

Interstate Commission on the Delaware
River Basin

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THE DELAWARE RIVER BASIN

THE UPPER VALLEY

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT OR EXPLOITATION?

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THE INTERSTATE COMMISSION
ON THE DELAWARE RIVER BASIN

The Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin was organized in 1936 by the Joint Legislative Commissions on Interstate Cooperation of New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. It is engaged in the formulation and execution of a coordinated, unified plan looking toward the wise use, development, and control of the resources of the Delaware River Basin as a whole.

Through its Advisory Committee on Planning the Commission is engaged in three parallel activities directed toward a planned development of the Delaware River Basin: (1) Advancement of comprehensive state planning studies for each state located in the Basin; (2) The compilation, mapping, and tabulation of pertinent data concerning existing conditions and trends in the Basin; and (3) The formulation of a program of current activities to be carried forward and stimulated by the Commission while longer-range programs are in course of preparation.

Into the above categories, individually or in combination, fall the major activities currently under way by the Commission in the fields of water pollution control and water supply. A third major interim project is outlined in this illustrated brochure, the manuscript for which was prepared by the Incoed Advisory Committee on Planning.

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FOREWORD

That portion of the Delaware River Basin which lies above the City of Trenton, New Jersey, is a region of many common circumstances, interests, and problems. Below Trenton, both the river and its hinterland begin to change in character, in predominating interests, and in activities; population density mounts; industry becomes an increasingly important factor; new and more complicated problems arise.

In actuality, however, there can be no clear line of demarcation between either the problems or the plans and programs for the Upper and Lower Delaware River Basins, no matter how geographically defined. Many of the proposals contained herein apply also, in at least some degree, to Basin territory below Trenton.

This statement is being broadcast among the people and officials of the Upper Basin in the hope that it may offer inspiration and suggestion for doing something about protecting and improving the great natural assets of this valley—assets which too long have been taken for granted and consequently neglected. The Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin is now supplying the people of this area with the services of a full-time field representative, to help them to help themselves. It is hoped that the contents of this brochure will be broadly illustrative of major objectives.

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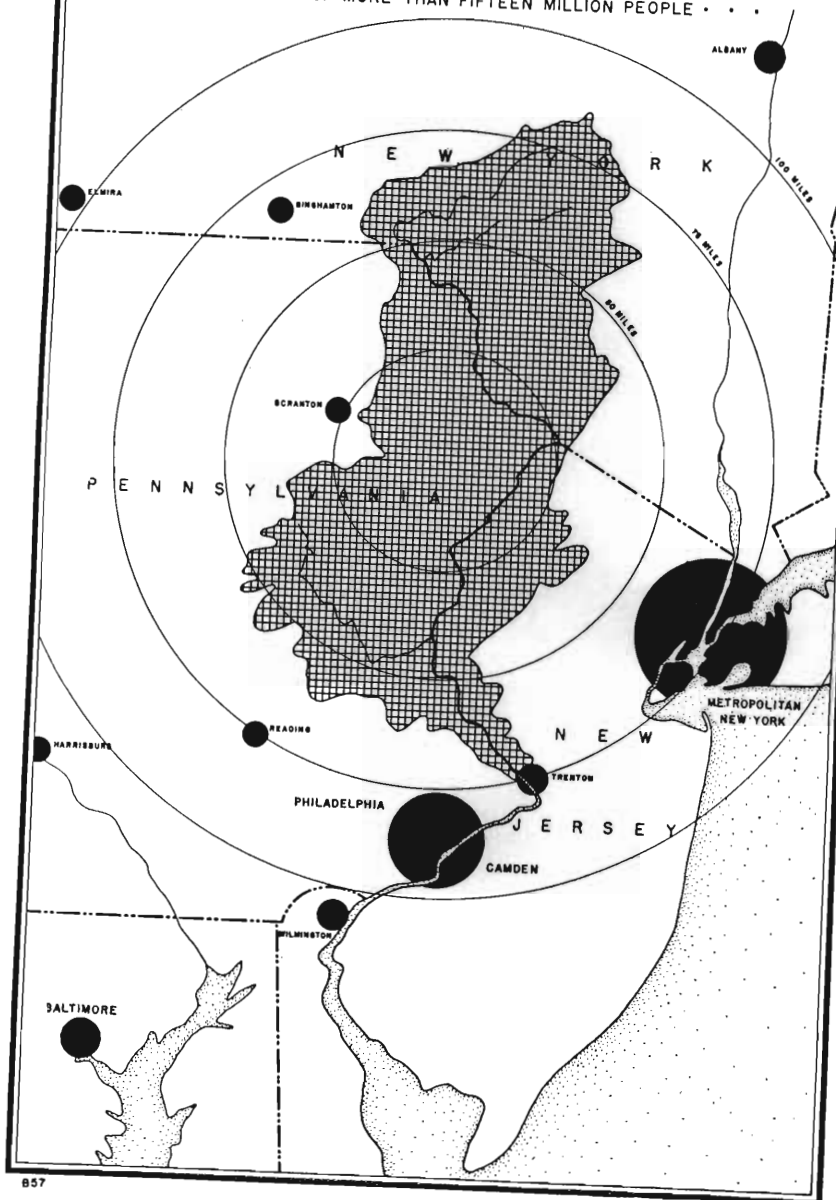
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THE UPPER DELAWARE RIVER BASIN ABOVE TRENTON, N. J.

