



# Upper Delaware Council

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## UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES May 6, 2021

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, May 6, 2021 via Zoom. Chairperson Dexter called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock- Fred Peckham, Town of Fremont- Jim Greier, Town of Cocheton- Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten- Susan Sullivan, Town of Highland- Andy Boyar, Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajsz, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township- Jeff Dexter, Berlin Township-Alan Henry, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Westfall Township- Michael Barth, Delaware River Basin Commission- Kristen Bowman Kavanagh, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania- Christine Dettore, National Park Service- Superintendent- Joe Salvatore. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Resources and Land Use Specialist- Shannon Cilento, Secretary- Ashley Hall-Bagdonas. Absent: Town of Delaware- Thomas Dent, State of New York-Bill Rudge. Guests: Haley Springston-Watershed Planning Coordinator for the Rondout Neversink Stream Program, Cody Hendrix- NPS Community & Land Use Planner, Ginny Dudko- Town of Deerpark Alternate, Roger Saumure- Shohola Township Alternate. Media: Linda Drollinger- River Reporter, Peter Becker- Tri-County Independent.

**Presentation: “Best Management Practices for Riparian Buffers” by Haley Springston, Watershed Planning Coordinator for the Rondout Neversink Stream Program:** Dexter introduced Haley Springston the Watershed Planning Coordinator for the Rondout Neversink Stream Program (RNSP). The Roundout Neversink Stream Program is a project of the Sullivan County Soil and Water Conservation District. They work in partnership with the Towns of Denning and Neversink and are fully funded by NYC Department of Environmental Protection. RNSP offer grant funding to projects related to ecological restoration, engineering, research, education, and community programming for those applicable within their watershed. They also offer consultation and collaboration with landowners, municipal officials, community organizations, highway departments, etc.

There are lots of benefits for planting riparian buffers. Some of the main benefits are that they protect public infrastructure and private property during flooding. They create a healthier ecosystem for native aquatic and terrestrial wildlife and improve water quality and soil health. Springston said RNSP install riparian buffers through the Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative (CSBI) Program for streamside landowners, in which Springston is the lead. The CSBI Program is for streamside landowners who live in the Roundout Neversink Watersheds. They also install Riparian Buffers alongside their largescale engineered river restoration projects. Springston provided a few examples of riparian buffers they installed. One was the Winton Waters CSBI Roadside. She planned and designed this planting in the Summer of 2020. The site before was pretty large riprap wedged between the West Branch of the Neversink and Frost Valley Road. Peckham asked if it was armored after one of the floods? Springston said it was armored for a long time before she started working for the stream program. She said CSBI advises against using riprap. If you walk along the riprap sections in the summer on a hot day, the stone becomes warm, which is a problem for habitat conditions for aquatic life. Brook trout do not like to hang out near warm waters. Another issue with stone riprap is without vegetation, they don't offer any filtration barrier between roadway contaminants and it runs off directly into the stream. They worked with the landowner and designed a planting to fill in the gaps between the riprap boulders and top the boulders with topsoil and vegetation. They worked with AMS soil. They used a blower truck with a topsoil blend and compost between the boulders and created a layer about 3-6 inches thick above it. Springston and an intern hydroseeded the area with a native wildflower seed blend as well as rye seed. She provided a picture that showed growth after just a few months.

