



# estuary news

Newsletter of the Delaware Estuary Program

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## WORKSHOPS COMPLETED FOR THE *FLOWING TOWARD THE FUTURE* PROCESS

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In April and May, ten regional workshops were held at five locations in the Delaware River watershed, which includes parts of Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York (see map). An additional 3 workshops were held with students attending the Youth Summit near Portland, Pennsylvania. The purpose of these workshops was to gather information and ideas for developing a vision for the Delaware River Basin and "21st Century Directions" for attaining the vision.

The workshops are the first step in a three-step process named *Flowing Toward the Future*. The next steps are a Governors' Summit to be held on September 29th at the NJ State Aquarium in Camden, NJ, and a basinwide conference to be held from November 15th to 17th at the Adams Mark Hotel in Philadelphia, PA.

A consortium of 8 government agencies and 5 non-profit organizations is conducting *Flowing Toward the Future*. These include the four state environmental agencies, Delaware River Basin Commission, National Park Service, U.S. EPA, Delaware Estuary Program, Heritage Conservancy, Alliance for a Sustainable Future, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Upper Delaware Council, and Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin.

The workshops used a focus group process with attendees segregated into four groups: preservation/advocacy, commerce/utilities, recreation, and government. Interest groups were used to determine differences between groups, if any, and to prevent a smaller interest group's opinions from being diluted by a group having a larger representation.

Each workshop began with a brief introduction about the *Flowing Toward the Future* process and the workshop objectives. The participants immediately split up into break-out sessions where trained facilitators led them through a three-hour process where they developed lists of vision descriptors, challenges and directions. The sometimes-intense brain-storming process was followed by a voting procedure that used color-coded big dots and small dots to score the results of the workshop. The pattern of the voting will be used to determine priorities and areas of consensus across interest groups.

The 26 break-out sessions held at the ten workshops yielded descriptors for about 75 vision elements, 826 challenges, and 880 directions (including redundancies). These are currently being analyzed. Some preliminary findings include the following:

- The vision for the Delaware River and its watersheds clearly involves diverse natural resources, healthy biological populations (including humans), and a clean environment. 23 of the 26 break-out sessions picked one or more of these as their top three vision elements - often combining them into one or using one to describe another.
- The vision of the future also clearly involves people because watershed communities, water supplies, and economic considerations were important to many participants.
- Environmental education and related stewardship ideas dominated the lists of challenges and directions.
- Interestingly, an opinion that crossed interest group lines is the need for increased enforcement of existing regulations. With the possible exception of land use, there was little interest in either less regulations or new ones.
- Concerns about land use - sprawl, non-point sources, the misuse of land, and the need to revitalize cities - were expressed at all workshop sessions.
- Other threads that appeared throughout the 26 workshops included the need for good science, improved land and water management, and the need to work more effectively and cooperatively.
- Regional differences were largely absent with the exception of one or two issues. In fact, an important conclusion might be that remarkable agreement exists within the Basin's community and between interest groups, although not always for the same reason or from the same perspective.



Delaware River Basin

A directions report is being prepared for mid-summer release. Meanwhile, the raw data from all the workshops can be found on the Delaware River Basin Commission's web site ([www.state.nj.us/drbc/](http://www.state.nj.us/drbc/)) or by calling (609) 883-9500 x205 for Chris Roberts or x260 for Clarke Rupert of the Commission's public information office.

# TIDINGS: News from around the region

## DiPasquale Sworn In As DNREC Secretary

Nicholas A. DiPasquale became the Seventh Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control on April 8, 1999 in Dover before an enthusiastic crowd of supporters. Governor Carper noted the 20-0 confirmation vote in the Senate as indicative of the broad support for Secretary DiPasquale in the environmental and business community. "It really is a matter of balancing," said Secretary DiPasquale. "It is important to protect both the public and private interests." DNREC's new Secretary mentioned implementation of the Coastal Zone Regulations as one of the more significant issues. "The Coastal Zone Regulations will soon be promulgated. They will become part of Delaware's history. These regulations will protect and improve our coastal zone for generations to come."

