

Estuary History

Circa 11000 BC – Paleo Indians begin inhabiting the Delaware Estuary region

1609 – Henry Hudson anchors in the Delaware Bay for the first time, giving the Dutch first claim to land in the Delaware Estuary.

1631 – Attracted by whale hunting, Dutch settlers establish the first permanent settlement in Delaware in on Cape Henlopen

1739 – Benjamin Franklin petitions the Pennsylvania Assembly to stop waste dumping and to remove tanneries due to foul smells, low property values, and disease.

1802 – E. I. du Pont opens first facility on the banks of the Brandywine to produce gunpowder

1819 – Construction begins on Fairmount Waterworks in Philadelphia to bring freshwater into the city

1825-1928 – Lackawaxen Dam built in northern PA blocks shad runs (only true dam ever built on the Delaware; lasted through early 20th century)

1829 – The Chesapeake and Delaware Canal first opens

1866 – Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is formed, with the primary focus of shad restoration

1880 – Many of Philadelphia's streams are converted into sewers as part of the city plan

1890 – Shad increase due to construction of a fishway on the Lackawaxen Dam and artificial propagation efforts

1913 – Pennsylvania passes Act 375, prohibiting discharge of anthracite coal, culm, or refuse into streams

1930 – Citizens petition President Theodore Roosevelt about the affects of the Estuary's pollution on the health of women and children

1936 – New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania create the Interstate Commission of the Delaware River Basin (INCodel) to establish water quality standards and take measures to meet them

1957 – Oysters begin to die from MSX parasite (90% of New Jersey oysters die by 1959)



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Estuary History *continued*

1960 – 1970's Wetlands are filled for highway projects in Camden, Philadelphia, and Wilmington

1961 – Delaware River Basin Compact is signed, creating the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC); marks first time federal government and states joined together in a river basin planning, development, and regulatory agency.

1985 – Creation of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network links the Estuary to a hemisphere-wide chain of shorebird protection sites

1994 – 2006 PSEG Estuary Enhancement Program restores more than 20,000 acres of salt marsh and adjacent uplands

1999 – Governors of the four basin states sign the “Resolution on the Protection of the Delaware River Basin” and call for development of the new comprehensive water resources plan for the basin

2004 – Partnership for the Delaware Estuary merges with the Delaware Estuary Program to become the chief administrator of the USEPA Delaware Estuary Program

2006 – Clear into the Future is launched by DuPont



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