

2024 Calendar of Events

The D&R Canal Watch is happy to announce the many celebratory events that will be held throughout 2024.

At each of these events we will sell our brand-new mug for a mere \$10. As always, the money will be used for projects that enhance our historic D&R Canal State Park.

Sunday, February 4: 10:00 a.m. Towpath Walk, Demott Lane to Landing Lane. 4.2 miles roundtrip. Meet at Demott Lane off Easton Avenue, Franklin Township. (GPS 1289 Easton Avenue, Somerset NJ 08873). View work on the Landing Lane bridge. Leader: Bob Barth, 201-401-3121; bbarth321@aol.com.

Saturday, March 9: 10:00 a.m. until about 1 p.m. Geology walk and talk along the D&R Feeder Canal near Scudder Falls. Meet at the Scudder Falls parking lot just off Route 29 (River Road), near the intersection of River Road and Bernard Drive, Ewing. Much of the walk will be along the tow path, however, walk will include short hikes up and down steep hills to view rock outcrops. Walk led by Pierre Lacombe, retired USGS geologist, pjlacombe25@gmail.com

Saturday, March 23: 10:00 a.m. History Bike Ride, Griggstown Causeway to Kingston, 10 miles roundtrip on the D&R Canal towpath. Explore the structures along the D&R Canal with Canal Watch trustee Bob Barth. Meet in the causeway parking lot in Griggstown. Bring water; helmet required. Allow three hours. Leader: Bob Barth, 201-401-3121, bbarth321@aol.com.

Sunday, April 7: 10:00 a.m. Towpath Walk, Weston Canal lot to East Millstone, 4.2 miles roundtrip. See the spillway at Somerset County's Colonial Park and the newly restored bridgetender's station in East Millstone. Leader: Bob Barth, 201-401-3121, bbarth321@aol.com.

Saturday, April 13: 2:00 p.m. Nature Walk: Meet at the historic Van Wickle House off Easton Avenue at the foot of DeMott Lane (GPS 1289 Easton Avenue, Somerset NJ 08873). See and hear Baltimore and Orchard Orioles and other nesting songbirds as we walk along the D&R Canal and identify the nature around us. Leaders: Herve and Anne Barrier, hb9955@gmail.com, 908-670-5743.

Sunday, June 16: 2:00 p.m. Canal Watch Annual Meeting. Capt. Bill McKelvey, canal and railroad historian, will present a slide program on the D&R Canal. In 1976, Captain Bill wrote *The Delaware & Raritan Canal: A Pictorial History*, a photographic treasure trove of historic views of our canal. Two years later he followed that successful book with *Champlain to Chesapeake: A Canal Era Pictorial Cruise*, which included many photos of the D&R as well as the other inland waterways along the East Coast.

Location: Fellowship Hall behind the Griggstown Reformed Church. Use the GPS address of 1065 Canal Road, Princeton (even though it is nowhere near Princeton). For information, call Linda Barth, 908-240-0488; barthlinda123@aol.com.

Sunday, July 28: Canal Road Walk and Roll. 10:00-4:00. Canal Road closed from East Millstone to Butler Road. Enjoy a day with friends and family along the scenic D&R Canal with no cars! For more information, please call 732-873-1991, option 4.

Sunday, August 25: Canal Road Walk and Roll. 10:00-4:00. Canal Road closed from Griggstown Causeway to Route 518 in Rocky Hill. **Meet Gen. Washington as he prepares to march with the army to Yorktown, VA.** Enjoy a day with friends and family along the scenic D&R Canal with no cars! For more information, please call 732-873-1991, option 4.

Saturday-Sunday, October 12-13: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday; noon to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. **Somerset County's Journey Through the Past.** Canal Watch members will open the East Millstone bridgetender's home and station (and the historic outhouse, for observation only). Linda Barth, 908-240-0488; barthlinda123@aol.com.

Saturday, October 19: For the October 19 finale of the anniversary year, we are honored to host **James C. Amon**. Jim was the first executive director of the D&R Canal Commission. He will paint a picture of where we were in the 1970s and where we were in the early 2000s when he retired from the commission. At that time the D&R Canal State Park was the most frequently visited state park in NJ. The commission started with virtually no money (the first several annual appropriations were \$50,000—a sum that even then was small), no recognition (almost no one knew that there was a D&R Canal, much less a canal commission) and a fair amount of hostility toward the idea that a separate commission had all this power. (The hostility came from the surrounding municipalities, the surrounding counties, the Division of Parks and Forestry and the NJ Water Supply Authority.) Jim was able to work with all of them and create the wonderful park that we all know today.

