



**President's Pen:**

**View from the Creek Bank**

The drought ended just after our fall newsletter went out. Nature changed our creek from extreme lows to extreme highs in just 24 hours. A 12 to 15 foot wall of water scoured the creek, destroyed bridges and bulwarks, moved autos, trailers and dumpsters incredible distances. Flood plain homes and businesses in or near flood plains were destroyed from Marple to Darby. Run off and overflow raised pollution counts alarmingly from Cobbs Creek to the Delaware River.

We hope we will learn from this. Short sighted building and paving creates flooding and pollution that wetlands, flood plains and streamside plantings prevent. We do not improve the "quality of life" by jamming buildings and roads on every spare inch of land.

The passing of Governor Ridge's "Growing Greener" legislation is a beginning: a 5 year plan to "restore watersheds, protect open space, clean up abandoned mines, help communities address land use, etc." The money allotted is minuscule for the task—but it is a start. The big problem is to give the municipalities the legal power to stop

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**Hurricane Floyd Floods Watershed--Damage Affects All Residents**

Stories about the flood on pages 2-3



*September 16, 1999: Hurricane Floyd floods the intersection of Burmont and Warrior Roads in Haverford Township.*

**Come to the Annual Meeting on January 22**

DCVA's Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, January 22, 2000, at 9 a.m. at the Springfield Quaker Meeting, Springfield and Old State Roads, in Springfield. Ron Thompson of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) will be the guest speaker.

The USGS provides maps, reports, and information to help others meet their needs to manage, develop, and protect America's water, energy, mineral, and land resources. It supplies scientific understanding needed to help minimize or mitigate the effects of natural hazards and environmental damage caused by human activities. The results of its efforts touch the daily lives of almost every American.

Mr. Thompson will give an overview of the USGS and discuss its Federal-State Cooperative Program, a partnership between the USGS and state and

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**DCVA Conference to be Held March 4<sup>th</sup>**

Mark your calendar for Saturday March 4<sup>th</sup>. That is the date of the Annual Darby Creek Watershed Stewardship Conference. It will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church in Lansdowne from 9 a.m. until 1:30 p.m., with registration at 8:30 a.m. This year's theme is Partnering for Success: What is our Stewardship IQ as We Move into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

Workshops will be presented on the following topics:

**A. The Status of the Rivers Conservation Grant.** This workshop will discuss the development of the Darby Creek Rivers Conservation Plan, the status of the Storm Water Management Plan for the Darby Creek, the Darby-Cobbs Partnership, and municipal initiatives to date.

**B. Community Historic Preservation Commitment.** Are our inventories up to date? What protection do we have for our historic treasures? This workshop will discuss these questions.

**C. Streambank Stabilization Demonstration Projects.** This workshop will look

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## **Hurricane Floyd Hurricane Floyd Hurricane Floyd Hurricane**

Hurricane Floyd hit the Philadelphia area September 16<sup>th</sup>, bringing 7 inches of rain—an all time record for a single-day rainfall. Area creeks, including Darby, flooded, causing an estimated \$15 million in damage, 1 death, and the evacuation of hundreds of people from their homes. Peco Energy reported that almost 500,000 customers lost service because of Floyd's wind and flooding. Many roads were closed—296 tons of mud and debris had to be removed with front end loaders before the Cobbs Creek Parkway could be opened to traffic. 466 trees were downed in Fairmount Park. Delaware County was one of 7 Pennsylvania counties declared a disaster area, qualifying it for federal disaster relief. By the middle of November, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had processed almost 15,000 applications for assistance and paid out \$11.9 million in grants to flood victims in the Philadelphia area. By January \$1,678,171 had been approved for government and public service entities to repair public property damage in Delaware County. People and municipalities are continuing to rebuild their properties and their lives.

### **Darby Borough Suffers Extensive Damage**

One of the areas hit hardest by Hurricane Floyd was Darby Borough. There floodwaters reached a peak of 12½ feet. 337 houses and 59 businesses suffered damage. More than 300 Darby Borough residents had to be evacuated from their homes. After a week over half of that number were still unable to get into their houses. Preliminary estimates of property damage ranged in the several millions of dollars.

During the flood, a liquor store and a bank were submerged and a senior housing complex that was being renovated was badly damaged. EPA spent days cleaning a paint factory on Pine Street. By the middle of October nearly 1,100 people from Darby Borough had been given \$1.86 million in federal assistance for property damage from Floyd.

On September 30<sup>th</sup> residents of 43 houses in the flood plain of Darby Creek petitioned Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials to buy and demolish their homes. The government agreed. The houses are in the 1200, 1300, and 1400 blocks of Chestnut Street plus two houses on Creek Avenue on the other side of Darby Creek. Because the 2 story houses are attached, all of the residents had to agree to the buy-out plan. Some residents had reservations; however, an agreement was eventually reached. FEMA and the Borough agreed on a pre-flood fair market value of each house. On December 7<sup>th</sup> the first 13 homeowners received their checks; the rest of the 43 were expected to have received their checks by the time this newsletter was written. After the homes are demolished, Darby Borough officials hope to turn the area into a park.

### **36 Homes to Be Demolished**

In addition to the 43 homes in Darby Borough that were approved by FEMA for demolition, the state of Pennsylvania plans to raze 36 homes devastated by Hurricane Floyd. If federal officials agree, the owners will be paid fair market value.

