



MAKING CONNECTIONS

*Investing in a Vibrant Economic Future in the Region at
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area*



ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS AND REPORT

Michele L. Archie
Howard D Terry
The Harbinger Consulting Group
www.harbingerconsult.com

NPCA PROJECT ADVISORS

Joy Oakes
Oliver Spellman
Cortney Worrall

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Download

Download this report and the accompanying technical report, which includes detail about the economic analysis and references to information sources used in this report:

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2

STUDY REGION MAP 3

INTRODUCTION: Why is Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Extraordinary? 4

FINDINGS: Economic Benefits of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area 6

A BRIGHTER FUTURE: Leveraging and Enhancing the Park’s Economic Contributions..... 11

- Strengthen Local Awareness of, and Collaboration around, the Park..... 11
- Focus Joint Promotional Efforts around the Park 13
- Strengthen the Park’s Identity as Part of the National Park System 13
- Leverage Park Assets and Opportunities..... 14
- Fill the Gap in Park Resources..... 14
- Build on Local Efforts to Conserve Natural Functions Anchored by the Park..... 14

DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT MAP 16

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: The Next Fifty Years 20

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As Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area begins its sixth decade as part of America’s National Park System, this report assesses the national park’s economic benefits and its value to the broader region. It also identifies challenges and opportunities to sustain and enhance its significance.

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Front Cover (Top Left) Bald eagle soars above the Delaware River. © Kenneth Canning | ISTOCKPHOTO **(Top Middle)** Historic building in Millbrook Village, New Jersey, one of several historic districts and town sites within the park. © Gary718 | Dreamstime.com **(Top Right)** Winter kayaker in the park. © Steve Greer **(Bottom):** Park visitor enjoys scenic views of the Delaware River upstream and Mt. Minisi in Pennsylvania from Mt. Tammany in New Jersey. © Richard Mirro | ISTOCKPHOTO **Left:** Fulmer Falls at historic Child’s Park in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. NPS Photo

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Understanding and Enhancing the Economic Significance of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

CARL WILGUS

President/CEO
Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau
Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania



Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area lends economic vitality to a region that covers five counties—Sussex and Warren counties in New Jersey, and Monroe, Northampton, and Pike counties in Pennsylvania. Each year:

- Park visitor spending supports 1,750 local jobs and puts \$2.5 million into local and state government coffers.
- National Park Service employment supports \$1.9 million in local wages.
- Every \$1 of federal government investment in the park yields \$24 in sales at local businesses.
- Because the park remains largely forested and undeveloped, it provides ecosystem goods and services such as clean water, reduced floods, fish and wildlife habitat, and carbon storage. Even the best technology and human ingenuity could not fully replace these natural benefits—and it would cost more than \$159 million to come close.

Just as important to the region's economy are the park's values as a community partner and as an anchor in a larger landscape of conserved and natural areas.

Research and consultation with local business, government, conservation, and other community leaders and park staff revealed opportunities to protect and expand its economic significance and overall value to the community over time.

These opportunities are outlined in recommendations that begin on page 11.

These recommendations—and the opportunities and challenges to which they are connected—boil down to three fundamental points:

- 1. Enhancing the values supported by the park depends on a broader recognition** of the park's contributions, and recognizing and strengthening the network of supportive relationships that undergird those contributions.
- 2. The continued vitality of the park as an economic engine in the region depends on maintaining and enhancing connections among public and private conserved lands.** The area's clean water, inspiring scenic beauty, productive fish and wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and other essential values will suffer if the park becomes an island of protected land in an increasingly developed region with isolated natural areas.
- 3. The park thrives—and its economic significance grows—when it is strongly connected to, and working in concert with, neighboring communities, businesses, and other formal and informal partners.** Strengthening these relationships will foster additional economic benefits, and a sense of pride, ownership, and partnership that will benefit the park—and the community—well into the future.



Milford, Pennsylvania. The region's charming towns and amenities invite visitors to relax and stay a while.

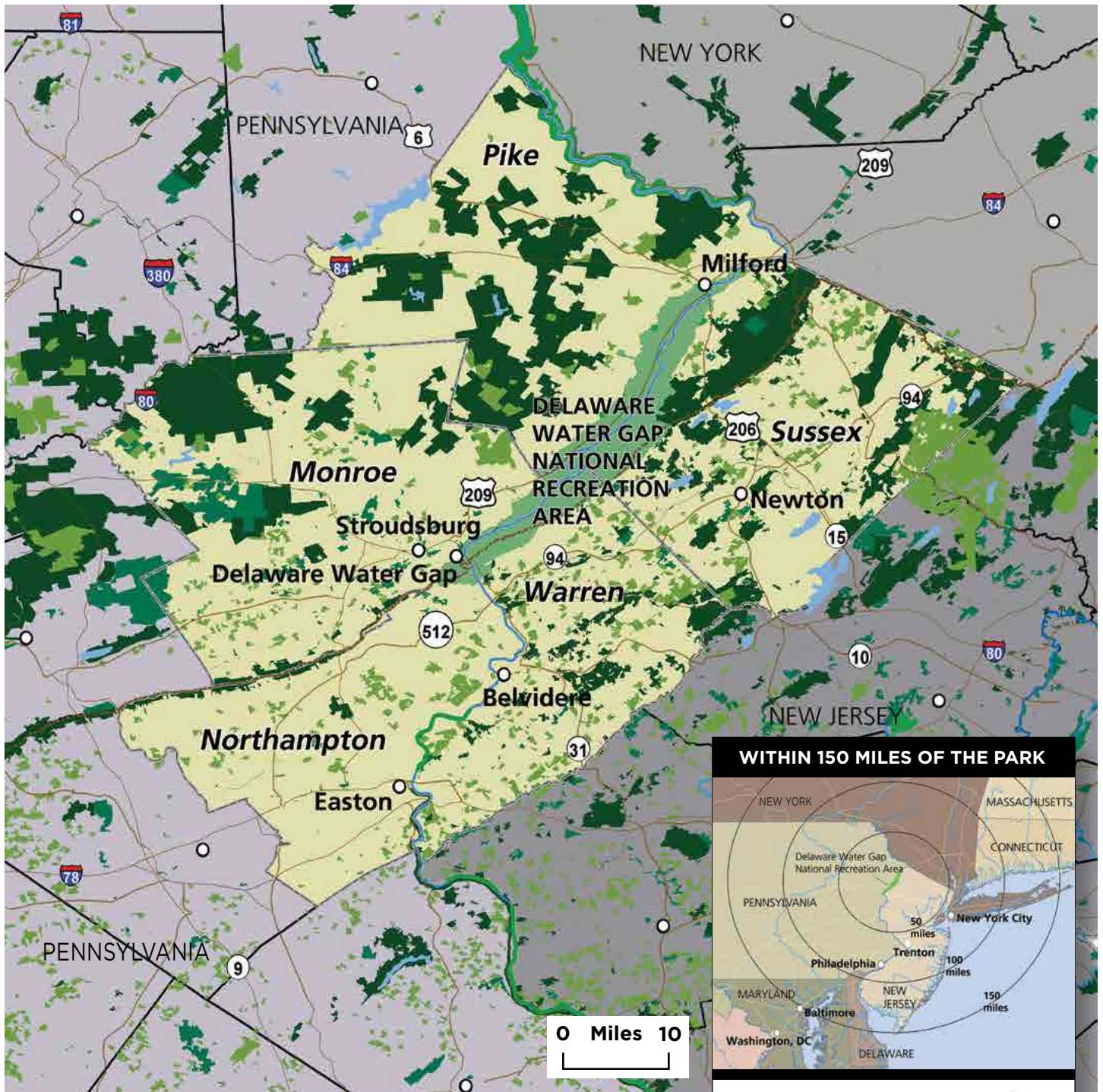
© Nicholas A. Tonelli | Wiki Creative Commons

More than a third of the employment in the Pocono Mountains is tied to the tourism and hospitality industry, so we know that as our destination draws more visitation we will also need to work harder to maintain the values that made us so attractive from the beginning.

