

CORRECTED  
Upper Delaware Council  
**WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 21, 2016**

Committee Members Present: Pat Jeffer, Al Henry, Deb Conway, Fred Peckham, Andy Boyar  
Committee Members Absent: Tony Ritter  
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton  
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Cindy Odell, Pete Golod  
Guests: None

These minutes are being corrected to delete a line regarding attendance at the NYC DEP's June 10<sup>th</sup> Emergency Action Plan Orientation Seminar & Communications Improvement Workshop.

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 21, 2016 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Vice-chairperson Jeffer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A motion by Conway seconded by Henry to approve the May 17 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Old Business:**

**Pike/Wayne Local History Roundtable May 20 Meeting Update:** Ramie noted that this meeting took place at the Pike County Historical Society's Columns Museum in Milford, PA. A recap of the Thomas Kennedy Local History Festival that took place on April 16<sup>th</sup> at the Hawley Silk Mill was provided. An update on the Local History Passport Project was provided. 2016 upcoming history events and initiatives were shared. The Northern Pocono Mountains Travel Guide was debuted. Ramie said discussion took place regarding the difficulties of authenticating the information that is distributed about history, including local history. Ways to counter false or bad information were talked about. It was noted that targeting children and providing them with the real facts would be a good starting point.

The next meeting of this group will be on September 9<sup>th</sup> in Equinunk, PA at the Calder House Museum. A presentation on the Historic Route 6 project will be given.

**Upper Delaware Scenic Byway May 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway were provided in members' packets for their information. Ramie provided some details of a visit earlier in the day by a delegation from the Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway. She reported that the Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway was designated in May 2015 and includes State Route 28 from the Town of Olive in Ulster County to Andes in Delaware County with sections along State Rt. 41 in Shandaken and along State Rt. 214 in Phoenicia, both to the Ulster/Greene County line. The meeting was requested as the newly formed Byway was looking for an opportunity to ask questions, exchange information and tour a portion of NYS Route 97. Ramie said that UDSB Chairman Glenn Pontier participated in this meeting with her. Peckham suggested the two Byways look for ways to collaborate.

**Friends of the Upper Delaware River June 1 Meeting Update:** Ramie reported that she attended the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Upper Delaware River Conservation Community with New York State US Supreme Court Decree Party Principal Mark Klotz and Delaware River Basin Commission's Regulated Flow Advisory Committee New York State Representative Brenan Tarrier in Hancock. The meeting provided more insight into the overall FFMP process and various negotiation deadlocks. Ramie referred to the written report prepared by her provided in members' packets and suggested that members read through it at their leisure.

**NYC DEP's June 10<sup>th</sup> Emergency Action Plan Orientation Seminar & Communications Improvement Workshop Update:** Henry stated that he had not typed up his notes from the workshop that he and Peckham attended in Matamoras, PA. He said the meeting was interesting and that they had a chance to provide their input. Henry said he and Peckham recommended that a way to warn upstream

residents in the event of a dam failure be devised. They suggested investigating the use of volunteer fire company sirens for this purpose. It was discussed that some sort of system commonality would have to be developed. Henry thought the idea was well received. He said that it was discussed that a combination of cell alerts and emergency broadcast system could be used in addition to the sirens. Henry shared the details of a conversation regarding cell towers for emergency warnings versus sirens and the costs associated with the towers. Henry stated that the NYC DEP inundation maps depict a worst-case-scenario breach of the dam, if Cannonsville Reservoir was 100 percent full at the time of a full failure breach. The likelihood of such a breach happening was discussed. Those maps are available on the NYC DEP website. Peckham provided what the chain of command is during a dam emergency. Henry suggested trying to get a copy of the Emergency Action Plans for the UDC. Ramie said we have requested in the past and been denied these because we are not an emergency response agency. Henry stated that he feels that “somebody missed the boat, seriously, about really having some type of notification for the people upstream that are within an hour of inundation.” Peckham said they tried to drive that point home at the meeting. Henry said he will type up his notes and provide them at next month’s WU/RM meeting.

**Sullivan County Trail Committee June 14 Meeting Update:** Ramie said that this meeting took place in Hurleyville, NY. They were able to see the trails being developed and expanded by the Center for Discovery and visit the the Maker’s Lab and Learning Center, a kind of a think tank and invention center where students and professionals are provided with resources to create projects for people with disabilities and the elderly. Hamilton questioned if they have a 3-D printer there. Ramie said yes.