Before you begin to plant a riparian buffer, it's crucial to have a solid design to your planting. Springston recommends doing a botanical survey of the area. She also conducts a soil survey and soil testing before she puts any plants in the ground. A botanical survey is very useful to survey the area and get an idea of the growing conditions that are present. She likes to catalog every species present alongside the area. The existing vegetation indicate the growing conditions at the site and informs selection of site-suitable species. Once she compiles her list of species present, Springston likes to use the USDA Plants Database to find the preferred growing conditions of the existing species. From that, you can get the range of growing conditions present at that site and it helps you choose plants that are accustomed to the conditions that are already present. Another tool Springston utilizes when she begins surveying the site's soil is the USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey. It's free and online and provides soil survey data across 95% of the U.S. You can look up information by address, upload a Shapefile if you use GIS mapping, or enter a nearby hydrologic unit. It gives you the taxonomic soil type of that area. Once you have that soil map the USDA NRCS database creates a custom Soil Resource Report giving you the soil properties. She utilizes this to determine the characteristics of soil. For the riparian buffer she's planting she can see within that if there are certain subareas that are better naturally suited to filter groundwater or to filter surface water. She highly recommends using that resource if ever designing a Riparian Buffer. If you would like a more refined, detailed level she recommends taking soil samples of your site and sending them out for soil analysis by a soil lab. Springston provided an example of a Soil Food Web Report from Harrington Soil Labs for the CSBI planting she did last year. It gives interpretations of biological life if present within your soil. In this case, the bacteria, the protozoa, and the nematode levels were all acceptable but it highlighted that the fungal levels of the soil were low. You can use these soils tests to inform what kind of soil amendments you will be installing at your planting. She said because the fungal levels were low, she decided to use MycoApply Ultrafine Endo/Ecto powder to support mycorrhizal network density and fungal development.

Once you have the design set there are a couple BMPs you can follow to make sure your Riparian Buffer improves the ecological health of the area. You can utilize native plants; reduce your mowed areas; and be soil conscious. Utilizing native plants is one of the best things you can do when you are planting alongside a stream. Choosing plants that are native will be more resilient than non-native plants. They often need less maintenance than non-native plants. They also support native fauna. Choosing native plants in fact supports native insect biomass which works its way up the food chain supporting birds, mammals, and other species. The NYS DEC offers really great information sheets for native flowers, native shrubs and native trees. Another great tool for finding native plants in your area is Indigenous Landscapes Native Plant Agriculture Guide. This guide is very helpful in selecting native species which support biodiversity, strengthen wildlife food web and address ecological restoration. She likes that it details specific wildlife fauna that benefit from native plant species. Another BMP you can follow when installing a riparian buffer is to reduce your mowed areas. She showed an example of their CSBI planting at the Schoenburg site. The planting is only within the first 100 or so feet along the stream edge but it's important even beyond that planting area to leave the larger streamside buffer un-mowed. This is a great thing to do to support insect biomass and native wildlife. You see in un-mowed areas a lot more dense and diverse native wildlife. Another BMP to follow is to be soil conscious when installing a riparian buffer planting. Springston referenced a diagram from RNSP's Landowner Guides that shows how much life is within soil. It's really important when you're installing your riparian buffer to shy away from harsh chemical fertilizers and be more conscious about how you're amending that soil. She recommends using compost teas, mycorrhizal based products, things that are going to promote biological soil life and not harm it.

As you are planting your riparian buffer you can also follow BMPs to promote stabilization along streambanks. Springston recommends planting and maintaining a buffer of mature vegetation year-round. A lot of landowners ask her how big should the buffer be and she tells them the bigger the better. The wider your buffer is the more potential protection you're offering your property during high flood events. She also recommends establishing roots on steep, eroding slopes. Willows are a really great resource for adding stability to a riparian buffer. They use willows in a couple different ways. One of them is willow fascines (bundle of willows). They are laid into the streambank They are excellent because they are very quick growing and it's a fast-acting approach to promoting stability along the streambank. RNSP also use willow staking; instead of having a bundle of willows, willow staking is pounding a single willow cutting into the streambank substrate. Springston provided a before and after photo showing an area one year after willow staking, saying it's a really effective tool if you have a streambank that doesn't have a lot of soil, is gravelly, and difficult to grow vegetation. Another way of getting vegetation growth on hillslopes or streambanks is hydroseeding. This is one of her favorite practices that RNSP does. Hydroseeding is often a two-step process. The first step is to apply a level of proganics which ignite that nutrient cycle in the soil. The second step is applying flexterra which helps adhere to the side of steep slopes. While RNSP uses hydroseeding on large scale and

restoration projects it's also a really good use for roadside drainage networks. If you hydroseed roadside ditches you're establishing vegetation with the root network that helps keep the soil in place which helps prevent sediment being pumped into streams. She said it's great to encourage local Highway Supervisors to contact their local County Soil and Water Conservation District and find out what hydroseeding services are available for your area. Post-installation recommendations are installing browse protection such as fencing, tree tubes, etc. Water your plantings during the growing season and regularly monitor and manage invasive species spread near the riparian buffer. A lot of times, managing invasive species is easier when you catch them early.

