

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
September 20, 2016

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

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

A motion by Peckham was seconded by Jeffer to approve the August 16 meeting minutes and carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway August 22 Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the August 22nd meeting of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway were provided in members' packets for their information. Ramie noted that the Revitalizing the Monarch Butterfly brochure was introduced at this meeting. The printing of 5,000 of these brochures was funded by a UDC Technical Assistance Grant applied for by the Town of Highland. Ramie said the Byway would like to pursue educational programs surrounding the brochure along with a number of other initiatives including the planting of pollinator gardens at each of the byway interpretive sign sites. The brochure has been posted in digital format on both the Upper Delaware Council and Upper Delaware Scenic Byway websites by Dorene Warner of W Design.

Ramie stated that the Byway is in the process of re-designing its website in order to make it more mobile responsive. A subcommittee has been formed to accomplish this, she added.

Ramie said a support letter for Hancock Partners' Arts Programming Grants was approved at this meeting.

Discussion about starting an individual membership program for the Byway took place.

Ramie reported that there has been no news whatsoever about the fate of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitor Center application submitted to NYS DOT on August 1st. Ramie said she has been in contact with Sullivan County Planning Commissioner Freda Eisenberg regarding the issue. Ramie will provide more information as it becomes available.

Ramie said that the Town of Deerpark town board is interested in implementing the NYS DOT Adopt-a-Highway Program. The Town intends to submit the application and then look to find local organizations and groups to adopt certain sections of Route 97 in their borders.

Ramie shared details about the continued distribution of the UDSB biodegradable litter bags. The next meeting of the UDSB is Monday, September 26th.

Scenic Wild Delaware River Marketing Committee September 8 Conference Call Update: Ramie said she serves on this committee which is designed to make sure that the Scenic Wild Delaware River MapGuide goes somewhere. She shared the results of a Google analytics report of the visitation to the website noting that visitation spiked in May, but has fallen off since then. She shared the ideas that were discussed for increasing traffic to the MapGuide website including reaching out to those with listings and encouraging them to put the cross link "badge" on their website to direct people to the MapGuide website.

Early Warning System for Reservoir-Related Emergencies Update: Ramie said another letter of support has been received from Buckingham Township and will be handed out with an updated report at the October full Council meeting.

Ramie referred to the copy of the UDC's September 19th letter to Paul Rush of NYC DEP reiterating our request for a copy of the Dam Emergency Action Plans, acknowledging their receptiveness of ideas to improve emergency notification processes downstream of the Delaware System reservoirs, and

letting them know that the UDC is gathering information on existing sirems to share with them at the appropriate time.

Other: Ramie reported that the "Local History Past-Port" is the title of a new printed guide to 15 historical society museums and historic sites open to the public in the greater Wayne and Pike County area of Northeastern Pennsylvania. The full color booklet offers a page for each museum or site, with a description, location, hours of operation, contact information and a photograph. The public is invited to take the free booklet and start visiting each location. At each place, the person's "Local History Past-Port" will be stamped. After visiting each of the locations and receiving a stamp from each one, the person is entitled to a free gift at the historical society or organization of their choice. The booklets can be picked up at the Lake Wallenpaupack Visitors Center, Northern Chamber of Commerce and the Pike Chamber of Commerce.

Peckham reported that the signage for improved directions to the NYS DEC Bouchouxville Forest trail head have been delivered and are ready for installation. A brief location about where the signs would be placed took place.

Ritter asked if there has been any update on the Barryville Access signage issue. Members did not have any updates to provide.

