By Jennifer Adkins, Executive Director, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary

Happier spring! A warm winter and early spring weather have the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary’s (PDE) staff hustling even more than usual. You may notice this here in Estuary News, and that this issue looks a little different.

To help keep our readers, supporters, and partners up to date on our latest work and activities, we’re adopting a new format for Estuary News. The spring and fall issues, which are distributed as e-newsletters, will focus more on the work of the PDE using photos and brief stories on our latest accomplishments and plans. The summer and winter issues, which are distributed in print and electronically, will continue to focus on critical themes for the estuary, with articles written by experts from around the region (including our staff, where applicable).

We welcome your feedback on the new format, as well as suggestions for future Estuary News issues. Please contact editor Shaun Bailey at SBailey@DelawareEstuary.org with either.

The PDE has nearly completed its Technical Report for the Estuary and Basin. This comes after more than two years of coordination among its staff, Science and Technical Advisory Committee, and many partners. The draft report includes the latest information on over 50 indicators of estuary health, ranging from water quality to fish and wildlife, and is currently undergoing technical review. Release of the technical report is anticipated in late April, and highlights will be presented in a special edition of Estuary News this summer.
Teaching About Clean Water through Art

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE) has once again teamed up with the Philadelphia Water Department for its 13th annual Art Contest. This year the theme was “Green City, Clean Waters.” Hundreds of young artists in Philadelphia vied for prizes and accolades by creating artwork. These showed how to keep the water in our streams (and faucets) clean. Winners will be recognized at an award ceremony on April 26. Contact Cheryl Jackson at CJackson@DelawareEstuary.org or (800) 445-4935, extension 112, for more information.

Introducing Communities to Living Shorelines

The PDE has produced a “Living Shorelines” brochure and is holding workshops in select areas. It is doing this to introduce large property owners, community organizations, and municipal officials to living shorelines and their benefits. Living shorelines are a more natural alternative to hard structures, like bulkheads. They are used for stabilizing eroding shorelines in some areas, and they create fish and wildlife habitat. Download the new brochure at DelawareEstuary.org, or call (800) 445-4935 for free copies.

Helping Schools Go Green

The PDE has teamed up with the Schuylkill Action Network (SAN) to plant trees along streams at five school campuses in the Schuylkill Valley. Students and parents from Limerick Elementary School helped to complete the first Schuylkill Action Students planting project last fall, and three additional projects are lined up for this spring. Streamside forests, or “riparian buffers,” on school campuses help prevent water from running off the land and polluting streams. They also make great teaching tools for schools and demonstration sites for communities. For more information contact Tom Davidock at (800) 445-4935, extension 109, or TDavidock@DelawareEstuary.org.
Tap Water Roundtable

We all care deeply about the quality of water in our rivers and streams. That’s why the PDE worked with the SAN to convene drinking water suppliers from across the Schuylkill Valley in March. Together they discussed their shared interests and collaboration on projects. For more information contact Tom Davidock at (800) 445-4935, extension 109, or TDavidock@DelawareEstuary.org.

Introducing Green Thumbs to Green Infrastructure

The 2012 Philadelphia Flower Show in March provided a great opportunity to promote the concept of green infrastructure to an audience of 270,000 plant enthusiasts. The PDE assisted the Philadelphia Water Department with its award-winning exhibit promoting the city’s Green City, Clean Waters program to the theme of “Islands of Aloha.” This program uses green infrastructure, like trees and plants, to capture and soak up rain water. Otherwise this would overflow the city’s combined sewer system during heavy rains.

Poo-lution Prevention

The PDE and the Philadelphia Water Department are relying on your votes to elect spokesdogs in Queen Village and Northern Liberties. Vote by May 1 at www.PhillyWatersheds.org/Spokesdog. Winners of the 2011 Philly Water’s Best Friend Spokesdog Competition from East Falls and Roxborough/Manayunk have been busy promoting good poop-and-scoop practices across the city. This helps to keep dog waste out of the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers.
Assessing the Health of Tidal Wetlands

Warm winter weather allowed the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE) to continue field work for the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Wetland Assessment into January this year. This surface-elevation table in Dividing Creek, New Jersey, is one of six stations installed around the estuary in partnership with The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. This includes four in New Jersey, one in Pennsylvania and one in Delaware, as well as three others near New Jersey’s Barnegat Bay. Long-term monitoring of tidal wetlands is critical for understanding the impacts of climate change, excessive nutrients, and sediment (mud) shortfalls on coastal wetlands, and making wetland-management decisions.

Flexing Our Mussels for Clean Water

PDE scientists took a break from field work this winter to organize the specimens in its mussel database. It did this to seek confirmation by nationally regarded scientists for rare species found recently in the Delaware Estuary. The PDE also recently updated its Freshwater Mussel Recovery Program (FMRP) Web pages to reflect its various elements and activities; from surveying streams for mussels to transplanting mussels where they have disappeared, and growing baby mussels in the lab. See for yourself at www.DelawareEstuary.org/Science_Projects_Mussel_Restoration.asp. This spring, the PDE will roll out a new volunteer mussel-surveying program and field guide, in addition to more rigorous scientific surveys.

