

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2021

Committee Members Present: Ginny Dudko, Andy Boyar (Zoom), Fred Peckham (Zoom), Al Henry (Zoom), Pat Jeffer, Evan Padua (Zoom)

Committee Members Absent:

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Shannon Cilento, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas (Zoom)

NPS Partner: Don Hamilton (Zoom)

Guests: Bill Dudko

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 21st, 2021 at the UDC office in Narrowsburg, NY. Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Approval of August 17th, 2021 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Henry, seconded by Padua approving the August 17th, 2021 meeting minutes carried.

Old Business

Ten Mile River Access: Committee requested that this matter stays on the agenda. Ramie had nothing new to report. Hamilton checked with Superintendent Salvatore and Cody Hendrix and they didn't have anything new to report either.

Emergency Plan Response: Last month Ramie received a response from Chief Ranger Keith Winslow that the Emergency Plan Response was moving forward. UDC requested to be informed of developments. Winslow emailed Ramie back saying the next step is a tabletop exercise and that he will be including Ramie as an observer. Ramie asked him for a date and time of the tabletop exercise and will keep the committee updated on developments.

OSI Grant Application: Cilento said on 7/20 WU/RM approved sending a Letter of Intent to apply for funding for Sullivan County's Earth to Sky program through the Open Space Institute for Upper Delaware-based training on creating communities that help tackle climate change. Cilento and the team propose to create a twelve-page booklet to be distributed to landowners or property owners on how to protect their land. She will mention the River Management Plan in the booklet. Cilento submitted the application on 9/15. It requires an in-kind match but does not require a cash match. The final budget request was \$5,000, which would cover Dorene Warner's design services from W Design. Warner also included a discount and a donation for services that valued a few hundred dollars. Spencer Printing gave them a quote for 7,500 copies. A decision should be in around mid-October and Cilento will keep committee members informed.

7/28 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Meeting Minutes: At the 8/17 meeting, Ramie gave a rundown of the 7/28 D&H Transportation Heritage Council meeting based on her notes. She provided a copy of the minutes in the packet. Ramie noted that Kenny Christianson, the representative for the Lackawaxen River Conservancy, spoke about a proposal to add the Lackawaxen River to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. It's expected to be a three-year process and will require an Act of Congress. Ramie reached out to them today to see who specifically is driving that application and the status of it.

8/30 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting Minutes: A copy of the meeting minutes was provided in the packet. Ramie said UDSB has opted to join the National Scenic Byway Foundation for \$150 in dues. There was a workshop on 9/15 called "Producing a Byway Video So It's Ready for TV and Social Media" that a few members of UDSB attended. UDSB opted to write a letter to Sullivan Broadband Local Development Corporation, specifically to Legislator Michael Brooks, after discussion took place of the underserved areas along the scenic byway. UDSB will purchase commercial time for PSA messages, committing \$300 to purchase 30 ads under the 1:1 match offer from Bold Gold Media. Bill Dudko reported that he believes five of the original eight 15-Minute Parking Signs at the NYS Rt. 97 Hawk's Nest that the Deerpark Town Board had requested to be installed to discourage loitering are

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missing. Ramie will be writing a letter to NYS DOT Region 8 informing them about the absent signs and inquiring about any replacements. Improvements for the Lumberland Pull-off are still in progress. The NYS DOT permitting officer has requested additional information based on Teresa Spradling's work permit application submission. Rosie DeCristofaro has been overseeing a vista clearing on Rt. 97 in Callicoon. Tree trimmer Nick Mootz suggested some additional work on the same property which involves adjacent lots owned by the same people that would benefit from selective clearing of dense tree areas. It was noted there is no signage for the UDSB coming west on I-84 from Middletown. Ramie will be looking into what steps need to be taken to get that signage installed. The UDSB is also introducing a new grant program. It was first called "uncategorized grants" and now is called "UDSB Culture and History Grants". Ramie said the 8/24 letter from the Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS) she shared with the UDC about the PEL study faulty comment process was also sent to the UDSB. DCS received a response from PennDOT saying that all public comments submitted through various methods were accepted. On 9/23 another meeting of the Project Advisory Committee will be held. Ramie was contacted by DCS President Barbara Arrindell for contact information for the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. Ramie informed her the meeting was not open to the public. DCS's attorney wrote a letter to PennDOT asking to be invited. AECOM, the consulting firm that PennDOT is using for the public engagement process, sent a message to the membership of the PAC giving the ground rules for the meeting and it stated that only PAC members are invited to participate in this virtual meeting. The sites for the smart solar trash receptacle pilot program have been proposed and are the Lumberland pull-off, Barryville cul-de-sac, Highland access, and Tusten Veterans' Park or the Big Eddy observation deck. It was mentioned by a few people that \$6,000 per unit does seem like a lot, Johnny Pizzolato pointed out they do have WIFI extenders in them that could cost upwards of \$4,000. With all the recent drownings, these receptacles will introduce new "hot spots" near the river. Powered by solar, they are completely "green". Jeffer said the trash receptacles should say they are WIFI hot spots so people are aware. A question came up during the DOT report about the guiderail improvements particularly in the Towns of Fremont and Delaware. They initially said the schedule for those projects would be late 2021 to early 2022 and UDSB was looking for an updated schedule. The next UDSB meeting is 9/27.

