



SPRING 2021

Friends
of the
Delaware
Canal

Canal News

Sharing Stories Virtually

The Locktender's House
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New Hope, PA 18938

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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.



PHOTO: Carole Mebus

A spring sight and sound along the Canal—a Yellow Warbler.

Zoom meetings, webinars, a YouTube channel. The Friends have been changing their storytelling game since March 2020 when we held our last in-person public program. Please visit the Friends of the Delaware Canal YouTube channel to find the *Canal Times I and II* programs and a video interview with Will Rivinus, who tells about his first venture into canal walking. Unfortunately, our two *Postcards from the Past* presentations aren't there because the Zoom recordings cut off after 30 seconds in spite of our best efforts.

The dates and times of the future webinars will be sent via Constant

Contact. If you aren't signed up, just scroll down to the form on the homepage of fodc.org or call 215-862-2021. The information will also be posted in the Events section on the homepage of fodc.org.

There are still lots of stories to share, and videos will be part of the mix. Want to help? The Friends could really use someone who is relatively experienced and enthusiastic about making "informal" videos. Interested? Please let us know.

See you one way or another!

JOIN US FOR THESE UPCOMING WEBINARS:

- The Canal's Spring Flowers
- The Birds of Spring
- Invasives Watch
- Canal Landmarks and Mileage Chart 101
- A program featuring the old postcards contributed to the Friends by long-time members Kathleen and Bob Stalgaitis.

OUR BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

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

FOUNDER

Tinicum Civic Association

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Washington Crossing Insurance Group
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The High and Low Points of Last Winter

PHOTO: Kent and Marion Smith



Conditions were perfect for cross-country skiing along the Canal.

The snow just kept falling this past winter making the Delaware Canal an extraordinarily beautiful white wonder. By all reports, it was the best winter for cross-country skiing on the towpath in at least ten years.

Unfortunately, the season's weather also created some serious problems along the Canal. Torrential rainfall at Christmas caused inland streams to overtop their banks and the Delaware River to rise to Minor Flood stage.

The relentless flow of stream water into the sub-canal culvert just north of Locks 22-23 in Raubsville caused its stone headwall to collapse. With the falling stone came a portion of the Canal berm bank, bringing the situation perilously close to completely blowing out the bank and seriously flooding the inland residential property. Thankfully, the erosion stopped short of that. The collapse was designated as an "emergency repair" by the DCNR engineers and Park



The culvert collapse in Raubsville.

staff, and Bi-State Construction was on site within days of December 26 to clear the culvert opening so that stream water could flow through it and to begin the repair of the culvert itself. Good progress was made, but then the snow and ice came making it too dangerous for the equipment to maneuver at the site, which is both narrow and steep. The project has resumed and is expected to be complete within weeks.

The flooding Delaware River rose to levels where its water overtopped the banks of the Canal in low areas. The flood waters caused damage to the towpath surface in several sections, particularly in the northern end of the Canal, and, just south of Easton, the earth sloughed off the slope of the towpath bank.



River flooding damaged the towpath banks south of Easton.

The high and rushing water in the Canal itself caused problems. The interior decking in the new Fry's Run Aqueduct experienced some displacement, which can be repaired by the Park staff. More complicated will be the task of removing some rocks that lodged themselves between the layers of the synthetic liner at the Tinicum Aqueduct.

In the case of all these problems, as well as projects that were underway last fall, the snowy conditions prevented work from progressing, but spring is on its way, and with it will come the renewal of repair work.

PARK MANAGER'S REPORT

By Devin Buzard

One of my favorite idioms is “Make hay while the sun shines.” Over the past year, while in service to the Delaware Canal, I have found this expression to be meaningful on multiple levels. I would go as far as to say that it encapsulates the general concept of confronting the challenges of Canal maintenance and management. There is never a shortage of work to be done and always an appropriate time to do it.

Repair projects along the Canal have recommenced with the melting of the snow.

The large excavators, currently located in Raubsville, once again have come back to life. The removal of a sycamore tree with a destructive root system kick-started our extensive efforts to reline the Canal and restore its ability to retain water.

