



Upper Delaware Council

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UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 5, 2022

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, May 5, 2022. Chairperson Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock- Fred Peckham (Zoom), Town of Fremont- Jim Greier, Town of Delaware- Harold Roeder, Jr., Town of Cochecton- Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten- Sue Sullivan, Town of Highland- Andy Boyar, Town of Deerpark- Virginia Dudko, Damascus Township- Jeff Dexter, Berlin Township- Alan Henry, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Delaware River Basin Commission- Kristen Bowman Kavanagh (Zoom), State of New York- Mike DiSarno (Zoom), Commonwealth of Pennsylvania- Tim Dugan, National Park Service- Joe Salvatore. Staff in attendance: Executive Director- Laurie Ramie, Resources and Land Use Specialist- Kerry Engelhardt, Secretary- Ashley Hall-Bagdonas. Absent: Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajsz, Westfall Township- Michael Barth, Guests: Don Hamilton, John Pizzolato, Jane Varcoe, Michael Padua, Edward Boyer, Barry Myrvold (Zoom), Cody Hendrix- NPS Community Land Use Planner, Bill Dudko- Town of Deerpark Alternate, Evan Padua- Town of Tusten Alternate. Media: Liam Mayo- River Reporter, Peter Becker- Tri-County Independent (Zoom), Meg McGuire- Delaware Currents (Zoom), Rosie Starr- Farm and Country WJFF (Zoom).

Presentation “The Founding Fish: American Shad on the Delaware River” by Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Natural Resources Chief Don Hamilton and John Pizzolato for “Upper Delaware Shadfest 2022” (9:20 time on recorded meeting): Don Hamilton shared a PowerPoint presentation and a short video clip on the American shad. The American shad is a species of fish found along the rivers and in the ocean of the mid-Atlantic. It was a staple food for Native American tribes such as the Lenape, who built fence-like weirs and used weighted nets to capture shad on spawning runs. The Delaware River currently holds crucial importance for the fish, because it is the last major river on the East Coast with an undammed main stem. American shad spend much of their lives out in the open ocean, returning to their home rivers to spawn. A decline in the undammed habitat available for their spawning and an increase in predation from a booming striped bass population have combined with other factors to drop populations of American shad to as low as one percent of their historic levels. The Delaware River provides the fish with a habitat to spawn in, and in exchange, the fish bring nutrients in to the Upper Delaware from the ocean. Hamilton said NPS welcomes volunteers to help with Young of Year Shad Sampling in August, September and October.

33:25: John Pizzolato spoke on behalf of the Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce and the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway to share the day-to-day plans of the first ever “Festival of the Founding Fish 2022” running from May 20-22 along the Upper Delaware River. It will be a weekend full of music, fish, and fun. Friday features opening festivities in Port Jervis and Hancock. Saturday is World Fish Migration Day and there will be a Children’s Story Time in Port Jervis, events in Barryville, the opening of Fort Delaware Museum of Colonial History, the Cochecton Preservation Society will hold a poster contest, One Grand Books will hold a book signing in Barryville with Melissa Gilbert. Andy Boyar will hold free Shad Fishing demonstrations. Hancock will feature an all-day art walk. There will be a cinema screening of “A River Runs through it” and “Shad Run”. NPS will hold a shad viewing float down the Delaware. There will be a Shad Shindig at Fort Delaware on Saturday with music headliners Super Yamba and a dance party by DJ Shando and DJ Buck Shad. This is a ticketed event and all ticketed holders for the event are entered into raffle to win a trip for two to Reykjavik, Iceland compliments of PLAY Airlines from Stewart Airport.

On Sunday, there will be music from Mike “Rocket Train” Edison from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in Callicoon. There are Living History demonstrations at Fort Delaware. Hancock has the Art walk, live music, Fish Festival & Fair. In

Narrowsburg from 6-10 is End of The Shad Run Disco with music headliners Say She She. For a full list of events check out festivalofthefoundingfish.com. He distributed posters, postcards, and Fort Delaware brochures.

