



DOI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Delaware River Basin Restoration Program

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Authorized by Congress in 2016 with strong bipartisan support, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Delaware River Basin Restoration Program (DRBRP) responded to a need for federal, state, regional and local partners to work together to keep the Delaware River and its watershed healthy for future generations of people and wildlife.

The legislation outlines three primary components needed to address the strategic program areas:

1. A partnership (Delaware Watershed Conservation Collaborative)
2. A grant and technical assistance program (Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund)
3. A watershed-wide strategy (Conservation Blueprint)

Delaware River Basin



Restoration Program

STRATEGIC PROGRAM AREAS



Sustain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat through restoration and conservation activities



Improve and maintain water quality to support fish and wildlife, as well as habitats of fish and wildlife, and drinking water for people



Sustain and enhance water management for volume and flood mitigation to benefit fish, wildlife and people



Improve recreational opportunities for public access in the watershed consistent with the ecological needs of fish and wildlife habitat

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

The DRBRP, through the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF), supports a diversity of conservation and restoration projects that contribute to the health, wellness and economic vitality of the communities in the Delaware River watershed. Combined with matching funds from partner organizations, the grants, which are co-administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, result in significant, measurable benefits for people and wildlife in the watershed.

Fostering Stewardship

The DRBRP is investing in the next generation of conservationists by transforming unused green spaces on school campuses into eco-classrooms with wildlife and pollinator habitats — providing opportunities to teach environmental stewardship and advance conservation efforts.

Supporting Agricultural Communities

With 21% of the watershed’s lands dedicated to agriculture¹, the DWCF is investing in projects that reduce agricultural runoff at the source, increase habitat for pollinators and wildlife and support agricultural landowners.

Expanding Recreational Opportunities

The Delaware River watershed’s recreation economy is valued at \$1.2 billion². The DRBRP is supporting that economy by investing in public access projects that expand and enhance educational and recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing and wildlife viewing.

Restoring and Conserving Habitats

The DRBRP advances conservation actions across the watershed. Efforts in the upper watershed include brook trout research and forest management. In the lower parts of the watershed, some projects address coastal resilience/restoration, urban conservation and pollinator habitats.

¹ [Technical Report for the Delaware Estuary and Basin, 2022](#); ²Kauffman, 2016. doi.org/10.1111/j.1936-704X.2016.03222.x

DELAWARE WATERSHED CONSERVATION FUND BY THE NUMBERS 2018 - 2023

\$55.1 million
in conservation investments

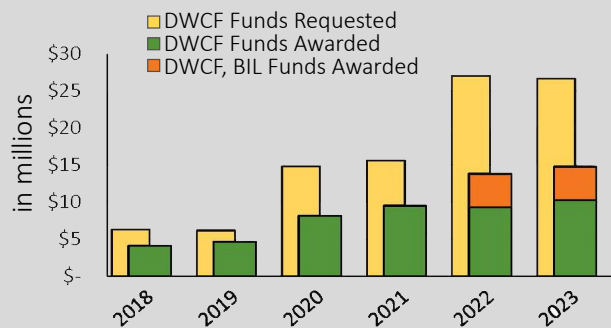
\$79.2 million
leveraged in matching funds

\$134.3 million
total conservation impact

DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM

The DWCF responded to a need for restoration in the watershed, and demand for the program continues to grow. In FY23, the DRBRP funded just 56% of proposals. The increase in appropriations and added infusion of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds allowed the program to finance 36 projects that will advance strategic conservation priorities in the region.

In FY23, the DWCF received 64 proposals requesting more than \$26 million in funding — far more than the available \$14.9 million. The high number of proposals received demonstrates the importance of and demand for the DRBRP to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners, as well as the value it holds for the Delaware River watershed.



14 projects
\$3.9M invested
\$3.8M matching funds



72 projects
\$22.9M invested
\$42.9M matching funds



51 projects
\$13.9M invested
\$17.3M matching funds



23 projects
\$5.3M invested
\$5.4M matching funds



36 projects
\$9.1M invested
\$10.6M matching funds



Left to right: Volunteers installed native plants to serve as pollinator habitat / Caesar Rodney School District; Large machinery was used to remove the Lenape Dam along the Brandywine River / Brandywine Red Clay Alliance; Kayaker enjoying views of Philadelphia / National Wildlife Federation.

To learn more about the Fish and Wildlife Service’s DRBRP visit bit.ly/30MmkvD or NFWF visit bit.ly/44cW0QQ. *All statistics and figures include BIL funds.