Springston said RNSP is outside of the Upper Delaware Council region; they deal with the Rondout Neversink regions within Sullivan and Ulster Counties. She provided links to USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey; USDA Plants Database; Native Plant Agriculture Guide by Indigenous Landscapes; and Trees for Tribes Statewide Data Explorer. She also provided her contact information and RNSP's social media information. A copy of the presentation will be posted on UDC's YouTube page and on UDC's website under Meeting Minutes. A brief question and answer session followed. Richardson asked if during hydroseeding they use the same seeds or a variety? Springston said you fill the hydroseeder up with water and you can add a mix of whatever seeds you want to spread. For the RNSP they use a custom blend of wildflower species and species that are native and have been sourced from their watersheds. You can also sow grass seed or rye. Cilento said she really appreciated the presentation and knows that they have a little different service area but feels the information is very relevant since there are so many property owners on streams and tributaries of the Upper Delaware. Cilento said the majority of property in the Upper Delaware is private property and asked Springston how she engages with private property owners to get them to undertake projects like this on their property? Springston said in their watershed they've seen a real change in the demographic of landowners; especially after 2020 with the migration with the NYC residents. Her biggest advice is to know your audience and your landowner. The first step is to build trust and communication with the landowner and your organization. She said in the past it's been difficult for RNSP to have landowners sign on to their programs. What's worked really well in recent years is to build those relationships with landowners and make sure they know about your program and what you do and to understand if you are reaching out to someone that's lived in the area for generations or someone who has just moved here. Peckham said in the Hancock area, Friends of the Upper Delaware River have engineers going through reengineering creeks and tributaries. He said he's a riverside landowner and he feels the biggest issue is Japanese Knotweed (JK). He knows that NPS has done a lot of work but he's also seen areas on the river that don't have knotweed. Springston said Japanese Knotweed is highly invasive and grows from its network of rhizomes beneath the ground. What's really difficult in removing JK is that if you leave even a small segment of the plant stem or the plant root it can resprout and grow again. She said in RNSP's watershed they are very lucky to have very low density of JK but in other sections of the Catskills, particularly along the Ashokan Basin, you see JK. There are certain agencies that will treat JK. RNSP will treat JK, for streamside landowners because it's in a manageable stage. Once it has a widespread area it's very expensive and time consuming to treat especially along waterways, because you see segments in floods or high-low events getting washed downstream. Robinson asked have you evaluated the costs for the various BMPs? Springston said it's very cheap to use willow cuttings because RNSP has a willow grove and they can cut them for free and do everything inhouse for that. It would depend on where you're sourcing the willows from, if you're installing them yourself or hiring a crew. For RNSP's projects they do a cost analysis to see what projects get priority. Boyar said he was on the river this week and there were sections of the river where Japanese Knotweed eliminates all the ground cover. He asked if there are any plantings that could match or take over JK in that area? He asked if you did a willow planting in that area would that shade out the JK which is shading out the groundcover already? Springston said in her experience she hasn't seen an effective biological control and she doesn't know of any native vegetation that would grow as aggressively to shade out JK. What's really tricky is because JK has that horizontal rhizome network beneath the ground, it can have a horizontal spread of 30-40 feet from that stem. She said if you hear of any methods let her know and we can keep each other posted. UDC members thanked Springston for her presentation.

**Approval of April 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Rajsz seconded by Greier, to approve the April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes.

**Public Comment on the Agenda:** None.

**Committee Reports:** There were no questions regarding the following meetings. They were: April 20<sup>th</sup> Water Use/Resource, April 27<sup>th</sup> Project Review, and April 27<sup>th</sup> Operations.

