



# D&R CANAL WATCH

Number 73 www.canalwatch.org November 2020

**2021 Calendar Contest**  
**See p. 3**  
**Supplies are limited so buy your copy soon'**

The D&R Canal Watch  
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**Our Mission**  
The D&R Canal Watch is an independent, nonprofit organization working to engage the public in the protection of the environment and preservation of the heritage of the D&R Canal.

## New Plan Unveiled for Bull's Island Recreation Area

The beginning of the feeder of the Delaware and Raritan Canal "Bulls Island Preserve" plan to reopen the northern section of the Bulls Island Recreation Area



In a virtual conference on Wednesday, October 28, the Department of Environmental Protection and State Parks announced the plan to open the northern section of Bulls Island Recreation Area, which has been closed since 2011.

Robin Madden, Acting Director of Parks and Forestry, gave a brief overview of the closing of the park and subsequent plans to reopen it.

A plan that had included aggressive tree cutting was denied by the D&R Canal Commission (D&RCC) in 2013. She then introduced Stephanie Fox, the park naturalist, who explained the proposed plan.

A new, blacktop trail called the Inlet Trail (black line on map on page two) will be created along the canal. It will continue around the island along the riverside to the wing dam. This will be an ADA-accessible walking and biking trail.

The DEP will remove 0.93 acres of former campground roads in the southern section.

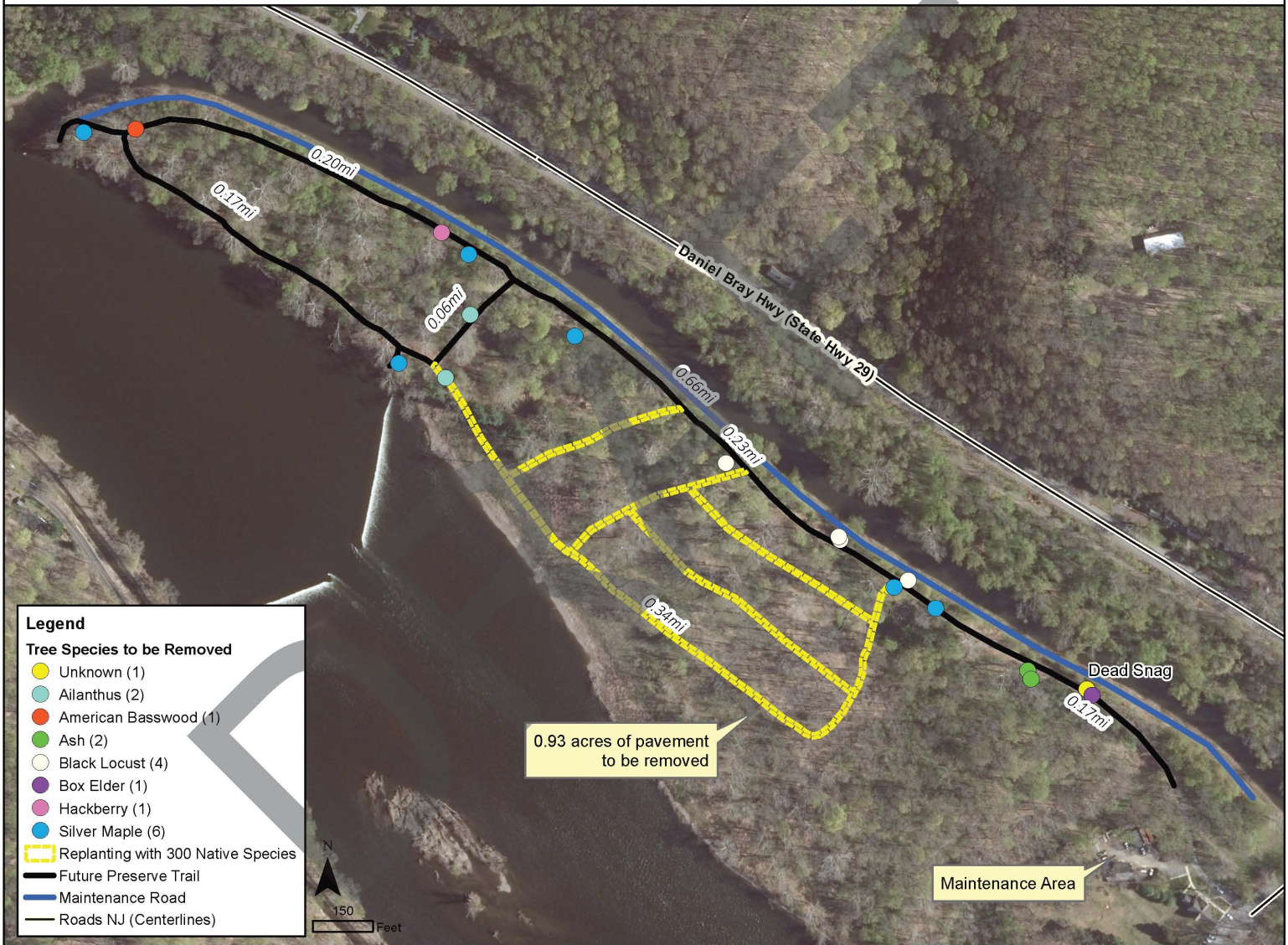
Unlike earlier plans, only eighteen trees will be removed. This will be a passive park, with no benches or picnic tables.

