



# Upper Delaware Council

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## UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 2, 2024

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, May 2, 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, Damascus Township- Jeff Dexter, Town of Delaware- Harold Roeder Jr., Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Berlin Township- Al Henry, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Town of Tusten- Cathleen Breen, Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajsz (Zoom), Delaware River Basin Commission- Kristen Bowman Kavanagh (Zoom), National Park Service- Lindsey Kurnath & Carly Marshall, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania- Tim Dugan, State of New York- Ryan Coulter (Zoom)

### Absent:

Westfall Township- Michael Barth, Town of Fremont- Jim Rodgers, Town of Cohecton- Larry Richardson

### Staff:

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

### Media:

Rosie Starr- WJFF, Peter Becker- Tri-County Independent (Zoom)

### Guests:

Bill Dudko-Town of Deerpark, Jane Varcoe, Susan Powell, Jim Powell, Peter Van Slyke, Jasper Pope (Zoom), DRBC- Beth Brown (Zoom) and Amy Shallcross (Zoom), Bob Cooney (Zoom), Greg Belcamino (Zoom), Joan Homovich (Zoom), Jessica Haaz (Zoom), Michael Lombardi (Zoom), Gordon MacAdam (Zoom),

### Presentation: “Delaware Aqueduct Repair Update” by New York City DEP Director of Water Resources Management Jennifer Garigliano:

Garigliano started with an additional update on a series of four shutdowns at the release works from mid-December until a few weeks ago. She said NYC DEP pulled the hydraulic cylinder out to be casted and redone at the Delaware Aqueduct, and turned the release back on in between. When they got the new custom cylinder back, they drained again, installed and tested it. After seeing it was working fine, they turned the release back on. They repeated the same process to fix the second hydraulic cylinder. NYC DEP made sure the shutdowns were coordinated with NYS DEC. They had to exercise the big towers as part of that, so they were able to get that done as part of their annual emergency exercise at the same time. There have been no issues with the hydraulic cylinders. DEP wanted to insert a camera into the release works to check out the valve at Neversink to possibly support future valve work at Neversink. Unfortunately, the camera broke during the process. They waited to install the new camera until Neversink was spilling to shut down. DEP put out social media posts and coordinated with NPS, Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), and other organizations to warn people of the release changes. They tried to keep the changes after 9pm or later as well.

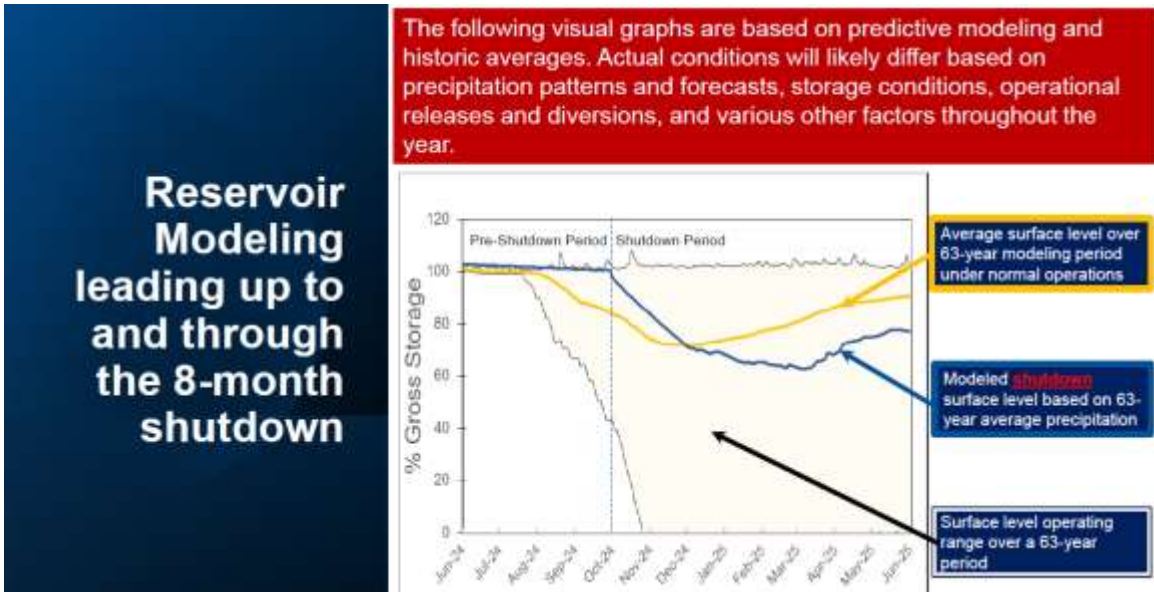
This Aqueduct repair is the largest and most complex repair project in the history of the water system supply, with so many moving parts that have to align to be able to get it done safely and accurately. There is a minor leak in Wawarsing that will be fixed with grouting inside the aqueduct while it's shut down. The major leak is in the Roseton area, just outside of Newburgh. The solution to fix that leaking portion of the aqueduct is to build the new 2 ½ mile by-pass tunnel. The tunnel itself is done. The last portion that needs to be done is to make final connections to the shafts to connect the new tunnel to the existing tunnel. To do that DEP needs to shut down the Delaware Aqueduct, depressurize it and drain it. DEP is estimating that it will take 5-8 months to be able to make that final connection. She reminded everyone that there are several criteria that need to be met for the DEP to go forward; the right hydrologic conditions, long-term weather predictions, etc.

