

**WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 20, 2021**

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

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at the UDC office in Narrowsburg, NY. Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

A motion by Boyar, seconded by Henry approving the revised March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes carried.

**Old Business**

**Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Update:** Dudko recognized and thanked Boyar who got this whole project started. It was May 2019 he shared about the Cleanup on the Hudson River. She also thanked Dan Paparella, who got a lot of the groundwork going and then had to postpone due to COVID. She thanked Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas for taking on the project in 2021 and stepping up. She thanked Ramie for supporting this idea and doing a lot of behind-the-scenes work. Dudko said she's thankful for all of the Litter Leaders in all of the Town/ships and volunteers. Through the PA DCED grant we were able to use some of that money for this project. Cilento said we have only a handful of event t-shirts left. At this point it's now over 250 volunteers. This past weekend we've had five or six litter sweeps. We've also had some individual efforts over the week. Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas organized a clean-up in Westfall Township on Sunday morning at the Matamoras Boat Launch across from the Township building. With eight volunteers, the Westfall team gathered eight contractor bags of litter and three tires. Westfall Township helped with disposal and a police officer was also parked by where the Westfall group was plucking to help with speed control, which was very helpful. There has been great support from Senator Mike Martucci's office. We've been tagged in a ton of photos on social media and we still have one more weekend of events. Cilento said logistically it's been interesting because we are coordinating so many moving parts. At this point we have 20 organized events in the 15 town/ships. Cilento presented on the Project Review Workbook at Lackawaxen Township last night and they mentioned how great the first of their two events were with their Growing Lackawaxen team. At the Westfall event three of the volunteers wanted to be added to the mailing list and follow us on social media. Hall-Bagdonas said Platform Industries was so excited to make these event shirts and this local business gets to see all of these photos with volunteers wearing the shirts and that's great. At every litter pluck Cilento and Hall-Bagdonas have been at, people have slowed down and said "thank you". Hall-Bagdonas said she's grateful that Cilento spent time to send in the Sullivan Renaissance grant. We were able to relay to a lot of people the idea of borrowing the litter buckets and they are excited to have this year-round opportunity to borrow them and utilize a local trail or go on the river. Dudko asked what was the most interesting object found? Hall-Bagdonas said there always seems to be a baby seat discarded at every cleanup event. Dudko found huge heavy landing gear from a tractor trailer. Cilento said when we were about 2/10ths of a mile away from the Township building and rolling back two tires, a kind Samaritan stopped and said we could put them in the back of her car and expressed her appreciation. Boyar said he found a squashed orange Brooklyn Union gas traffic cone. Boyar said he would like to have a comprehensive email list; that could be one way to thank volunteers directly. It could also be a good way to share the NPS Microplastics Study that Hamilton provided. Cilento said that's a great idea and she hopes to get the estimated number of bags collected from each Litter Leader. Boyar said he was surprised by the number of medical masks he found littered. Cilento, Padua and Padua's wife Cherene were featured in the *Sullivan Democrat* article. Cilento and Padua were also featured on the *Sullivan County Democrat* Podcast that she shared on the UDC Facebook page and Instagram. She said this event has been really great to meet a lot of people, partners, and stakeholders.

**Ten Mile River Access Update:** Ramie said the way that we left this was Superintendent Salvatore told us that NPS is in the process of renewing the lease for Ten Mile River (TMR) with the Boy Scouts of America. That's the first step before the Regional Director could make a determination on overturning the prohibition on trailered boat

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launching. Ramie asked Hamilton if he could give an update on the status of that lease renewal. Hamilton relayed that Salvatore said there was some consternation at the regional office on the instrument that they are using that was provided by the Solicitor's office. They may have to revise that and is still being finalized. Holmes has seen the draft of the lease and the Boy Scouts of America are fine with the terms that are laid out in it. As far as he knows they are OK with where it stands and, as Hamilton said, they are just dotting the i's and crossing the t's. They are just waiting to get back the final copy.