Over these past snowy months, I am happy to report great success in filling several vacant full-time Canal positions in our Southern offices. These include a Park Maintenance Supervisor and a Maintenance Repairman (skilled tradesman), who was recently added to our staff complement. Newly hired Park Maintenance Supervisor Matthew Overbeck of Pipersville replaces Brad King, who retired after his 35 years of service to the Commonwealth.

On the heels of former Delaware Canal Assistant



A large sycamore tree was downed at the site of the collapse north of Woody's Bridge. Its roots were undermining the Canal's prism.

PHOTO: Carole Mebus

Manager Bethany Hare taking a promotional opportunity, we are just weeks away from announcing the hiring of two new Assistant Managers. This is all good news as we are looking to the future of the Canal with a dedicated administrative presence and offices in both the Northern and the Southern sections. The concept is similar in nature to how our maintenance responsibilities are currently established. This is all taking place in conjunction with the

recent acquisition of the former David Library of the American Revolution and the Sol and Rose Preserve properties in Washington Crossing.

As you may already know or gleaned from this newsletter, the Canal sustained significant damage during the December heavy rains and river flooding event. While timelines for all of the repairs to be completed are still unknown due to the severity of the damages, I am certain that the appropriate resources are being committed, and we are pushing towards the goal of opening the Easton feeder gate as soon as possible.

While on the surface it would appear that work is weather dependent, I would argue that work is perpetually progressing forward and with your support we will “continue to make hay”.



Painting the Mt. Eyre Road Bridge faux camelback trusses required agility on the part of CAT volunteers.

The Limber CAT

Before winter set in, seven Canal Action Team members gave the Mt. Eyre Road Bridge over the Canal two much-needed coats of barn-red stain. The bridge, located on the line between Lower Makefield and Upper Makefield Townships, is one of, if not the only, public road bridge over the Canal owned by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Under the direction of Team leader Bob Ketler, the CAT members came laden with their most trusty painting tools and went to work—bending, stretching, leaning, and crawling to reach all the components of the two faux camelback trusses.

After a full morning's worth of work with Delaware Canal State Park Rangers handling traffic control, CAT brought the Mt. Eyre Road Bridge back to an appearance worthy of a Canal landmark.



The Friends are planning to bring back our series of “Green Phase” COVID-precautioned short walks as soon as the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) allows public programs to resume. To account for the uncertainty of conditions and time frames, these walks will again be Pop-Ups, but we are scheduling a Spring Beauties Walk on Sunday, April 18, just to try to get things back to being a little more normal.



POP-UP SHORT WALKS

Locations, Dates, and Times are sent via Constant Contact and posted on fodc.org.

We were able to get 11 short walks in last season and have another 20 walk itineraries ready to go as opportunities arise. The walk lengths vary from 2 to 6 miles roundtrip. In addition to late afternoon ventures, we anticipate that weekend and morning walks can be added to the schedule.

To walk with the Friends, watch for our Constant Contact e-mails and check Events on the homepage of fodc.org. If you are not on our Constant Contact list, please scroll down to the bottom of the homepage to sign up or call 215-862-2021.

To discourage the spread of COVID, these walks will once again be limited to 10 people, masks must be worn, and physical distancing encouraged. Reservations must be made in advance. All information will be included in our event notices.

These walks fill up very quickly, so when you receive the notices, don't hesitate to make your reservations. To be fair, preference will be given to those who have not participated in other short walks during the current season.



SPRING BEAUTIES WALK SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 1:30 PM

Meet at the I-295 Park and Ride Lot
1140 Woodside Road, Yardley, PA 19067

Beauty comes in different forms. On this 2-mile-roundtrip walk, you can take in the Canal's beauty at Lock 7. Daffodils dance on the towpath bank and trees will be blossoming. The Lock with its stone walls restored by the Friends, the little board and batten shanty, and the Locktender's House complete the spring scene. Another kind of beauty shows itself at the 1799 House sitting by the Canal at Woodside Road. This historic stone house was purchased by the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission as part of the Scudder Falls Bridge project. The house has been sensitively rehabilitated and serves as a restroom facility for Canal visitors. Having a new bathroom facility near the Park, in a saved historic structure, no less, is a beautiful thing.

