

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
February 2, 2017

(Re-scheduled from January 17, 2017)

Committee Members Present:	Pat Jeffer, Al Henry, Fred Peckham, Doug Case, Jim Greier
Committee Members Absent:	Tony Ritter, Andy Boyar, Debra Conway
NPS Partner:	Don Hamilton, Carla Hahn, Larry Neal
Staff:	Laurie Ramie, Cindy Odell, Pete Golod
Guests:	Larry Richardson, Harold Roeder, Dave Dean, Susan Sullivan, Jim Barth, Ginny Dudko, Aaron Robinson, Jeff Dexter (6:12 p.m.)

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Thursday, February 2, 2017 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. This meeting was re-scheduled from January 17 as that meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

Election of Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2017: Henry made a motion to open the floor for elections. A motion to nominate Peckham as Chairperson for the WU/RM Committee for 2017 was made by Henry and seconded by Greier. Peckham was elected by voice vote. Henry made a motion to nominate Pat Jeffer for Vice-Chairperson for 2017 and Greier seconded the motion. Jeffer was elected by voice vote. Peckham conducted the meeting.

A motion by Jeffer seconded by Henry to approve the December 20 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Scenic Wild Delaware River Marketing Committee January 12 Call Update & January 17 Geotourism Stewardship Call Update: Ramie shared some details from these calls and noted that a group bus tour marketing flyer was mailed out to members in their packets from the cancelled January 17th meeting. She stated that the National Geographic's Maps Division will not be accepting any new Geotourism projects and will be transitioning maintenance of the existing MapGuide websites to contractors. This change is the result of the sale of National Geographic to Rupert Murdoch, she explained. The logo branding and support will remain active and there won't be any outward change to the site. Ramie noted that John Beljean, the National Parks Conservation Association's Delaware River Field Representative who had given the UDC its first presentation on the Geotourism project back on September 3, 2015, has tendered his resignation effective February 1st to return to business coaching and will be a part-time ranger at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. She reported that the UDC hosted an Upper Delaware Focus Group meeting on behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association at the UDC office on Wednesday, February 1. Joy Oakes, the Senior Director for the Mid-Atlantic Region, wanted to obtain feedback on the Scenic Wild Delaware River initiative in terms of what's working and what needs attention. Ramie spoke of the direct link now in place for easier recall of the website address at www.scenicwilddelawareriver.com.

January 13 Delaware River Basin Conservation Act Conference Call Update: Ramie said this call was arranged by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with a few partners to brainstorm early steps for the program described in the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act (DRBCA). In particular, discussion centered on determining the appropriate partners to be involved in shaping a shared vision and developing a framework for action. The legislation specifically directs the USFWS to consult with the Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as federal agencies. The National Park Service is not on the list, but the Fish and Wildlife Service do recognize that in the Upper, Middle, and Lower Delaware, the Park Service has a large presence there and they will "involve them to the extent of their interest." The framework for this program needs to be up and running by June 1, 2017, Ramie stated. She said she will continue to follow this program and provide updates when they are available.

Other: None

New Business

Upper Delaware River Height Signs Discussion: National Park Service Chief Ranger/ Law Enforcement Supervisor Larry Neal provided several copies of photos of bridges containing river height signs or the remnants of those signs and of a sample of the information kiosks at accesses up and down the river. He noted that these signs had been installed on the bridges in the past to give visitors a visual marker of the river height. Neal spoke of the river height signs on the Damascus and Skinners Falls Bridges, noting that they have not held up as a result of river ice. He referred to the Barryville Bridge river height sign stating that this one has held up since the construction of the new bridge, but noting that it is adjacent to an access that is not widely used and only seen by a fraction of the river users as it is on the abutment facing the New York side only. Neal referred to the picture of one of the NPS information boards stating they all contain information for calling the 24-hour River Information hotline which is updated daily April through October. Neal also shared a copy of the NPS Upper Delaware "Planning Your River Trip" brochure available at many accesses. Neal stated, "Ultimately the signs on the bridges were a catastrophic failure in my mind." He added that there is no agreement in place regarding placing the signs on the bridges. He said that the NPS management team has decided unanimously not to re-hang the signs on the bridges and stated the reasons being they have not lasted; it is labor-intensive for DOT to install them and the Park Service does not have the manpower or equipment to install them, nor do they have the approval of the engineers to drill holes on the bridges. Neal said the new Pond Eddy bridge currently under construction is slated to have one of the river height signs installed on it. He does not see the need as there is not going to be an access site there and only a fraction of the people going down the river will see it as it is only to be installed on one side of the pier and not both. Neal asked members for their opinions on the river height signs. Case thinks it is a good idea to have the gages as visitors don't realize if the river is high or low. Dudko noted that visitors need to obtain the river height information before they get on the river. Sullivan said it is her opinion that the Park Service providing the daily river information on the hotline is the most effective thing they can do. Henry stated that this matter should be deferred to the February 21 committee meeting for further discussion. Hahn said that the Pond Eddy Bridge construction team has asked the NPS for the signage to install on the bridge and a decision on whether to move forward with installing them or not must be made by March 6. Henry stated that signage recessed into the piers is protected and more likely to last longer. Neal said he understands that visitors are not seeing the river height signs and those who do, do not know what they mean. He asked if it is a necessity to put them back on there just to keep replacing them over time? Members agreed to discuss this further at the February 21 committee meeting.

Superintendent's Compendium Proposal: Prohibit Glass Containers: Neal referred to the copy of the signage hung at accesses over the years requesting that no glass containers be taken on or near the river. The signage does not say it is unlawful to have glass, it just highly advises against glass containers. Neal shared information on a July 4th incident at Skinners Falls involving a camp and many broken glass bottles. He referred to a draft of proposed language to be included in the Superintendent's Compendium. It reads, "The possession of glass containers is prohibited on the river and to the ordinary high water mark. This condition is determined necessary to ensure public safety on the river. There is a history of glass containers breaking in the river, on the rocky shoreline, gravel bars and islands. Broken glass shards are difficult to clean up. The river is frequented by swimmers and boaters who are generally barefooted. Broken glass has caused numerous injuries over the years." After a brief discussion, a motion to support the addition of language to the Superintendent's Compendium prohibiting glass containers on the river and to the ordinary high water mark was made by Case, seconded by Henry and carried unanimously. Neal said he would communicate that support to Superintendent Heister.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Report: A copy of the February 2nd NYC Current Reservoir Levels was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 77.1%. Normal for the same date is 88.1%.

Other: Ramie referred to the additional handouts in members' packets. The first is an informal update from New York State DOT on projects in Region 9 including bridges at Kellams Stalker, Callicoon, and Cochection, and work along Route 97.

The second handout was a copy of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council January 25th meeting minutes.

Ramie passed around copies of two booklets compiled by Ed Wesely of *The Milanville Bridge – from 1901 - 2017* and *The Milanville Historic District*. The copies are available in a pdf format upon request, she noted.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Greier, seconded by Case to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 2/15/17