SIXTY-EIGHT HUNDRED SQUARE MILES OF PICTURESQUE ROLLING-TO-RUGGED LAND IN THREE CONVERGING STATES-NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW JERSEY-LYING WITHIN LESS THAN TWO HOURS DRIVING DISTANCE OF MORE THAN FIFTEEN MILLION PEOPLE . . .



THIS IS THE UPPER BASIN

Sixty-eight hundred square miles of picturesque rolling-to-rugged land in three converging states: New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. An area more than three-fifths forested, with a population of only three-quarters of a million, but lying within less than two hours driving distance of more than fifteen million people. A land of farms, forests, and many streams; still largely unspoiled. A land which now serves, but which by careful planning might be made to serve much better, as a home and playplace and as a source of pure drinking water, for many people. This is the Upper Basin.

Somewhat out of the beaten track between metropolitan areas and somewhat beyond the high pressure flow of metropolitan populations, the area has thus far escaped much of urban and industrial exploitation. Times, however, are changing; so, also, are the circumstances of the Upper Basin.

The increasing congestion of near-by cities brings greater need for the relief afforded by open country. Growing consciousness of this need, increased leisure time in which to satisfy it, and automobiles to make the going easy are bringing rapidly-growing thousands into such close-at-hand natural recreation centers as the Delaware River Basin.

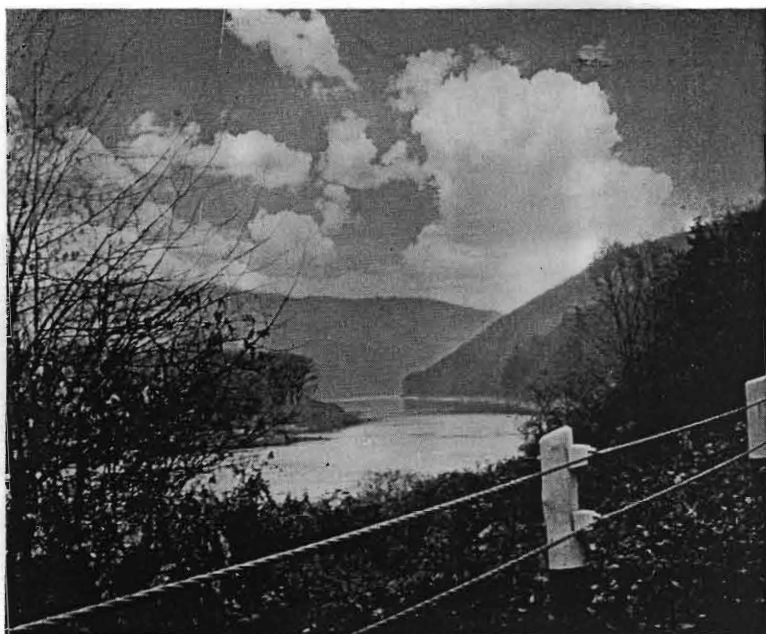
Other rural areas of similar natural attraction, closer to the metropolitan centers, already have been severely exploited, and can no longer satisfy the urge that takes people into the country. Now it is the Basin's turn. Good roads and scenic highways are reaching into the more remote parts of the valley and city-dwellers are coming into the area in great and increasing numbers; for the day, for a few weeks, for year-round residence. This is as it should be, for the Basin is a regional and a national asset and not the private playground of the relatively few people who early saw and appreciated its values and its advantages.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT VERSUS EXPLOITATION