The next meeting will take place on the second Tuesday of July in Wurtsboro, NY.

Peckham requested that a letter be sent to New York City thanking them for letting the UDC attend their workshop and to reiterate the points that they made at the meeting. He added he feels it would be good to follow up. Ramie questioned what points he wanted to make. Henry noted that a warning system cannot be solely sirens, but that NYC could be asked to work on a system. He spoke of the June 2013 full Council meeting where Thomas Murphy, Jr., Chief, New York City Environmental Protection Bureau of Water Supply, Reservoir Releases Policy Development, referred to the water in the reservoirs as “their” water and stated that if the water is theirs when it is impounded, it should be their responsibility should the dam fail and that water is released. Boyar commented that he is glad that the UDC attended the meeting and brought up the need for an emergency notification system for upstream residents. He shared his idea for a relatively simple, visual flood warning system that could consist of signage on the interstate bridges which would be color-coded to indicate any danger of increasing river height. Henry reiterated the system cannot solely be sirens. He spoke of the notifications that are available on his cell phone. Henry said he does not understand why NYC would deny the UDC a copy of the Emergency Action Plan. He said that one of the Council’s responsibilities is to work in partnership with the National Park Service to oversee river-related safety. He added that Congress charged the UDC with that task. Henry asked that request be made again in the letter to be sent to them. Peckham asked if this letter would go to the towns and townships. Ramie said it would. He suggested sending to non-participating towns and townships such as Deposit, Stamford, Buckingham and Manchester.

**Upper DelAWARE River Roundtable June 16 Meeting Update:** Ramie said this meeting focused on agriculture. She said she had the opportunity to introduce Golod to that group of ten. Discussion about a food systems map took place. The idea is to create a map that connects the producers of food with the users. These projects will require a lot of public involvement, Ramie noted. There is no central repository for this type of information. The Roundtable exists to foster ideas and help projects along they feel could be beneficial to the Upper Delaware. The topic of value added dairy was also discussed at the meeting. Getting dairy farmers more money for their milk is the goal and ways to achieve this were shared. A brief discussion about the Narrowsburg Union soliciting tenants took place. Ramie shared Narrowsburg Union brochures that she obtained at the Roundtable meeting.

The next meeting of the Roundtable is tentatively scheduled for August 18<sup>th</sup>.

Peckham stated that Ramie had just sent out an email regarding solar. He questioned what that was about. Ramie noted that the June 27<sup>th</sup> public meeting of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Committee will include a presentation highlighting solar by Carol Roig and Stephen Stuart, co-executive directors of Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development. Ramie said there have been many meetings at the town

levels regarding solar. Ramie noted that NPS Superintendent Heister has challenged the UDC to work together to come up with a position on solar. She said we will begin discussions at the June 28<sup>th</sup> Project Review Committee meeting. Conway suggested that Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development could present to the full Council on solar in the near future. Ramie said the Council would only act on anything involving the river corridor and so far only one proposed project is located partially within the designated corridor. A very lengthy discussion about solar and the River Management Plan took place. Boyar spoke about the issues and concerns with disposing of solar panels. Henry said it is important to remain neutral and look at the Plan for the solar and other issues not addressed. He also said he would like to know more definitively where the actual corridor boundary is located.