A majority of the homes, 22, are in Colwyn Borough on Keystone Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets and are worth \$1.14 million. Also proposed for demolition are eight properties in Upland, in the area of Front Street and Upland Avenue, worth \$375,000 and 6 houses along West Rolling Road in Springfield worth \$1.1 million.

The state is proposing that the federal government fund 75% of the cost, the state 22 percent, and the local municipality 3%.



**Flooding at the intersection of Township Line Road & State Road near the border of Upper Darby Township and Springfield Township.**

# Floyd Hurricane Floyd Hurricane Floyd Hurricane Floyd

## Steam Restoration Work in Radnor Holds Up

The bad news from Radnor Township with regard to impact from Hurricane Floyd is that a bridge that spanned Darby Creek just upstream from the confluence of Darby Creek and Little Darby Creek in the 100-acre Skunk Hollow Park was washed away and destroyed. Local Boy Scout troops, members of DCVA, and other community volunteers had devoted countless volunteer hours getting the bridge constructed and the project had been completed only a few weeks before the arrival of Floyd. The loss of the bridge is a major blow to accessibility to Skunk Hollow from Saw Mill Park, the contiguous linear park just downstream from Skunk Hollow and the Willows.

The good news is that the recently completed 200 feet of streambank restoration in the Willows as part of a WRAP grant from DEP worked as advertised. While flood waters churned and caused streambank damage on most sections of Little Darby Creek as it runs through the Willows, the recently sloped and planted section of streambank held up beautifully.

## Merry Place is Destroyed

Hurricane Floyd caused over \$100,000 worth of damage to Merry Place, the new park in Haverford Township for children of all abilities. It destroyed the fishing pier, boardwalk and benches, and eroded sand and soil.

Haverford Township is now in the process of repairing and rebuilding the area. Volunteers, including the Haverford High Interact Club, are helping in the clean-up. The students scrubbed mud from the memorial bricks in the Merry Place Walk of Life and cleaned the gazebo. Some wood from the fishing pier has been retrieved and will be used again on the trails and walkways.

The township has been notified that it will receive Federal Emergency Management Agency money for restoration. Therefore, in December the Haverford Township Commission voted to award 2 contracts totaling \$79,950 for work in the park. One contractor will restore the canyon walls including grading, replacing topsoil and seeding and mulching the entire area. The second contractor will replace walkways, ramps, seats, railings and the fishing pier destroyed during the flood.

Tim Denny, township Recreation Director, reports that the boardwalk and pier will be rebuilt using recycled plastic lumber. The cost will be an extra \$12-14,000 above what the insurance will pay; however, the result will be better than the original. A plastic lumber boardwalk and fishing pier are expected to last longer and to require less maintenance. The extra expense will be paid from Merry Place Fund donations.

Tim is encouraged by the increased awareness of the project that the flood has brought. He says, "Floyd set us back, but in the end I hope that we are going to have an even better park. We are concentrating on getting back to where we were and then to moving ahead." The ultimate goal is to have a grand re-opening in the spring.

## Hurricane Floyd Leaves Heavy Footprint at Refuge



*The day after Hurricane Floyd at the Heinz Wildlife Refuge: the east impoundment boardwalk has been destroyed.*

*-Photo by Bill Buchanan*

By Bill Buchanan

Debris littered the Dike Trail as though a giant tidal wave had surged through the area. All along the banks of Darby Creek there was a plethora of items, from household trash to downed trees, and chemical drums to portable toilets. Trash was strewn from the overhang of trees and other taller vegetation. A floating canoe launch and ramp were ripped from their moorings and taken hundreds of feet downstream and re-deposited on a sandy shoreline of the creek. And speaking of sand, tons were swept along the flood route and relocated everywhere, smothering untold numbers of plants. This was just part of the damage at the Heinz Refuge in the wake of Hurricane Floyd.

The bulk of the damage seen by the public occurred near the lower parking lot behind the visitor contact station. It was here that the canoe launch and ramp were torn away.

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## Swedish Cabin Still Stands

Friends of the Swedish Cabin are happy to report that the Cabin was able to withstand the floodwaters. They attribute its durability to its builders' choice of location—the cabin was built at a bend in the creek and above the fall line and on the left bank. Because of this it was able to avoid the direct force of the floodwaters.

However, there are some after effects of the flood at the cabin. Water lines indicate that there was four feet of water outside of the cabin and three feet inside. Now mold and mildew have grown on the bottom of logs as well as on the carpenter's bench. And the West Pen clay floor has still not hardened. But the Cabin should be ready for opening in the spring.

**The Darby-Cobbs Partnership is expanding rapidly. Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of the Partnership's brochure describing the goals of the partnership and the ways you can become involved.**

## **DCNR Rivers Conservation Grant Is Underway**

DCVA will issue requests for proposals for the services of a consultant to assist in the development of our Darby Creek Watershed Rivers Conservation Grant from the Department of Environmental Resources.

The steering committee has inventoried the many resources available and needed to develop the conservation plan. Plans are to hold a meeting with municipal partners early in February in preparation for the public participation meetings to be held through March and April.

The public participation meetings will focus on identifying issues of environmental concern and options for possible solutions. The participants will eventually set priorities for action. Input of the public is key to the success of the grant. Hopefully our model for local stewardship of our precious natural and historic resources will be our legacy to the next generation. As we join together, let us think globally, act locally. We can make a difference.

We need your help! Call us at 610 789-1814 to volunteer.