But the onrush of new and increased occupation and use of any territory has its dangers as well as its advantages. Carefully guided, it may be good for the new land. Uncontrolled, it may quickly spoil the very things by which it was attracted. Of this, there is already sufficient evidence in the Basin: in polluted streams, in highways littered with billboards and hot-dog stands, and in the shack towns that have been crowded upon river banks and lake shores.

The Upper Delaware River Basin cannot, if it would, close its doors to home and recreation seekers nor to those who may see in the valley opportunities for an improved livelihood. But the Basin can, if it will, direct future occupation and development into channels that will produce assets rather than liabilities. This calls for wise planning and for the judicious use of regulatory powers vested in the states and their political subdivisions.

A prerequisite to intelligent planning is the determination of objectives. The primary interests and potentialities of the Upper Delaware River Basin are agricultural, recreational, and



Natural scenic beauty of the Delaware River.

residential. Present and probable future industrial development is relatively slight for the area as a whole, but assumes considerable importance in some localities including Easton and portions of the Lehigh Valley, Port Jervis, and other of the larger towns.

Recreational and residential interests, already rivaling other activities in the valley, may soon come to excel all others. They represent assets as yet little developed. Under careful guidance and regulation, and in this way only, they can be greatly expanded, not alone for the advantage of the thousands who will be attracted to the Basin, but more particularly for the lasting benefit of the people who are settled and earn their living there.

This future, more vivid, involves an obvious choice between planned development and exploitation: the latter may benefit a few by taking from the many, planned development offers rich rewards to all and a heritage, not only unimpaired but enriched, to those who come after us.

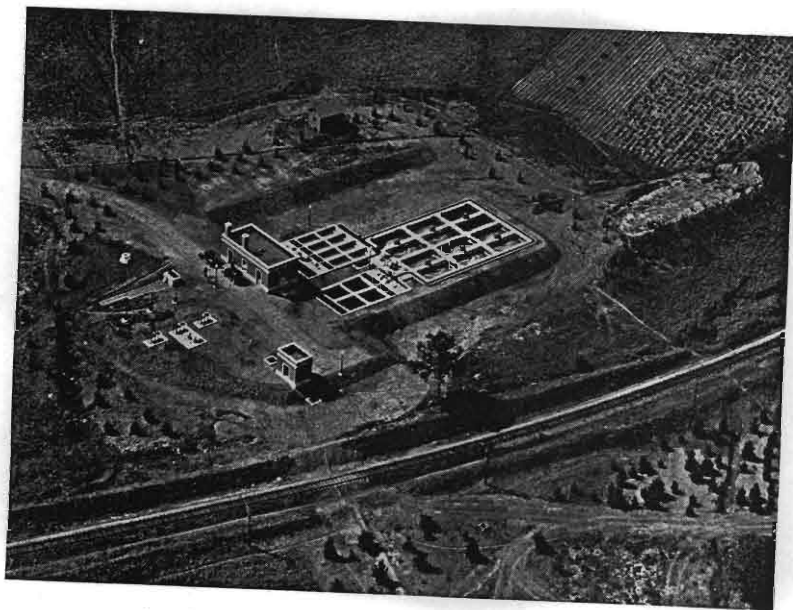
It follows that principal immediate needs or responsibilities of the Basin include:

1. The adoption and effectuation of measures for the conservation, protection, and far-sighted development of the Basin's basic wealth in soils, forests, waters and scenery.
2. The further development of recreational facilities and of means of access to, from, and within the Basin.

