

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
November 19th, 2019

Committee Members Present: Ginny Dudko, Jim Greier, Fred Peckham, Al Henry, Pat Jeffer,
Doug Case, Dan Paparella
Committee Members Absent: Andy Boyar
Staff : Laurie Ramie, Pete Golod, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Guests: Bill Dudko, Cheryl Korotky

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 19th, 2019 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Vice-Chairperson Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

A motion by Henry, seconded by Case, to approve the September 17th, 2019 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business

9/23 and 10/28 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting Report: Ramie noted that the Water Use/Resource Management Committee didn't meet in October. There were too many absences to be able to necessarily get a quorum. Since then there have been two Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) meetings. Ramie provided highlights from the most recent meeting on 10/28. There was a decision made to create a Grants page on the UDSB website for the three different grant programs of business and nonprofit signage, butterfly habitat promotion and for scenic vista clearing. People will be able to download those forms from the website <https://www.upperdelawarescenicbyway.org/> and read the guidelines. Ed Wesley was in attendance and brought up the closure of the Skinners Falls-Milanville bridge. Wesley is upset about that but he did say one positive if there could be any, is that compared to 2015, when the bridge was closed so abruptly and with no notice, communication was better this time from PennDOT. He expressed gratitude to UDSB and UDC for the past support we've given for the preservation of that bridge to try to make sure it stays open and gets repaired. As we know it is indefinitely closed this time. Various parties are working to make sure it gets rehabilitated. UDSB decided to put that on the agenda for the November meeting in consideration of sending a letter to PennDOT encouraging them to maintain, rehabilitate, and reopen the bridge. UDSB was due to make a presentation on 11/7 before the Sullivan County Legislature's Planning and Community Development Committee. Sullivan County has been gracious in providing grant funds to UDSB and they like to get a report back on what the activities are and what they are accomplishing. There was also talk about ideas for a spring workshop on an environmental topic to show that UDSB has an environmental interest as well as tourism. The idea that has been discussed has been innovations with trash and recycling such as turning trash into useable products, even fashion. UDSB also talked about how heritage tourism is so popular and thought that there might be a chance to reach out to the town historians along the byway route and ask them for suggestions on themes that could be followed for different bus tours or self-driving tours. In terms of scenic vista clearings, UDSB decided to take a reconnaissance trip in the Town of Highland because that was considered to have a lot of opportunities where you could open up more views to the river. Sullivan County Planning got a bus together on 11/15, with representatives from UDSB and the DOT riding from Tusten to Barryville to identify where the need exists, where the State has the authority to do the work, how UDSB could facilitate that, and if there are any private property owners that would need to be contacted. There is a new opportunity for State designated scenic byways to consider going for National Scenic Byway Status. That may or may not be something that UDSB wishes to pursue. UDSB doesn't know yet the pros and cons. The president signed into law on 9/22 legislation called "Reviving America's Scenic Byways Act of 2019". It requires the Secretary of Transportation to request nominations and make determinations about roads that would be designated under the National Scenic Byways Program. There will be a 30-day window of opportunity. Ramie said the kicker is there is no funding for it so any byway that opts to pursue this designation would be on their own to hire a consultant most likely to put an application together. The program guidelines haven't been released but it's expected applications would be due in the Spring. Usually the reasons to go for that designation would be additional grant funding and exposure because you would be listed on the Federal Highway Administrations website. UDSB now needs to figure out the cons. If there are federal regulations or oversight, Ramie doesn't believe they would pursue it. A conference

