

**WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 21, 2020**

Committee Members Present: Andy Boyar, Ginny Dudko, Fred Peckham, Al Henry, Pat Jeffer,  
Dan Paparella  
Committee Members Absent: None  
Staff : Laurie Ramie  
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton  
Guests: Bill Dudko, Cheryl Korotky

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

A motion by Peckham, seconded by Henry, to approve the November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Election of Officers:** A motion by Henry, seconded by Jeffer, to elect Andy Boyar as Committee Chairperson was carried. A motion by Henry, seconded by Jeffer, to elect Virginia Dudko as Committee Vice-Chairperson was carried.

**New Business**

**F.E. Walter Dam Re-evaluation Study:** Ramie provided two handouts in the meeting packet. Henry brought this topic up at the 1/2 UDC meeting when he informed the council that Bill Gibney of District 7, who is a Commissioner with the PA Fish and Boat Commission told him of this project. Although this project is on the Lehigh River, there could be impacts to the Delaware in terms of releases. Henry understands that this study is going to go on for three years. Ramie explained that one handout is a fact sheet from the Army Corps of Engineers that was provided, given that they are leading the study along with the DRBC and NYC DEP. The second handout is a message from The Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) saying their representatives attended the public meeting on 1/9 and they stressed they did not want to see any detrimental impacts to the releases on the Upper Delaware River from this. Ramie said UDC has not submitted any comments but certainly could. Paparella said he personally submitted a comment echoing FUDR's sentiments. He received a response saying his comments will be shared with the study team to ensure all public concerns are considered in this study analysis and will also include this as part of the administrative record. Hamilton said to learn more about this issue he spoke with Vin Difrenna, Hydrologist from Office of the Delaware River Master, and he said there are no planned changes in the Montague Flow Target at river mile 246. He said at this point, he can't see how this could potentially affect the Upper Delaware because that's what our flows are predicated on, meeting that flow target. The River Master has a dual mission of ensuring that Montague gage target is met while also conserving water in the basin. The DRBC directs releases from F.E. Walter Dam towards meeting the Trenton target and that's based on what's coming down the river from up above. Two different agencies manage two different flow targets and this study is focused on a better understanding of how the use of the water from the Lehigh would affect the salt line. He said it's possible something could change but right now he doesn't envision it being an impact to the Upper Delaware. Henry said it's interesting because presently the F.E. Walter Dam is filled 5.7% and looking at the rest of the dams that is the only one that doesn't have water in it. This was discussed at the 1/2 meeting. Henry said Trout Unlimited is involved with an interest in a tailwaters fishery. The local rafting industry is concerned with more conservation and fewer releases. He understands it's not in our region but it's an overall concern. Boyar recommended that the UDC monitor the study for now.

**Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report:** A copy of the 1/14 NYC Current Reservoir Levels was provided along with the DRBC Hydrologic Conditions Report of the same date in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 90.9%. Seven-day precipitation totals in the Upper Basin were .48 inches. Hamilton asked if anyone knows why F.E. Walter is so low and if it's because of their recreational releases? It is the resource that DRBC directs

releases from toward meeting the Trenton target but have conditions been necessary to have it end up so different than all the others?

**DRBC's Water Management Advisory Committee Appointment:** Ramie said the UDC is the watershed organization member of the DRBC's Water Management Advisory Committee. The Chair of DRBC's WMAC is Preston Luitweiler who is with the Water Resources Association. They have three seats that are expiring all on 6/30 of this year and ours is one of them. We've been invited to reapply but it's not a guarantee that it would be accepted. You need to submit the organization's name and intentions via letter along with a biography or resume of the individual that would represent the UDC. Previously, it was Pete Golod. This group meets quarterly and he participated by phone. Ramie's theory is when our position is filled again, that individual will be assigned that responsibility. Most immediately 2/20 is the next meeting of the group from 10 a.m. to noon at the DRBC office in West Trenton with a call-in option. Ramie told them that she will participate at that one via phone. A motion by Peckham seconded by Henry to appoint Ramie to be the temporary delegate to the Water Management Advisory Committee carried.

**Other:** None.

### Old Business

**NPS Report on 2018 Weather in Review: Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River:** Hamilton said Superintendent Heister had shared this Resource Brief with the UDC that their Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network puts out and weather is one of the vital signs that they monitor. This is a summary of what is going on in the Upper Delaware Region in terms of temperature and precipitation. You can see a distinct upward trend in an average of annual temperature and precipitation. A question came up from the Town of Fremont about what kind of influence the earth's rotation on its axis had on this process. Hamilton provided the following article "The Effects of Revolution & Rotation on Climate & Weather" which Ramie forwarded. It describes some of the influence of the effects of revolution and rotation on climate and weather. Henry said he knows Jim Greier is a proponent and advocate of the "*Farmer's Almanac*" and he was wondering if there was something to do with a slight deviation in the axis. He believes Greier's question was if that had any effect on the weather we've been seeing recently? Boyar said from this article there is a confirmation of the wettest year and 17<sup>th</sup> warmest year in the region and said last week it was confirmed it was the second warmest year globally. Hamilton said a reason why the salt front changes and why there is concern about that is because of sea-level rise. With sea-level rise, we can expect the salt front to come further upward. Paparella said there are extremes with climate change. You may have an extremely wet spring into early summer and also a drought in the middle of summer. Henry said looking at the handout Heister provided, there are a handful of times they use the term "park" and for the Eastern River and Mountains Network he would recommend NPS say "on the river". Hamilton said he would share that message with them.