New Business

Schoharie Valley's Early Warning System for Gilboa Dam Report: Ramie referred to the written report by Golod titled, "Gilboa Dam/Reservoir (Schoharie Valley)" provided in members' packets. Their system consists of outdoor warning sirens, reverse 911, and NY Alert system. The siren system consists of twenty sites along Schoharie Creek where the sirens are affixed to poles above the water inundation levels, and have the ability to rotate. Ritter suggested that NYC DEP could use the Schoharie Valley Early Warning system as a prototype for one in our area and for use near all of their reservoirs. Ramie said she does not know what the difference would be with that system and the one we're asking for here. Referring to the report, Peckham read where the group Dam Concerned Citizens, Inc. seeks "Dam owners' indemnification of downstream residents and local governments for financial costs and losses attributable to dams." He explained that indemnification would be motivation to get a system installed. Ramie said the Dam Concerned Citizens group was a major catalyst for getting NYC DEP to provide the emergency warning system. Ritter provided details on the Schoharie Reservoir and Gilboa Dam which are part of New York City's Water Supply System. Ramie read a statement from a press release provided to her by Odell regarding the Gilboa Dam sirens after Hurricanes Irene and Lee in 2011. The statement read that "DEP will assist with \$300,000 toward the repair of Schoharie County's emergency siren system for Gilboa Dam, with money anticipated to be reimbursed by FEMA for infrastructure damage." After much discussion, it was decided to send a letter to the Dam Concerned Citizens, Inc. asking for details (including the coverage area) and insights into how they succeeded in working with NYC DEP on the emergency warning system for the Gilboa Dam.

Bridge Identification Signage Discussion: In regards to the newly installed sign on the Narrowsburg bridge which reads, "Narrowsburg, NY – Beach Lake, PA" Henry said that for system commonality, the sign should read "Narrowsburg, NY – Darbytown, PA". He referred to a number of documents that list the area just across the bridge in Pennsylvania as Darbytown, PA. He noted that Beach Lake is a village in Berlin Township and the bridge crosses into Damascus Township in Pennsylvania. He reiterated that referring to it as Beach Lake is confusing. Ramie provided some background information on the bridge signage project which was coordinated by Sullivan County Planning. She added that Sullivan County Planning consulted with Wayne County Planning for the information placed on that sign. Henry said that for emergency response purposes, the signage should tell you where you are on the river. He said his opinion is based on his experience from being a fireman for a local fire department. Ritter suggested that emergency contact information be added to the river signs. Ramie said the signs were designed as identification signs so that someone boating underneath them would know where they are. Henry suggested that someone go out on the river and see if the signs are legible from a boat. Peckham noted that the Delaware is a scenic and recreational one and questioned why the signs would be installed at all. Ramie said they were for orientation purposes for visitors that are not familiar with the area.

Henry shared details of a conversation he had with a livery owner who expressed concern about the liveries being responsible for paying for the installation of emergency call boxes along Route 97. Ramie

said an idea had been shared by a Council member that liveries may be interested in sponsoring those call boxes as a good will gesture. There would certainly be no obligation. Henry suggested the livery owners be included in any conversation about the emergency call boxes. Ramie said that all the meetings are open to the public and she would add this to the action items. Ritter reported that the cell phone service on the river from Narrowsburg to Ten Mile River has improved immensely in the last couple of years.

A motion to draft a letter to Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management objecting to the Narrowsburg, NY-Beach Lake, PA Bridge identification sign instead of Darbytown, PA, for action at the October 6th full Council meeting, was made by Henry and carried by Ritter. A vote was taken and the motion carried with Peckham voting no.

Delaware River Basin Conservation Act Approved in Senate: Ramie reported that the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act was passed on September 15th by the U.S. Senate as part of a larger package of legislation contained in the Water Resources Development Act by a vote of 95 to 3. It still has to pass in the House of Representatives and be signed by the President in order to be enacted, she noted. The Act would establish a non-regulatory Delaware River Basin Restoration Program in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along with a \$5 million grant and technical assistance program. The program is designed to bring some priority to the Delaware basin. The grant portion of the program requires a minimum 50-percent non-federal match, which will ensure that any federal investment is at least doubled. The bill requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to coordinate with federal agencies and consult with non-governmental organizations and partnerships working in the region to ensure program implementation incorporates a basin-wide strategy that is complementary to existing funding programs and initiatives throughout the Watershed.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Report: A copy of the September 19th New York City DEP Current Reservoir Levels report was provided in members' packets. Total storage as of that date was 73.3% with Cannonsville at 54.3%. Normal total storage for this date is 76.9%.

Other: Ramie referred to the Friends of the Upper Delaware River handout provided in members' packets. The handout provided information about the NYC East-of-Hudson Croton water supply system coming back on line. The reservoir managers have adjusted their estimated water supply needs from the Delaware system taking into consideration the contributions from the restored Croton system. As a result, there is a substantial increase of available water in the reservoirs for downstream needs including the protection of the unique cold water ecosystem below the dams. A brief discussion about Lake Wallenpaupack releases took place.

Public Comment: None

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

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 9/27/16