



Upper Delaware Council

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UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

June 6, 2024

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, June 6, 2024. Chairperson Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call followed reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendees:

Town of Deerpark- Ginny Dudko, Town of Hancock- Fred Peckham (Zoom), Town of Highland- Christine Martin (Zoom), Damascus Township- Jeff Dexter, Town of Fremont- Jim Rodgers, Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Berlin Township- Al Henry, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Town of Tusten- Evan Padua, Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajsz (Zoom), Delaware River Basin Commission- Kristen Bowman Kavanagh, National Park Service- Lindsey Kurnath, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania- Tim Dugan (Zoom)

Absent:

Westfall Township- Michael Barth, Town of Delaware- Harold Roeder, State of New York- Ryan Coulter

Staff:

Executive Director- Laurie Ramie, Resource & Land Use Specialist- Kerry Engelhardt, Administrative Support- Stephanie Driscoll

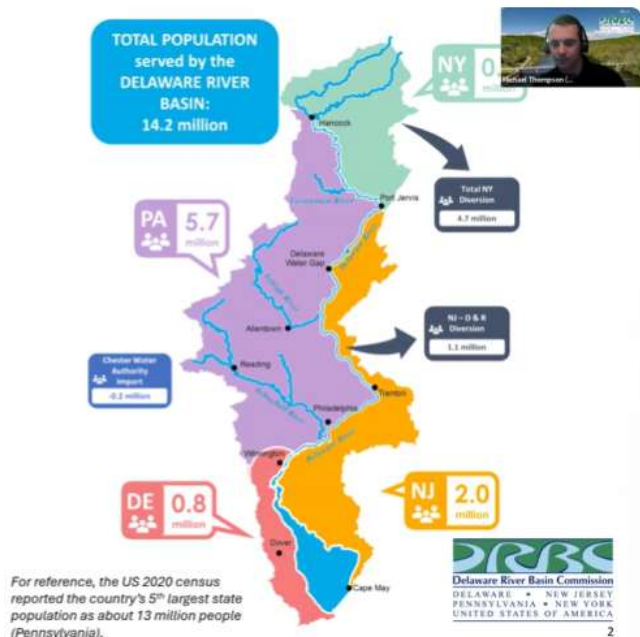
Media:

The Epoch Times- Cara Ding (Zoom)

Guests:

Bill Dudko-Town of Deerpark, Michael Thompson- DRBC (Zoom), Chad Pindar- DRBC (Zoom)

Presentation: “A Comprehensive Assessment of the Delaware River Basin Commission’s Water Audit Program (2012-2021)” by DRBC’s Senior Water Resource Engineer Michael Thompson, P.E.: Thompson introduced himself as the Senior Water Resource Engineer for the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), growing up in Shokan, NY. A PowerPoint presentation was shown during the meeting. The Delaware River Basin is roughly 13.5 thousand square miles. DRBC recently estimated that the population served by the basin (those who rely on the basin for drinking water) is about 14.2 million people, about 4% of the U.S. population. A graphic was shown of the breakdown of the population served reliant on the basin for drinking water.



Roughly about of the population of New York is estimated to be served by water from the Delaware River Basin.

There are approximately 8.6 million people that live within the basin boundary, and 7.3 million people live inside the public water supply service areas. About 85% of the people who live within the basin are reliant on a public water supply organization. Public water supply within the basin is essential in its nature. Because the nature of public water supply is so extensive it's critical to understand how efficiently this resource is managed when it comes to assessing sustainability.

The foundational research of the Water Audit Program that standardized the concept was pushed out to the world in 2000 by the International Water Association by textbook. That sparked a wave of action regarding water efficiency. By 2006 the American Water Works Association (AWWA) endorsed using the method of the Water Audit Program and developed the Microsoft Outlook program called the Free Water Audit Software (FWAS). You enter your own data into the FWAS and it runs standard calculations that the International Water Association published. In 2007-2009 the DRBC underwent a formal rulemaking that required public water suppliers who meet certain standards to keep the AWWA FWAS annually and submit it to DRBC. The requirements pertain to suppliers that serve an excess of 100,000 gallons per day on average during any 30-day period. The first mandatory reports were due in 2013 for data from 2012. After DRBC received data in 2021, that was the 10-year mark when they opted to prepare a comprehensive report. There are about 300 public water supply systems that meet the criteria and submit reports; collectively they report about 29,000 miles of water length. There are about 2.5 million active service connections.

