

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2015

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, Pat Jeffer, Al Henry, Andy Boyar, John McKay
Committee Members Absent: None
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Cindy Odell, Travis O'Dell
Guests: Jeff Dexter

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 15, 2015 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:28 p.m. A motion by Boyar seconded by Jeffer to approve the October 20 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business

NPS Geology Mapping October 30 Meeting Update: O'Dell reported that this meeting took place with individuals from the New York State Museum. He noted that The New York State Geological and Natural History Survey was established by the New York State Legislature in 1836. Geological research has been conducted continuously since then and has remained an important component of the State Cabinet of Natural History, established in 1842 and later renamed the New York State Museum in 1870. The New York State Geological Survey (NYSGS) is a bureau of the State Museum in the State Education Department. A team will be mapping the geology of the Upper Delaware. The project will be introduced to the full Council at its January meeting, O'Dell noted. Heister added that this is a standard inventory that all units of the National Park Service with significant natural resources are to have. She added she requested this inventory as a result of a recommendation from this committee.

Delaware Company "Future of History" November 14 Forum Update: Ramie referred to the handouts in members' packets which included a cover letter explaining who the sponsors of the event were and the program schedule. She said the event was attended by approximately 70 participants. Ramie mentioned some of the topics that were covered, and noted that NPS Superintendent Kris Heister spoke about the National Park Service's history focus and the upcoming 2016 Centennial. Ramie said the program organizers, The Delaware Company, were pleased with the turnout and stated that it may become an annual event. Boyar questioned where the event was held. Ramie replied Sullivan County Community College in Loch Sheldrake, NY.

November 19 Water Census Webinar Update: O'Dell referred to the written report in members' packets. He noted that the National Water Census has been a three year study of the Delaware River Basin whose primary goal was to provide stakeholders and water-resource managers with technical information to answer the two basic questions of: does the nation have enough freshwater to meet both human and ecological needs?; and will this water be present to meet future needs? A final report is anticipated to be complete by January 2016, he added. O'Dell said his report contains a list of those who provided updates during the November 19 webinar and the subject that they covered. Information about this project, as well as the final report once available, can be found at

www.water.usgs.gov/watercensus/delaware.html. Boyar suggested that this report may become a valuable tool in the debate about whether there should be thermal releases in times of thermal stress for the Delaware River.

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway November 23 Meeting Update: Ramie said the minutes from this meeting were provided in members' packets.

DRBC RFAC December 3 Meeting Report & December 15 Strategy Call Update: O'Dell noted that a report regarding the December 3rd meeting was provided at the December 3rd full Council meeting. The purpose of the December 15 follow-up call was to develop a strategy moving forward to address some of the issues that were raised at the December 3rd meeting. O'Dell listed some of the call participants and

shared his thoughts. He noted that the State of New Jersey and New York City are at odds when it comes to certain issues. He feels that it needs to be figured out how to get all of the Principals to talk with one another in a transparent manner in order to develop future decisions regarding flows on the Upper Delaware. Ramie said that she and O'Dell made statements on behalf of the UDC at the December 3rd RFAC meeting. She suggested that a letter could be sent to the Principals to encapsulate the points that were made at that meeting. A brief discussion about the October 2013 FFMP Public Listening Session that took place at SUNY Sullivan took place. Boyar feels it is important for the UDC to stay on top of the Principals. The changes to the FFMP that are being requested benefit the river and benefit the ecology. He noted that a big part of the summer economy and overall economy in the area is based on the river. He stated there is no sensitivity to the overall impact of low water on holidays and weekends. All of these issues should be talked about, Boyar added. He feels the entire process is being held hostage by the State of New Jersey which wants an entire re-work of a fair allocation. Boyar urged the Council and the Water Use/Resource Management Committee in particular to stay on top of what he referred to as a "mis-use" of water. Henry agreed it is time for a letter to be written. He added that if the desire is to really draw attention to these issues, he feels people corridor-wide need to start writing to their elected officials and starting petitions. Ritter agreed that "grassroots activism" is needed. After more discussion a motion to draft a letter to the Decree Party Principals (directed to the four basin state governors and NYC mayor, with appropriate courtesy copies) which summarizes the UDC's positions as stated at the December 3rd DRBC Regulated Flow Advisory Committee meeting and requests setting a forum well in advance of the May 31, 2016 expiration of the current Flexible Flows Management Program for the negotiating parties to directly hear input from public interests was made by Henry. A brief discussion regarding the operating of the New York City water system and the difference of opinions between NYC and New Jersey took place. New Jersey is looking at NYC's whole water system and saying that they want more water that they feel is available. Ramie said a letter will be drafted and sent out in advance of the January full Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Boyar. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