Three hundred trees, all native species, will be planted (see box at right). Interpretive signs will be designed and installed.

The proposal still requires a few more approvals, including one that will be on the agenda of the D&RCC meeting on November 18th.

- Downy Serviceberry
- American Hornbeam
- Flowering Dogwood
- Eastern Redcedar
- Red Maple
- Common Hackberry
- American Sycamore
- Cockspur Hawthorn

## Bulls Island Tree Info and Trails - October Update



(continued on page two)

### Bulls Island (continued from page one)

There is no formalized timeline for the completion of this project, but as soon as one is ready, it will be shared with the public.

During years of flooding of the island, the root systems of many trees have been compromised. For this reason, there is no longer a campground, which encourages long-term stays. It is possible that in the future, newly acquired park land on the east side of Route 29 could be used as a campground. While this is far from definite, park officials have given it some thought.

Bulls Island was once one of the most popular sections of the D&R Canal State Park, an oasis for fishermen, birdwatchers, canal buffs, and nature lovers. It's wonderful to learn that it will

# 2021 CANAL WATCH CALENDAR

The brand new 2021 D&R Canal Calendar is now available.  
Supplies are limited, so order your copy now.

The calendar features images taken by park users. To purchase a copy, please email or call Linda Barth ([barthlinda123@aol.com](mailto:barthlinda123@aol.com); 908-240-0488) and she will arrange for delivery.

12" x 12" -- \$20, with all proceeds going to the D&R Canal Watch to purchase items for the park. You may pay with cash or with a check payable to the D&R Canal Watch.

This lovely full-color calendar features images taken by people who visit the towpath. The photographs include turtles, birds, and plants that thrive in the D&R Canal State Park, as well as boaters, towpath, and views of the canal in all seasons.

Our calendar is 12" x 12" and includes a map and a history of the D&R Canal.

The cost is \$20, with all proceeds going to the D&R Canal Watch to purchase items for the park. Supplies are limited, so order your copy now.



## New Loop Trail Added Across the Delaware River

Thanks to the Friends of the Delaware Canal (FODC) in Pennsylvania, a new loop trail has been added to the five that were established by the Friends in 2005. These trails connect the Delaware & Raritan Canal feeder with the towpath of the Delaware Canal in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

