



Upper Delaware Council

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UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES September 3, 2020

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, September 3rd, 2020 at the Narrowsburg Union in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Cocheton- Larry Richardson, Town of Delaware- Thomas Dent, Town of Hancock- Fred Peckham- (via phone), Westfall Township- Michael Barth, Town of Tusten- Susan Sullivan, Town of Deerpark- David Dean, Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajsz, Town of Fremont- Jim Greier, Damascus Township- Steve Adams, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Delaware River Basin Commission- Kristen Bowman Kavanagh (via phone), Commonwealth of Pennsylvania- Tim Dugan (via phone), State of New York- Bill Rudge, National Park Service- Darren Boch. Staff in attendance: UDC Executive Director- Laurie Ramie, Resources and Land Use Specialist- Shannon Cilento, Secretary- Ashley Hall-Bagdonas. Absent: Berlin Township- Alan Henry, Town of Highland- James Gutekunst. Media: Peter Becker- Tri-County Independent (via phone), Linda Drollinger- River Reporter. Guests: Kevin Clarke- NYS DEC, Greg Sterne- NYS DEC, John Yagecic- DRBC (via phone), Ginny Dudko- Town of Deerpark (via phone), Roger Saumure- Shohola Township.

Richardson introduced Brendan Weiden. Weiden thanked UDC for being there and said that he and his wife, Kathy, are the proud owners of the Narrowsburg Union. He said this is the kind of community event they had always envisioned being part of everyday life at the Union. In the strange world of social distancing this is a great place to spread out. Weiden said if you have any questions, feel free to ask him or Kathy. She will be mostly at the new store they opened called Catskills Curated which is an artisan gift store down the hall. They have also created the Upper Delaware Welcome Center which is a private version of an information hub for the five counties and all the Towns that surround the Upper Delaware River. Weiden said please come in and visit when you take a break.

Presentation by Kevin Clarke: “Mongaup Unit Wildlife Area Habitat Management Plan”: Richardson introduced Kevin Clarke, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Wildlife Biologist. Clarke explained Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) in general are areas that are owned by New York State. They provide opportunities for outdoor-related recreation. Some are more user-based recreation like hunting, trapping, fishing, and others include wildlife photography, hiking, and just enjoying the wildlife and all the opportunities that Mongaup Valley and its resources provide. It is funded by the Conservation Fund through sale of hunting and fishing licenses and Pittman Robertson funds, an excise tax on the sale of firearms. Mongaup Valley in total is approximately 12,000 acres, but about half of that is a conservation easement. When talking about Mongaup Valley WMA concerning management that's going to occur with the property, realize that they're talking about the state-owned acreage, which is about 6,313 acres with the 5,542 acres in conservation easement. It encompasses several Towns in two counties. Originally, they tried to purchase it with funds from the Environmental Quality Bond Act of 1982; that never happened. They tried to purchase 1,600 acres initially, and it was supposed to be called the Mongaup Valley Eagle area, which is the big attraction to Mongaup Valley and is probably the number one use for public use of that property. It was finally purchased in 1990 from Orange and Rockland Utilities, Clove Development Corporation, and Trust for Public Lands.

Clarke said a WMA plan is a way for them to put down on paper and essentially be accountable and have a blueprint to follow for all WMAs across the state. They define acreage goals for the management of each habitat type. They define the species that they want to manage in each of those habitats. It's guided by Responsible Management Practices, what they call their Best Management Practices for any species, especially with regards to impacts on

things like wetlands and special management zones, stream corridors, etc. These WMAs cover a 10-year period and then they will write a new Management Plan and come up with a new plan for habitat management, for all the habitats available on the WMA.

There are a couple of species that are well known at Mongaup Valley that are managed whether actively or just through protection of property and those are the bald eagle and the timber rattlesnake. They started studying eagles back in the 1970s at Mongaup Valley. They put radio telemetry units on eagles, and the goal was to define critical habitat for bald eagles. Through that research, they discovered it was an important area for bald eagles to overwinter. The area has a lot of resources that they prefer. The alewives that are available at the reservoirs are an extremely important food source for them, especially throughout the winter because of the open water generated by the power-producing facilities. The research that they did there led to the development of an Eagle Overwintering Important Area. Clarke said they now have bald eagles nesting on the property. In 1987 they documented the first nest and at this point between state-owned land and conservation easements, there are four active nests on the property. The timber rattlesnake is also an important species to them but what Clarke has learned over his 16-years he's been at DEC it's not as important to the public as it is for them. DEC has done active management with timber rattlesnakes and Clarke will discuss that later.

