



National Wild & Scenic Rivers
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Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers 101 Workshops

Staff of the National Park Service (NPS) Northeast Region, National Wild & Scenic Rivers, sponsored and facilitated an orientation to Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers in April, 2013 at three different locations. The series of four-hour workshops was designed to provide the agency's Wild & Scenic River partners with a basic understanding of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, the study and designation process, and the River Management Plans. The workshops also provided an overview of Sections 7 and 10 of the Act which relate to the NPS and other agency roles in a regulatory setting.

Each workshop session was tailored to some extent to the concerns of individual rivers, including river resource protection and management issues, but also gave a general orientation to Wild & Scenic Rivers. Participants were free to attend any one of the three sessions that was most convenient and relevant to their interests. Workshops were designed to be held at different times of the day and evening to attract greater municipal participation, and refreshments were provided by local NPS partners.

Session #1 on April 10, 2013 was held from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Carvel State Building in downtown Wilmington, Delaware. Light refreshments and community outreach were provided by White Clay Watershed Association. This workshop served the information needs of nonprofit, local government, and state and federal agencies focused on the White Clay Creek, Great Egg Harbor, and Maurice River National Wild & Scenic Rivers. The 27 participants included the White Clay Creek Management Plan Coordinator; representatives of London Britain and London Grove townships in Chester County, PA; Delaware and Pennsylvania departments of transportation; City of Newark, Delaware Parks & Recreation; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia and Baltimore districts; representatives of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association and River Council in southern New Jersey; representatives of Citizens United for the Maurice River (NJ); Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control; Chester County Conservation District; Delaware State Historic Preservation Office; Natural Lands Trust; the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program; and Delaware Senator Chris Coons' office.

The discussions during Session #1, and subsequent sessions, largely centered on the role of NPS and the specifics of the project evaluation process under Section 7(a) of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. Participants asked:

- 1) Should a proposed project on an undesignated tributary to a designated tributary be reviewed by NPS (A. NPS must be alerted to the project and should have the opportunity to review it.), and should maintenance projects be reviewed (A. Generally not.)?
- 2) Is the NPS Section 7 determination strictly advisory? (A. No. The permitting agency may not issue the permit without a determination from NPS of no direct and adverse effect.)
- 3) Since White Clay Creek is designated as a watershed, are Section 7 reviews just within the designated corridor boundary of 250 ft. on either side of the creek, or do these reviews encompass the entire watershed? (A. Section 7 reviews look at impacts from "water resources projects" that are proposed for the bed and banks of the designated creek and its tributaries.)

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Session #2 on April 11, 2013 was held from 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. at the Wayne Dumont Jr.

Administration Building in Belvidere, New Jersey. Dinner and logistical support was provided by the Martins Jacoby Watershed Association and Warren County, New Jersey. The focus of Session #2 was on the localities situated on the north end of the Lower Delaware National Wild & Scenic River (Phillipsburg, NJ north to the Delaware Water Gap), and the Musconetcong National Wild & Scenic River, a major tributary to the Lower Delaware in northern New Jersey. The 19 participants included several representatives of the Musconetcong River Management Council and Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA); representatives of Lower and Upper Mount Bethel townships, PA; US Army Corps of Engineers; New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; Martins-Jacoby Watershed Association; Warren County, NJ Planning Department; representatives of Washington, Mount Olive, Bethlehem and Lebanon townships and Hampton in New Jersey (also MWA representatives); and Northampton County, PA Parks and Recreation Department.

Session #3 on April 12, 2013 was held from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Solebury Township Municipal Building in Solebury, Pennsylvania. Refreshments and logistical support were provided by Natural Lands Trust. The focus of Session #3 was on the municipalities situated on the south end of the Lower Delaware National Wild & Scenic River, from Easton, Pennsylvania to Washington Crossing State Park in New Jersey. The 38 participants included Delaware River Basin Commission; Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; Bucks County Conservation District; New Jersey and Pennsylvania departments of environmental protection; Delaware & Raritan Canal; U.S Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District; Delaware Riverkeeper Network; Tinicum Creek Watershed Association; representatives of Tinicum, New Hope, and Solebury townships and Point Pleasant, Pennsylvania; Hopewell Township, New Jersey, including its Environmental Advisory Committee; Kingwood Township, New Jersey; Stockton Borough (NJ) Planning Board; Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Hunterdon Land Trust; Natural Lands Trust; Tidewaters Gateway Partnership, Inc.; and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

A broad variety of questions were raised and comments offered during sessions #2 and #3:

- 1) How do you address the negative impacts of hydrofracking on the Delaware River (both discharges and withdrawals)? What is the role of NPS and DRBC? How can we protect scenic views?
- 2) Will the Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic Management Committee oppose the cutting of sycamore trees on Bull's Island? These trees withstood Hurricane Sandy and anchored the soil, preventing erosion. They are nesting habitat for several species of rare, threatened and endangered birds. Bull's Island's northern section should be a natural area similar to the southern portion and the campground should be situated elsewhere, possibly across Route 29.
- 3) What part, if any, did the Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic Management Committee play in the decision to permit the expansion of the Susquehanna Roseland power line?
- 4) If a project on the Delaware River is involved in a lawsuit, does NPS wish to be informed early, or wait until the project applies for a federal permit? Perhaps wait until after the lawsuit?
- 5) If New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is reviewing an application for a sewage permit (and since the NJ DEP permit requirements were first developed in response to the federal Clean Water Act), is the NJ DEP permit actually a federal application?
- 6) Wild & Scenic was originally promoted as a means to advocate for river and resource protection. It seems there are real teeth in the law, but are those teeth limited to projects that involve the expenditure of federal funds?
- 7) Concerns were raised about the replacement of historic bridges in Tinicum Township.
- 8) What is the most effective way to address impacts of recreational tubing/boating on the Delaware River (specific concerns were noted regarding the operations of Delaware River Tubing)?

- 9) How do specific river management plans for designated tributaries of the Lower Delaware relate to the overall Lower Delaware National Wild & Scenic River Management Plan? Does NPS refer to these local plans when conducting its Section 7 reviews?

All participants were provided with the following handouts for future reference and to stimulate discussions:

- 1) Powerpoint presentation on National Wild & Scenic Rivers System and Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers
- 2) Federal Register guidelines for eligibility, classification and management of Wild & Scenic Rivers (Sept.7, 1982)
- 3) The Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-542, as amended)
- 4) Wild & Scenic Rivers questions and answers booklet

The documents identified above will be placed on NPS partners web sites for all participants (and those unable to attend the workshops) to download. In addition, NPS displayed examples of river study reports, river management plans, and authorizing legislation for all of the rivers represented at the workshops, and distributed NPS unigrid brochures for many of the rivers. The Delaware River Basin Values Report was distributed to participants of the two Lower Delaware sessions.

Feedback from the workshop participants indicates that they felt the session discussions and handouts were very informative and met their needs. NPS will follow up with its nonprofit partners and river councils/management committees for additional feedback and to identify next steps in community and municipal outreach.