



SUMMER 2020

Friends
of the
Delaware
Canal

Canal News

The Locktender's House
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Our Mission

The Friends of the Delaware Canal is an independent, non-profit organization working to restore, preserve, and improve the Delaware Canal and its surroundings.

Our primary goals are to ensure that the Canal is fully watered from Easton to Bristol and the towpath trail is useable over its entire length.

We embrace this mission in order to sustain a unique link to our heritage, protect beautiful and diverse natural areas, provide recreational and educational opportunities, and enable the Canal to serve as a community and economic asset.

Another Camelback Bridge Project Crossed Off the To-Do List



Work in progress at the Thompson-Neely Camelback Bridge.

Extensive repair work on the historic camelback bridge that crosses the Delaware Canal in the northern section of Washington Crossing Historic Park has been completed. To preserve one the canal's most iconic and well-used structures, the Friends raised \$78,000 in private contributions to fund the project. **Thank you!**

The work was completed by camelback bridge restoration expert Randall Myer of R-Shell Exteriors, Lancaster, PA. Myer and his assistant Jane Martin arrived on site in late January. The weather was cooperative, but the pandemic wasn't. They were drawn off

the job by the COVID-19 restrictions, and then returned to the project in May when construction activities were allowed.

After elevating, then stabilizing the bridge on cribbing, the main floor beams, posts, cross bracing, X braces, roof boards, and many deck boards were replaced with appropriate timber. The bridge then received its coatings of signature barn red stain. The final inspection by representatives from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Friends took place on June 3.

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OUR BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

Learn more about these Friends. Click on their links at www.fodc.org.

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Yardley Borough
Yoga Love Studio, Yardley



Camelback Bridge Project *continued*

The Thompson-Neely Camelback Bridge is one of only six along the 58.9-mile-long canal that still retains its authentic structure. The camelback design was used on the Delaware Canal because it has a slight hump in the middle allowing clear passage of canal boats underneath. Today they are picturesque and useful reminders of the canal's colorful past.

The Friends of the Delaware Canal's quest to restore and preserve the six remaining camelbacks began in 2002. Since then, five of the six have been restored. Their quest continues.

Friends' volunteers undertake maintenance projects each year to keep the already restored bridges in good condition. The Upper Black Eddy Ready Response Team (UBERRT)

will be restoring Hazzard's Camelback Bridge this summer, and the Canal Action Team (CAT) will be applying their stain brushes to the Goat Farm Camelback Bridge, as well as cutting back vegetation that tries its best to engulf the bridge approaches.

The sixth bridge, Spahr's Camelback Bridge in Upper Black Eddy, is a victim of earthquake damage and extensive deterioration. Its restoration is a major undertaking and remains a goal.

We are very grateful to the many generous contributors to this project, who love the camelback bridges and ensure their preservation. With special thanks to the Goodfellow Fund, Judy and Joe Franlin, Barbara and Peter Sperry, and Susan Taylor.



At the final inspection of the Thompson-Neely Camelback Bridge (from left) – Jane Martin and Randall Myer from R-Shell Exteriors, Bethany Hare, Delaware Canal State Park Assistant Manager; Eugene Gelfand, consulting engineer to DCNR; and Susan Taylor, Friends of the Delaware Canal.

PARK MANAGER'S REPORT

By Devin Buzard

As you may have already gleaned from other articles in this issue of *Canal News*, we are nearing a predictable end to several large-scale construction projects along the northern end of the Canal.

These much needed replacements and repairs necessitated the dewatering of the Canal. The bypass gate that feeds Lehigh River water into the Canal was closed last fall. The waterway is essentially without water, but when it can be found in sporadic stretches, its source is stormwater runoff or local streams that flow directly into the Canal.

While there have been setbacks with recent events and the temporary cessation of some work, I am still optimistic that we will be able to introduce water once again as early as August.

As spring transitions into summer, I am finding it is difficult to predict what the next few months will bring. You will see an increase in boom mowing (long reach) along the banks as summer continues. We recently replaced this critical piece of machinery that was lost to a roll-over accident last year.

And, despite being faced with so much recent uncertainty, I have been inspired to see that the good

work of the Friends has not faltered over the past few months. Most notably, I witnessed the fulfillment of a primary mission of the Friends—the restoration of an authentic camelback bridge in the skilled hands of an expert craftsman.

While there could be no large ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Thompson-Neely Camelback Bridge when the project was completed, I know that one would have been well-attended. A repair of this scale only exists with many supporters. I appreciate the Friend's commitment to preserving our historic structures and proud to know that this bridge will go on to bear the footsteps of future generations.