Normally, the Delaware Aqueduct supplies 50% of NYC drinking water. That is difficult to manage for a 5–8-month period when you’re taking half the city’s water supply out of service. To make demand during that period, they plan to take about 600 million gallons a day from the Catskill System. They did a rehabilitation of the Catskill Aqueduct in advance of the shutdown to make sure they can make that demand. There are two pump stations in the Croton System that allow DEP to take water out of the Croton System and put it into the Delaware Aqueduct below the West Branch. The portion of the aqueduct that needs to be fixed is the portion between Rondout Reservoir and West Branch. Because there is a break above West Branch, they can still use the Delaware Aqueduct below West Branch. The section from West Branch to Kensico is still be in service during this period where DEP can take up to 240 million gallons a day from the Croton System into Kensico. They can get a maximum of 290 million gallons a day out of the Croton Filtration System.

Pre-shutdown operations are scheduled to begin June 1<sup>st</sup>. July is when DEP expects contractors to start mobilizing to bring all the equipment back on site to be ready to go for October 1<sup>st</sup> when they plan to shut down the Delaware Aqueduct to the West Branch. It will take a few weeks to depressurize, and once that’s done the workers will be able to enter the existing aqueduct. They expect construction to last from October 2024 to the end of May 2025. If the repair is complete before the end of May 2025, DEP will restore the flow as soon as they are able to. As this is such a complex project, if something doesn’t go according to schedule and they don’t think they will finish by June 1, 2025, they will get the aqueduct back to a point that it can be turned back on.

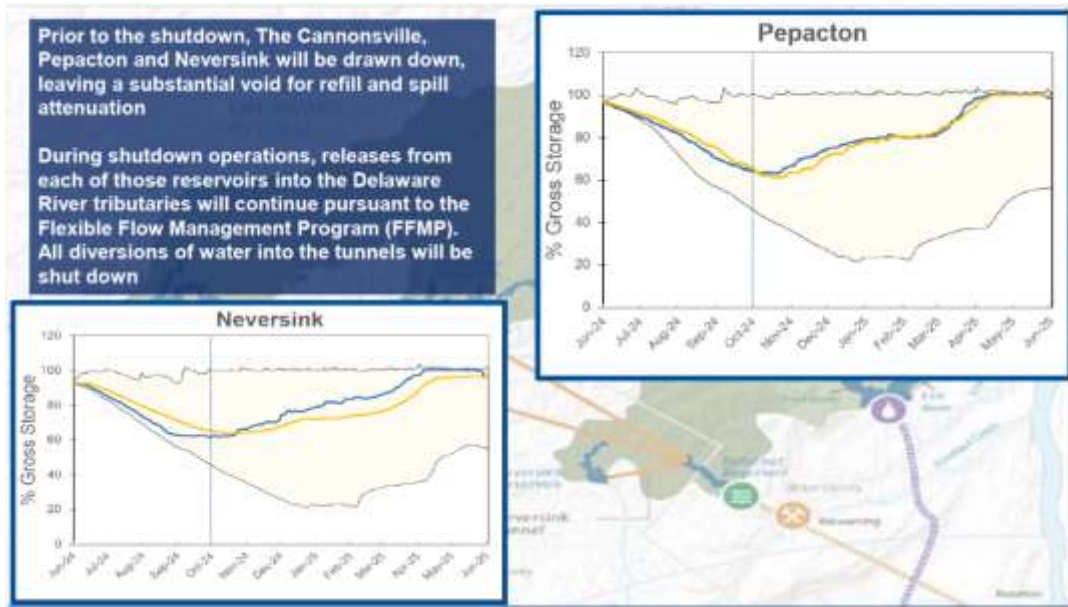
After the shutdown is complete, the DEP will work to re-balance the system. During the shutdown it is not normal operations for the DEP. The way they normally operate the system is to draw down the reservoirs in tandem so that come June 1<sup>st</sup> (start of the water year) all the reservoirs have the same chance at being full. This year, they will start by drawing down the Delaware System to create a larger void than normal. They will still be operating in accordance to the Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP). You won’t see massive differences in releases, except that they anticipate being at that 4G rate while they are getting ready for the shutdown. They are bringing it down for a couple of reasons. One is to create that void since they won’t be diverting water for that 5–8-month period. The model takes the shutdown into consideration, and will allow DEP to capture that spring rain that comes in. Once the shutdown is over, they will need to rely on the Delaware water to bring the system into balance. They will still be maintaining the water storage objective in the Shokan while keeping the Croton System as full as possible since they will be relying on the Croton much more heavily during the shutdown.

