atlantic Youth Anglers & Outdoor Partners David La Puma, New Jersey Audubon</p>

Workshops

Delaware Bay Sediment Transport Analysis Tool	Captain Alek Modjeski, American Littoral Society Steven Hafner, Stockton University Coastal Research Center Mat Suran, Stockton University Coastal Research Center
Ask the Funders!	Moderator: Susan Myerov, Pennsylvania Environmental Council Andy Johnson, William Penn Foundation Christine Hall, Natural Resources Conservation Service Carl Alderson, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Rachel Dawson, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
BMPs of Nonprofit Management	Caroline Bott, River Network
Ask the Experts: Media Relations	Moderator: Rita Yelda, Coalition for the Delaware River Angela Delli Santi, New Jersey Department of Labor Meg McGuire, Delaware Currents David Kinney, Trout Unlimited
The Do's & Don'ts of Lobbying as a c3 Organization	Abby Levine, Alliance for Justice
How to Win Friends and Influence People: Using Social Media to Achieve Your Goals	Hillary Mohaupt, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters

Aligning Conservation Action, Partnerships, and Regional Initiatives



“Swimmable, fishable rivers, healthy fish and wildlife for all, and clean drinking water for all. These are affirmative rights. In essence that’s what we’re pursuing. And with the power of the people in this room and what we can achieve, I am confident that we will be successful in delivering that vision for the four states we represent.”

Eric Stiles, President and CEO, New Jersey Audubon

Day one of the Annual Forum focused on aligning conservation work to drive collective action and maximize regional impact. Discussions looked into the challenges, success stories, and strategies to coordinate amongst funders, government agencies, nonprofits, and other groups working across the watershed to protect and restore its natural resources.

The Delaware River Basin Restoration Program served as a leading example of partnership-driven conservation at a landscape scale. Attendees learned about collaboration that led to the creation of this program in 2017 and how continued coordination between state, federal agencies, and the non-profit community drives its administration. Participants also reflected on the history of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Partnership Program – another example of success driven by collaboration. Through the program, conservation and outreach is administered at the local level by partnership organizations, community volunteers, and federal assistance. As speakers and participants discussed opportunities to further these efforts, they noted that some key stakeholders were missing from the table including urban and rural communities.

Breakouts showcased other initiatives crossing state lines including capacity-building tools for executing regional work. Environment New Jersey introduced a new Delaware River Watershed mapping tool, which allows organizations working in the region to map, visualize, and communicate threats in the watershed. Partnership for the Delaware Estuary presented the revision of Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) outlines 8 goals and 39 strategies to achieve clean water, healthy habitat, and stronger communities in the Delaware Estuary. Participants further explored how to influence water consumption behavior and educate communities on how to protect water quality. Engaging discussions around clean water verse water quality standards highlighted the need for more public education, transparency, and what’s in our water and how it’s regulated.

The Future of the Watershed



Sessions throughout the event explored opportunities to take ownership of the Delaware River Watershed's future. Speakers and participants emphasized the importance of leadership and collaboration at all levels, from federal government all the way to the local landowner, in order to achieve sustainable restoration and protection results.

Climate change is continuing to negatively impact communities throughout the watershed. Over the last 100 years, temperatures, precipitation, and sea level rise have increased in alarming rates. Attendees gathered to find solutions and learn how New York City, Philadelphia, and the State of New Jersey are implementing place-based resiliency efforts to protect their communities. Discussions examined a wide range of topics including the nation political conversation on climate, opportunities for cities to pilot projects in the absence of federal leadership, how to influence local decision makers, effects of climate change on the Upper Delaware reservoirs, and the disparate impacts to impoverished communities.

At the state level, 4 *the Delaware* campaign leaders discussed environmental priorities in each state's administration, unique challenges, and opportunities to advance state leadership toward thinking watershed-wide. The Coalition was highlighted as an invaluable resource in coordinating efforts among partners and sharing resources for advocacy and communications. The importance of state funding for Delaware River Basin Commission was highlighted as a clear action for states to take in showing leadership, though only a piece of planning for the watershed's future.

In another session, attendees focused on bottom-up strategies to create a pathway to achieving 25,000 miles of swimmable, fishable waterways. This included fostering citizen science to engage communities in monitoring and protecting water in their own backyards.

Growing the Conservation Movement

The last set of breakout sessions centered on how to foster stewardship across the watershed in order to reach new audiences and nurture the next generation of advocates.

Speakers and attendees shared information on educational programs that are happening throughout the watershed including the Delaware River Sojourn, New Jersey Audubon's World Series of Birding, and the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools program. STEM education, afterschool, and summer enrichment programs are also creating opportunities to develop youth's environmental interest and ethic. The 2018 RiverGuides program, administered by Urban Promise, offers summer jobs that educate residents about the Cooper River while empowering youth leaders. Participants heard first-hand from students about their experience which not only helped connect them with nature, but also built skills for school and home.

In addition to learning about existing programs, participants explored how to engage nontraditional audiences with conservation priorities. Conservationists challenged themselves to recognize that different communities connect to nature in various ways and to explore opportunities to create new, authentic partnerships. This included recruiting businesses to advocate for clean water, engaging municipalities on water quality issues, building leaders through faith organizations, and connecting with local farmers to implement BMPs.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed committed to fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion earlier this year with the goal of ensuring underrepresented, underserved, and overburdened communities have a voice in the watershed and share equitably in the benefits of clean water.

Attendees participated in a number of sessions dedicated to DEI - topics included organizational changes, best practices for community engagement, and aligning environmental programs with community priorities. Discussions kicked off by reflecting on the makeup of the conservation workforce. Speakers and participants examined the root of the lack of representation of people of color in the NGO environmental community. They discussed the importance of training people for the

green economy, with a focus on recruiting young, talented staff from diverse backgrounds through incentives and paid internships. Students of Urban Promise's 2018 RiverGuides program provided more insight into the barriers of recruitment and how to grow a conservation ethic amongst underserved youth and communities.

After reviewing strategies for inclusive engagement, participants worked together to identify actionable items towards building an inclusive watershed. Commitments included reaching out to diverse, ethnic organizations, reflecting on organizational mission statements, increasing outdoor accessibility for the physically disabled, and engaging community interests through arts.

Field Trips



Attendees visited local conservation sites included the Cape May Point State Park, Reeds Beach, and a maritime forest. Trips provided first-hand experiences that showcased how natural habitats and restoration projects such as oyster reefs protect beaches and barrier islands against erosion. Attendees also learned about local conservation programs including reTURN the Favor beach walks to rescue stranded horseshoe crabs and protect shorebirds, and enjoyed a butterfly demonstration as they learned about the Monarch Monitoring Project, which studies the fall migration of monarch butterflies along the Atlantic Coast.





Moving Forward

Join us next fall as we continue to work together to secure a future with clean water, healthy habitats, and strong communities. The Forum is a great event for those interested in or working on water quality, conservation, stormwater, or other watershed issues to learn, connect, and have fun.

The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed is dedicated to integrating new voices into the structure, processes, and policy development of our conservation efforts. If you are a student or organization that is interested in learning more, contact Katharina Miguel at katharina.miguel@njudubon.org.