Out on the towpath, I am sure you have noticed the increase in visitation and may have even personally witnessed a new user, who is still unfamiliar with trail etiquette. While the increase in traffic may at times be frustrating, it is important to remember that this influx of recreational users truly indicates the importance of our public lands that you, as Friends of the Delaware Canal, already know and support. While this trend in visitation may not last forever, it is my hope that the appreciation for places like the Delaware Canal will not fade.

The Friends heartily thank all
the Delaware Canal State Park staff
for keeping the towpath and waterway open
during these extremely challenging times!

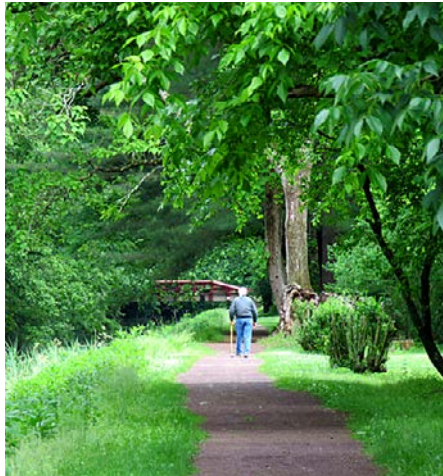
BUTTON, BUTTON *THE FRIENDS HAVE A BUTTON*

You can get yours **absolutely free** at the Locktender's House in New Hope or at a Friends' event. Many thanks to Board member Jeff Connell for being our button benefactor!



Calendar of Events

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Always open.

COVID-19 has sucked the certainty out of the Friends' plans for 2020. You already know more than you'd like about the hazards of gathering in groups and being in enclosed spaces, so we won't belabor the reasons why our organization has decided to cancel some of our traditional events and reconfigure others.

The Friends of the Delaware Canal is a Pennsylvania State Parks friends organization. As such, we must and want to comply with the directives that are issued by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Those directives are based on the Center for Disease Control and Department of Health guidelines.

When you receive this newsletter, the Counties of Bucks and Northampton may be in the Green Phase, "the new normal." At this point, the Friends' "new normal" means that we will plan on having walks, but the number of participants will be limited to 20 people, who will social distance and wear masks. Reservations will be required. And, yes, we will have a sound amplification system, so there won't be the need to huddle together to hear.

Canal Action Team (CAT) projects, such as bridge painting and vegetation removal, will go forward with precautions in place. The number of volunteers on each project will be

limited to five, the work will take place outdoors, and no contact with the general public made.

We would dearly love to take on some small group clean-up activities to make up for missing the Friends' annual Canal Clean-Up Day, but there is just too much poison ivy growing on the banks to risk it. (And now you know why our annual clean-up is scheduled in very early April.)

Later this year, it may be possible to have some programs, such as photo shows or presentations by speakers, but it will depend upon how well COVID-19 is tamed. Plans are being made for virtual alternates, if need be.

We will not be having our *Paddle the Canal* events in partnership with the State Park Educators this summer and fall. The need to sanitize the kayaks, paddles, and PFDs and be in close proximity during instruction and launching has ruled paddling out.

Our practice of carpooling people from the starting and finishing points of the Friends' annual 58.9-mile-long Canal Walk has complicated the decision about whether or not the Walk will be held this year.

Unfortunately, *Faces and Places—A Celebration of the Arts and History Along the Delaware Canal* has been cancelled. Nearly all of the event arrangements for the Friends' major fundraiser must be made well in advance, so the cancellation became inevitable. Plans are already underway for Faces and Places 2021.

Meanwhile, as the way forward becomes clear, we will let you know the what, where, and whens about upcoming activities. If you've provided your e-mail address, you will receive announcements via Constant Contact. The events will be posted on the www.fodc.org and listed on the Friends' Facebook page.

It's been very strange to be without events and activities since early March. We very much miss seeing you, and hope to be able to change that, at least somewhat, soon.

SMILING AT THE LOCKTENDER'S HOUSE



Susan Schneider's expression can't be seen behind her mask, but a painted stone, hid by a kind someone nearby, makes it clear that there's a smile under there.

Even though the interior of the little museum at Locktender's House at Lock 11 in New Hope is currently closed to visitors because of the COVID-19 restrictions, the Friends are still sharing the Canal's stories.

On weekends, Susan Schneider, our Locktender's House guide, sits on the front porch. Decked out in her long skirt, homespun blouse, and mask, she has been greeting visitors and providing them with information about the many aspects of the towpath and waterway.