Garigliano said when DEP models in planning mode they use the historical record. There are 63 years in the model of which they are modeling. She is only showing the averages in the presentation graphs (shown below). The Yellow of the lines are the average operations they expect under normal conditions. The blue line is what they are getting as output for the shutdown using the 63-year period of historical conditions. The yellow shaded background is the operating range they’ve seen over the 63-year period.

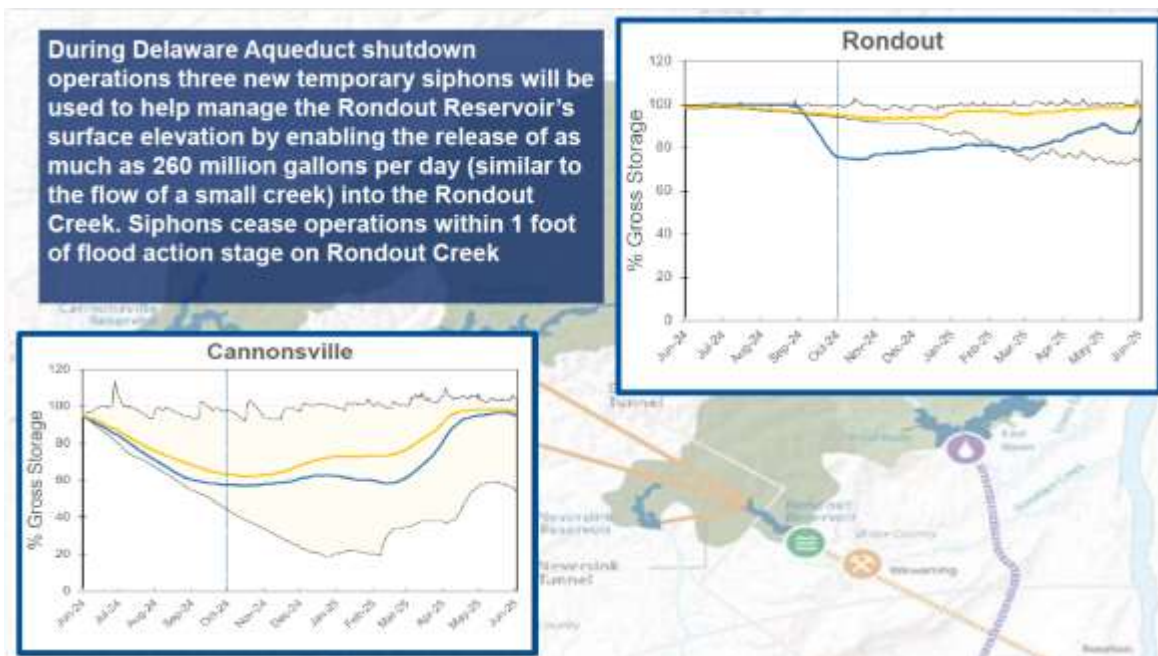


G. Dudko asked if the aqueduct wasn’t leaking, would the average have changed much? Garigliano said no. When you look at the average in the reservoirs, this leak is not significant.

She said that no one has the predictive capability to say what the release is going to be on any given date. The operations decisions will be made in real time based on the best information that's available. Depending on rainfall, DEP is anticipating getting Pepacton, Neversink, and Cannonsville down by 30% come October 1<sup>st</sup>. Depending on hydrologic conditions, that may be more or less. 30% is double the current void going into this. The graphs for Neversink and Pepacton are shown below.



The dotted line that goes down both graphs is October 1<sup>st</sup> (the target date for the shutdown). DEP anticipates, under normal conditions, they can probably get Neversink and Pepacton down to 60% storage ahead of time by making the FFMP releases and through diversion. Normally, NYC DEP is dynamic in what they take out of the Delaware reservoirs, only taking what they need. The Supreme Court decree authorizes them to take up to 800 million gallons a day out of the three reservoirs, but they don't do that unless they have to. They are hoping to manage the drawdown mostly through diversion. The 60% is not outside the operating range the DEP has seen over the last 63 years. Both Pepacton and Neversink are similar to what you would normally see. The goal is to make it feel like there is no shutdown happening.