These may be regarded as primary objectives toward which much of current planning should be directed. Complete plans for Basin development are matters for study and gradual evolution. But while the planners struggle with long-range plans, exploitation marches on, opportunities are lost. Enough is known about the Basin and its needs to permit the setting down of many things that may be done pending completion of comprehensive plans. Some of these things, including the making of plans, are listed and illustrated on the following pages.



A sewage outfall: discharging raw sewage into the Delaware River.



A modern sewage treatment plant: reclaiming used water.

**A PROGRAM FOR THE STATES, COUNTIES,
MUNICIPALITIES, AND CITIZENS
OF THE UPPER VALLEY**

I. Toward conservation and protection of natural resources:

A. Restore and maintain the purity of the waters of the Delaware River and its tributaries by:

1. Adequate treatment of all municipal sewage.
2. Installation of sewage collection and treatment services for all sizeable communities now without these services.
3. Elimination of all incidental sources of pollution such as outhouses emptying directly into surface waters.
4. Stoppage of all present discharge of harmful industrial wastes into the river or its tributaries, accompanied by precautionary safeguards against similar discharge from new industries which may come into the valley at some future time.

These measures and controls are essential to the safe recreational use of Basin waters; to the maintainance and improvement of fish and other aquatic life; and to the protection and betterment of present and future public water supplies for both domestic and industrial use.

For the most part, they are matters for regulation by the Boards of Health of the three states, working cooperatively through interstate agreement or by concurrent statute to arrive at uniform standards and policies. Full accomplishment, however, will require cooperation from municipalities, private industries, and individual citizens.

A Reciprocal Agreement for the Correction and Control of Pollution of the Waters of the Interstate Delaware River, drafted and negotiated by the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin, has been effective among the states in this drainage basin since July of 1938. The provisions of this Agreement were published in the first brochure of this series. Legislation, designed to give continuing effect to the agreement which has been made by the respective State Departments of Health, is now pending in the four state legislatures.



The land must be conserved; soil erosion checked.

B. Acquire, for public use and management, large land areas which are submarginal for agricultural purposes.

This, primarily, is a job for the states, with or without federal participation or federal aid, but may sometimes be done profitably by counties and municipalities. There are within the basin hundreds of square miles of land that have little or no agricultural value; land which does not and cannot return profit to private owners and which, therefore, now represents a waste and a net loss to the locality. Much of this land, mostly forested, can under public ownership be made to serve the important multiple purposes of wide recreational use, timber growing, wild life protection, soil conservation, and the protection of present and future public water supplies. Large acreages of such land are already owned by each of the three states. Much more could be acquired to advantage.

C. Encourage reforestation and improved forest management of privately held lands not suitable for cultivation.

This, primarily, is a responsibility of the State Departments of Forestry and of official agricultural agencies, but may be further advanced by general education.

D. Encourage the adoption, by farmers throughout the Basin, of soil-erosion-control practices as demonstrated in the locality.

This is chiefly a responsibility of the several agricultural and soil conservation agencies operating in the three states.

II. Toward protection and improvement of recreational facilities and scenic assets:

A. *Improve the recreational values of the Delaware River by:*

1. The acquisition and development of extensive river frontage, at strategic places, to afford improved public access to the river—a responsibility of the states, the counties, and individual municipalities.
2. The establishment of boat and canoe renting places or concessions at favorable places, preferably in connection with public park developments.
3. Construction of portages at rapids and other dangerous points along the river to reduce canoeing hazards and to encourage greater use of the river for this purpose. This may be done at nominal cost by canoeing clubs, by the states, or by municipalities.
4. More extensive stocking of the river with gamefish and panfish, by the three states working cooperatively. Being a boundary river, the Delaware is a sort of “no-man’s” stream, relatively barren in many places, when it should be one of the most productive fishing streams in the country.
5. The adoption of uniform fishing laws and regulations by the three states, to govern fishing in the main river.
6. Pollution abatement.