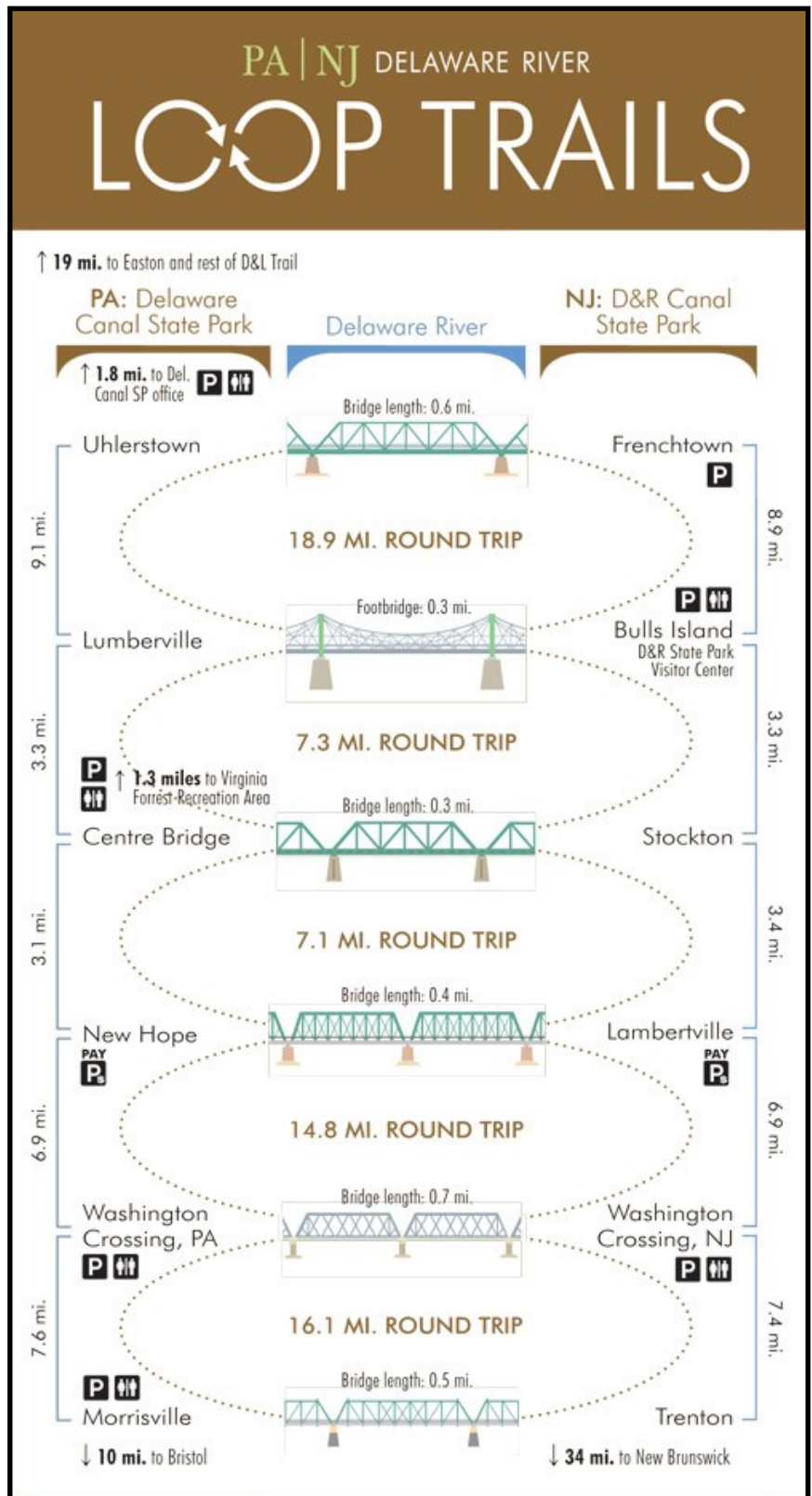
According to Susan Taylor, executive director of the FODC, a new canal loop will be available next year when the walkway attached to the I-295 Scudder Falls Bridge opens. This sixth loop will provide new, shorter routes south of Washington Crossing.

- From the D&R towpath at Washington Crossing, go south along the feeder to Ewing — Cross the new Scudder Falls Bridge on the walkway — Access the Delaware Canal towpath in Lower Makefield, PA and follow it north to Washington Crossing, PA — Cross the WC bridge back to New Jersey. **This is a 6.7-mile loop.**
- Follow the D&R Canal feeder towpath south from the Scudder Falls Bridge in Ewing to Trenton — Cross the Calhoun Street bridge to Morrisville, PA — Follow the Delaware Canal towpath north to the new bridge in Lower Makefield, PA. **This is a 10.6-mile loop.**

When the walkway on the new I-295 bridge opens, the existing loop trail signs (see image at right) along the river will be obsolete. With this in mind, the Friends of the Delaware Canal are creating a new map that will be incorporated into fourteen signs to replace those that now stand on both sides of the Delaware River. New signs will be installed at the western and eastern ends of the Scudder Falls pedestrian walkway.