The Spring Beauty Walk will be led by veteran Canal Walker Jeff Connell, who also serves on the Friends' Board of Directors. He will share the story of the Scudder Falls Bridge pedestrian pathway, which will be the seventh river bridge crossing connecting the Delaware Canal towpath to the D&R Canal towpath in Ewing, NJ. Along the way to Lock 7, he will point out the newly replaced 9-11 memorial bench and a wildlife haven.

Applicable COVID precautions, as described in Pop-Ups, will be taken. Reservations are required no later than April 14. Please call 215-862-2021 or e-mail friends@fodc.org.

Hope to see you on the towpath!

Upcoming Events

CANAL CLEAN-UP DAY

SATURDAY, APRIL 10

PLUS

Any Day, especially during the month of April

Usually, the Friends' annual Clean-Up Day takes place on the first Saturday in April, and hundreds of volunteers tackle the trash that has accumulated in and along the Canal's 58.9-mile length. Of COVID Times necessity, this year's clean-up will focus on individual and family group efforts—no large groups will be encouraged. The official date is also different because the first Saturday in April is the opening day of trout season in Pennsylvania and occurs during the Easter holiday weekend. To compensate for these unusual circumstances, we are extending Clean-Up Day and encouraging volunteers to give the Canal its spring cleaning anytime, particularly during the month of April.

Here's how to help this spring –

On Saturday, April 10, go out to any section of the Canal and pick up trash, debris, and anything that doesn't allow the Canal to look its best. Both on-land and by-boat clean-ups are welcome. In fact, using canoes and kayaks is sometimes the only way to get to trash on the berm side or just hiding below the water surface.

If you can't be out on the 10th, please work anytime the weather and your energy encourage you to do so.

For the safety of all, volunteers must comply with federal CDC, State, and local COVID-19 precautions, including, but not limited to, wearing a face mask, practicing physical distancing, and following proper hygiene protocols. (Handwashing is and always has been a good idea on Clean-Up Day.)

Please wear gloves and sturdy shoes and bring along any pick-up tools that work well for you.

If you need trash bags or gloves, we can supply them. Contactless pick-up can be done at either the Locktender's House in New Hope (call 215-862-2021 or e-mail friends@fodc.org) or at the State Park Headquarters in Upper Black Eddy (call 610-982-5560 or e-mail kmartens@pa.gov).

If you collect things that are too heavy or unwieldy to take home for disposal, please let the Friends know the location, and the Park staff will make pick-up arrangements.

And don't forget to let the Friends know that you've been out there working, so that we can thank you as well as count the number of volunteers who participated and determine what areas might need attention after April. Please take pictures and share them!

The Friends have done clean-ups ever since the organization's founding in 1982, and we intend to keep up that tradition because our goal is always to be of help to the Delaware Canal.

If you have questions about these new circumstances, please call 215-862-2021 or e-mail friends@fodc.org. And THANK YOU for your concern and help!



Nearly all of our photos from past Canal Clean-Up Days feature groups of people working together—not the visual message that we want to communicate this year. So, here's a rare exception. This volunteer showed off the very large and mossy sneaker that she found along the towpath in Falls Township.

GIVING BACK

To all of you who invested in the Friends' efforts by contributing to our Year-End Appeal,
THANK YOU!

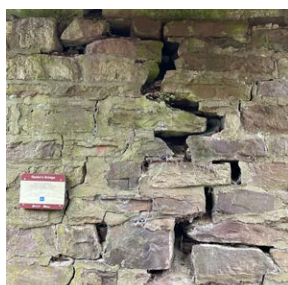
After nine months when the Delaware Canal provided much-needed refuge, serenity, and recreation, it was clear that you wanted to help the Friends improve and maintain the place that had given you so much. Many people who contributed at year-end had never done so before.

Your generosity has eased the way into what we hope will be a year of significant progress.