**Scenic Wild Delaware River Stewardship Council June 20 Meeting Report:** Ramie said she attended this meeting June 20<sup>th</sup> which was an audience with the Pennsylvania Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources Cindy Dunn and some of her staff. The meeting was arranged by the Pennsylvania members of the Geotourism Stewardship Council to talk about shared priorities and determine opportunities for collaboration on geotourism projects – those that sustain or enhance the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents. Ramie shared a list of those in attendance. She noted that Carl Wilgus, CEO and President of the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, stated that Pennsylvania is #3 in the United States for outdoor recreation behind California and New York. He spoke of the effort to rebrand the Poconos into an environmental focus and shared visitation data for the Poconos. Secretary Dunn said a few words of how she sees DCNR's ability to fit in with the Geotourism programs and acknowledged that conservation is a big driver for quality of life issues. She added that she sees a lot of potential to model this initiative in the two National Park units of the Upper and Middle Delaware River to the rest of the state. Joy Oakes of the National Parks Conservation Association provided an overview of the National Geographic Scenic Wild Delaware River initiative. The Scenic Wild Delaware River is only the 23<sup>rd</sup> Nat Geo site in the world. It was noted that this program turns the whole river into a uniter rather than a divider which it has been in the past. One of the references of the travel industry used during the National Geographic Geotourism MapGuide roll out event for the Scenic Wild Delaware River was "America's newest destination." Ramie said it was reported at this meeting that the National Parks Conservation Association is planning an Upper Delaware River tour for legislative staff of federal and state elected officials in August. Ramie will provide more detail on this when it becomes available. An overview of the Pocono Forest and Water Conservation Landscape Initiative was provided. Secretary Dunn also spoke of the Pennsylvania Recreation Plan and how they have a goal of putting a trail within 15 minutes of every Pennsylvania resident. She also spoke of conservation initiatives within her department. Ramie noted that the Stewardship Council has been broken down into five subcommittees. Those committees are Editorial for the MapGuide for future nominations to ensure that the site is current and representative of the full area; Marketing and Promotion; Sustainability for some of the projects that they have in mind; Strategy and Fundraising; and Education and Outreach.

A brief discussion of NYS Governor Cuomo's upcoming visit to the area took place.

**Delaware River Sojourn Report:** Ramie reported that June 18<sup>th</sup> was Day 1 of this event. 98 people were signed up to paddle the 16 mile section from Skinners Falls to Lackawaxen that day. Included in members' packets was the itinerary for days 1 and 2. This year's Sojourn was the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual, Ramie noted. She said she anticipates receiving more information after the event concludes and will include photos in the next Upper Delaware newsletter.

**Other:** None

### New Business

**NPS Law Enforcement Contract Discussion:** Ramie said we received word earlier in the day from Heister that she and Chief of Law Enforcement Larry Neal were unable to attend tonight's meeting and requested that discussion be postponed to a later date.

**May 27 Reservoir Releases Report – Don Hamilton, NPS:** Hamilton said that due to the upcoming BioBlitz event he did not have this report ready. He added that he will prepare a report for the July meeting indicating the effectiveness of the coldwater releases on Memorial Day weekend for providing thermal

stress relief and additional flow to the Upper Delaware River. Henry said it was his inquiry of whether these releases are effective or not. Hamilton asked what the increases were. Ramie said she will provide Hamilton with the cubic feet per second figures of the increased May 27<sup>th</sup> releases. Boyar said it is also important to look at the river. He noted that last weekend was Father's Day weekend, a typically busy weekend for the river, and the river levels were really low. He noted that big economic dollars are at stake and those conditions were not good for those trying to make a living on river related business. He questioned if they are still meeting the 1,750 cfs target at Montague. A brief discussion about the current river conditions took place with members reporting on different sections of the river.

**Upper Delaware River Bridges July 13 Meeting:** Ramie said NY and PA DOTs will hold this river valley meeting that the UDC and NPS had requested last year on July 13. Two sessions will take place; one for municipal officials and emergency service providers at 3:30 and one for the general public at 6:30 in the Tusten Town Hall. The topics will include the operation of the bridge commission, and the plans, detours and coordination for the Skinners Falls, Pond Eddy, Narrowsburg, Kellams, and Callicoon bridges through 2018-19. Discussion about the Skinners Fall Bridge took place. Members noted they have not seen any repair activity at that site yet.

**Delaware River Flow and Storage Report:** A copy of the June 20<sup>th</sup> New York City DEP Current Reservoir Levels report was provided in members' packets. Total storage as of that date was 94.9% with Cannonsville at 91.4%. Normal total storage for this date is 96.3%. Ramie noted that if Ritter were in attendance he would provide a more in depth report. She added that he has not been in attendance at a committee meeting since January. Henry said he understands that it is Ritter's busy time of year but questions if the Chair of a committee should be absent so often. Boyar said he would like to reach out to Ritter to check with him on his meeting participation availability based on his inability to attend for the last four months. If he is not going to be available, the possibility of another election could be explored. Peckham noted it is good to have continuity from one meeting to the next. Henry and Ramie discussed the fact that it is also the Chair's responsibility to provide the report at the full Council meeting. Henry and other members agreed with Boyar reaching out to Ritter. Boyar said he would do that.