The graphs of Cannonsville and Rondout are shown above. Cannonsville goes down a little bit before 60% and refills by the start of June. Rondout comes out of the normal operating period. Rondout Reservoir has a very small

water shaft of its own so it does not have a lot of inflow coming into it. Where you could normally see significant increases in some of the other reservoirs with higher rainfall, you don't see that in Rondout. There are 3 different tunnels, one each from Cannonsville, Pepacton and Neversink, that feed into Rondout and enter the Delaware Aqueduct through Rondout. Rondout is also a terminal reservoir for the DEP; if something went wrong somewhere else in the system, water could be taken from Rondout and sent directly down to NYC. They tend to keep Rondout steady and full. They won't be doing that while the Delaware Aqueduct is shut down, drawing the Rondout to about 70/75% storage. They also want to make sure there is a good void in Rondout, since it does not have release works like Cannonsville, Pepacton, and Neversink do.

Rondout Reservoir received syphons in case they need to evacuate water out of the Rondout, since they can't send it down the Delaware Aqueduct like they normally would because of the shutdown. It is the only reservoir in the Delaware to receive syphons since it only has the capacity to release 10 or 15 MGB. The other reservoirs have the capacity to release much more. This was all reviewed during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and it was determined that the release works on the other 3 reservoirs were sufficient to maintain storage. The syphons are temporary; when the shutdown is over, they will be removed from Rondout.

Garigliano said the graphs for the other reservoirs throughout the system are available. A [full slide-show](#) with all the information about the shutdown is on the NYC DEP website. There is a page on the DEP's website dedicated specifically to the [Delaware Aqueduct project](#) with links to the EIS and an overview of the shutdown.

There is a Waterfowl Management Program concerning birds on the reservoirs; using boats and noisemakers to keep them off the water. This program will be expanded during the shutdown. Recreation is also a concern during the shutdown. For the Delaware System, the DEP doesn't anticipate the shutdown impacting recreation with no restrictions being put in place. The only system that will have restrictions put in place during the shutdown is the Croton System due to ice-fishing.

They've been working on this project for more than 20 years with several predecessor projects that needed to be done before the shutdown and repair of the Delaware Aqueduct. Currently, they are still anticipating shutting down on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Robinson asked if the DEP has done anything with the pumping stations on the Hudson in anticipation of something going wrong. Garigliano said there have always been pumping stations in the Croton System. Robinson said he meant the one on the Hudson River. Garigliano said that pump station hasn't been used in well over 30 years. It only exists as part of the Drought Management Plan. To get approval to turn on the pumps in the Hudson, you would need to have a very significant drought; the water in the Hudson River needs to be filtered and treated. That portion of the aqueduct is also taken out of service. The two pump stations in the Croton System have always been part of the Drought Management Plans and the DEP has used them in the past in anticipation of drought. The Croton pumps got a huge overhaul so they have the current higher pumping capacity for this shutdown. Case asked if the tunnel will be worked on all summer? Garigliano said yes, they will be taking water all summer probably more than they usually do. Jim Powell asked if there is a significant flood, what is the DEP's ability to take water out the reservoirs while the aqueduct is shut down? Garigliano said there will be discharge mitigation releases to be able to maintain the conditional seasonal storage objective. Peter Van Slyke asked if water will mostly go down the aqueduct during the drawdown or go into the West and East Branches? Garigliano said the releases will still be made in accordance of the rights within the FFMP. They are based on storage and a forecast of available water. It takes into account that they won't be taking water for that 5-8-month period. To get the reservoirs down, the water will be going down the aqueduct.

Chairperson Dudko presented Garigliano with the 2024 Upper Delaware Litter Sweep t-shirt as a thank you for presenting this evening and Garigliano left the meeting.

**Approval of April 4, 2024 Minutes:** A motion by Dexter seconded by Henry to approve the April 4, 2024 meeting minutes carried.

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

**Committee Reports:** There were no questions regarding previously distributed minutes for Water Use and Resource Management 4/16 (Evan Padua), Project Review 4/23 (Larry Richardson) and Operations 4/23 (Ginny Dudko).

**Status Reports:**



**Delaware River Basin Commission:** Bowman Kavanagh reported the Second Quarter Public Hearing will be on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm. There are also two advisory meetings coming up: Monitoring Advisory and Coordination Committee will meet on May 14<sup>th</sup> and the Water Management Advisory Committee meeting is on June 26<sup>th</sup>. Those dates are listed on the DRBC [website](#).

The DRBC recently published an [IDF tool](#) on their website; a tool to predict extreme precipitation in the Delaware River Basin. It allows users to go online and obtain estimates of future changes in intensity, duration, and frequency curves for extreme rainfall events for any county, municipality and HUC12. She thanked the DRBC's Water Resource Operations Manager Amy Shallcross for joining tonight for Garigliano's presentation on the Delaware Aqueduct repair update, in case there were any questions for the DRBC. DRBC's Director of External Affairs and Communications Beth Brown is also joining the meeting tonight to share updates on the DRBC's Second Quarter Business meeting being held in Narrowsburg.