As far as habitat types at Mongaup, it's predominantly forested. Clarke provided a slide with a chart about the portions in each habitat site. Mongaup Valley is about 97% forested. There's a tiny bit of wetland acreage, there's a tiny bit of open water acreage. What most people don't realize is a lot of the river and a lot of the reservoir acreage are in conservation easement and not part of Mongaup Valley WMA, as far as the state-owned land goes. A good portion of that 97% forest is mixed forest. A portion is coniferous forest, and a portion of that is deciduous forest. Based on the inventory that NY DEC did there recently, Clarke would say the chart is a little inaccurate. He said just walking around the landscape, the predominant type, there is mixed forest but it is predominantly an oak/pine forest. He thinks what we're losing most of all is that deciduous forest component. We're kind of transitioning, shifting to more of a dominant white pine forest, more than it has been in the past. Whether some past management has contributed to that, Clarke isn't certain, as he said they have 6,160 acres of forest, 97% of the property, with 75 acres of that are actually forested wetland. There are 40 acres of young forest right now. In 2013 they did a clear cut and one of the species they had in mind was the Ruffed grouse. Wetland acreage is very low; it's nine acres, less than 1% of the property. Permanent wildlife openings like open fields are used by turkeys for brooding and strutting, white-tail deer for feeding, and insect-eating songbirds. They have zero acres currently. At some point by the end of this Ten-Year Management Plan, we'll have at least eight acres, which he said is not a lot when you think of the overall acreage but if you look below at the utility right-of-way that makes up a little bit of that difference. Clarke said a lot of people frowned on them because they don't like seeing power lines running through but from a habitat perspective, that provides a lot of variety that would not be there otherwise. There is also a pipeline right-of-way that runs through Mongaup. Those two open spaces provide a lot of benefits for wildlife that we wouldn't have otherwise.

Regarding past forest management, this is not new on the property. As far as timber harvest goes, they have been occurring in this area for a long-time post-settlement. There was a lot of timber harvested for fuel and shelters; it was for industry. It went through the 19th century into the 20th century. They harvested hemlock, they harvested for tanning, they harvested for several reasons, including timber lumber. In the late 1900's, the Clove Development Corporation enrolled 3,000 acres into our 480A Tax Law program, which provides a tax benefit if you agree to do a certain amount of forest management on your property. Of those 3,000 acres that they put towards for ADA, they commercially harvested 1,000 of those acres. Currently, the forest is predominantly pine. As far as other species go, there is a Red Maple contingent, American Beech, and Black Birch. Clarke said Black Birch is quick to regenerate especially throughout the Catskills. A lot of these areas, higher elevations Sugar, Eastern hemlock, and then the big one, Pitch Pine is what they call an important ecological community. Mongaup WMA was once known for having a couple of Pitch Pine stands on it. On the map in the beginning of the Habitat Management Plan they point out that it has an important ecological community and a Pitch Pine community. If you look at the inventory data Pitch Pine doesn't come up as one of the top three in the basal area in any of the stands. One of the things they thought about is do they want to try to bring back Pitch pine communities? There's one thing you really need to regenerate Pitch pine and that's fire and fire is not something that's out of the question for DEC. It's difficult logistically sometimes, but he thinks in this area of the state, it's probably a little easier than it is in other areas like burning down Westchester County. The Young Forest Initiative drives a lot of forest management, but not all. There are other types of including intermediate stage and mature forest. Mature forests fit a lot of species in this area. There's an organization

called Species of Greatest Conservation Need that benefit greatly from mature forest as do bald eagles. The Young Forest Initiative's goal is to put some of this young forest habitat on the landscape. Essentially their original goal was for all of their state-run WMAs to create 10% younger forests across all the WMAs. Those goals have changed a little bit. Some WMAs they know it's going to be easy to achieve 10%. Mongaup Valley is one of those areas where right now they are not slated to cut 10% of the existing forest, just because there are access issues with slope, especially along the river. There are also issues with bald eagles and rattlesnakes. There are a lot of issues that preclude timber harvest. One of the other parts of Young Forest Initiative is the monitoring program. They want to monitor the impact of their timber harvest, but also want to monitor the species. Does it benefit the species; does it exclude the species? Some species use mature forest; if you do a young forest cut, they might be excluded from that. The Scarlet Tanager like large tracts and mature forest. They're going to be excluded from the young forest cuts but other species like Wood Thrush, which they think of as a mature forest species, might benefit from these young forest cuts. Even in the Catskills, a lot of times where Clarke sees Wood Thrush are on the periphery of some of these larger forest openings. They do well feeding and nesting on these edges. They do fairly well in a fragmented landscape. They are going to monitor both vegetation and wildlife throughout the term of this plan. When they develop the next plan, they will continue to do the same thing. They model the impacts of their harvest, vegetation and wildlife species. When the Young Forest Initiative first came into fruition, it defined a suite of target species. There are the white-tail deer, the wild turkey, and the songbird Golden Wing Warbler. Mongaup Valley is within the Appalachian range of the Golden Wing Warbler. Clarke said a lot of people ask why do you have white-tail deer and wild turkey as target species for the Young Forest Initiative; they're everywhere in NY. The reality is those two species are responsible for most of the funding that comes through this program. You don't want to leave out game species like that. One of the things this property is known for other than bald eagles is it gets a lot of hunter use. They want to make sure that they manage for the species that benefit them as well. Other species that come into play are the Ruffed Grouse, the Eastern Snowshoe hare, and the New England Cottontail. When it comes to putting Young Forest Habitat on the landscape, they have three ways to do that. One is by clear cuts, either complete or clear cuts with residuals where you leave some seed trees behind to provide seeds for future generations. If you're trying to manage for Oak species and regenerate Oak species, this is a very popular one to use. You'll leave those big mature Oaks that have the good canopies and nice crowns, the good acorn producers. They're going to put young on the landscape. Of course, then you have to fight with White-tail deer to keep those young Oak on landscape but that's the reality of managing.

