

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2020

Committee Members Present: Andy Boyar, Ginny Dudko, Al Henry, Fred Peckham, Evan Padua.
Committee Members Absent: Pat Jeffer
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Shannon Cilento, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Guests: None.

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, December 15th, 2020. Chairperson Boyar authorized Vice-chairperson Dudko to run the meeting. Dudko called the meeting to order at 8:15 p.m.

A motion by Henry, seconded by Boyar approving the November 17th, 2020 amended meeting minutes carried.

Old Business

11/19 & 12/15 Delaware River Sojourn Meeting: Cilento said planning continues for the third week in June 2021. They have also proposed the second week in August as a fall back date. Cilento confirmed that the Sojourn will be working with both PA and NY politicians this year. Congressman Antonio Delgado is confirmed and they are working to get some local politicians as well. The logo was shared at the meeting and the theme this year is focus on fish. There are seven specific Delaware River fish splayed out in a sunshine design. Sandy Schultz on the committee is an artist and designed the logo. Merchandise with the logo will be sold at the event. Cilento will keep the committee updated on the progress of the event.

11/23 Bioblitz Meeting Report: A site has been picked in Damascus Township on the ridgeline. It's owned by Kathy Dodge and Peter Snyder and has some diverse ecosystems and habitats. Cilento said they believe the event will happen over a few weekends in June and July 2021 because of COVID. It will be different teams working at different times. It's anticipated that the Van Scott Nature Preserve in Beach Lake will be the site for the next Bioblitz.

12/4 NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets Spotted Lanternfly Webinar: Ramie took part in the webinar with 20 participants. Two staff members from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets gave the presentation. Ramie said there isn't much as far as updates but this issue has been well publicized. The agency had particular concern on Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) damage to agriculture such as vineyards and the types of plants on which the SLF likes to feed. They did point out that there have been sightings in Port Jervis. It was also confirmed in Lake Superior State Park in Bethel, NY. Through the Scenic Byway organizations, they sent out SLF scraper information cards. You can use the information card to scrape egg masses and destroy them. Ramie has a box of 400 to distribute. The idea was for highway departments to receive them because rusted metal surfaces are one of the primary places SLF likes to lay its eggs. If anyone is interested in the SLF information cards please let Ramie know how many you would like. There is a recording of the 12/4 presentation available if anyone is interested in viewing it. Boyar suggested reaching out to Bethel Supervisor Dan Sturm to see if he would like any SLF information cards.

12/7 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting Minutes: Ramie said the majority of the meeting was spent on initiating an update of the 2002 Enhancement Concept Corridor Management Plan. A PowerPoint presentation was given by Freda Eisenberg and Heather Jacksy from Sullivan County Planning. Ramie has a copy of the PowerPoint presentation if anyone would like more details. Discussion on a format and how it can be action-oriented are goals. It must also comply with requirements of the NYS Scenic Byway system.

In the interest of time Ramie invites the committee to review the minutes. The next meeting is 1/25.

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2021 Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Event Planning: Ramie said in your meeting packets is a draft letter that Cilento is proposing we send out to start soliciting volunteers that we've dubbed "Litter Leaders". Ramie said Boyar's approach was that the Litter Leaders would be captains. We will send this to all participating municipalities as well as the two non-participating Townships. Ramie said if they can help us that's a start; if they cannot we will simultaneously put this notice out through social media channels and through a press release to reach the public. A Motion by Henry seconded by Padua to approve the draft letter soliciting volunteers for the 2021 Upper Delaware Litter Sweep carried.