Location: Prallsville Mills, on Route 29, just north of the village of Stockton.. Linda Barth, 908-240-0488; barthlinda123@aol.com.

Sunday, November 10: 10:00 a.m. Towpath Walk, Demott Lane to Landing Lane, 4.2 miles. Meet at the historic Van Wickle House off Easton Avenue at the foot of DeMott Lane (GPS 1289 Easton Avenue, Somerset NJ 08873). Leader: Bob Barth, 201-401-3121, bbarth321@aol.com.

In addition to the above activities sponsored by the D&R Canal Watch, you can see the D&R Canal State Park programs at this link:
<https://dandrcanal.org/programs>

Trail interpreter Pamela V'Combe will begin her series of walks in April.

Pamela V'Combe
Trail interpreter



**New Jersey shore was the target of German U-boats.
See New York Times article about the D&R on the next page.**

The fiery months that followed would pit German U-boat sailors against American servicemen in a desperate battle that stained East Coast waters with oil and blood. Thousands perished as hundreds of ships were sunk. Plying the seas amid this deadly cat-and-mouse game was a stalwart contingent of civilian mariners who crewed the tankers and freighters supplying the war against the Axis powers.

Numerous US coastal states became battlefronts in 1942, and the events that transpired off New Jersey illustrate the brutality and devastation of this pivotal but forgotten campaign. Today, the seafloor along the Garden State is strewn with shipwrecks attesting to the innumerable ways to die faced by friend and foe alike only miles from the boardwalk. Though these seafarers' lives were forfeit, the battle they fought would decide the fate of millions.

Kyle A. Nelson would be honored to make himself available for any sort of event, whether a presentation/Q&A or interview of some kind. The focus would be entirely on the subject of the book (not about him). If there is interest in a presentation, he can also tailor its focus as desired (for example, life for civilians along the Shore during this time). Interested parties may contact Kyle Nelson at 267-326-3160 or via email at KyleANelson1@gmail.com. His website is www.ka-nelson.com.



German U-boat. Courtesy of reddit.com

Delay on Delaware-Raritan Canal Assailed as Adding to War Perils

Joseph Sterling Says Vital Link in Inland Route May Be Badly Needed if U-Boat Attacks Continue

The failure of United States Army engineers to approve the modernizing of the Delaware and Raritan Canal, between Bordentown and New Brunswick, N. J., may seriously penalize the nation if its Eastern transportation problem becomes urgent as a result of the war, it was declared yesterday by Joseph Sterling, New York lawyer and chairman of the State of New Jersey Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission.

In a statement reviewing the commission's efforts for the past eight years to gain approval for deepening, widening and modernizing the canal, Mr. Sterling declared that "we cannot condemn in too strong language the inertia of the Army engineers in reaching no decision concerning this greatly needed improvement."

The commission and civic and private interests have urged action on the canal since 1933, and in June of 1941, before a board of Army engineers in Washington, appealed earlier rejection and asked for action in view of the impending national emergency. No action has been taken on the appeal.

Now, Mr. Sterling declared, the need for the waterway, which would complete the inland route

from Florida to New York, is being emphasized by the continuing attacks on tankers and other vessels off the American Atlantic coast.

The commission said that several years ago the canal could have been deepened to twelve feet for about \$22,000,000, but that today it would cost some \$5,000,000 or \$6,000,000 more.

"The loss of time is far more regrettable than the additional cost," Mr. Sterling said. "The U-boat menace may for a time abate; it is possible that it may grow worse. It may recur if the war is protracted; railroads will be taxed to their limit. We will then realize what our short-sightedness has cost us, when bulk freight so necessary for our national safety is 'bottlenecked' for lack of transportation."

Representative Joseph J. Mansfield, chairman of the Rivers and Harbors Committee of the House, had approved the project, Mr. Sterling said, and has pointed out that the canal would provide the final link in an inland route from Florida to the Great Lakes.