Clarke then mentioned shelter wood; you leave a little greater density of residual trees and provide shelter. He said they are thinking about that because of the fact that there's a lot of White pine at Mongaup and that may be something they want to regenerate. Young White pine thickets can be beneficial to a lot of species and provide protection from aerial predators. They provide thermal cover. Clarke said everyone hates the first stage of a young forest cut because they come to an area and it looks like a bomb went off. It's not nice and clean and it doesn't look like a park. It takes a couple of years for vegetation to come and start the tape over and colonize. They leave brush piles. Some of their young forest cuts, they do what's called a fowl leave or a chop-and-drop where they cut the trees and just let the trees lamp, they don't take them. They are not cutting them for the resource they provide financially. They are cutting them for the resource they provide the wildlife. When you fell them in place, it provides cover. It also provides a barrier that prevents deer from getting into the interior of these cuts and allows for regeneration to occur. Clarke showed the difference between the first stage young forest cut and the difference a year later and five-years later. Five years later is when they get into that optimal Young Forest Habitat. When talking about optimal Young Forest Habitat, that's typically up to 10 years of age, the reality is it doesn't all colonize by the tree species that they want it to that quickly. It might be 15-20 and you could still call it young forest; it depends how quickly regeneration occurs and how quickly the trees take off. It's that stage of dense regeneration timber on the landscape. Young forest species of Mongaup Valley other than those from the Young Forest Initiative as a whole; the three that they are really concerned about and want to manage at Mongaup are the Golden-Winged Warbler; the Ruffed Grouse, and the Eastern whip-poor-will. They have documented and surveyed the Eastern Whip-poor-will adjacent to Mongaup where clear cuts have been done in the past so they know management stands a chance to benefit that species. They still have some residual population of Ruffed Grouse. Clarke doesn't believe they've ever documented one drumming. They have detected them visually when they were going to do surveys. Clarke said he loves Ruffed Grouse and when he moved to the Catskills at 11 years old, his first encounter with wildlife in the Catskills was with a male Ruffed grouse. It was during the breeding season, in the Spring and he was in full display and it freaked Clarke out because he thought the Ruffed grouse was coming after him. When he saw the display, he thought it was an aggressive display. Clarke had a bow with him at the time and he dropped it on the ground and started crying and

ran back to the house and thought “What was this thing that I saw?” He looked it up and found out it was a game species and it was a whole different story!

The other species is the Golden-Winged Warbler. Clarke said he didn't want to say that he doesn't have hope for it as we are within the historic Appalachian range. They know that they utilize right-of-way at Sterling Forest, which is not too far away. They benefit from this young forest habitat although they utilize mature forests as well. Clarke said this would be a real win if they could bring back Golden Winged Warbler to Mongaup. They haven't detected one in the survey, but he said overall on the landscape, Golden Winged Warblers at least in the Appalachian population are down 98% since the 1960s. One of the big reasons is because of loss of habitat. In Region 6, Golden-Winged Warblers occur in much greater densities, you'll run into multiple breeding males in a survey. It's because they have a very different habitat there than at Mongaup. The majority of what you see around here is mature forest; up there it's kind of that shrubby almost old agricultural land converting back to forest. Clarke said he thinks that's a big part of what Golden Wing Warbler habitat has been through; the history of this country is kind of that conversion of old farmland back into forest habitat and they really benefited from that. Whether or not they are going to be able to provide that same type of habitat they will find out through their species monitoring. He said it's important to folks to try to bring this bird back. They created Golden Wing Warbler Working Group which Clarke has attended and it partners with 39 agencies, organizations, and universities. Clarke said there are a lot of biologists working to save this bird. Unfortunately, it hybridizes with the Blue-Winged Warbler which has been documented in the area and that creates a whole other suite of issues. That brings another concern to Clarke's mind; will we ever be able to bring back the pure Golden-Wing Warbler? One of the goals of the Golden-Wing Warbler Working Group was to increase the breeding population by 50% by 2050. Clarke provided a slide of Golden-Wing Warbler habitat showing a fairly good herbaceous component. In the distance of the slide you can see a mature forest and that's really important for Golden-Winged Warblers. They don't just want that young forest. They nested that young forest, but once the broods hatch, the male will take those broods into the mature forest where they feed and grow. That's one of the things that's important; having that habitat matrix of mature, young, different stages of forests and creating a variety on the landscape. Clarke said regarding Ruffed Grouse when you manage aspen stands you cut a 10-acre stand on a 30-year rotation. Then you have young, medium, and mature. Clarke said that's not the way it's going to happen here but if you read a lot of the research, ruffed grouse benefit from Oak cuts, Oak regeneration and that's what they are going to try to take advantage of. If they benefit from a 10-acre cut, he doesn't see why they wouldn't benefit from the 25-acre cut, etc. as long as that mature forest nearby. It's not just one habitat type. Again, it's that variation habitat. It provides the different components that they need for their life history. Ruffed Grouse eat berries and seeds and you will find that in young forest, but they also eat acorns. There are three primary Oak species that we find around here, white, northern red, and chestnut and acorns really drive these systems. They're what drive winter survival. They drive populations from small mammals, birds, all the way up the game species. One of the big things that young forests provides for ruffed grouse is protection from avian predators. That's not what they have at Mongaup but he said they hope to achieve a regenerating Oak stand adjacent to mature forest, providing all the things ruffed grouse need to survive at Mongaup. The eastern whip-poor-will does fairly well around here because they use pine and mixed forest, which are the majority of the landscape around here. When they hear them singing at night, it's often associated with quarries, but they like open areas. That's where they use the edges. That's where they sing to find mates that utilize those for foraging and breeding populations. Breeding populations have declined by 50% over the last 30 years. Clarke said we don't want to forget about the bald eagle; the last thing that we want to do is impact the bald eagle negatively with forest management and the same thing with the timber rattlesnake. There are things that they can do to benefit the timber rattlesnake on the landscape; they're an important part of ecosystems.

