

Warren County Commissioners Named High Admirals of the Delaware by Delaware River Sojourn

By Art Charlton

(WHITE TOWNSHIP, NJ – June 28, 2023) – The Delaware River Sojourn had another successful journey last week that saw scores of paddlers kayaking and canoeing for 70 miles on the longest free-flowing (undammed) river in the eastern United States, including 33 miles along Warren County's western edge.

And on the Sojourn's final day, the three members of the Warren County Board of County Commissioners were honored for their efforts to advance the protection of the Delaware River and its tributaries, as the Sojourn's steering committee named them "High Admirals of the Delaware."

Commissioner James R. Kern III was on hand June 23 to receive the award as the paddlers prepared to board buses to the day's launching spot. During the Board's meeting tonight, Kern brought up a pair of Sojourn representatives, who presented the High Admiral award to Commissioner Director Lori Ciesla and Commissioner Jason J. Sarnoski as well.

The Sojourn, a guided paddling and camping trip that just completed its 28th year, serves to heighten awareness of and appreciation for the Delaware River and its watershed, which flows for 330 miles through New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.

With seven days of paddling from June 17-23, the Sojourn combined canoeing and kayaking with camping, educational programs, historical interpretation, and more. This year, after spending the first four days paddling the Upper Delaware between Hancock, NY, and Bushkill, PA, the Sojourn moved to the Warren County area for the final three days, as participants – numbering more than 100 on some days – journeyed from the Shawnee Inn in Pennsylvania across from Worthington State Forest in Hardwick Township to the Phillipsburg Boat Launch in Union Square, Phillipsburg.

Kern praised the Sojourn steering committee for its efforts to organize the annual event, noting, "They're really committed to working with Warren County."

During the High Admiral award presentation, Sojourn steering committee members Alan Hunt of the Musconetcong Watershed Association and Art Charlton, director of the Warren County Public Information Department and the Explore Warren County Tourism Partnership, explained the Sojourn's tradition of naming High Admirals of the Delaware.

Hunt noted the organization based the award on the title Lord High Admiral given during the days of the massive timber rafts that floated down the river in the 1800s, bringing logs from the upriver regions on an often dangerous journey to sawmills in the more populated areas of the lower Delaware, such as Philadelphia.

The Sojourn chose to recognize the Warren County commissioners for their efforts that included establishing an environmental advisory committee, and working on transportation planning and smart land use issues. "We wanted to thank you all," Hunt said.

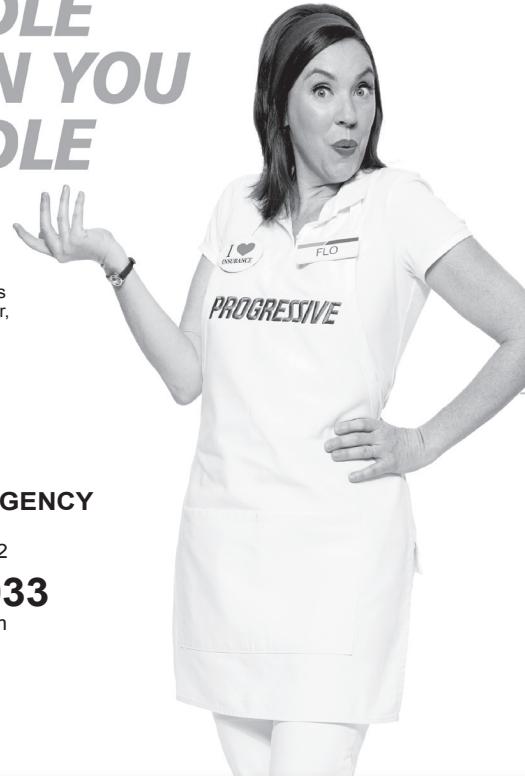
Hunt and Charlton then explained the Sojourn's lighthearted tradition: Whoever is given the High Admiral award is saluted by all the paddlers present, and they hold the salute until the Admiral returns the salute. Once given the title, the High Admirals of the Delaware are saluted throughout the remainder of the Sojourn and must return the salute.

"I like the title 'Admiral' better than 'Commissioner,'" Sarnoski joked, before the public and staff at the commissioners' meeting joined in a salute to the newest High Admirals of the Delaware.



Delaware River Sojourn Planning Team members Art Charlton (left) of the Warren County Public Information Department and Explore Warren County Tourism Partnership, and Alan Hunt (center) of the Musconetcong Watershed Association, present the High Admirals of the Delaware award to the Board of County Commissioners, Commissioner Jason J. Sarnoski, Commissioner Director Lori Ciesla, and Commissioner James R. Kern III.

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