Here in the Pocono Mountains, that means emphasizing genuine hospitality, and just as important, preserving the region's natural environment and small-town character.

These are goals we share with our neighbors in New Jersey and New York, and there is a lot more we can do collaboratively across state lines to promote both economic development and resource preservation. When it comes to man versus nature, both sides can win.


© Jill Nobles
Smile Peace Love Photography



DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA AND THE FIVE-COUNTY STUDY REGION

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area lends economic vitality to a region that covers five counties in two states—Sussex and Warren counties in New Jersey, and Monroe, Northampton, and Pike counties in Pennsylvania. Differences in population, visitor services, recreational access, and other variables mean that the economic influences of the park are felt differently throughout this large and diverse area.

- Five-county study area
- Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
- Other National Park Service designation
- State and federal conserved land
- County parks and conserved land
- Private conserved land



Map by Dan Servian

KRISTIN MULLER

Executive Director
Peters Valley School of Craft
Layton, New Jersey

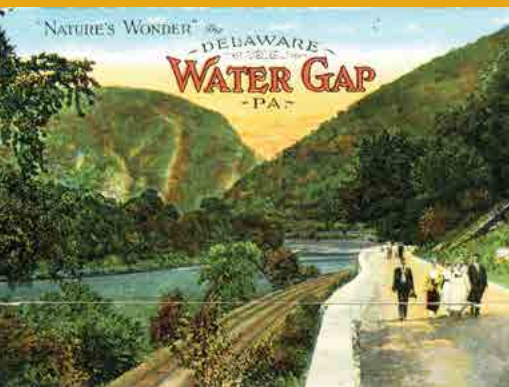


Peters Valley School of Craft has existed in this natural and historic oasis for 45 years.

Organizations like ours and other park partners help make the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area a national treasure.

None of us could do it alone—but working together, we bring a whole range of benefits to the park, local residents and visitors, the historical buildings inside the park, and the area's sense of history and culture.

© Karli B. Scott



Delaware Water Gap has long been known as a destination for visitors seeking a natural respite from city life. Courtesy of Lew Hoy collection

.....
Out-of-town visitors to Delaware Water Gap spend over \$120 million annually in the region.

INTRODUCTION

Why is Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Extraordinary?

One of the last large undammed rivers in the lower 48 states, the Delaware River flows freely 300 miles along its main stem from Hancock, New York to the Atlantic Ocean at Delaware Bay. The river divides Pennsylvania from its eastern neighbors—New York and New Jersey—and flows between New Jersey and Delaware before reaching the ocean.

The Delaware River is many rivers in one. The Upper Delaware supports one of the country's best cold-water trout fisheries. The Lower Delaware is broad, tidal, and active with commercial ship traffic. In between, the Middle Delaware leaves the Appalachian Plateau at Port Jervis, New York, and flows for 40 miles through a narrow valley surrounded by heavily forested hills and mountains.

This middle stretch of the Delaware River—dotted with islands and fed by waterfall-stepped streams—ends dramatically at the Delaware Water Gap. Here, the river slices through a narrow cleft in what was a continuous ridge more than 400 million years ago. The Water Gap is flanked by the ends of the now-interrupted Kittatinny Ridge: Mount Minsi in Pennsylvania and Mount Tammany in New Jersey.

This extraordinary 40-mile stretch of one of the cleanest rivers in the United States flows through the heart of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area—one of the country's most-visited national park areas.¹

THE WATER GAP AND BEYOND

In the heyday of Victorian resort tourism, visitors from New York and Philadelphia were enticed to travel for a day by train or trolley to experience the Delaware Water Gap—promoted as the “eighth scenic wonder of the world.” Even then, the Water Gap was as much a gateway as a destination, inviting travelers to stay and relax in the natural beauty of the surrounding area.

Since 1965, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area has invited visitors to enjoy 40 miles of free-flowing river and some 70,000 acres of forests and floodplains, waterfalls and marshes, beaches and mountain terrain.

Each year, between four and five million visitors accept this invitation. As in the late 1800s, the area's slower pace, scenic beauty, and recreational opportunities draw city-dwellers and suburbanites from two of the country's largest metropolitan areas. Twenty-five million residents of the Philadelphia and New York City metropolitan areas are able to leave urban life and, after driving a couple hours, arrive at the recreation area, which is part of the National Park System.²

TODAY'S PARK

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area spent much of its first 50 years in the long shadow of the controversial, then abandoned, Tocks Island Dam project. Decades ago, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers acquired land upstream of the Water Gap for a proposed reservoir. Congress designated the national recreation area in 1965. When plans to build the dam were dropped, nearly 70,000 acres remained under National Park Service administration. From residents' emotions about giving up their homes to clear the way for the now-abandoned reservoir, to more than 1,000 buildings the Park Service was given to manage, this history has shaped the park profoundly.

Today, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area has evolved into a remarkably diverse park. National Park Service stewardship extends to 500 aboriginal and pre-Colonial archaeological sites, fossil sites, a large museum collection and archive, 700 buildings, 160 miles of road, 175 miles of trail, and five historical districts—plus the visitor centers, picnic areas, beaches, signs, parking areas, and staff that are the starting points for most visitors' park experiences.



The park has built a network of supportive partnerships essential to its operation and its ability to serve visitors. Nearly 20 formal partnerships and several dozen informal partnerships cover law enforcement, infrastructure maintenance, restoration and care of historic structures, and educational programming. Significant opportunities remain for additional partnerships.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The 50th anniversary of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in 2015 and the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016 invite reflection on the past—and a focus on the future. These anniversaries offer the opportunity for the park, its partners, and nearby communities to come together to conserve and enhance the region’s natural and cultural assets anchored by the national park.

This report provides a window into economic relationships between the park and nearby communities and businesses. It aims to help foster and inform productive conversations and actions to shape the

next 50 years for Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the region.

At the heart of this report is an analysis of economic impacts of park visitation in nearby communities.² These are perhaps the most apparent and easily measured of the park’s economic influences. This report also explores the park’s value as an employer, facilities and land manager, and community partner.

The report also takes a broad view, looking at influences that can be more difficult to quantify—such as the value of the natural assets the park protects, of the larger natural landscape to which the park is connected, and of qualities that are important to year-round and seasonal residents. A review of existing studies and plans, interviews with local experts, and consultation with park staff and community leaders including business owners and tourism promoters provide a broad and rich context for understanding the park’s economic importance well beyond its obvious role in attracting visitors.

Above: Of the 15 million people who rely on the Delaware River basin for clean drinking water, more than half—8 million—receive theirs directly from the forested middle and upper Delaware, which yields water of exceptionally high quality exceeding most standards. Special protections work to keep these waters clean.

© Alex Potemkin | ISTOCKPHOTO

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The 50th anniversary of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in 2015 and the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016 invite reflection on the past—and a focus on the future.

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NOTES

1. Much of the length of the Delaware River is protected within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, which was created by Congress to safeguard the natural, cultural, and recreational values of rivers across the country. As it flows through the park, most of the Delaware River is recognized as a National Scenic River, while a shorter stretch near the Water Gap is designated as a National Recreational River. Upstream and downstream, other stretches of the river are administered by the National Park Service and supporting partners in the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, and the Lower Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.
2. “Park” and “national park” are used throughout this report to refer to Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, one of more than 400 parks in America’s National Park System.

FINDINGS

\$1 FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN THE PARK
= \$24 SALES AT LOCAL BUSINESSES

Economic Benefits of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

Tourism and recreation are big business in the region around Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Between 1998 and 2012, tourism employment grew 26 percent in the five-county study region (Sussex and Warren in New Jersey, and Monroe, Northampton, and Pike in Pennsylvania). According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, in 2012 nearly one of every five private-sector jobs in the region was in an industry related to travel and tourism.