Bald Eagles use the white pine stands at Mongaup Valley, and the overwintering area where they use these deep winter roosts. They tend to be east-facing slopes on the west side of rivers and reservoirs and they tend to be mature white pine stands. It provides protection from the prevailing winds and thermal cover over the winter. One thing they want to make with timber management is that they do not do anything that's going to negatively affect these deep winter roosts or much of the Eagle overwintering area. At Mongaup 2,331 acres are outside of the Eagle Overwintering Important Area (EOIA) with about 4,000 acres within the EOIA. If they do manage in an EOIA they will make sure to avoid winter roosts, paying attention to slopes and direction. There may be a Time of Year Restriction so it would likely be a winter cut because there are a lot of things you can impact in the Spring and Summer. They don't want to cut in the winter if they are within proximity of a deep winter roost or an EOI area. For timber rattlesnakes and other species, they want to cut over winter. If they have to, they will just move the cut outside the EOI so that they can still cut through that winter period. For young forest cuts they have 321 new acres

for a total of 361 acres but that is well below the Young Forest Initiative goal of 10% on all their WMA's. Clarke said that's something they're going to look at and see if they can get a few more acres in as they need about 200 more to meet the 10% goal. Access issues, eagle and timber rattlesnake issues, and soil disturbance come into play. There's a lot of reasons why they might not reach that 10% but they're going to try. Clear cuts would occur in the stands that lean more towards hardwood. When you look at the inventory, you see a lot of stands where hardwoods make up the top three in Basal area. What you'll find is there's a white pine component in just about every stand on the property. When Clarke says clear cuts are going to be done in hardwood stands, realize that those are not just hardwood stands to some degree, those are mixed stands. They all have a white pine component. He said whether they want to generate that white pine or whether it's a low enough component that they harvest it and try to regenerate white pine is something they have to think about that. Seed tree cuts would occur in the mixed stand, to provide a bit of protection. It might lean more towards a shelterwood cut, depending on how many residuals that they'll leave. Clarke provided a slide of a mixed forest stand treated with seed tree cut showing clustered white pines. He said it's a good idea to leave them in clusters, you still get the benefit of regeneration by opening up the canopy around them, but you'll protect them from windfall.

Clarke said forest openings can be provided by utility Rights-of-Way (ROWs) and it's a way to create this matrix of different ages of habitat. They're great areas for wild turkeys, for strutting, and brooding habitat. White-tail deer and black bears use them. They're foraging areas for bats and insect-eating birds. Clarke said if you want to see a porcupine at Mongaup Valley WMA, go walk the pipeline at sunrise. There are so many species that benefit from this habitat on the landscape. Clarke said the idea is to cut adjacent to that utility-right-of-way. When they do that, they end up with this habitat gradient, where they start to encompass all the things that Golden Wing Warbler needs. Clarke said they are also going to create eight new acres of forest openings to benefit rattlesnakes. They will create 8-12 acres of basking areas. The rattlesnake areas are less than an acre. There are things they can do to benefit species that utilize the wetlands at Mongaup. There are 75 acres of forested wetlands. The species that would benefit from forest acreage with a high amount of tree canopy are the wood frog, the spotted salamander, and the marbled salamander. The marbled salamander is a Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Things they want to keep in mind when doing adjacent cuts is leaving brush piles, avoid impacts, define special management zones, follow NYS logging Best Management Practices, use silt fences, avoid steep slopes, etc. With invasive species control they hope not to use herbicide but he said that's the reality of it when they manage for invasive species in wetlands sometimes, they have to. There was a brief question and answer period after the presentation. Clarke's contact information can be found on the slideshow that's posted on the UDC website.