THE 6TH FOR THE 40TH

Can the sixth and final historic camelback bridge over the Canal be restored in time for the Friends of the Delaware Canal's 40th anniversary in 2022?

Yes, we feel confident that it can be—with your help. Out of the 100+ bridges that once crossed the Delaware Canal, Spahr's Bridge in Upper Black Eddy is one of only six that retains its authentic and iconic camelback structure. The Friends spearheaded the restoration of four of the other camelbacks, encouraged the fifth, and have had Spahr's on our to-do list for years.



The Spahr's Camelback Bridge east abutment is in especially bad shape.

Spahr's Bridge has been a formidable project to tackle because not only is the superstructure severely deteriorated, but also both stone abutments are cracked, a condition exacerbated by two earthquakes. The \$350,000–\$400,000 cost of restoring Spahr's Bridge has been an obstacle.

Now the stars are aligning.

The relatively new owner of the property on either side of the Bridge believes in historic preservation and supports its restoration rather than modernization. The condition of Bridge is now so poor that action by the State is inevitable. The Friends have been very vocal in our support of handling the project using historic preservation best practices, and the State agrees. Plans are now underway to hire a highly qualified contractor to dismantle the superstructure taking care to inventory and record the existing members and store and reuse timber and hardware when possible. The State plans to contract with a consultant to prepare the plans and specifications



Do not cross this bridge.

for the repair of the stone abutments. The State will fund both the dismantling and the abutment projects.

And we come to the part of the Spahr's Bridge project with which you can help. Private contributions are being sought to fund the superstructure portion. In simpler terms, the trusses, the deck, the cross beams, and the hardware. Putting Spahr's Bridge together requires expertise, skills, and passion. The Friends contribution to the project will help ensure that those requirements are met. We are very pleased and thankful for two very generous donations from the Goodfellow Fund and Barbara and Peter Sperry. They have given the Spahr's Bridge restoration a great jump start.

More information about how you can help will be coming soon. If you're already convinced, you can donate now by scrolling down on the www.fodc.org homepage to the Spahr's Bridge contribution block or, even better, send your check to Friends of the Delaware Canal, 145 South Main Street, New Hope, PA 18938.

Get 'em Before They Hatch



A Spotted Lanternfly egg mass. Please seek and destroy.

As we learned last year, getting rid of Spotted Lanternflies while they are alive is a challenge. They jump; they fly; they jump; they fly...

There is still time to control these destructive insects before they hatch and fly off on their pretty wings. Start finding and destroying their egg masses now. Spotted Lanternflies lay their eggs in the fall, usually on flat surfaces like tree trunks, rocks, walls, wood fencing, even outdoor equipment.

It may take a bit of investigating, but you will become better at tracking them down once you know what to look for. If you have an Ailanthus tree aka Tree of Heaven on your property, check there first. These trees are a Lanternfly favorite. If you noticed an infestation on your property, be sure to scan that area as well.

You can remove their mud-like egg masses with a paring knife or a small plastic card, like a credit card. Using a rigid surface, you can crush the eggs or, even better, remove and destroy the entire casing by scraping it into a plastic bag containing rubbing alcohol. Once the eggs come in contact with the liquid, they will die. Killing eggs now will help curb this pest this summer. ***So, harness your pent-up pandemic energy and go Lanternfly hunting.***

Canal Tenders—More Important Than Ever

The Delaware Canal State Park has experienced a historic increase in visitation since last March when the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic set in. We're pleased to say that the many people didn't cause a dramatic increase in the amount of trash left behind, thanks to the care taken by visitors and the diligence of the sixty volunteers who serve in the Friends' Canal Tenders program.

Many, many thanks to all the Tenders, who pick up trash, clear branches, and report problems throughout the year. Their pandemic precautioned clean-up efforts make the Canal a better place for both people and critters.

We are pleased to welcome two new Canal Tenders to the crew!

David Weiss has volunteered to co-tend the Canal from Black Rock Road to East Afton Avenue in Yardley along with veterans Ann and Keith Webb.

