WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
October 20, 2026

Committee Members Present:	Bill Dudko, Al Henry, Jim Rodgers, Pat Jeffer, Christine Martin (Zoom), Jim Serio (Zoom)
Committee Members Absent:	Evan Padua, Bob Lindquist
Staff:	Laurie Ramie, Julie Pais
NPS Partner:	Tom Kearns (Zoom)
Guests:	Ginny Dudko

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 20, 2026. Committee Vice-chairperson B. Dudko called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

Approval of the September 15, 2026 meeting minutes: A motion by Henry seconded by Serio approving the 9/15 meeting minutes carried.

Public Comment on Agenda: None.

New Business:

PennDOT: Port Jervis-Matamoras Bridge Repair Project Online Plans Display 10/16-11/13: Members reviewed a news release from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation inviting the public to review online plans for a proposed bridge pier repair project on the Port Jervis, NY-Matamoras, PA Bridge. Specific improvements include concrete repairs and sealing cracks at the pier, placement of rock scour protection along the pier perimeter, applying a protective coating to the top of the concrete pier, and repointing the existing stone masonry at Wingwall C. Access to the bridge pier will be provided via a river causeway and access road originating from the Port Jervis side of the river at Water Street. Traffic will be controlled using short-term, single-lane closures during construction. There will be no traffic impacts to Route 6. The public can review detailed project information from Oct. 16 to Nov. 13 on the PennDOT District 4-0 website, which includes a written comment form that may be submitted. Ramie pointed out that construction is anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2028 and be completed by that Fall. Members questioned why this work wasn't done when the bridge underwent major rehabilitation to replace the bridge deck from the former open metal grate system to concrete. Ramie speculated that the funding may not have been secured at that time or that these issues involving the bridge pier may have been discovered after that contract finished.

UDC 10/5 Notice to Railroad: Deterioration of Train Retaining Wall in Callicoon, NY: Pais reported that during a routine field visit in Callicoon on Oct. 2, she noticed several breaches in the retaining wall adjacent to the railroad tracks along River Road, west of Tower Road. The soil embankment was once secured by rebar and a concrete lattice structure but has become compromised. In several places, the soil has blown out onto the road, and several pieces of concrete were actually strewn across River Road. She sent a letter including photos and a map to representatives from Norfolk Southern Corp. and New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway/Central New York Railroad on Oct. 5 to alert them and ask how this situation will be addressed. The letter recommends immediately conducting a formal inspection of the train retaining wall as prudent both to ensure the safety of the railroad operation as well as the public. This is the second notice that the UDC has sent after an Aug. 27 notification about the damaged support retaining wall at the intersection of Tower and River Roads in Callicoon, also copying the Town of Delaware, Sullivan County Public Safety, NYS DEC, and National Park Service. Dudko said the railroad likely needs to do all this work at the same time. They're running trains on the westbound track of the former double track, so these issues would have less of an impact on the train traffic.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: Reviewing the Delaware River Basin Commission's hydrological conditions report dated Oct. 13, Dudko commented that the flow and storage levels look fairly normal. Serio said that Delaware River release rates were decreased on Oct. 1.

Other: None

Old Business:

Status of Contracts for USGS Delaware River Gage at Barryville Discharge Data: Ramie explained that the Sullivan County Legislature approved a new resolution on Oct. 15 after their original resolution to fund the $8,700 cost of full discharge data from the Barryville Gage did not take into account that the time period extended beyond the 2026 calendar year. She has returned the contract to the Office of Management and Budget and awaits its execution. Simultaneously, the UDC awaits receipt of its contract from the USGS. It began undergoing legal review on Sept. 28 and Ramie had been advised to expect that to take 30 days or more. Since the funding has been secured, there was no lapse in the collection and publication of the discharge data, however. Martin asked if this funding is for only one year? Ramie said yes, October 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027. There has been no funding commitment beyond that.

NYS DEC Response to UDC 9/24 Letter: Barnes Landfill Monitoring, Town of Highland: Ramie said she is keeping this on the agenda as a placeholder but there has been no response from NYS DEC at this time to the Council's 9/24 correspondence requesting an interpretation of the results of 2025 monitoring of the Barnes Landfill and asking additional questions. She mentioned that the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and a local film maker with a potential interest in this story have expressed their interest in being kept apprised of this response as well.

Flexible Flow Management Plan Update: Serio reported that he and Dr. Peter Kolesar are still working on developing their "ask" to combine the thermal and rapid flow mitigation banks in the next iteration of the Flexible Flow Management Plan. They were able to get on the agenda of the Delaware River Basin Commission's Regulated Flow Advisory Committee (RFAC) meeting which will be held on December 9 to present their proposal. Henry asked Serio if they have organizations supporting this effort and how the UDC could help. Serio said that the Village of Hancock, Town of Hancock, and the Friends of the Upper Delaware River Inc. have all been briefed. This subject will be a program at the Upper Delaware River Rendezvous conference on October 22, which will be a good outreach venue. G. Dudko asked if a letter of support from the WU/RM Committee would be helpful. Serio said once the proposal is further fleshed out, he should be able to offer a presentation on it at next month's meeting. B. Dudko praised Serio and Kolesar for their great volunteer work in researching this topic. Ramie said that if the WU/RM Committee proposes a letter of support at its November 17 meeting, it could be presented at the December 3 UDC meeting for approval by the full Council membership, which would still be in advance of the December 9 RFAC meeting.