A water audit is a mass balance; a calculation typically for individual systems. The idea is that the water that goes into a system, then leaves the treatment plant and goes out to the distribution network, needs to equal the amount of water coming out of that distribution network and ideally being delivered to the customers. The difference between the water being put into the system and the water accounted for is typically considered water loss. A graphic was shown of a common way the water balance is shown.

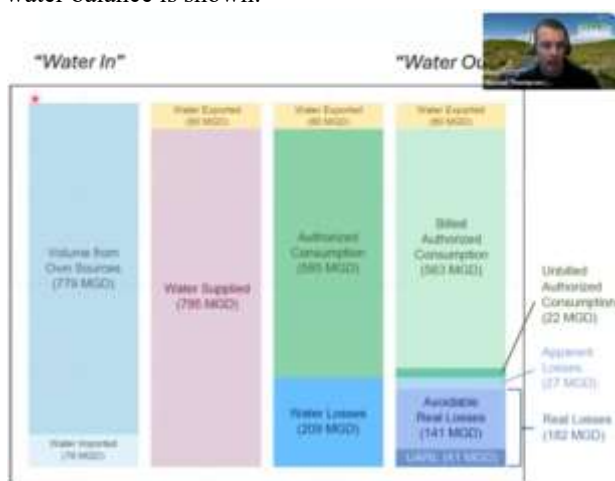


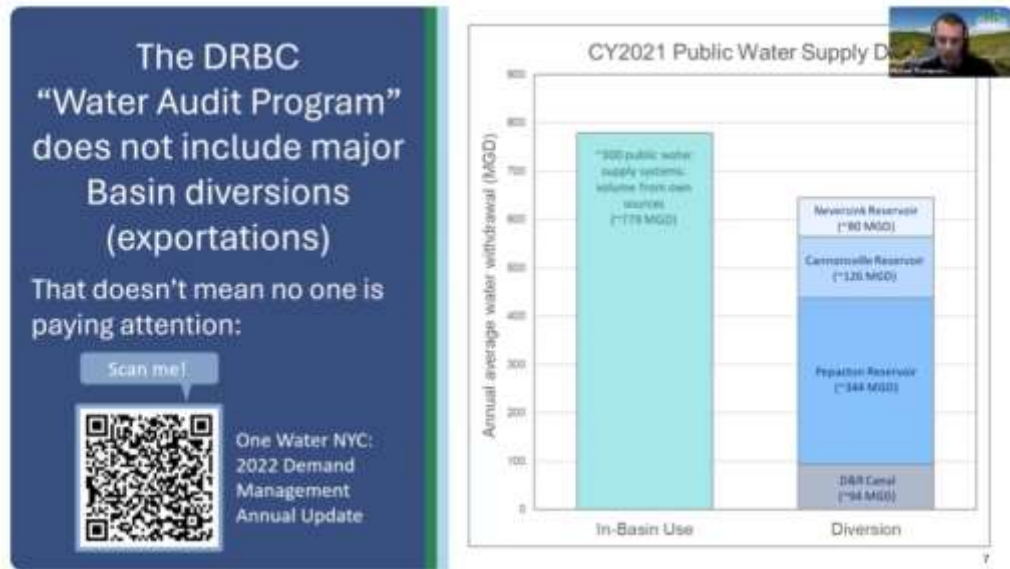
Figure ES-1. Aggregate water balance for 300 systems reporting water audit data to DRBC for CY2021. Note that the totals in the 3rd and 4th columns are 1 MGD less than the 1st and 2nd due to rounding when the data is disaggregated.