The Construction Countdown

3 – 2 – 1 – Done



The chamber at Groundhog Lock awaits its new drop gate.

Completion is in sight for three major Canal construction projects. (Please knock on wood. This is no time to jinx anything.)

The northern end of the Canal from Easton to New Hope has been essentially dewatered since last fall. The bypass gate that supplies water from the Lehigh River was closed to allow work to begin on three projects during the winter/early spring. The timing of the dewatering was dictated by the restrictions concerning the habitat of the red belly turtle, a PA threatened species.

The three projects are:

- The replacement of the northern drop gate on Groundhog Lock aka Locks 22/23 in Raubsville
- The replacement of the Fry's Run aka Kleinhans Aqueduct in Williams Township
- The repair of the berm bank blowout and structural damage at the Tinicum Aqueduct (The steel trough that conveys water over Tinicum Creek is not being replaced as part of this project.)

The first estimate for the completion of the three projects was May 2020, but then came the obstacles. Access agreement issues, problems with bids, a tree falling on a big piece of equipment, and, of course, COVID-19 shutdowns.

Now, in June, it almost seems miraculous to be able to report that all three projects are expected to be completed by early fall, at the latest, thanks to the diligence of DCNR and the contractors. We hope that

there are no additional delays to be encountered due to material availability or personnel shortages due to COVID-19.

From North to South:

The massive timber drop gate for Groundhog Lock is being built in the shop of Methods and Materials Building Company of Gilbertville, PA. (This is the same company that constructed the drop gate and miter gates for the Lock 11 rehabilitation.) The Delaware Canal State Park maintenance staff has cleaned out the gate chamber and is in the process of replacing the timbers on which the gate will rest. When the new gate arrives, the Park staff will install it. The project is anticipated to be finished in August at a cost of \$44,000.



The wickets that allow water to flow into and out of a lock controlled by a drop gate aren't often in view. This replacement project offered a perfect opportunity to see them.

On August 11, 2018, three inches of rain fell in less than an hour turning Fry's Run in Williams Township into a torrent heading to the Delaware River. The Fry's Run aka Kleinhans Aqueduct stood in its way and lost the fight. Parts of the aqueduct and its supporting structure were torn away. As an interim measure to



Fry's Run aka Kleinhans Aqueduct after the storm in August 2018.

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maintain water flow in the Canal, DCNR installed two pipes where the aqueduct had been. Last winter, Loftus Construction of Cinnaminson, NJ began work on the new aqueduct. In mid-June, the \$780,000 project was 99% complete.



Loftus Construction in the midst of the replacement— March 8, 2020.



The Fry's Run Aqueduct is done. Water and growing grass will complete the picture.

The northern berm bank and canal prism at the Tincicum Aqueduct (*above right*) were also victims of torrential rains. Tincicum Creek raged in June of 2017 collapsing the earthen structures at the aqueduct, but the steel trough and its pedestrian bridge remained intact.

To keep water flowing southward, DCNR installed a temporary channel. Concurrently, an engineering consultant was engaged to develop plans to restore and strengthen the earthen structures, repair the leaks in the aqueduct's stone abutments, reinforce its stone pier in the Creek, replace the deteriorated footbridge, and refinish the steel trough.

Clearwater Construction of New Cumberland, PA began the many-faceted, \$1.045M job late last winter. Work is currently progressing and expected to be completed in July.



The north end of the Tincicum Aqueduct after the creek did its damage.



A temporary channel kept water flowing south through the Tincicum Aqueduct.



The Tincicum Aqueduct work site — June 7, 2020

The completion of these three major projects holds the key to rewatering the Canal from Easton to New Hope. It really can't come soon enough, but the progress that's been made in spite of all the obstacles this year has been impressive.

Refreshing the Stories

The Friends is very proud of its significant role in sharing the Delaware Canal's history. Our organization has been involved in the placement of nearly all the interpretive signs that can be found from Easton to Bristol. We both create new signs and improve and replace existing ones when needed.

Late last winter, six sign panels that had been suffering from wear and defacement were replaced through a partnership between the Friends and the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Trail Towns Amenity Grant Program.

New panels, "Where the Water Flows" and "A Modern Timber Aqueduct" were installed at either end of the Tohickon Aqueduct in Point Pleasant. The "Canal Boat Graveyard" panel was replaced in Tullytown, and the kiosk at the Black Rock Road Picnic Area in Lower Makefield received three new generic interpretive signs.

Clear, crisp text and photos await your visit.



