

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
July 21, 2020

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

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 21st 2020. Chairperson Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Boyar welcomed Shannon Cilento, Upper Delaware Council's Resources and Land Use Specialist. She started last Wednesday and said she's happy to be here. She worked at Sullivan County Division of, Planning for three years. She was the Community Development and Grants Planner. She did land use reviews, administered grants, and handled all their communications programs.

A motion by Dudko, seconded by Henry approving the June 16th meeting carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business

Ten Mile River Access Closed to Trailered Boat Launching: Boyar said this topic was generated by the 7/1 letter from the NPS Regional Director. He remarked that he had a conversation with Don Hamilton today and he indicated that NPS had an interest and willingness to try to find some type of a resolution. The letter expresses interest of coming up with a resolution. Hamilton said he wants to emphasize the second to last paragraph of the 7/1 letter: "The NPS and BSA remain open to options for expanding visitor access and experience at TMR. We are willing to consider the carry-in/hand carry only designation as temporary until the UDC can develop a formal recommendation for consideration that presents a workable solution for trailered boat access. Enforcement of the access as carry-in only will be implemented over a two-year period with an initial focus on education." Hamilton said NPS is not ticketing anyone for launching boats. They are focusing on education and they are open to proposals. Boyar said other than licensed guides, who he believes have the ability to get in and out without creating a mess or getting stuck, the question is how many others trailer there? If they earn a livelihood and it's not a problem why the restriction? Padua said the case that's been made is the ruts from the wheels are causing that damage. The viable solution would be to improve the access to make it a trailered launch and designated area. It could be a basic boat ramp like those by the PA Fish and Boat Commission at the Darbytown access, same as Damascus and Buckingham's accesses with rebar with perpendicular concrete slabs. Padua said it may wash out every ten years. It may get used as a beach by people. He said NY is far behind on the boat ramp engineering process. He recommended forming a committee and going to the TMR access with NPS. Henry said the access is for the general public and in NY and PA they prohibit any activity on boat ramps other than launching boats. The NPS could enforce that. He recommends finding a local architect to go down there; with the knowledge that's available UDC could decide on a location. He said we would have to figure out who would fund it. He said the difference between TMR and Darbytown and Buckingham accesses is that it's a muck pile at TMR. They were placed in the proper location by official commissions. He doesn't think the Fish and Boat Commission would ever put a launch ramp at TMR because of the conditions. The only way to get the ball rolling is to try. Boyar said there is a pull-off on Crawford Rd. with a spot between a tree and foliage that seems to be a good spot. Padua agreed with him and said or further downstream is better. On a trip out west Boyar had taken photos of eight different ramps. He recognizes that the TMR access is a tricky and unique spot. Holmes said Boy Scouts of America wants to continue to be able to allow the general public and river users to use the access. BSA currently does not have the funds for improvements but would be willing to investigate what kind of improvements should be made. The access has been part of the community for a very long time and is under a lease agreement with NPS for a very small amount of money. Peckham asked if a Technical Assistance Grant could be secured for a study? Ramie said the Town of Tusten could

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be an applicant for a study of that area if they chose to look into the feasibility of improvements. Henry recommends UDC hire an engineer who is hydrology-oriented and have them meet with UDC, NPS, and BSA to get an idea of an estimate on what can be done to improve the site. Padua asked about a previous diagram provided, if it was to be a million-dollar access. Ramie said that was part of Sullivan County's Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan's study of improvements for all of the river accesses. She said at the time that was considered to be kind of a "pie in the sky". Everyone acknowledged that the improvements suggested there were aspirational at best, not necessarily realistic. Henry said he doesn't know if it was just a rendering or if an engineer went on site but there may be valuable information that can be found by communicating with Sullivan County. Ramie said UDC was on the Local Waterfront Revitalization Committee during that time with Heather Jacksy and she does have the documents from that project. Ramie said the consultant was Environmental Planning and Design from Pittsburgh. Henry said along with the knowledge base that exists in the UDC, guides, and locals, the engineer can be educated on the water conditions at TMR. A Motion by Henry seconded by Dudko to secure an engineer by the end of August 2020 with lapsed funds from the six-month Resources Specialist vacancy carried. Henry recommended going down to the site after the meeting tonight. Ramie said it would be helpful to have someone like Dick Crandall involved in the committee with his wealth of experience as the former Superintendent of TMR Scout Camp and Tusten Town Supervisor. Hamilton wanted to express that NPS doesn't own the TMR access and can't make any capital investments. Boyar suggested talking to legislators about funding.

