



Delaware Audubon

www.delawareaudubon.org

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Southport Project in Pennsylvania Threatens Delaware River Ecosystem

Delaware Audubon and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) are opposing the Southport Project in Pennsylvania, a plan to use dredging spoils as fill for a construction project.

The Southport Project, according to the DRN, consists of a new container facility to be built in and along the Delaware River. The project requires filling 3.75 acres of wetlands and 12.28 acres of open waters in the Delaware River in and around existing piers 122 and 124 in Philadelphia. The project also requires dredging 35 acres of river bottom and filling in an undisclosed amount of floodplain with 3 to 4 feet of fill. Pennsylvania has proposed constructing this project with dredge spoils from the Deepening Project (*see story on page 3 about our opposition to the deepening*).



Delaware Audubon and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network are opposed to this project because it requires filling in portions of the river, will result in destruction of wetlands, requires filling of the floodplain, and will destroy the natural riverbank that remains along portions of the site.

Pennsylvania has been approaching a variety of state and federal agencies seeking as much commitment to the project as they can secure. According to a spokesperson for the DRN, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Army Corps of Engineers, both of which have permitting authority over the project, are clearly working to make the process as easy as possible to implement this very damaging project and misapplying key environmental protection requirements.

Delaware Audubon has joined the DRN and other environmental organizations in the quad-state area to seek more time for public comment, and to force a thorough review of the environmental impacts of the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Southport Project is a major concern to all our organizations because of its affects on the River, fish habitat, water quality, floodplains, and important aquatic and wetland habitats.

Mark Martell, president of Delaware Audubon, pointed out that the Deepening and the Southport Project upstream will affect the wildlife and habitat of the Delaware River Basin downstream. A joint letter sent to the Delaware River Basin Commission states, "It is important that New Jersey, Delaware, and New York have an equal say in whether or not this project moves forward. They only get that equal say through a DRBC review process."

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) should have given this project a complete review. According to their Rules of Practice and Procedure, "Projects that substantially encroach upon the stream or upon the 100-year flood plain of the Delaware River or its tributaries" are among those that should be reviewed for compliance. Despite stiff opposition by Delaware Audubon and our partner organizations, the DRBC chose to dismiss its right and obligation to undertake an independent review and permitting of the project.

Delaware Audubon also joined the DRN and other organizations in strong comments to the Army Corps of Engineers – urging them to ensure a full environmental review of the project before any decisions about permitting are even considered. Agencies such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, among others, have submitted strong comment concerning the project as well.

Stay tuned to this issue on the Delaware Audubon and Delaware Riverkeeper web sites. You can read the joint letter to the Army Corps of Engineers on our web site at: www.delawareaudubon.org/action/southportletter.pdf ■

Annual Meeting Set for November 12th at Cokesbury Village in Hockessin

Conservation Award Recipient: Andy Ednie

The 2010 Delaware Audubon Society Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, November 12 at the DuPont Pavilion of Cokesbury Village. The event will begin at 7:00 pm with light refreshments.

Respected Delaware birder and compiler of "Birdline Delaware," Andy Ednie will receive the Delaware Audubon Conservation Award. A guest speaker (to be announced soon on our web site) will present an entertaining program about birds.

Members will be sent additional information by mail shortly, but you can register now on our web site at: www.delawareaudubon.org/meeting ■

FROM THE PRESIDENT



This has been a year to forget for the environment. The Gulf Oil disaster is a dramatic reminder of the environmental consequences of our daily decisions. Sure, we can point toward the cozy regulatory environment established by the Federal Government and the corner-cutting steps taken by the domestic offshore drilling industry; but the real changes that need to be made begin and end with us.

We have often ignored the environmental impact of our personal decisions: I need a new truck for my work; should I get Diesel? What other kind of engine would be better? I need a new vehicle for my family; should I buy a more expensive hybrid? I'm putting a new roof on the house; should I consider adding solar panels? I'm buying a new appliance for my family; should I look at Energy Star ratings? I have to replace the old heater or air conditioner; what should I consider buying in its place?

