



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 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

Through regular engagement with state agencies and other partners, we ensure the DRBRP addresses habitat needs for state identified Species of Greatest Conservation Need. From reconnecting brook trout habitat in the upper watershed, to restoring tidal systems for saltmarsh sparrow, these efforts benefit priority wildlife and neighboring communities.

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 support working lands by reducing agricultural runoff at the source and increasing habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

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 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 - 2025

**\$85.5
million**

in conservation
investments

**\$117.1
million**

leveraged in
matching funds

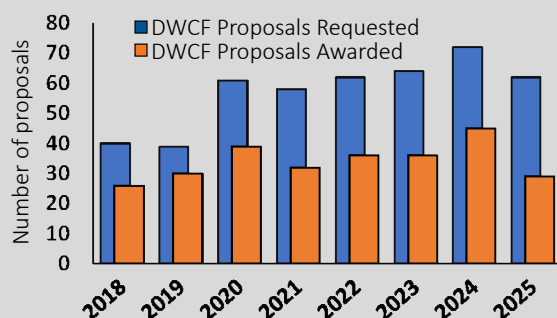
**\$202.6
million**

total conservation
impact

DEMONSTRATED PARTNER INTEREST

Since 2018, the DWCF has become increasingly competitive, consistently receiving more high-quality proposals than it has the funds to support.

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. In FY 2025, the DWCF funded less than half of proposals received with requests for funding being more than double the \$12.5 million available.



This robust partner interest highlights the program's reputation for delivering real conservation outcomes and the value it offers to the American public, fish and wildlife. While the program's successful track record has attracted additional funding partners to help advance shared priorities across the watershed, demand continues to exceed supply.

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

The DRBRP engages with an array of public-private partners, including state agencies, to identify shared conservation goals and direct on-the-ground conservation investments. By working with partners, the DRBRP is increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of conservation delivery, ultimately restoring and connecting a resilient landscape across the watershed.

The Service, NFWF, and state agencies are working together to align landscape-scale conservation initiatives that reflect a shared vision for more efficient, collaborative conservation that respects state authorities, reduces administrative burdens, and directs resources to shared priorities.

CONTACT & LEARN MORE

Mike Slattery, Michael_Slattery@fws.gov

Sandra Cross, Sandra_Cross@fws.gov

To learn more about the program visit fws.gov/program/delaware-river-basin-restoration or nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program. *Statistics include FWS and partner funds.

NEW YORK



17 projects
\$6M invested
\$5.9M matching funds

PENNSYLVANIA



98 projects
\$33.7M invested
\$59.6M matching funds

NEW JERSEY



73 projects
\$22.8M invested
\$26.6M matching funds

DELAWARE



31 projects
\$7.2M invested
\$9.1M matching funds

MULTI-STATE



51 projects
\$15.8M invested
\$16M matching funds