

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES May 3, 2018

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, May 3, 2018 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Aaron Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Shohola Township-Aaron Robinson, Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Fremont-Jim Greier, Town of Delaware-Harold G. Roeder, Jr., Town of Cohecton-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten- Susan Sullivan, Town of Highland-Deb Conway, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeffrey Dexter, Berlin Township-Alan Henry, Lackawaxen Township-Doug Case, Delaware River Basin Commission-Peter Eschbach, National Park Service-Carla Hauser Hahn. Staff in attendance: Resource Specialist-Pete Golod, Secretary-Linda Drollinger. Absent: UDC Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Westfall Township-Michael Barth, Town of Lumberland, State of New York, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Media: Dave Hulse, Peter Becker. Guests: Roger Saumure-Shohola Township, Ginny Dudko-Town of Deerpark, Jennifer Claster-National Park Service, Evan Padua, and others.

Presentation by John Thompson, Coordinator of Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP): Invasive Species in the Upper Delaware. Thompson introduced the subject of invasive species, identifying them as any animal or plant not native to an area that causes harm to its new locale. Characteristics common to all invasive species are: rapid reproduction, high germination rate, phenotypical plasticity, and environmental generalists. Rapid adaptation to environmental conditions and lack of natural predators and competitors make invasive species unusually prolific. The result is habitat degradation and loss as well as loss of native species. Thompson described the four phases of human response to invasive species as prevention, eradication, containment, and resource protection/long-term management. A graph illustrating those phases depicted public awareness starting during the late containment phase.

Thompson defined his organization's mission as being threefold: to promote education; early detection; and control. CRISP has eight Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMS) established within New York State. The Upper Delaware region is part of the PRISM encompassing Sullivan, Orange, Delaware, Schoharie, Otsego, Ulster and Greene Counties and is adjacent to the Lower Hudson and Finger Lake PRISMs. At present, there is no PRISM network in Pennsylvania, but a position is being created there to oversee development of a similar system in that state. In the interim, CRISP and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation need permission to cross state lines. Thompson said New York has more forest pests than any other state, but Pennsylvania is not far behind.

Spotted Lanternfly, a flying plant hopper, is native to Southeast Asia and is thought to have arrived in the U.S. via a stone pallet shipment through the Port of Philadelphia. It feeds on over 100 plant species, including trees, grapes, apples and peaches, but prefers Tree of Heaven, another invasive from Asia. When Lanternfly is feeding on Tree of Heaven, the leaves emit an acrid smell like burnt peanut butter. Thompson said it may be that Tree of Heaven is essential to the insect's reproduction. If that proves to be the case, Lanternfly could be controlled by preventing access to it. Sticky bands are attached to Tree of Heaven for monitoring and Lanternfly population control. Fruit crops are expected to be most severely impacted, devastating orchards and vineyards. New York apple production is second highest in the nation; wine is a leading export.

Lanternfly has one life cycle per year, hatching in June, achieving adulthood July through December, and laying eggs in October. Grayish clusters of approximately 35 eggs are laid in straight lines on smooth surfaces, rocks and metal among them, then covered with a waxy substance. Because of the insect's affinity for laying eggs on metal, commercial vehicles will be stopped for inspection on highways within quarantine zones, currently limited to Southeast PA counties. Although Monroe County, PA is the closest it has come to our area, Lanternfly is expected to be in the Upper Delaware by summer 2019.

Mile-a-Minute (MAM) is an invasive vine that grows six inches per day, 25 feet per year. Its seeds, which float on water, are dispersed by birds and remain viable in soil for 5-7 years. It is identified by its triangular leaves, curved prickles on stems, its ocrea – flat, round leaves at nodes, and iridescent blue berries from July until first frost. It's been documented at Skinners Falls. If MAM is found on a property, CRISP will inspect the property, discuss eradication strategies with the owner, and then perform whatever eradication strategy the owner has approved, at no cost to the property owner. For more information or to arrange a property inspection, contact John Thompson at jthompson@catskillcenter.com or visit <http://catskillinvasives.com>.

During the question and answer period following the presentation, Sullivan asked with whom CRISP partners to eradicate invasive species. Thompson answered, "Volunteers." He said one obvious benefit of enlisting volunteers is that they learn to identify the invaders. At least three eradication attempts are required for elimination of MAM. One month after the first eradication attempt, there will be half as much as before. One month after the second eradication attempt, there will be one quarter of the original amount. CRISP contracts with Cornell Cooperative Extension for volunteer training. To eradicate an area of Japanese Knotweed the size of the Council meeting room could take five to 15 years.

Robinson asked what herbicides are recommended. Thompson said Roundup will work, but pulling up the plant by its roots is preferable to any herbicidal treatment. Once out of the ground, roots should be allowed to dry in sunlight. If MAM seeding can be prevented, the infestation can be eradicated.

Asked if washing a vehicle would kill Lanternfly eggs attached to it, Thompson said that it would not, that egg clusters tend to be hidden in out-of-the-way spots like wheel wells, making a power wash or scraping necessary.

Robinson asked if it would be possible to get Lanternfly to feed on Japanese Knotweed or MAM. (Thompson had mentioned early in the presentation that scientists are working toward biological control of Knotweed, with an insect that feeds exclusively on it.)

At the conclusion of Thompson's presentation, Robinson thanked him and gave him a UDC lapel pin.