Approval of August 6th Meeting Minutes: A motion Dean seconded by Dent, to approve the August 6th, 2020 meeting minutes carried with one abstention by Rajsz.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None.

Committee Reports: There were no questions regarding the following meetings. They were: Aug. 18th Water Use/Resource Management, Aug. 25th Project Review and Aug. 25th Operations.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: Kavanagh announced that their Third Quarter Business Meeting will be held on Thursday, 9/10. Details for calling into that may be found at <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/upcoming/>. The Hydrologic Conditions Report was provided in the meeting packet. In addition, NYC reservoir storage and river flows are both above their median. Drought status is normal. There have been no enhanced releases from the NYC reservoirs for the purpose of thermal mitigation since 8/1. There are still 170 cfs days left in the bank which is a bit less than 7%. Thus far the Thermal Mitigation Program has been successful in meeting the goals of Flexible Flow Management Plan (FFMP). Their next scheduled Water Management Advisory Committee meeting on which UDC has a seat, is 10/21. John Yagecic is the staff liaison for the Water Quality Advisory Committee and is currently in the process of planning a topic-specific meeting in October with their expert panel on the Interpretation Development Model with a regular meeting sometime in November or December.

Yagecic said one project of interest to UDC is they are updating the Decision Support System (DSS). That was a tool that was originally developed by USGS and it 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. They will be working through the Subcommittee on Ecological Flows to roll that tool out and will work with them on evaluating flow regimes to see what the habitat impact is. Yagecic said they would like to circle back to the UDC when the tool is fully developed to run through it with everyone. If anyone has any questions or comments, contact Yagecic via email at: john.yagecic@drbc.gov.

Peckham said he was in Washington, D.C. when the Snakehead hit the water in Maryland twenty years ago. He said they are hoping that the colder water is going to hold the snakehead back. He knows it is early but will that have any effect on the FFMP? Yagecic said he doesn't know enough about that issue to comment; he's an engineer, not a biologist. Yagecic said he could reach out to their Aquatic Biologist for his thoughts on the issue. He said he knows they talked a little bit about that at the last Subcommittee on Ecological Flows (SEF) meeting and he believes the consensus was that the appearance of that species was too new to have a good understanding of what would control it and what would repel it, but he would be happy to follow-up on that.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Richardson thanked Rudge for helping to arrange this presentation this evening. Rudge said he tried to participate in the WU/RM meeting with the River Traffic Public safety issue and it was hard for him to do that via teleconference. He said they are experiencing unprecedented use at public lands by automobiles and they are really struggling with it in some places. It's difficult to manage that use. They are remote locations, they don't have facilities, and they are dealing with garbage and natural resource impacts. They are doing their best to come up with a solution. A big part of it has been COVID-19. He said this is just a theory but people seem to have a lot more time on their hands and there aren't many alternatives to spend their leisure time. For many reasons people going to public lands is a good thing but some areas are being overrun and they are working on that. Sullivan said what would be a way to mitigate the problem? Rudge said traditionally you control use by parking lot size and that's generally worked well. In one example they worked with the Department of Transportation installing barriers so it's physically impossible to pull off and park. They also used a permit system which is very onerous.

Ramie asked Rudge if he was aware of the Mongaup Access statistics that NPS reported a 249% increase from 2018 to just the end of July? Rudge said it's great to see those numbers and he's sure it was mentioned that those numbers are significantly higher because those are just numbers of people going into the access. That doesn't count the people pulled off on the side of the road.

PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources: Dugan reported that the Commonwealth has assigned an alternate representative; Christine Dettore. She's with DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation working with grants and covering Northeastern PA. Dugan said out-of-state travel is still restricted heavily for most of their staff. An exception to that would be going on out-of-state fire assignments. They just had a lot of staff heading out to the Western United States over the last month and that continued into this week. There is a high demand for resources from people, to equipment, to vendors to supply a lot of these wildfires in the Western United States. Anyone that is available is going as soon as possible. They have had a bunch of staff from their Delaware Forest District that have gone out on assignments and all returned safely. At least three people already are positioned to be reassigned for a second trip. Dugan said regarding the state budget, all expenses must be essential operations and mission critical. Spending is very limited for many of their operations. They are still working in a modified telework status until the end of December. Some offices are operating at a limited extent and staff that are able to work from home or in a virtual status are continuing to do that. Regarding insect and disease-related forestry in the Northeast, there was a little bit of a bump in gypsy moth egg mass production this year. There will be a DCNR Spray Program next year. It is unknown if that will include private lands or not. At the minimum, it will include state lands. There are no heavy populations in Delaware forest. However, in the Pinchot Forest District which covers Wayne, Lycoming, and Luzerne counties, do have some heavier infestations that will probably receive treatment in the Spring. Dugan sent along some information on Hemlock Woolly Adelgid as there were some questions from last month's meeting. Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) adults are currently on the move. They are putting out advisories to tourists and residents that are moving throughout Pennsylvania to be on the lookout for adult SLF on their vehicles before they leave home and check their vehicles before they leave their destination point to head back home to ensure that they're not carrying adult SLF with them.