9/15 NPS Water Safety Committee Report: Hall-Bagdonas reported that she and Cilento attended the 9/15 Water Safety Meeting via Microsoft Teams. Ron Babus ran through the drownings that happened this summer which were noted in local papers and discussed at UDC meetings. Of note the fifth drowning was a 17-year-old at Cedar Rapids in Barryville. He was told at least twice by Cedar Rapids staff to put on a life jacket. Babus said he will be updating the Drowning Database. He also shared several close-calls that happened this summer. Cilento noted that a few were at Skinner's Falls and one was a small child. There was no yelling but because NPS was staffed there, they saw the child's foot was stuck in the rocks and could quickly act. Ingrid Peterec believes having staff at Skinners helped and life jacket loaner stations working. They will be looking at the life jacket survey and that will come out in 2022. There are four locations where they have the life jacket surveys. National Canoe Safety Patrol had over 8,400 contacts this summer and 229 rescues. A member of the public, Bizzy Coy, reached out to NPS and she attended the meeting to give a presentation: "Dangerous Waters- A Safety Messaging Strategy for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River." She talked about how the target audience is young men 18-30; that they are from NYC or nearby urban areas; they are camping and or recreating at local outfitters; English and or Spanish speaking, etc. Some obstacles she discussed were safety blindness, not even noticing life jacket warnings; having the vacation mindset; the deception of the river; invincibility syndrome; peer pressure; etc. Coy suggested updated messages to go along with the promotion that is already being shared. A few examples were: Ask your friend to wear a life jacket. Their life is in your hands. Most drownings happen on a calm river. Wear a life jacket no matter what. Keith Winslow tasked Babus with staying on top of this matter. The next meeting will be a brainstorming session on this presentation. The date and time are TBD. Henry said initially at Skinner's, Lander's used to put a lot of aluminum canoes out. With the advent of the smooth bottom boats and rafts, that has decreased the amount of capsizes in that area. He said it also seems that people are putting in further downstream, where often times there is more water.

Other: None.

New Business

Northern Snakehead Catch on Upper Delaware River: Hall-Bagdonas received a call from Susan and Doug Case (Lackawaxen UDC Representative) asking for contact information for NPS and DEC. Hamilton received a call from Case and he went over and picked up a Northern Snakehead they had caught on Monday morning. Hamilton put up new laminated posters about the Northern Snakehead for anglers at Darbytown and Narrowsburg DEC access. On

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9/5 there was a snakehead caught in Ray Turner's eel weir; on 9/19 one was caught in Doug Case's eel weir. When NPS was recovering the tires from the Big Eddy a week ago Monday he was talking with the Watershed Steward staff at the Narrowsburg DEC access and she mentioned an angler caught one there on 8/29. Neither NPS nor NYS DEC had heard of that catch. There was also a report of one that was in the Bashakill Wetlands up the Neversink drainage. Hamilton said the issue is concerning. He said there are not a lot of good management strategies. He has been in contact with DEC and PA Fish and Boat Commission. NPS has a project funded for next summer that is a freshwater snail inventory of the river. Snails make up a pretty significant part of the animal biomass. The project will also include eDNA sampling throughout the length of the river and that's really valuable. Those water samples can be analyzed for presence of a whole range of species of organisms. That could potentially tell them a lot more about the extent and spread of Northern Snakehead or any other species they are concerned about. There's concern about flathead catfish getting in the Upper Delaware. They are a fish that eats a lot of other fish. Hamilton said the NPS Northern Snakehead posters say to report them to NPS, DEC and PA Fish and Boat Commission. They should be killed upon capture and not moved around. If they are able to look at specimens and look at stomach contents that may be able to give some indication on what they are eating. Henry asked how accurate eDNA is? Hamilton said that's a good question but everything in the water swaths of secretion, excrement, and skin and eDNA can determine what is in the water samples from a certain distance. He said for this project they are probably going to collect samples every two kilometers of the Upper Delaware River. Fish and Wildlife Services has the capabilities in their Lamar, PA lab to analyze water samples for eDNA and they ran the samples for NYDEC collected here last fall. Hamilton said he hopes to continue to work with them. He said they may not be able to eradicate them but they can try to control them and reduce their population. Henry suggested putting a bounty on the Northern Snakehead and asking fishing experts what the snakeheads are hitting on. Hamilton said he's gotten feedback, Joe Demalderis said fish where carp won't even go and cast a frog imitation. They seem to prefer slow water habitats and weedy areas. Dudko suggested having the Northern Snakehead being a topic for a future full Council meeting presentation.

