



ESTUARY NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DELAWARE ESTUARY: A NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

20 Years of Cleaner Water

By Jennifer Adkins, Executive Director, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary

When it comes to clean water in the Delaware River and Bay, every stream in the watershed matters. That's the theme of our 2015 Activity Report, now available at DelawareEstuary.org/activity-report. This annual report highlights our most notable activities from last year, and the people who made them possible.

There have been remarkable achievements by partners working together around the watershed, and not just last year, but over the last 20. One of the most impressive is a 71% reduction in point sources of PCBs (one of our toughest toxic pollutants) to the river and bay since 2015. This is thanks to the Delaware River Basin Commission and cooperation by communities, industries, and agencies around the region. Another is preventing pollution like nutrients, bacteria, and metals from making their way into the Schuylkill River, the largest tributary to the Delaware Estuary, with over 300 projects by partners in the Schuylkill Action Network in 10 years. And let's not forget about the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary's events and programs that have



Sarah Bouboulis (left), Ryan Flannery (center), and LeeAnn Haaf (right) of the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary pose for a photo while performing maintenance on a restored shoreline near Milford, Delaware on April 13.

reached over 3 million people with positive messages and information on the estuary since 2003.

In celebration of our 20th anniversary and achievements like these, we have more programs, events, and opportunities to get involved in than ever before. You'll read about some of these in this issue of *Estuary News*, like the recent Christina River Watershed Cleanup, Schuylkill Scrub, and events coming up this spring. Others are highlighted at DelawareEstuary.org/anniversary, which we will update throughout the year.

Even with progress like this, many of our waterways are still challenged by pollution. We need your help and support to make every stream matter. ■

Cause for 'Shellabration'

In 2016, the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary will roll out a **new Oyster Shell Recycling Program** starting in Wilmington, Delaware. The program is designed to address Delaware Bay's oyster shell deficit by collecting shells from restaurants and elsewhere. Scientists will then reuse the shell for restoration projects. This is important because shells provide a place for young oysters to grow, among other benefits. Thank you to all those who donated to this cause at our Experience the Estuary Celebration on October 15. Because of you, we were able to buy a lift gate for our truck, which is essential for recycling oyster shells. ■

FEATURED COLLABORATOR: Lift Fund donors at our 2015 Experience the Estuary Celebration



Credit: Spencer Roberts of the PDE

Building Consensus

More than **250 experts** have committed to working with the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary to revise the *Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan for the Delaware Estuary*. This plan, created in 1996, is a roadmap for protecting and enhancing our region's waterways. The result will be a valuable set of action plans intended to guide conservation and management for the next 10 to 15 years. Please email Sarah Bouboulis at sbouboulis@DelawareEstuary.org if you wish to help. ■

FEATURED COLLABORATOR: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Changing Minds with Art

Almost **1,300 children** from **27 schools** learned an environmental lesson in February. That's because they entered the Green City, Clean Waters Art Contest. This is a collaboration between the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary and Philadelphia Water, and it's once again promoting clean water through art. Winning students were treated to an award ceremony on April 26, and their drawings can now be seen on ads inside SEPTA buses and subway cars. And we are not done. Each first-place winner's artwork will soon become a street-art sticker teaching people how to keep pollutants out of waterways. Please visit DelawareEstuary.org/art-contest for info. ■



FEATURED COLLABORATOR: Philadelphia Water

Credit: Shaun Bailey of the PDE

Credit: Shaun Bailey of the PDE

Bringing Earth Day to the Masses

About 2,000 people turned a new leaf during their visit to the Wilmington Earth Day and Arbor Day Celebration on April 22. The Partnership for the **Delaware Estuary recruited over 30 exhibitors for the event**, including local, environmentally friendly businesses, conservation groups, and outdoor travel destinations. People gathered in downtown's Rodney Square to enjoy crafts, lunch, and advice on how to live a greener lifestyle. And most took home free giveaways, like plants that are native to Delaware. See for yourself in pictures available online at DelawareEstuary.org/earth-day. ■ FEATURED COLLABORATOR: City of Wilmington