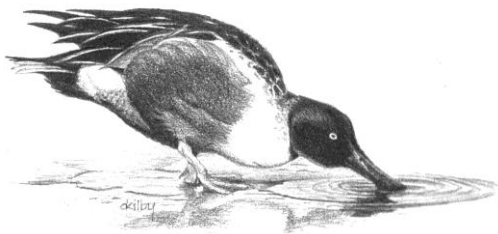
The purchasing and household decisions we make affect the amount of energy we use – and drive the need for power from the grid. We can fight hard for an offshore wind farm, and we can certainly push to eliminate coal from our fuel mix, but the simple fact is that we can make a difference by changing the way we manage our households.

All the decisions we make for our families tend to have some form of environmental consequence. When my wife and I make decisions on weekend activities, we now consider our route planning not just for the time we save, but for the gas we eliminate by making our trips more efficient.

Delaware Audubon has just joined other organizations in a letter urging our legislators to support the electrification of vehicles. However, we must be careful when pushing for changes like this, because we are simply moving from one energy source to another, and each source has issues. We believe that moving vehicles to the electric grid is better for the environment than continuing our use of gasoline. Yet we recognize that we are dealing with electricity; and expanded use of electricity may wind up burning more domestic coal—the dirtiest of fossil fuels.

So as your friend and partner in environmental protection, I urge you to use sound environmental judgment in your daily economic decisions. What's better for the environment can sometimes be more damaging to the wallet in the short term, but that's the nature of taking a long-term view to living.

Mark Martell, President



Northern Shoveler - illustration by Daniel S. Kilby

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Delaware Audubon seeks Treasurer

We are looking for a member with basic accounting skills to join our Board as Treasurer. This requires very little time commitment. If you'd like to volunteer for this position, please contact us.

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Delaware Audubon Continues to Oppose Delaware River Deepening

Sees little, if any economic benefit to the state

While Delaware and regional politicians are promoting or supporting the deepening of the Delaware River by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Delaware Audubon is presenting evidence from the independent U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) that counteracts claims of economic benefit to the region. The GAO is the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress.

Several municipalities and state government officials have gone on record supporting the deepening of the Delaware River, because they believe that the project will result in more jobs at the Ports of Wilmington and Philadelphia. According to Mark Martell, president of the Delaware Audubon Society, "Delaware Audubon wants to focus on the most damning aspects of the project – and they are the poor economic analysis for the region and the State of Delaware's limited benefits, if any, from the project."

Delaware Audubon quoted from the recent GAO report, which said: "...market and industry conditions have changed significantly in ways that raise questions about the Corps' project benefit estimates going forward."

Is there evidence to support the state officials claims of economic benefits and jobs? Maybe not. "Consequently," the GAO went on, "decision makers do not have the updated information necessary to indicate whether the market and industry changes that have occurred would affect the project's net benefits."

On September 13, 2010, Delaware Audubon submitted comments on the dredging of the Delaware River, also known as the Deepening Project. You can read a complete copy of our commentary, available as a slide show in PDF format, on the Delaware Audubon web site: www.delawareaudubon.org ■

Delaware Audubon Joins Other Groups Supporting Electric Vehicle Development



Photo: The Fisker Sunset concept car, a plug-in hybrid. Fisker Automotive plans to manufacture electric cars at the former GM plant in Wilmington.

In September, Delaware Audubon joined a number of other environmental groups sending letters to the state's Congressional delegation in strong support of efforts to advance the wide-scale deployment of electric vehicles and to develop the infrastructure needed to support them.

However, Delaware Audubon added one clarification: "Electrification works as long as we also focus our efforts on improving and updating the aging infrastructure of the nation's power plants," the letter stated. "This two-pronged approach to reduce car pollution and power plant emissions will go a long way in moving towards a future that relies less on the air polluting technologies of the past."

The letter pointed out that the technology already exists. What is needed now is the focused leadership to help these technologies make that crucial first step past early adopters to the general public.

Specifically, the letter asks Delaware's Senators to support S. 3442 introduced by Senators Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Jeff Merkley (D-OR). The Electric Vehicle Deployment Act bill would allow geographic areas to compete for selection as electrification "deployment communities." In those selected geographic areas, temporary targeted financial incentives would be used to support development of electric vehicles and infrastructure.

