

Number 104

[www.canalwatch.org](http://www.canalwatch.org)

April 2026

### **3rd Annual Canoe and Kayak Race to be held on Saturday, May 2**

**Sign up now to take part in—or to volunteer for—the 3rd Annual Canoe and Kayak Race!**

**Saturday, May 2: 3rd Annual Canoe Race.** Commemorating the 52nd Anniversary of the D&R Canal State Park! Come join us for a **paddling race** on the D&R Canal Saturday, May 2nd at 10 a.m. A paddling race on the D and R Canal.



A canal mule would pull a boat 15 miles per day. **Can you complete a half mule-day on the canal?** If so, join us for the 8.6-mile canal race in Princeton, NJ.

More info and registration here: <https://paddleguru.com/races/DRCanalRaceSpring2026>

Proceeds go to the Canal Watch in support of projects in the park. You can choose from 8-mile or 1-mile race distances. Canoes, kayaks, and SUPs welcome. Race begins and ends at the Turning Basin, Alexander Road in Princeton, NJ. \$35. Mandatory pre-Registration and additional details available: <https://paddleguru.com/races/DandRCanalPark50thAnniversaryRace>; 972-742-1500. (There is a "contact race" button on the page that directs to there as well.) Contact: Alan Lamb, [Alan.Lamb3@gmail.com](mailto:Alan.Lamb3@gmail.com).

### **More Canal Watch Activities and Events for 2026**

**Sunday, June 28: 2:00 p.m. Canal Watch Annual Meeting.** D&R Canal Commission director John Hutchison will share the work on the new master plan. Fellowship Hall behind the Griggstown Reformed Church, 1065 Canal Road, Griggstown. (GPS may use Princeton, although it is nowhere near Princeton.) Contact: Linda Barth, [barth-linda123@aol.com](mailto:barth-linda123@aol.com); 908-240-0488.

See the end of this list for more information about the D&R Canal State Park Master Plan.

**Sunday, July 26: Canal Road Walk and Roll. 10:00-4:00.** Canal Road will be closed from East Millstone to Butler Road. Enjoy a day with friends and family along the scenic D&R Canal with no cars!

**Sunday, August 30: Canal Road Walk and Roll. 10:00-4:00.** Canal Road will be closed from Griggstown Causeway to Route 518 in Rocky Hill. Enjoy a day with friends and family along the scenic D&R Canal with no cars!

(continued on page two)

**Sunday, September 13: Canal House Challenge, 10:00-4:00.** Five of the historic locktender and bridgetender homes will be open to the public. Pick up a passport at your first stop and have it stamped. If you visit all five buildings in one day, you will receive a small prize. Visitors will be invited to tour the homes in East Millstone, Blackwells Mills, Griggstown, Kingston, and Port Mercer (addresses will be provided in the August newsletter). The friends group in charge of each home will welcome visitors and provide a tour and history of the building.

**Sunday, September 20: Young Patriots Day at Princeton Battlefield.** Young Patriots Day is an annual, interactive educational event held at Princeton Battlefield State Park in New Jersey, celebrating 18th-century American history for children and families. The 2026 event features Revolutionary War reenactments, historical figures, and hands-on colonial activities. The Canal Watch will staff a table at this event. Volunteers are welcome.

**Saturday-Sunday, October 10-11: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday; noon to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Somerset County's Journey Through the Past.**

**On Saturday, meet and talk with Canal Cap'n Hummel. Performances at 11:00 and 1:00 at the East Millstone bridgetender's home. The captain will be there all day to talk with guests and answer questions.**

Canal Watch members will open the East Millstone bridgetender's home and station (and the historic outhouse, for observation only). Bob Barth, 201-401-3121, [bbarth321@aol.com](mailto:bbarth321@aol.com). (To see the many other historic sites that will be open, Google "Journey Through the Past, Somerset County, NJ.")



**Sunday, October 18: 10:00 a.m. Bike Ride on the Feeder Canal.** Starting and ending point for this round-trip ride to be determined. **Helmet required. SAVE THE DATE.** Tim Roth, [tim-roth@comcast.net](mailto:tim-roth@comcast.net), 973-222-0586.

**Saturday, October 24:** Geology hike, 10:00 a.m. **Meet at Prallsville Mills, Route 29, Stockton.** During this geology walk, participants will learn about the four geologic units of the Newark Basin along the D&R Canal. Walk led by Pierre Lacombe, retired USGS geologist, [pjlacombe25@gmail.com](mailto:pjlacombe25@gmail.com).