The most obvious, and certainly the largest, economic influence of the park is the role it plays in attracting visitors and providing a variety of activities for them to enjoy while in the area.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PARK VISITATION

For the past 20 years, park visitation has been relatively consistent at between four and five million people annually. About two-thirds of these visitors travel from outside the five counties included in the

study area. In 2014, these out-of-town visitors spent some \$120 million in the five-county region.

These purchases supported \$168 million in sales for area businesses and more than 1,750 local jobs. These visitors added \$2.5 million in hotel and sales tax revenue to state and local government coffers.¹

Local residents spent \$18 million visiting the park in 2014—for example, renting canoes, or buying gas and lunch—contributing significant revenue to local businesses.

In 2013, automatic federal spending cuts triggered by Congress (the “sequester”) forced a variety of cuts in park services. Responding to proposed closures of two of the park’s most popular destinations—Kittatinny Point in New Jersey and Milford Beach in Pennsylvania—private organizations donated \$121,000 to keep these river access areas open through the busy summer season. Five local canoe liveries contributed \$20,000 of that total.



Each year, volunteers log more than 110,000 hours at the national park—the equivalent of nearly 53 full-time workers. These volunteer efforts contribute the equivalent of \$2.6 million in time and services, and add value to all areas of park stewardship and operations. © NPS Photo

Annual Economic Benefits Add Up

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area yields significant economic benefits for five neighboring counties*

	Sales at Area Businesses	Local Jobs Supported	Wages and Salaries	
Impact from Out-of-Town Park Visitors	\$168 million	1751 Jobs	\$75 million	In 2014, 2.95 million out-of-area travelers spent \$120 million visiting the park.
Impact from Local Park Visitors	\$26 million	266 Jobs	\$12 million	In 2014, 1.1 million locals spent \$18 million visiting the park.
Impact from National Park Service Employment	\$25 million	215 Jobs	\$10 million	In FY 2013, the National Park Service spent \$7.6 million on payroll.
TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	\$219 million	2232 Jobs	\$97 million	

*Counties include: Sussex and Warren in New Jersey; Monroe, Northampton and Pike in Pennsylvania

IMPACTS OF PARK EMPLOYMENT

National Park Service staff at Delaware Water Gap includes about 100 year-round, full-time employees, and 70 seasonal workers. Most live in the study region. A Michigan State University analysis—updated with current data—estimated that the \$7.6 million the Park Service paid park workers in fiscal year 2014 supported an additional 45 local jobs, and over \$2 million in wages.

Employment at formal and informal partner organizations expands the park's economic impact. Together, the three largest park partners—Appalachian Mountain Club, Peters Valley School of Craft, and Pocono Environmental Education Center—employ about 100 year-round and seasonal workers.

In 2013, 825 volunteers contributed nearly 110,000 hours working at the park—the equivalent of nearly 53 full-time workers. The Park Service invested just \$21,000 in program costs (plus staff time) and garnered nearly \$2.6 million in donated value. Volunteers help extend park staff capacity in nearly every area of park operations from interpretation to administration to maintenance. Along the park's 33-mile-long McDade hiking and biking trail, for example, volunteers walk and ride the trail, answer visitor questions, assess trail conditions, and do basic trail maintenance.

PARK CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area has a large maintenance responsibility. The National Park Service is responsible for hundreds of miles of roads and trails; more than 50 bridges; 60 dams on Delaware River tributaries; and more than 100 historic buildings and 600 additional structures including houses, farm outbuildings, and commercial structures, many in poor condition. In terms of infrastructure responsibilities, the park ranks among the top eight within the National Park System.

Beyond core operations funding, the park spends about \$10 million per year on routine construction projects to keep up with current needs, while also chipping away at a maintenance backlog estimated at \$125 million. Altogether, these projects support an estimated 120 jobs and more than \$8 million in additional economic activity in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Nearly all of the park's small maintenance contracts and purchases (under \$2,000 to \$3,000 depending on the type of purchase) are fulfilled by local retailers, plumbers, HVAC servicers, and the like. In 2013, these small expenditures added up to \$204,000 in sales for local businesses.



On summer weekends and holidays, park visitors in Pennsylvania ride the free “Pocono Pony” bus to beaches, trailheads, and other park attractions. The buses accommodate bikes, kayaks, and small canoes. Riders get beach access without paying the usual fee. NPS Photo

\$2.5 MILLION
HOTEL + SALES TAX
REVENUE SUPPORTED
BY PARK VISITATION
EACH YEAR



Road Work Ahead

Three major road reconstruction projects pose a costly obstacle—and a priceless opportunity—for Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Old Mine Road, River Road, and Route 209 are heavily used by park visitors and commuters. All three are in critical need of repair and rehabilitation—with a combined cost of \$92 million.

Absent significant special support, the outlook is poor for completing this work. The Northeast Regional Office of the National Park Service receives only \$38.5 million annually to address park transportation needs across 13 states.

Thoughtfully improving the engineering, safety, and signage of these three

existing roads, while maintaining and even enhancing their rural character, could encourage visitors to explore more of the park's natural and cultural attractions, and to spend more time and money in the park and the surrounding area.

Some park roads need major repairs that also protect the area's rural character. © Dawnbjbenko | Dreamstime.com

TAMMIE HORSFIELD

President
Sussex County
Chamber of Commerce
Newton, New Jersey



In New Jersey, we are home to the “quiet” side of the park. We have great trails, a long history, a rich heritage, and a quality of life that is really hard to beat. People come here—and many of us live here—for the small-town, rural feel of this place, how beautiful it is here, and the trails, the river, and the environment.

Our communities and businesses could benefit even more from the park with some targeted changes and greater collaboration. The Chamber could assist in the establishment of a joint visitor center here in Sussex County, and we would love to see more river access, which would translate into more economic activity. Our trails partnership committee could easily expand its work to assist the National Park Service with trail maintenance and construction projects in the national recreation area. Signage, sharing information and working together on promotion...the list goes on.

Sussex County tourism is an important part of our county balance and economic prosperity. The park is an important part of that.

Photo by Sussex County
Chamber of Commerce



THE VALUE OF THE PARK AS A COMMUNITY PARTNER

Staff at Delaware Water Gap maintain shared infrastructure within the park by partnering with elected officials and agencies including the federal government, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, five counties, and 22 townships. The park contributes maintenance and management funds that would otherwise need to be supplied by state and local governments. For example, the National Park Service manages 22 miles of State Route 209 in the park. Over the past ten years, the Park Service has invested \$34 million to maintain this state highway.

The national park takes the lead on most search and rescue operations in the area. In 2013, the park spent nearly \$21,000 on personnel and supplies for search and rescue missions plus costs associated with monthly training sessions. The park’s 17 officers comprise the largest local law enforcement agency in the area, augmenting local police and sheriff department capacity.

On yet another front, the park contributes expertise to county planning offices, local land trusts, and developers to support regional conservation and planning efforts. Park staff supports applications for conservation easement funding, provides data and analysis for county open space planning efforts, and gives presentations on benefits of connectivity among conserved lands in the larger region. The park participates in land conservation coordinating groups such as the Northeastern Pennsylvania Conservation Alliance and the Common Waters Partnership.

Partnership projects include the 2009 Common Waters Atlas, identifying priority areas for future conservation, and a 2013 “Natural Economies” workshop where 100

business, government, and conservation representatives explored strategies to bolster economic development that supports the region’s clean water, healthy ecosystems, and rural character.

The park contributes to community vitality as a center for education, historic preservation, research, green space, and special events. In 2013, thousands from neighboring communities, as well as out-of-town visitors, participated in park programming and attended park events.

THE VALUE OF THE NATIONAL PARK AS A PROTECTED AREA

The natural, scenic character and recreational opportunities of the park and nearby natural areas are central to the quality of life throughout the region. Combined with a lower cost of living than in nearby cities, that quality of life plays a role in maintaining the high concentration of seasonal homes, and in their conversion to year-round residences.