This is data for all 300 systems the DRBC requires to report, reflective of calendar year 2021. The same number (779 million gallons a day) that's being withdrawn a day is going out to the distribution network intended to reach the customers. The reported authorized consumption volumes (school, municipal building, flat rates, etc.) are about 585 million gallons a day. Compared to the 779 million, that leaves a large amount that is essentially considered water loss; about 26% of the water supply gets sent out and doesn't make it to the intended target. A small volume of the water loss is considered apparent losses, related to things like accounting errors or meter accuracy. The remainder is what's called 'real losses' like leaks. That is a fairly large number that is broken into two categories. One is 'Unavoidable Annual Real Losses' (UARL) that counts for about 141 million gallons a day. UARL is a theoretical calculation based on system physical characteristics like the length of mains you have in your system, connections, length of service piping, and pressure it's operating at. When you run the calculation, it is estimating the volume of water that's going to leak out of that system regardless of how you're operating your system. The UARL is somehow trying to quantify that. A lot of research for the UARL started in the 1990's and in 1999 Allan Lambert, a researcher out of the United Kingdom doing research as a part of a U.K. program to revamp their water loss standards, published a paper on UARL by estimating unit rates of water leakage in systems for three kinds of

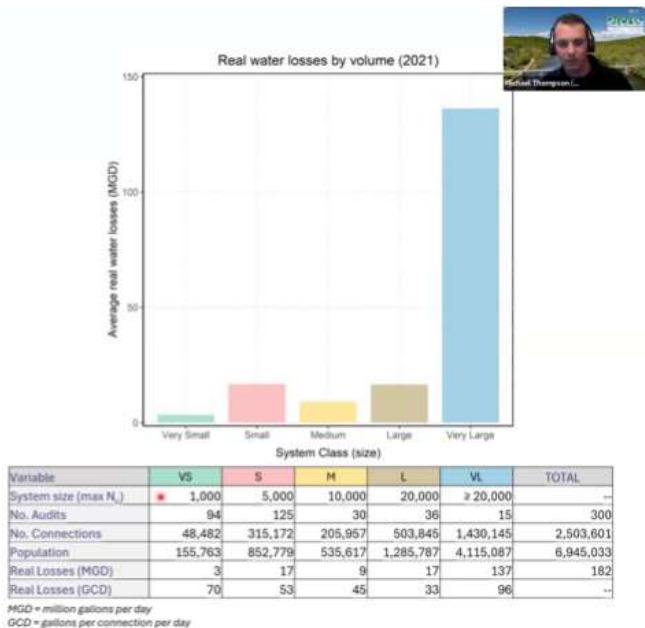
leaks: background losses, reported bursts, and unreported bursts. There are three locations those leaks can happen: on the mains, at service connections, and meters. Lambert developed unit rates based on data from 27 systems across the globe that operated efficiently. There is another perimeter where you take the actual calculated real loss for a system and compare that theoretical number (UARL).

There was a question on the exports of water to NYC and whether those were included in the calculations. The short answer is no, the exports are not captured in the 779 million gallons a day. There was a graph shown of the withdrawals by the 300 public water supply systems within the Water Audit Program on the left, and on the right the out of basin diversions color coded by source.



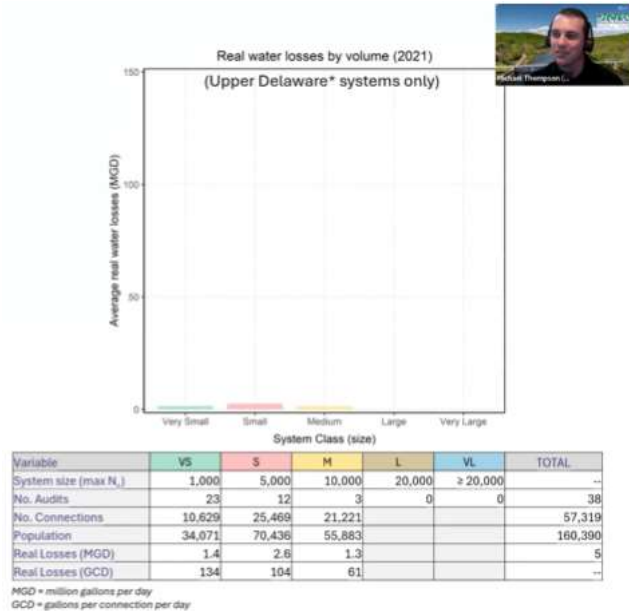
Just because the DRBC is not requiring an audit on system efficiency, that does not mean that someone isn't looking at. NYC DEP included a screenshot of their own 2021 Water Audit, available by the QR code on the slide above. Roughly 58,000 million gallons is lost per year and if you assume half of that is Delaware River Basin water that would be about 29,000 million gallons per year, about 79 million gallons a day; 43% lost of the 300 systems in the Water Audit Program.

