

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
March 16, 2021

Committee Members Present: Ginny Dudko, Andy Boyar, Al Henry, Fred Peckham (phone),
Evan Padua (phone)
Committee Members Absent: Pat Jeffer
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Shannon Cilento, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton (phone)
Guests: NPS Superintendent Joe Salvatore (phone), Wayne Holmes- Boy
Scouts of America (phone)

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 16th, 2021 at the UDC office in Narrowsburg, NY. Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

A motion by Henry, seconded by Boyar approving the January 19th, 2021 meeting minutes carried. There were no questions on the February 16, 2021 notes (no quorum).

Old Business

Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Update: Hall-Bagdonas said on 3/12 Cilento sent an update out to Litter Leaders asking for: Dates and time of cleanups, ideally between 4/17 and 4/25; location of cleanups; information for attached flyers; and number of volunteers to help in preparing our t-shirt orders and supply numbers. Right now, we have leadership in all Town/ships except for Manchester. Cilento also supplied helpful information on trash disposal for Sullivan, Wayne and Pike Counties and information on TerraCycle. A proof from Chris at Platform Industries was provided in the meeting packets. The shirts are in safety green color and as we get the numbers from our Litter Leaders we will be able to secure the price for our shirts but right now it is about \$8.75 per shirt for 75-99 shirts. Per Boyar's request Cilento reached out to Jeff Bank seeking volunteers and monetary donations and sponsorships. Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas will be purchasing supplies for the event in coming weeks and are also working on the permits for NYSDOT and PennDOT. SUNY Sullivan had expressed interest in Cilento giving an informational presentation about the Upper Delaware S&RR that will not only inform students about this incredible resource but hopefully also solicit some litter volunteers. Cilento reached out to Ingrid Peterec at NPS for a potential partnership presentation.

Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas will be speaking with English teacher Bill Templeton and his National Honor Society students at Sullivan West. He is a Litter Leader for Town of Fremont. Hall-Bagdonas said they look forward to that Zoom meeting. Ramie wrote a press release (included in the meeting packet) and that was shared on social media. Ramie also shared the press release to the Upper Delaware Community Network and handfuls of people interested in this project have been reaching out in the last few days. Hall-Bagdonas asked if there is any discussion on the t-shirts. Chris from Platform Industries said on a good week production would take about two weeks. Ramie said she sees 250 shirts being the minimum order. Discussion continued. Boyar asked Cilento to ask if Jeff Bank could help be a monetary sponsor. A Motion by Henry seconded by Boyar to secure the order with Platform Industries for Upper Delaware Litter Sweep t-shirts carried.

Salvatore and Peckham said they were having issues hearing the discussion over the conference line phone.

Ten Mile River Access Update: Ramie said she was hoping to have Salvatore address this subject since we've had a setback. Salvatore said he was hoping to remove the prohibition of boat launching at Ten Mile River (TMR) Access. The email-chain of discussion about the issue ended up at the Regional Director's office after the UDC wrote her to appeal the ban. The Regional Director came back with her findings which supported the prohibition of trailered boats being launched. He was told since the Regional Director made that decision, he does not have the authority to overturn that decision. He spoke with the Regional Director and both he and staff agree to do the administrative paperwork to make this right. He has the paperwork ready to go with his reasons to overturn the decision with some strong justifications and it will likely be sent in this week. He expects it to be a minor

UDC Water Use/Resource Mgmt. Comm. Meeting Minutes 3-16-2021

speedbump. He hopes a turnaround of about two-weeks with their response. He said right now he cannot remove that from the Compendium since it came down from the Regional Director. Salvatore said he feels the Regional Director is going to support his and his staff's decision. He thanked Hamilton for writing support on this matter. Salvatore said they are not enforcing it and people can continue to trailer-boat launch without damaging the resources. Henry said when Jessica Weinman was Acting Superintendent, she put that in the Superintendent's Compendium, not the Regional Office. Salvatore said he just hired Weinman to be the Facility Manager at the park unit. Salvatore said when UDC sent a letter to the Regional Director and the Regional Director responded that means the Regional Director put a stamp on that decision. He's not allowed to overturn a decision his boss makes without her approval. Padua asked how will that affect moving forward on the improvements of TMR Access or is that a different topic? Salvatore said NPS doesn't own that property. They have a lease agreement with the Boy Scouts of America. He said he doesn't see that this would affect any of the boat ramp discussion at all.