Ten Mile River Access Boat Ramp Structural Engineering Plan: Ramie said since we've had our presentation by Eric Baird at JHA Companies in November we had some follow-up questions we asked him to get back to us on. Ramie last contacted him on 12/10 and is still waiting to hear back from him. Baird's tasks are to come up with cost estimates for the work that they outlined in the design plan as well as the permitting requirements. In the meantime, the Alliance for the Upper Delaware Watershed had asked for environmental and conservation projects that would benefit from state funding and this was a project Ramie presented to them. The tough part was she did not have a price tag associated with building the boat ramp. Padua said let's say JHA Companies comes back with a really high estimate for the boat ramp and we don't get funding from the state. He said it was brought up last summer that NPS had overstepped by limiting the trailers at Ten Mile River (TMR). He wondered if there is a way to reach an agreement on what is tolerated at the TMR access if it remains in the same state it is in right now. Padua said he is all for progression and improving the access. Ramie said NPS did agree to put a stay on any enforcement at the TMR access and focus on education at this stage. NPS challenged the UDC to come up with an alternative solution. She said even if they reject it they aren't the final arbiters of it since they don't own the site. Ramie said we have done our due diligence of trying to come up with an alternative. Henry said with the new Superintendent coming in this subject would be important to update him on. He said hopefully they can take a different enforcement posture to make it more realistic.

Henry said if JHA Companies is not responding he will reach out to them. They are in a contract with UDC and need to get something to us rather than a delay.

Other: None.

New Business

NYS DEC Draft Trout Management Plan Regulations: Padua said he pretty much agrees with what they are doing with the new proposed regulations. He doesn't really catch-to-kill trout on a regular basis so he is fine with the one trout between 12-16 inches. He said he thinks it's a little funny that the Upper East Branch of the Beaverkill has been stocked for some time will be considered a Wild Fishery. He's all for a healthy ecosystem so overall he agrees with most of the regulations. Peckham said he has an opinion and everyone probably knows it already. He said they are also going to stop stocking in PA along the Main Stem. A lot of people go fishing in those tributaries. Peckham feels that when those meetings were held many locals weren't aware of them. He feels it's special interests and doesn't need to be done. Peckham said to have catch-and-release and have a little kid catch a 23-inch trout, they would want to take that home. He said they are overlooking a lot to push the anglers downriver away from the West Branch to the East Branch. Peckham says he opposes this. Boyar said the trout is an economic driver and if you do run a sports shop or drift boat this money from outside the area is called an economic engine. For locals that fish there is no economic impact on walleye, perch, shad, or eels. It's a compromise where there's no catch-and-release on those other fishes. Boyar said the economic value of trout has been demonstrated time and time again. He said there is a difference of opinion. Padua said dwarf wedgemussel studies were brought up a year ago that influence thermal mitigation releases. He said there's no mention of the dwarf wedgemussel in the Draft Trout Management Plan. Padua said he finds it extremely disrespectful that all the people that surveyed the river for the past three years cared only about trout. Padua told them about all fish he came across. Hamilton said NPS advocated for flow targets based on keeping fully or minimally wetted perimeter at Callicoon to keep dwarf wedgemussels to watered. They haven't pushed a temperature target there. It appears that they are quite benefited by groundwater upwelling in the locations that they are in. They probably have more influence on their survival in terms of temperature than water in the water column itself. They definitely need to keep water over them so they don't become dewatered. Ramie said with this proposal the comments are due by 1/25. If committee members see fit this draft letter can go to the 1/7 UDC meeting to be voted on. Padua feels UDC should write a letter in support of the regulations. He agrees the trout are an economic booster. If there was a downside it would be the lack of recognition of native fish species in the Upper Delaware River. Henry suggested Cilento adding the collective thoughts to the draft letter. Boyar didn't

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want the opportunity to pass by to say the concept of the young kid fishing and catching a large trout that had nothing to show for it. The whole idea about catch-and-release is to gently lift it from the water, get a picture of the smiling child, and fish and release the fish back. The child will have that photo and memory for the rest of their life. Cilento said the both she and Hall-Bagdonas grew up fishing and understood the importance of catch-and-release and both still love to fish. A Motion by Henry seconded by Boyar to forward the draft NYS DEC Draft Trout Management Plan Regulations to members to be voted on at the 1/7 meeting carried with one abstention. Hamilton said in a word of clarification in describing native fish, smallmouth bass and walleye are not native to the Upper Delaware either. Henry suggested wordsmithing to say “other fish species”. Hamilton suggested saying “naturalized”. Cilento said she would send it out for review to the WU/RM committee to review before the full council meeting.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: A copy of the 12/14 DRBC Hydrologic Conditions Report was provided in members’ packets. Total combined storage was at 72.1.%.

Other: None.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Henry seconded by Boyar, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas 1/7/2021