"Probably the most important industrial stretch in the world lies between Philadelphia and New York, and this final link is unused," Mr. Sterling added.

The New York Times

Published: February 15, 1942
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2025 CANAL WATCH CALENDAR

Your Canal Photography is Needed for the Canal Watch 2025 Calendar

The 2024 D&R has sold out and we are now accepting photographs for the 2025 edition.

1. The calendar pages are 12” by 12.” In order to print an image this size from your digital camera at a resolution necessary to make a quality print (300 pixels per inch), your image needs to measure 3,600 pixels by 3,600 pixels, i.e., 300 pixels per inch times 12 inches = 3,600 pixels. You should check your smart phone for information about the number of megapixels that are in the photos taken with your camera. Currently, most smart phone cameras do not provide an image that will print a 12” by 12” image at a required print resolution of 300 ppi (pixels per inch).

2. Since our historic waterway is a place that you can visit often, consider visiting the canal in different light, especially early morning and at dusk.

3. Remember that it’s a 70-mile park. Perhaps visit a section that you have not seen before.



We urge you to start shooting and send your images by June 30 to Linda Barth at barthlinda123@aol.com. In your email, please provide the location and date of each image. Photos can come from any year.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS YEAR, EACH PHOTOGRAPHER MAY SEND NO MORE THAN FIVE IMAGES, SO CHOOSE WISELY.

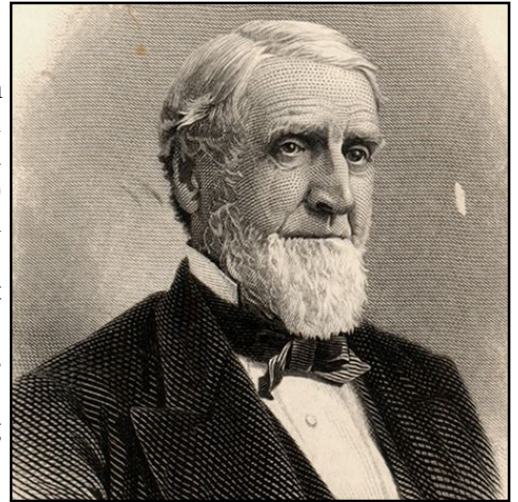
“Taking Cover,” by Sandra Shapiro

From the National Canal Museum — Who Was Asa Packer?

Asa Packer (right) was born on December 29, 1805, in Mystic, Connecticut. His family's poverty limited his formal education. In 1822, he walked more than 200 miles to a cousin's home in Pennsylvania to apprentice as a carpenter. Eleven years later and still so poor he travelled by foot, Packer arrived in Mauch Chunk and leased a canalboat from the Lehigh Coal & Navigation (LCN) Company. Income from his first boat season let Packer lease a second boat.

Then he opened a general store and boatyard and built a fleet of canal boats. In 1837, Packer built some of the massive locks in the LCN's Upper Grand section, which cemented his fortune and his standing in the community and the anthracite industry.

In 1851, Packer bought controlling interest in a floundering



railroad, renamed and rebuilt it. By 1855, the Lehigh Valley Railroad (LVRR) connected the coal docks at Mauch Chunk with Easton, and Packer was on his way to becoming the wealthiest man in Pennsylvania. You can visit his home (left) in Mauch Chunk (now called Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania). The mansion was built in 1861 by Philadelphia architect, Samuel Sloan; it was constructed over a span of two years and cost a total of \$14,000 dollars. Topped by a red-ribbed tin roof and a central cupola, or belvedere, the home was built over a cast-iron frame and

consists of three stories, 18 rooms and approximately 11,000 square feet of living space.

Visit www.asapackermansion.com/.

Though still firmly in charge of the railroad, Packer's later years were dedicated to philanthropy. Recognizing the need to train American engineers, he founded Lehigh University with a bequest of \$500,000 and land; later he donated \$400,000 to build the Linderman Library at Lehigh in memory of his daughter. In 1876, he donated land for the Lehigh Valley's first hospital, St. Luke's, and endowed it with \$300,000. Packer died in Philadelphia on May 17, 1879; generous bequests in his will sustained his support of these and other institutions long afterward.