Approval of April 7th Meeting Minutes (48:30): A motion by Henry seconded by Robinson, to approve the April 7th, 2022 meeting minutes carried.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None.

Committee Reports: There were no questions regarding the following meetings: Water Use/Resource Management April 19th (Ginny Dudko); Project Review April 26th (Larry Richardson); and Operations; April 26th (Andy Boyar)

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission (49:00): Bowman Kavanagh reported that the Hydrologic report and meeting notices can be found at <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/> Next week on 5/11 at 1:30 p.m. is their 2nd Quarter Public Hearing. On 6/8 is the 2nd Quarter Business meeting. They will have in-person/hybrid meetings in Wilmington, DE.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (50:00): DiSarno provided a report after the meeting due to preliminary audio difficulties. He reported that he accepted a new job in Western New York and will be starting 5/23. Therefore, 5/5 will have been his last UDC meeting. DiSarno will now be working out of our DEC office in Avon, NY. Both Jeff Rider and Kelly Turturro have already discussed this and a new DEC representative will be present at next month's meeting. It's still undecided who the next representative will be. For any access or fisheries related issues, please contact Ryan Coulter (ryan.coulter@dec.ny.gov) or Bobby Adams (robert.adams@dec.ny.gov).

Many of their Stocked and Stocked Extended reaches on the Delaware River tributaries have been stocked. This includes the Neversink River, Callicoon Creek, EB and NB Callicoon Creeks, Halfway Brook, Beaver Brook, Willowemoc Creek, Little Beaverkill and the Beaver Kill. The Stocked Extended reaches will receive additional stockings throughout May. For additional information, such as the location of the stocked reaches, stocking dates, regulations and access, view the Trout Stream Interactive Map at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/122444.html>. The spring stocking list can also be viewed at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/23285.html>.

Fishing regulations guides have finally been printed and can be found at Town Halls, sporting goods stores and anywhere else that sells fishing licenses.

They've submitted work requests for the Narrowsburg and Skinners Falls access sites to clean up the sediment which was deposited during recent high-water events. Their Operations crew is overworked, but will hopefully get to these soon. DiSarno submitted this as high priority, saying hopefully, they will be completed shortly.

PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (54:50): Dugan said their Spring fire season has been active in PA. They did have a pretty good amount of precipitation in April but over the last three weeks it dried out. The Northeastern part of PA had a pretty active Spring fire season so far. They started to get rain over the last weekend, bugs are bursting, and the forest floor is greening up.

Spongy Moth (fka Gypsy Moth) will be a spray program this year in PA only on state land. As it relates to the Upper Delaware there are only 1,400 acres in central Pike County on state land. Most of the heavy damage last year was in Central PA. Dugan said as oak leaves are emerging, when they're over an inch or 2 inches long you'll start to see potential "shotgunning", once those leaves are two inches in size and up to full grown. Dugan said they hope to get some cool, wet weather, with ambient moisture that allows the now naturally propagating virus and bacteria that are natural controls to be available in the environment. Dugan said a cool, wet Spring is a forester's dream because that means no fires and a decrease of Spongy moths.

Dudko asked a question about the Avian Flu. Dugan said he's not fully up to speed but did say that it was moving from South to North with migratory birds. Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania all had incidences in succession. Dugan said he would look for a current Department of Agriculture press release to circulate for information.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware (64:28): Superintendent Salvatore thanked Ramie for allowing NPS to use the office last Friday for the Annual Water Safety Meeting. There was a great turnout between UDC, the NPS, the National Canoe Safety Patrol (NCSP) and several liveries. The timing was really good because NCSP had just had their training. He also thanked UDC for organizing the 2nd Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep. NPS took a half day with service. Dexter sent a great picture of NPS staff member Jamie Myers looking like Spiderman as she climbed up a hill utilizing a rope Dexter had for safety.

Salvatore said they held Canal Days which were really cool and there was a great turnout of fourth graders. He apologized for missing the last meeting as he was attending Law Enforcement training in Georgia at the time. NPS submitted their Fiscal Year Plan to the UDC and Ramie will distribute that to members for comments.