Representatives Ed Markey (D-MA), Judy Biggert (R-IL), Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and Jerry McNerney (D-CA) introduced similar legislation in the House.

This approach—to deploy all of the elements of an electrified transportation system simultaneously at scale in select geographic areas—is designed to represent a path forward that is fiscally responsible while still minimizing the risk of electric cars being relegated to a niche market for enthusiasts.

The letter concluded, "Americans look toward the Gulf of Mexico and see an entire way of life potentially destroyed. They look to the Middle East and see our economy and our national security being held hostage by nations that wish us harm. The American people understand the danger. They want to be able to drive cars powered by cleaner, domestic fuels."

"American industry can provide those cars and the infrastructure needed to support them. We are one short step away from widespread deployment of a major new American born-and-bred technology. Electrification will open the floodgates, and the result will be a cleaner, safer, stronger nation." ■

Cardinal illustration by Steven D'Amato



2010 Bird Seed Sale

Help support *Audubon Adventures*

Ordering Deadline: Monday, October 11

Pickup Day: Saturday, October 16 (9 am – 1 pm)

at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

To learn more, and place your order, visit:

www.delawareaudubon.org/seedsale



Delaware Audubon

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EARTH SAVING TIPS: Green Your Commute



Did you know the average U.S. employee spends an average of 47 hours driving through rush hour traffic each year? All that time on the road means we waste 23 billion gallons of gas in commuter traffic a year. Learn how you can reduce your carbon commuter footprint with these simple tips:

Take public transportation.

In 2005, public transportation (like buses and metro) saved the U.S. 6.9 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Next week, leave the car in the garage and give public transport a whirl—it can save you time, money and 20 pounds of CO₂ emissions per day. Haven't used public transportation before? Start out slow; take it once or twice a week and before you know it, you'll be confident enough to take it every day.

For more information: www.dartfirststate.com

Carpool with Coworkers.

Save a few pounds of CO₂ by sharing a ride with your neighbors or coworkers. If your office doesn't already have a carpooling plan, take it upon yourself to see who's interested. Wrap up your next staff meeting by seeing if anyone wants to share a ride, or send out a short memo to solicit feedback. You'll position yourself as an agent of change, saving you and your colleagues time, money and vehicle wear and tear...all while helping the environment.

For more information: www.ridesharedelaware.org

Of course, if you live in a smaller or more rural environment, car-free tips may not be practical. Fortunately, there are still ways you can reduce your carbon footprint as you travel to and from work:

Make the Hybrid Trade.

Hybrids are now available in just about any make and model, have better gas mileage and run cleaner than their non-hybrid counterparts. If you can't make the hybrid switch, try to look for a car that has the highest miles per gallon (MPG). You'll burn less gasoline and stretch your dollar.

For more information: www.greencars.org
www.hybridcenter.org

Keep Your Car in Shape.

Strange but true: keeping tires properly inflated could save an estimated 2 billion gallons of gas each year. In addition, be sure to get regular tune-ups and filter changes—proactive maintenance will help you burn less gas while saving you from car trouble.

Drive Responsibly.

Adhering to the speed limit and avoiding sudden starts and stops will help you burn less gas and bump up your MPG. Discovery's Planet Green recommends keeping your engine speeds between 1,200 and 3,000 RPMs, and up-shift between 2,000 and 2,500 RPMs. Of course, planning efficient trips for errands and other trips will also keep you from racking up unnecessary miles.

Small individual changes can make a big impact. Try integrating these tips into your daily commute and make a difference in safeguarding our earth. ■

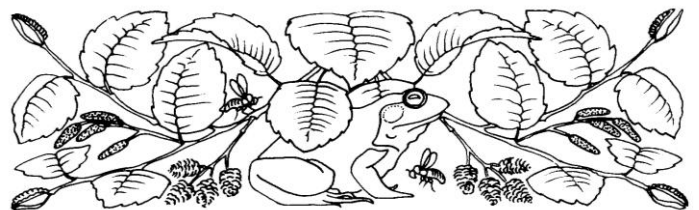


Illustration by Rosemary Gilbert Bell

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