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area anchors a larger natural region that safeguards water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and inspiring scenic views. Within the park, intact river floodplain, riparian buffers, and wetlands help lessen the impact of floods upstream and downstream.

The Value of Ecosystem Services

A 2011 University of Delaware study of the economic value of the Delaware River estuary watershed found the value of ecosystem goods (e.g., drinking water and fish) and services (e.g., water filtration, flood reduction, and carbon storage) totaled over \$15.2 billion in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey portions of the watershed. Applying the same methodology, the value

Above: Delaware River frozen in mid-winter. © Steve Greer

of ecosystem services from the national park's wetlands, forests, and open water would cost over \$159 million each year to replace—if it were possible to replace all of these natural benefits.

Within the park, forests account for nearly 90 percent of the acreage that provides these natural benefits. The surrounding landscape is predominantly rural, and many parts also are heavily forested. In Pennsylvania, the streams that flow into the park drain watersheds that are nearly 80 percent forested. In New Jersey, those tributary landscapes are about 50 percent forested. In general, forest cover increases in the Upper Delaware River watershed above the park.

Of the 15 million Americans who rely on the Delaware River Basin for clean drinking water, more than half—eight million—receive theirs directly from the forested middle and upper sections of the watershed, including New York City, which taps into reservoirs at the river's headwaters. The forests, wetlands, and floodplains of the river's middle and upper reaches form a natural water filtration system that helps keep the river's water so clean that it exceeds most water quality standards. Special regulations help maintain the exceptional purity of these waters.

Forests are Essential to these Natural Values

The integrity of the region's forests is essential to maintaining this exceptional water quality—and helping minimize damage in this flood-prone region. Forests are natural sponges, collecting and filtering rainfall and snowmelt, and releasing water slowly into streams. By slowing the flow of water, forests help reduce floods, recharge groundwater, and defend against drought. Around farms, cities, and suburban areas, forests capture sediment, nutrients, chemicals, and pathogens before they reach lakes and streams.

Conserving the region's forests maintains these naturally provided benefits—and saves money in water-treatment costs. A survey of 27 municipal water suppliers by the American Waterworks Association and Trust for Public Land found that a ten percent decrease in forest cover in the watershed correlated with a 25 percent increase in water-treatment costs.

In a plan released in 2013, the Common Waters Partnership and Pinchot Institute for Conservation identified significant forest cover, good forest health, protected floodplains, and healthy riparian corridors as key assets for weathering the effects of climate change in the Delaware River basin upstream from Easton, Pennsylvania.

\$159
MILLION

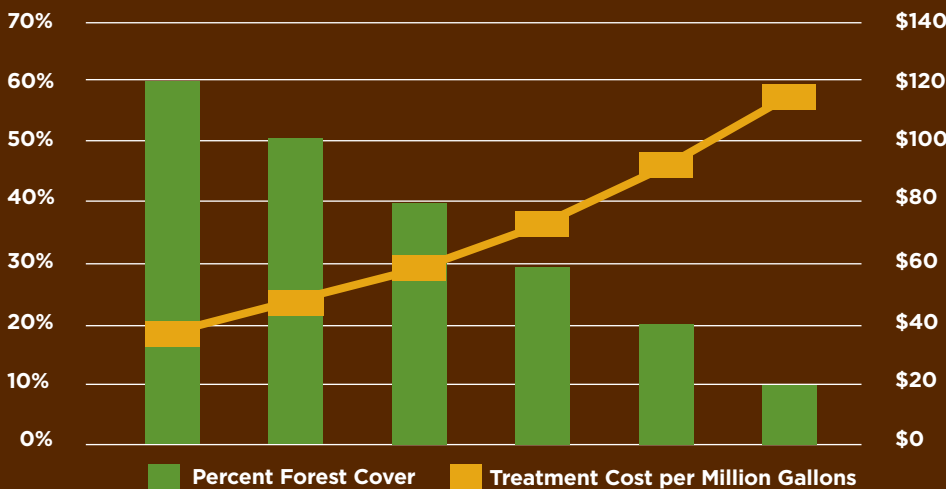
COST OF REPLACING THE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE PARK'S WETLANDS, FORESTS, AND STREAMS

Below: The integrity of the region's forests is essential to maintaining its exceptional water quality.
© Nihonjapan | Dreamstime.com

Forests = Clean Water

Declining Forest Cover Translates Into Increased Costs for Water Treatment.

ON AVERAGE 10% ↓ FOREST COVER = 25% ↑ WATER TREATMENT COSTS



SOURCE: American Water Works Association and Trust for Public Land survey of 27 municipal water suppliers, 2002



DAVID JACOBI

Owner
Adventure Sports
East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania



I've been hanging out, camping, and working on this river for most of my life. I have always loved the feeling of being in the middle of nowhere so close to home.

My great-grandmother owned property along the river, and was forced to sell for the Tocks Island dam project, which became the park we know today. I grew up listening to her stories, and seeing the tears in her eyes over having to leave the place she loved. My father still points out where friends lived along the river and the camps where he ran canoe trips.

It was a painful start, but the river would be so different today if the national recreation area were not here. Homes, hotels, condos, and businesses would probably cover every inch of the river banks. I'm thankful it didn't turn out that way, and that, each year, the company my father founded in 1969 still provides thousands of people with trips down the Delaware that they won't forget.

© Jill Nobles
Smile Peace Love Photography

Fish, Wildlife, and Outdoor Recreation

Black bears and other large animals live in the national park and range beyond park boundaries. Bear populations in the region are particularly healthy, in large part because of the high-quality, largely intact forested habitat anchored by the park; the nearby state forests, parks, and game lands; and the forested private lands that connect them.

Among the four pillars of Pennsylvania's state bear-management plan are minimizing the loss of forested habitats, and improving the quality of existing forests. The state of New Jersey classifies Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the complex of public lands to which it is connected (e.g., Stokes State Forest, High Point State Park, and Bear Valley Wildlife Management Area) as one of two "excellent" bear habitat areas in the state, with forest cover approaching 70 percent.

The national park protects habitat for several state-listed rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species, including ten species of fish. In many cases, park populations are the healthiest in the state, or the species are so rare that park populations are critical to their survival.

Along the river, the park provides essential habitat for reintroduced osprey and rebounding bald eagle populations—good news both for the birds and for growing numbers of park visitors who enjoy eagle watching in the winter, and observing ospreys nesting and raising their young along the river in the spring and summer.

Assigning a dollar value to healthy natural systems, and to the existence of a diverse array of plants and animals, is difficult. Part of the value of these natural systems lies in supporting outdoor recreation such as hunting, wildlife viewing, and fishing.

.....

Conserving the connections between habitat areas in the park and nearby forested state, county, and private lands is key to maintaining a home for bears and other wildlife in the region.

.....

Right: Black bears and other large animals live in the park and range well beyond park boundaries.
© Tony Campbell | ISTOCKPHOTO

In 2011, participants in those activities spent nearly \$5 million in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. One in five summer park visitors fishes, with clean-water-loving trout and shad among the most popular quarry. Hunting is allowed seasonally in most of the park.

A 2009 survey of Pennsylvania residents conducted for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources found that 41 percent of their strenuous exercise was done in a park or on a trail. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area's 200 miles of trail and 40 miles of river provide inexpensive venues for outdoor exercise and recreation, and a corresponding value in reduced health care costs. Although the size of this benefit has not been quantified, studies from other areas suggest it may be significant. For example, the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia reported that, in five southeastern Pennsylvania counties, the health benefits of moderate-to-strenuous exercise in the region's conserved open space resulted in \$577 million in avoided medical costs, and saved local businesses \$485 million in lost productivity.





A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Leveraging and Enhancing the Park's Economic Contributions

While Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area currently makes substantial economic contributions to nearby communities, opportunities abound to boost the park's impact, and to ensure its economic significance over time.