Credit: Shaun Bailey of the PDE

Adding Experience

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary has **added two experienced professionals** to its staff of 22. On February 1 Lorestine Pittman (on right) came on as coordinator of grants. A month later Nancy Descano (second from right) joined as the new deputy executive director. Pittman will work to maintain and grow the nonprofit's grant funding. She has experience with the Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. Descano will manage the organization's facility, finances, human resources, and technology. Her experience comes from the Latin American Community Center, Blood Bank of Delmarva, and the corporate sector. Please also congratulate Spencer Roberts (left) and Kaitlin Tucker (second from left), our newest science fellows. ■



Credit: Shaun Bailey of the PDE

Experimenting on the Bayshore

Credit: Josh Maody of the PDE



Residents in Money Island, New Jersey are benefiting from the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary's latest restoration project, a collaboration with The Nature Conservancy. This "living shoreline" consists of environmentally-friendly logs made of coconut fiber (coir), wetland grasses, and shellfish. It is paired with an experimental breakwater made of oyster-loving "castles" shaped like LEGOs (pictured) and shell bags. This project adds to an upstream living shoreline, which scientists built in 2014. See for yourself next time you sail out of Money Island Marina. Visit DelawareEstuary.org/living-shorelines for details. ■

FEATURED COLLABORATOR: The Nature Conservancy

Mapping Marshlands

Scientists spent the winter studying data from seven wetlands near Barnegat Bay and Delaware Bay. They are using these to create an **early warning system for wetlands** called Marsh Futures. This will allow communities to map and fast track priority wetlands for enhancement. Why is this important? Because poor health often precedes wetland loss, and we can ill afford to lose wetlands. Not only do they spare neighborhoods from flooding, they also serve as nurseries for the fish and shellfish we eat. For details, please visit ow.ly/10s8eC to read our winter 2014 article entitled "Marsh Futures: Moving from Tracking to Action". ■

FEATURED COLLABORATOR: Barnegat Bay Partnership



Credit: Spencer Roberts of the PDE

Showing Off Our Mussels

The Fairmount Water Works is building the first educational hatchery for freshwater mussels – perhaps in the world. Scientists at the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary and The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University are providing support and expertise. The goal is to **create a hatchery that can grow mussels and teach people** how they live in streams and clean the water. The grand opening is anticipated for this fall, and the challenge is daunting. Would you believe this museum is built to flood? This means all exhibits must be mobile, elevated high above the floor, or rise to the ceiling. Please visit the Watershed Blog at ow.ly/103qLZ for more info. ■

FEATURED COLLABORATOR: Philadelphia Water



Credit: Kurt Cheng of the PDE

Cleaning Up Waterways

Approximately 450 people picked up litter at this year's Christina River Watershed Cleanup on April 9, despite terrible weather. **Almost 70 of these folks joined in at the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary's site** near Wilmington's Russell W. Peterson Wildlife Refuge. Thanks go out to the Delaware Department of Fish & Wildlife for ferrying volunteers up and down the Christina River. The boat rides allowed volunteers to collect far more litter than they would otherwise, sparing the Delaware River and Bay from this pollution. See these volunteers on Flickr at ow.ly/10FWCQ. ■



Credit: Jeff Long of the PDE

FEATURED COLLABORATOR: Christina Conservancy

Advocating for Wetlands

Dr. Danielle Kreeger spoke to a standing-room-only crowd at the Delaware Wetlands Conference on February 2-3. Experts were intrigued to hear what her research has revealed about the health of the region's tidal wetlands. The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary tracked wetland health at two permanent stations and through **more than 350 health assessments deep in the marshes** of Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The take-away message? We can reverse our high rate of wetland loss, but only through collaboration, experimentation, and matching scarce funding with priority projects. Visit ow.ly/10saRh to go in depth with Dr. Kreeger's winter 2016 article entitled "Decade of Research Shines Light on Wetland Loss".

FEATURED COLLABORATOR: Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control ■



Credit: Shaun Bailey of the PDE

Credit: White Clay Creek State Park



Creek Fest

May 7, from noon to 4 p.m.

Newark, DE

Goodbye, April showers. Hello, May flowers! It's time to celebrate spring at White Clay Creek State Park's Carpenter Recreation Area. Families at Creek Fest will enjoy animals, food vendors, live music, and kids activities. Why all the hubbub? It's all to celebrate the natural wonders of White Clay Creek, Delaware's only National Wild and Scenic River. And you can help protect it by visiting the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary's table. This event is free except for the park's entrance fees. Visit WhiteClay.org for info.