2/18 NPS Water Safety Committee Report: Hall-Bagdonas and Cilento attended the 2/18 meeting via Microsoft Teams with Ingrid Peterec, Keith Winslow, Jamie Myers, Susie Kaspar, Brenden Dohn and Andy Weber from the NPS and Emily Borger of PA Fish and Boat Commission. 2020 was an unprecedented summer at Upper Delaware with the pandemic challenges and visitation much higher than we have ever seen. Delaware Water Gap was plagued with 5 drownings, although we had several near misses (Luke's Landing and Skinners), we were fortunate this past summer to continue another year without any drownings. Our proactive approach to water safety needs to continue so we can keep up this trend. Reish is retiring in a few short months. He said it is important for Upper Delaware to transition to the next Water Safety Program Manager those duties and that will require mentorship for a smooth transition. Salvatore said a top priority of the Unit right now is finding a replacement. Salvatore said they are making it a priority to get a new Law Enforcement Officer in for a smooth transition. 3/12 is the National Canoe Safety Patrol (NCSP) call with NPS to discuss lessons learned from 2020. Because of COVID NCSP participation last year was about 1/3 with 1,904 volunteers (the year before it was 5,176). 4/30 is the Annual Partners Meeting call. NCSP training weekend is 4/30-5/2. Code Red for high water alert will be discussed which would be a system to alert all liveries. Winslow said he's confident it will be ready by then. NPS is going to use the Risk Assessment Tool provided by the Office of Public Risk Management to assess whether they are going to put up their loaner life jacket stations. A press release will be going out for Water Safety Month (May). UDC will be one of the locations where lawn signs can be picked up and the other pickup site will be the Zane Grey Museum. The next meeting is scheduled for 3/25.

Salvatore said he made a decision today to not open the Zane Grey Museum this summer until further notice. He said there have been some modifications and they will likely not be able to hold on to as many interns because of the restrictions with COVID. He said he would rather err on the side of caution. He said the last time the museum was open they were only seeing about 20 visitors a day.

2/22 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Report: Ramie said minutes were provided in the meeting packet. She said the big news with the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) is that there is a restructuring proposal that has been submitted to the Sullivan County Legislature for funding. It would be well beyond what is typically given. The last few years was \$20,000-\$25,000 by the county. The new plan would be to professionalize the organization by hiring an Executive Director and a part time Executive Assistant to bolster the programs. In terms of marketing, they would hire a media company to do digital and print advertising buys. It would increase the grant programs for the Pollinator Environmental Grants, Signage Grants, Vista Clearing, and River Community Visitor Enhancements. Ramie said there was initial angst about this because the Chairperson put the proposal together without consulting the board. There was also a proposal that UDSB adopt a different organizational structure to include a board that would specialize in areas like real estate, marketing and promotion. Ramie said that the Town, Village and City representatives would take more of a secondary role as consultants or advisors. Ramie said that the Chairperson was told that loss of control would change the organization too significantly from what it was designated back in 2002. Ramie said ultimately, what was presented was a pared down version which would keep the board structure the same but hire an Executive Director and a part time Executive Assistant. It would be funded by a redistribution of the Hotel Occupancy Tax which currently 85% of that goes to the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association. A presentation was made on 3/11 before the Sullivan County Committee on Management and Budget. Ramie said they seemed receptive to the idea of a \$100,000 contribution. The caveat was they want a three-year commitment for the Executive Director. Ramie said staff could be based at the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitor Center which will be at the Callicoon Depot. The next meeting for UDSB will be 3/22. Henry said he would recommend to UDSB that they would contract because the funding may run out.

2/25 Eagle Creek Renewable Energy Final License Application Supp. Info.: Hamilton said they have an agreement in concept that is almost ready to go to their attorneys for legal language. Henry asked if there were any particulars relative to flows or releases? Hamilton said yes, they have some safeguards in place for the minimum flows in the river at Callicoon. It should provide a better current for recreational and aquatic life needs. Henry asked if that information could be forwarded to UDC. Boyar asked if there were minimum flows in the feeder streams (brook trout ridge) in the reservoir system? Hamilton said there are some protections in place for adequate flows and water quality within those regions.

3/9 Wayne/Pike Conservation Partnership Report: Cilento participated in the quarterly meeting of the Wayne/Pike Conservation Partnership (WPCP). She said there are a lot of good projects going on that are relevant to the UDC. The Landowner Outreach Committee of the WPCP is putting together a resource guide for Wayne and Pike County property owners including information related to nature resources such as agriculture, forestry, regulations, municipal contacts, etc. The Leadership Committee is working on creating some workshops on Recreation Planning. They are also supporting and help publicizing Earth Day events such as UDC's Upper Delaware Litter Sweep. They talked about the Terracycle program and explained when doing cleanups, you can separate the #1 plastics to be upcycled to a new product. Members of the WPCP also provide themed articles to *Connections Magazine*. It was discussed at the 3/9 meeting that Cilento could submit an article related to the UDC. Jessica Yoder from Pike County Planning talked about their trail project and survey which is under New Business. Cilento provided the schedule for the rest of the WPCP meetings and committee meetings in the meeting packet and she plans on participating in a few of those. She feels it would be a good way to make more contacts on the PA-side.