Research and consultation with park staff and business, government, conservation, and other community leaders revealed challenges—and opportunities—for sustaining and enhancing the park's economic values, including its quality-of-life benefits.

Six of these challenges are described below. Each is accompanied by recommended actions that suggest ways in which park staff, partners, neighbors, and other community leaders can work together to make the most of the park as an economic asset for the region.

CHALLENGE #1: Strengthen Local Awareness of, and Collaboration around, the Park

Working relationships among the national park's many formal and informal partners, local businesses, and commercial-use

permit holders could be improved through better coordination, communication, and cooperation. Strengthening these relationships would foster additional economic benefits, and a community sense of pride, ownership, and partnership that will help the park and the region better face future challenges.

Perhaps in part because it is divided between two states (New Jersey and Pennsylvania), Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area has not garnered the level of regional support and awareness that many large parks enjoy. Overall, few people know about the park, understand its mission and how it operates, and appreciate its significance.

Recommendations

Invest in the park's "Friends" group to be an increasingly active, supporting organization that better connects the park, partners and the community, and provides the glue for the park's many informal partnerships.

Establish an ongoing park/business roundtable to foster better working relationships between the park and local businesses in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

1 in 5

**PRIVATE-SECTOR JOBS IN
THE REGION IS IN TRAVEL
AND TOURISM, A SECTOR
THAT GREW 26% BETWEEN
1998 AND 2012.**

Above: Wildlife viewing is a popular recreational activity in the park, which offers important year-round habitat for bald eagles. For more than a decade, bald eagles have nested successfully here.
© dalhete | ISTOCKPHOTO



Creating more collaborative events to highlight the park's unique features, historical significance, and cultural stories could raise the park's profile, identify opportunities to encourage citizen science and stewardship, and provide fodder for future marketing campaigns.

.....

Above: Traditional yarn dyeing demonstration at historic Millbrook Village, New Jersey. With several historic districts and town sites within its boundaries, the park showcases the region's rich history and culture. Park staff and partner organizations collaborate to offer programs and events like Millbrook Days and Hands-on History, which bring traditional crafts and cultural activities to life. NPS Photo

Such a forum could be a mechanism for working together to promote the park and its activities, generating ideas and support for new programming and facilities, and tapping the expertise of park users in planning and in project development. It could also maintain a simple electronic system for communicating about park construction and other projects that might affect businesses and area residents.

Host more events to expand knowledge of the park's natural, historical, archaeological and cultural wonders. In 2010, the park and the Pocono Environment Education Center hosted a "BioBlitz"—a 24-hour event in which teams of volunteer scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members worked together to find and identify as many species of plants, animals, microbes, fungi, and other organisms as possible. BioBlitzes are planned at five-year intervals, with one on the books for 2015. Conservation organizations around the Upper Delaware

National Scenic and Recreational River also host an annual BioBlitz.

Creating more collaborative events to highlight the park's unique features, historical significance, and cultural stories could raise the park's profile, identify other opportunities to encourage citizen science and stewardship, and provide fodder for future marketing campaigns.

Create a network for policy advocacy to address opportunities and threats related to the park and surrounding region, such as federal funding levels for the national park system and for the Delaware River watershed as a whole. Such a network could strengthen the region's ability to anticipate and address issues of broad concern and impact.

Projects such as the Susquehanna-Roseland electric transmission line and other energy-related developments illustrate that neighboring communities and the

park share many interests. These include protecting clean water, avoiding flood damage, maintaining adequate water flows in the river, defending against invasive species that threaten forest health and native plants and animals, and planning commercial and residential development to be compatible with the area's quality of life and park values.

Explore and implement more ways of deepening residents' involvement with the park. The park, partner groups, local schools, and others could consider ideas such as: park residency programs for architects, archeologists, geologists, artists or naturalists; cooperative research and education programs; and volunteer events.

CHALLENGE #2: Focus Joint Promotional Efforts around the Park

Taking advantage of untapped opportunities for joint promotion around the park could create more exposure and recognition for the park and the surrounding region. Building relationships that cross county and state lines can both support the park and benefit tourism promoters and businesses.

Recommendations

Use the park's 50th anniversary in 2015 to "break the ice" on regional tourism promotion around the park. Highlighting the shared landmark and its historical, recreation, and natural values would provide a common message that could spark long-term collaboration and success.

At Shenandoah National Park, a multi-county 75th anniversary committee planned celebratory events and activities throughout the 2011 visitor season and hosted a special "Celebrate Shenandoah" website. Anniversary events inspired an increased sense of connection with, and pride in, the park and the surrounding region. Four years later, the committee continues to work together to highlight the park's values.

Establish a regional identity surrounding the park by using a high-profile project such as a National Geographic geotourism map and website. Geotourism projects help focus communities on shared resources and opportunities, and create long-term mechanisms for stewardship of special places and culture. They also result in highly visible National Geographic co-branded promotional pieces, and open up new marketing channels.

Work together on promotion. International visitation can be promoted through mechanisms such as Brand USA and the U.S. Travel Association's International Pow Wow. These are opportunities for park staff to join in the efforts of tourism bureaus in the region to attract more international visitors. Collaborative promotion within the New York City and Philadelphia areas could yield benefits not just in visitation, but also in building a stronger base of support for the park in a broader region.

Team up to provide more park information to visitors in nearby communities. The park, partners, and local chambers of commerce and tourism agencies can work together to boost visibility for the park and the businesses that serve its visitors.

CHALLENGE #3: Strengthen the Park's Identity as Part of the National Park System

The size and geography of the park, combined with chronic funding and staffing shortfalls and the absence of a clear "brand," make it challenging for many visitors to identify Delaware Water Gap as part of the National Park System. Interviews conducted for this study suggest that strengthening this identity could help build local support for, and pride in, the park, while enhancing its appeal to visitors.

Recommendations


Increase the visible presence of the National Park Service throughout the park and outside its boundaries. In 2013, to better reach visitors scattered throughout its 40-mile length, the Park Service dropped some of its less-popular interpretive programs, and redirected staff to make roving contacts with visitors. Their efforts paid off in a four-fold increase in the number of informal contacts made per hour.

Among other approaches to expanding its visible presence, park staff could consider siting another staffed park information center in New Jersey, and posting uniformed Park Service staff and/or special displays at area visitor information centers outside the park. Mobile-accessible information points (e.g., QR codes and cell-phone tours) could be located where feasible in the park and at key visitor contact locations outside the park. A comprehensive review of informational and way-finding signage is likely to identify gaps or opportunities for enhancement.

CAROLYN CLARK SEIFRIED

Owner
Carolyn Seifried Consulting, LLC
Layton, New Jersey



 Winding between Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the Delaware River winds through the lives of the visitors and residents along its banks. I remember my father fishing here, my first hike to Dunfield Creek, the controversy of the Tocks Island Dam. Now, living within a half mile of the river in northern New Jersey, this is where I go for summertime floats.


I would like to see the area continue to be preserved and respected by all who visit and live here. It's important to continue establishing partnerships and alliances that further goals shared by communities, organizations, and park staff alike—enhancing the experience of visitors to the area, supporting local businesses, and helping protect the landscape and the way of life of the residents who live on the fringes of this wonderful recreation area. 

Photo Courtesy of Carolyn Seifried

SUSAN COOPER

Owner
Village Farmer and Bakery
Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania



Village Farmer and Bakery has been in business for 37 years. We have seen our

business grow along with park visitation. Families who brought their children to the park are now bringing their grandchildren.

Our entire family has been so lucky to live next to the park. It has been a personal influence on all of us. My son and his wife own an outfitting company that rents equipment like canoes, bikes, and snowshoes to park visitors, and offers guide services. My daughter's career focuses on natural resources, too.

There are so many opportunities to connect our communities and businesses to the park. The Cherry Creek Crossing Trail is bringing park visitors right into town. Delaware Water Gap is now an official "Trail Town," which puts us on the map for hikers. The more we all work together to promote and connect this area, the better we will all do.