**Skinnners Falls, NY-Milanville, PA Bridge Preservation Advocacy:** Ramie said regarding the Skinnners Falls - Milanville Bridge, there was a public meeting that Wayne County Planning held on 12/4. Out of that meeting it was decided that the parties that were interested in this subject would do a joint position statement. The idea is to encourage PENNDOT to do what it takes to preserve that bridge. The draft position statement was being drawn up by Wayne County Planning in conjunction with their consultant Tom Shepstone. They circulated it to all the stakeholders on 12/13 and gave everybody until 1/17 to make comments. Ramie reviewed the document and submitted UDC's comments on 12/20 and noticed on 1/17 that the NPS, through Jennifer Claster, had submitted comments on it. Since then she hasn't seen any other activity on it. She said she assumes now the authors of this position paper will synthesize all the comments that they received and will come back with a second draft of the position paper which is geared toward the understanding that the bridge is important on numerous fronts for this region and they want to see it saved in some fashion.

**Planning for Upper Delaware Sweep, April 2020:** Ramie said we solicited project ideas for an approximately \$15,000 balance of the Pennsylvania grant. A portion of the \$15,000 is to pursue a longtime business plan for the UDC to study our funding situation. Number two on the list was to hire a coordinator for this Upper Delaware Sweep. It was one of the 15 that were proposed. The timing of it is a little tricky because the grant has to be submitted via an application and then it is upfront funding with no match required but it could take four to six weeks

for the contract to come back. That would put potential approval of this into mid- March. In the meantime, we would need to start advertising this right away since the event is in April. Ramie is looking for help with the framework of what we're asking for in a coordinator. That one statement to hire a coordinator lacks specifics and a direction in how much would it pay, what are we asking of this individual, etc. She recommends setting a cap on how much would be available for the coordinator, then Ramie will know how much is left. Peckham said the Upper Delaware River Basin Citizens had a successful cleanup along the river in the past; perhaps we could work together. Peckham said some areas need to be picked up two or three times a year and other areas aren't touched for years. Boyar said the idea was to get everyone to focus on a given day if anyone wants to join in and if it's a week earlier or week later it doesn't matter. Boyar would like the next meeting to be held in February 2020 and invite those who were at the first meeting. Boyar said he's spoken with various newspapers and planned for some articles to promote this. Ramie said she is initiating the online grant application on Friday, 1/24. Henry asked if Pennsylvania funds can be used to hire a coordinator that will oversee PA and NY? Henry asked if Paparella would have an interest in doing something like this? Paparella said yes, and asked if the UDC would consider funding someone who doesn't have professional experience coordinating a trash cleanup? The duties Ramie envisioned were logistics, finding sponsors, recruiting volunteers, publicity, education, etc. Paparella said he would ask for no more than \$3,000. Henry recommended the UDC office be made available to Paparella if he needs to make calls.

**1/10/20 Local History Roundtable Update:** Ramie attended the 1/10 meeting held at the Wayne County Historical Society in Honesdale. They have published their Local History Past-Port for the Northern Pocono Mountains Region and Surrounding Areas. She has a limited number for those interested. This publication has 24 different sites and 6,000 were printed by St. Clair Graphics. Fourteen different organizations represent these 24 different sites. There's no commercial advertising. Each organization has its Past-Port stamp; if you go to all the sites and show your Past-Port stamps you get a prize. This is funded through the Wayne County Hotel Tax Board and they are also asking the other counties involved, Wyoming and Pike, to contribute as well. They also set the date for their local history festival which is an annual event named after Thomas Kennedy and that will be Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, the day before our awards banquet. That will take place at the Dorflinger Factory Museum in White Mills. The Wayne County Historical Society has won a grant to host a workshop on archival practices which will be held in Fall 2020. It was a small grant of \$2,500 but they had applied previously and wasn't successful because it didn't have a public outreach component. Everyone who attends the workshop will get acid free boxes to pack their curated materials in and instructions. Ramie said it's Archiving 101. Sally Talaga gave a presentation on Historic Preservation. There were issues with the projector so she was invited back for the 4/25 local history festival. The next Local History Roundtable meeting will be 4/3 in Milford at a location to be determined.

