

# The Milepost



Quarterly Event Guide for the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park

Winter 2009

145 Mapleton Road, Princeton, NJ 08540

Vol. 9, Issue 1

Phone: [Kingston Office \(609\) 924-5705](tel:6099245705) / [Bull's Island Office \(609\) 397-2949](tel:6093972949) ~ Park Web Site: [www.dandrcanal.com](http://www.dandrcanal.com)



## 175 Years and Counting!



### Delaware & Raritan Canal 1834 - 2009



On June 25, 1834 the Delaware and Raritan Canal was officially opened for public use. After a journey of several days that began in Bordentown, Governor Peter Vroom and entourage arrived via mule-drawn canal boat in New Brunswick to a 24-gun salute and parade. The group enjoyed a grand dinner that evening to celebrate the opening of this highly anticipated modern transportation system. It was expected that the new waterway would be a boon to the state's economy by providing new business, commerce and transportation opportunities. In April of 1834, a few months prior to the June ceremony, the Hunterdon Democrat published these enthusiastic words regarding the nearly completed D & R Canal:

*Those who are partial to this mode of traveling cannot fail to be pleased with this route. The scenery from Lambertville to Trenton is striking and beautiful with a fine view of the Delaware River, and passing through a fertile and well-improved region of country. The appearance of the whole country through which the Feeder runs is truly imposing, and a great part of it romantic and beautiful. The whole of this magnificent work will soon be completed; its enterprising and liberal advocates will be remembered with pride by Jerseymen, especially those who were mainly instrumental in its accomplishments will stand conspicuous, and will be ever regarded as benefactors in their country.*

Clearly, 19th century New Jerseyans appreciated the visionaries responsible for the canal project and welcomed this new addition to their state. Then, as now, the D & R Canal was valued. Today of course the D & R is no longer a working transportation canal. Instead it has successfully transitioned to become a beloved park, recreation destination, water supply and historic site. To the 21st-century visitor and regular park user, it is no less appreciated. Our yearly visitation numbers stand as a testament to the canal's continued favor as the D & R Canal State Park is among the state's most heavily used parks.

This year will mark a Delaware and Raritan Canal milestone. It will be the 175th anniversary of the waterway's opening! A celebration of that landmark is in order. A committee has been formed and its members are currently busy planning a year-long canal commemoration the details of which can be followed throughout the year on the park website - [dandrcanal.com](http://dandrcanal.com). While opportunities to learn about the waterway's history and contribution to the state will be offered, it is the committee's goal to showcase everything the D & R Canal State Park has to offer. Visitors will have a plethora of programming options and events from which to choose from hiking, biking, boating, birding and horseback riding to guided history and nature walks, art/photography shows, lectures, family picnics, camping/outdoor equipment expo and concerts.

To start the year off, the Delaware River Mill Society will host "**175 Year Celebration of the D & R Canal Art Show**" from January 19th to the 31st. The show will be open to the public daily from 12:00 - 4:00 pm. This artistic look at the canal will be mounted in the historic Prallsville Mills in Stockton and will feature contemporary artist's impressions and renderings of the waterway today. The show will include paintings, drawings, photographs and three dimensional work inspired by the historic sites and nature's beauty along the feeder and main-stem canal. For those who want to showcase their D & R artwork or photography should contact the Delaware River Mill Society at (609) 397-3586 for full submission details.

In addition to this kickoff art show and the usual programming offerings, there will be several unique happenings offered during the course of the year. In the spring park users will have an opportunity to show their support of the canal by taking part in an ambitious task - **Hands Along the Canal**. This bold undertaking will attempt to line thousands of hand-holding park users along the historic towpath from Landing Lane to Trenton's Cadwalader Park. **Sponsored by the East Coast Greenway, Hands Along the Canal is scheduled to take place at 10:00 am on Saturday, May 9th.** Those of you who love and use the D & R should make sure to mark your calendars, pick a favored location and plan to be a part of this historic show of support for the park. **Keep checking [www.dandrcanal.com](http://www.dandrcanal.com) for updates and event details.**