### **Status Reports**

**Delaware River Basin Commission:** Bowman Kavanagh noted the UDC calendar and saw that it's Cilento's birthday on 5/28 and wished her a happy early birthday. DRBC's Second Quarter Public Hearing Meeting is next week on 5/12. The Business Meeting is on 6/9. DRBC's Monitoring and Coordination Committee is scheduled for 6/9 but may change. The Water Management Advisory Committee Meeting is on 6/17 on which Ramie has a seat. All upcoming meetings can be found at: <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/upcoming/>

DRBC is working with FEMA on an Advanced Assistance Grant that will benefit the Lackawaxen Watershed. FEMA applied for and was awarded two grants close to a year or two ago. FEMA requested DRBC assist them with some advanced technical assistance. DRBC's role is more specifically is for GIS work and helping with outreach and workshops. It involves getting folks together from counties in the Lackawaxen Watershed; point people from county agencies such as emergency management, conservation districts, building code officials, etc. who are looking at hazard mitigation projects or have been involved with hazard mitigation planning. The idea is to help local counties to identify what projects are priority for them and provide technical assistance. Bowman Kavanagh said they can help these counties and FEMA to advance these projects to where they can have an application where they can go after funding. There kickoff meeting for that was last month. They are also working on a Storage Feasibility Study; a basin wide study to explore feasibility of additional freshwater storage to meet future needs. Whether that's increasing demands, drought management, flow management, or climate adaptation. Mott McDonald is a consulting firm that was selected through a competitive process to perform that work. The schedule for that is about 18 months.

Bowman Kavanagh's colleague, John Yagecic, joined her on the 9/3/2020 meeting call to talk about updating the Decision Support System (DSS). This is the tool that was originally developed by USGS which allows them to translate flow regime into available habitat for a number of different species in specific reaches in the Upper Delaware. The original tools were developed on older antiquated software systems and are not really usable today. They received grant funding from the Water Research Foundation (WRF) and are in the process of updating that. Bowman Kavanagh said they are making good progress on that and by end of summer early fall, if UDC is interested in a presentation, Yagecic could likely provide one.

The Hydrologic Conditions Report from 5/3 was provided in the meeting packets.

Greier said he's been reading about the study done in the Delaware River about the microplastics that are contaminants and found in 100% of the water sampled. Greier said 13 million drink water from the Delaware every day and he asked what the DRBC is going to do to address the issue of microplastics? Bowman Kavanagh said that microplastics are in the camp of emerging contaminants in terms of a lot of research is being done on what are the implications. How does it affect a human or wildlife when they ingest it? DRBC is doing a study in the more southern portion of the basin. She said there's a lot of studies being done in many places. There's been some research about whether really small microplastics when ingested, do they stay in the stomach? A lot is not known about the impacts. Bowman Kavanagh said she would be happy to have her colleague Jake Bransky, who is leading the Microplastic Study, come speak about this issue. UDC members said that would be valuable. Bowman Kavanagh said she would be happy to set that up. She said in the last few years she found out that fleece clothes which you think would be a good alternative have microfibers that are plastic as well. When you wash your fleece the discharge goes to a treatment plant and the microfibers are so small they will generally pass through the treatment plant. They recommend not washing your fleece clothing that often. She said this issue is endemic everywhere, even in the Upper Delaware where we have exceptional water quality.

**NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation:** Rudge provided in advance for the meeting packet a 5/03 press release "DEC and DOH Announce New Initiative to Protect Drinking Water Sources".

Ramie said Henry forwarded along a photo of the significantly deteriorating sign at the Narrowsburg Access where the letters are peeling off to see what DEC can do about that.

**PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources:** Ramie welcomed Christine Dettore as this is her first meeting as an UDC alternate. Dettore said she's glad she could join. She said she is with the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation and serves as a regional advisor for the ten counties in the Northeast (Region II) which includes Wayne and Pike Counties. She primarily works with their Community Conservation Partnership Program, which is their grant program. She is familiar with UDC and some of the things that have been going on for the past several years working with some Upper Delaware Water initiatives. Dettore said Wayne County is one of the last remaining counties in the state that do not have a Greenways and Open Space Plan. DCNR awarded them a grant and Wayne County is working on that now.

Dettore said they just finished their 2021 grant season. They had over 377 applications and they are starting to review and rank those.

DCNR works with a lot of their partner organizations in the Sojourns that have been awarded through the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR). She said most of them are going back to being in person this summer. Dettore will forward the list of Sojourns they are working with to UDC staff. Several partners are going down the Delaware River this year. In a portion of Wayne and Susquehanna Counties the D&H trail was nominated as DCNR Trail of the Year and that was the first time Northeast PA had a trail nominated. They will be having that celebration in Uniondale (Susquehanna County) this September.