**1/13/20 Upper Delaware BioBlitz Update:** Ramie and Hamilton participated in this call about the BioBlitz. It was last held in 2018 and they have been doing it every other year when it's been possible to find an organizer. The coordinator since the beginning, Steve Schwartz from Equinunk, PA has said he cannot do it in 2020 and ask for people to step forward and take the reins. The Delaware Highlands Conservancy has expressed interest with a vision of a floating BioBlitz and to hold it in conjunction with Delaware River Sojourn although they still need land to set up their studies and public outreach portion. The idea is to hold the Bioblitz on June 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the Delaware River Sojourn. Teams would be invited to start collecting their samples on 6/19 and the public events, base camp, display of collections, workshops and talks would be sited at the Northeast Wilderness Experience Campground in Equinunk near Kellams Bridge. Everyone on the call agreed that a BioBlitz should take place and there's great interest in it. The Delaware River Sojourn gave their preliminary overview of what they have planned this year for the 26<sup>th</sup> annual trip. On 6/19, day zero they do a river cleanup in conjunction with the NPS. They will be camped for the nights of 6/19, 6/20, and 6/21 at the Northeast Wilderness Experience Campground. The paddling itineraries for the days are 6/20 from Hancock Fireman's field to Buckingham; which is a 6-mile introductory run. Day 2 (6/21) will be from Buckingham to Northeast Wilderness Experience Campground and that's 13 miles. Day 3 (6/22) will be starting at the campground and going to Damascus for 14 miles. Day 4 (6/23) is Damascus to Narrowsburg. They don't have the programs in place yet. Another conference call will be set up to hone-in on details and get in touch with scientists and naturalists that participate, etc. Henry asked if they are looking for a location? Hamilton said they are considering the location and he stressed there are a lot of questions that need to be answered and come together for these BioBlitzes. It requires a lot of time and effort and some financial backing. Hamilton said BioBlitzes have had great partners in the past. Money was raised, food was catered and it set a high standard. Boyar asked how many BioBlitzes Hamilton participated in and he said four. Two were at

the Boy scout Camp in Tusten and two were at Starlight, PA. Boyar said the years at the Boy Scout Camp were great. Hamilton said the site itself has to meet certain criteria. You need to have the participants, the will, the time, funding, and the resources to pull it off. An advantage of going back to a site is being able to see how numbers compare or if anything new is collected. Combining it with the Delaware River Sojourn makes for a lot of moving parts. Ramie and Hamilton will report back with updates.

**1/14/20 USGS Integrated Science in the Delaware River Basin Update:** Ramie provided a written report from the 1/14 USGS Integrated Science in the Delaware River Basin call. She knows that the committee had a particular interest in the stream gages and the USGS's motivation to get more of those functioning and operational. They have introduced quite a few. In FY18 and FY19 they added 49 new or reactivated gages to the 150 that were already in existence. Those are for better communication but they also have gages that are specifically attuned to water temperature or salinity. Ramie said the most impressive thing to her was that USGS scientists and technicians are dedicating all this research effort to the Delaware River Basin as their pilot project. This is an ongoing study and 1/14 was a progress report. Hamilton asked for a digital copy of the report; he was unable to attend the call due to a conflict at the same time. He believes there was NPS presence on the call.

**1/21/20 Subcommittee on Ecological Flows Update:** Boyar had a conversation with Dr. Peter Kolesar before this meeting. Dr. Kolesar attended the 1/21 Subcommittee on Ecological Flows (SEF) meeting and noticed Pete Golod was not there. Dr. Kolesar asked Boyar to report that the 2019 Thermal event protocol was analyzed and determined it was fairly successful. It accomplished the goals in terms of mitigating the high temperatures. Data is showing those temperatures were brought down and it works. There was a notion if you can guard against 75° maximum temperatures in thermal events, would it be better to have a 72° temperature average as opposed to a 75° cap. The SEF committee agreed to look into the initiative to see if there's any benefit over and above the protocol that was used last year to maintain a 72° average. They also brought up yo-yo releases and how to prevent them. That will be worked on at the next meeting. Ramie received an agenda for the meeting and with that a 37-page evaluation on the Rapid Flow Change Mitigation Report dated 12/6/2019. She will forward that to anyone that's interested. Peckham and Boyar requested her to forward it to them. Hamilton said their Regional Hydrologist attended the meeting and he will be briefed on the meeting on Thursday.

**Other:** Henry said there was recently a program on "Pennsylvania Outdoor Life" showing people fishing the Upper Delaware last January with no personal floatation device. Henry said he thinks the NPS should contact all the commercial use authorization folks. Henry said he knows the law is all kayaks and canoes and vessels 16 feet and less need life jackets. Hamilton said he's surprised that the people from "PA Outdoor Life" wouldn't be mindful of that. Even if not required, they should set a good example for river safety.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Dudko, seconded by Jeffer, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. was carried.

*Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas, 1/27/2020*