### **More about the Canal Master Plan:**

The D&R Canal Commission is making important progress on its challenging and long-awaited initiative to revise its master plan for the D&R Canal State Park and conduct an up-to-date Historic Structures Survey.

The Commission is working with the Trenton-based firm, Clarke Caton Hintz, on the comprehensive master plan update, made possible through a \$550,000 grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust. The Historic Structures Survey is the project's centerpiece, and it is focusing on documenting the canal state park's historic resources, determining their condition and devising strategic recommendations for preserving these canal treasures. The last historic structures survey was conducted in 1982.

The current master plan, last updated in 1989, has guided the physical development of the park and informed the implementation of the Commission's land use regulatory program to protect the canal's historic, environmental and water supply resources.

During the past three decades, however, central New Jersey has undergone significant environmental, economic and demographic changes. And while the master plan continues to be an important document, it no longer accurately reflects the "truth on the ground" in the 450 square miles of the Commission's jurisdiction. An updated master plan would provide current and comprehensive data, analysis, strategies and recommendations on guiding the physical development and future growth of the canal park and maximizing the potential of its myriad resources.

## Your Canal Photography is Needed for the Canal Watch 2027 Calendar

**After taking a year off, we are now accepting photographs for the 2027 Canal Watch calendar.**

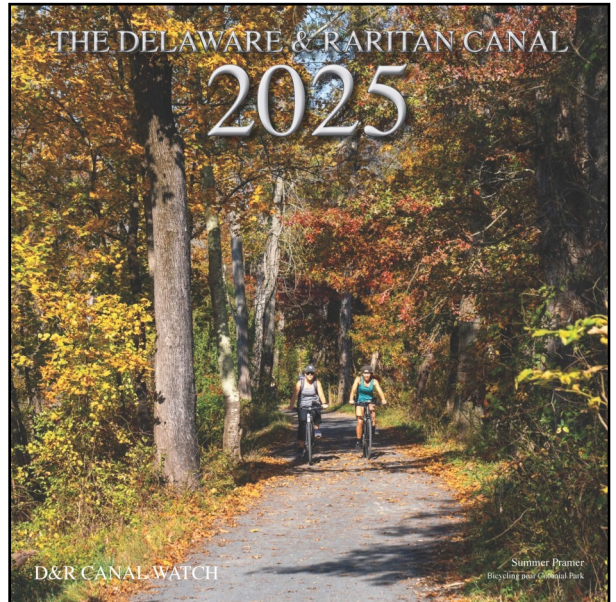


Photo by Summer Praner

1. The calendar pages are 12” by 12.” In order to print an image this size from your digital camera at a resolution necessary to make a quality print (300 pixels per inch), your image needs to measure 3,600 pixels by 3,600 pixels, i.e., 300 pixels per inch times 12 inches = 3,600 pixels. You should check your smart phone for information about the number of megapixels that are in the photos taken with your camera. Currently, most smart phone cameras do not provide an image that will print a 12” by 12” image at a required print resolution of 300 ppi (pixels per inch).

2. Since our historic waterway is a place that you can visit often, consider visiting the canal in different light, especially early morning and at dusk.

3. Remember that it’s a 70-mile park. Perhaps visit a section that you have not seen before.

We urge you to start shooting and send your images by June 30 to Linda Barth at [barthlinda123@aol.com](mailto:barthlinda123@aol.com). In your email, please provide the location and date of each image. Photos can come from any year.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS YEAR, EACH PHOTOGRAPHER MAY SEND NO MORE THAN FIVE IMAGES, SO CHOOSE WISELY.**

### News from the Park Superintendent

Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl reported that recent winter weather had kept State Park Service maintenance staff busy clearing piles of snow within the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. High winds had also resulted in multiple reports of downed trees, requiring maintenance staff to tackle that removal work as well, the superintendent said.

She also stated that seasonal hiring was continuing, and the State Park Service was looking for individuals to serve in Visitor Service Assistant positions for the Bulls Island Recreation Area in Delaware Township. The Superintendent recommended that anyone interested in summer employment should contact staff in the Bulls Island office for further information.

In addition, the superintendent reported that the Rockingham Historic Site in Franklin Township was scheduled to be open to walk-in visitors during April. She recommended that members of the public check social media sites for further details on the dates and times when the site would be able to accommodate visits. Paul Soltis, former Wallace House historian, is now the new historian at Rockingham.

Vice-Chairman Bostock acknowledged that the State Park Service staff had endured a much heavier workload as a result of the harsh weather conditions experienced this winter season. He expressed appreciation for their hard work and asked the superintendent to convey the Commissioners’ thanks for their efforts.