Brown said that the DRBC has been having their quarterly business meetings virtually since COVID, but once a year they are gathering in-person. In 2022 they gathered in Wilmington, DE and in 2023, Camden, NJ. For 2024 DRBC has chosen Narrowsburg, NY for the on-site business meeting. They have learned that there is a meaningful opportunity to wrap around some other engagement and outreach prior to the meeting. She welcomed everyone as UDC members and community members to attend. The quarterly business meeting will be on June 5<sup>th</sup> at the Tusten Theatre at 10:30 am and there will be a virtual option as well. More details about the meeting are available on the DRBC [website](#). At the meeting, the commission may take action on any of the dockets and resolutions that may have been heard at the public meeting or any items brought up in the past. Following the business meeting there will be an opportunity for general public comments to the commission. This gives the public an opportunity to address commissioners directly on issues related to water resources, water management, and other topics within the DRBC's scope. She encouraged people to consider attending or sending someone to represent their municipalities, and if you are going to attend to please [register](#) in advance. After the meeting, at around 1:30 pm on June 5<sup>th</sup>, the DRBC will be hosting a short film screening and panel discussion of a video the DRBC contributed to but was primarily produced by Meg McGuire of *Delaware Currents* with collaboration of other organizations.

Brown asked everyone to consider donating to a food drive the DRBC is leading to help combat food insecurity within the Upper Delaware River Basin communities. The food drive is accepting donations through June 4<sup>th</sup> to spread awareness of the meeting and to give back to the community. The food drive will be in support of two local partners in recognition of the bi-state nature of the UDC. In PA it will support the Wayne County Food Pantry Program and in NY, the Sullivan County Federation for the Homeless. There are certain locations already committed to hosting a donation box. She referred to the donation box located in the UDC meeting room with reusable shopping bags provided and a letter attached. She asked everyone to consider taking a bag and letter with them tonight to put at a location within their municipality to display and bring the donations to the meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup>. The DRBC will be recognizing the recipients of the donations at the meeting. As new [drop off points](#) are added, they will be available on the DRBC website. Her contact card is attached to the letter with the reusable shopping bags and she encouraged anyone who has questions to reach out to her directly.

G. Dudko asked if there is going to be an effort to get the food donated back to the river communities? Brown said they did look at a number of recipients, but as a government agency it was difficult to find a non-religious organization. She asked G. Dudko to reach out to her to chat about other opportunities and thanked her for the feedback.

Bowman Kavanagh reminded the council that DRBC's Senior Water Resource Engineer Michael Thompson will be giving a presentation on the Water Audit Report at the June 6<sup>th</sup> full council meeting.

**NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation:** Coulter said DEC staff has been out stocking trout during the spring season. The DEC has hosted a couple free family fishing days, one just this past weekend in the City of Poughkeepsie. Spring turkey season started on May 1<sup>st</sup>. DEC sent staff to the Highland Access to clear out debris; there is some silt left at the bottom that they couldn't remove. New wooden DEC Access signs have been ordered to replace older signs that are in rough shape, including at the Cohecton Access that Evan Padua had mentioned.

**Pennsylvania Dept. of Conservation and National Resources:** There is a Pennsylvania [Outdoor Recreation Survey](#) link included in the packet. Dugan asked everyone to provide their opinion if they are interested. He reported that the PA Game Commission had some updates recently with the hiring of several new Regional Directors. Mike Dean is the new Regional Director for Northeastern PA, returning to this area from South Central PA. Within the last week, the Executive Director of the Game Commission Bryan Burhans has stepped down and Steven Smith has replaced him. Dugan said the PA Fish and Game Commission operates similarly to the PA Fish and Boat Commission; there is a Board of Commissioners with an Executive Director and staff that work with the board.

PA Game Commission adopted their 2024/2025 season and bag limits that are available [online](#) or in print. The antlerless deer tag allocation went up about 91,000 across the state. For the two units in his management it was static. Spring gobbler season for PA starts this Saturday (5/4). Spongey moths have hatched early, trending about a week and a half earlier than expected. This year PA is treating 229,000 acres across the Commonwealth, which is mostly State Forest Land, some State Park, and some national properties. In this region the Commonwealth may start spraying this weekend at Grey Towers in Milford. Spongey moth drop silk that will help them carry in the wind. If you didn't line up treatment for your property already, you may not be able to now. If you go to PA DCNR [website](#) and search "spongey moth control" there is an abundance of information for home and land owners. Cool, wet, rainy weather is the best treatment for the spongey moth. The extra moisture in the environment allows virus and fungus that are already present in the environment to populate and become prolific so that the caterpillars will then die. Oak trees are already dropping their catkins as well, which is a big source of pollen.