The Secretary also listed water-quality issues and implementation of controls to limit pollutant loadings for Delaware waters, southern Delaware nutrient management issues, and attainment of ozone standards here and among states along the East Coast as some of the most difficult environmental problems facing the Department and all Delawareans. He emphasized that our environmental challenges go beyond those facing business and industry. "Environmental protection is becoming personal," said Secretary DiPasquale. "It affects our daily lives. We must examine our personal lifestyles, our habits."

One of the more exceptional projects with which Secretary DiPasquale has been involved is the redevelopment along the riverfront in Wilmington. "We can see progress. We can't always see the results of our efforts. It's not always visible. We have the opportunity to reclaim this natural resource. We need to restore our rivers and our waterways, to protect them and to enjoy them. And we need to look more holistically at our environment," said Secretary DiPasquale, who included integration of environmental databases and information management among Departmental management and organizational issues he will focus on during his administration.

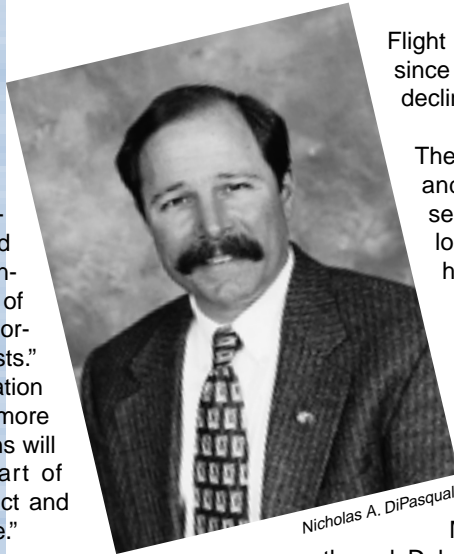


## Delaware Partners In Flight

Partners in Flight is an international bird conservation program with chapters in each of the states in the U.S., the Canadian Provinces, and in South and Central American countries. The mission of PIF is to cooperate on a hemispheric scale to maintain and recover landbird

populations - especially the neotropical migrants — which depend on forests, shrublands, and grasslands throughout the Americas.

PIF was begun as a response to an alarming trend in population declines among some of the bird species that migrate each year between their North American breeding grounds and their Central and South American feeding grounds. These are called Neotropical Migratory Birds (NTMB's). The concerns of Partners in



Nicholas A. DiPasquale

Flight have expanded to include all landbirds since many resident bird populations are also declining.

The reasons for the declines are complex and not completely understood but they seem to be related to the degradation and loss of suitable habitat across the entire hemisphere.

The Delaware Partners In Flight Working Group is concerned at the local level about bird conservation in our state and our region. Delaware - and the Delmarva peninsula - is a critical migratory and breeding region. There are over 100 species of Neotropical Migratory Birds that migrate into and

through Delaware each year. In 1995, 10 nesting species were rare and another 16 species were very uncommon. Many resident species are showing serious population declines.

## How You Can Help:

- Provide food sources for birds in your backyard. This can be as simple as planting some native shrubs;
- Avoid spraying pesticides and herbicides on your native plants. The caterpillars that may live there are a rich food source for birds;
- Cats are expert predators. If you have a cat, consider keeping it inside for healthier cats and more abundant wild birds.

*If you want to do something more to help, call (302) 653-2882 or write to DE Partners In Flight c/o Division of Fish & Wildlife, 4876 Hay Point Landing Road, Smyrna, DE 19977.*

## Successful Watershed Management Through Education

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the Watershed Partnership for New Jersey (WPN) launched a statewide watershed education campaign this May to encourage residents to become aware of their roles in watershed management and to become actively involved in watershed activities in their communities. "Successful watershed management is dependent upon all citizens taking positive steps to prevent pollution such as controlling wastes, reducing polluted runoff and preserving open space, requiring more than just additional government regulation," said Robert Tudor, Assistant Commissioner of Environmental Planning and Science.

WPNJ Chairperson Dale Rosselet notes that education is an important part of watershed management. One way to raise awareness in a community is to help distribute watershed education materials. Such materials may be ordered from NJDEP for local festivals, events, community days, school activities or for general distribution.

The *Clean Water Ringers Program* is geared for elementary school students. Claudius Crab, Marshall Muskrat and Diesha Diamondback help inform students about water pollution prob-

lems and solutions. The *Nonpoint Source pollution brochure* provides a brief introduction to nonpoint source pollution and prevention tips. The *Clean Water Book* provides an in-depth look at how you can reduce water pollution in your daily life. To request copies of this publication, call Kyra Hoffmann, NJDEP Division of Watershed Management, at (609) 292-2113 or e-mail [khoffman@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:khoffman@dep.state.nj.us).