## Major incident declared over giant hole at canal in England

On December 22, 2025, a major incident was been declared at a Shropshire canal where a giant hole emerged, leaving boats stricken in the cavity or teetering on the edge of the drop.



The incident on a stretch of the Llangollen Canal in Whitchurch has been blamed by engineers on an “embankment failure,” with its collapse causing water to rush into a nearby field and the canal bottom to fall away, leaving a trench.

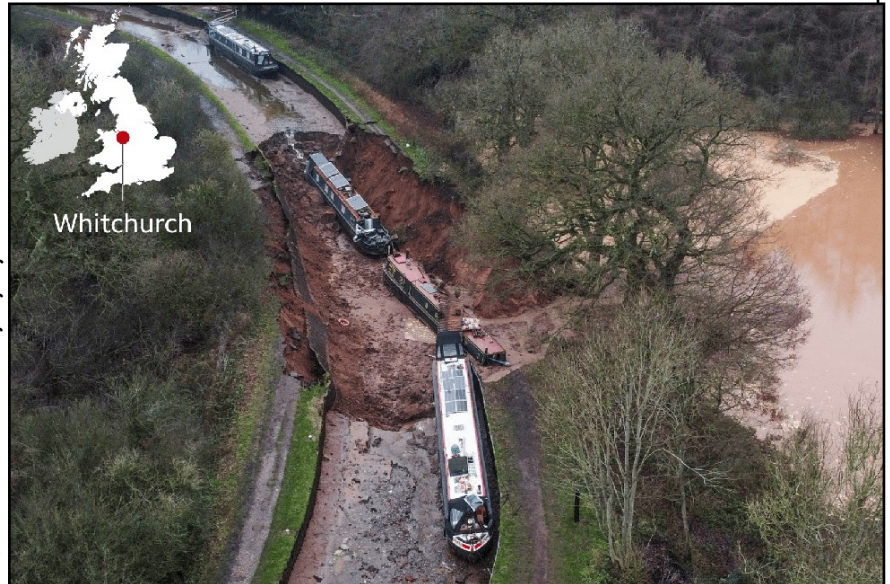
Two narrowboats were said to have sunk into the hole shortly after 4:00 a.m., with one witness estimating it to be 15 feet deep.

Fifty firefighters were deployed to the scene. There are no reports of casualties, according to police.

Onsite engineers from the Canal and River Trust have said that earlier descriptions from emergency services of a “sinkhole” were not accurate to describe what had happened. Scott Hurford, area manager at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, said crews began receiving reports of the collapse at about 4:20 a.m.

“The water... has leaked out of the canal into the surrounding fields,” he said. “There are up to 15 people who had to be moved out of the way to safety, and there’s a number of canal boats that have been affected, some of those have gone into the field and some are at the bottom of the canal.”

People who live on boats near to where the incident unfolded said they were first alerted to a problem by unusual noises, with some in the area fearing an earthquake, according to one report.



The sounds became so bad that people knew to flee their vessels, a witness told the BBC.

Mr. Hurford said: “Our job is the response phase, so we’re there to save life, protect property, and the environment, but we will support in the recovery phase.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvDUFs4a24w>

## MILLSTONE AQUEDUCT TO PRINCETON BASIN POP-UP WALK - 3 MILES

**DATE: Saturday, May 9th TIME: 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM—LOCATION: Millstone Aqueduct Parking Lot, 775 Mapleton Road, Princeton. REGISTRATION NOT REQUIRED / FREE**

**Join our seasonal historian at 10:30 am at the Millstone Aqueduct in Plainsboro for a leisurely 3-mile round-trip morning walk to Princeton Basin and back.** Hear about the connections between the D&R Canal the small village of Aqueduct and how the creation of Carnegie Lake altered it forever. Learn about the bridge tender houses that once stood along the path in Princeton, see the now inoperable turning bridge mechanism for the Dinky railroad spur line and discover the bustling canal community that once occupied the area around Turning Basin Park at Alexander Road in Princeton. As the group walks the towpath, parts of the canal's infrastructure will be highlighted. Put on your hiking shoes and come prepared to learn a bit about the D&R Canal and areas through which it flows.

**Participants will meet at the Millstone Aqueduct Parking Lot located at Mapleton Road in Plainsboro promptly at 10:00 am (see link above and/or below). Be prepared for a consistently paced 3-mile round-trip walk lasting about 2 1/2 hours. Bring water, dress for the weather and wear comfortable walking/hiking shoes. Inclement weather will cancel this walk. Have a question or need further information? Call the Kingston Office at 609-924-5705 or email [drcanalprograms@dep.nj.gov](mailto:drcanalprograms@dep.nj.gov)**



Carnegie Lake at the Millstone Aqueduct. Photo by Tom Egan

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### Our Mission

The D&R Canal Watch is an independent, nonprofit organization working to engage the public in the protection of the environment and preservation of the heritage of the D&R Canal.