Lake Jefferson Dam Update by American Rivers: Ramie referenced a written update on the Jeffersonville Hydroelectric project dated September 23, since the UDC had previously submitted a letter of support to remove the damaged Lake Jefferson dam and restore free flow of their tributary to the Delaware River. The report noted that specialized sediment sampling took place on June 2 and received a clean bill of health from the laboratory. This means that any sediment that may be washed downstream after the removal of the spillway and dam contains no problematic pollutants. It was conducted in accordance with NYS DEC standards. The next steps will be to continue project design for the dam's removal. In other news, the Lake Jefferson project is no longer under the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which had overseen it for the past 40 years due to the former presence of the hydroelectric power operation. FERC stepped out of that role as of June 11 and it is now under the jurisdiction of New York State. This allows the non-profit project leader, American Rivers, to find appropriate funding and complete the permitting application process with the NYS DEC.

9/23 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Board of Trustees Meeting Summary: Ramie referenced a handout of her minutes from this meeting, which primarily consisted of discussing the concept of a short "teaser" video suitable for the DHTHC website and YouTube to get people interested in discovering the D&H Canal's significance, the Council and its members, and its six-chapter series of longer-form historic videos. The next meeting of the full D&H Transportation Heritage Council will be October 28 at the Mamakating Historical Society in Summitville.

9/29 Upper Delaware Water Safety Partnership Fall Meeting Summary: The National Park Service held a fall debriefing of the recreational season with water safety partners on September 29 at the Tusten Town Hall meeting room in Narrowsburg and virtually. Participants described their practices and initiatives focusing on water safety. On the UDC's behalf, Ramie reported that the UDC focuses on four areas: reviewing and making recommendations on NPS enforcement, resource management, and recreation plans by our federal partners; serving as the contractor for a summer campaign on water safety billboards at entrance points to the river corridor with Adams Outdoor Advertising; recognizing those who directly save lives and promote safe practices through our annual bi-state River Valley Awards program which occurred this year on Sept. 15; and through educational efforts such as our publications, website, social media, and events/activities including participating in the U.S. EPA/NPS Geographic Response Plan development exercises. UPDE Superintendent Lindsey Kurnath said their intention was to keep this process informal, with NPS participating as a partner among a network of peers.

One discussion centered on the inconsistent cell service in the river valley, particularly between Barryville and the Hawks Nest. That remains a big issue for safety response and leads to some river users calling 911 for minor issues because it's the only number that works for them, resulting in an unnecessary burden on the system and deployment of resources. As a suggestion, the UDC was asked to arrange a public presentation to hear an update on the progress of the Connect Sullivan project with Archtop Fiber which aims to provide broadband coverage to 100% of the county and could also improve cellular communications. An invitation has been issued to speakers on this topic for the November 5 UDC meeting. Other ideas were to use a free app like what3words that works offline to pinpoint exact locations where individuals need help; share WIFI and passwords among the river outfitters and law enforcement community instead of having to waste time driving around to find a signal in an emergency; train the 911 dispatchers to ask the right question to discern what level of assistance is needed and to focus on location markers; hand out small waterproof maps to every livery customer listing the river accesses, bridges, and landmarks along the route; place more physical markers along the river (although this was considered problematic due to the prevalence of private property); improve the interactive mapping functionality of the NPS app which could be downloaded for the Upper Delaware River in segments or turn the map into posters that guest could take a photo of and save on their phones to reference; work with the DRBC and others to share their river recreation maps for these purposes; and await the advancement of satellite technology to take the place of prohibited cell towers in the river corridor. Henry commented that many people on the river don't know where they are when help is needed. The onus is on self-preservation. They need to pay attention to the safety talks and realize that they may not be able to rely on their cell phones. The liveries are responsible for launching 80-90% of the people on the river; they need to give more explicit descriptions of starting and ending points of river trips.

Another topic raised was a decrease in river traffic this summer which the NPS and National Canoe Safety Patrol each observed. NPS reported on 12,000 river contacts by their staff in 2026 compared to 22,000 in 2025. NCSP recorded 5,100 contacts and 85 rescues this season, a decrease due to fewer people on the river. Asked for reasons why visitor statistics were down, participants speculated that it was due to a post-COVID slump after an initial boost in outdoor activities during shutdowns, questionable weather forecasts that scared people away, and economy stressors in terms of higher costs for fuel for transportation, river trips, camping, and leisure activities. Ramie said it will be interesting to see whether

the overall Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River visitation statistics will begin showing a decrease after several years of trending upwards.

10/6 Pike/Wayne Conservation Partnership Meeting Summary: Pais said the Pike/Wayne Conservation Partnership plans to start meeting quarterly to share educational topics. She met the Pike County Planner and asked if they have maps of existing trails, which they do. Pais has been collecting information and feasibility studies for other rail-trail projects in light of the proposal Sam Rowe raised about exploring the development of a greenway trail along the railroad and Upper Delaware River.

