

# Spanning the Gap

## Flooding and Funding



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*Spanning the Gap*  
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Ravaging the Delaware River Valley, floodwaters left their mark of destruction throughout the river's corridor. Chunks of ice 15 feet high scoured Smithfield Beach and surrounding lands. Milford Beach was completely submerged under four feet of water, as was a section of U.S. Route 209. A footbridge at Dingmans Falls was destroyed.



*(Left)* Canoe launch restroom at Smithfield Beach. A man is standing on the ice at the right of the building.

*(Above)* The same scene in summer.

As spring begins to blossom and the great ice floes melt away, the uninformed observer may not realize the extent of the devastation. The beach and bath houses appear, from the outside, to be just fine. Why is the area still closed? Electrical systems, plumbing and complex composting restrooms within the bath houses were completely destroyed at Milford and Smithfield Beaches. Although a request for approximately \$2 million in emergency funds to rehabilitate facilities was submitted within days of the flood, there has been no action on it as of yet. In the interim, efforts are being made to reopen park facilities and areas damaged; however, these efforts are severely hampered by limited staff, limited funding and, to date, no approved budget with which



Though the flood had been caused by days of *rain*, not snow, the ice and snow deposited by the rising river covered low-lying areas on

to work.

Since the park has to operate at last year's funding levels, yet simultaneously absorb a number of unfunded or increased costs, some of them substantial, constraints on rehabilitation efforts continue to be considerable. A key funding issue centers on legislation to authorize collection of commercial fees along U.S. Route 209. Without Congressional authority to collect these fees, the park must absorb almost a quarter million dollars in associated, unfunded costs.

Many facilities will open later than normally expected in the spring of 1996.

the banks.



The bulletin board at the Smithfield Beach bathhouse, with the river receding water only a few steps away. The entire beach slope is under water.