**National Park Service-Upper Delaware:** Salvatore thanked the UDC for organizing the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep. He said it was a great project and he encouraged his staff for a month leading up to it to participate. He had about 60% of his staff come out on the last Friday and they collected about four pickup trucks full of garbage. It was a great initiative, and great for the community and community relations.

He asked members to check out <https://www.nps.gov/upde/index.htm> to which they've added a lot of new content.

This past weekend Salvatore attended the National Canoe Safety Patrol (NCSP) training. He was very proud to see the crowd of about 100 volunteers ranging in age of 13 to 80 years old.

Salvatore said he got the approval from the Regional Office and from the Washington Office to enter into an agreement with the Boy Scouts of America regarding the Ten Mile River (TMR) launch area. Boy Scouts of America has their folks looking at the agreement right now. He has not been able to change the Superintendent's Compendium with the prohibition of the TMR boat launching. Salvatore said NPS will not be enforcing anything as far as boat launching goes; NPS will be educating the public. They did find an area a little more downstream that is a little more hardened. If NPS is at TMR they will encourage the public to launch from that site.

Dexter, Richardson, Ramie, Cilento, Salvatore and Hendrix met this week to discuss Technical Assistance Grants (TAGs). There was an audit done in 2018 with scrutiny put on what can and cannot be approved as far as the TAGs. Salvatore has spoken with the Financial Office at the Regional in Philadelphia. There is a prohibition on any capital improvements as TAGs or brick-and-mortar projects. As long as they stay within the objectives and goals of the River Management Plan (RMP) he sees no issues on those TAGs getting approved. He feels Cilento is a great asset to review those TAGs. The best thing moving into 2022 is to first ask for some conceptual ideas of what people want, have a good cover letter, make sure they comply with the goals and objectives of the RMP, and try to cite the section of the RMP that supports the project. He's going to do everything he can to support and advocate for the TAGs and is already communicating with the Region.

Kevin Reish, one of the Law Enforcement Officers, is retiring this month. He said they are lucky enough to have his replacement come in the day after Reish retires. They are bringing in someone from Gateway National Recreation Area. They brought on Ron Babus full time and he will be taking over a lot of Reish's water safety duties. Another Law Enforcement Officer, Sean McNeil, will be leaving next month and they have a plan to have someone to come

in right behind him. They will be hiring one more Law Enforcement Ranger for more presence on the river. Dexter thanked Salvatore for the work he did on the TAGs because it's brought some confusion over the last few years.

**UDC Executive Director's Report:** Ramie noted the Upper Delaware S&RR News Release about "Wear Your Life Jacket to Work" Day on 5/21. They are encouraging you to take a photo and use the hashtags #lifejacketatwork and #safeboating and be sure to tag @BoatingCampaign and @updeNPS on Instagram.

She announced that former UDC representative for the Town of Hancock, F. Gerald "Gerry" Mackin died on 5/1/2020 in Las Vegas, where he had relocated after moving from Hancock in 2007. Mackin was appointed to the UDC on 12/4/2002 to succeed his friend and Peckham's uncle, the late George Frosch. He served for five years, through 2007 when he was elected chairperson of the board. He had been Hancock's town attorney for 13 years and then the town supervisor for 11 years (1989-2001). A very thorough obituary in "The Hancock Herald" says that he passed away at the age of 75 after a year-long battle with cancer. He will be interred in Uniondale, PA and the family has requested that donations in his memory be made to the Town of Hancock Volunteer Rescue Squad. The notice was published belatedly because *The Hancock Herald* was not in operation when Mackin died a year ago, Ramie had discovered.

After the 4/30 deadline passed for comments on the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge study, we heard that PennDOT had installed a sign on the PA side that flashed a message about extension of the survey period to 6/1. Ramie said that seemed like an odd way to announce that. In the last couple days, we've been deluged with more modern communications of that message from multiple sources including emails from PennDOT, their consultants AECOM, the Project Advisory Committee, the PATH system for Section 106 Consulting Parties, and advertisements such as this one from yesterday's *Times Herald-Record* she displayed. If you missed taking the survey, filling out the questionnaire, or submitting a letter, you have until Monday, 6/1. See the flyer in the packet for instructions on how to do that. UDC submitted comments before 4/30 supporting rehabilitation. We also issued a news release which can be found on our social media channels and website.