Lehigh Canal lock at Walnutport, Pennsylvania

Class of 2020-2023

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

Class of 2022-2025

Linda Barth (Somerville)
Robert Barth (Somerville)

Christopher "Kip" Bateman (Branchburg)
Barbara ten Broeke (East Millstone)

Class of 2021-2024

Tom Lederer (Princeton)
Marion Munk (Piscataway)
Wayne Petko (South Bound Brook)
Charles Martin (Franklin Township)

EVENTS YOU MAY WISH TO ATTEND



Celebrating Black History Month ~ 2024

The Abraham Staats House Presents

*"An Award-Winning Program for Excellence in History & Education" ~
Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission*

"Tory Jack Day"

**Featuring: Mr. Joseph Becton's
"African Americans During the American Revolution"**

Saturday, Feb.10, 2024 10:30AM - 1:30PM

17 von Steuben Lane, South Bound Brook, NJ 08880



The Friends of Abraham Staats House and South Bound Brook Historic Preservation Advisory Commission are delighted to once again present the "Tory Jack Day" program at the Abraham Staats House.

The house will open for seating at 10:30AM. At 11AM: Our featured performer at this event for two decades, Joe Becton, renowned historian, and former National Park Service Interpretive Specialist, gives a special presentation, "African Americans During the American Revolution." Seating is limited, advance reservations encouraged. After his program, enjoy light refreshments and tour the historic Abraham Staats House until close at 1:30PM.

Admission - \$10 (in-person or Zoom) 18 & under - Free.

Advance Reservations encouraged for in-person or Zoom attendance, at:

Eventbrite or www.staatshouse.org By Phone: 732-369-3583

Please allow a two-week notice for accessibility and assistive services requests.

In celebration of Black History Month: Visit www.staatshouse.org to view a special video "The Old Kitchen at the Abraham Staats House: A Window into Slavery in New Jersey."

Friends of Abraham Staats House, Inc.

17 von Steuben Lane, South Bound Brook, NJ 08880

E-mail: info@staatshouse.org Website: www.staatshouse.org

Tel: 732-369-3583 Mail: PO Box 115, South Bound Brook, NJ 08880



The Friends of Abraham Staats House, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which has received grant support made possible by funds from the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and New Jersey Historical Commission and the Borough of South Bound Brook.

Canal Watch Calendar of Events

To see our events for 2024, please check page two and three of this issue.

We have been sending the Canal Watch newsletter by email so that you can read it in **COLOR**. You also have one less item to recycle. If you would like a black-and-white paper copy, please write to Linda Barth at barthlinda123@aol.com and she will mail a printed copy to you.



Lock 10 near Zarephath
Robert H. Barth

Board of Trustees

Linda Barth, president
Charles Martin, vice president
Wayne Petko, secretary
Tom Lederer, treasurer
Robert Barth
Christopher "Kip" Bateman
Ted Chase
Jeff McVey
Marion Munk
Barbara Ross
Tim Roth
Barbara ten Broeke

The D&R Canal Watch
P.O. Box 2
Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553
908-240-0488

www.canalwatch.org
<https://www.facebook.com/dandrcanalwatch/>
info@canalwatch.org

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.

News from the D&R Canal Commission meeting, November 29, 2023

Executive Director's Report

Director Hutchison reported on the Commission workload for the period encompassing October 18, 2023, to November 28, 2023. In addition to the six projects listed on the meeting notice, staff issued 24 deficient staff reports, 10 jurisdictional determinations, 4 certificates of approval, and 7 general permits. In addition to those matters, staff organized and conducted 11 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects. As of November 28, 2023, there were 22 projects undergoing staff review.

Director Hutchison stated that fee collections totaled \$23,600 for the month. He stated that this was less than the \$34,800 collected in November 2022 and the \$65,975 collected in November 2021. With five months of the fiscal year completed, the Commission had collected \$149,375 of the \$650,000 anticipated appropriation. Since this would entail collecting slightly more than \$71,000 per month between now and June 30, 2024, it was, in the estimation of the Director, unlikely that fee revenues would meet the anticipated appropriation amount.

The director stated that the Commission had engaged two temporary employees from the local area who would work on a part-time basis scanning the Commission's documents using the new Ricoh large document scanner that was acquired last month. Director Hutchison stated his intention to vigorously attack the accumulated files and preserve them in electronic format in the coming months.