This \$4,500 project has been funded by a \$3,000 tourism grant from the Bucks County Conference and Visitors Bureau and a \$1,500 contribution from Gordon and Barbara Heisler, Washington Crossing residents and members of the FODC. Thanks to both for investing in the benefits of the sixth loop trail.

The redesign of the map is already underway, and the new sign panels should be



fabricated by early 2021. The Friends' Canal Action Team will do the installations when the time arrives.

Thanks to Susan Taylor and the FODC for this story.

## Sharing the Towpath — Safe or Scary

Walkers enjoying the peace and quiet of the D&R Canal towpath are often startled by bicyclists coming from behind. It is almost impossible to hear their approach. Thankfully, most riders use a bell or verbally announce that they are “coming on your left.”

Sometimes, however, bikers zoom along, lost in their thoughts, with no regard for the pedestrians they meet.

The D&R Canal Watch is often asked about trail courtesy on the towpath: who yields to whom?

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has published the “New Jersey Bicycling Manual,” which explains the rules of the road as they pertain to bicyclists. On p. 40 there is a section devoted to sharing the trail with pedestrians and horses. This page is pertinent to the D&R Canal towpath.



Here is the text:

**Share the Trail**—When you ride on a multi-use trail you should expect to encounter other types of users: pedestrians (including those in wheelchairs or using other mobility assistive devices), other bicyclists, rollerbladers, skateboarders and possibly, equestrians. **You are obliged to yield the right-of-way to equestrians and pedestrians.** You shouldn't assume that other bicyclists will yield to you when they should. You should also be aware that you may encounter motor vehicles wherever the trail crosses roadways or driveways.

**Communicate with Others When you Pass**—Don't pass unless you can see your way clear to do so. As you would when riding on the road, check behind you for overtaking traffic. Check ahead of you for oncoming traffic. **Use your bell or audible warning signal and call out “passing on your left” or “on your left,” and then proceed to pass.** Give those you are passing adequate clearance.

**Crossing Intersecting Roads or Other Trails**—When approaching an intersection with a roadway or another trail, obey whatever traffic control devices are present. If there are none, yield to other traffic arriving at the intersection before you. Even if you arrive at the intersection first, be prepared to stop, especially at a road crossing, since most motorists may assume they have the right-of-way over trail users.

Our state park officials are working with county governments to provide crosswalks in places where our trail crosses county roads. In several very busy areas, trail walkers can push a button that activates flashing lights to warn motorists.



**Please remember this state law:**

**39:4-11 Audible Signal.**— A bicycle must be equipped with a bell or other audible device that can be heard at least 100 feet away - NOT a siren or whistle.

## The Next Step for the East Millstone Bridgetender's Station

Working with our partner organizations, the D&R Canal Watch has commissioned and received a conditions assessment for the East Millstone bridgetender's station, which is the small structure next to the bridgetender's home.

Since our September newsletter, state park personnel have met with representatives of the NJDOT and Somerset County engineering to further discussions about the station.

Members of the D&R Canal Watch have met with park staff to complete permit applications for both the D&R Canal Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office for the restoration of the station.

If the permits are approved, and before the project can go out to bid, the Canal Watch must have the funding in place. We are currently working on plans to seek grants for this funding.



### D&R Canal Watch 2021 Membership Renewal Form

Membership year: January 1 to December 31

Nonprofit Org \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \$40 \_\_\_\_\_  
Supporter \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ Business member \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check, payable to the D&R Canal Watch, to D&R Canal Watch, P.O. Box 2, Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553-0002. Dues can also be paid online at <https://canalwatch.org/join/>

For reasons of fiscal and environmental responsibility, newsletters will be posted on the Canal Watch website, [www.canalwatch.org](http://www.canalwatch.org), and emailed to members for whom we have email addresses. If you require a paper copy, please check here \_\_\_\_\_.