National Geographic Geotourism Council December 7 Call Update: Ramie said this call was held to discuss the status of the nominations. Public nominations for the interactive MapGuide website will be accepted through Jan. 15, 2016 at DelawareRiver.natgeotourism.com. The site will launch in May 2016. She submitted a nomination for the UDC's Raft Trip recently. A meeting of the Stewardship Council will take place in January, Ramie noted. At that time, nominations will be reviewed to ensure that they meet the criteria of being distinctive and authentic to this region. Recommendations for interviews will also be discussed at this January meeting. Ramie stated that opportunities to arrange public meetings where the project goals and nomination process can be explained are still available.

Sullivan County Trail Committee December 8 Meeting Update: Ramie reported that a presentation by Helen Budrock of Sullivan Renaissance was given about their new program for 2016 which is called Healthy Communities Initiative. Healthy Communities is a growing trend focusing on policy changes at the local level that support healthy eating and active living in one's community. Grants ranging from \$500 up to \$2,500 will be available. Ramie listed some of the projects that would be considered for this funding and the timeframe for this program.

Ramie noted that the Catskills Challenge was discussed at this meeting.

The next meeting of this committee is scheduled for January 12, 2016, Ramie stated.

Other: Ritter referred to the December 9th email from Heather Jacksy of Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management provided in members' packets. The email contains an update on the Long Eddy Access. O'Dell said that was provided for informational purposes.

Henry made a motion that a letter be sent to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission requesting that they officially use the historic name of Darbytown for their access located on Route 652 just across the NY/PA bridge rather than the inaccurate "Narrowsburg, PA". The motion was seconded by Boyar. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Henry said he recently met with Palmira Miller, Program Coordinator in the Northeast regional office of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council. He noted they have money available to clean up dumpsites, particularly those that are located near waterways. He shared details of his meeting and spoke of potential sites that are scheduled for cleanup through the program of the Pennsylvania Environmental

Council. For more information, Miller can be contacted at 570-592-7876 or via email at pmiller@pecpa.org.

New Business

NYC DEP November 25, 2015 Response Letter: Public Safety Below Cannonsville, Pepacton and Neversink Reservoirs (Referred by full Council at December 3rd Meeting): Ramie noted that this letter was referred back to the WU/RM Committee to see if any further action was desired. A copy of the letter was included in members' packets. Ramie referred to the last paragraph of the letter where it stated, "Should the Upper Delaware Council desire to participate in these exercises, please contact Paul Bennett, Chief – Emergency Planning, DEP Bureau of Water Supply at pbennett@dep.nyc.gov / (845) 340-7843." She added that she heard from Town of Delaware Supervisor Ed Sykes that he would be interested "in a drill of all our towns' emergency managers including fire departments, highway superintendents, radio and TV media, and supervisors. The EAP (emergency action plan) must consider the small amount of time that will be given." Henry spoke of notification drills and how the testing is conducted. He suggested that a tabletop exercise would be the most beneficial as it demonstrates how the Emergency Action Plan actually works. Ritter stated it was an "eye opener" when Paul Rush of NYC DEP shared the inundation maps after the Cannonsville Reservoir incident this past summer. After a brief discussion, a motion to draft a letter to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection offering to facilitate a Dam Emergency Action Plan Tabletop Exercise for the river valley counties and local governments for action at the January 7th full Council meeting was made by Henry, seconded by Boyar and carried.