Director Hutchison reported that, on October 30, he and Darlene Yuhas met with Bill White of the DEP Office of Resource Development (ORD) regarding the Commission Master Plan update. He stated that Mr. White volunteered his expertise in the development and preparation of RFP documents to the Commission so that it could prepare the most concise document outlining what the Commission would need from any potential bidder interested in undertaking the Master Plan update project.

Park Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Rojewski reported that the ORD continues to work with the DOT to further investigate the sinkhole found behind the grist mill adjacent to Wickecheoke Creek at the Prallsville Mills. ORD and NJDOT will investigate the cause of the sinkhole, identify compromised subsurface utility and infrastructure, and initiate emergency repairs. She stated she would provide additional information as available.

She reported on another sinkhole discovered in July 2023 by a homeowner at Easton Avenue in South Bound Brook, adjacent to the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and the canal. Following assessment of the site conducted by the NJWSA and the State Park Service, it was determined that the collapsed pipe, which caused the sinkhole, was not State infrastructure. South Bound Brook subsequently determined it was not municipal infrastructure, and it was likely that the pipe was a drainage feature installed by a property owner without the required permitting. She stated that infrastructure repair and backfill activities were completed in November by the State Park Service and ORD, with support from NJDOT.

Superintendent Rojewski reported that the Griggstown Lockett's House and Visitor Center was winterized by park maintenance staff on November 17, 2023. She reported that park staff were engaged in preparation for the upcoming winter season, including snow plowing equipment checks and purchasing equipment and materials as needed.

The superintendent reported that Transco Pipeline recently notified the Park Service that it has begun excavation work to access the pipeline/install infrastructure upgrade in an easement on Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park property in Ewing Township. No closures or impacts to the towpath are expected at this time; however, the superintendent stated that construction equipment was being staged in areas adjacent to the trail. It was anticipated that the project would be completed by the end of December. The superintendent reported that all permitting, including securing a right-of-entry agreement, was completed by the easement holder. She further reported that Park Service staff were visited by the WPIX-11 television news team and DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette as part of a news segment highlighting the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park as one of New Jersey's most visited State parks, in addition to being a treasured historical resource. Park Historian Vicki Chirco delivered an interview highlighting the rich history of the canal. The superintendent stated that she would share a link to a video of the segment. That link is here: Here's the link: [A New Jersey gem: Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park \(pix11.com\)](https://www.wpix.com/news/2023/11/29/a-new-jersey-gem-delaware-and-raritan-canal-state-park-pix11-com/)

You may take part in the monthly commission meetings either in person or online. Visit www.nj.gov/dep/drcc and click on "Meeting Information." Then click on "Upcoming Meeting Notice." The D&RCC meets at 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. The public is allowed to comment on the proceedings. In-person meetings have resumed; they are held at Prallsville Mills on Route 29, just north of Stockton.



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:

- **Restored the Kingston canoe/kayak boat launch**
- **Paid for the conditions assessment and the engineering drawings for the East Millstone and Griggstown bridgetender stations.**
- **Working with the park, we posted signage at six locations to help visitors find their way through Trenton.**
- 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.
- Sponsored star-gazing and solar observation events.
- Sponsored bird watching walks along the main canal and bilingual nature walks
- Installed and facilitated canal interpretive signage at locks and spillways
- Activities in 2009 marking the 175th 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.
- Installed Kaya-Arms on docks to facilitate entering and exiting kayaks
- Funding the park’s website and continued updating
- Paying the dues for the Meetup site used for announcing park activities

Canal Watch Achievements (continued)

- 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 maintenance of the site at the rate of \$50 per month, and professional courses for the maintenance staff.

Renew your Membership for 2024



We would like to remind our members to please renew their membership. You can do so online by visiting www.canalwatch.org and clicking on “Join” at the top right.

Please wait a few seconds for the membership form to appear. When you click “Submit,” you will be taken to the payment page. If you prefer to pay by check, please make it payable to D&R Canal Watch and mail it to the Canal Watch at P.O. Box 2, Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553.

Alternately, you may use the form below and mail it with your check.

D&R Canal Watch 2024 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, 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? Would you like to join the Wednesday Work Crew? May we call on you? Yes ___ No ___ Try me ___ (circle your skill)