**Friends of the Upper Delaware River Fall Redd Count Results:** Cilento provided a copy of Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) fall Redd count results for brown trout. They haven't finalized the actual interpretive report yet. The draft is on Jeff Skelding's desk. This is the rough data and it's broken down between the main stem vs the two branches. Cilento had done Basket Brook and had found two right at the mouth. There are 77 overall pretty evenly distributed over the east and west branch of the main stem. FUDR is also doing a Spring Redd count. Hamilton asked if there's any information on how accessible the streams are? He said you get a lot of rock and cobble build up at the mouth and with low water levels fish can't really get up there. That's a factor often for how many Redds you would end up with in a stream like this. Henry asked how far up Basket Brook Cilento walked? She said they walked up to the intersection of Rock Valley Road about a half mile and said it's beautiful up there. Hamilton said he also counted Redds at that same section. Ramie asked what the dates for the spring count were? Cilento said the dates had conflicted with Upper Delaware Litter Sweep events.

**2021 Upper Delaware BioBlitz Update:** Cilento said they are waiting for reports to come in. Birds are happening in May, botany is happening in June, invertebrates in July, and fungi in September. There is another call regarding BioBlitz next week.

**2021 Delaware River Sojourn Planning Update:** Cilento said there haven't been many updates since they rescheduled it to August 2021. Registration is going to open 5/1 and the committee is currently discussing capping it to make sure the groups are under a certain size for safety purposes to comply with the three states involved with it possibly being 90-125 people per day.

**3/22 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Report:** A copy of the meeting minutes was provided in the meeting packet. Ramie said the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) also plans to do a comment letter on the Skinners Falls Bridge and had discussed reaching out to Ed Wesley, who has attended many UDSB meetings to be a proponent on behalf of rehabilitation. Wesley is now permanently based in Virginia but is still accessible and interested in this issue. At the time that this meeting took place the virtual public meeting on 3/30 was coming up, so they talked about the need for people getting involved and express their views. At that time the comment deadline was 4/23 but was pushed back by a week. Larry Richardson made the point on behalf of UDSB that this is a one-of-a-kind bridge that should be preserved. Ramie sent around background information to the board members including the Joint Position Paper UDSB was a signatory on. She also provided information on the Project Advisory Committee meeting that had taken place on 2/22. She thinks that UDSB's perspective will be to focus more on the businesses in the area and the impact that the bridge has on them. They also discussed adopting two policies for conflict of interest and preventing sexual harassment Richardson had brought up since UDSB is a 501(c)3 organization for insurance purposes and otherwise they should have those types of policies in place. There are several project updates. The presentation that was made on 3/11 before the Sullivan County Legislature's Management and Budget Committee was where the Chairperson Johnny Pizzolato expressed interest in getting a three-year commitment to expand the organization. This would be to basically hire a staff person as Ramie previously described. It seems to be well received by the legislators but no decision has been made about the outcome of that presentation and structuring. The Upper Delaware Litter Sweep was discussed, UDSB graciously offered to cover the difference of the event T-shirts; ultimately that turned out to be a \$400 gap. Members were concerned about the challenges UDC was facing with NYSDOT at that time to secure permits for Rt. 97. UDSB has the state scenic byway coordinator, Christine Colley, as a participant so they appealed to her directly. Colley asked Ramie to provide the proposal in writing and offered to bring it to the attention of the regional staff. Ultimately, they did accommodate the request and we are grateful it worked out in the end. We've also learned lessons for any future events we may do. The UDSB Visitor Center at Callicoon Depot came up when discussing future operations and management of the facility. The lease was signed with the railroad on 3/1 which now means site control is in hand for the Callicoon Business Association. As you know UDSB transferred over its \$250,000 capital construction grant to the CBA in order for this project to become a visitor center and office space for the facility. Questions have come up on the logistics such as when will it be open, what kind of services will be offered there, who will staff it, etc. This is the start of the conversation as it