Making Friends (and Beer!) for Oyster Restoration

16 Mile Brewing Company of Georgetown, Delaware has joined forces with the PDE to brew a limited-edition batch of Delaware Oyster Stout using Delaware Bay oysters. Up to $5 from every keg (available to establishments with 16 Mile on tap in Delaware and New Jersey) benefits the PDE. In March, The Oyster House in Philadelphia held a Delaware Bay Oyster Happy Hour event to benefit the PDE’s restoration efforts. This includes its work with Rutgers University and others on the Delaware Bay Oyster Restoration Task Force to restore oyster reefs in the Delaware Bay.
Promoting Restoration Opportunities and Priorities

Over $250,000 was invested in the 2011 Priority Projects for the Delaware Estuary identified by the PDE Alliance for Comprehensive Ecosystem Solutions. The public-private Alliance has selected a set of priority projects for 2012 from over 130 projects in the Project Registry of the Delaware Estuary. Summaries of these projects will be posted at DelawareEstuary.org by the end of April for 30 days of public comment before being finalized. The Project Registry was created in 2010 as a vehicle for connecting interested partners and funders with projects. You, too, can access and learn more about the Registry by going to DelawareEstuary.org and clicking on the Project Registry logo (shown above).
**ESTUARY EVENTS**

**Wilmington Earth Day Celebration**  
**April 20, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.**  
**Wilmington, DE**

The PDE, City of Wilmington, and Delaware Department of Transportation invite you to take a lunch break for the free Wilmington Earth Day Celebration. Discover earth-friendly products and services in Rodney Square on Friday, April 20, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Christina River Watershed Cleanup**  
**April 21, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Even DNREC Secretary Collin O’Mara and Governor Jack Markell of Delaware found time to help pick up trash at the annual Christina River Watershed Cleanup last year. Join us at the Riverfront Wilmington site on Saturday, April 21, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Visit www.ChristinaRiverCleanup.org for more information.

**Ag Day**  
**April 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
**Newark, DE**

Have fun down on the farm at the University of Delaware’s free Ag Day. Every year families come from all over to experience the wonders of both agriculture and the natural world. Attractions will include almost 100 exhibits, hayrides, lectures, livestock, music, plant sales and more. Stop by the PDE’s table to see how clean water makes it all possible. For details visit http://ag.udel.edu/agday, or call (302) 831-1355 today.

**Fishtown Shad Fest**  
**April 28, from noon to 6 p.m.**  
**Philadelphia, PA**

Celebrate the fish that sustained a revolution. Visit Shad Fest at Penn Treaty Park in Fishtown Philadelphia. Those who do will find craft vendors, beer, food, music and us, the PDE. That’s right, look for our table among those of other nonprofits at this one-of-a-kind festival. For more information visit facebook.com, keyword “shad fest,” or e-mail Info@FishtownShadFest.net.

**Open House**  
**May 6, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
**Newark, DE**

Tucked away in the woods off White Clay Creek is the best friend a bird ever had. It’s a small facility that solves big problems for injured, orphaned, and oiled birds, and it’s called Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research. For one day only, you can have a backstage pass at its annual open house, allowing you access to presentations and tours taking place throughout the day.
ESTUARY EVENTS

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And it’s all free! Call (302) 737-9543 for details, or simply log on to TriStateBird.org. Hopefully we will see you there at our booth.

Schuylkill Scrub Ends May 31
Southeast PA

The Schuylkill Action Network has organized over 80 riverside cleanups into one campaign called the Schuylkill Scrub. See for yourself at SchuylkillScrub.org. Log on today to register your own cleanup, or find a volunteer opportunity near you. For more information, please call Tom Davidock of the PDE at (800) 445-4935, extension 109.

Delaware Bay Day
June 2, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Bivalve, NJ

Start your summer at the South Jersey Bayshore, where Delaware Bay Day stands above all others as the travel event to top. This year will mark the first such festival featuring the Delaware Bay Museum. This new attraction features exhibits and programs extolling the virtues of a waterman’s life on Delaware Bay. You won’t be sorry you went, especially if you arrive hungry for some fresh, local seafood. Please call (856) 785-2060 with any questions. And be sure to stop by the PDE’s table while you are there.

Fun Comes Naturally on ecoDelaware.com

Since 2008, over 69,000 people have visited ecoDelaware.com as a way to find new places to visit and explore in the Delaware Estuary, and visits are up 126% over this time last year. EcoDelaware.com has information for planning a trip to some of the estuary’s most beautiful and interesting places and events; from a lunchtime stroll to a weekend excursion. The most popular event on ecoDelaware.com so far this year is the Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird Festival of Milton, Delaware (pictured).
Oyster Happy Hours
May 9 and 21
Georgetown and Wilmington, DE, respectively
The PDE is teaming up with 16 Mile Brewing Company and the Center for the Inland Bays (CIB) to host a happy-hour event on May 9, from 5:30 to 8 p.m., at 16 Mile’s new tasting room in Georgetown, Delaware. Proceeds will benefit the PDE and CIB’s work to protect Delaware’s estuaries. Or join us for happy hour at Harry’s Seafood Grill on May 21, from 5 to 7 p.m. Proceeds from this event will benefit the PDE. Contact Karen Johnson Forst at KForst@DelawareEstuary.org for more information.

Save The Date!
October 11, 2012
The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary’s (PDE) 2012 Experience the Estuary Celebration will take place on October 11 at the Figure 8 Barn in Bellevue State Park of Wilmington, Delaware. Please contact Karen Johnson Forst at KForst@DelawareEstuary.org for information about event sponsorship.

Partnership for the Delaware Estuary: a National Estuary Program
The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Inc., (PDE) is a private, nonprofit organization established in 1996. The PDE leads collaborative and creative efforts to protect and enhance the Delaware Estuary and its tributaries for current and future generations. The PDE is one of 28 National Estuary Programs. To find out how you can become one of our partners, call the PDE at (800) 445-4935 or visit our website at www.DelawareEstuary.org.

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