Where is the water being lost in the basin? Everywhere; all systems leak. There are several ways to look at the data with lots of variables that change from system to system. There was a chart shown of a simple view of where real losses are occurring (leaks).



The chart presents data from system class (system size). Looking at the data, the systems that supply the most water have the largest volume of leaks. The blue bar on the right represents 15 systems within the basin that are supplying water to 4 million people, accounting for about 80% of the leaks. Whereas over 2/3 of the system are considered small and very small, but the volume of water being lost is much smaller of the very large systems. DRBC tries to get a value that's more comparable between the two systems to make sure the large system is operating as well as the small system. They take the total real loss number and divide it by the number of connections, equaling the averages at the bottom of the chart (real losses) that are the number of gallons lost per connection. The very small systems are losing more water per connection.

A chart was shown of real water losses by volume in the Upper Delaware.



There are only 38 systems included in the data. There are no large or very large systems; the majority are small or very small systems. The bottom numbers (real losses) are about twice the rate of the entire basin average. With the smaller systems with low population density, the industry doesn't like to use 'gallons per connection per day' but 'gallons per mile of main per day'. When you look at it that way it's about 50% increase than the entire basin. Those numbers could come from the location, topography, climate, financial resources facilities have to repair leaks, awareness, or quality of data, among other things.

How sure are they on the data the DRBC is putting into the reports? Every piece of data being put into the report has a series of questions associated with a grade attached to it. After the report they add up all the grades and you get a score of 0-100 on the overall report on how trustworthy the data is. The overall trustworthiness is noticeably smaller in the very small systems than the trustworthiness of larger systems, probably related to resources with the same reports being done for all water audits.

Different portions of the basin can be very dissimilar. The 38 audits being done in the Upper Delaware region with those systems currently serve 160,000 people, with the remaining audits serving 6.8 million people. It accounts by about 2% of the water withdrawn by audited systems. The water losses in the upper basin are higher than the entire basin as a whole. The proportion of unavoidable real losses are also higher in the upper basin than the basin as a whole, again due to population density affecting system infrastructure needs, elevation changes that affect operating pressures and loss rates, resources scale with size but the audit does not, and other things.

Why is the audit important? We can't know what is recoverable if we don't know what is being lost. Any treated water recovered or leaks fixed is money saved. The cost of supplying water is then passed on to the utility company's customer base via their water bill. From a planning perspective, it's about sustainable use of water resources and planning for system resilience; less water being taken from a pond, stream, or ground for something like ecological needs, system of voiding installation of additional wells to make demand and passing those costs onto their customers, or a system that has enough water during a repeat drought of record because they are operating efficiently. Every kilowatt of energy put into treating and moving water into the distribution network also has a carbon footprint associated with it, which can also be related to the amount of water lost.

Chairperson G. Dudko and the entire council thanked Thompson for the comprehensive, Upper Delaware-focused presentation. Bowman Kavanagh will bring him back a UDC lapel pin to show the UDC's appreciation. Thompson left the meeting via Zoom.

Approval of May 2, 2024 Minutes: A motion by Henry seconded by Dexter to approve the May 2, 2024 meeting minutes with Richardson and Rodgers abstaining, carried.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None.