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first needs to be renovated. The grant funding is somewhat tied up with Covid response. That is trickling down slowly but first all paperwork has to be approved. That includes request for proposals to be submitted and an architect or a design build contract has to be in place. Ramie expects that to take some time. Simultaneously the planning is underway for what type of equipment and furnishing will be needed for this facility to accommodate the different types of brochure displays, desks, chairs, how to share the products, etc. There is a \$100,000 grant available for that purpose through the USDA. UDSB expressed they would like to have input for the furnishings chosen. Freda Eisenberg had a great idea since the visitor center does not want to compete with any of the local businesses or offer services that would duplicate others there, that it could have just a representative sampling of the types of products that are locally sourced by artisans and crafts people and makers along the byway and have an information card about where you can go between Hancock and Port Jervis to buy those products. A Facebook group called "Hawk's Nest Outrage" had contacted UDSB and presented a seven-point list of what they would like done at the Hawk's Nest. That includes: No parking signs on cliff side; time limits at each pull-off; cameras on pulls-offs and cliffside; roadway grooved or chipped and tarred; red light placed at intersection of Routes 31 & 97; speed limit changed from 55 to 40; and more police presence at Hawk's Nest. UDSB thanked the group for their ideas and let them know they are already working with the Town of Deerpark, NYSDOT, and the police department. They have made great strides in getting arrest statistics, increasing the police patrols, the speed limit was reduced to 35 mph in that section, and the Town blocked off the main turnaround. UDSB's position is that it would like to stay in its own lane of positivity with the entities that have decision-making authority. They wrote back to the group and said they have similar concerns and suggested they go to the Town or the decision-making authorities. The next meeting is Monday, 4/26 and is the Annual meeting and Election of Officers.

Cilento asked if UDSB discussed marketing-wise how to differentiate the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitor Center from Upper Delaware Welcome Center at the Narrowsburg Union and Catskill Curated. Ramie said when the Callicoon Depot Committee was giving tours, Brendan and Kathy Weiden who are owners of the Narrowsburg Union were there participating in the tour. The Union is a for-profit business. Ramie feels it's just far enough away and will have different hours. The Depot has other goals that will set them apart so they are not competing with Catskill Curated.

**3/25 NPS Water Safety Committee Report:** Hall-Bagdonas and Cilento attended the 3/25 meeting via Microsoft Teams with Ingrid Peterec, Kevin Reish, Jamie Myers, Susie Kaspar, Brenden Dohn and Andy Weber from the NPS. Reish relayed that no one has been appointed as the next Water Safety Program Manager to his knowledge. He presumes it will stay in the Law Enforcement division but has not received any direction or information on who will be fulfilling these responsibilities. He retires on 5/31. The National Canoe Safety Patrol meeting was on 2/12 and Reish said it went well. NCSP is planning on holding their annual spring training on 5/1-5/2. Kaspar set up a radio interview with Bold Gold Media's Community Health Works tentatively for 5/14. Social media will have numerous Water Safety Month posts leading up to Memorial Day weekend. NPS are finalizing the design of the new boating safety life jacket design. The next Water Safety Meeting is scheduled for 4/22 at 11:00 a.m.

Ramie added that Reish and Kaspar were on a Callicoon Depot tour representing NPS on Saturday.

**4/9 Mongaup River Access Overflow Parking Meeting Report:** Ramie provided her notes from the 4/9 site visit. She sent her notes to all participants listed so they could get back to her with any changes. She did hear back from Jessica Weinman, NPS Chief of Maintenance, who clarified one point and that is reflected on the draft document. There were 11 participants from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), NPS, UDC and NYSDOT. The discussion was centered on how to redesign the parking lot to fit more people. They determined there are 33 spaces now and think they could easily achieve 50-55 spaces by reorganizing and taking out the earthen berms that are in the center and gain another ten feet. Weinman had the idea to use firehose to separate the spots to go between lines since it isn't a big deal to drive over those. Another idea was since liveries use that space to drop off customers and boats, if they have their own area that may free up some space. That could be a Phase II project that they look at. They could take out some of the trees and boulders that are stage right side of the access. The next steps will be DEC sending a survey crew to the site. NPS would then work on the design, potentially through outsourcing it. If a project scope can be budgeted by July, the DEC may be able to program some of this work for next year. Henry said if they are looking to increase it going north, at one time there was a river rest stop that the NPS put in but that area was deemed to be very dangerous by everyone that was involved. At the time, NYSDOT had major concerns about the amount of traffic next to Rt. 97 on the curved area. That's why the access was moved downstream.