Pond Eddy Bridge Repairs & Skinners Falls Bridge Closure: Ramie reported that the emergency repairs that started on December 8th are designed to bring the bridge back up to the 7-ton weight limit. Work is being conducted by Nyleve Bridge Corp. and is expected to be completed by the second week of January. The work schedule will be 6 days a week, weather permitting, and cars are only able to cross before 8 a.m., between 12 and 1 p.m., and after 5 p.m. on those days that they are working.

Ramie reported that the 114-year-old Skinners Falls Bridge, which spans the Delaware River between the Sullivan County Town of Cochection and Wayne County, Pa., will be closed indefinitely. An inspection revealed that the bridge's suspension wires were twisted and out of line, making the bridge unsafe to carry vehicles. She requested PennDOT put the UDC on their media alert list as she only learned of this closure after receiving a phone call from a reporter. This request has been honored. Ramie said that "is bad news that we have lost another Upper Delaware crossing."

Boyar questioned why there is not a visual uniform warning system up and down the river located on the bridges. Such a system could include information for all types of weather related issues and other emergencies. He noted this would be a good project for someone to undertake. Ritter noted that this discussion took place at the October WU/RM meeting where it was decided that that much information is available electronically and that an electronic gage (warning system) is not necessary. A lengthy discussion about the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and notification process took place. It was noted that the EAP pulls in a lot of different agencies to get the word out. Henry shared some personal experiences and knowledge from his time at Chief of Law Enforcement at Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River.

NPS November 24 Response Letter: Ten Mile River Access: Ritter referred to the copy of the letter provided in members' packets. Ramie noted it was a very thorough, well-researched response and she thanked Heister for her time devoted to answering our inquiry. Henry referred to the copy of the Ten Mile River Access Concept Plan for the TMR Access from the Sullivan County Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and questioned the success of it. Heister said it is a conceptual plan. Ritter said he thought a simple concrete pad at the access could help alleviate the trouble boaters have with the mud when they are entering or exiting the river at that spot. Heister said as the letter states the "NPS does not feel it is prudent to invest in capital improvements to the site." The reasoning is they have a land use agreement with the Greater New York Council, Boy Scouts of America, but do not own the property in question. Henry suggested an engineer could be sought to see if a concrete slab would rectify the mud situation, although he personally does not feel it will. The differences between New York and Pennsylvania accesses took place. It was noted that the Narrowsburg and Ten Mile River accesses are located in eddies. Ritter said he is just looking to see if there is some way to improve the access minimally so people don't have to deal with so much mud. After more discussion, O'Dell was directed to call Bill Rudge of NYS DEC to ask if the DEC has a hydraulic

engineer or similar professional available to inspect and offer recommendations for the potential improvement of the muddy condition at the Ten Mile River Access as an initial follow-up to the National Park Service's response letter on the subject.

Update on Barryville Access Signage: Ramie noted a letter dated September 29th had been sent to the DEC requesting that the signage identifying the Barryville Access as a public access be replaced. Boyar reported that NYS DEC and the Town of Highland are working out details regarding the signage and its placement. Henry questioned if any answer had been received from NYS DOT to questions raised during the October 21 meeting held at the UDC office. Ramie said no communication has been received. Henry asked if that could be followed up on. O'Dell said he will contact the NYS DOT to inquire about the status of the DOT's intended outreach to Fred Reber to provide him with options for his livery's use of the river access area under the Barryville-Shohola Bridge.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: Ritter reported that as of December 14th, the Cannonsville Reservoir is at 68.9% capacity with total storage at 80.1%. He added that the forecasted high for Christmas Day is 61 degrees.

Other: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Henry seconded by Jeffer to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 12/30/15