## **Quiz Helps in Making Better Environmental Choices**

How do you make environmentally sound choices at home and at work? You can find out by taking a fun and informative quiz that focuses on the environmental impacts of everyday activities. The two-part quiz, titled "Episode 2" The Pollution Menace," is available for viewing and downloading at the Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center's website. Try the Pollution Prevention at Home part at <http://www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/quizes/quiz99home.html>. Or check out the Pollution Prevention at Work part at <http://www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/quizes/quiz99work.html>.

Both parts have an automatic scoring feature. Lighthearted in tone, the quiz is a solid information resource that will help households and businesses make low-impact choices in purchasing and other activities. The Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center (PPRC) works collaboratively with business, government and other sectors to promote environmental protection through pollution prevention.

## **Haverford State Hospital Update**

The Haverford State Hospital Task Force is exploring options for funding and has filed a grant for the development of a feasibility study. The study would consider the advantages of using the site in a way that is consistent with the priorities expressed by the community in response to the township wide survey. Residents are in favor of preserving the open space.

Haverford Township Authority chairman, Fred Moran, says that the Authority will meet in February although no date has yet been announced.

## **Conservation Fund to Preserve Former Hospital Site Launched**

The Haverford State Hospital (HSH) Committee of the Haverford Civic Council has established a HSH Conservation Fund dedicated to support conservation of the existing natural lands at the Haverford State Hospital. Funds will be used for planning, acquisition, development of natural area access portals and nature trails, and maintenance of the conservation areas. The conservation effort may include some of the developed hospital grounds also if the projects are used to provide public access, construct an environmental education center, or create a "bridge" between the three currently separate natural areas.

The Civic Council has already committed to contribute \$500 to a Conservation Master Planning Project that will be funded primarily by Haverford Township and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

The Civic Council recognizes that nonprofit conservation organizations or government agencies may assume ownership or stewardship of the lands and will donate funds collected for purposes consistent with the above mission to entities it determines are qualified. While the Civic Council thinks it is unlikely, it also recognizes the possibility that efforts to secure preservation of the natural areas could fail and the Commonwealth could sell the property to a commercial developer. In that event, the Civic Council intends to use unrestricted funds for future new natural lands conservation efforts within Haverford Township. Donors may also designate restricted funds or pledges that will be used only for the above HSH site mission and not on other Haverford Township sites.

Please join in this community effort to preserve valuable property for ourselves, our children and future generations. The Haverford Township Civic Council is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization and all donations are tax deductible as charitable contributions. Please make checks payable to the HSH Conservation Fund and mail to the Haverford Township Civic Council, Post Office Box 1072, Havertown, PA 19083.

For more information, call Peter Puglionesi at 610 446-2145.

### In Memoriam

We are saddened by the recent death of Tom Birch of Drexel Hill, a resource analyst for the U.S. Forest Service and a leader of many conservation programs.

In addition to his work with the U.S. Forest Service, Tom taught teachers how to implement environmental programs in school with Project Learning Tree and helped to train grassroots groups, including members of the DCVA, to tackle environmental cleanup projects such as Trail Boss.

In 1996 he was awarded the Silver Beaver and in 1999 the Hornaday Gold Medal for his work in Boy Scouting. He also ran a program at Tyler Arboretum to educate high school students about environmental careers.

The DCVA is particularly grateful to Tom for his assistance in helping to develop our environmental education program. Tom was a special friend of the DCVA who will be greatly missed.

### Watershed Conference

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at new options for streambank restoration.

**D. Monitoring the Darby and Its Tributaries.** This workshop will examine the role of citizen monitoring and DEP's Assessment Monitoring Initiatives. It will also discuss the monitoring programs of DCVA and of the Philadelphia Water Department.

**E. Environmental Education.** This workshop will discuss educational programs available to enrich all ages.

Plan to come and attend the workshops of most interest to you. Preregistration is \$8; conference day registration is \$10. Lunch is included. Watch for more information to be mailed closer to the time of the conference.

**Visit DCVA's website at:**  
[www.libertynet.org/~dcva](http://www.libertynet.org/~dcva)

### Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Education Center Is Constructing a Permanent Home

Renovation of the old stables at 63rd and Catherine Streets in Philadelphia has started. When completed in October 2000, this building will be the permanent home of the Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Education Center (CCCEEC). The new building will contain meeting rooms, classrooms, administrative offices and exhibition space. A capital campaign continues to raise funds for other improvements.

The building's location in the Cobbs Creek valley will provide an ideal setting for the pursuit of environmental education. The programs of CCCEEC are designed to help community members establish a personal connection with the local ecology. The Center is working to strengthen environmental education in urban schools through hands-on activities, research and teacher training.

### PRC Constructs Environmental Driveway

In a project that was funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) has built a new driveway utilizing crumb rubber from waste tires. Rubber modified asphalt is an economically proven alternative to standard pavements. In general the increased flexibility of this asphalt reduces the occurrence of cracking and rutting, giving a life span that appears to be about double that of standard asphalts. This asphalt can also reduce the level of highway noise by as much as 75%.

The Waste Tire Grant from DEP was implemented to facilitate the development of markets for the reuse of scrap tire derived products. Currently there are 45 million scrap tires stockpiled in Pennsylvania and every year an additional 12 million tires are discarded.

The new driveway will be dedicated during PRC's Earth Day celebration on Saturday April 15th. PRC invites everyone to attend.

### Miscellany...

✓ Congratulations to Dave Cannon, board member and former vice president of DCVA, who was sworn in on January 3<sup>rd</sup> as a Radnor Township Commissioner after winning a hard fought campaign last November. Dave tells us that two major issues throughout the campaign were stormwater management and protection of open space. He has pledged to use a comprehensive watershed approach to address flooding problems in Radnor.

