



News for Immediate Release

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Pennsylvanians Choose Delaware as 2011 River of the Year

Harrisburg – The people have spoken: the Delaware River is Pennsylvania’s River of the Year for 2011.

Chosen for the first time through a public vote, the Delaware bested five other candidates in an online contest that saw more than 10,000 ballots cast from across the state. The Delaware received 2,520 votes.

“The Delaware River is the longest un-dammed river east of the Mississippi and is steeped in history, diverse in resources, and is vital to protect,” Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary John Quigley said. “Its waters serve the needs of more than 15 million people from four different states, including more than 5 million Pennsylvanians. It boasts the largest freshwater port in the world, as well as threatened and endangered species, and a thriving tourism industry.

“A goal of the River of the Year designation is to raise awareness of the river and its conservation needs. The public voting format used to nominate and select the River of the Year for the first time this year certainly generated local enthusiasm for conservation and recognition of the importance of our waterways,” Quigley said.

The five other finalists were: Clarion River, Conewango Creek, Kiskiminetas River, Pine Creek, and the Stonycreek River.

DCNR and the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers, or POWR, administer the River of the Year program. Local organizations submit nominations.

“Although we could only have one winner, each of the waterways that were nominated is special and important in its own way,” Quigley said. “Congratulations to all the local groups who nominated their rivers, and rallied support for them not only for this vote, but through all of their activities and advocacy.”

POWR helps train and organize local watershed associations, as well as the groups who lead a dozen sojourns on rivers around the state each year.

“The Delaware River is simply an incredible resource -- not just for Pennsylvania, but for the nation as a whole,” said POWR Executive Director Jon Meade. “To honor it with the River of the Year award reflects the importance of preservation to those who live near it and experience it every day.”

There are a number of organizations that work in partnership to support conservation and recreation activities along the Delaware, including: the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC); Delaware Canal State Park; National Canoe Safety Patrol; National Park Service; and Upper Delaware Preservation Coalition.

These groups will organize several events throughout the year, including the 17th annual Sojourn paddling trip, a symposium, photo contest and river legacy fundraiser. The eight-day sojourn will include educational programs, and give paddlers a chance to experience the Delaware River to encourage greater understanding of the river and stewardship needs.

"On behalf of the steering committee and all our partners, I would like to thank everyone who voted for the Delaware. Having the Delaware be Pennsylvania's 2011 River of the Year is truly an honor, especially since it is the people's choice and with this the DRBC's 50th Anniversary year," said Kate O'Hara, co-coordinator of the Delaware Sojourn Steering Committee. "This designation will not only showcase the Delaware and all it has to offer, but also highlight the numerous organizations, agencies, and individual volunteers who work together to protect and enhance the river for future generations."

The Delaware also will be celebrated with an annual Rivers Month poster issued in June.

Pennsylvania's River of the Year has been presented annually since 1983.

For more sojourn event information, visit POWR's website at www.pawatersheds.org or contact Jon Meade at info@pawatersheds.org.

To learn more about DCNR's Rivers Program, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/rivers.

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