**4/13 NPS Annual Fishing Guides Meeting:** Ramie said this meeting happens every year. This year Bonnie Sheard from NPS mentioned it to her and asked if she wanted to attend. Sheard is the Superintendent's Secretary and Commercial & Special Park Uses Program Manager and is retiring in July. Superintendent Salvatore has mentioned that he doesn't intend to backfill that position; he can handle his own secretarial duties. Ramie said last year the fishing guides reported 1,266 customers which they call visitors in this case. That represents 1.3% of NPS's annual visitation. The gross receipts that they reported amounted to \$284,201 and that is a way to judge how much business they are bringing into the River Valley. Sheard told the anglers: "I appreciate you being out on the river. You are our eyes and ears out there." She mentioned the specific example of when the train wreck occurred in Deposit in August 2018, it was a fishing guide who first alerted the NPS. She acknowledged that the NPS Law Enforcement staff is quite small here and fishing guides provide a valuable service being out there and reporting incidents. Regarding COVID guidelines and the requirement to wear a mask for fishing guides, it means that those rules apply while they are in parking lots and any co-managed areas. Where it differs is the recommendation to not wear a mask in the boat because if you capsize or the mask gets wet you would have difficulty breathing. They said the rangers would likely give warnings about mask wear on land rather than to write tickets. Brendan Dohn, the IT Specialist for NPS, discussed the USGS Water and Weather Alerts available. Dohn said the hotline is available for people to find this information. You can sign up for WaterAlert, an automated email or text messages, whenever certain parameters (defined by you) are exceeded at one of their gaging stations. You can also sign up for WaterNow and it will send an email or text message containing the USGS Site number of the gage you want to query with a response within a few minutes. Ramie asked Dohn to give a future presentation to the UDC and he was receptive to that idea.

Hamilton was also at the meeting and gave a report on a few items including the Ten Mile River (TMR) boat launch situation. He told the fishing guides that it is not currently prohibited but won't be advertised as a trailered boat launch. Hamilton provided a recommendation for where on the TMR site would be a more solid place to launch. It's upstream and the same site looked at with JHA Companies. Hamilton provided an update on the Northern Snakehead. One was caught in Callicoon on 7/31. Another one was found two miles below Callicoon on the northside. NYDEC did eDNA sampling in September and also did electrofishing. They did a section from Callicoon to Cohecton and Long Eddy up to Lordville. With eDNA sampling they take a sample of water and Northern Snakehead's sluff off molecular material through their waste or skin that can be picked up in a DNA analysis to determine if they are in the water in that vicinity. The only place they got a positive on that was where they caught the one snakehead. Ramie was given the opportunity to give a presentation on what the UDC does and what we can provide to fishing guides. She told them about the UDC Visitor Map & Guide. She was able to mail out 25 copies to a new guide who had requested it for his clients. Ramie mentioned our newsletter, website, and social media. She also mentioned the Water Use/Resource Management Committee and this is the forum to discuss topics that would probably be of most interest to them. At the Q&A time Salvatore mentioned they would have two new Law Enforcement officers due to one retiring (Reish) as well as Sean McNeil leaving the area. The fishing guides said one thing that comes up every year that they don't feel is being taken care of is illegal guides. They offered to do a sting operation if NPS was interested. In the last few years misrepresentation has really exploded and that's an infringement on their rights, infringement on the water, they don't have proper training, and it affects the quality of the fishing and the experience of anglers who think that they are dealing with a legitimate professional when they are not. Ramie said if they are lacking the ethics to be a registered fishing guide they tend to say to clients "tell them you're my brother-in-law" and they don't admit that they pay for the service. In a sting operation it would require a paid transaction to occur. The fishing guides would like to see an example be made to deter people from engaging in that illegal activity. Salvatore said he would look into what sort of authority NPS had to confront illegal guides and would get back to them.

There has also been a change in the PA law regarding fishing licenses. They used to always be reciprocal. Hamilton said this applies to fishing guides who must have licenses from both states but from what he understands, it doesn't apply to the average angler. Hamilton said it's Pennsylvania's requirement if a guide is fishing off their shoreline on their side of the river, they must have a PA license; the NY license alone isn't good enough. Padua said he has to get a PA guide license to operate on the Upper Delaware; he can't get that without a PA fishing license. He doesn't understand how anybody was getting their PA fishing guide license without a PA fishing license.