An update provided from Dettore in relation to recreation and conservation is that their staff are able to make limited fueled and site visits to do inspections and close-out grants. The Grants Workshops that typically would be in-person this fall will all be held virtually mostly in the month of November. Otherwise parks and forest in

Pennsylvania continue to see high user and visitor rates. They continue to work with adjusting their management styles and being able to service those visitors and high visitation rates. As of 9/1 two hunting seasons opened kicking off the beginning of the fall hunting season for the resident goose and Canada geese seasons as well as the migratory dove season.

Richardson asked if they have found that the SLF has extended its territory at this point in PA? Dugan said yes, the established range has continued to increase. He doesn't have the map to reference. The first three years it was increasing very quickly. It was initially observed in 2014 and for the last two years it's kind of slowed as it heads into more rural and heavily native forested areas. The SLF does not do well in those natural forested areas because it does not have as many tree species that it prefers to feed on. It does continue to expand, but seems to be slowing down a little bit. Richardson asked if it is in Pike or Wayne County at this point? Dugan said it is in Monroe County. There were reports last year in Pike County, but he doesn't think that Pike County was added to the official list and it's not in Wayne.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: Boch said following up on Rudge's earlier update he asked for a Comparison of 2019 to 2020 Visitor Statistics to go along with what we've been talking about all summer. These 2019 numbers include May through September without counting for Labor Day and the rest of this month.

2019 (May-September)	# Kiosk	# Roving
Lackawaxen	2,622	2,540
Mongaup	9,683	1,868
Skidders Falls	4,005	7,709
Ten Mile River	4,492	2,852
Year Totals	20,802	14,969

2020 (May-August)	# Kiosk	# Roving
Lackawaxen	2,747	3,697
Mongaup	14,733	1,483
Skidders Falls	5,598	17,012
Ten Mile River	3,824	1,344
Year Totals	26,902	23,536

He explained that roving is walking around, outside and away from the kiosk, or in and at the headquarters, but roving is contact. There has been a lot of email traffic and phone calls related to litter and issues related to crowds at Skidders Falls and it's just more data to show we're not just feeling it, we are counting it and there are repercussions with it both good and bad.

Boch said the Region has begun a TMAP process. That acronym stands for Transitional Management Assistance Program. Anytime there's going to be a change in leadership for the Superintendent the region gets a team together. They're usually about six-eight folks including Superintendents from other National Parks and Chiefs from other divisions. They review a lot of documentation and interviewed the outgoing and acting Superintendents: Kris Heister, Jessica Weinman, and Boch. They interview all the Chiefs and any line staff that wants to participate. Boch said it's an important process because when the new superintendent comes in they get a TMAP document helping guide what the focus should be in the first six months of their tenure. This is an ongoing process. Boch talked to the Deputy Regional Director last week to find out the status. The new Superintendent job was closed for conducting interviews. He is hopeful right after his Acting tenure ends or soon thereafter will be new leadership. Today Boch extended an offer to the new Community Planner. A Panel from NPS and Boch interviewed for Jennifer Claster's replacement and Claster was actually on that panel because he wanted someone intimate with the job to be asking some of the questions. He said that will be great for this Unit, the new Superintendent and certainly Cilento and the UDC team.

Yesterday, the Regional Director concurred with the UDC's recommendations that the two Tusten projects substantially conformed. Boch got an internal announcement from the Chief of Cultural Affairs of the Unit that the New York and Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Offices had heard the NPS recommendation that Skidders Falls Bridge be added to the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Unit. Some history that was given to Boch was during the 2012 Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) Workshop Skidders Falls was determined to not meet the ORV criteria for Cultural Resources. Once construction started wheels went into motion to look at the bridge

was positive from both states. Not only was Skinners Falls added but so was Hankins Creek Stone Arch Bridge and Ten Mile River Stone Arch Bridge.

Boch said the Northern Snakehead press release was issued after the WU/RM committee meeting so we have an APB out on that invasive fish. Boch said his last day here is technically 10/2 but he may stay for the Strategic Retreat on 10/3; he is hoping the new Superintendent will be here by then.