A playplace in the Basin.

IN PANORAMA

The Upper Valley and Its Problem

The Delaware River winds through the heart of the Upper Basin, the land extending back from its banks in forested hills, and open fields—in scenic beauty to delight the visitor. With its tributary streams a challenge to the fisherman, with its secluded camp sites a genuine retreat for the vacationer, with its abundance of game in the wild, wooded country to the north a paradise for the hunter—with all these assets and an undefiled charm, the region beckons the city-dwellers, a few hours away.

Neatly patterned farm land lies close by the river and tributary streams; close by forests and hills; close by a highway leading from heavily populated towns. The traveller will find his temporary haven, and the home-seeker his ideal permanent abode here by woodland, field, and stream.





Amusements are widely different from the artificialities of the metropolis: there is hiking, fishing, hunting, swimming, bicycling, and horseback riding, from spring through autumn; sledding, skiing, tobogganning, and skating in the winter, to complete the year-round program of recreation; and always there may be found relaxation amidst natural scenes far removed, in spirit, from the crowds and din of city life, but in fact, inescapably linked to the city by highway and railroad.

To preserve and refine the perfections of the Upper Valley, to turn its natural resources to the economic advantage of its citizens without destroying its attractions—this is a task which requires foresight and cooperative enterprise; this is the task which the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin outlines in this brochure.



B. Assure the preservation and appropriate maintenance of the Lehigh-Delaware Canal, for that portion of its length having special recreational and scenic value.

This canal is a regional as well as a local asset which should be preserved for its scenic, recreational and historic values. Its usefulness can be improved by:

1. Acquisition of occasional stretches of accessible abutting land by the State of Pennsylvania, preferably extending along both sides of the canal, from highway to river, to give full protection and to take full advantage of both waterfronts.
2. Abatement of pollution of canal waters at their source along the length of the canal.
3. Adaptation of all improvements of the abutting highway to the preservation and continued usefulness of the canal.

C. Increase the recreational assets of the Basin by providing pedestrian, saddle, and bicycle trails and paths, at least experimentally in a few carefully selected locations.

This might be done variously by the state highway and state park departments, and by the counties. With the edge worn off of automobile driving as recreation, people are returning to the more healthful pleasures of walking, horseback riding, and bicycling. Tangible evidence of this is to be found throughout the country. Improved highways, with their hard surfaces and fast, crowded traffic, afford no outlet for these forms of recreation. Special provision must be made for them and this can be done advantageously in many parts of the Upper Basin.

D. Improve the convenience of pleasure and tourist driving by establishing well maintained roadside parking and picknicking places, along all frequently traveled highways, at intervals of from 10 to 30 miles.

These places might be acquired and operated either by state highway or state park departments as may be found most expedient in the individual states. Some additional legislation may be necessary to enable the proper state departments to provide these facilities.

E. Protect scenic values along highways and in other locations, by zoning and other regulatory measures later outlined.



The Lehigh-Delaware Canal

Hillside, highway, and canal must be preserved in their natural beauty
if the recreational values and scenic assets of the Basin
are to be conserved and protected.



III. Toward protection and improvement of highways.

A. *Protect and improve the utility of highways and their scenic values by:*

1. Zoning: whereby business uses, billboards, and other structures along the highways may be confined to designated and logical locations, and kept a proper distance back from the roadways. Authority to zone is now vested in counties, cities, boroughs, and townships in Pennsylvania; in all municipalities in New Jersey; and in cities, villages, towns in New York. Adequate protection of trunk highway may ultimately require some direct state responsibility for the zoning of highway frontage, but none of the three states now has provided for the exercise of this power.
2. Regulation of the frequency and character of points of public access to and egress from trunk highways, including roads, streets, and entrances to places of business. Authority to do this—a power properly to be given to state highway departments—does not yet exist in any effective degree in any of the three states, although a new law adopted in New York in 1937 represents a significant step in this direction.