Friends of the Upper Delaware River Recreational Plan Study: Cilento said this is a Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) project that they are leading for the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters, which isn't necessarily in the river corridor but UDC was invited to participate in this process because it relates a lot to the Recreational Access Study that the Towns of Fremont, Hancock and Delaware used Technical Assistance Grants for. The first part is surveys and outreach. Provided in the meeting packet is a Hancock Area Recreational User Survey and also a Hancock Area Landowner Survey including the Towns of Colchester, Deposit and Hancock in NY and the Townships of Buckingham, Manchester and Scott in PA. Comments are due by 9/22. Chris VanMaaren from NY DEC Division of Fish and Wildlife commented "Question 5 and 6 on the rec survey will lead to false weighting of the choices given. The choices lead people to conclusions they may not have been inclined to note. Question 11 on the Landowner Survey at least makes these points w/o an all or nothing choice. I would suggest formatting the rec survey to have the gradient of concern for the various choices and I would also recommend that choices be included that allow someone to show that they are pleased with the way things are currently."

Hamilton's comments on Recreational Use Study were, "I think it would be of interest to get more info on what recreational boaters/fishers consider adequate flows (in relation to various USGS gages) for a high-quality recreational boating/fishing experience. Maybe consider adding the question below; 5. What was less than satisfactory about your experience? Flow conditions of river; What flows (cfs) do you consider adequate for a high-quality recreational boating/fishing experience (perhaps specified for different sections of the river system, in relation to various USGS gages; e.g. Hale Eddy, Fishs Eddy, Lordville, Callicoon, Barryville [Barryville Gage above Lackawaxen])." His comments on the Hancock Area Landowner Survey were: "Do you have adequate information on local zoning, development limitations, permit requirements, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for a riverfront property owner (in place to protect water quality and natural resources) in Pennsylvania or New York State, or on a river that's part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System? I'm also copying Cody Hendrix (our NPS Community and Land Use Planner), Joe Salvatore (our Superintendent), and Laurie Ramie and Shannon Cilento of the Upper Delaware Council, who may also have interest in/suggestions for these surveys." Hamilton said the question of "Do you have adequate information on local zoning..." really relates to the brochure Cilento and her Sullivan County group are working on to inform people about land use that will protect the river, especially if they are waterfront owners. A lot of times people don't know what they can/can't do or should/shouldn't do. Cilento asked once the survey is complete if Peckham would participate since he is a property owner on the river in the focus area. Cilento asked if everyone had a chance to review the documents? Peckham noted how when he was a kid no one really posted about their property because everyone knew each other but that is a new way of showing

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information. Henry said he just reviewed it and he will email his comments back to her. Henry said a law was recently passed in PA that the color purple is the demarcation of land. You no longer have to put up posters just purple paint. Dudko said if anyone had any comments, please send them to Cilento by tomorrow.

NPS Virtual Intern History Project: Cilento said NPS has hired an intern through the Virtual Student Federal Service. She was a seasonal intern this past summer. She attends school in Florida and is originally from NJ. Cilento said this project came out of conversations with Jeff Dexter and Damascus Historical Society. Damascus Historical Society wanted to apply for a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) through the UDC to update their historic walking and driving tours. There was discussion if UDC could have Cultural TAGs. Before the application process, Lauren Hauptman from the NPS had suggested she could create an internship around this and someone could be dedicated to these projects. Cilento thinks that's a really great compromise. Damascus Historical Society is really excited as is the intern. Cilento, Hauptman and Cody Hendrix had a call with the intern two weeks ago to talk about different projects. She will be focusing in Damascus' two districts to update driving and talking tours that Mary Curtis developed. The virtual intern will also pick a few other communities to work with; she's looking into Equinunk and Lordville. Ramie asked if it's a paid internship? Hamilton said no, it's not.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: A copy of the 9/20 DRBC Hydrological Conditions Report was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 92.9%.

Other: Dudko said she won't be at the 10/7 UDC meeting and asked Vice-chairman Boyar to answer any questions about the meeting, if needed.

Ramie said that Padua made an observation to Central New York Railroad (CNYK) about the culvert near Hankins and he received no acknowledgement. UDC then sent a letter on 8/19 and UDC has yet to receive a response. This prompted a discussion about accumulations of railroad ties along the tracks A Motion by Padua seconded by Boyar for Ramie to draft a letter for the 10/19 meeting to the Federal Railroad Administration regarding the accumulation and proper disposal of railroad ties along the Southern Tier line tracks in the river corridor; and the potential safety hazard of a damaged culvert in Hankins that has been brought to the attention of Central New York Railroad twice by Padua and the UDC, and not acknowledged, carried.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A Motion by Jeffer seconded by Henry, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. was carried.