Committee Reports: There were no questions regarding previously distributed minutes for Water Use and Resource Management 5/21 (Bill Dudko), Project Review 5/28 (Larry Richardson) and Operations 5/28 (Aaron Robinson).

Status Reports:

Delaware River Basin Commission: Bowman Kavanagh thanked the UDC staff and members for allowing the DRBC to use the building for their caucus and quarterly business meeting preparations this week and thanked Ramie specifically for the opening remarks she provided. A copy of the remarks is included in the packet. G. Dudko commented that the remarks were well done. Bowman Kavanagh said they had a Climate Resilience Plan resolution that was passed at the business meeting. The DRBC has put a lot of thought into climate change over the last decade, but they haven't had anything they could point to in writing. The Climate Resilience Plan is something they can get more input on not only the technical work but how it affects regulations. The DRBC also had the food drive with collection boxes sponsored by several local towns, townships and business. There were over 300 items collected given to the three entities in Sullivan County, Wayne County, and Narrowsburg. NYS DEC Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar was at the business meeting to represent NY Governor Kathy Hochul, and U.S. Representative Mark Molinaro from NY sent a pre-recorded video message. The DRBC appreciates their interest in the Upper Delaware.

Ramie said one of the items at the business meeting was the approval of the DRBC's Annual Budget with apportioned shares for each of the states and the federal government. She asked if each party is giving their fair share? Bowman Kavanagh said every year it's the same resolution; the apportions are related to a 1980s agreement on what the dollar amount share should be based on a certain budget. It requires a vote but it is not a commitment; it's their agreement on how it should be distributed coming down to what the legislature on an annual basis approves. The DRBC has not received consistent funding from the federal government since 1997 (excluding one earmark in FY2009/2010 and recent community project funding in each of FY2023 and FY2024), New York State is consistent with about 50% of what is agreed upon, New Jersey gives their share or close to it, Pennsylvania gives a portion of their share coming down over the last few years, and Delaware gives their full fair share. She can send a link after the meeting of what the DRBC actually receives from each state. Rodgers asked if the federal government is a voting party. Bowman Kavanagh said yes through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with the states. All of the 5 signatories get an equal vote.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Absent.

Pennsylvania Dept. of Conservation and National Resources: Dugan reported that on June 12th from 6pm-7pm the PA Bureau of Forestry is holding a Public Town Hall virtual meeting called "Forests for All: A Plan for Pennsylvania's Forests and People." To attend that event, you do need to [register](#) in advance to provide questions and feedback into the forum. This meeting is an open house, town hall style meeting for people to learn about the Bureau of Forestry's Strategic Plan for PA Forests.

Over Memorial Day weekend Governor Shapiro kicked off the "Great American Getaway" in a custom R.V., touring around many parts of PA visiting a lot of DCNR sites. Dugan commented that it's great and speaks volumes about the Governor's support for being outside and outdoor recreation.

PA Game Commission posted an update on Chronic Wasting Disease. There has been a little bit of growth of Chronic Wasting Disease spreading since 2012 in South-Central PA (Disease Management Area [DMA] 2). 90% of the cases since the beginning have originated or existed in DMA 2. They are seeing some small amounts of growth with Armstrong County reporting one case, and Dawson County with two cases. Game Commission is instituting some new regulations in the area to increase the opportunity for hunters to reduce the herd and keep the disease from spreading too aggressively.

Game Commission and federal partners announced the Game Bird Seasons for 2024-2025. On June 24th PA Hunting and Trapping licenses will go on sale and can be purchased [online](#) or through a licensed vendor.

Spongy Moth are showing their impacts in the last two weeks with defoliation of trees. DCNR is starting to get calls from homeowners, residents, and visitors about seeing leaves coming down. Impacts will likely continue to increase through June into the beginning of July. By the end of June, they should be pupating. Bureau of Forestry did spray treatments in the region in certain blocks of State Forest land. There were multiple landowners that contracted for treatment as well. At the end of June/early July the Bureau of Forestry does their Annual Defoliation Surveys.