© Jill Nobles
Smile Peace Love Photography

Remind visitors they are in a national park via improved and expanded signage, including way-finding, identifying, and interpretive signs. Make park entrances clear and welcoming, using iconic National Park Service signage.

Create a recognizable brand and associated marketing strategy for the park, in collaboration with area tourism promoters and businesses. Learn from other parks such as Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, National Parks of New York Harbor, and the Lewis and Clark National and State Historical Parks, where collaborative efforts to create clear identities and iconic images for parks and special park sites have provided the backbone for effective and consistent marketing campaigns.

Consider the pros and cons of redesignating the national recreation area as a national park and recreation area, or national park and preserve. Research conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City suggests that having "national park" in the name connotes more prestige and appeal than other, lesser-known National Park Service designations. Such a change is worth careful consideration.

CHALLENGE #4: Leverage Park Assets and Opportunities

Opportunities abound to leverage the presence of the park and specific assets for greater financial gain for local communities and businesses, and the park's benefit. Even relatively minor adjustments to operations—and how local communities and nonprofit organizations relate to the park—could help boost economic benefits.

Recommendations

Consider allowing more concessionaires to contract with the park. Use the park/business roundtable recommended above to sort out the best opportunities that would both serve visitors and benefit local businesses, and to gain insights on how to package concession opportunities for success.

Put more of the park's historical structures to work. Most of the 100+ historic buildings in the park stand unused. Selectively rehabilitating and using these buildings represents significant potential for generating revenues for the park, while creating more vitality, more business, and more job opportunities within park boundaries. The

park's historic properties management planning process now underway will provide a foundation of information and guidance based on data analysis and public input.

Link nearby communities and businesses with the park. Where appropriate, make access easier and enhance the flow of visitors between the park and nearby businesses and communities through signage, easy-to-follow maps, park information kiosks in high-traffic areas outside the park, and physical connections. For example, the Cherry Creek Crossing Loop Trail established in 2012 connects the village of Delaware Water Gap and the park. The trail encourages river users to visit the town, and encourages town visitors to walk to the river.

Collaborate with partners and other groups to host more large events within the park, as appropriate. These should include more events like Millbrook Days, in which the park is a visible partner.

Work together to attract new visitors and to encourage existing visitors to stay longer in the surrounding area. The park/business roundtable recommended above could foster an ongoing dialogue among park staff, partners, and tourism operators and promoters about how better to serve park visitors, expand local visitor offerings, and support more local jobs and economic activity.

Leverage the park's extensive artifacts and documents collection, and significant expertise in historical preservation and interpretation. These resources could be used to enhance existing educational opportunities and facilities, and other ways to serve visitors and residents.

CHALLENGE #5: Fill the Gap in Park Resources

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is the second-largest park in the National Park Service's Northeast Region, which stretches between Virginia and Maine. Year after year, it ranks among the most-visited parks in the nation. With hundreds of miles of roads and trails, hundreds of bridges, 700 structures, and 60 dams, Delaware Water Gap's infrastructure responsibilities rank among the top two percent of parks nationwide.

A business plan analysis based on the park's fiscal year 2002 operations identified \$15.9 million in needed annual operations funding to carry out its responsibilities—

but the park's total operating budget that year was only \$8.9 million. For every ten staff needed, the park had only five.

The park's operating budget peaked at \$10.1 million in 2009, and in FY2013, fell back to around the \$8.9 million level.

Today, the park's deferred maintenance backlog—including overdue roof and other building repairs, equipment upkeep, and road and trail maintenance—is estimated at over \$125 million, plus \$92 million in long-needed major road reconstruction.

Recommendations

Recover more operating costs through targeted user fees. For example, charging a reasonable nightly fee for use of river campsites would enable the park to cover the costs associated with managing those sites, such as the river safety patrol, campsite maintenance, waste management, and administrative costs.

Expand the park's short- and long-term leasing program. Investing money and effort to rehabilitate structures suitable for long-term leasing will pay off over time, and provide regular income from rents. Renting buildings for weddings, events, and meetings at a rate competitive with other local venues is another potential revenue source. Businesses that regularly rent park buildings for events could become concessionaires, ensuring a more consistent revenue stream.

Update the park's business plan, which was released in 2005, to identify additional, current opportunities for cost savings and revenue generation. Parks can apply for business plan assistance from the National Park Service's Washington office. Share the plan with the park/business roundtable to spark new ideas and shared commitment to filling the park's resource gap.

Create an endowment for park operations and programs in collaboration with a revitalized "Friends" group and other partners.

Reduce infrastructure maintenance costs by prioritizing preventative maintenance on critical assets, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and removing hazardous and excess structures.

CHALLENGE #6: Build on Local Efforts to Conserve Natural Functions Anchored by the Park

While the national park protects some 70,000 acres—and more forests, wetlands, and farmlands are conserved outside park boundaries—the integrity of this natural landscape is not assured. A 2001 U.S. Forest Service analysis identified the Middle Delaware (from Brodhead Creek upstream to Mongaup) as among the watersheds in a 14-state region with the most development pressure on private forests critical for drinking water supply. Although population



A Student Conservation Association crew member works to rehabilitate a building at Camp Ken-Etiwapec in New Jersey, a former Boy Scout camp in the park. The camp will house youth corps crews engaged in future historic preservation training programs and projects in and around Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The work was part of the Hands-On Preservation Experience (HOPE) Crew partnership between the National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Corps Network. It was funded by the National Park Service, and supervised by Philadelphia preservation carpenter, Mathew Grubel. © Steve Cimbalik

Conserved Land Saves Taxpayers Money

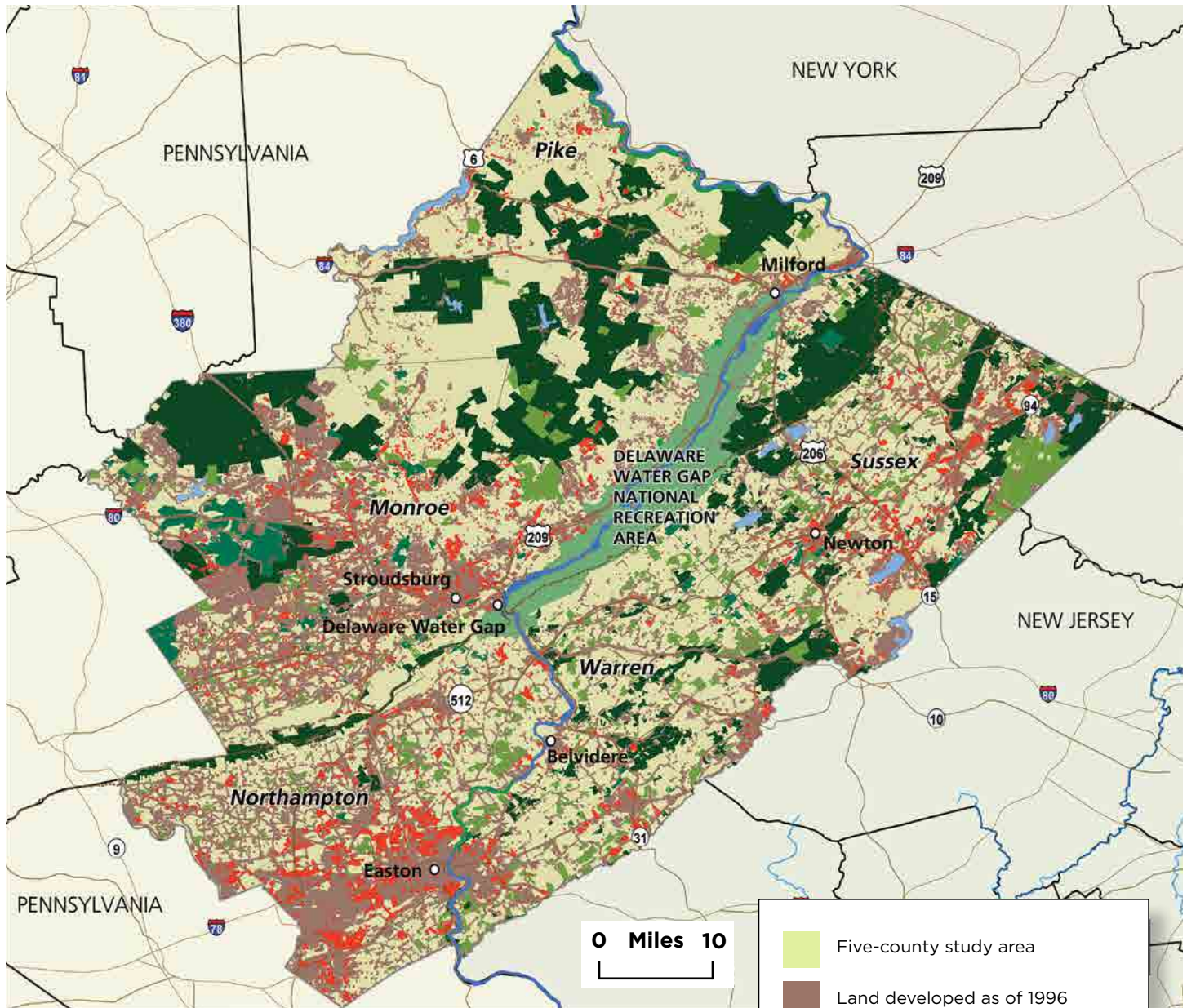
In 2014, resort developer Wyndham Worldwide agreed to sell 560 steep, heavily forested acres to the National Park Service, rather than building more than 180 houses as part of a larger proposed development. Adding this land to the park protects scenic views around Mosier's Knob in Smithfield Township, Pennsylvania, and helps safeguard the park's connection to other conserved areas.