Also in May canal aficionados, park users and all others will have an opportunity to meet the authors who have been inspired to research and write about the canal era and the D & R. **The Canal Authors Extravaganza will be held on Saturday, May 16th in Griggstown from 12:00 to 3:00 pm (exact location still to be determined).** This will be a chance to meet and speak with eleven canal authors including William McKelvey, Paul Muldoon (*Pulitzer Prize winning poet*), Richard Veit, Marie Murphy Dues, Linda Barth, Jeanette Muser and others. Lee Sullivan Hill and Linda Barth will read excerpts from the children's books, the **Riverside Band** will be on hand to provide their brand of bluegrass inspired music and attendees will have the opportunity to view several videos about the D & R including the NJN production produced by Cliff Crawford. So get those canal books off their shelves and plan to get them autographed in person!

These are but a few of the programs and special events that are planned for this milestone year so make sure to keep checking the park website for additions and updates throughout the year. This extended programming calendar and special events could not be accomplished without the assistance of the many friends groups and organizations that dedicate themselves to the preservation and support of the D & R Canal State Park. Our staff is (*as always*) happy and grateful for their continued commitment and support! We look forward to an active and exciting year as we mark the canal's 175th anniversary. We encourage everyone to help us celebrate. Come show your support for this treasured New Jersey historic site and surviving icon of the canal era!

# FREE WINTER 2009 PROGRAMS AT THE D & R CANAL STATE PARK



Programs are subject to cancellation due to inclement weather, lack of interest or illness. **Registration is REQUIRED for ALL PROGRAMS unless otherwise noted.** Call the Park Office at 609-924-5705 (*Kingston Office*) to register or do so online. Visit [www.dandrcanal.com/programs.html](http://www.dandrcanal.com/programs.html) for further details and to check for program updates, cancellations and/or additions.  
**All programs are FREE unless otherwise specified!**

JANUARY 2009

**Jan. 1:** **Blackwells Mills Canal House Association's New Year's Day Open House:** A long time tradition continues! Come to the historic canal house on the corner of Blackwells Mills and Canal Road in Franklin Township for this annual open house. The door is open wide for the celebration with refreshments. A warm welcome and friends await your visit. The doors will be open from 1:00 - 4:00 pm. Registration is NOT required and admission is FREE!



**Jan. 3:** **After Holidays Walk-Off:** Here's your chance to honor to that New Year's Resolution to get more exercise and lose a few of those extra pounds we all put on over the holidays! Join the parknaturalist for a 5-mile walk on the historic D&R Canal towpath. Participants are asked to meet at the Washington Crossing State Park parking lot located in Titusville directly off Route 29 in Mercer County at 1:00 pm (*right before the bridge over the Delaware*). Start the new year off on the right foot and enjoy the beauty of the winter season.



**Jan. 10:** **Concert At the Mill:** Enjoy the sounds of talented local musician, Geoff Caldwell and help support the efforts to maintain the historic Prallsville mills site at the same time. This concert will be held at the historic mill site located directly off Route 29 just north of Stockton's town center (*approximately 4 miles north of Lambertville*). Admission is FREE but donations will be gratefully accepted with all proceeds going to help maintain the Prallsville Mills. Time to be announced. For further details and information please call the Delaware River Mill Society at (609) 397-3586.



**Jan. 19 - 31:** **175 Year Celebration of the D & R Canal Art Show:** The Delaware River Mill Society will kick-off the year-long celebration by hosting this art show beginning on Monday the 19th and ending almost two weeks later on Saturday the 31st. The show will be open to the public daily from 12 to 4 pm. This artistic look at the canal will be mounted in the historic Prallsville Mills (*located directly off Route 29, just north of Stockton in Hunterdon County*) and will feature contemporary artist's impressions and renderings of the waterway today. The show will include paintings, drawings, photographs and three dimensional work inspired by the historic sites and natures beauty along the feeder and main-stem canal. **For further details and information please call the Delaware River Mill Society at (609) 397-3586.**

**Jan. 23:** **New Jersey Owl Prowl:** Join Sanctuary Director Sean Grace of the **New Jersey Audubon Society** to learn about New Jersey's nocturnal hunters. Which owls live here year round and which ones migrate to and from our state? Which owl has been known to snack on fish and earth worms? Join us for an evening class learning cool owl facts followed by a hike looking for these creatures of the night. Participants are asked to meet at the Plainsboro Preserve at 7:00 pm to start the program and then car pool over to the D & R canal and walk along the canal to look and listen for these elusive birds. Interested participants are asked to contact NJ Audubon Society at (609) 897-9400 to pre-register. There is a \$15.00 registration fee.



