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In the Beginning...

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (NRA) was established in the shadow of the controversial U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tocks Island Dam project in 1965. From the beginning, the park's enabling legislation's call for the care and protection of both natural and cultural resources was clearly at odds with damming the Delaware River to provide water storage and outdoor recreation.

Amidst public protest, many historic buildings were removed to make way for the dam. Environmental opposition and cost over-runs would eventually nix the project, leaving the National Park Service to manage those structures left standing. Still the dam remained on the books. The threat of inundation facing the valley and its remaining historic buildings would not subside until the menacing dam project was officially deauthorized in July 1992.

Here we are then, ten years after, and like the free-flowing Delaware River that continues to run through it, this 70,000-acre Pennsylvania/ New Jersey preserve is "going with the flow." While not exactly what its creators had originally intended, as it matures – the park (minus the dam) is gradually finding equilibrium with nature, park visitors, and the surrounding communities.

Delaware Water Gap NRA is a linear park running approximately north-south for a distance of 40 miles. At its southern end, Interstate 80 pro-

vides direct access for the multitudes from metropolitan New York. Manhattan is a mere 90 miles away. From a distance and seen from above, the valley and park are a collage of farmscapes, rural villages, historic structures, ponds and streams, roads and trails – asymmetrically divided by the winding Delaware River. Up close, the park is a rich repository of prehistoric and historic settlement – historic structures woven together by a tenacious cultural landscape.

The structures, landscape, and river are remarkable survivors. Quite remarkable indeed, considering that the origin of the river itself goes back some 200 million years. In the latter part of that time period, the Delaware River was rejuvenated through a process of geologic uplifting, thus forming the park's namesake, the distinctive Delaware Water Gap.

In the late 20th century, yet another "rejuvenation" was to occur in the Delaware Valley – the restoration of the structurally damaged Van Campen Inn, an imposing stone house with distinctive Georgian and Dutch detailing dating back to 1746. This was an uplifting process of a different sort. A movement was initiated by concerned citizens and National Park Service cultural resource managers willing to look beyond the threat of inundation by the dam. The emergency stabilization of the Van Campen Inn was completed in 1984 and would inspire subsequent preservation efforts parkwide. Backed by extensive inventories, condition assessments, archeological investigations, historic structure reports, and Historic American Buildings Survey drawings – originally intended as "record and remove" compliance – park staff were well equipped to begin the process of preserving what remained of the valley's cultural heritage.

To commemorate this 10th anniversary of the deauthorization of the Tocks Island Dam, this issue of CRM looks at what has been lost and gained over the last 37 years since the park was created. A recurring theme is preservation for public enjoyment through reuse, partnerships, and resource protection. In the end, that will be a noble achievement. On behalf of my colleagues at the park and elsewhere in the National Park Service, our park consultants, and partners, I hope the sharing of our collective experiences will be of benefit to the reader.

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Map by GIS Lab, Delaware Water Gap NRA.

