

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
August 16, 2022

Committee Members Present: Ginny Dudko, Al Henry, Evan Padua, Fred Peckham (Zoom), Pat Jeffer
Committee Members Absent: Andy Boyar
Staff: Kerry Engelhardt, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton (Zoom)
Guests: Bill Dudko- Deerpark Alternate

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 16th, 2022. Chairperson Dudko called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Approval of July 19, 2022 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Henry, seconded by Padua approving the July 19th, 2022 meeting minutes carried.

Old Business

Additional NPS Responses to 5/19 WU/RM Letter to Water Safety Committee: Ingrid Peterec provided a response to UDC staff on 7/21: "UDC Questions to NPS: **Question 1.** How does the statistic of 74 drownings in the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River from 1980-2021 compare or rank with other federally designated waterways? **Answer:** *The National Park Service's Office of Public Risk Management has been compiling data on drowning fatalities in national parks since 2007. This data includes park sites that have lakes, rivers, seashores, and other water sources that potentially could lead to a drowning. The data compares the years from 2007 to 2016. They are still validating the data from 2017 to the present so this data is not available. Upper Delaware ranks in the top nine out of the 80 parks in the data set that have experienced at least one drowning.*

Question 2. We have heard conflicting information about the use of inflatable Personal Flotation Devices on the Upper Delaware River. What is legally permissible to meet the standard of carrying a US Coast Guard-approved device on watercraft for our bi-state river? **Answer:** *Type 5 inflatable PFD's are legally permissible and are approved on the Upper Delaware but not recommend due to rapids and some type 5 vests failing to work when they hit the water due to the vest not being properly inspected and not taken out of service when required based on manufacture labeling.*

Question 3. Please list the current provisions as per the prevailing federal and state laws for both New York and Pennsylvania and the Superintendent's Compendium to require mandatory PFD usage in terms of age and highwater conditions. Regarding the highwater clause, has there been any consideration of lowering that to less than the six-foot trigger? **Answer:** *Life jackets required in the State of NY: New York state laws require all children under 12 years of age to wear a USCG-approved life jacket or PFD at all times while aboard any watercraft less than 65 feet long unless they are in an enclosed cabin or below deck. Life jackets required in the State of PA: In Pennsylvania, passengers 12 years of age and under on Commonwealth waters are required to wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket while underway on any boat that is under 20 feet in length and when riding in or operating, canoes and kayaks. Personal Watercraft (PWC) Life Jacket Law. Statistics have shown that drownings are more closely related to the activity of swimming from the shoreline of a commercial property as well as boating with a commercial vessel and not wearing a PFD when switching from the activity of boating to the activity of swimming and choosing to remove or not wear a properly fitted PFD.*

Question 4. With respect to the safety slogans selected for new signage, it appears that many of the drownings recorded in recent years have involved swimming. If the analysis of victims' activities does prove that, committee members felt that there should be at least one additional slogan to warn about the potential danger of swimming in a river, either from the shore or after jumping out of a boat, without the protection provided by a PFD. That risk may not be understood without emphasis. **Answer:** *The park's Water Safety Committee utilizes data collected from the park's drowning database to drive decisions as well as the demographic makeup of visitors to the river (age,*

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gender, where they are from, age etc.). In response to the large number drownings last summer and the information gathered from each incident as well as information about who are visitors are the committee focused on designing and developing new water safety signs that focused on the hazard (drowning), what was the activity leading up to the drowning, and on what do we want them to do (outcome – wear a life jacket). The designs of the new signs were to help the visitor think about the effects of them drowning such as the impact on their family and friends. The park designed six signs that covered swimming activities, swift river currents, and steep drop offs. The signs are in both English and Spanish and will be translated into different languages such as Russian to reach the more diversified audiences that are coming to recreate on the Upper Delaware.”

7/25 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Minutes: A copy of the 7/25 UDSB minutes by Ramie were provided in the meeting packets.

7/27 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Meeting Minutes: A copy of the 7/27 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Meeting Minutes by Ramie were provided in the meeting packets.

7/29 Environmental Resources Fair Report: On 7/29 Engelhardt attended the Environmental Resourced Fair for new residents. It was held at the Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center right at the dam. There were five information tents: the UDC; Delaware Highlands Conservancy; Pennsylvania DCNR; Pike County Conservation District; and the County Planning office. It had a steady flow of people attending. Everyone was interested to talk to us about what UDC does and hear about the river corridor and she handed out a lot of maps. It was also a great chance to strengthen partnerships.

8/9 Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee Report: Engelhardt attended the 8/9 meeting. Results were overall very positive. Next year the cleanup will be on 6/16 and paddling will be from 6/17 to 6/23 in the Upper Delaware. They are the same days as the Schuylkill Sojourn but they are not too concerned about that as it tends to be different groups who attend each. They are looking to have more days on the Upper portion next year.

8/13 6th Annual Upper Delaware “Get Trashed” Litter Cleanup Report: Hall-Bagdonas provided an infographic of the 8/13 event for the meeting packets. Around 90 volunteers participated in a cleanup from Balls Eddy to Shehawken. Four river-miles were cleaned. 360 volunteer hours were logged and 50+ tires were extracted from the Delaware River. Hall-Bagdonas said the Delaware River Club appreciated UDC’s \$500 contribution and it was great to see so many partners get involved!

Upper Delaware River Litter Bag Stations Update: Hall-Bagdonas said concept has been discussed since late last year. She provided a draft proposal for members to look at and said she would like to consider using local Trout Unlimited groups or Sullivan Renaissance for funding sources. Boyar will provide UDC staff with contractor’s name, and/or construction plans for storage boxes for river litter bags. Engelhardt and Hall-Bagdonas will look into sourcing larger sized “rag bags” for the litter stations.

Other: Henry will reach out to someone at The Conservation Fund regarding an installation of a segmented ramp at the Ten Mile River access.

New Business

Darbytown Access Post-Paving Work Plan: Hamilton will follow up with Keith Winslow or other appropriate NPS personnel about the need for signage and striping at the Darbytown Access, necessitated by the recent paving of that access.

10/11-12 Friends of the Upper Delaware River Annual Virtual Conference: Ramie provided the save-the-date information for the Friends of the Upper Delaware River’s “Water Water Everywhere” Conference on 10/11-12. Hall-Bagdonas said staff and members have attended this in the past and paid for the fee. Please let us know if you are interested in attending this virtual conference.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: The 8/15 DRBC Hydrological Conditions Report noted combined storage is at 71.2%.

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Other: Staff will check with Ramie and Boyar about the feasibility of changing the start time of WU/RM meetings to 6:30pm moving forward. If there are no problems, it will be added as an item to the 9/1 agenda of the full council meeting regarding same.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A Motion by Henry seconded by Padua, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas 8/26/2022