A. J. Zolton has taken on the section from Lock 17 (Treasure Island Lock) in Tinicum Township to Lock 18 in Uhlerstown.

Several sections in the southern end of the Canal remain without Tenders including:

- Riverfront Park to Beaver Street: Bristol Borough
- Beaver Street to the Bristol Lagoon at Jefferson Avenue: Bristol Borough
- The Bristol Lagoon to Green Lane: Bristol Borough
- Green Lane to Edgely Avenue: Bristol Township
- Edgely Avenue to Levittown Shopping Center: Bristol Township/Tullytown Borough
- Wheatsheaf Road to the Conrail Tunnel: Falls Township

Please let us know if you can help with any of these sections. The boundaries are not set in concrete, so feel free to propose a length other than those shown.

Being a Canal Tender is a rewarding experience in so many ways, and you'll be in very good company. *To find out more about what's involved, visit the [HELP](https://www.fodc.org) page at [fodc.org](https://www.fodc.org) or call 215-862-2021.* And while you're there, check out the Canal Action Team (CAT) page. Perhaps, it's a volunteer opportunity just right for you.

At the Board Table

Thanks to the convenience of being able to attend from home via a Zoom webinar, participation in our 2020 Annual Meeting on November 10 was the highest ever. Many were in attendance for the first time. This was a positive consequence of the pandemic, even though everyone missed not being together and sharing covered dishes.

During the webinar, the activities of 2020 were reviewed in a PowerPoint presentation, and a short video featuring Will Rivinus telling about his first canal walk made its debut. Friends' organization business was conducted; and Delaware Canal State Park/PA DCNR representatives covered current and upcoming issues. These speakers were Jason Zimmerman, Assistant Director of the Bureau of State Parks; Devin Buzard, Park Manager; and Beth Hare, Assistant Manager. Beth included in her report the visual evidence of the success of her and her four-year-old daughter's venture into mule cookie making.

Two retiring Board members were recognized for their service. During her eight-year tenure, **JUDY FRANLIN** was a dynamo serving as Secretary and Treasurer at different times. She will continue to be active as a member of the Finance and Development Committee. **NANCY SMALL**, a more recent Board member, shared her breadth of knowledge of the operations of other non-profits.

The membership re-elected **JOAN FULLERTON**, **DAVID SCHAEFFER**, and **JACK TORRES** to additional two-year terms. Elected to their first terms were Gordon Heisler and Ken Standig. Here's a bit about them.

GORDON HEISLER

Living within a half-mile of the Delaware Canal for over forty years in Lower and Upper Makefield Townships and enjoying trips along the towpath since the 1970's, Gordon has a unique appreciation for the waterway and towpath. He has been a Canal Tender for the Washington Crossing section for eight years and participated in several Canal Action Team projects. Gordon realizes the importance of preserving and improving this one-of-a-kind park. A member of the Friends for many years, Gordon joined the Board to assist in implementing improvements and spreading the word about the canal and towpath experience.

Professionally, after graduating from Rider University, Gordon spent forty years in oil and chemical logistics industries with FMC, Sunoco, and consulting. He also volunteers at the Morrisville Food Bank. Gordon and his wife Barbara enjoy biking and hiking on the Canal and traveling to visit many other trails throughout the United States and Europe.

KEN STANDIG

Ken and his wife Julie moved to Buckingham Township full time from New York City and Long Island in 2019, but they have enjoyed life along the Delaware River for much

longer than that. Annual summer camping trips with the Boy Scouts at Treasure Island Scout Reservation, canoe trips in high school and college days, and family camping in the Delaware Water Gap were all part of their lives. Now they enjoy the views along the Canal towpath while biking, hiking, and walking their dog Dizzi.

Ken retired in 2018 after a 43-year career in engineering, during which he managed the planning, design, and rehabilitation of infrastructure projects. He found working on dams, locks, and canals to be the most interesting and challenging, including more than a dozen projects along the New York State (Erie) Canal and the D & R Canal in New Jersey. He hopes that his experience will be put to good use along the Delaware Canal. Ken has been a member of the Friends' Advocacy, Restoration & Maintenance Committee for the last year. He has degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Lehigh University and is a licensed Professional Engineer and a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Welcome Gordon and Ken!