The D&R Canal Watch is asking for your support for our activities that protect, maintain, and promote the recreational, historical, aesthetic, and environmental qualities of the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park. Over the past years, the Canal Watch has:

- **Sponsored a number of events for the park's 50th Anniversary and created the Tour de Towpath.**
- **Restored the Kingston canoe/kayak boat launch**
- **Paid for the conditions assessment and the engineering drawings for the East Millstone and Griggstown bridgetender stations.**
- **Working with the park, we posted signage at six locations to help visitors find their way through Trenton.**
- Led history walks along both the main canal and the feeder, pointing out historic structures and Light Rail study tours
- Led history bike rides along the main canal.
- Sponsored star-gazing and solar observation events.
- Sponsored bird watching walks along the main canal and bilingual nature walks
- Installed and facilitated canal interpretive signage at locks and spillways
- Activities in 2009 marking the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. These included "Meet the Canal Authors Day" and "The D&R Canal: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow," by Richard Hunter" walks, bike rides, canoe and kayak rides, "Hands Along the Canal," and proclamations from our legislature.
- Examination of Lock 9 to determine the feasibility of reopening the lock to navigation
- Post-flood cleaning of canal structures in Griggstown, Zarephath, and East Millstone
- Painting over graffiti in East Millstone
- Repair of shutters on the East Millstone bridgetender's home
- Straightening and painting of the outhouse at the East Millstone bridgetender's home
- Staffing the East Millstone bridgetender's home during the village's Canalfest in October
- A photographic exhibit of the homes of bridgetenders and locktenders.
- Services of an information technology consultant for the park's computers
- Funded classes to certify maintenance staff in small motor repair, applying herbicides, etc.
- Contacted legislators and the governor's office to keep the parks open and retain the commission
- Facilitated the mothballing of an empty bridgetender's home by buying lumber and painting the windows.
- Installed Kaya-Arms on docks to facilitate entering and exiting kayaks
- Funding the park's website and continued updating
- Paying the dues for the Meetup site used for announcing park activities

Canal Watch Achievements (continued on next page)

## Canal Watch Achievements (continued from previous page)

- Sponsored lectures on topics such as “The Role of the Delaware and Raritan Canal in the Growth of Trenton’s Industrial Potteries,” “The Operation of the Joint Companies and the Interrelationship of the canal with the state’s first railroad,” “The Roebling Story,” “Photography Along the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park: Treasure in Central New Jersey,” “Meet Ashbel Welch, the second chief engineer of the Delaware and Raritan Canal,” and Jim Amon on how the canal and the park changed during his tenure with the commission.
- Purchased gifts that the park budget could not provide. These include a digital camera, seven picnic tables, several benches, a laptop computer and software, a desktop computer, an LED projector, an inflatable screen for outdoor viewing of videos, a subscription to the Meetup website, a scanner, printer ink, a water testing kit, an external computer drive, lumber for canoe dock at Griggstown, folding tables and twenty chairs for Bulls Island, development of a new park website and maintenance of the site at the rate of \$50 per month, and professional courses for the maintenance staff.

### Renew your Membership for 2026

We would like to remind our members to please renew their membership. You can do so online by visiting [www.canalwatch.org](http://www.canalwatch.org) and clicking on “Join” at the top right.

Please wait a few seconds for the membership form to appear. When you click “Submit,” you will be taken to the payment page. If you prefer to pay by check, please make it payable to D&R Canal Watch and mail it to the Canal Watch at P.O. Box 2, Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553.



### D&R Canal Watch 2026 Membership Renewal Form

Membership year: January 1 to December 31

Nonprofit Org \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \$40 \_\_\_\_\_  
Supporter \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ Business member \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check, payable to the D&R Canal Watch, to D&R Canal Watch, P.O. Box 2, Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553-0002. Dues can also be paid online at <https://canalwatch.org/join/>

For reasons of fiscal and environmental responsibility, newsletters will be posted on the Canal Watch website, [www.canalwatch.org](http://www.canalwatch.org), and emailed to members for whom we have email addresses. If you require a paper copy, please check here \_\_\_\_\_.

Volunteers are needed to lead walks/trips. Do you have computer, photography, or design skills that you are willing to use for the organization? Would you like to join the Wednesday Work Crew? May we call on you? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Try me \_\_\_ (circle your skill)