Thompson said general information on invasive species can be found at <http://www.nyis.info/>. Council members mentioned that good online articles regarding both invasive species and clean energy and water resources could be found on the DEC's own website. [For articles about a clean energy project, the Beaverkill Covered Bridge, and Roscoe ("Trout Town"), see the April issue of The Conservationist, a NYS DEC free online publication at https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/0418consomag4web.pdf.]

Approval of April 5 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Sullivan, seconded by Greier, to approve the April 5 meeting minutes was carried. Richardson abstained.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None

Committee Reports: Committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They were: April 17 Water Use/Resource Management by Peckham, April 24 Project Review by Richardson, and April 24 Operations by Robinson. Robinson's report mentioned that Tusten would appoint a new UDC alternate at its May meeting, who has expressed an interest in joining the WU/RM Committee. Sullivan named guest Evan Padua as that alternate, introducing him to the Council and saying that he plans to attend the May WU/RM Committee meeting.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: DRBC Director of External Affairs and Communications Peter Eschbach was present. After giving a post-retirement report on former colleagues Clarke Rupert and Dr.

Thomas Fikslin, Eschbach next reported on public feedback regarding the Gas Regulations. Nine thousand submissions were received. Eschbach defined "submission" closely, saying a petition containing 20,000 signatures would be considered one submission. DRBC is in the process of reading them all and trying to categorize them according to concern. If a form letter was submitted (five prototype form letters have been identified so far), it will be sorted by type. He said the agency is still weeks away from forming teams to address each category of concern, and if outside expertise is required, DRBC will get it. As of now, there is no timeline and no target completion date. Eschbach said Al Jazeera was outside the DRBC building the morning of May 3, awaiting news of DRBC action in response to the well-publicized public feedback. The DRBC has scheduled a public hearing on May 16, followed by the June 13 business meeting to rule on projects, with an open public comment segment afterward. Information about these next sessions is available on the DRBC website at <http://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/upcoming/>. Eschbach mentioned that volunteer opportunities are available through the Water Management Advisory Commission and that two internship opportunities are available for candidates with data analysis or paralegal experience. See <http://www.state.nj.us/drbc/about/staff/internships.html> for information and application instructions.

Peckham asked Eschbach about the Barnes Landfill in the Town of Highland, and was told DRBC had notified both NYS DEC and the National Park Service that the landfill is a potential source of Upper Delaware River contamination. Council members informed Eschbach that the Barnes Landfill is an old problem of which NYS DEC and NPS have long been aware and explained that provision for its cleanup via a now defunct escrow fund has left the Beaver Brook tributary subject to contamination from its leachate.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Rudge was absent, however two handouts were provided. One detailed recent accomplishments of Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs), including the story of an injured eagle rescue along the Upper Delaware in Cohecton, NY. Veterinarian examination of the two-year-old female determined that it had sustained a severely broken wing as the result of a gunshot wound. The bird is currently in the care of Wildlife Rehabilitator Missy Runyan and expected to survive. Shooting an eagle is a federal offense; anyone with information that may help identify those involved in the shooting is encouraged to contact the Region 3 Law Enforcement office at (845) 256-3013. The other was a news release: "DEC Seeks Volunteers for Annual Stream and River Monitoring" announcing the agency's recruitment campaign for the 2018 summer sampling season. Volunteers will conduct water quality assessments in streams and rivers as part of the State's Water Assessments by volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) project.

PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources: No report or handouts in the absence of Representative Tim Dugan.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: Hahn filled in for Heister, who was away at training. She introduced new employee Jennifer Cluster as the "long-awaited land use planner." Initially, Cluster will be working with Jonathon Chester of Shippensburg University Center for Land Use and Sustainability (CLUS) on applications for the Geographic Information Systems tool currently in development by NPS and CLUS. Hahn reported that Heister participated in an April 27 Friends of the Upper Delaware River float trip, and that Heister and Hahn met with Ten Mile River Boy Scouts regarding the Ten Mile River access site. Hahn said the New York State Department of Transportation has been installing signs along Route 97 and other state highways indicating access to the Upper Delaware Scenic River. It's anticipated that signs will also be placed at appropriate exits on interstates like I-84 in the NEAR future. Hahn said results of reports collected from 79 licensed guides, camps and liveries indicate that there were 104,583 visitors to the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River last year, generating \$4,318,742 in local revenue. Asked how that data was collected, guide Evan Padua said each licensed guide submitted reports to NPS detailing the number of clients served and providing other data as requested. Sixteen licensed guides attended the park service's Sixth Annual Guides Conference. The Annual Water Safety Partners Meeting was scheduled to be held May 4 at the UDC Office. May 18 is Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day. May 19 is Migratory Fish Day, which will feature a float trip. All are welcome but, as the number of participants is limited, those interested should contact Don Hamilton at (570) 729-7842 x3302 as soon as possible. At the mention of

migratory fish, Peckham said the late spring had moved the salt line a couple of miles south of where it normally is at this time of year and that no shad are running yet because they like a slower, warmer river.

UDC Executive Director's Report: In the absence of vacationing Ramie, no report was given. A May monthly calendar handout with UDC meetings, deadlines and activities was provided.

Old Business: None

New Business:

A motion by Henry, seconded by Richardson, to approve UDC Resolution 2018-02, "A Resolution of the Upper Delaware Council Approving 2018 River Clean-up Grant Applications" carried unanimously.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Report: A copy of the May 2 NYC Current Reservoir Levels was provided in members' packets. The NYC Delaware River Basin Storage was at a combined capacity of 99.7%, with Cannonsville at 101.1% capacity. Normal for the date is 98.6%.

Other: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder, seconded by Peckham, to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m. carried unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Linda Drollinger 05-07-18