

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | Monday, October 7, 2019

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Photos of the event will available here by 4 p.m. on October 7: <http://bit.ly/delgado107>

Congressman Delgado, Conservation Organizations Celebrate \$1.24 Million in Federal Funding for the Upper Delaware River

On-the-Ground Project Funding Aims to Conserve Wildlife Habitat, Enhance Water Quality, and Improve Recreational Opportunities

DEPOSIT, N.Y. – On October 7, Congressman Antonio Delgado (NY-19), Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, Trout Unlimited (TU), Town of Colchester Supervisor Art Merrill, Village of Deposit Mayor Bryan Moore, and Town of Hancock Board member Patrick O'Brien gathered in Deposit, N.Y. for a press event and site tour that celebrated \$1,239,817 in federal funds recently awarded to FUDR and TU as part of the [Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund](#). These new funds will allow these organizations to conserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat, enhance and maintain water quality, and improve river-based recreational opportunities and public access in the Upper Delaware Watershed (Delaware and Sullivan Counties in New York, and Wayne County in Pennsylvania.)

“These Delaware Watershed Conservation grants represent an important investment in the future of the Upper Delaware River to restore habitat for fish and wildlife species, keep our waterways clean and healthy, expand recreational access, and support local jobs that rely on the river. I couldn’t be prouder to have these federal funds coming to our state to address on-the-ground conservation and restoration issues facing the Upper Delaware,” said **Congressman Antonio Delgado (NY-19)**.

The five grants totaling \$1,239,817 include:

- Management of invasive knotweed throughout the Upper Delaware River Watershed. Invasive knotweed can permanently displace native vegetation, destroy fish and wildlife habitat, and reduce recreational opportunities. FUDR/TU will develop a strategic management plan with demonstration sites in public, regionally significant areas, with outreach to streamside landowners, in order to limit further spread.
- Improvement of trout habitat and river access at Cadosia Creek in Hancock, New York to create additional recreational opportunities along the river.
- Enhancement of the New York-Pennsylvania Joint Fisheries Investigation Plan involving the East Branch, West Branch, and main stem of the Delaware River. The New York-Pennsylvania Joint Fisheries Investigation Plan will assess the region’s recreational trout fishery and potential

pressures caused by angling to guide future fisheries management and fish habitat restoration decisions in the Upper Delaware River.

- Implementation of the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Stream Corridor Management Plan, including stream bank restoration to improve water quality on Quaqua Creek in the Village of Deposit, N.Y. and Mongaup Creek in Livingston Manor, N.Y., and a comprehensive assessment of road stream crossings.
- Aquatic passage improvement on Fuller Brook in the town of Colchester in order to connect habitat for aquatic organisms; and streambank stabilization on Laurel Creek in Deposit, N.Y. to improve water quality and prevent water contamination from soil.

"We're thrilled that Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grantees include Coalition member Friends of the Upper Delaware River. The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed worked with Congressional allies on the 2016 passage of the [Delaware River Basin Conservation Act](#), which subsequently created the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund to provide restoration and conservation funding to combat critical issues like habitat degradation, invasive species, and degraded water quality," explains **Sandra Meola, Director of the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed**. "The Upper Delaware's headwaters in New York provides drinking water to downstream communities in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. In total, 13.3 million people receive their drinking water from the Delaware River Basin, including about fifty percent of New York City, creating a necessity to safeguard the Upper Delaware."

Along the Beaverkill, East Branch, West Branch, and upper main stem of the Delaware River in New York, wild trout fishing provides 350 jobs with \$3.6 million in wages, a demand that creates a necessity to gather data via the New York-Pennsylvania Joint Fisheries Investigation Plan and improve trout habitat in the Upper Delaware. Additionally, New York State jobs directly associated with the Delaware River (such as water utilities, fishing, recreation, water/sewer construction, tourism, and ports) [employ 32,171 people](#), earning approximately \$550 million in wages.

"The Upper Delaware River is an enormous economic engine for our region and this new conservation investment is a great example of how the river generates resources for our local communities. These grant awards happened because the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition - a broad coalition representing diverse local interest groups and municipalities - came together with the common recognition that protecting the river serves everybody's interests," said **Jeff Skelding, Executive Director, Friends of the Upper Delaware River**. "This new conservation investment serves multiple economic and ecological objectives. It protects our natural environment, boosts our recreational economy, addresses public safety and economic issues associated with flooding, and creates local jobs."

The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed and partners aim to increase funding for the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund from \$6 million to \$10 million in fiscal year 2020 to better meet the needs of conservation organizations, as well as local and state governments that can apply for grants. This summer, the House Interior Appropriations Committee included

\$10 million for the fund in their interior appropriations bill, while the Senate Interior Appropriations bill announced in late September included only \$6.5 million.

"The Upper Delaware River is a world-renowned wild trout fishery that attracts anglers from across the country. The beautiful trout of the upper Delaware are a symbol of economic and ecological health in our region. They need clean, cold water to thrive and these Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grants will help ensure a healthy watershed that supports the long-term sustainability of our wild trout populations," explained **Tracy Brown, Trout Unlimited's New York Restoration Manager New York.**

Investment in on-the-ground conservation projects in the Upper Delaware also protects wildlife, as the area is part of the Atlantic Flyway, [providing habitat to over 200 resident and migrant avian species](#). The area is an ideal habitat for the bald eagle, hosting one of the largest populations of wintering bald eagles in the Northeast; a species that relies on clean water for their diet of primarily fish and builds their nests where food is abundant. Other wildlife in the Upper Delaware River that rely on clean water and healthy habitat include the American shad, eels, Great Blue herons, and occasionally river otters.

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The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed is a network of 149 non-governmental organizations located in NY, NJ, PA, and DE and are dedicated to protecting and restoring the natural resources of the Delaware River Basin. For more information, visit www.DelRiverWatershed.org.

Friends of the Upper Delaware River works to protect, preserve, and enhance the cold-water ecosystem and the economy of the Upper Delaware River Watershed and to address environmental threats to the area for the benefit of local communities, residents, and visitors. For more information, visit www.FUDR.org.