An analysis by the Monroe County Planning Office shows that permanently protecting this land will cost local governments very little, while avoiding a large school district deficit for educating children living in the fully built development, and preserving the land's ability to provide for free ecosystem services that are expensive to achieve otherwise, such as air pollution removal, flood control, water quality protection, and carbon emissions reductions.

Lost Annual
Local Tax Revenue
\$48,335

Avoided Annual
School District Deficit
\$3.4 million

Annual Value of Ecosystem
Services Protected
\$1.2 million



COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AROUND DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Proximity to urban centers, and the appeal of a slower pace, smaller towns, affordable housing, scenic vistas, and easy access to nature have made the region one of the fastest-growing areas on the Eastern Seaboard. This map shows the footprint of development in 2010. Areas developed prior to 1996 are shown in light brown. Those developed between 1996 and 2010 are highlighted in red.

In 2010, one of every eight developed acres in the five-county region had been converted since 1996, usually from forested land.

More than half of the acreage developed in Pike and Monroe counties (Pennsylvania) between 1996 and 2010 was within 10 miles of the park. In Sussex and Warren counties (New Jersey), only 19 percent of development in that same time period happened within 10 miles of the park. In Northampton County (Pennsylvania), that figure was just seven percent.

	Five-county study area
	Land developed as of 1996
	Land developed between 1996 and 2010
	Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
	Other National Park Service designation
	State and federal conserved land
	County parks and conserved land
	Private conserved land

Map by Dan Servian

growth has slowed recently, the middle and upper Delaware River basin contains some of the fastest-growing counties on the Eastern Seaboard since the turn of the 21st century.

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area manages land and water at the bottom of tributary watersheds that originate outside of park boundaries. The health of the park's natural systems directly depends on the health of the larger region—as does the basin's remarkably good water quality.

Rapid population growth, increasing population density, and expanding development in counties that neighbor the park are emblematic of these threats to forest health and water quality. Other potential threats include invasive species, climate change, and energy-related developments such as roads, pipelines, power transmission lines, drilling infrastructure, and hydraulic fracturing.

With so much forest cover throughout the middle and upper Delaware River basin, there may seem to be little cause for concern. However, a 2012 analysis of Pennsylvania's forests by the Pinchot Institute for Conservation suggests the need to look closely at streamside or "riparian" forests. These are the last line of defense for streams, trapping and filtering sediment, chemicals, and nutrients before they reach the water. For the cleanest water, the study found that more than 70 percent of small streams in a watershed should be protected by riparian forests. Most of the small watersheds that feed the park offer 60-70 percent cover, while a few dip down to 40-60 percent.

Maintaining forested, intact stream corridors and watersheds in the larger region around the national park will help protect the natural beauty, clean water, and abundant wildlife that are central to the region's appeal and vitality. Each 1,000 acres of forest land conserved protects a yearly value of more than \$2 million in ecosystem services like water filtration, flood control, and carbon storage. Thoughtful

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For the cleanest water, more than 70 percent of small streams in a watershed must be protected by riparian forests. Most of the small watersheds that feed the park offer 60-70 percent cover, while a few dip down to 40-60 percent.

development and conservation within the entire region are essential for preserving scenic park views, clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, and forest health.

Recommendations

Maintain connections between the park and other large conserved areas. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area sits at the heart of an unusual opportunity to conserve a large complex of connected lands and waters. If forested connections are maintained among federal, state, and local parks and other public lands—as well as with significant forested tracts of privately conserved lands—the national park will continue to anchor a resilient region with clean water, healthy fish and wildlife, the capacity to moderate flooding, and a desirable quality of life.

Leverage the park's mitigation fund. In 2012, the Park Service received \$66 million as mitigation for expansion of the Susquehanna-Roseland electric transmission line through the park. Nearly one-third of this "mitigation fund" is earmarked for land conservation, acquisition or easements from willing sellers, and stewardship. These funds can be used to protect lands inside the park's boundaries, and to conserve key connections with other conserved lands through voluntary agreements with willing private owners.



Streamside or "riparian" forests are the last line of defense for streams, trapping and filtering sediment, chemicals and nutrients before they reach the water.

© Steve Greer

BUD COOK

Senior Project Manager
The Nature Conservancy
Long Pond, Pennsylvania



Clean drinking water, pristine streams for fishing, vast forests for hiking and hunting and outdoor enjoyment—these are valuable Pocono assets that should be protected. These assets form the basis for the region's number one industry: tourism and outdoor recreation.

Twenty years ago, The Nature Conservancy, a global conservation organization, named the Pocono Plateau one of the "Last Great Places" in the world because of its diversity of plants, animals and natural habitats. Many conservation groups, along with local governments, have been protecting special Pocono places to preserve the rural nature of the area, not only for wildlife, but for the people who live and visit here.

The Poconos' natural wealth—an abundance of water, trees and beauty—is priceless, but fragile.

We must work together to protect the natural assets of this special landscape.

© Jill Nobles
Smile Peace Love Photography



On warm, rainy spring nights in wetland areas in the region, thousands of spotted salamanders (above), spring peepers, and other amphibians make their way to shallow ponds where they breed. When conditions are right, the NPS closes part of River Road in Pennsylvania to protect this remarkable natural phenomenon. © Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey

Each 1,000 acres of forest land conserved protects a yearly value of more than \$2 million in ecosystem services like water filtration, flood control, and carbon storage.

These funds could be used to stretch dollars available through state and county bonds, private philanthropic organizations, and other existing and new sources to meet shared goals of protecting clean water, healthy forests, and fish and wildlife habitat. Continued close cooperation is essential between park staff and existing land conservation and clean water initiatives.

Coordinate development planning.

Better integrate park plans and projects with county master plans and open space programs, state open-space goals, and regional efforts. The Common Waters Partnership is well positioned to expand its role in facilitating this coordination. An integrated approach could help all levels of government as well as the private sector better understand the value of ordinances and regulations that protect park resources and infrastructure from poor storm-water management and other development impacts outside its boundaries.