Canal Action Team (CAT) volunteer Mark Frey installing the new sign panels at the Black Rock Road Picnic Area.

Tending the Canal



The Friends' Canal Tender volunteers watch over and care for their sections of the towpath and waterway year-round. The Delaware Canal is so much better for their efforts.

We welcome:

Bill Low, who is a Co-Tender with **Aodan** and **Linda Peacock** for the Phillips' Mill to Centre Bridge section

Eileen Killeen and volunteers from **Yardley Friends Meeting** will be adding the Woodside Road to Mt. Eyre Road stretch to their tending territory.

Many thanks to our retiring Tenders:

Alex Castner and sons **Will** and **James** for tending the Wheatsheaf Road to the Conrail Tunnel section

Bob Ketler: Woodside Road to Mt. Eyre

John Manocchio: Lock 11 to Rabbit Run

Ricki Fisher: Bridge Street to Rabbit Run

Marge Copenhaver: Phillips' Mill to Centre Bridge

Annette Heinz and the "Housewives of Rolling Hills": Lock 17 to Uhlerstown Covered Bridge

TENDERS ARE NEEDED for these sections, which can be divided into stretches of any length:

- Bristol Riverfront Park to the Levittown Shopping Center
- Wheatsheaf Road in Falls Township to the Conrail Tunnel
- Bridge Street to the Rabbit Run Bridge in New Hope
- Lock 17 to the Uhlerstown Covered Bridge In Tinicum Township

Can you help? Find out more at fodc.org/help-the-canal/canal-tenders/



FRIENDS OF THE DELAWARE CANAL

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New Hope, PA 18938

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WELCOME NEW FRIENDS

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Carol & Dan Achord | Patricia & Tim Merkel |
| Lucille Aquilone | Mark Miller |
| Paul & Christine Angulo | Michael Mitrano |
| John Augustine | Eileen O'Mahony |
| Tom Curry | Sydney Mason |
| Cindy DeKraft | Paul & Casey Pane |
| Linda Fleck | Steve Robinson |
| Zachary Henry | Ian Skuse |
| Mary Kocubinski | Kate Smith |
| Walter Kocubinski | Michael Swartley |
| Sandra & Tom Lavis | Michael Tavella |
| Tamie & Douglas Logan | John Wehmiller |
| Joanne McDonald | Michael Yalowitz |

SHARE THE TOWPATH TRAIL, PLEASE

By Paula Hynes

On a recent weekday morning, we witnessed a scene that is all too common these days. A man, focused on his phone screen, was oblivious to a bicyclist who was coming up behind him on the towpath, and this in spite of her several calls of "On your left" and finally resorting to "Hey, dude." The man just continued up the middle of the towpath, and the bicyclist swerved around him narrowly avoiding a fall into the water.

The moral of this story? We all need to be mindful when using the Canal towpath.

During this time of COVID-19, the towpath is experiencing an unprecedented surge in visitation. Many of the bicyclists and walkers have never been to the Delaware Canal State Park before. These extraordinary circumstances mean that we need to heighten our awareness of whom and what is on the towpath. The extra dividend in this is that we will be more likely to spot the wildflowers and the wildlife. The sight of a dozen turtles lined up on a log is worth a pause.

Be prepared to wear a mask and social distance.

If you are close to other walkers, runners, or bicyclists, please be ready to put on a mask. The CDC guidelines suggest that all persons, when possible, should maintain at least six feet of distance. This separation often is not possible on the sometimes very narrow towpath. Wearing a mask is the best solution, and it signals that you care about others.



Out for a walk along the Delaware Canal in New Hope.

Ride your bicycle with care.

Bicycle tires rolling on the red argillite towpath don't create much noise, and walkers can be taken by surprise. Cyclists need to make their approaches known by using a bell, calling "on your left," or simply saying hello to signal the intention to pass. Be mindful of low bridge clearances and limited lines of sight, and be prepared to walk a bicycle under these structures when necessary. And slow down when passing a walker or other cyclist. It is just common courtesy.

Be a good steward of the Delaware Canal State Park.

Keep the towpath clean for all to enjoy. If you take a bottle of water with you, remember to

take it home. Please don't leave used masks and gloves behind. Most restroom facilities are now open for public use, so take care to keep them clean, too.

Just be nice.

If you are traveling in a group, be sure not to block the path for others. Bicycle riders should yield to pedestrians and hikers should yield to equestrians.

The Canal towpath connects many towns, large and small, to an inspiring natural resource. It can be a beautiful day in the neighborhood for all, if we just be mindful.