**Jan. 24** **Visit the Port Mercer Bridge Tender's House:** At one time many canal company houses dotted the landscape along the main route from Bordentown to New Brunswick. Today precious few remain. Under the care of the Lawrence Historical Society the Port Mercer Canal House, located at 4378 Quaker Road in Lawrence Township (*behind the Mercer Mall*), has been lovingly maintained. Come to this winter open house, learn about the canal's past from the D&R Canal State Park's historian and experience the 19th century first-hand. The house will be open from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Registration is NOT required. Weather permitting.



**Feb. 7:** **Kid's Groundhog Day Celebration:** Let's make some guesses on what Punxsutawney Phil, the famous groundhog, has to say about this winter season. Children will learn a little about hibernation, migration and other techniques animals use to survive the winter weather. Other activities will include a reading of "Gregory's Shadow," shadow puppets, and everyone will make a Groundhog Day craft to take home. Appropriate for ages 4 and up. The hour long program will be held at the D & R Canal's Kingston Office and begin at 10:00 am. Space will be limited so call early to reserve your spot!



**Feb. 14:** **Blackwells Mills Canal House Association's Valentine Party:** Members of the BMCHA are hosting this party for all ages. Come join them at the canal house and enjoy cider warmed on the iron kitchen stove or a cup of hot chocolate. Supplies will be provided for visitors to create their own cards for 2009! This afternoon program will be held at the Canal House located on the corner of Blackwells Mills and Canal Road in Franklin Township between 1:00 - 4:00 pm. Registration is NOT required & admission is FREE!



**Feb. 21:** **Visit the Port Mercer Bridge Tender's House:** At one time many canal company houses dotted the landscape along the main route from Bordentown to New Brunswick. Today precious few remain. Under the care of the Lawrence Historical Society the Port Mercer Canal House, located at 4378 Quaker Road in Lawrence Township (*behind the Mercer Mall*), has been lovingly maintained. Come to this winter open house, learn about the canal's past from the D&R Canal State Park's historian and experience the 19th century first-hand. The house will be open from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Registration is NOT required. Weather permitting.



**Feb. 28:** **Explore the D & R Canal by Light Rail:** Repeated by popular demand! Join us for a whirlwind guided tour by light rail into the nineteenth century between Roebling and Trenton! We will meet in the parking lot of the Bordentown Light Rail station (100 W. Park Avenue at Prince Street, above the boat landing) at 11:00 a.m. sharp, purchase tickets, and be treated to a brief introduction before boarding the train at 11:25 for a 5-minute ride south to Roebling to see cuts in the shoreline and sunken canalboats from the era when coal-laden boats crossed the river from Bristol to the D & R Canal. Roebling's abandoned Kinkora plant, and perhaps even an eagle may also be observed.

Then we will board an 11:37 northbound train for a 15-minute ride to Trenton, and return to Bordentown on a 12:14 train, arriving at 12:25. The tracks follow the path of the D & R Canal between Crosswicks Creek and Trenton. From the west side of the train we will see passing views of the canal and the sites of former Trenton industries and bridges that lined the canal, now Route 129. On the return trip from the east side of the train we will glimpse two former Roebling plants, the Marsh, and Watson's Creek. Two-hour, either-direction tickets are \$1.35 (.65 for seniors). Please bring exact change. Parking and the tour are FREE. This program is sponsored by **Friends for the Marsh** and co-sponsored by the **D & R Canal Watch, D & R Canal State Park, and D & R Greenway Land Trust.** **Reservations are suggested but NOT required. For further information and to register for the trip after February 15, call 609-924-2683.**



FEBRUARY 2000