3/16 DRBC Water Management Advisory Committee Report: Ramie participated on this meeting via Zoom this morning at 10 a.m. They had 30 participants. An in-depth report of the hydrologic conditions was given where they mention trends and patterns. For the Winter 2020-2021 Season it had been a La Niña weather pattern with a more variable Jetstream that led to more storminess in the second half of the season. That means there was colder air and precipitation fell as snow. In February they had 5 or 6 storms in the basin which led to ice on the river with no major issues. A snowfall on 12/16-12/17 led the next week to a rain and snow melt on 12/24-12/25 that increased stream flow and the lower basin was at flood risk. After a recent 4-10" snowpack in the Upper basin one week ago; yesterday, there was less than 1" due to warmer temperatures above freezing 3/7-3/11. Stream flow began increasing and made its way to the lower basin. Since beginning of March, precipitation has been below average. 2018 and 2019 were above average for precipitation but below for 2020 and so far for 2021. Reservoir storage was between 80-90% for NYC now and groundwater is normal. There is no issue as far as drought outlook. In the coming weeks there will be early Spring snow in the upper basin and rain everywhere else. The 3-month outlooks has a 40-50% chance of above normal temperatures (48-60 degrees). They gave recent DRBC updates. They mentioned the 2/25 Special Meeting with the vote to prohibit high-volume hydraulic fracturing. The second part of that vote was to propose amendments to DRBC rules regarding exportation of wastewater by 9/30/2021. The next two Water Management Advisory Committee (WMAC) meetings are 6/17 and 10/21. DRBC has a public hearing on 5/12 and a business meeting on 6/9. All meetings are still virtual but that is subject to change. The meeting staff also discussed projections for public water supply and power generation.

2021 Upper Delaware BioBlitz Planning Update: Cilento said since this is sort of a virtual event each group is planning their own weekend or day for collection. 5/15-5/16 is set for the bird group, 6/26-6/27 for the botany group, 7/24-7/25 for the invertebrate group, and 9/9 for the mushroom and fungi group. Cilento said because it's able to happen between May-September the groups can pick certain times of year which may be better for locating certain species rather than just one weekend for all of them.

2021 Delaware River Sojourn Planning Update: Cilento said the biggest update regarding the 2021 Delaware River Sojourn is they have postponed it to 8/6-8/13 instead of holding it in June. They pushed it to August so more people would have their vaccinations and feel more comfortable. Days 0-4 are in the Upper Delaware corridor. There's going to be a pre-first day litter clean up at Hancock Fireman's Field. Cilento is helping to coordinate with Delaware Highlands Conservancy, NPS, and Friends of the Upper Delaware River. 8/7-8/10 they are featuring programming on Upper Delaware topics. Cilento will be giving a presentation on the UDC. Hamilton will also be giving a presentation for the event.

UDC Water Use/Resource Mgmt. Comm. Meeting Minutes 3-16-2021

Other: Padua asked if Hamilton could get documentation on the low flows from the Rio and Mongaup re: Eagle Creek Renewable Energy. Hamilton said he would forward that documentation.

New Business

NYS DEC Mongaup River Access Parking Lot Re-design: Ramie said this had come up again at the 3/4 UDC meeting because Henry asked Bill Rudge the status of it. UDC had established a River Traffic Public Safety Task Force at the end of last summer because of all of the increased usage by the public at the Hawks Nest and public accesses. One of the focuses would be on the Mongaup River Access. There was an over 40% increase in usage in 2019 to 2020. Even without the pandemic it had been increasing in use. UDC wrote the DEC on 9/25/2020 to ask if they had any solutions. Rudge and his staff did agree to look into the redesign of the parking lot which currently has space for 33 parked vehicles. Rudge followed up with NPS, saying he would like to have a site-visit in April. Ramie emphasized that the UDC would like to be part of that process as well. Salvatore asked to meet with Rudge next week and said this issue is brand new to him. Dudko said it wasn't just that parking lot; it was the whole area across Rt. 97 and people walking across the highway. Henry recommended they get a Town of Lumberland representative involved when Rudge and Salvatore meet. Salvatore suggested having a side-meeting that involved UDC and Ramie agreed it would be good to have the people involved from the last meeting.

3/30 Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge Virtual Public Meeting: Ramie has been reporting about the Project Advisory Committee that the UDC has a seat on and this is one of the outgrowths. Ramie said anyone that has an opinion of the fate of the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge can now participate. There will be a presentation first and then they will seek public input which will also trigger an online survey that will be open for about one month. Ramie noted that the link provided in the handout by PennDOT was not correct and she said the best strategy to provide comment is to participate in that meeting if you are interested. She said she did forward the information to Ed Wesley.

Lackawaxen River Corridor Trail Feasibility Study: Cilento said this past week we were made aware that the Pike County Division of Planning is heading a grant-funded project to study the feasibility of implementing a trail from Hawley, PA to Lackawaxen, PA at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers. Cilento said as a planner, she feels this is going to be a really great project that would connect Hawley to the Delaware River. She said she's looking forward to seeing where this project goes. They put out a survey for Public Input which she and Ramie took. It's a lot of questions about personal trail use. Cilento said if anyone is interested in taking the survey it's not long to complete and the public input would help inform them. She said she will keep the committee updated on that study. She could forward out details of the study to anyone that's interested. Ramie said we were also discussing having a presentation on this subject at an upcoming full Council meeting.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: A copy of the 3/15 DRBC Hydrological Conditions Report was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 87%.

Other: Henry said we should follow-up with JHA Companies on anything pending so we can close up our contract. Ramie said she is waiting to hear back on the permitting for the boat ramp.

Henry recommends staff contact Jeff Chorba regarding internet connectivity issues.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Boyar seconded by Henry, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. was carried.