Ramie said we had an unexpected visit from the commissioner of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection on 4/13. Ramie happened to be near the window in the front office that Tuesday when she noticed a car with the NYC DEP logo pull in, and saw Paul Rush coming towards our door. Paul, who we know fairly well, is the deputy commissioner for the Bureau of Water Supply and he had with him Vincent Sapienza. He explained that they were on their way to a meeting downriver and decided to make a little detour to Narrowsburg to say hello. She gave Sapienza a quick tour of the office, including our large-scale river corridor map in the conference room which is always a hit, and we talked about the Upper Delaware. He asked how long Ramie had been with the UDC and she told him since 1997. Rush mentioned that Sapienza came up through the ranks of the DEP after starting with the agency in 1983. He was formally appointed as the commissioner in October of 2017. Ramie said that was a complete surprise but we appreciate the recognition.

Ramie said lastly, referring to the May calendar, to make note that a prior version from the 4/27 Operations Committee made it into the digital packet by mistake and Hall-Bagdonas sent out the updated version separately. From Tuesday, Ramie would like to thank Salvatore and Hendrix for coming over to meet with Dexter, Richardson, Cilento and herself to lay the groundwork for our solicitation of applications for the next round of TAGs. We'll report more on that at the 5/25 Project Review Committee. Let Ramie know if you have any questions about our May or June dates. Ramie noted that on 5/26 at 10 a.m. there will be a virtual meeting of the Annual NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission. The meeting is open to the public. Ramie attends this annual meeting and issues a news release. We're awaiting confirmation of our invited presentation for the 6/3 meeting.

### Old Business

**Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Update:** Cilento said for anyone who hasn't heard yet, the First Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep was hugely successful. Staff had such a fun time with it. We had 21 official cleanup events throughout our 13 member Town/ships as well as Buckingham and Manchester. There were unofficial cleanups also. Boyar and Richardson's groups went out through the week. We had well over 300 volunteers picking up litter throughout the corridor with lots of great photos and great publicity. She believes every local paper had some sort of write-up about it. *Sullivan County Democrat* had a podcast that Cilento was interviewed for that also featured Evan Padua. It was a wonderful way to get some of the local residents engaged. We've also had some of the best social

media engagement since we've created our social media in November. We had a ton of tags, likes, and photos shared. On Instagram as of today we are only 35 followers away from hitting 1,000 which is really exciting because we're sharing a lot of education about the UDC. We had a bunch of volunteers wanting to get added to our newsletter list. Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas thank each and every UDC member for their support. It was a wonderful event to be part of.

Cilento said the next step of this is that she and Hall-Bagdonas put together an application for a Sullivan Renaissance Healthy Community Initiatives Grant to create 12 litter clean-up kits that will be available for volunteers to borrow free of charge year-round. The UDC will house the kits at its office and replenish the supplies as needed. Designed for use by two people, each kit will contain a five-gallon bucket, a trash grabber tool, contractor bags, neon safety vests, work gloves, face masks, a travel-sized first aid kit, litter clean-up safety tips, a Visitor Information Map & Guide for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, and relevant literature such as a briefing on the Delaware River Microplastics Study. Sullivan Renaissance awarded \$500 towards this project. Cilento said that's very exciting and more great publicity and partnership with that news.

Ramie said a news release was issued that focused on the donations received in order to purchase the popular Litter Sweep t-shirts. Ramie will be issuing a news release citing all of the Litter Leaders and thanking them. Staff is already thinking of ways to improve the event for next year. They would like all of the groups to submit the amount of trash they picked up to tally that so they will be mindful of that for the next event, for example.

