



**DELAWARE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ROSE TREE PARK - HUNT CLUB
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Edward M. Magargee
District Manager

February 12, 2009

Linda Burlington
NOAA Office of General Counsel for Natural Resources
Room 15107
1315 East-West Highway,
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Draft DARP and Environmental Assessment for Athos I Oil Spill

Dear Ms. Burlington:

The Delaware County Conservation District is writing in support of the Darby Creek dam removals and habitat restoration project proposed as part of the restoration plan for the Athos I Oil Spill in the Draft DARP dated January 2009. The Delaware County Conservation District is a subdivision of State Government, but a service of County Government. The mission of the Conservation District is to ensure the wise use of Delaware County's natural resources and to protect and restore the natural environment through the conservation of its soil, water, and related resources. The Conservation District with the direction and participation of the District Board will support, promote, and execute programs, regulations, and individual efforts, which are consistent with this goal. We will work with individuals, governmental units, and the regulated sector of society to prevent environmental degradation and advocate remediation of past environmental damage.

The Delaware County Conservation District supports the selection of the Darby Creek dam removals and habitat restoration project as an effective means to advance aquatic ecosystem recovery in this tributary to the Delaware Estuary. Based upon the information provided to us by American Rivers, this project will address 3 dams and an abandoned bridge pier that have contributed to degraded aquatic and riparian habitat conditions and aquatic ecosystem fragmentation in lower Darby Creek.

"Modification or removal of dams" along with the "restoration of stream banks, channels and habitat features" are listed as specific management alternatives within the *Cobbs Creek Integrated Watershed Management Plan (October 2004)* prepared by the Philadelphia Water Department Darby-Cobbs Watershed

function to freshwater systems, particularly along America's populated coasts. The Delaware County Conservation District strongly supports the removal of unnecessary dams and applauds the Trustees' selection of the Darby Creek dam removal and habitat restoration project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Edward M. Magargee
Edward M. Magargee
District Manager