Volunteers are needed to lead walks/trips. Do you have computer, photography, or design skills that you are willing to use for the organization? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
Try me \_\_\_ (circle your skill)

## CANAL WATCH ACTIVITIES FOR 2020

www.canalwatch.org

www.dandrcanal.com

**THE CANAL WATCH ACTIVITIES FOR 2020 HAVE BEEN CANCELLED. ALTHOUGH THE D&R CANAL STATE PARK IS OPEN, OUR BOARD FEELS THAT IT WILL BE TOO CHALLENGING TO SPONSOR WALKS WITH GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHEN DISTANCING IS NECESSARY.**

**UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A SAFE, TESTED VACCINE HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED ACROSS THE NATION, WE WILL DISCONTINUE OUR ACTIVITIES FOR 2021 AS WELL. CHECK BACK WITH US LATER IN 2021 BY CLICKING:**

<https://canalwatch.org/events/>

## THE CANAL

Dear Canal

I have lived beside you  
four long decades  
walked there with daughters  
practiced woodcraft  
tugging myself away  
too long after sundown

into you, my tears have dropped  
and I have dipped hot hands  
to rest from paddling

yet never  
until this gelid day  
have I slid down your brief bank  
--setting first one boot, then the other  
onto your glimmer of surface

walked out to where it seemed I saw  
your great heart pulse  
and, deep in darkness,  
the quicksilver of fish



Photo by Mary Alessio Leck

CAROLYN FOOTE EDELMANN  
Winter 2005

# News from the D&R Canal Commission, the D&R Canal State Park, and the New Jersey Water Supply Authority

## Canal Commission's Report

At the September 16 meeting of the D&R Canal Commission, the members approved a new, mixed use structure in South Bound Brook at the corner of Main Street and Elm Street. This building replaces the Southside Restaurant, which has served customers for many years. The project area is a 0.59 acre triangular-shaped lot located at the convergence of Main and Elm streets in the Borough of South Bound Brook, Somerset County, approximately 168 feet south of the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

The commission also approved the Montgomery Township proposed municipal complex at the intersection of U.S./N.J. Highway Route No. 206 (Route 206) and Orchard Road in the Township of Montgomery, Somerset County, approximately 1.1 miles from the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

## Park Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Kalleser reported with regret that a member of her park maintenance staff had retired. The superintendent also reported that removal of ash trees (photo right) and ailanthus altissima (Tree of Heaven, photo below) will occur this fall in the vicinity of Lambertville and that park staff was communicating with officials of the City of Lambertville, including the mayor, the city clerk, and the business administrator, as well as park and recreation committee members.



Superintendent Kalleser reported that the DEP Division of Parks and Forestry had engaged in internal staff-level discussion regarding the proposed "Bulls Island Preserve" plan to reopen the northern section of the Bulls Island Recreation Area (see page one). Acting Director Madden reported that she had briefed DEP Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources Ray Bukowski on

the matter; he in turn requested a final internal meeting on the proposal. Acting Director Madden noted that this meeting would be followed by a stakeholder meeting (October 28). Director Madden stated that she anticipated an application to implement the plan to be submitted to the Commission in November.

The superintendent reported that discussions were on-going related to the disposition of the East Millstone bridgetender's station and that further discussions to arrive at a path forward would need to involve the participation of NJDOT, Somerset County and Franklin Township.

Superintendent Kalleser reported that a Frenchtown-to-Trenton Delaware and Raritan Canal Park clean-up would take place utilizing the services of approximately 150 volunteers. She noted that social distancing would be observed due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic.

Commissioner Lubitz inquired if any activities to suppress the spotted lanternfly (photo right) had been undertaken at the Bulls Island Recreation Area. He noted that the proliferation of the pest could have negative impacts for the vineyard located across State Highway 29 from the park. The superintendent reported that representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture had visited the recreation area recently, and that she would inquire about the status of such activities and report them to Director Hutchison.