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Lastly, Ramie said Lee Hartman had a water use complaint. Hartman mentioned he had recently seen seven ATVs driving through the bed of Bouchoux Creek. The ATVs were operated by teenagers. He told them they were ruining the trout beds when they do that. That's also been known to happen at Equinunk Creek. Hamilton said DEC would be the primary agency to enforce that but NPS could also beyond the Ordinary High-Water Mark.

**Other:** Henry said it's going to be difficult to relay to the public the mask mandate and asked how NPS will do so? Ramie said Salvatore said NPS will be doing an education effort more than writing tickets.

Hamilton said there was an Action Item from last month on the low flows from the Rio and Mongaup re: Eagle Creek Renewable Energy. The minimum flow for Black Lake Creek has been established as 15 CFS below Toronto and Cliff Lake Dams. Water quality monitoring for Dissolved Oxygen and pH are going to be implemented at Black Lake Creek also to make sure it's maintaining standards. The minimum flow in the Mongaup River below Rio Reservoir is 100 CFS. They are doing some trial runs with the air induction valve at the Rio Minimum Flow Power House to improve Dissolved Oxygen concentrations from mid-July through mid-September. NPS worked with the USGS Office of the Delaware River Master to help establish a relationship between the Mongaup project releases that count towards the Montague flow target and resulting flows at Callicoon, which are influenced by releases from the New York City reservoirs and directed by the Office of Delaware River Master. There are proposed settlement agreement license articles developed containing language that limits the frequency of releases from the Rio Reservoir that result in flows below 929 CFS at Callicoon. 929 CFS at Callicoon represents the fully wetted perimeter at the Callicoon site where dwarf wedgemussels were originally found, allowing them some shifting of location within that site. It also represents a flow that provides better water levels for recreational boating on that section of the river so boaters aren't having to drag boats over shallow riffles.

Henry said the original Environmental Impact Statement called for 1,000 CFS at Hancock. Hamilton said he believes that was the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation that did that study in the 1970's before the Park Unit was established.

**New Business**

**Draft Comment Letter for Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge Study:** Ramie sent the draft comment letter earlier today to the full Council membership, deciding to put it on this agenda in case the committee wanted to discuss it. She set a comment deadline of 5p.m. Thursday 4/22. The letter and concept of it was approved but the exact language was to be reviewed by members. The deadline for the comment letter is 4/30. The committee said they liked the draft comment letter. Padua said one of his friends mentioned they like that the bridge is closed because it's quiet and they can just walk across it and wouldn't mind if it was a walking bridge. Ramie said that view was expressed at the meeting and it didn't seem to gain a lot of traction with people but it is an option. Cilento said over the Neversink in Fallsburg there's the Denniston Ford Bridge which is the same style as the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge. The Town of Fallsburg closed that bridge 15 years ago and built a new deck bridge right next to it. They preserved the historic bridge and have rental permits to use it for weddings and events. Two pillars were added on so you can't drive across it. Ramie said that suggestion was made for the Pond Eddy Bridge, to leave the historic bridge intact, but NYSDOT said that many piers in the river would create a backwater situation.

**4/29 Evan Padua Seminar on Fresh Water "How-To" Fishing Techniques:** A copy of the *Sullivan County Democrat* article was provided in the meeting packet on Padua's virtual program scheduled for 4/29 at 6:30 p.m. The seminar will be a "how-to" fishing techniques and basic fishing on the Upper Delaware River. He'll touch on regional seasonal fishing opportunities and provide the best "Tips and Tricks".

**Delaware River Flow & Storage Report:** A copy of the 4/19 DRBC Hydrological Conditions Report was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 98.9%.

**Other:** Padua asked if the committee saw the update on the work at Cannonsville Dam? Ramie read the 4/27 email from Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR): "The New York City Department of Environmental Protection has informed us that, due to delays in equipment delivery, they have postponed the planned work at Cannonsville Dam to repair the valve in the release chamber. This avoids the need to shut off the release for the 3-day period that was originally planned. The 4-5-hour Gate Tower exercise will still occur but no date has been confirmed. We will keep you posted when that work gets rescheduled."

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**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Henry seconded by Padua, to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. was carried.

*Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas 4/30/2021*