Ramie read aloud an email sent to UDC from an individual named Bonnie Robertson on 6/25: "We were on a rafting trip today, leaving from Narrowsburg. After a great day on the river, we tried to get off at the NPS takeout at TMR only to sink thigh-deep in disgusting mud. It ruined our entire day. What can be done; cement ramp, stone? We should be embarrassed by the condition of this area. Totally disgusting mud, smell, and totally unsafe. Please reply." Ramie's response was: "Hello Bonnie, thank you for sharing your (bad) experience. To let you know, the TMR access site is owned by the Greater New York Council Boy Scouts of America, which has a lease agreement with the National Park Service to co-manage it. The UDC and particularly its Water Use/ Resource Management Committee has been discussing this issue for years and has offered suggestions such as the ones you mentioned for improvements. Those upgrades would require the permission of and an investment of funds by the property owner, who is under no obligation to share this recreational site with the public at all. If you're interested, you can review the minutes of that committee and our full council on our website to read about it. The latest news was that the NPS closed the access to trailered boat launching over our objections for that determination and the process by which it was made and plans to install advisory signage informing the public how the mud is the result of naturally occurring anaerobic conditions at that particular location. I have attached a couple of slides that explain why. Some spots along the shoreline are better than others and the conditions are variable from year to year. It's not pleasant, but it's not considered unsafe to humans. Sorry I can't be more helpful. It is an ongoing controversy, Laurie." Hamilton thanked Ramie for making the effort to provide that reply. That is part of the educational effort NPS is trying to make. It is a wild and scenic naturally flowing river. It has a lot of variable conditions; it is a depositional area with a lot of soft mud in it. There is nothing unhealthy about it. Ramie said that's why UDC objected to the article that characterized the TMR access as "a public safety hazard", which NPS Acting Superintendent Boch said he would not submit a correction to the *River Reporter*; he thought it wasn't necessary. That's why that sort of message does have to be counteracted so that people aren't under the impression that it's unsafe or anything negative is going to happen to them as a result of it. At this point, that article is so old that it's outdated, but in future references, Ramie thinks it's important to hammer that point home that it may not be pleasant but it's not unsafe.

6/18 DRBC Water Management Advisory Committee Report: Ramie attended the 6/18 virtual meeting and included the draft minutes in the meeting. They are considered draft until they are approved at the next meeting. It provides various reports from DRBC staff on hydrologic conditions. This is the advisory committee on which the UDC sits. We were just reappointed as the watershed organization member. They also did accept Boyar's interest in becoming the alternate for the UDC on this committee. It was discussed who would over who would be the chair for the next term. That will be Kathy Thaefer of the Artesian Water Company of Philadelphia and Vice-Chair will be Jan Bowers, who is with the Chester County Water Resources Authority. The next meeting is 10/21. If there are any questions Ramie can bring them back to that committee.

6/19 Trust for Public Land's Callicoon Park Steering Committee Meeting Report: UDC was invited to serve on this Steering Committee and they held the kickoff for it on 6/19. Ramie passed around a site plan for the former Upper Delaware Campgrounds in Callicoon. The proposal by Trust for Public Land, now that they have acquired

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this property, is to develop a 47.5-acre recreational park in conjunction with Sullivan County who will ultimately manage it. The Town of Delaware will get a portion of the property to site a wastewater treatment plant, which currently is in the floodplain and not in a good location. The DEC has asked for two acres to develop a fishing and boating access. There is one mile of river frontage on this property. Ramie said the main purpose of this meeting was to walk it and they took us in different directions throughout all of the acreage. It was interesting to see several buildings that are still intact there, including a pavilion and restrooms, when the campground very abruptly closed after they couldn't take the floods anymore in 2006. What they have in mind is a public design process, for which the firm, Environmental Planning and Design has been hired to work with Trust for Public Land to guide that process and come up with a master plan for what people would like to see happen there. They are going to hold public meetings on 8/6-8/8 but they haven't said what the format for those will be. It may be in the form of an open house where people are invited to this site. They recently were awarded a \$50,000 Community Fund Award from L.L. Bean, the outdoor retailer. The Trust for Public Land has a \$1 million investment from L.L. Bean over five years and that was one of the specific projects for which they applied a portion of this funding. Ramie will continue to bring reports as it continues. Hamilton said DEC intends to establish a trailered boat launch. Ramie said a site plan was shared by Bill Rudge (DEC) who said they are still investigating what activities would be authorized there. They're very excited at the opportunity to get public access back there again since the other access got washed out by the Callicoon Creek.

6/19 Mongaup River Hydroelectric Projects- Response to Determination on Requests for Study

Modifications: The FERC license is due for renewal. Provided in the meeting packets are three different handouts that are all part of the latest filings. Hamilton said NPS has been quite involved in a settlement agreement discussion with NY DEC and Fish and Wildlife Service. They will be reviewing this license renewal under Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

6/22 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. Meeting Report: Ramie participated in the 6/22 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) teleconference. At the Highland access which includes the Barbara Yeaman Eagle Observation Blind it has been brought to UDSB's attention that there was a pollinator garden started there that has become overgrown. UDSB is interested in seeing if the Delaware Highlands Conservancy because of their role in having put the blind there might be willing to take over the maintenance of it. UDSB approved a motion to send a letter to the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, trying to ascertain their interests in committing to long-term maintenance of that pollinator garden. The letter will also mention that there are UDSB and Sullivan Renaissance grants that would help with that.