✓ This year the Annual Awards Dinner will be held in the fall. The new chairperson for the event is Carolyn Laws. She is looking for help. If you would like to serve on her committee, please call her at 610 259-0498.

✓ Currently the position of Corresponding Secretary is open. DCVA is looking for someone who has access to a computer and word processing software to help with organization correspondence and other typing. If you are interested, please call 610 789-1814.

✓ DCVA seeks a permanent home. Due to Hurricane Floyd's flooding and other factors, DCVA is forced to move. We are looking for a central location with heat, light and power. We need about 500 square feet but will take what is offered. Kitchen facilities are a plus. Anyone with ideas please contact Fritz Thornton at 610 789-1814.

✓ April is Local Environmental Stewardship Month; May is Historic Preservation Month. Both of these topics are dear to the hearts of DCVA members. Special events are being planned throughout the watershed. Municipalities are encouraged to pass proclamations for both months to increase local community awareness of the many options available for involvement and enjoyment.

✓ Adopt the Darby. DCVA is setting goals for our stream and bridge watch program. If interested in this program, call us at 610 789-1814.

✓ The Annual Darby Creek Cleanup will be Saturday, April 29th. Mark your calendar now. We will be working extra hard this spring to reverse the damage done by Hurricane Floyd. We need everyone's help!

## Stream Stabilization in Darby Borough

In October, 1998, DCVA received a mini-grant of \$500.00 from the Delaware County Conservation District for a streambank and erosion control and riparian planting project in a public park adjacent to Darby Creek in Darby Borough. The project is a demonstration effort using bioengineering technology.

A twenty foot BIO-D Log was purchased and installed at the base of the Creek. These logs, used to prevent erosion, are manufactured of coconut fiber and are wrapped in netting; they look like the trunk of a palm tree. A mat, purchased and donated by Darby Borough, was placed above the log. Then plants and trees were planted through the netting to create the riparian buffer on the streambank. The project was completed in August 1999.

The project survived two floods in September and then also survived Hurricane Floyd! Unfortunately the 3 to 1 angle of the bank established for the plantings was the most convenient location for the Darby Borough equipment to enter the stream to clean up damage from Floyd. Consequently the matting and the Bio-D log were badly damaged. However, Darby Borough has been granted a \$25,000 Watershed Conservation grant. It is hoped that some of this money can be used to repair the damage that was done.

Some of the plants did survive. George Ambrose, a teacher at Penn Wood West, has involved some of his students in repair and maintenance of the area since the flood. DCVA is planning to purchase a Bartram Oak or a River Birch to plant at the site in the spring.



*John Bowers (left) and Bill Frasch look over staked matting and BioLog at the stream stabilization project on Darby Creek in Darby Borough.*

## Friends of the Swedish Cabin to Host Pea Soup Supper

The Swedish Cabinaires (Friends of the Swedish Cabin) will host the annual Pea Soup Supper Benefit on Saturday, March 18, 2000, at St. John's Episcopal Church in Lansdowne, PA. Punch and "nibbles" will precede the supper at 5:30. At 6 "bottomless bowls" of authentic Swedish pea soup will be served accompanied by Swedish breads and cheese, dessert and coffee or tea.

A musical program featuring John and Jan Haigis will follow supper. Admission is still only \$10 per person, but advance reservations are required as seating is limited to the first 100 guests. The proceeds will benefit the Cabin Furnishing Fund. Reservations will close March 1<sup>st</sup>. To receive your reservation form, call Dave Anderson at 610 449-3577.

## Annual Meeting

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local agencies, providing information that forms the foundation for water-resources management and planning activities.

At the meeting, members of the board of directors will be elected. The nominating committee has recommended that the following be elected to the board for a 3 year term (incumbent directors running for re-election are noted with an asterisk):

- \*Anne Ackerman
- \*Joseph Ackerman
- \*Dave Cannan
- \*Bob Doherty
- \*John Haigis
- Judy Rice
- \*Fritz Thornton

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor. After the annual meeting, a short board meeting will be convened to elect officers for 2000. The nominating committee consists of Vicki Shaner, chair; Gila Hunt; Rosemary Kesling; Bob Shaner, and Grace Wheeler.

All members and interested watershed residents are encouraged to attend the meeting. Call 610 789-1814 with questions.

## Historic Sites Committee Developing New Educational Materials

Plans are underway for a brochure on the historic sites within the watershed and for a slide program which will be available for presentation to schools, civic organizations, and service groups. The theme is Celebrating the Heritage of the Darby Creek Watershed.

### FLOOD DAMAGE?

Think trees. 50 trees are available for riparian spring planting. Call Clyde Hunt at 610 449-9333.

## Conservation District Poster Contest

The Delaware County Conservation District (DCCD) has announced the 2000 Pennsylvania Conservation Districts Poster Contest theme: Water for Life.

Posters will be judged in the following age categories: K-1; 2-3; 4-6; 7-9; 10-12. For a complete list of the contest rules, contact Monica Starr at 610 892-9484. Posters will be due in the DCCD office by May 12, 2000. An awards ceremony will follow in early June.

The 1999 poster contest was quite successful with over 200 posters submitted. K-1 and 2-3 winners Dustin Colsher and Sam Spoor won the state competition in November with their posters titled, "In the Children's Hands." Their posters were sent to Texas for the national competition.