Vice-Chairman Loos asked the superintendent for additional information about maintenance staffing to make up for the recent retirement of park personnel. Acting Director Madden responded that although additional staffing had been requested, no new hire requests were moving forward, and that the maintenance staff levels within the Division of Parks and Forestry were as low as they had ever been. The superintendent noted that additional retirements of Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park maintenance staff were likely in the near future. Commissioner Stout reported, based on discussion with former Director of Parks and Forestry Olivia Glenn, that the department was considering the implementation of a plan to solicit assistance from non-profit entities to assist with maintenance activities. Acting Director Madden stated that such a program was under

(continued on the next page)



review and had not been finalized. Commissioner Lubitz commended the park staff for the completion of path repairs in the Kingwood portion of the park path following Tropical Storm Isaias. Commissioner Lubitz also noted he had observed work being done within the park at a Delaware River tubing pick-up spot where tubers exit the river. He asked if any negotiations were taking place with the tubing company. Acting Director Madden responded by stating that she had nothing to report on this issue.

Vice-Chairman Loos requested of Acting Director Madden that the Commission be included in the discussions regarding the fate of the East Millstone bridgetender's station.

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report — Michael Sellar reported that the dredging project for the main portion of the Delaware and Raritan Canal in the area known as “Reach No. 5” would conclude during the current week. Mobilization to dredge the area denoted as “Reach No. 6” would commence thereafter. Dredging of the “Reach No. 6” area would occur from September 21 until approximately mid-November, after which time the dredging operations would halt and removal of dredge material would commence. Mr. Sellar reported that the dredging contractor restored Access Area I, at the Flemer Preserve in Somerset County.



Mr. Sellar reported that the contract for repairs at the Island Farm Weir was awarded and work would commence soon.

Mr. Sellar reported that the surveys of



those portions of the Delaware and Raritan Canal that had been treated for Hydrilla (photo left) revealed no new plant growth. He reported that the herbicide injection continued at a target dosing rate of 3 parts per billion and would continue until the alternative date of September 30.

Mr. Sellar reported that repair work on the western canal embankment repairs in the Borough of Stockton would begin tentatively in spring/summer of 2021. In addition, he reported that repairs of the embankment from Bulls Island to Prallsville Mills were in the design and permitting phase. He noted that these plans included a tree removal plan, which would allow for better maintenance of the narrow embankment between the Delaware and Raritan Feeder Canal and the Delaware River. Mr. Sellar anticipated that an application for the projects would be submitted to the Commission within the next six months.

Mr. Sellar reported that of the stormwater basins to be repaired in Franklin Township, four were completed with one, at Dellwood Lane, to be completed in the spring of 2021. Mr. Sellar reported that the Transco pipeline repair project in Ewing Township, Mercer County in the vicinity of Scudder Falls was completed by Transco's contractor in July, and that the project site was restored. Mr. Sellar reported that the Cedar Grove Brook watershed project had been put out for bid for engineering services.



The D&R Canal Watch is asking for your support for our activities that protect, maintain, and promote the recreational, historical, aesthetic, and environmental qualities of the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park. Over the past years, the Canal Watch has:

- Led history walks along both the main canal and the feeder, pointing out historic structures and Light Rail study tours
- Led history bike rides along the main canal and star-gazing events
- Sponsored bird watching walks along the main canal and bilingual nature walks
- Sponsored lectures on topics such as “The Role of the Delaware and Raritan Canal in the Growth of Trenton's Industrial Potteries,” “The Operation of the Joint Companies and the Interrelationship of the canal with the state’s first railroad,” “The Roebling Story,” “Photography Along the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park: Treasure in Central New Jersey,” “Meet Ashbel Welch, the second chief engineer of the Delaware and Raritan Canal,” and Jim Amon on how the canal and the park changed during his tenure with the commission.
- Purchased gifts that the park budget could not provide. These include a digital camera, seven picnic tables, several benches, a laptop computer and software, a desktop computer, an LED projector, an inflatable screen for outdoor viewing of videos, a subscription to the Meetup website, a scanner, printer ink, a water testing kit, an external computer drive, lumber for canoe dock at Griggstown, folding tables and twenty chairs for Bulls Island, development of a new park website, and professional courses for the maintenance staff.
- Canal interpretive signage at locks and spillways
- Activities in 2009 marking the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. These included “Meet the Canal Authors Day” and “The D&R Canal: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,” by Richard Hunter” walks, bike rides, canoe and kayak rides, “Hands Along the Canal,” and proclamations from our legislature.
- Examination of Lock 9 to determine the feasibility of reopening the lock to navigation
- Post-flood cleaning of canal structures in Griggstown, Zarephath, and East Millstone
- Painting over graffiti in East Millstone
- Repair of shutters on the East Millstone bridgetender’s home
- Straightening and painting of the outhouse at the East Millstone bridgetender’s home
- Staffing the East Millstone bridgetender’s home during the village’s Canalfest in October
- A photographic exhibit of the homes of bridgetenders and locktenders.
- Services of an information technology consultant for the park’s computers
- Funded classes to certify maintenance staff in small motor repair, applying herbicides, etc.
- Contacted legislators and the governor’s office to keep the parks open and retain the commission
- Facilitated the mothballing of an empty bridgetender’s home by buying lumber and painting the windows.

**Class of 2019-2020**

Theodore Chase (Griggstown)  
Tim Roth (Long Valley)  
Jeff McVey (Lambertville)  
Barbara Ross (Princeton)

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Tom Lederer (Princeton), publicity chair  
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Carl Hemmingsen, Bordentown  
Marion Munk (Piscataway)  
Wayne Petko (South Bound Brook)

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Robert Barth (Somerville)  
Michael Kaplan (Griggstown)  
Ellen Kaplan (Griggstown)  
Pamela V'Combe (Trenton), activities chair  
Charles Martin (Franklin Township)

**Officers**

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Vice President, Charles Martin  
Secretary, Wayne Petko  
Treasurer, Tom Lederer

**LOCAL EVENTS YOU MAY WISH TO ATTEND**

**November 12 – Virtual**

**7 PM, How Many Wildflowers Can You Grow in a Sourland Mountain Garden? with Juanita Hummel.** Gardening on the Sourland Mountain can be a challenge! The landscape is sprinkled with giant boulders, the topsoil is shallow, rocky, acidic and sometimes soggy, and there are too many hungry deer living in the woods. Here are some tips on what to try based on 35 years of experience with all of the above mini-ecosystems in our Sourland Mountain yard. The focus of the talk will be primarily on native plants, most native to the Sourlands, as well as their role in the ecosystem. Sign up via <http://tiny.cc/SC2020Train>

**November 14 — The Road to Victory at Yorktown – The Washington-Rochambeau Trail through Mercer County**

On November 14, 2020, at 1:00 pm, the Trent House Association will present an illustrated talk outlining the Continental Army’s historic march through Mercer County to the final battle of the Revolutionary War at Yorktown in 1781. This virtual program will be given by local historian David Bosted via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/32UKTzr> with questions and answers following. The route of the march from Massachusetts to Virginia follows the roads and waterways taken by the troops of General Washington and French General Rochambeau, passing through Mercer County. Mr. Bosted’s talk will describe the route through Mercer County, highlighting the role played by Trenton and the Trent House. He will also illustrate how posters can promote this important part of New Jersey’s history as the nation looks ahead to the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration of the American Revolution in

2026.

For more information, visit <https://williamtrenthouse.org>.

**November 22** — The Somerset County Historical Society invites you to join us for a casual hike in the Wetland Mitigation Lands along the Raritan River near Manville. (It was once the front yard of the Van Veghten farm, now our headquarters.)

When: Sunday, November 22 at 2 PM

Where: Meet at Van Veghten House National Historic Site, 9 Van Veghten Drive, Bridgewater, NJ 08907

Why: Exercise, enjoying nature, learning a little about the history of the land, birding, wild flower observation, meeting new friends. Each season has its own surprises.

The route is on level ground and can take 45 minutes to 1.5 hours depending on the route we choose. If the weather has been wet, it can be a bit muddy. Pets on a leash welcome.