Lauren Hauptman, their Cultural Resources Manager, was working remotely for a while and just accepted another job at Rocky Mountain National Park. They are aggressively recruiting for the Cultural Resources Manager. Salvatore decided to reorganize and Don Hamilton will be in charge of the Cultural and Natural Resources. Most of their seasonal staff and interns are on board. They are still waiting for their seasonal law enforcement. They are working on a Water Safety video that is trilingual. They found there are not only a lot of Spanish speaking folks coming to the river but also a lot of Russian speaking folks.

Between June and October there will be more water releases in the Upper Delaware so reservoir repair work can be done. Hamilton said it's going to be a significantly greater amount of water: 1500 cfs from Cannonsville and 700 at Pepacton.

Salvatore had a meeting a few weeks ago with the Delaware Tribal Nation president. She was in town at a meeting in Milford. He would like to see partnership in getting all of the tribes associated with this park unit together. She is going to try to help him for a fall program. He's reached out to Regional about funding.

Two weeks ago, NPS Director, Chuck Sams was touring the Delaware Water Gap for National Public Lands Day and also because the park put in for a lot of the Great American Outdoors Act legislation funding. Sams came to look at their deferred maintenance and buildings, and had dinner with several Superintendents.

UDC Executive Director's Report (75:30): Boyar and Ramie included in the packet a paragraph they drafted that attempts to describe the UDC's purpose and scope. This would be used for public outreach materials. Its goal is to answer the question: "Who are they and what do they do?" Ramie said, as you know from the long debate we had during the strategic planning workshop for our 5-Year Plan, that's not easy to do. This incorporates the new mission statement that came out of that process and expands on it. Roeder suggested adding, "Established by an Act of Congress". They asked the committee to review the draft and offer comments before the next Operations Committee meeting on 5/24 where it will be finalized.

After our 2/22 meeting with Congressman Mondaire Jones here in which he introduced himself as the river valley's potential new U.S. Representative, it turns out that New York's Court of Appeals struck down the redistricting maps as "procedurally unconstitutional" on 4/29. So now the Congressional and State Senate maps go back to the drawing board, and the scheduling of primary races will be affected. Also in the political realm, Jeff Dexter was the first person to bring to Ramie's attention the breaking news on Tuesday that Congressman Antonio Delgado has been chosen by Governor Kathy Hochul to serve as the state's new lieutenant governor. He is expected to take office this month to replace former Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin who resigned after his arrest on bribery charges, then he will need to run in the next election to keep the position. Rep. Delgado was elected in 2018 to represent the 19th District which includes all of the NY river communities except in Orange County. The governor is expected to call a special election to replace his vacancy. We will be on standby to see how this all shakes out, but having someone who is actively familiar with the Upper Delaware River and our issues in the Executive Branch could be helpful to our cause. A motion by Sullivan, seconded by Robinson, for the UDC to send a congratulatory letter to Rep. Delgado carried.

After we shared the news last month about the short-term closure of the Cohecton-Damascus Bridge for construction work on the weekends of 4/9 and 4/16, it got rained out both times. The bridge was closed to traffic on the 4/23 weekend and Ramie hasn't heard any further updates. The annual meeting of the NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission is coming up on 5/25 however, at which reports will be given on all 10 Upper Delaware River crossings.

Please see the May calendar of meetings, activities, and deadlines in your packets. Personnel Subcommittee will meet with Engelhardt on 5/24. Wear Your PFD to Work Day is 5/20. The June 2 UDC presentation will be by Port Jervis-based historian Frank Salvati on "History of the Lenape in the Upper Delaware River Valley".

Ramie said we want to wish NPS UPDE Cultural Resource Program Manager Lauren Hauptman well after she notified us on 4/22 about accepting that new position at Rocky Mountain National Park that began last week. Lauren was very proactive in working on the oral history project, advocating for our historic bridges, helping communities with their historic needs, cataloging museum collections, renaming the Corwin Farm to the historically accurate Cowen Farm, and helping to secure the \$50,000 project to update the Delaware & Hudson Canal's National Register of Historic Places listing, besides being a genuinely nice person. She did offer to help with any transitional needs since her Park Service email will remain the same.