Craft Spirits Happy Hour

May 12, from 6 to 8 p.m. | Smyrna, DE

You are invited to a Craft Spirits Happy Hour at Painted Stave Distilling. Join us as we enjoy cocktails made with small-batch spirits, take a tour of the distillery, and learn about its local ingredients and environmental efforts. Proceeds from this fundraiser will help support our efforts to protect local rivers and the Delaware Bay. Tickets are just \$25 per person, which you can purchase online. Visit DelawareEstuary.org for more details, or call Elizabeth Horsey at (302) 655-4990, extension 114.

Peace, Love & Horseshoe Crab Festival

May 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Milford, DE

Migrate your way to the DuPont Nature Center for its Peace, Love & Horseshoe Crab Festival. This deck party will feature crafts, food, music, vendors, and more. Kids, meanwhile, will enjoy the Estuary Eco-challenge. And birders will have plenty to do thanks to flocks feasting on nearby horseshoe crab eggs. This event is free. Parking will be available at the nearby public boat ramp, where visitors can catch a shuttle. Please call (302) 422-1329 for info.

Horseshoe Crab & Shorebird Festival

May 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. | Milton, DE

Visit Milton, gateway to Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, for a celebration of horseshoe crabs, shorebirds, and the outdoors. Then embark on an adventure. Options include boat rides on the Broadkill River, canoe trips on Prime Hook Creek, a free shuttle to the refuge, trail walks and more. Please call (302) 684-1101 for details, or visit HistoricMilton.com.



Credit: Shaun Bailey of the PDE



Credit: United By Blue

Schuylkill Scrub

Ends May 31 | Southeast PA

Volunteers will treat more than 1,000 sites to a spring cleaning during the Schuylkill Scrub. This three-month campaign takes place in Pennsylvania's Schuylkill Valley. Those who organize new cleanups will be eligible to win prizes. All this is made possible thanks to collaboration between Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and the Schuylkill Action Network's many members. Learn more about the Schuylkill Scrub online at SchuylkillScrub.org, or call (800) 445-4935, extension 121.

Delaware Bay Day

June 4, from noon to 9:30 p.m.

Bivalve, NJ

Hundreds of families can't be wrong. Delaware Bay Day is worth the trip to a remote outpost known as the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. This dockside festival offers children's games, contests, history exhibits, live music, seafood, a street parade, and even sailing cruises. And it's all capped off by a lighted boat parade and fireworks. The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary is a proud sponsor. Discover the full slate of activities at BayshoreCenter.org, or call (856) 785-2060.

Teacher Workshops

July 18-21

Sites in DE, NJ, and PA

Educators can choose from four different workshops offered by the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary. These will take place in Pennsylvania's Berks and Schuylkill counties, Philadelphia, Camden, and Smyrna, Delaware. Participants will discover environmental science lessons they can use in the classroom. They will also earn continuing-education hours. Call Michelle Hoover at (800) 445-4935, extension 112, to enroll today. But you better hurry. Seats are filling fast, especially given the price — a mere \$20 to \$25 per session.



Credit: Melissa Blitner

ESTUARY EVENTS

27TH ANNUAL DELAWARE RIVER CLEANUP

July 18-19
Milford, PA
(900) 356-2852

DELAWARE RIVER CLEANUPS

August 25-26 and 29-31
Philadelphia, PA
LivingLandsandWaters.org/events



Clean-up Corner

Credit: Shaun Bailey of the PDE

MEETINGS CONTACT LIST

Meetings conducted by the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary's implementation and advisory committees occur on a regular basis and are open to the public. For meeting dates and times, please contact the individuals listed below:

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Partnership for the Delaware Estuary: a National Estuary Program

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Inc. (PDE), is a private, nonprofit organization established in 1996. The PDE, a National Estuary Program, leads science-based and collaborative efforts to improve the tidal Delaware River and Bay, which spans Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. To find out how you can become one of our partners, call the PDE at (800) 445-4935 or visit our website at www.DelawareEstuary.org.

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