The departure of veteran Board member **JACK DONOHUE** at the beginning of January 2021 left a void on the Board. Well known for his enthusiasm and reasonable thinking, Jack was a great asset to the Friends during his two terms.

As always, the Board welcomes your participation and input. And, if you are interested in serving, please raise your hand.



FRIENDS OF THE DELAWARE CANAL

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WELCOME NEW FRIENDS

Lars Ahlman	Jill Henry
Eric Beckhusen	Jean Hewens
Chris Cascone	Kim & Bob Hood
Anna Christensen & Todd Borneman	Kathleen Kennerley
Barbara & Jeff Clarke	Tom Kuhn
Dean Dickson	Jill Laurinaitis
Marc Engelsman	Cathy Ann Leonard
Terri & Jon Epstein	Anthony Mannarino
Heidi Furman	Claire & Jerry Melican
Dan Frank & Family	Zoe Morawski
Harry Gamble	Anne & David Pearl
Melanie Gray & David Rubin	Francoise Picaronny
Edward Green	Tara Rivas
Nancy Hamill	Jill & Howard Savin
Roxane & Bill Hansen	Tony Tran
Jim Heim	Kathrin Wagner
Norma & Jeff Heller	Paul West
	Kari Williams
	Alexander Witko

THE NEED ISN'T NEW

Even before the Delaware Canal was fully opened in 1832, those responsible for its construction realized that the water supplied by the Lehigh River in Easton was not enough to maintain a full Canal, particularly in the southern end. To solve this problem, an “ingenious device” was erected at the Union Mill (since converted into The Waterworks, a residential condominium complex) in New Hope.

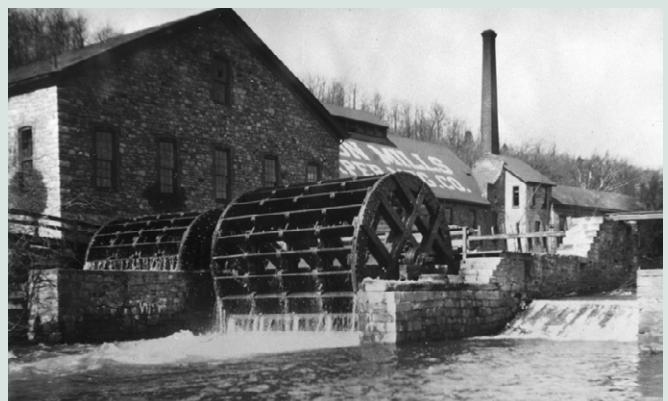
In June of 1831, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania contracted with Lewis S. Coryell and three of his business partners to erect a wing dam at Well's Falls in the Delaware River and water wheels. The purpose of the dam was to supply water to a two-wheel system. There was an undershot water wheel driven by the power of the river flow, which was coupled with another wheel with buckets that scooped river water, raised it, and then allowed it to flow through a trunk leading to the Canal.

A traveler to New Hope in 1832 wrote, “This simple contrivance, without gearing or valves, or anything else liable to get out of order is more than sufficient to supply the Canal from New Hope downwards.” The waterwheels were capable of raising 3,500 cubic feet of water per minute. Although not as repair-free as the New Hope visitor envisioned, they remained in place until June of 1923 and then were carried away in a flood in 1936.

After 1923, the issue of insufficient water flowing southward reemerged, particularly when the level of the Delaware River dropped below the level of the New Hope inlet. Various remedies were tried, but none worked well enough.

As you have read in past issues of *Canal News*, the Friends, in partnership with the Delaware Canal State Park, are working to install a centrifugal pump in the River in the northern section of Washington Crossing Park. The pump and the electrical installation, financed by the Friends, are ready to go. The pipe leading from the River to the Canal is in place. Before putting the pump in operation, there is one approval that must be granted from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

The new “Bowman's Hill” pump will augment the flow of water to Bristol as the New Hope waterwheels once did.



Waterwheels once provided additional water to the southern end of the Canal.