## Municipal News

### Radnor Township Includes Money for Storm Water Management in Budget

The 2000 budget for Radnor Township includes \$3.8 million for storm water management projects. This is more than double the amount that was suggested by township staff in September for the original budget. It is expected that the projects will focus primarily on the watersheds of the township's creeks: Ithan, Little Darby and Gulph. The first two are tributaries of Darby Creek. One impetus for the projects is flooding problems in the township, especially at the Radnor Middle School in Wayne, which is in the Darby Creek Watershed. Exact projects, however, will not be decided until after a township storm water management plan is completed in March.

### Another 150 Acres of Open Space in the Watershed May Be Sold for Development

The December 16, 1999, issue of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* reported that the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is planning to sell about 150 acres of vacant land in Marple Township. The land in question includes hilly wooded land in back of Cardinal O'Hara High School and Don Guanella School. The property, which is adjacent to Darby Creek, is currently zoned residential and is considered to be worth \$150 million. Marple Township officials expressed surprise at the Archdiocese's proposal. However, Board of Commissioners President, Bob Jordan, was quoted as saying that the sale "would be super for taxpayers" as it would mean \$366,000 per year in taxes to the township and \$1.5 million to the school district. DCVA will be monitoring this situation.

### Audubon Bird Count

By Bill Buchanan

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the rush of the last weekend of holiday shoppers you may have noticed others who were driving around the area, making quick stops, with binoculars and spotting scopes in action. What were they doing? They were counting birds! Saturday, December 18, 1999, was the 78<sup>th</sup> annual Delaware County Christmas Bird Count, part of the larger International 100<sup>th</sup> National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. It is one of the longest running continuous database studies of its type to see, or hear, what species of birds can be counted within a specific geographic area for each region. It occurs on different days throughout North America, Bermuda, the West Indies and various Pacific Islands from mid-December to the beginning of January.

About 55 birders were out and about before dawn on Saturday morning, listening and looking for owls first off and then the more diurnal species as the day wore on. The count is done within a circle 15 miles in diameter with the center being Wallingford.

There were 102 species counted this year. Among some of the more interesting or rare finds was a raven seen at Ridley Creek State Park. These large, close relatives of crows are normally found in the farther reaches of the state. Other species found included Great Horned, Screech and Saw-Whet Owls, as well as a Long-Eared Owl.

Down around the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum and along the Delaware River such species as Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Goshawk were spotted. Among some of the smaller species were Palm, Orange-Crowned and Nashville Warblers.

The complete results of all the counts will be published later this year by National Audubon and will continue to add to the ever growing pool of information about the trends that happen in the avian world. The results very often can be used as an indicator of the health of the environment throughout the hemisphere as most species do migrate and their numbers will often tell when something is happening to affect their respective summer and winter territories.

### Darby Creek Watershed Course to be Part of Elderweek 2000

A course on the Darby Creek watershed will be presented at 2000 ElderWeek at the Delaware County Community College April 17-20<sup>th</sup>. DCVA board member Anne Ackerman will teach the course titled "From Daylesford to the Delaware—Getting to Know the Darby Creek Watershed." The workshop will focus on the role of the individual as a steward of our environment using the Darby Creek Watershed as an example. Participants will explore the rich heritage of the Darby Creek watershed, the challenges of stewardship, and the opportunities available for involvement.

### Upcoming Conferences

The fourth annual **Keystone Coldwater Conference: A Primer on Instream Habitat** will be held February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2000, at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College. The objective of the conference is to inform individuals from grassroots groups, including watershed organizations, about formation and conservation of instream coldwater habitat. The cost of the conference is \$20. Call 814 863-5100 for information or use the Internet at [www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/coldwaterconservation](http://www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/coldwaterconservation).

**A Citizens' Volunteer Monitoring Clinic** will be held in our area on March 11, 2000, at the Stroud Water Research Center in Avondale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The clinic costs \$10, which includes lunch. The clinic, sponsored by PADEP, Canaan Valley Institute, River Network, Stroud Water Research Center, and Alliance for Aquatic Resources Monitoring, will help attendees design a monitoring program. There will be two tracks, one for first time participants, and one for groups with experience.

Attendance is limited to the first 15 groups that sign up. Each group can bring up to three people. For more information, contact the Canaan Valley Institute at 888 549-7640.

## Growing Greener Legislation Signed by Governor

On December 15, 1999, Governor Ridge signed into law a \$646 million five-year Growing Greener program. It was a bill promoted by Ridge although it had been modified from his original proposal. Originally the bill was to be funded by redirecting \$425 million from other state environmental programs, a proposal that proved to be very controversial. The final compromise bill has \$473 million of new money in it though it still uses \$173 million from existing recycling, hazardous site cleanup and landfill closure funds. The bill does not have any dedicated funding source so the money will be subject to the political wrangling of the state budget process every year.

The bill includes \$100 million for farmland preservation; \$154 million for infrastructure improvements at state and local parks; \$239 million for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to clean up mines, plug oil and gas wells, and award grants for local water and wastewater treatment projects; and \$152 million for the PennVest program to fund grants for drinking water, stormwater and sewer infrastructure projects.

Critics of the law say that much more money is needed for environmental programs and that the law is mostly just a promise since it lacks dedicated funding. They are also disappointed that the compromise bill eliminated monies to fund programs for urban revitalization, historic preservation, and libraries and museums.