Typical conditions calling for corrective action by local planning and zoning commissions.



The perils of travel are increased.

3. Adoption of the "freeway" or "limited-access" principle in rights-of-way location and design of all new trunk highways; and in the improvement of existing trunk highways, where still practicable. This will be facilitated by a policy of acquiring more adequate right-of-way widths, 200 feet or greater, for trunk roads. These improvements in policy and practice probably will require some additional legislation in all three states, particularly as to state financing for such wider rights-of-way.

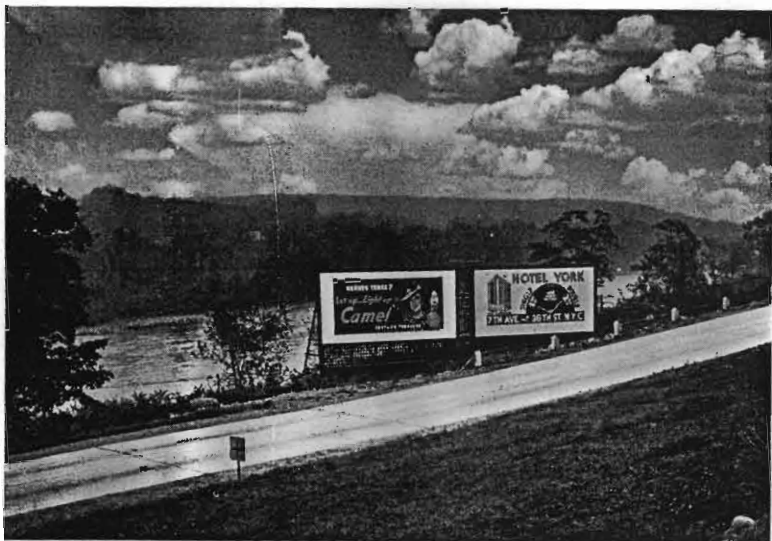
The public has a tremendous and rapidly increasing investment in its highways. These highways are built primarily for traffic use; not for commercial exploitation. The public pays for and has a right to expect safe, speedy, and pleasurable driving, amply protected against the encroachments of the few who seek to capitalize upon concentrated traffic. The indiscriminate and excessive placement of billboards, gasoline stations, and other commercial structures along highway frontage, creates unnecessary traffic hazards, reduces highway capacity, and destroys scenic values. Out of the uncontrolled highway-frontage development grows premature obsolescence

of highways, leading to the premature scrapping of roads which have cost the public from fifty to two hundred thousand dollars a mile. Much of this damage is avoidable and can be prevented by proper zoning and planning controls and by the acquisition of wider rights-of-way, coupled with limitation of the number and location of points of ingress upon traveled roadways.

B. Make special effort to apply the above protection to the river front highways such as the new scenic highway, known tentatively as the Delaware Trail, from Port Jervis to Callicoon; and to other roads having unusual scenic quality.

C. Give consideration to the extension of the scenic river highway, the proposed Delaware Trail, from Port Jervis southward to Trenton.

Such a highway would have large usefulness and might be expected to become one of the famed scenic ways of the country. Its precise location, however, will involve difficult problems of preservation as well as of the creation of scenic assets. For example, it would seem that such a highway should be placed on the New Jersey side of the river for most, if not all, of the distance from Easton to Trenton so as to avoid destruction of the Lehigh-Delaware Canal and its attending scenic assets.



Scenic value is destroyed . . .

IV. Toward more adequate and more effective planning and zoning.

A. Encourage the creation of official local planning and zoning boards or commissions and guide these agencies toward sound and effective planning and zoning programs, including the making and adoption of comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.