call is being set up to hear from other State Byways in New York that have gone for National Status and look at their experience. In the DOT report that UDSB receives every month it was mentioned that there was a project along Route 97 in the Towns of Delaware and Cochection to bring the guiderails up to current standards. There are a series of orange barrels up and some of the guiderails are either missing or knocked over. Kris Gilbert from DOT said it's not until 2021. For the sake of some expediency and an emphasis of the safety issue this presents, UDSB is writing a letter to the DOT Region 9 to ask if they can bump up that schedule. The damaged wall at the Hawks Nest was also discussed. They had the maintenance order out for that, found out how much it cost and said "never mind" they will do it under a System Repair Order. That will be pursued in 2022. UDSB is not happy about that but the DOT insists that the wall is safe and not a safety hazard in anyway. They are aware that it is not aesthetically pleasing. DOT Region 8 Director Lance MacMillan responded to a letter that the UDSB sent him about vegetation and the impact of views of the Hawks Nest. He pointed out that they had just done a contract in the Fall of 2018 to remove litter from the pull-off areas and clear some vegetation. They did point out the issue that the DOT doesn't own the right-of-way beyond the face of that wall. There's a private landowner so each time they do work there they have to get a Temporary Occupancy Permit and negotiate the terms of that. The agreement they had for that project limited the clearing to 60 feet offset from the face of the wall at the Overlook and the property owner had the right to say which trees they could take or trim. Knowing that, there was discussion to see if that property owner might be amenable to signing a Scenic Easement. That would allow them to have a little more freedom and flexibility. UDSB did research and found the property owner has about 55 acres. They have written a letter saying the Orange County Land Trust, is interested in pursuing this Scenic Easement. The Callicoon Train Depot Committee commissioned a site survey as part of the lease negotiations which Central New York Railroad required. It was also mentioned that after the Town of Delaware won the Second Place Silver Feather Award in the Sullivan Renaissance Municipal Beautification contest, the Town is going to give those proceeds to the Callicoon Train Depot Project. The next step for the project is a request for proposals for the architectural services will be issued. The next UDSB meeting is 11/25.

10/8 Friends of the Upper Delaware River's "Water, Water Everywhere" Conference Report: Ramie provided a preview of our newsletter article that reports on the Water, Water Everywhere Conference on page 3. Ramie, Hamilton, Golod and Peckham all attended. One topic was the announcement of the Delaware Water Conservation Fund Grants. Henry asked for more details about the Japanese Knotweed project. Ramie said there are three Japanese Knotweed demonstration projects and they will be able to apply that research to see what works. She thought this would be a good topic for a program for the UDC. Steve Schwartz is primarily the one behind the project. He assisted with the development of that proposal. Henry said in the prior report of the UDSB how they are concerned with brush, not necessarily trees. On Route 97, a majority of the obstructing vegetation is Japanese Knotweed. He wonders if anybody knows the grow back rate of Japanese Knotweed.

10/15-16 Coalition for the Delaware River's 7th Annual Delaware River Forum Report: Golod attended the 7th Annual Watershed Forum in Allentown, PA. There were 250 participants. It started off with a status update of the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF) administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (UF&WS) and recently finalized awards up to \$250,000.00 requiring a 1:1 match. The second grant program is the Delaware River Restoration Fund (DRRF) which privately funded and offers up to \$500,000 requiring a 25% match. In the 15 months since USFWS and NFWF have collaborated on the grant programs, 54 on-the-ground conservation and restoration projects have been funded throughout the watershed. The first breakout session Golod attended was called "Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution- Maximizing Advocacy Efforts for Local and State Success". Some key points he gleaned were that single-use plastics have become a global issue and the prevailing dominant trash in our oceans as well as our watershed. Plastics are moving up through the trophic levels and being consumed by and affecting humans; plastic is in our seafood, rainwater and river systems. Currently, the EPA does not have published water quality criteria for trash or approved testing methodologies for trash to be evaluated as a pollutant, and the World Economic Forum recently reported that there will be more plastics in our oceans than fish by 2050. Additionally, Pennsylvania is also the largest importer of trash from other states in the nation, adding to an already growing landfill problem within the Commonwealth. The second breakout session Golod attended was Watershed-Wide Planning, participating in the Flexible Flow Management Program group in which the participants were asked to break up into groups and strategize on how to move the CDRW's four main priorities forward. His group agreed that the FFMP should be viewed as an important watershed planning tool rather than just a water supply engineering plan. They discussed how the CDRW and partner organizations can play a more meaningful role in the implementation of the FFMP. One of the biggest issues was trying to make the language of the FFMP less confusing and more understandable to the average reader. Another was having the CDRW form a subcommittee with a basin