Inform these coordinated efforts using scientifically based growth projection models for the upper and middle Delaware basin, developed collaboratively by the

park, county planners, and researchers from the Woods Hole Institute, NASA, and Shippensburg University.

Consolidate responsibility for regional coordination and outreach into a community and environmental planner position at the park. This staff person would provide a single point of contact for local governments and planning boards, state and federal land managers, land trusts and other conservation groups, community associations, and other government agencies and coordinating bodies.

Provide incentives for forest and riparian area health on private land. Private owners will continue to manage a large majority of the 2.2 million acres of land that drains into the park. In January 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture committed \$13 million for farmland and forest management on private lands in the Delaware basin in response to an application coordinated by the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed. Use this and other programs, such as the Common Waters Fund, to support private landowners in conserving and managing their forests, and to establish

Watershed Connections

Complex challenges within the four-state Delaware River basin have sparked diverse governmental and non-profit collaborative efforts, with several notable ones listed here.

DELAWARE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Established in 1961, this regulatory agency oversees a unified approach to managing the river system without regard to political boundaries. Four states and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are represented on this commission, which carries out programs in areas such as water quality protection, water supply allocation, regulatory review (permitting), water conservation initiatives, watershed planning, drought management, flood loss reduction, and recreation.

COALITION FOR THE DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED

With more than 60 members, the Coalition brings together nongovernmental groups working throughout the watershed to protect and restore the river, its tributaries, and surrounding lands. Coalition members include watershed associations, conservation groups, outdoor interests, environmental organizations, and education centers. With generous seed funding from the William Penn Foundation, the Coalition provides a forum for sharing information and networking, and for coordinating communications and advocacy around shared interests. In January 2015, as a result of a partnership facilitated by the Coalition—and involving other groups

such as American Farmland Trust, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Common Waters Partnership—an additional \$13 million in federal resources will be available to further conservation efforts on privately owned forests, farms, and other working lands throughout the watershed.

COMMON WATERS PARTNERSHIP

The Pinchot Institute for Conservation and others founded this regional partnership to address development pressures that could threaten clean water, natural places, and working lands critical to the region’s economy and rural character. Over 40 public agencies and nonprofit member organizations represent three states

financial links between landowners and water users in the basin.

Use a coordinated and broad approach for other types of planning and resource preservation. Just as successful regional conservation depends on collaborative relationships and a common framework for identifying priorities, so too do cultural and historic preservation, recreation planning, and facilities planning. A broader geographic perspective in these and other areas will strengthen and enhance these resources within the park, as well as beyond the park's boundaries.

The park's visitor-use management planning now underway can engage other public lands managers across the region, and could create momentum toward regional development and management of recreational offerings. A coordinated regional approach could help direct different types

of recreational use to areas that can support it, reduce user conflicts, and reduce pressure on the park to accommodate incompatible recreational uses.

Engage the public and build a constituency that supports land conservation and regional connectivity in order to protect clean water and animal habitat. Piggyback on specific efforts such as county open-space bond campaigns to convey broader messages about regional conservation and its benefits.

The national park and other public agencies should coordinate conservation education and advocacy, working with existing partners. The park could assist with specific activities such as ride-along tours for business leaders, elected officials, other community leaders, or media that focus on accomplishments, economic benefits, conservation needs, and future opportunities.

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Just as successful regional conservation depends on collaborative relationships and a common framework for identifying priorities, so too do cultural and historic preservation, recreation planning, and facilities planning. A broader geographic perspective in these and other areas will strengthen and enhance these resources within the park, as well as beyond the park's boundaries.

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Below: View of Mt. Minsi in Pennsylvania and the Point of Gap parking lot off Route 611. Forests help protect clean water in the middle and upper Delaware River, and also help to minimize damage in this flood-prone region. Forests are natural sponges, collecting and filtering rainfall and snowmelt, and releasing water slowly into streams. © Bryan Katz



and 11 counties between the Water Gap and the reservoirs on headwater streams in New York. Common Waters promotes conservation through cross-boundary collaboration, scientific research, education, and technical assistance.

DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED INITIATIVE

This effort promotes provision of sufficient clean water through targeted investments supporting conservation of healthy watersheds. Near the national park, the initiative works in Pennsylvania's Pocono-Kittatinny region and in the New Jersey Highlands, and involves Delaware Highlands Conservancy, Natural Lands Trust, The Nature Conservancy, the Pinchot Institute, Land Conservancy of New Jersey, and the New Jersey Highlands Association, among others. The William Penn Foundation has provided generous initial funding for this initiative.

BRIAN BARRETT

Chairman
Board of Supervisors
Smithfield Township, Pennsylvania



Our township is a gateway to this beautiful national park, which is defined by the pristine, free-flowing Delaware River. We want to preserve this remarkably natural area, while also encouraging common-sense, high-quality development that is compatible with—not in conflict with—its rural character.

This is one of the best places in the country to live, work, and play. Why shouldn't we expect any proposed developments also to deliver their best?

Clean water in our mountain streams helps to make this region so extraordinary. Our township is working with landowners to protect the community's clean water by requiring future development to give streams the space they need to support clean water.

Strategic land preservation also plays a role in the region's future economic health. For example, adding the Wyndham lands to the national park saves our township thousands of dollars in avoided costs that would have resulted had this land been developed.



© Keith R. Stevenson | Pocono Record

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Next 50 Years

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is an indispensable asset in this part of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, lying at the heart of the region's unique appeal for residents and visitors alike. It protects nearly 70,000 acres of forest, wetlands, streams, farmland, and historical sites—and preserves, studies, and interprets a complex legacy of human use, unique geological features, and ecological relationships.

Park visitors and the 2,000 local jobs they support provide the visible face of the park's economic benefit to the region. Other impacts perhaps not as widely recognized are the park's roles as an employer, a customer, a neighbor, a property manager, a community services provider, a partner, and a steward.

The impressive tally of economic benefits for park neighbors does not fully capture the value of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The park enhances the region's identity and quality of life in ways—though difficult to quantify—that are just as valuable as the contributions that can be measured in dollars and jobs.

The research and local interviews that underpin this report revealed a remarkable array of opportunities to protect and leverage the value that the park provides—and a shared sense of urgency to make progress. Many spring from a focus on strengthening connections that weave the park into the larger region. Whether ensuring the integrity of forests and streams that connect the park to a larger natural landscape, or establishing a park/business roundtable, the stronger these connections grow, the better the park works and the more value it offers.

With dozens of formal and informal park partnerships, this concept is not new. And, now is a critical time to move forward to strengthen and deepen connections around and with the park. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area's 50th anniversary in 2015, and the 100th anniversary of the National Park System in 2016, provide focal points around which park staff, partners, and neighbors can come together to shape the region's next 50 years. The connections reinforced, expanded, or even newly made today can profoundly shape the character and vitality of the park and the region.



Above: One of the most popular activities enjoyed by park visitors is paddling on the relatively calm, free-flowing Delaware River. Local liveries provide equipment, shuttles, personal flotation devices, and lunch. **NPS Photo Right:** A National Park Service employee helps a young angler learn to fish. One in every five summer visitors to the national park fishes on the Delaware River or along one of its many streams. Clean-water-loving trout and shad are among the most popular quarry. © Danielle Coons **Back Cover:** Both Buttermilk Falls, New Jersey's tallest waterfall (pictured), and Raymondskill Falls, Pennsylvania's tallest waterfall, are located in the national park, which is renowned for its scenic beauty, waterfalls, and opportunities for quiet recreation.

© Steve Greer



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The impressive tally of economic benefits for park neighbors does not fully capture the value of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The park enhances the region's identity and quality of life in ways—though difficult to quantify—that are just as valuable as the contributions that can be measured in dollars and jobs.

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800.NAT.PARK
1500 Walnut Street | Suite 502 | Philadelphia, PA 19102
777 6th Street, NW | Suite 700 | Washington, DC 20001
120 Park Avenue | Floor 14 | New York, NY 10017

npca.org