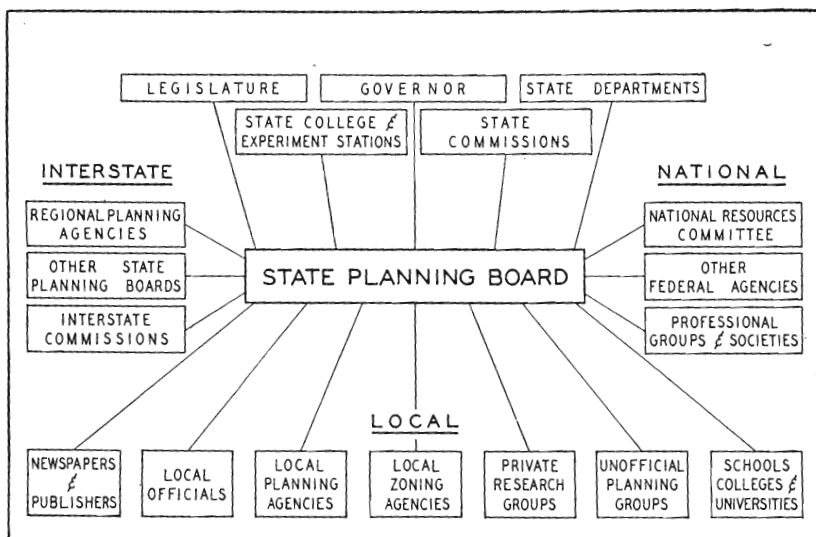
All cities, boroughs, townships, and other municipal incorporations in all three states now have fairly adequate planning and zoning powers granted through state enabling acts. Counties in all three states have extensive planning powers and, in Pennsylvania, counties have authority to zone.

The legislated duties of the State Planning Boards in all three states include the general guidance and assistance to the localities in organizing their planning and zoning work. All three State Planning Boards can and will supply, upon request, free literature outlining local planning and zoning procedures under the laws of their respective states and assist local agencies in other important ways.

Local planning and zoning are more than fine theories. They are well established in hundreds of counties and municipalities



To preserve and protect requires practical planning.



An organization chart of general application.

throughout the country and are saving millions of dollars annually to the public and individual property owners. The Delaware River Basin, most particularly, cannot afford to do without this kind of guidance and protection.

B. Advance comprehensive state plans as rapidly as circumstances may permit, to serve as guides for:

1. The placement of new highways.
2. The acquisition of large public reservations.
3. The location and programming of other major public works in the Basin area.

This is a direct responsibility of the State Planning Boards, but requires the interested support and cooperation of the several state legislatures, of all state departments and other public agencies, and of the general public.

C. Further develop a plan and program for the Delaware River Basin through the integration of state, county, and other plans to be evolved for the several portions of the Basin area.

V. Toward promotion and education.

A. *Stimulate official and public interest in and knowledge of the above program and its objectives by such means as:*

1. The holding of public meetings in the various localities for discussion of Basin and local problems.
2. Encouraging the organization of citizen groups for accomplishment of specific purposes, within the program outlined above.
3. Public addresses, newspaper releases, and printed reports.
4. Encouraging the discussion of Basin problems and potentialities in the public schools.
5. The setting up of a plan of annual awards for such things as the most attractively designed and maintained gasoline stations and roadside restaurants.
6. The running of a well publicized campaign against misplaced billboards.
7. Regular inspection of all restaurants, hostelryes, and tourist camps, with award of an insignia of special merit to those approved for cleanliness and orderly management.



A Regional Conference, sponsored by Incodel.

The points outlined in this brochure illustrate the many things that might be done to stimulate Basin consciousness and to enlist public assistance in improving the economic development, the appearance, the livability of the Delaware River Basin, and in safeguarding those easily destroyed qualities which now make the region so distinctive.

The future, in the Upper Valley, is in the hands of the present generation.

THE INTERSTATE COMMISSION ON THE DELAWARE RIVER BASIN

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