

Remarks at Press Conference by Gerald Kauffman

Proposed Legislation to Designate Two Additional Streams to the White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic River

Friday April 10, 1:45 p.m.

Good afternoon. Today is a *good* Friday in many ways.

With Senator Kaufman's proposed legislation to designate two Wild and Scenic stream segments along the East Branch in Pa. and Lamborn Run in Del., the White Clay Creek National Wild and Scenic River will be protected from its headwaters to tidewater. The White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic River is cited as a national model of two states working together to protect a common watershed. In Delaware, we are lucky to have this national treasure in our own backyard.

Notable events in American history have occurred in the White Clay Creek Valley.

In September 1777, Captain Johann Ewald, a Hessian soldier, described the British advance from Newark to the Battle of the Brandywine in his diary:

The army marched past Newark and toward morning on the 8th crossed the White Clay Creek, which was surrounded on both sides by steep, rocky heights that formed a most frightful defile half an hour (a mile and a half) in length. I still cannot understand why (American General) Sullivan abandoned this position, where a hundred could have held up the army a whole day and killed many men. My hair stood on end as we crammed into the defile, and I imagined nothing more certain than an unexpected attack at the moment when we would have barely stuck our nose out of the defile. For the precipitous rocks on both sides of the creek and along the defile were so steep no one could scale them. But I surmised that Sullivan has reasoned that General Howe would never choose this route, because he had stationed himself behind the Christiana Bridge.

Mason and Dixon surveyed the north-south boundary between Delaware and Maryland a mile to the west of the White Clay as they veered off course from their tangent with the arc of Delaware and created the lawless "Wedge."

After the Second World War, the Pennsylvania Railroad bought up land in the White Clay Creek Valley for a reservoir. The railroad was in the water business to run the big steam engines of the time. The railroad eventually turned over the reservoir land to the DuPont Company, one of the world's biggest corporations.

After the record drought of the turbulent 60s, the White Clay Watershed Association opposed the new dam, which would have pooled six billion gallons at the bottom of Wedgewood Road. This year, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of DuPont's having donated reservoir land to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the state of Delaware, creating the 5,000-acre bi-state White Clay Creek Preserve.

The next drought hit in 1995 and then the next in 1999. After that drought, then Gov. Carper transformed water-supply management in northern Delaware and passed the 2000 Water Supply Coordinating Council Act, which mandated that the water purveyors build a billion gallons of new water storage in an environmentally friendly way. Ten years later the purveyors have doubled the goal and built over two billion gallons of new water storage, including the Newark Reservoir and raising Hoopes Reservoir.

These actions led to the delisting of Lamborn Run as a reservoir site by the Delaware River Basin Commission, and, thus, this headwater stream is now eligible for Wild and Scenic designation.

Although we try to put a price on them, recreational opportunities along the White Clay Creek are priceless; they include hiking, trout fishing, mountain biking, running. I can take you cross-country skiing to the Lamborn Run with its north facing slopes that hold the most snow late in the winter. I've skied as late as St. Patrick's Day there.

There are exciting new watershed initiatives occurring along the creek. The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary plans to restore the freshwater mussel—the oyster's cousin and nature's water filter. We submitted a \$3.9 million grant to NOAA under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to create 125 green jobs, remove the lower dams along the White Clay, and, hopefully, restore the American shad runs for the first time in a century.

When the Chrysler plant is rejuvenated, it will be water from the White Clay Creek that feeds its economic expansion of a new electric-car plant or wind assembly. The United Auto Workers were largely responsible for preserving this valley land as they wanted to fish and hunt and recharge on weekends before they went back to work on Monday.

If I were showing around workers from the Base Realignment Commission (BRAC) over in Aberdeen, Md., I would take them to UD, along Main Street in Newark, and then up in the White Clay Creek Valley, so they could see for themselves the possibilities of living close to the next best thing to a national park.

Over the past ten years, I've taught more than 500 civil engineering students who study the White Clay Creek as a living laboratory. By my estimates, there are only two land-grant colleges that have a wild and scenic river that flows through campus. One is Colorado State University and the other is the University of Delaware.

My friend McKay Jenkins, Cornelius A. Tilghman Professor of English at UD who studied under Princeton Pulitzer Prize-winning author John McPhee, wrote about watersheds like the White Clay at our water policy forum:

The point I want to make here is that any effort to reject the permeability and flow of boundaries runs against the natural way of things. Water wants to flow—it's in the nature of water. People want to flow—it's in the nature of people. Culture wants to flow—it's in the nature of culture. Dam a river, and the dam, one day, will crack. Isolate a person, and the person will crack.

So the White Clay Creek is a priceless natural resource, a refuge from the economic times.

Almost a decade ago when he learned the White Clay Creek was 191 miles long, Joe Biden said, "My state isn't even that long." Now with the two stream additions, the protected river will be almost 200 miles long.

So to our six horsemen of the environment—Biden, Carper, Castle, Coons, Markell, and Kaufman—I say "thank you." Thank you from all of us who benefit from your efforts to protect the White Clay Creek.