Foreword

Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper

The Delaware River is the last major free-flowing river east of the Mississippi, its entire length unimpeded by man-made structures. Its free-flowing nature is one of the most touted and respected aspects of the Delaware.

Such freedom for the river brings freedom for those who use it. Paddlers (whether in canoes, kayaks, or other small craft) are able to put in at any point along its length and enjoy as much of the river as they choose. No dams or blockades disrupt the joy one feels when floating along its cool, clean waters or taking on the challenges of its rapids.

The joy of paddling this free-flowing river is magnified by the knowledge, and reality, that it includes the longest stretch (197 miles) of river anywhere in the United States that is so clean, and for that reason it is given special legal protections from degradation. Stops to swim, fish, and watch birds and wildlife can be fully and safely enjoyed.

The rich ecological history of the region is still evidenced today as one paddles down the Delaware's length. Unique cliff formations overlooking the river, rapids, islands, and a remarkably well-established green riparian buffer provide important habitat, beautiful views, and an incredible, glorious distraction from the intense activity of our day-to-day lives.

The Delaware River is unique in both its present-day beauty and its past history. We all know the Delaware as the site of many of the historic events that formed and shaped our nation. The remnants of this history are often evident, for those in the know, as one paddles down the river's waters.

A Paddler's Guide to the Delaware River makes all of this nature, beauty, and history accessible. It tells you about those special spots, where to put in and where to take out, the secret stories and locations to look for, where to find the quiet waters and the fast-flowing rapids. My copy of the earlier edition is dog-eared, water-spattered, and worn with repeated use—and yet I never head out onto the river without it.

As beautiful as the Delaware is—and as important as it is to the more than 15 million people who drink its waters, as well as to the many millions who eat its fish, work its shores, and benefit from its very existence—the river is fragile and at our mercy. So we must take it upon ourselves to preserve the freedom and health of the river from those who would seek to profit from it and thereby do it harm. Only by protecting the river are we able to protect ourselves. *A Paddler's Guide to the Delaware River* ensures that we will have the access, appreciation, and firsthand experiences with this beautiful treasure that give us the knowledge and commitment to ensure its health today and for all future generations.