## Growing Greener Grants Available

On January 4th, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania began accepting applications for grants for watershed restoration and protection as authorized by the Growing Greener initiative. For this first round the state would like to see applications for on-the-ground projects like planting stream buffers, fencing streams, restoring wetlands, watershed assessments and education programs. The state will be giving priority to groups who sponsor several projects in their watershed in a coordinated manner.

The deadline for grant applications is February 11, 2000. To get an application, apply online or get more information, visit DEP's website at <http://www.dep.state.pa.us> (choose Growing Greener Grants Center). An on-line discussion board also will be available on DEP's website to help answer questions. Application packets can be requested by sending your name, postal address and phone number by e-mail to [GrowingGreener@dep.state.pa.us](mailto:GrowingGreener@dep.state.pa.us) or by calling toll-free 877 PAGREEN.

## EPA Wants Philadelphia to Make Bigger Pollution Cuts



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999, that it is proposing to take action on state plans to control ground-level ozone for 10 major urban areas, including Philadelphia. EPA said Pennsylvania needs to revise its air quality plan for the five-county Philadelphia area to include additional measures for reducing ozone-causing pollution and must submit a revised plan by October 2001.

EPA said that the four-state Philadelphia area needs to reduce its emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by an additional 62 tons per day and its emissions of nitrogen oxides by an additional 3 tons per day in order to meet the one-hour ozone standard.

PA DEP insists that Pennsylvania is committed to reducing pollution in the Philadelphia area and is already doing its fair share. Pennsylvania has adopted significant control measures in the Philadelphia area over the last 5 years—auto emissions testing, nitrogen oxide reductions at power plants, and new auto refinishing requirements—to reduce our contribution to the regional ozone problem. Pennsylvania is working on other strategies recommended by special stakeholder groups from Philadelphia and surrounding areas.

“But Pennsylvania can’t meet the ozone health standard by our actions alone,” said DEP Secretary James M. Seif. “EPA needs to reduce the transport of nitrogen oxides into Pennsylvania from coal-fired electric utilities and industrial boilers in Midwestern and Southern states. EPA also needs to put in place new standards for cleaner cars and gasoline.”

The other urban areas EPA is targeting for further reductions are Atlanta, Greater Connecticut (Hartford), Washington D.C., Western Massachusetts (Springfield), Baltimore, Chicago, Houston, Milwaukee and New York City.

For more information on EPA's proposed action, visit EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/airlinks](http://www.epa.gov/airlinks) or [www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/ramain.html](http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/ramain.html).

## PA Senate Passes Bill to Curb Sprawl

In December the Pennsylvania Senate approved legislation that would give municipalities some power to stop unwanted development. It encourages individual municipalities to work together, allowing regional planning for zoning purposes. Currently state law requires that every municipality must provide for every conceivable land use. The new bill allows various development types to be spread over a regional area with legal protection against developers' claims of exclusionary practices.

Environmental groups are happy to have gotten this first step even though they are disappointed that builders were successful in eliminating a provision from the bill that would have allowed municipalities to block development until roads, storm management systems and other infrastructure were already in place.

The bill must now be considered by the House.

## Dump the Delaware Deepening

By Maya K. van Rossum, Delaware Riverkeeper

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (the "Corps") and the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) are proposing to deepen the Delaware River's shipping channel from 40 to 45 feet for 102 miles from Philadelphia/Camden to the sea. The \$300 million project poses serious threats to the Delaware River system including the human, aquatic and wildlife communities it supports, and it will not have the economic benefits the Corps is claiming.

The Deepening Project poses a number of environmental threats to drinking water, aquatic species, wildlife and threats of toxic contamination. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network in partnership with the Sierra Club (New Jersey and Delaware Chapters), Delaware Wildlands and 20 other civic, environmental and health organizations from throughout the region have joined forces as the Alliance to Dump the Delaware Deepening in order to challenge this project and raise awareness about the environmental impacts and economic losses it represents.

The Deepening Project poses a serious threat to our environment and communities. Independent review has shown that the Corps' data masked toxic "hot spots" which will be hit by the project. Muck pulled from the River bottom will go to 8 existing and 4 new disposal sites along the River, most in NJ, subjecting some communities to 75-foot-high dredge spoil piles. Two currently used dredge spoil disposal facilities already discharge copper, cadmium, lead, zinc, PCBs and DDX to the River. The Corps has failed to consider the toxic impacts to wildlife that will inevitably visit the disposal areas.

Plans to import dredge spoils from outside the region (from areas like New York where spoils are highly toxic) and dumping them along the Delaware to help pay for the project appear to continue moving forward despite DRPA claims to the contrary. And the Corps continues to refuse to study the toxic impacts of deepening private side channels which must also be dredged for the project to be useful.

Confined disposal facilities may threaten drinking water supplies with toxic contamination. According to scientists, toxins from the confined disposal facilities may leach through the soil, polluting groundwater supplies below. Further study is needed to confirm the existence of this risk — studies the Corps will not be undertaking before the project goes forward.

Representations by the Corps that confined disposal facilities will quickly become pristine wildlife areas are unsubstantiated. The Corps plans to use the disposal facilities for at least 50 years, disturbing and redisturbing them every three years with spoils mounting up to 75 feet high. There will be little opportunity for pristine wildlife refuges.

The deepening project threatens New Jersey's recovering oyster populations with a moving salt line that can bring with it predators such as MSX and dermo, and with sediment which will cover oyster seed beds smothering spat, preventing the setting of spat, and/or smothering viable oyster populations.