National Park Service: The monthly activity report is included in the packet. Kurnath said the Project Review “Road Shows” are going really well. There are 4 completed with 4 more on the schedule and 7 to go in total. She asked if the UDC members could speak to their town boards and supervisors to make the connection in Berlin, Lackawaxen, Cochection, Damascus, and Fremont. NPS will follow up with Buckingham and Manchester. G. Dudko said it’s a good idea to check in verbally; an email invite can get easily overlooked. Kurnath said Marshall can send out another round of emails as well. Ramie had forwarded a great *River Reporter* article on the “Road Show” in the Town of Tusten. Kurnath thanked everyone for the support for these presentations have been great so far.

There were 324 students and teachers in attendance for Canal Days. The Sojourn is coming up on June 15th and 16th in the Upper Delaware, and the Zane Grey Festival will be on July 13th.

UPDE NPS Special Park Use Coordinator/Administrative Assistant Debby Seiboldt will be retiring as of June 28th and they have a replacement already lined up, hoping to start in July. Kurnath asked everyone to get the word out about another position open at UPDE NPS: Administrative Assistant. The Superintendent Administrative Assistant position was eliminated in 2021, but they have now decided to bring that position back. Interviews were completed for Don Hamilton’s position of Resource Management Division Chief and they hope to have an offer out within the next week. Cultural Resource Program Manager Alex Garcia-Maldonado will be back next week from an assignment at Colorado National Monument.

There will be a presentation by NPS staff at the June 18th WU/RM Committee meeting on “Longitude Inventory of Freshwater Turtles in the Delaware River at UPDE and DEWA”.

UPDE NPS submitted a comment letter on the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge PEL Study that was consistent with the UDC’s letter.

There was one Special Use Permit issued this month. For the current year there were 90 Fishing Guide CUA’s issued, 11 Livery CUA’s, 3 Children Camp CUA’s, and 1 Food Truck CUA. Kurnath has been told that UPDE has the largest CUA Program in the region.

The Milanville NPS office roof, siding, and window replacement project is done and the Starlink installation at Milanville and Lackawaxen is almost complete. The NPS created Maintenance Assistance Teams from Legacy Restoration Funds specifically to serve smaller parks that don’t have a huge team of Historic Preservation Specialists. There is currently a Maintenance Assistance Team working on the Alice Grey Coal Shed to stabilize it, located behind the Zane Grey Museum. Ramie asked what relation Alice Grey is to Zane Grey? Kurnath said she’ll have to look into that.

UDC Executive Director: Ramie commented that the UDC staff was impressed by the DRBC staff’s efficiency and attention to detail while putting together and setting up the meetings this past Tuesday and Wednesday. After the business meeting there was a screening of a film: “A Flight Along the Delaware: Our History, Our Watershed” produced by Meg McGuire of *Delaware Currents*. Engelhardt was invited to join a discussion panel with Dan Corrigan of Northeast Wilderness Experience, DRBC’s Director of External Affairs Beth Brown, and Brent Gotsch of New York City Department of Environmental Protection, moderated by McGuire. Engelhardt said the video was well done; a fly over of a large portion of the Delaware River starting at the East and West Branches. It was interesting to see how the river changes in different sections. The [video](#) is available on the Delaware Currents website and DRBC’s YouTube Channel.

Ramie said Narrowsburg is really having a moment now with the attention from hosting the DRBC meeting. Also, the Big Eddy Narrows map by Lisa Glover is continuing to receive a lot of attention with many copies already sold for a donation to the UDC of \$20 per map. She passed around a copy of the free 2024 “Narrowsburg Field Map” done by the Narrowsburg Chamber of Commerce; the UDC has this available in the front office. She said she recently saw a commercial from the “I Love NY” tourism program that included a shot of a rafting group on the Delaware River in Narrowsburg in a Lander’s River Trips raft. Rodgers said he saw that TV commercial too which ended with footage of the NYS Route 97 Hawks Nest Drive.

It's time to issue a press release that the 2025 Technical Assistance Grant application period is open and accepting applications until 4:30pm on August 23rd. Engelhardt has updated the forms on the UDC website. Martin asked what towns and townships can use TAGs for? Engelhardt said a lot of successful applications have to do with zoning within the river corridor like updating the codes, GIS involved projects, emergency preparedness brochures, and things of that nature.