**National Park Service:** Kurnath asked everyone to refer to the new Monthly Activity Report that is included in the packets. She said the report should include consistent information between what is discussed at the full council meetings and all the committee meetings. She thanked Marshall for coming up with the idea. If you have feedback, please let her know.

She reported that the UDC/NPS "Road Show" kicks off this week, starting on Monday May 6<sup>th</sup> in Westfall Township and then Tuesday May 7<sup>th</sup> to the Town of Hancock. So far there are 7 meetings confirmed and tentatively scheduled. She thanked everyone for their help setting these up.

Last Saturday (4/27) NPS hosted two events. The first was Project Healing Waters, where about 20 active service members and veterans participated in a fly-fishing event. That is a national effort with the National Park Trust, the NPS, and the non-profit Project Healing Waters. The Roebling's Delaware Aqueduct 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration happened on Saturday as well, and she heard that was a great event with about 80 guests. Those event photos and more information can be found on UPDE NPS social media and she thanked everyone who participated.

The National Canoe Safety Patrol (NCSP) training will happen this weekend (5/11-5/12) and they will start patrols the following weekend. D&H Canal Days are coming up; 4<sup>th</sup> graders are welcomed from 5 local school districts this year to walk through stations of living history around the Roebling Bridge. "Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day" is May 17<sup>th</sup> supporting a National Safe Boating campaign. She asked willing council members to stay after the meeting for a photo using life jackets NPS staff had brought.

UPDE NPS has their seasonal staff coming on. Kaetlyn Jackson's last day of her assignment at UPDE will be this Friday (5/10) and NPS will be continuing the search for a candidate for that position. Bob Letts from Delaware Water Gap has joined UPDE through a temporary assignment as the Facility Service Assistant and they are actively trying to fill that position as well. A seasonal Maintenance worker will also be starting soon to help maintain accesses and trash on the weekends. A seasonal Biologist will also be starting.

On the report, "Special Use Permits Issued" is included to keep everyone up to date on events that are happening.

B. Dudko said the ice breakers at Roebling Bridge need maintenance. Kurnath said they are aware, Jessica Wienman is going to take a look at them. Wienman will attend the May 21<sup>st</sup> WU/RM Committee meeting to talk more about the accesses. Ramie asked if UDPE will be holding orientation for the interns and seasonal staff? Traditionally, the UDC has been invited to attend and explain who the UDC is and what we do. Kurnath said not currently; in the last few years the staff has started on different days. She will talk to Peterec about setting up an orientation meeting. G. Dudko asked what schools are invited to the D&H Canal Days. Ramie and Driscoll replied the list they saw had Sullivan West, Damascus, Robert B. Wilson, Wallenpaupack, and Hancock.

**UDC Executive Director:** Ramie welcomed new Town of Tusten alternate Cathleen Breen. Evan Padua is Town of Tusten representative, with Breen as 1<sup>st</sup> alternate and Susan Sullivan as 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate.

At the last Project Review Committee meeting Peckham had recommended that the UDC list emergency phone numbers on the UDC website for when people have issues involving the river. UDC staff has added 24-hour National Park Service Dispatch number and the River Conditions Hotline to the homepage. As Kurnath says in her written report, those numbers shouldn't be used for private property disputes or issues. Kurnath said if people are

calling those numbers thinking that will report an emergency, it will slow response time. People just need to be aware if there is an emergency, they need to call 911. Peckham said State Troopers or police haven't come for river issues he's had in the past; you would be better off reaching out to DEC. Ramie appreciated Peckham making the suggestion to add the numbers to the UDC website.

Discussion of the keynote speaker for the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual River Valley Awards was referred to the full council from the Operations Committee. An invitation was extended to U.S. Senator Fetterman; his staff replied back that he isn't available for that date. Since the Operations Committee meeting Ramie had received some suggestions for the keynote speaker from various board members. They were: NYS Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, Pennsylvania Director of Outdoor Recreation Nathan Reigner, and Delaware Riverkeeper and founder of non-profit organization Green Amendment for the Generations, Maya van Rossum. Ramie welcomed any other ideas; she would like to have the speaker lined up by the summer newsletter deadline. Robinson suggested Reigner; he offered the most uplifting presentation the UDC has had in years. Henry suggested inviting PA Governor Shapiro as the keynote speaker. Ramie said she doesn't unilaterally pick a person. Henry recommended circulating the names and a small bio for voting members to vote on which Ramie said she will do.