Other threats glossed over by the Corps include threats to the River's federally endangered short-nosed sturgeon; salt water intrusion to drinking water supplies; blasting that could threaten drinking water aquifers; and impacts to wetlands and wildlife.

Economically the project also doesn't make sense. According to the Corps, over 80% of the benefit from the Deepening Project will accrue to six oil facilities — lowering operating costs, thereby increasing their profit margin. None of the oil companies are being asked to contribute anything to the taxpayer funded project. Worse, none of the oil companies have committed to spending the \$20 to \$50 million they would have to spend to deepen their private channels and berths in order to take advantage of the project. One oil company is on record saying "they see no advantage to a 45 foot deepening at their facility at this time and the tanker berths will remain 'as is'."

The DRPA claims the dredging is needed to keep the Delaware River ports competitive with other East Coast ports by accommodating new deep draft ships. The truth is these ships need at least a 50-foot channel. Forty-five feet simply won't do it. And according to consultants hired by the DRPA for a 1996 study, the new mega container ships will choose only one East Coast hub port — one with special new multi-million-dollar piers and rail terminals. Philadelphia/Camden — 100 miles up river from the sea — is not in the running for many reasons having nothing to do with the channel.

According to DRPA's own consultants, at 40 feet the Delaware ports "can accommodate the majority of the existing and newly-constructed container ships that are in service today and for the foreseeable future." These consultants go on to state, "The growing importance of feeder ports is a role that is emerging for the ports of Philadelphia and Camden. The vessels that are becoming available for the feeder trade require less than 40 foot draft."

To learn how you can get involved or to join the Alliance to Dump the Deepening, contact the Delaware Riverkeeper Maya van Rossum at 215-369-1188.

*The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is dedicated to protecting and restoring the Delaware River, its tributaries and habitats by empowering citizens to take a more active role in protecting the creeks and streams that flow through their neighborhoods. Operating on the belief that the best line of defense against unwise resource management is often at the local level, Riverkeeper provides organizing, training, information, and support for concerned citizens. Volunteers are given the opportunity to participate in a full program of citizen action, water quality monitoring, and restoration projects. When necessary, Riverkeeper initiates legal action to protect water quality, usually in partnership with the Environmental Law Clinic at Widener University's Law School. Established in 1988, Riverkeeper, an affiliate of the American Littoral Society, works throughout the entire Delaware Watershed which includes portions of NY, NJ, PA and DE. Riverkeeper raises all funds necessary for its own operations and programs. You can contact the Riverkeeper Network by calling 215-369-1188, writing P.O. Box 326, Washington Crossing, PA 18977, or visiting its web site at [delawariverkeeper.org](http://delawariverkeeper.org).*

## DCNR Grant Focus of November General Membership Meeting



Left to right, Ed Ambrogio, DCVA Member; Ann Smith, Pennsylvania Environmental Council; and Karen Holm, Delaware County Planning Department; at November general membership meeting.

Hurricane Floyd and its devastating effects have heightened our awareness of the need to develop both an environmental and a storm water management plan for the Darby Creek Watershed. The DCNR Grant was awarded to DCVA to develop a watershed management plan. Since the grant was awarded, it has come to light that other governmental agencies are also working on developing plans for the watershed. At our general meeting in November, representatives from the Darby-Cobbs Watershed Initiative and the Delaware County Planning Department spoke about their programs and the way in which all interested groups are dovetailing their efforts to develop and implement these projects.

Ann Smith briefly reviewed the various members of the Darby Cobbs Partnership. (For details, see the enclosed brochure.) Each initiative will continue to function on its own but will partner through the Darby Cobbs Initiative to combine resources and avoid duplication of efforts. As an example, DEP, the Philadelphia Water Department and the DCVA are monitoring the Darby Creek for water quality. The DCVA monitoring will continue as an educational program and results will be compared with the Philadelphia Water Department's data. DCVA is represented in the partnership and individuals may attend any open meetings. If you are interested, call the Partnership at 215 563-0250 for dates and times.

Karen Holm, from the Delaware County Planning Department, who is responsible for the Storm Water Management Plan for the Darby Creek discussed the status of the plan. The plan is in Phase I which involves developing and understanding the characteristics of the watershed and identification of key problem areas. Karen indicated that the Darby Watershed Plan is especially challenging because the Darby Creek is highly urbanized, unlike other local creeks for which plans have already been developed.

Anne Ackerman reported on the DCVA's Rivers Conservation Grant. The grant goal is to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for the Darby Creek watershed. The grant joins 31 municipalities and 4 counties!

These presentations were followed by discussion that focused on development along the creek and the inability of the county to control municipalities. Future legislation will only impact future development along the creek. There is growing concern that developers will push planned projects forward prior to the enactment of the law.

## Update on the DCEN Environmental Resource Guide Is Available on the Internet

If you are interested in helping to update the DCEN's (Delaware County Environmental Network) Guide, call Monica Starr at 610 892-9484. The DCVA is a founding member of the DCEN, a volunteer network serving Delaware County.

### DCVA welcomes the following new members:

John Amadio  
Albertine Falkenhain  
Elmer Funk  
Meg & Scott Hessen  
Joan Staples

### President's Pen

*Continued from page 1:*

run-away building. They don't have it now. Until these 2 things happen we cannot function as "Stewards of Penn's Woods" which we have "borrowed from our children." Governor Ridge says, "Preventing pollution and conserving resources are fundamental to preserving the environment for future generations." I say "Amen" to Governor Ridge. Now let's make sure we follow through.