Secondly, we received a hand-written letter she displayed addressed to: UPPER DELAWARE SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVER, P.O. BOX C, NARROWSBURG that came from a Mary Yoder from Peach Bottom, PA. It says, "Dear Gentlemen and Sirs, I am interested in one of your brochures of Upper Delaware (sp) scenic and recreation river. We are doing this is an English lesson at school. Please send soon. Some of the others have been getting some brochures recently. We think it's interesting. Sincerely yours, Mary Yoder" That P.O. Box C was the NPS address about 2 decades ago but they were right to put it in our UDC box. Ramie said she was more than happy to mail Mary a bunch of our Upper Delaware brochures. We hope that she shares them with her classmates and aces this assignment.

New Business

Draft Resolution 2022-05: Approving 2022 River Clean-up Grant Applications (88:00): A Motion by Henry seconded by Greier to approve the two 2022 River Clean-up Grant applications for the Town of Deerpark (\$3,331.13) and the Town of Lumberland (\$1,100.00) carried.

Draft Letter to NPS: UDC 2022-007: Narrowsburg Union Daycare Special Use Permit, Town of Tusten, Substantial Conformance Recommendation (88:45): A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve the substantial conformance recombination draft letter to NPS regarding UDC 2022-007: Narrowsburg Union Daycare Special Use carried unanimously.

NYS DEC Conceptual Site Plan for Long Eddy River Access (91:35): Ramie displayed photos of the existing conditions at access. The board referred further business on the NYS DEC site plan for spatial improvements to the Long Eddy River Access to the Project Review Committee. The full discussion can be found on recording.

Other: None.

Old Business

Status of Resolutions to Support UDC Funding: (115:50): Ramie reported that we await resolutions to support permanent UDC state funding from Lackawaxen and Cohecton. Once they are received, we will package them to send both to the respective governors of PA and NY by certified mail with a UDC cover letter.

Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Report (117:30): Hall-Bagdonas said the Second Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep was a great success thanks to all of the sponsors, a wonderful community, partners and Litter Leaders many of which were UDC members and staff. Thank you to our contacts at Mike Pries, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, PennDOT & NYDOT for helping secure all necessary safety documents and answering any questions.

We had 20 official cleanup events throughout our 15 NY towns and PA townships paralleling the river. There were unofficial cleanups also. Nearly 350 volunteers picked up litter throughout the corridor. Thank you to many of the local papers that publicized the event. We were able to utilize our 2021 Sullivan Renaissance grant-funded Litter

Buckets during the Litter Sweep. School groups have already reached out with interest in continuing Litter Sweeps like these. We are still receiving totals and photos from Litter Leaders.

It was a wonderful way to get local residents engaged and Hall-Bagdonas said she was thankful to see the beauty of some of these town/ships as she did Litter Sweeps like Fremont and Westfall. We've had great social media engagement posting events and tagging partners and will continue to post photos from the events. Staff is already thinking of ways to improve the event for next year.

Ramie thanked Hall-Bagdonas who organized a good deal of it which was beyond all of our meetings and minutes. We have about 40 t-shirts remaining and suggested that UDC board members take them as UDC promotional items if they didn't already have one. Staff will reach out to the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep's Litter Leaders to request their totals for the amounts of trash collected and photos of their clean-ups if not yet shared, as well as finalize payments for supplies and ads through the special account.

Other (122:10): Engelhardt said she spoke with Nadia Rajsz earlier, who said she had a positive experience with the Litter Sweep but wanted to mention all of the pull offs where the anglers park were particularly bad along Rt. 97 and as previously discussed, perhaps we should put up "Do Not Litter" signs there.

She also mentioned that Mike Martucci's aide, contacted UDC but she has not heard from him. Ramie confirmed she provided that additional funding information to Chief of Staff Matt Nelligan.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Henry, seconded by Dudko, to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. was carried.

*Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas 5-31-2022
Recording of meeting available on request*