Ramie said the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep was very successful, and we will be giving a verbal report on that later in the agenda. The 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Delaware Aqueduct crossing was very popular. She encouraged everyone to look up the event on social media. On Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup> a scaled back edition of the Upper Delaware Shadfest: Festival of the Founding Fish, will be a one-day event starting at the Barryville Farmers Market opening day from 10am-1pm, with an invitation only dinner that evening to honor the partners involved with Shadfest in 2023, and finishing with a "Shad Shindig" dance party at River's Edge in Barryville that is free and open to the public. The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association is an event sponsor. The Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) had decided to scale back Shadfest every other year to focus on promoting monarch butterflies with a pollinator specific event in the fall, another one of the UDSB's core missions. Engelhardt is involved with planning the Delaware River Sojourn happening in June (press release from the DRBC included in the packet) and the Upper Delaware BioBlitz in June as well.

May and June calendars of UDC meetings, events and activities are included in the packet for review, with confirmed dates for the UDC/NPS "Road Show" listed. A portion of the May 21<sup>st</sup> WU/RM Committee meeting will be dedicated to the public River Accesses. The UDC has invited NPS, NY DEC, and PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) representatives to speak. A subcommittee will likely be formed then to focus on issues such as access maintenance, needed improvements, additional access point recommendations, plan and project updates, and law enforcement policies. Ramie encouraged any UDC member that isn't on WU/RM to participate if they'd like, either in person or via Zoom. May 29<sup>th</sup> is the annual meeting of the New York-Pennsylvania Joint Interstate Bridge Commission that Engelhardt and Ramie will be attending virtually. May 29<sup>th</sup> is also the kick-off meeting for the Sullivan County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Committee, which the UDC will sit in on to represent the interests of the river towns within the county. The DRBC will be in the Upper Delaware the first week of June for their quarterly business meeting and other outings. Paddling for the Delaware River Sojourn starts on June 15<sup>th</sup> and the public portion of the BioBlitz is on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Presentations for the next three council meetings are: June 6<sup>th</sup>, Michael Thompson from the DRBC to discuss the Water Audit Report; July 11<sup>th</sup>, UPDE NPS Superintendent Kurnath will give a presentation on NPS staffing needs. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, we will have a presentation by New York Water Science Chief Guy Foster on the USGS stream gages and how they operate. If anyone has suggestions for presentations from September on, please let her know.

#### **New Business:**

- a. **Resolution 2024-05: Approving 2024 River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants:** A motion by Robinson, seconded by Henry to approve the 2024 River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants to the Town of Deerpark for \$3,945.91 and Town of Highland for \$1,140.00, carried.
- b. **Draft Letter to PennDOT: Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge Comments:** Ramie showed photos via a PowerPoint of the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge Public Meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Narrowsburg Union. The public comments that are being taken are specifically about the PEL study. G. Dudko said if they hadn't done so many studies over such a long length of time, they took some of the money that was spent on studies and shortened the time that the bridge has sat, maybe it wouldn't have gotten to the point

where it is now. Ramie said she did mention that in the letter; that protracted study that has caused further deterioration. She added that everyone is welcome to write individual letters as well. The paper survey is included in the packet and you can also complete the [survey](#) directly online. A motion by Henry to send the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge comment letter to PennDOT, seconded by Robinson, carried.

- c. **Substantial Conformance 2024-02: Smith Flood Plain Variance, Damascus Township:** Engelhardt said this application was discussed at the most recent Project Committee meeting. She thought the project substantially conformed to the guidelines of the River Management Plan (RMP), however there were some requirements of the Damascus Township Flood Plain Ordinance that hadn't been addressed by the original submission documents. The public hearing of the Zoning Board was happening at the same time as the Project Review meeting. After some discussion, the Project Review Committee felt that we couldn't vote to make a recommendation without that further information. We do need to make a recommendation tonight in order to stay within the 45 days. She spoke with Damascus Zoning Officer Ed Lagarenne the day after the meeting to discuss what had happened at the public hearing. Lagarenne confirmed that he had received further information from the applicant that the proposed improvements did not rise to the level of substantial improvements. The applicant is proposing putting additions on an existing dwelling that is located within the flood plain. If the improvements were considered substantial, they would have been required to make improvements to the entire dwelling, but because they are not, they only have to make sure the proposed improvements meet the standard of the flood plain. Lagarenne also said the applicant submitted plans showing the proposed floor elevations of all the improvements and that they met all the requirements of the Damacus Flood Plain Ordinance. Engelhardt recommends voting to make a recommendation of substantial conformance to the NPS. Kurnath asked when the additional information came in from Lagarenne? Engelhardt said on May 24<sup>th</sup>, the day after the May 23<sup>rd</sup> Project Review meeting. Kurnath said the UDC didn't receive a full application for this project then until May 24<sup>th</sup>, so the 45-day deadline didn't start until that day. Engelhardt said the report has been revised to include the additional information. Henry said we should add that the 45-days started on May 24<sup>th</sup>. A motion by Henry to recommend substantial conformance for the Smith Flood Plain Variance, seconded by Robinson, carried. Ramie asked if the Damascus Zoning Board had voted in favor of the application the night of the public hearing? Engelhardt said yes, in favor.
- d. **Delaware River USGS Gage at Barryville:** A letter is included in the packet about the USGS gage at Barryville. Ramie said that Padua had brought up at the April WU/RM meeting that the USGS gage at the Barryville Bridge still functions but doesn't have the full parameters. A warning message states that until it's fully funded, they can only provide so much information. This letter was written after the WU/RM Committee discussion to USGS asking why this was happening, and went out via email on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Chief of NY Observing Systems Branch for USGS at the NY Water Science Center Guy Foster responded that the gage was funded by both the PA DEP and the USGS Next Generation Water Observing System. Funding from the PA DEP remains intact but the USGS had to make cuts within the Delaware River system. In the letter, Foster was invited to give more information via a presentation to the UDC. He accepted the invitation for August 1<sup>st</sup>. Robinson said it's odd; he doesn't understand why they aren't just doing the calculations through an algorithm like it's typically done? Peckham said a few years ago, the USGS shut down a bunch of gages with no funding. Ramie said she remembers that happening. Peckham said they got funding through towns and private organizations to keep them running. Robinson said there are half a dozen gages on tributaries of the Delaware. Dugan said we should save all questions for Foster when he's here in August. Henry said that the gage at Barryville Bridge was always more accurate since it's below the Lackawaxen River.
- e. **Other:** None.