**Other: None.**

#### **New Business**

**Delaware River Watershed Congressional Caucus:** Dexter said two articles were provided for this. Ramie said she's aware the group knows this event happened on 4/12 but she wanted to share the news of Congressman Delgado reestablishing the Delaware River Watershed Congressional Caucus; which is something he pledged to do several years ago. He found a co-chair in Representative Fitzpatrick from Pennsylvania and it's meant to be a bipartisan caucus where some extra attention will be paid to the Delaware River and its needs. Ramie said any additional recognition is always welcome. This news brought a lot of great coverage and that's why we shared some of those articles in the meeting packet. One of the speakers at Callicoon Riverside Park was Sullivan County Legislature Chairman Rob Doherty. He had asked Ramie beforehand for talking points on the UDC and our needs. He used his time at the podium to talk about UDC's federal and state funding issues, which was gracious of him to do. That evening Ramie received an email from the Chief of Staff for Congressman Delgado, Amanda DeSantis, who introduced her to Matthew Gerson who works on the legislative team and is the primary contact for the Delaware Watershed Caucus. DeSantis set up a call with Ramie and advised Gerson that Delgado met with the UDC in 2019. Ramie had a half-hour call with them on 4/20. She explained how UDC is financed and that we are part of the base funding that the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (UPDE) receives and that \$300,000 comes through a Cooperative Agreement. Gerson asked why has it been capped at \$300,000? He said if we can get to the root cause if it's a choice or part of the legislative bill that could help UDC. Ramie advised them that we had just signed our Five-Year Agreement which again sets funding at \$300,000 a year as has been the case since 1988 since we were advised no increase was feasible. Ramie sent them follow up information and is waiting to hear back.

Ramie said the bipartisan nature of the announcement on 4/12 was great to see and it was the first time UDC was introduced to NYS Senator Mike Martucci. He also spoke at that press conference and made the point when it comes to supporting the river and river valley, it doesn't matter what political party you're in. Afterwards he took a tour of the Callicoon Depot which is the future Visitors Center for the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. Ramie shared the handwritten card he sent in which he provided thanks for the whole event and said that he was looking forward to the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep. Ramie said we made some really great connections that day and look forward to any future opportunities that yields.

**Draft Resolution 2021-13: Approving 2021 River Clean-up Grant Applications:** A Motion by Greier seconded by Richardson to approve the two 2021 River Clean-up Grant applications for the Towns of Lumberland (\$1,100) and Deerpark (\$3,308.43) carried.

**Other:** Sullivan said getting the funding from the PA DCED Grant allowed us to do the Upper Delaware Litter Sweep which was a really energizing event. She said funding is such an important issue and it's wonderful to see some progress because you see the results.

Sullivan said regarding the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge, Ramie did a comment letter that is so thorough. She said if any UDC members still need to submit comments any one of Ramie's points makes a perfect comment letter and thanked Ramie. Ramie asked if the NPS is intending on doing a comment letter? Salvatore said there was a comment letter done by Superintendent Kris Heister prior to his arrival. He said he's had conversations about the issue but hasn't put a pen to paper but said he would like to do a Letter of Support mirroring some of Ramie's comments. Ramie said she knows Lauren Hauptman from the NPS has been very engaged in the process and said she's a valuable resource for that information. Sullivan said to be a Consulting Party with Section 106 is not the easiest thing to do. PennDOT had some glitches in their system but any individual and any group such as a historical society can be a Consulting Party. She said everyone she's reached out to has been cooperative and lovely. Ramie said being a Consulting Party means you will be privy to all of the information that PennDOT puts out about the bridge study.

**Public Comment:** Boyar said he thinks the public was very appreciative of the job that the UDC staff did in "herding the cats" during the litter sweep. With 300 volunteers that participated, they answered all questions, got out all the materials, and got out the press releases. He said he would like the minutes to reflect his personal thanks for the job that was done. Dexter said the Damascus cleanup he was at was the third cleanup Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas had been at. Ramie said they had been very much hands-on and stepped up when there were no Litter Leaders. Dudko said she would like to thank Boyar for the inspiration because he was the one that got this project going over a year ago. Boyar said in the Town of Highland they did keep track of the quantity of trash that was recycled or deposited. It was around 1.7 tons and in many Town/ships there were similar responses like that. There were so many things that made it a feather in the cap for the UDC. He said at one-point Rajszyk was short on volunteers for the Town of Lumberland and then 19 people from a local business owned by Mike Fraysse showed up and it's unbelievable to have a response like that. He thanked everyone for the support and said let's do it again next year.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Rajszyk, seconded by Sullivan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. was carried.

*Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas 5-20-2021*