wide representation to implement a work plan in order to put into motion the suggestions that were brought up during their session. The third breakout session Golod attended was How to Leverage Non-Traditional Partnerships for Watershed Protection. He said it was a great panel because it focused specifically on the Upper Delaware at the Main Stem. In June 2006 flooding cut the Towns of Hancock and Deposit off from all sides for days. As the communities began to rebuild they started to look to NYC and the Decree Party members to address reservoir levels during wet seasons as a measure to provide some flood relief and protection. While this was occurring Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) was looking to NYC and the Decree Party members to address releases to protect the fish habitat from thermal stress during the summer months. Peckham said before we go any further, after the 2006 flood FUDR threatened to sue the Town because the way they were cleaning the creeks trying to get to people's houses. Peckham said he was cut off for a week. The Town of Hancock hired Lancaster Development, a giant operation out of Albany. There were sections of roads there were completely gone so Lancaster Development came in and started building roads. Peckham said it's just been the last few years that FUDR has gotten back in favor with the Town again. Golod said this was also before they had a storefront on Main Street. Golod said if there was anything good that could come out of this flood this common goal opened a line of communication between the community and FUDR leading to the formation of the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition (UDRTC). Golod has mentioned previously in the WU/RM meetings the Stream Corridor Restoration Plan which is a non-regulatory plan that was the impetus of the UDRTC. The whole process of FUDR coming to the table to talk to NYC and the Decree Parties about water releases along with the Towns of Hancock and Deposit highlighted there was a gap in the Delaware system where NYC's watershed ends and the Upper Delaware begins. The UDRTC has helped heal some of the wounds and enhanced relationships with the governmental entities in the region and the environmental/conservation groups working in the region. Something this conference implemented this year was Municipal Awards. Golod mentioned Art Merrill, Supervisor from the Town of Colchester, was honored. In the last six months, the Town of Colchester has received funding from the State of New York and the Federal Government, which has been matched to implement a series of projects along the East Branch of the Delaware River and Downs Brook, a tributary that crosses under Main Street in the Hamlet of Downsville. The work includes improvement of water quality through berm removal and floodplain reconnection, bank stabilization, and native plantings, as well as several related community benefits, including development of a walking trail and a boat launch. Golod said the rest of the report can be read at one's leisure.

10/22 DRBC Water Management Advisory Committee Report: The DRBC Water Management Advisory Committee meets quarterly and this was the 10/22 meeting. Golod participates via teleconference. Some brief highlights: the hydrological conditions as of 10/15, the Upper Basin had experienced normal to abnormally dry periods of rainfall towards the end of the summer and into the fall with a precipitation of -7 inches. Then 10/16 and 10/20 brought two major rain events that help bring the precipitation levels back up. Streamflow at the USGS gages indicated flows were normal but dipping slightly below the daily median flow in September and early October. Total NYC reservoir storage was approximately 62% of usable capacity and the lower basin storage pools in Beltzville and Blue Marsh were nearly at 100%. As of 10/22 the salt front was at River Mile 81 which is compared to its normal location at River Mile 72 for that time of year. As of 10/10 ground levels for USGS monitoring wells in Wayne County indicated normal to slightly drought watch levels. The Water Use Update: In 2017 total water withdrawals in the basin were 6,389 million gallons per day which is a drop from 2016's 6,565 million per day. The next proposed 2020 meetings for the Water Management Advisory Committee are February 20, June 18, October 22, and June 2020. Memberships expire in January. If UDC chooses to continue the DRBC will require a letter of intent.

