

A Blueprint for the Future

At the dawn of the millennium, the commission was engaged in developing a new comprehensive water resources plan for the basin, an assignment given out by four governors.

The governors challenged the basin community to play an active role in drawing up the visionary blueprint for the watershed's future and called for the creation of a broad-based Watershed Advisory Council to assist the DRBC.

At its October 1999 meeting, the commission adopted a resolution creating the council. Selection of members carried over into the year 2000.

The charge to develop the plan and the council was contained in a document titled "Resolution on the Protection of the Delaware River Basin" that was signed by Governors Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey and Thomas R. Carper of Delaware at a Governors' Summit held September 29, 1999 at the New Jersey State Aquarium. Governors George E. Pataki of New York and Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania also signed the resolution but were unable to attend the event. They were represented by the top officials in their state environmental agencies, John P. Cahill and James M. Seif, respectively.

The resolution also was signed by Brigadier General M. Stephen Rhoades, commander, North Atlantic Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region II Administrator Jeanne Fox; then-EPA Region III Administrator Michael McCabe; and National Park Service (NPS) Northeast Regional Director Marie Rust in support of the actions taken by the governors.

Each of the basin states presented an award to recognize a person who has made significant efforts to benefit the natural resources of the Delaware River Basin. The winners were:

- Peg and Hal Haskin (New Jersey)
- John C. Bryson (Delaware)
- Ruth M. Jones (Pennsylvania)
- Raymond M. Christensen (New York)

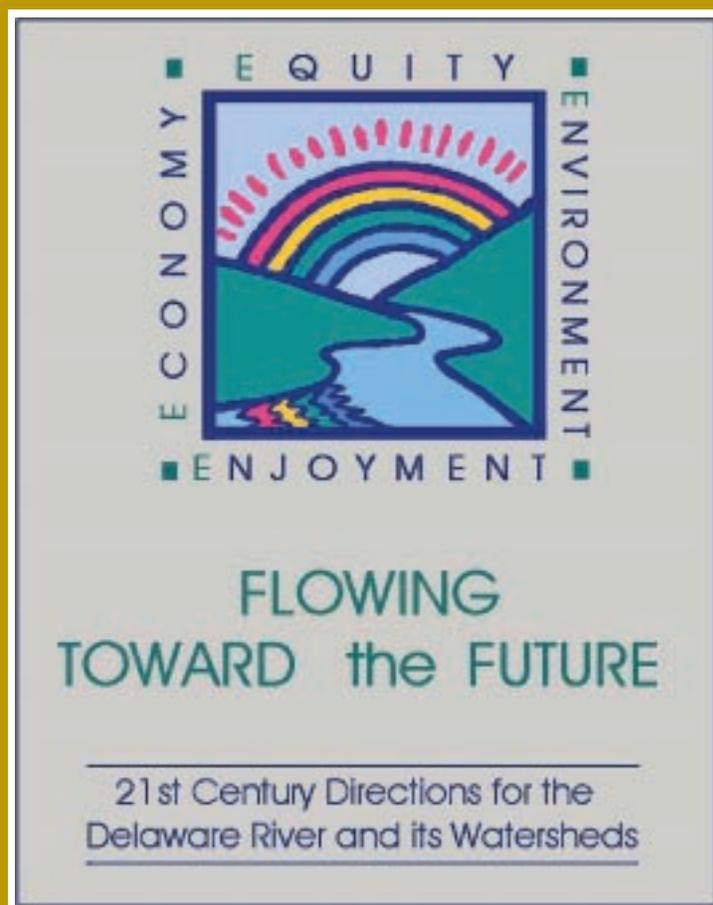
A Shared Vision

The Governors' Summit was the second step in a three-step process named Flowing Toward the Future. The other elements were regional workshops and a watershed-wide conference.

The process began in April and May 1999 with approximately 350 people attending ten workshops held at five locations in the Delaware River Watershed — Dover, Del.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Bridgeton, N.J.; Narrowsburg, N.Y.; and Bethlehem, Pa. In addition, students attending a regional Youth Summit in Pennsylvania held their own workshops in May using an abbreviated format.

The purpose of the workshops was to gather information and ideas for developing a shared vision for the future of the Delaware River Basin as well as “21st Century Directions” for attaining this vision.

Each workshop used a focus group process where participants were divided into one of four interest groups — preservation/advocacy, commerce/utilities, recreation, and government. Several mixed groups also were conducted. Trained facilitators led these breakout groups through a three-hour process where participants prioritized and described vision elements, challenges, and directions. The 26 breakout sessions held at the ten workshops yielded lists for 71 priority vision elements, 826 challenges to be overcome, and 880 directions needed to overcome the challenges.



After the workshops were completed, the information was analyzed for themes. The 71 priority elements were consolidated into five vision statements that collectively describe a 21st Century vision — Ecological; Water Supply; Livable, Pleasing Places; Vibrant Economy; and Stewardship. The over 1,700 challenges and directions, in turn, yielded suggested directions grouped under the following headings — Good Science; Watershed Education; Watershed Image and Marketing; Land Resources; Water Management; and Working Better Together. These are not stand-alone directions, but packages that collectively will attain the five vision statements making up the 21st Century Delaware River Basin vision. Each represents a collection of related activities that should, or could, be done by agencies, organizations, and/or citizens of the basin.

The information and insights generated from the workshops were used to develop the September 1999 report, “21st Century Visions and Directions for the Delaware River and its Watersheds.”

The final Flowing Toward the Future event was the watershed-wide conference held November 15-17, 1999 in Philadelphia. This conference was designed to build upon the first two events, helping to establish directions and models for cooperative action that will sustain the river, its tributaries, and its watersheds into the 21st Century and beyond. The conference featured more than 150 presenters and was attended by nearly 500 people over the two-and-a-half days.

Conference sponsors included the Delaware Estuary Program, Heritage Conservancy, National Park Service, William Penn Foundation, U.S. EPA, PECO Energy, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, and the Port of Philadelphia and Camden.

The organizers of the Flowing Toward the Future process included the DRBC, the basin’s four state environmental agencies, Alliance for a Sustainable Future, Delaware Estuary Program, Heritage Conservancy, National Park Service, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Upper Delaware Council, U.S. EPA, and the Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin. New Jersey Future and the Stroud Water Research Center also helped to organize the Governors’ Summit and November conference.

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Governor Whitman presents Peg and Hal Haskin the “Flowing Toward the Future” Award “in gratitude for the time and effort they have generously given to benefit the natural resources of the Delaware River Basin.” Looking on are Carol Collier, the DRBC’s executive director, and Robert C. Shinn, Jr., commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and Governor Whitman’s representative on the DRBC.
(Photo by Clarke Rupert)



A participant at the Narrowsburg, N.Y., workshop votes with multi-colored dots for his favorite challenges and directions as part of the Flowing Toward the Future process to forge a new comprehensive plan for the basin.
(Photo by David B. Soete)