**Other:** Hamilton reported that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Upper Delaware BioBlitz is scheduled for June 24 and 25 on a 500 acre parcel that takes on a lot of diverse habitats at the Ten Mile River Boy Scout Camp off of NYS Route 97 in the Town of Tusten on the Cohecton Turnpike Road. There are nine teams of scientists scheduled to be in attendance. This event is an effort to highlight the biological diversity and healthy ecosystem that we have here. The public portion part of the event will take place on Saturday, June 25 from 9 a.m. till 3 p.m. He noted that a BioBlitz is an event where biology experts and volunteers gather to collect, identify, and catalogue every living thing on a demarcated property in a 24 hour period. Hamilton provided the program schedule and noted there is a full program of activities for the public to partake in including guided walks and a nature photography workshop. A brief discussion about little brown bats and other important resources that are staying here in the Upper Delaware took place. A website and Facebook page for the event are available. He said you can locate them by Googling "Upper Delaware BioBlitz". Ramie commented that the programs are hands-on and very educational. Hamilton spoke of the agencies that have supported the effort. He stated that so many people are separated from nature these days and events like these are also an effort to re-connect them. He spoke of iNaturalist noting that it is a site and community for reporting personal observations of any plant or animal species in the world. Hamilton thanked the Upper Delaware Council for their sponsorship and encouraged members to attend.

Hamilton said he has been involved with recent meetings with economists from Colorado State University and biologists from USGS. He said the Delaware River has been selected as one of three pilot project sites in the country to be involved in a new initiative called "Sustaining Environmental Capital" (SEC). The initiative aims to provide solid scientific tools that help public land and water decision makers determine the production and valuation of ecosystem services. This is in response to the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) report: "Federal agencies with responsibilities relating to ecosystems and their services are tasked with improving their capabilities to develop valuations for the ecosystem services affected by their decision-making and factoring the results into analysis that inform their major planning and management decisions." The Delaware pilot will evaluate biofiltration, nutrient flux, storage, and retention associated with freshwater mussel populations within the Delaware River. This information will be incorporated into a stated preference nonmarket valuation study in an effort

to quantify the economic value of ecosystem services provided by freshwater mussels. Fresh water mussels are among most important in terms of water filtration. Hamilton said they have been working with fresh mussels in the Upper Delaware since 2000. One of the reasons that the Delaware River was chosen as a pilot project site is because of some of the data that exists. He reported that fresh water mussels make up the greatest animal biomass in this river and are really important to this system. He added that they are also the most rapidly decreasing species in North America. You can no longer collect fresh water mussels in New York or Pennsylvania without a permit to do so, Hamilton stated. He spoke of the collection efforts in the Upper Delaware and provided some of the data that he says we have here that might not exist anywhere else in the world. He reported that the average square meter of substrate in this river has about 75 mussels in it with some areas containing over 300. He added that some of these mussels can live for over 100 years. Peckham questioned if the reservoir releases have anything to do with the declining number of mussels. Hamilton said the reservoirs only went in about 50 years ago creating a tailwater fishery of cold water which is great for trout, but it is important to keep in mind that there are hundreds of other species of plants and animals that have evolved and adapted to a system here that was different than that over thousands of years and we need to understand how they are affected by changes. Hamilton said in a lot of parts of the country, resources are being looked at in order to determine the economic value of what they produce and factor that into decisions they make. Hamilton said there is a website for the Sustaining Environmental Capital initiative and he will pass that along to those interested. He noted that the Delaware River is a real rarity as it is the last major on the Atlantic coast undammed the length of its main stem. The primary host fish that enables eastern elliptio mussels to reproduce is the American Eel and American Eels don't get up the Susquehanna River anymore because of dams and as a result there is no longer any reproduction of the eastern elliptio mussels going on in the Susquehanna. He said dams were built for decades and the trade-off was not realized initially.

Hamilton reported there are peregrine falcons nesting in the Hawks Nest for the first time in anyone's memory. A brief discussion about the peregrine falcon took place. He reported that the population is still endangered. He added that they have been delisted federally, but are still listed as endangered in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

Hamilton noted that Biologist Jamie Myers has requested to go to part-time and as a result she will be moving over to the Interpretation Division of the park. She worked for the Natural Resources Division for 18 years and has done a great job. They will be looking to hire.

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** A motion by Peckham seconded by Boyar to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 p.m. was carried.

*Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 6/28/16*