To receive a Watershed Education and Resources Packet complete with the new WPNJ Watershed Education and Resource Directory, a colorful map of NJ's watersheds, brochures and fact sheets, write Colleen Thomas, NJDEP, PO Box 418, Trenton, NJ 08625 or fax (609) 292-0687.

### Summer Flounder and Weakfish Size and Possession Limit Changes

The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife recently adopted changes to existing summer flounder and weakfish regulations. The modifications are the result of efforts to comply with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's management plans to help rebuild summer flounder and weakfish populations along the Atlantic coast.

The 1999 Delaware regulations include:

- A summer flounder season closure from July 16 to August 7 to reduce the total harvest;
- A 15-inch minimum length of summer flounder caught recreationally;
- A creel limit of eight summer flounder caught recreationally;
- An increase in the minimum length of weakfish caught recreationally from 13 to 14 inches;
- A creel limit increase from 6 to 14 weakfish caught recreationally.

For more information, contact the Fisheries Section, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife at (302) 739-3441 or Kathleen Jamison, Information and Education, at (302) 739-4506.

The 1999 New Jersey summer flounder and weakfish regulations include:

- A summer flounder open season from May 15 to October 11
- A 15 1/2-inch minimum length of summer flounder
- A possession limit of 8 summer flounder
- A 14-inch minimum length of weakfish
- A possession limit of 14 weakfish

Fish are measured from tip of snout to tip of tail. Cleaning or filleting of fish with a minimum size limit while at sea is prohibited.

For more information about NJ regulations, access the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife web address <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/marreg99.htm>.

### ERDG's Horseshoe Crab Conservation Program

The Ecological Research & Development Group of Milton, Delaware launched a successful **Just flip 'em!** Horseshoe crab conservation program last year to bring attention to the high mortality from horseshoe crab strandings and to encourage individual support for the preservation of these ancient mariners. Up to 10 percent of this species die each year from stranding alone. Loss of habitat, pollution, and overharvesting for bait are the primary causes for the population's dramatic decline. The Rodgers Forge Elementary School was one of twelve Maryland middle schools selected this year to participate in a pilot program to raise and study horseshoe crabs in the classroom. Encouraged by Governor Parris Glendening and developed by Cindy Grove, Aquatic Resources Education Coordinator for Maryland DNR, this program teaches students about the early development stages of this remarkable species, its ecological role in nature's delicately balanced food web and its biomedical contribution to the health of millions of people world wide.

ERDG believes the current restrictions on harvesting horseshoe crabs for eel and conch bait is but a short-term conservation solution. Public education and coastal community support in conjunction with habitat conservation initiatives, both terrestrial and aquatic, will ultimately be the foundation of a successful conservation program.

ERDG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to seek solutions, which prevent and/or mitigate damage to native wildlife populations and habitat from human activities. This is accomplished through scientific research and development, public education, environmental planning and management. ERDG works to inspire and assist individuals and organizations to solve problems, change behaviors and promote sound decisions to achieve sustainable ecosystems.

For more information about ERDG, call Glen Gauvry at (302) 684-3373 or e-mail [ERDG@dmv.com](mailto:ERDG@dmv.com).

<http://www.njaquarium.org/>

Welcome to the official web site of the New Jersey State Aquarium! This website features an underwater viewing camera so you see what's happening right now at their Open Ocean Tank.

On this website you can also learn about the Aquarium's research programs, including the first-ever aquarium breeding of several species.

The New Jersey State Aquarium is located on the Delaware River waterfront at 1 Riverside Drive, Camden, NJ, just minutes away from Philadelphia's historic district and Penn's Landing by ferry, car, or public transportation. The RiverLink Ferry crosses the Delaware River every 30 minutes, departing on the hour from Philadelphia and on the 1/2 hour from Camden from 10am - 5pm. Call (215) 925-LINK for more information.

For more information about the New Jersey State Aquarium, call the Aquarium's main number (609) 365-3300 or visit their web-site at [www.njaquarium.org/](http://www.njaquarium.org/).