10/23 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Quarterly Meeting Report: This quarterly meeting took place in Rosendale, which features an attraction called the Widow Jane Mine, where they hold acoustic performances and the sound of flowing water can be heard. It was time to elect a chair and vice-chair. Nominations were made for Bill Merchant as chair, and Cliff Robinson, Jr. as vice-chair. That election will take place in January. A problem was brought up about the National Historic Landmark designation that five sites have been under since the 1960s. That includes High Falls, Cuddebackville, Minisink Ford, Honesdale and Algerville. Back then when the nomination was written up they didn't include any specific structures on those sites. Now that's proving to be a problem because one of the sites in Cuddebackville is trying to get a state grant to do some repairs of buildings there but because the buildings were not identified on a survey map they can't get the grant. Now they are scrambling to get the paperwork and order any direct consultants to do it proper to go back in time and do it properly The NPS is assisting through Lauren Hauptman's efforts. There's also a problem with the D&H website. The webmaster moved away

and didn't provide the access information for the maintenance of the website. They have someone who is willing to take over the website but can't do anything with the site as is. There is talk about one more effort of trying to contact him or starting a new website. 2025 will be the 200th anniversary of the year they started constructing the D&H canal which then took about three years to complete and go in to operation. They will start planning for that. For the 100th anniversary was in 1998, they held a bike ride to take a chunk of coal from Carbondale all the way to New York City and present it to the mayor. They were talking about looking at significant dates in the history of the D&H canal and re-creating those. Filming is underway for chapter 4 of the series of DVDs that the Council has undertaken. That will start at Port Jervis and go to roughly to Spring Glen, New York. There will be a fifth and final DVD that will cover all of Ulster County. At that point it will be fully covered from Carbondale to Kingston. The next meeting is in Port Jervis on 1/22/20.

11/4 Relicensing Eagle Creek Renewable Energy's Mongaup River Hydroelectric Project: Ramie provided a handout on the FERC relicensing of Eagle Creek. She said Hamilton is our best source of information. Hamilton said he has been on conference calls with Fish and Wildlife Service and the most recent discussions have been about flow scenarios and plugging in different modeling.

11/14 Scenic Wild Delaware River Geotourism Stewardship Council Report: The group met at Narrowsburg Union and Paparella also accepted the invitation. There are 12 participants including five staff members from the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). Ramie said they are trying their hardest to keep the initiative going. The main product is an interactive website at Scenic Wild Delaware River.com that provides a listing of local, natural, and authentic attractions and businesses that are of the mom and pop variety. It is by local people making recommendations to travelers about what you'll experience if you come to visit this nine-county region of the Upper and Middle Delaware. NPCA's proposal to the William Penn Foundation for funding for this initiative was denied. That means that there will be a less capacity to invest into program staffing and we need to discuss how to cut back or find other sources of funding. They would continue to engage and advocate for causes. The website is going to be updated. It's still affiliated with National Geographic and one of their 23 Geotourism regions across the world but there will be more local control over the website in terms of its content. They will be able to customize it so it will be faster and more efficient and cheaper to operate. There are still trying to grow other social media platforms on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. They use Google ads to try to drive traffic to the website. They went over some potential topics for workshops mostly on the theme of sustainability, ecotourism etc. Molly Oliver from Friends of the Upper Delaware River gave an overview of the Upper Delaware River Conservation grants. They also mentioned the Delaware Water Gap Recreation Area Visitor Use Management Plan which is controversial because of proposals for fees and tolls. That plan is publicly available and they are accepting comments until December 6.

They also spoke about the Regional Haze Plan. By 2060 all national parks must have clear air that is original to the parks. They have to show what their plans are to reduce air pollution. That is also something that the NPCA is going to comment on. It's under the Clean Air Act and requires federal and state agencies as well as stakeholders to work together to restore clear skies at national parks like Yosemite, Grand Canyon, and the great Smoky Mountains, protecting millions of visitors and surrounding communities from air pollution. Ramie mentioned in 2016, the Obama administration proposed guidance to help the states more effectively meet their obligations, under the Regional Haze Plan. Haze pollution obscures views and harms nearly 90% our nations precious park sites. On average visitors to national parks are missing out on 50 miles of scenery, equivalent to the length of Rhode Island. Haze also poses a health risk to some of the 330 million people who visit our parks each year as well as the communities that surround the parks and is exacerbated by the most serious problem of our time climate change. There are bills before Congress called Restore Our Parks which would provide funding for the Park Service particularly for the maintenance backlog. Ramie provided a handout for the New York breakdown for "Restore Our Parks". They also provide statistics for Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The legislation in the House and Senate has pretty good bipartisan support. Congressman Delgado is firmly behind the bill. Paparella said he's glad they are having these meetings promoting geotourism. He feels it will help bring tourists to the area that will care about it and want to explore it for more than one attraction. Ramie said they were very excited to hear about Paparella's Upper Delaware Recreation Project.