Sullivan said Boch mentioned the good and the bad of the increased visitor numbers. She asked him what the good was? Are they able to hire more staff? How does NPS react to such a dramatic increase of visitation? Boch said the intrinsic good is that people are discovering this resource and in his short time here he has found there is a lot to discover. He thinks any Park Manager wants people to come and visit. More visitation is always their default. Like any organization or institution, they want customers/visitors and there should be economic benefits to the communities as well. NPS puts out annual reports on the economic benefits of the unit's visitation. In a lot of parks that have "too much" visitation. There are obvious issues that go along with it like consumption of resources and protection of the visitor's experience. Boch said there is no direct correlation between numbers of visitors and whether you get an increase in your base budget or staffing. Adams said the increase would probably happen after the fact because no one knew this was going to happen. This particular climate is so unpredictable. Boch said correct, this unit is not the only park seeing increases. National Parks are being utilized but his colleagues are reporting a lot of the same issues.

Greier asked for a copy of the 2019-2020 visitor statistics and Boch handed them out.

Richardson asked Boch if the Community Planner they extended an offer to is from within or outside of the NPS? Boch said outside. Richardson strongly encouraged if a decision has been made for the Superintendent that they try to be at the UDC Retreat as well. They can get a real feel for what UDC is all about by listening to the comments. Boch said that he has relayed the date and time and that the new Superintendent should really be a part of this Retreat. He said the Community and Land Use Planner is tentatively going to start in November.

UDC Executive Director's Report: Ramie thanked Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas for packing and hauling the A/V equipment over and setting it up. Ramie said that is great news about the addition of the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge to the ORV list because Ed Wesley had threatened to chain himself to the bridge if there was any move for anyone to take that down. That was a pretty quick turnaround on hiring for the NPS Community and Land Use Planner and we are pleased to hear that.

As Boch was mentioning, Ramie did have her TMAP interview this afternoon. She's been through this process before because she's worked with all of the six superintendents that have been in the Upper Delaware. Since 1979, that really isn't that many and that's pretty consistent. She was a news reporter covering UDC meetings for the first, John Hutzky, who retired in 1995 after 16 years on the job. He was followed by Cal Hite, Dave Forney, Vidal Martinez, Sean McGuinness, and Kris Heister with a few acting roles. The team members who participated in her interview deliberately represented other places. In this case, they were from the Delaware Water Gap, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the New River Gorge National River in West Virginia, and an archeologist from Interior Region One. She was told that the vacancy announcement has closed and that they're working on this process of online staff surveys, as well as interviews with partners and other key people over the next few weeks. At that stage, they said, the interview process will begin. They reiterated the same thing that Boch said that the purpose of it is to identify the issues, priorities, and projects that the incoming Superintendent should focus on during the first six months. Also, they ask the question, what are the key qualities that this person should possess to be successful at the Upper Delaware? Ramie said UDC has rather strong opinions about that for the type of area that this is, and the difference that it is from the traditional National Park. She was able to express all that and they went through questions for about 45 minutes. Ramie asked if they reached out to Richardson and he said they had not. She told them that UDC appreciated the opportunity to have that input.

Today Ramie also participated in a site visit to the Eagle Creek Renewable Energy property, aka the Tri-State Diesel Site, across from the NYS DEC Mongaup Access, that was arranged by Rajs. In attendance besides us were NYS DOT Sullivan County Resident Engineer Ed Mall, Lumberland Town Supervisor Jenny Mellan, Highway Superintendent Bosco Hunt, Constables Chief Pat Cahill, Kevin Reish and Ingrid Peterec from the NPS, and Dave Dean on that Lumberland/Deerpark border. This was an outgrowth of our River Traffic Public Safety Task Force

following our 8/18 forum at the WU/RM Committee. We were taking a look at that Rt. 97 empty lot which is bordered by the town-owned Birdsall Road, County Rt. 31 (the Upper Mongaup Road), and the DEC's Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Unit to discuss its unauthorized use as overflow parking for the NYS DEC Mongaup Access. Some options discussed were to: request a re-design of the river access parking area to potentially increase its capacity; negotiate a lease with Eagle Creek; or attempt to acquire the property. Complications are that it's in a flood inundation zone, it's an old brownfield site, it has historic remnants of the D&H Canal, there are town concerns over assuming liability, and the DEC may not have the ability or desire to expand its land holdings there. Ramie said even before COVID-19 we had seen an exponential increase of popularity in that access. Now it's the desire to do something about the issue. Rajsz will be reaching out to Eagle Creek Renewable Energy next. Ramie took photos that she will share of that vicinity at the 9/15 WU/RM meeting where we'll continue this topic.

Our seven-member Strategic Plan Steering Committee held its first conference call meeting on 8/27 to assist our facilitator Buck Moorhead to design the process and itinerary for our 10/3 board retreat that will take place here at the Narrowsburg Union. We talked about goals and an agenda for this session, pre-and post-retreat activities, and began developing a mission statement. We've started a Google Docs folder to share information and comments, and you will shortly see an online survey seeking your advance input to make that day as productive as possible. The steering committee will meet next Thursday for its second time.

