



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 variety 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.

RESTORING HABITATS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE

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, stream restoration and pollinator habitats.

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, hunting and wildlife viewing.

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, increasing habitat for pollinators and wildlife and support agricultural landowners.

IMPROVING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The DRBRP is investing in rain gardens, living shorelines and dam removals on public and private lands to mitigate flood impacts during large storm events and improve water quality. Investments benefit local communities, fish, wildlife, and pollinators simultaneously.

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 - 2024

**\$72.1
million**

in conservation
investments

**\$100
million**

leveraged in
matching funds

**\$172.1
million**

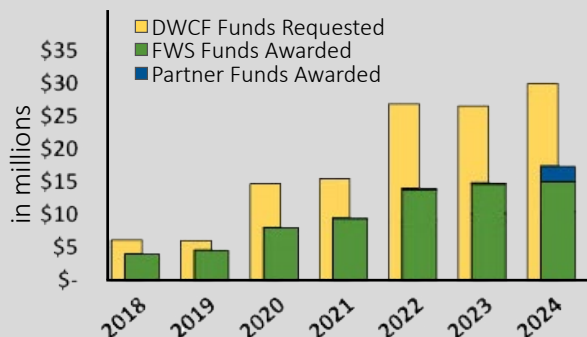
total conservation
impact

DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM

The DWCF responds to a growing need for restoration in the watershed. Due to its successful track record for directing resources to conservation needs, the program has attracted additional funding to advance shared priorities in the region.

In FY 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other partner contributions, allowed the program to finance 45 projects at a record of \$17.3 million in conservation grants.

But demand still exceeds supply: The DWCF received 72 proposals requesting more than \$30 million. This demand speaks to the program's reputation for delivering conservation outcomes on the ground, and the value it offers for people and wildlife in the Delaware River watershed.



NEW YORK



16 projects
\$5.3M invested
\$5.1M matching funds

PENNSYLVANIA



87 projects
\$29.6M invested
\$52.5M matching funds

NEW JERSEY



62 projects
\$17.9M invested
\$21M matching funds

DELAWARE



28 projects
\$6.2M invested
\$8M matching funds

MULTI-STATE



46 projects
\$13.0M invested
\$13.4M 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; Kayakers enjoying a sunny day on the Cooper River/Upstream Alliance.

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 FWS and partner funds.