



## FRIENDS OF THE UPPER DELAWARE RIVER

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### ***On West Branch in Deposit, N.Y., Good Turn Leads to River View***

By Dan Plummer

One good turn leads to another. That's the nice life lesson I've learned from a recent incident involving our rivers. Please allow me to tell you the story.

I serve as board chairman of Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), a non-profit organization that looks after the welfare of the river system. A little more than a year ago, I got a call from John O'Connor, mayor of Deposit, N.Y. He was looking for a little help.

The Oquaga Creek needed some bank stabilization work just upstream of where it dumps into the West Branch of the Delaware River. He knew that our organization has donated money and workers to various efforts to preserve and protect local streams and rivers. Mayor O'Connor asked whether FUDR was able to do anything to help with the Oquaga issue. He told me that the problem spot was often used by fishermen to launch boats.

I met there with O'Connor and Jim Serio, another local conservationist and river guide who had helped connect me to the Mayor. Standing at the West Branch-Oquaga junction, we immediately saw that there was a larger problem. The bank was indeed in need of repair, but the boat launch issue quickly became a secondary concern.

The section of Oquaga Creek that was eroding was only yards away from the Deposit sewage treatment plant, which seemed imperiled by potentially devastating flooding if the bank erosion were allowed to worsen. I laughingly told the mayor that maybe we should worry about the boat launch after we were certain that the plant was not going to fill the West Branch with sewage, or words to that effect.

With the help of Serio and the AI Hazzard Chapter of Trout Unlimited, FUDR stepped in and followed the Department of Environmental Conservation's recommendations to restore the flood-ravaged stream bank. Local contractor Donny Wheeler came to the rescue and did the work at a deeply discounted rate to help the non-profit groups get the job done. (Wheeler explained that he loves to fish, too.) Mayor O'Connor was gracious in thanking the groups for helping out since the town was short on funds to make the repairs.

A few weeks after the work was complete, O'Connor called me to say that a Deposit native named Kent Joscelyn owned a small piece of property on the West Branch that he might want to donate to FUDR. I checked with my board members, who asked me to pursue the lead.

The parcel, just downstream from the West Branch Bridge in Deposit, includes about 300 feet of river frontage. Kent Joscelyn's father, Ray M. Joscelyn, and brother, John D. Joscelyn, who were Deposit fishermen, had also owned the property. He told me that he wanted to donate the land to a group

that would use it to benefit the local community and visitors to the area. It seemed like a perfect fit since his goal mirrors nearly verbatim the FUDR mission statement.

He had a couple of reasonable requests for the property, such as the creation of a good view of the river as the property was developed. The transaction is now complete, and FUDR is the new owner of this very special piece of land.

This was a great gesture of appreciation from the donor. We are following through on his idea that the property should be shared by all of us—locals and visitors, fishermen and –women and sightseers. We're planning a small park there, giving Joscelyn the “view for all” that he hoped for.

We live here amid the natural beauty of rivers and mountains. Kent Joscelyn has provided all of us with a lovely vantage point from which to view this majesty.

As I said, one good turn leads to another.