UDSB is extremely interested in updating its website and has now hired Steve Franzken from Mid-Hudson Web, who also created the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association website. They submitted a \$3,500 proposal to create the site, which includes optimization and indexing, and they'll host it as well on their servers. It's estimated that it will be a four-week turnaround.

Deerpark Police Chief Szyndor has offered to come to a UDSB meeting to discuss the ongoing issue with enforcement at the Hawk's Nest, which people have said has gotten a bit out of control. Even during the pandemic, many groups have been congregating there and up to no good. One suggestion UDSB would like to share with Police Chief Szyndor is installing surveillance cameras and additional patrols, etc.

There was a proposal to update the UDSB Enhancement Concept Plan, which was developed in 2002 to gain the state designation for the byway. When the first plan was done, there was a \$150,000 investment in it for the 241-page document, which at this point is somewhat outdated. It's not web-based, it's not interactive, but the UDSB doesn't have \$150,000. Ramie said they were going to have to be creative in how they come up ways to update it. It might not need to be changed significantly since the historic sections and other parts are still valid. UDSB is interested in setting up a special meeting to delve into that and then see if there'll be some funding programs that will open up. Sullivan County Plans and Progress have been the number one option but does not appear to be that viable these days since everything is frozen for COVID-19. Cilento said if they reinstate the State CFA process, that would be a perfect candidate.

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There was an update provided on the Callicoon Train Depot and Visitor Center. The Phase I Environmental Impact Study, a 318-page report, was recently completed. That's a requirement that Central New York Railroad has in order to sign the property lease with the Callicoon Business Association. The report does recommend moving to a Phase II Study because it did find some evidence of spills. It's not necessarily a problematic finding; it just means that the railroad wants to establish a threshold of existing conditions to guard against liability issues in the future. Building inspection of the Depot took place on 7/1 and had very positive results in terms of the infrastructure being solid. It needs a new roof; and certain improvements made to the building, but the mechanicals are good and the bones of it are still in fairly decent shape.

Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) will be presenting about their Japanese Knotweed study at the 8/24 meeting of the UDSB and will be the same program shared at the 8/6 UDC meeting. The next UDSB meeting is 7/27.

Other: Padua noted in the UDSB minutes about Highland River Access Improvements Project Update reading: "Pizzolato said enacting these improvements will provide a great example of how wonderful and functional a river access can be along the byway." Padua said it just beats our first topic on the agenda to a pulp. He suggested reaching out to the Town of Highland in UDC's pursuit of an improvement to TMR. Henry asked if they are still planning to put in a boat launch ramp at Highland access? Boyar said yes.

Henry asked if we could get a status of the Long Eddy Access for next month. Padua said he sent an email earlier this year and hasn't received a response. Henry said Jim Greier said there are three accesses in Fremont. One is at the Kellams-Stalker Bridge, which is out of the question. Greier has stated on the record that there was a public access north upstream of the Town road that no one knows about. Henry said it would be nice to find out exactly where that location is because no one knows about it. He said he's been with groups out there and has been chased off that beach.

Dudko asked Hamilton what was going on at the Mongaup Access this weekend. On Sunday the lot was full on the riverside. She said the Tri-State Diesel site was overflowing and there were cars parked up and down Rt. 97. She estimates 300 cars were there. Hamilton said he wasn't aware of any special events. He said a lot of their accesses have been very busy. Hamilton said he knows at the Damascus Access people were parked along Rt. 371.

New Business

Friends of the Upper Delaware River's Comments on NYS DEC Draft Fisheries Management Plan for Inland Trout Streams in New York State: Ramie noted that Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) dove deep into the DEC draft Fisheries Management Plan for Inland Streams in New York state. Hamilton said NPS also commented on this draft. Ramie requested a copy so she may distribute it to committee members.

2021 Upper Delaware BioBlitz Report: Hamilton participated in a 6/4 planning call which he reported about at the last meeting. They are in a scoping process and looking at a late June 2021 BioBlitz and still looking for a potential site.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Report: A copy of the 7/20 DRBC Hydrologic Conditions Report was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 87%.

Other: Padua wanted to thank Hamilton for reminding him that he could drop tires off behind the Milanville office that he pulled out of the river and also for likely helping orchestrate the NPS helping pick up the tires in Callicoon and Cohecton. However, when he went down there to dispose of the tires, he also noticed a few pieces of garbage that he pulled out of the river over two years ago and brought there. He understands that garbage is a worldwide issue but he trusts that NPS intend to dispose of all of those tires, the old boats, and garbage that has accrued there over the years in a relatively timely fashion. Padua's fear is as the pictures show in the Milanville General Store, when Calkins Creek comes over its banks, those tires will inevitably end up right back in the river. Hamilton's understanding is the Maintenance division is going to haul those to Monticello in the next several weeks.

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Boyar said we are going to head down to Ten Mile River after tonight's meeting. Hamilton said he would meet those who were going there.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion by Henry, seconded by Dudko, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas 7/30/2020