10/13 Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee Meeting Summary: A survey was conducted of 2026 Sojourn participants to figure out how to improve the event next year. The steering committee is discussing a theme for 2027. Pais said one idea people favor is, how can citizens help with the river. We could put together a booklet of actions people can take and what resources can be tapped. Sojourn dates for 2027 have not been finalized as they are in the early stages of planning.

10/14 DRBC's Water Management Advisory Committee Meeting Summary: Ramie's notes from the WMAC meeting were provided. There were 48 virtual participants and reports were provided on hydrologic conditions (recovered significantly with 55" of precipitation in the Upper Basin over the last 365 days), a DRBC update (4th quarter public hearing on Nov. 4 and business meeting on Dec. 3), Subcommittee on Source Water Protection (meets next on Nov. 18), proposed rulemaking for an amendment to the Water Code to add definitions and reporting requirements for large water supply system customers (50,000 gallons per day or more over a 30-day average, public comments being accepted through Dec. 4), and the release of a new report based on the application of the Surface Water Evaluation and Estimation Tool (SWEET) screening surface water conditions in six basin watersheds (not local to the Upper Delaware).

10/15 NPS Upper Delaware Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) Holders Meeting Summary: Pais attended and said the topics were similar to the Water Safety Partnership meeting. Chief of Interpretation Ingrid Peterec reported a 39% decrease in river users over 2025, with Skinners Falls and Mongaup Accesses being the most visited. Chief Ranger Keith Winslow urged participants to call their 24-hour Park Dispatch at (570) 426-2457 to report any abandoned vessels, while also providing an update on the EPA/NPS Geographic Response Plans, life jacket use, and fishing licenses. They are looking into deteriorating conditions of the boat ramp at the Buckingham Access. Clean-up needs at the Ten Mile River Access were mentioned. Liveries and campgrounds are worried about frivolous 911 calls on the river to avoid draining local resources. They would like to improve the ability of 911 operators to filter out non-emergency calls. There was discussion about the CUA permitting process. If people are out there operating a business illegally without the proper permits, how does NPS handle that? The response was that NPS is addressing these issues and has a process: 1. Ask the party to obtain a permit; 2. If they refuse and the behavior continues, issue a citation; 3. Take legal action if the operation is still ongoing; 4. Issue a possible cease-and-desist order or ban them from the Upper Delaware park unit. They spoke about the funding of the USGS Barryville Gage and noted that this data is important if the meaning of it is understood. They also shared the link to the NOAA website for the prediction of river levels. This particular site is based on a measurement at Callicoon: https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/ccrn6#hg=official. The UPDE staff offered to provide the same monthly activity report they provide to the UDC to any CUA holders that are interested. They also spoke about goose hunting on the river and how best to convey the rules about it after there was an alleged pellet gun shooting of a person in the arm. Henry said if that happened, NPS should have investigated it. He never heard of any injuries occurring that way. Most sportsmen are responsible during any hunting season. Martin inquired about an alleged fatality of a young child at a campground in the Town of Highland on July 3 after a tree reportedly fell on the tent he was sharing with his father during a storm. She did not see reports of this in any newspapers, nor was it ever mentioned by the Park Service. Henry said that NPS would not necessarily have been involved in an

investigation of an incident that occurred on private property but expressed surprise that there was no press coverage. Pais said she was under the impression that this reported incident did lead to revamping of the facility's safety program in the event of hazardous weather. All agreed that we don't have adequate, confirmed information to make any conclusions.

Other: Martin said she was approached recently by Town of Highland resident Julius Robinson who asked for an update on the proposal he had sought support for last summer to initiate a water quality monitoring system downstream of the proposed Camp FIMFO site in Barryville before project development to establish a baseline, then continuing after the project's completion, to ensure that its septic systems do not have a negative impact on the Delaware River. The UDC had written a letter to the Town of Highland Planning Board on August 7, 2025 supporting this idea and recommending working with the Delaware River Basin Commission to advise on appropriate sampling locations, schedule, and testing parameters, while advocating that the cost be borne by the applicant. Ramie said, to her knowledge, the UDC did not receive any response to the letter that was sent under the signature of former Resources and Land Use Specialist Kerry Engelhardt. Martin said it might behoove us to remind the planning board of this letter and its recommendations, so that it doesn't get lost in all the correspondence. Ramie said she presumes it became part of the project record and would be considered as a potential condition to impose if the project is ultimately approved, but that the planning board may not have been in a position to respond to it while a decision on the application is still pending. Henry said staff could send the 2025 letter to Martin to provide to the town as the UDC representative. Martin said she would forward it by email but staff could take that same action more directly. The consensus was for Ramie to forward the letter to the Town of Highland Planning Board by email with an explanation of its purpose.

Public Comment: None.

Adjourn: A motion by Jeffer seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m. carried.

Meeting minutes prepared by Laurie Ramie, 11/3/2026