#### **Old Business:**

- a. **Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Final Report:** The press release that Ramie issued this afternoon is included in the packet. Driscoll reported that approximately 370 people volunteered for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep, based on our t-shirt order. She thinks the t-shirts are well worth the investment; some people sign up just for the t-shirt or have participated every year and collect the t-shirts. She also brought up the Litter Sweep dates, that we may be better off opening the Litter Sweep to the whole



month of April instead of 8 or 9 days. A couple of town/townships ended up doing their Litter Sweep(s) outside of that April 20-28<sup>th</sup> period, and it would give her more time to prepare supplies if the Litter Sweeps were spaced out a little. Everyone agreed that seemed like a good idea. Overall, the Litter Sweeps were very successful and she thanked everyone for their help organizing them. This was a great year for donations of goods, like the Blue Fox Motel donating a buffet lunch to Tusten's Litter Sweep and Greater Barryville Chamber of Commerce donating coffee and refreshments to Highland's Litter Sweep.

Henry asked if there was a written final report? Ramie said no and we haven't done one in the past. Henry said he'd like to see something. Driscoll agreed that it could be useful and will get a final report done by the next WU/RM Committee meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

- b. **UDC Bylaws Amendment: Rules for Mandatory Policies:** A copy of the bylaws with the proposed amendment added on page 3 is included in the packet. Ramie said this is not something that we can take action on tonight, due to the 30-day requirement for advance notice. If you are satisfied with the language that's been added in page 3 on Section 6 and 7, that is the proposal to amend it. G. Dudko said there was a discussion on the amendment at the April Operations Committee meeting. Henry asked if they need to wait 30 days to approve it or if it's approved tonight it goes into effect in 30 days? Ramie said since it was sent via email on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 30 days after then it can be voted on and become immediately effective. Everyone thanked Ramie for adding the language. It will be on the June full council meeting agenda for a vote.
- c. **NPS Determination Letter 2024-01: Pavilion at the Flats, Town of Tusten:** The letter is included in the packet. This is the response from NPS that they concurred with the UDC's recommendation of substantial conformance for the first application of the year of the Pavilion of the Flats in the Town of Tusten. In the letter NPS mentioned that the towns and townships should establish where the hamlet boundaries are. Henry said he read in a local newspaper that they are planning on adding a public bathroom to the pavilion building. Breen said they are looking at all their options. Engelhardt said if they were to add that, it would have to be reviewed again by the UDC.

**Other:** Henry said Breen had just told her that when she called 911 once, her call was sent to PA instead of NY. Henry said that's nerve wracking; if they send the State Police, it wouldn't be the right state. He thinks we should follow up with Commissioner Scott Schulte at the Division of Public Safety about which dispatch centers 911 calls are being sent to, so that we and visiting public are aware.

**Public Comment:** Jane Varcoe said she felt the DRBC sponsoring a food drive in the Upper Delaware region is redundant; the towns and townships already have a system in place. G. Dudko asked if having extra help and food for the pantries was a bad thing? If organizations have too much food, they can consider giving it to other towns and townships in need. Varcoe said it just seems like the DRBC thinks our area isn't doing a good enough job. Brown said that is not the case. The DRBC wanted to give back to the Upper Delaware region, with the help from their partners in the area. She asked Varcoe to reach out to her directly to address any concerns.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Roeder seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m. carried.

*Minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 5/13/2024*