June and July calendars are included in the packet of UDC meetings, activities, and deadlines. Our next two presentations will be a National Park Service Upper Delaware Staffing Overview by Superintendent Lindsey Kurnath on July 11th and a program on USGS Stream Gages by New York Water Science Center Chief Guy Foster on August 1st. Note that next month’s full Council meeting will be on the 2nd Thursday of the month due to Independence Day.

Rodgers asked if the keynote speaker has been chosen for the UDC awards banquet? Ramie said an invitation was extended to Pennsylvania Director of Outdoor Recreation Nathan Reigner. Reigner was enthused to participate but may have a conflict on September 22nd, so we are waiting until mid-July for a confirmation from him. That coincides with the summer newsletter deadline.

New Business:

- a. **Resolution 2024-06: Amending the UDC Bylaws:** A copy of the resolution is included in the packet. A motion by Henry to amend the UDC Bylaws adding a section for “Mandatory Training Policies”, seconded by Padua, carried.
- b. **Draft Letter on Delaware County Bridge Repair in Lordville:** A copy of a draft letter supporting the position of the Hancock Town Board to postpone closing County Bridge #163 on Lordville Road from July 8th to August 16th for construction during the peak recreational season and for its impact on emergency services and mail delivery was reviewed. Ramie said that Peckham had brought the closure to the UDC’s attention at last month’s Project Review meeting. There is a petition going around to postpone the closure with about 37 Lordville residents’ signatures. The Hancock Town Board passed a resolution at their town board meeting on June 4th to come up with a reasonable timeline. A motion to send the letter to requesting time to collectively discuss options made by Richardson and seconded by Henry, carried.
- c. **Other:** None.

Old Business:

- a. **NPS Determination Letter 2024-02: Smith Flood Plain Variance, Damascus Township:** Engelhardt said the NPS determination letter is included in tonight’s packet concurring with the UDC’s decision that the Smith Flood Plain Variance in Damascus Township substantially conforms to the Land and Water Use Guidelines in the River Management Plan. That will close this project.
- b. **NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission Press Release:** A copy of Ramie’s press release is included in the packet. She reviewed highlights of the capital construction plans from the 5/29 annual meeting.
- c. **Upper Delaware River Access Spreadsheet:** A copy of the spreadsheet presented at last month’s WU/RM meeting with information like who owns the access, if NPS uses it or not, amenities, etc. was presented. Kurnath said most of the notes on the spreadsheet are from NPS Facility Manager Jessica Weinman’s site visits in April. The only update not on the spreadsheet is that the rebar at the Damascus Access site was fixed by PA Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC). NPS, NY DEC, and PFBC all agreed to meet in the winter

going forward to discuss the accesses. Weinman will also attend the May WU/RM meeting going forward. Eventually, there will be a laminated sign posted at each access listing an email to give NPS comments on site conditions. Ramie commented that this spreadsheet is very useful and will be helpful when the UDC updates our Visitor Information Map & Guide brochure.

Rodgers asked if there is a port-a-john at the Long Eddy Access? Padua said there is not. Kurnath said there is no agreement to have one put there yet. Padua said maybe Coulter can look into having the DEC put one there. Kurnath said NPS is monitoring it as well.

- d. **Other:** Martin commented that she enjoyed attending the DRBC's quarterly business meeting. She thanked Ramie for sending out information on the press conference by the Delaware Riverkeeper that happened prior to the DRBC business meeting. She said over 50% of the discussion during the public comment session at the DRBC meeting was on climate change and Camp FIMFO. She thinks those comments were appropriate since after the Environmental Impact Study comes back the project will then go before the DRBC for their review. Bowman Kavanagh said the DRBC has had an application in hand on Camp FIMFO for about a year and a half, but typically waits until the state has made a determination first before taking action.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Robinson seconded by Rodgers to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. carried.

Minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 6/11/2024