Upper Delaware Sweep in 2020: Ramie said this is Andy Boyar's initiative and he has said he would like to hold another meeting perhaps sometime over the winter as we have only had those two round table sessions. Ramie also wrote about it in the newsletter and hopes that will stir some interest. She said other leadership is needed as the UDC Awards Banquet is also set for April 2020. Dudko asked to keep this matter on the agenda for next month.

Other: None.

New Business

Announcement of 11/29 Upper Delaware Recreation Project and ENGN Sponsorship of an Upper Delaware/Lackawaxen Litter Pluck: Paparella is trying to promote an area wide litter pluck on Black Friday. This initiative was started by REI which is a big outdoor sports equipment company. For years, they have given their entire staff off for this. They have been promoting doing litter plucks across the nation. Paparella said he would likely be leading a group near the Upper Delaware or Lackawaxen by the rivers and major tributaries. A time is to be determined. He has posted the event under his Facebook group page Upper Delaware Recreation Project and was looking for sponsors to share the event like the Callicoon group ENGN. If anyone knows of problem areas along the byway with a lot of litter, reach out to him. Henry told Paparella to reach out to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council as they are very instrumental in cleaning up trash sites on property. Golod said the UDC's contact is Palmira Miller.

9/24 SCD Article: "Project to Reshape River Access Earns \$250,000 Grant": Ramie provided a handout for a Delaware Watershed Conservation grant that Sullivan County obtained for the Highland access. They already had it engineered but lacked implementation funding. They can't start work until they have the contract in place and Heather Jacksy is the coordinator.

10/3 News Release: "Gov. Cuomo Announces Launch of Innovative Pilot Project to Compact Harmful Algal Bloom: Golod said harmful algal blooms are an issue around here especially on lakes. Sullivan County has quite a few areas but they are not in the designated river corridor. Governor Cuomo launched an innovative new pilot project to prevent harmful algal blooms in the village of South Hampton's Agawam lake. He's proposing to have a mobile algae harvester that will separate algae and other substances from the water and return the resulting filtered and improved water to the lake to abate the harmful algal blooms. Ramie said Lake Huntington in Cochection has been battling this.

11/11 TH-R Article: "State Issues Insect Warning": Ramie provided another article on Spotted Lanternfly. It says there isn't an infestation in NY yet but they have found individual Spotted Lanternfly in Orange and Sullivan Counties.

11/14 TH-R Article: "Catskill Aqueduct Shut Down for 10 Weeks of Repairs: Ramie provided an article on the Catskill Aqueduct. NYC DEP had talked to UDC about biofilm and Ramie found that interesting. Henry said they were going to close down from Cannonsville and if it was high enough they were going to release it down the Main stem. He suggested getting the most current information from Adam Bosch of NYC DEP.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report: A copy of the 11/18 NYC Current Reservoir Levels was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 80.4%, normal for the same date is 79.1%. Average precipitation for November .29 inches and the historical record for November was 1.94 inches.

Other: Henry found a 2002 article for the highest waterfall in Pennsylvania which is Darbytown falls. Henry brought up how Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission changed Darbytown to Narrowsburg on the river access sign. He suggested checking to see if UDC is able to use some of the PA DCED grant money to give the state of Pennsylvania money to change back to Darbytown. It saddens him to lose our local history. Golod said he has got a call from a volunteer for the Damascus Ambulance Corps saying they received a call from the Narrowsburg access when it was actually at Landers Access in NY.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Case, seconded by Jeffer, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. was carried.