*Fritz Thornton*

## The Valley

The Valley is published by DCVA (Darby Creek Valley Association), P.O. Box 732, Drexel Hill, PA 19026. Website: [www.libertynet.org/~dcva](http://www.libertynet.org/~dcva). A regional citizen's organization, DCVA works to protect and enhance the Darby Creek watershed. Articles for this newsletter were written by Anne Ackerman, Dave Anderson, Bill Buchanan, David Cannan, Bill Frasc, Rosemary Kesling, Fritz Thornton, Olga Thornton, and Maya van Rossum. Photographs by Bill Buchanan and Olga Thornton. Edited by Rosemary Kesling. ♻️ Printed on recycled paper. © 2000.



### Flood Damage at Heinz Refuge

--Continued from page 3

Further down the trail the popular boardwalk was ripped apart with about a third still anchored on the east side of the impoundment with the west end being crumpled up like a child's toy and another section finding its way to the other end of the impoundment down by Bartram Avenue along the Trolley Bed Trail.

The dike itself was breached with a gaping trench in it just immediately past the water control structure as water ebbed and flowed due to the tidal changes of Darby Creek.

On the day after the flood itself there was a distinct odor in the air of petroleum products mixed with the stench of raw sewage. As it turned out the storm had absolutely pulverized the Sunoco Oil Tank Farm directly across Darby Creek from the refuge (opposite the canoe launch). The water retention ponds of the tank farm, as well as a settling pond, were flooded, hence totally overwhelming the flood pumps. This, no doubt gave off the fuel smell while both the Delcora Pump Station (just downstream from the Tank Farm) was flooded and up in Colwyn over 60 port-a-potties were pulled from their anchorage to ride the flood ravaged waters of Darby Creek.

Add to this were downed trees, flooded out trails and general chaos from Darby to Tinicum. This was the scene left by Hurricane Floyd which deposited the largest amount of rain to fall within a 24 hour period in the greater Philadel-

phia area since records have been kept.

The refuge was closed for a week. Once an assessment of the damage at the refuge was done, staff began to do all it could to clear trails of trees and debris, shore up the dike, locate and remove larger items and assist private contractors from EPA and other entities in locating and removing chemical drums and port-a-potties. Later the staff was joined by volunteers, including community service, Friends of Heinz Refuge "Trail Tamers" and National Public Lands Day volunteers in doing all they could to help begin the healing process at the refuge.

According to refuge manager, Dick Nugent, an estimated \$670,000 in damages had been dealt to Tinicum. Nugent points out that it will take time to see things come back to normal, if indeed they do completely. Most trails at the Refuge are now walkable again, however, and efforts continue to restore the area.

One of the high points through all of this was the fact that further downstream, in Tinicum Township, the flooding was not as bad as upstream in places like Darby and Colwyn. This can be attributed to the fact that even though the refuge is just a remnant of its once grand sweeping acreage (6,000 acres), the remaining wetlands of Tinicum Marsh did their job. They slowly absorbed the deluge of water from upstream and reduced both the velocity and strength of this powerful storm. It is a testimony to the importance of preserving what precious little is left of places like the Refuge.

### JOIN THE DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION TODAY!

The Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA) is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of all of the watershed's resources, including water, wildlife, historical sites and the floodplain. The organization's immediate goals are to prevent all forms of pollution in the Darby Creek and its tributaries, to prohibit dumping and construction on the floodplain, and to expand our educational programs for all residents within the watershed. It also seeks to improve water quality and maintain a debris-free stream through clean-ups and public education. DCVA works to preserve historic properties, such as the Swedish Cabin and the Blue Bell Inn. The Association would like to set aside the more than 30 miles of valley for use as a greenway for all residents to enjoy. We need your support. Help us continue to protect our watershed for ourselves and our children.

**We invite you to fill in the form below, check member category, and mail form with your check to:  
The Darby Creek Valley Association, P.O. Box 732, Drexel Hill PA 19026**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Your Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Representative (if organization member) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership:

- Individual Member.....\$10.00
- Family Member .....\$15.00
- Senior Citizen .....\$5.00
- Student Member.....\$5.00
- Organization Member .....\$20.00
- Life Member .....\$100.00

To support the many DCVA projects, I would like to make a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in addition to my dues.

# CALENDAR

Saturday, January 22	DCVA Annual Meeting, Springfield Quaker Meeting, Springfield 9 a.m.
Saturday, February 19	DCVA Board Meeting. 9 a.m. Place to be announced.
Saturday, March 4	Annual DCVA Conference, St. John's Episcopal Church, Lansdowne 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 18	DCVA Board Meeting. 9 a.m. Place to be announced.
Saturday, March 18	Pea Soup Supper, Sponsored by Friends of the Swedish Cabin St. John's Episcopal Church, Lansdowne. 5:30 p.m.
Month of April	Local Environmental Stewardship Month
Saturday, April 15	DCVA Board Meeting. 9 a.m. Place to be announced.
Saturday, April 15	Celebration of Earth Day at the Pennsylvania Resources Council 3606 Providence Road, Newtown Square. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday, April 29	Annual Darby Creek Clean Up. From the Headwaters to the Delaware. 9 a.m.
Sunday, April 29	Annual Celebration of Arbor Day throughout the Watershed
Month of May	Historic Preservation Month: Special Events focusing on the Heritage of the Darby Creek Watershed

**Darby Creek Valley Association**  
**P.O. Box 732**  
**Drexel Hill, PA 19026**

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