Ramie said as we approach the end of the 2020 fiscal year on 9/30, money becomes the bane of her existence since we need and want to spend every cent of the federal allocation we receive, with no carryover funds allowed. It's truly use-it-or-lose it, but only for certain allowable purposes. The problem is that it's a moving target since we still have bills coming in to anticipate while spending down a surplus that was generated by our six-month vacant position and fewer expenses during our COVID closures. When she had a fairly good handle on it down to around \$3,000, one of our last grants came in with actual expenses that were over \$4,000 less than we awarded. We're in the process now of identifying appropriate services and purchases for this new surplus amount. One project staff is opting to pursue is to prepare a tribute booklet for our 2020 award honorees as well as order plaques and certificate frames which we all agree they should receive despite our cancellation of the 8/30 awards banquet. That takes at least two weeks of intense work to gather photos, do some interviews, design the format and write the tributes. Other projects are to print additional copies of our new Project Review Workbook and to order map files for records management which we couldn't afford previously. Ramie has a list of pending quote requests such as for ADA compliance of our website, an electrician for a repair, and a custom cleaning service for the office. She will pass that along to the Operations Committee when we have solid numbers. It's stressful due to the turnaround time required.

Today Ramie received a sponsorship request from Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) for the 11th Annual "Water, Water Everywhere" conference coming up on 10/14. For \$100, we can have the UDC's name and logo on all the registration and program materials to exhibit our support for this watershed educational conference. For several years, we have also offered to cover the participation of any interested staff and board members. It costs less this year because it's virtual. The cost will be \$15 per person until 10/1, and \$25 after that early bird deadline. Ramie would welcome a motion to approve the renewal of UDC sponsorship at \$100 of the FUDR conference and coverage of registration fees for board and staff. A Motion by Dent seconded by Rajsz to sponsor Friends of the Upper Delaware River "Water, Water Everywhere" 10/14 Conference at a \$100 level and covering the costs of staff and interested members carried. Ramie said she will circulate the agenda to members to all.

Lastly, the UDC's September calendar of meetings, activities and deadlines with an October preview is provided. Upcoming presentations include: 10/1, "Knotweed: A Tough Love; Managing Knotweed for Containment, Benefiting from Knotweed's Gifts"; and on 11/5, New York State Museum & Geological Survey has completed their Upper Delaware Region Geology Maps. Andrew Kozlowski and James Leone will return to give us a program on their findings. Peckham said it was really interesting when they spoke about this study the first time and will be great to see the results.

Old Business

NY-PA Interstate Bridges Work Schedule Update: Ramie said this handout came out of the Annual NY-PA Interstate Bridge Commission Meeting. UDC specifically asked if they could give an update that offers the schedule for any construction of the capital projects coming up for the foreseeable future. A copy was provided in the meeting packet.

Other: None.

New Business

Payment for Completed Town of Tusten Technical Assistance Grant 2020-03: \$10,000: Cilento said the Project Review and Operations Committees approved two 2020 Technical Assistance Grants (TAGs) for the Town of Delaware and the Town of Hancock on 8/25. Before the 8/28 deadline, we also received both Tusten's completed projects. The Town had a Comprehensive Plan and a Zoning Update. Cilento has received documentation on the Tusten Zoning Update and that is the project that came in under budget so she is working with them for more information before she brings it before Committee. Cilento said she feels they did complete the requirements of their contract for the Comprehensive Plan. They had proposed in their application to draft Part I of the Comprehensive Plan Update including an entire outline, public workshops, vision sessions, and then the standard introductory parts, the history and several content sections. Cilento will send a copy digitally to everyone, but as far as the requirements of the grant, UDC awarded \$10,000 and their total project costs ended up being just over \$12,000. A Motion by Rajsz seconded by Greier to approve the \$10,000 payment for Tusten TAG 2020-03 carried.

Cilento says she has packets of this year's TAG Awards for the Special Project Review meeting on 9/8 and she also sent them out digitally. We received three applications for projects in the Town of Delaware and Fremont, the Town of Hancock, and the Town of Tusten.

Draft Letter to Upper Delaware Congressional Representatives re: Great American Outdoors

Act: Richardson said this letter was discussed at Operations Committee and he believes everyone is familiar with it. Ramie said it originated here at full council last month when we talked about how can UDC be helpful in raising the profile of our Upper Delaware deferred maintenance projects? A Motion by Greier seconded by Rajsz to approve the draft letters to Upper Delaware Congressional Representatives Delgado, Maloney and Cartwright re: Great American Outdoors Act carried.

Draft Letter to Sullivan County Legislature re: Callicoon Riverside Park Support: A Motion for discussion by Rajsz was seconded by Dent. Rajsz asked if we knew the amount needed? Ramie said she understood Sullivan County had committed to a match. Cilento said she could look up the details. Dent said the Trust for Public Land is really spearheading this and he didn't see any mention of Sullivan Renaissance. Cilento asked if the Town of Delaware applied for a "Golden Feather Award" this year? She said she would follow-up on that as well. A Motion by Rajsz seconded by Dent to approve the draft letter of support to Sullivan County Legislature re: Callicoon Riverside Park carried.

Other: None.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Rajsz, seconded by Peckham, to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m. was carried.