WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
November 18, 2025

Committee Members Present:	Evan Padua, Bill Dudko (Zoom), Jim Rodgers, Al Henry, Christine Martin (Zoom)
Committee Members Absent:	Bob Lindquist, Pat Jeffer
Staff:	Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Stephanie Driscoll
NPS Partner:	Kearns Kearns (Zoom)
Guests:	Ginny Dudko (Zoom), Rosie Starr (Zoom), Anie Stanley (Zoom)

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, November18, 2025. Chairperson Padua called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Approval of the October 21, 2025 meeting minutes: A motion by Henry seconded by Rodgers approving the 10/21 meeting minutes carried.

Public Comment on Agenda: None.

New Business:

11/13 Confluence Flats Site Visit, Starlight, PA: Engelhardt said she went with the Delaware Highlands Conservancy for a site monitoring visit to a property in Starlight, PA which had recently done a conservation easement. They wanted to make sure there were no encroachments from ATV trails, building, etc. She commented that it is a very wet property that people do some hunting on. There is an existing tent platform and outhouse on the property. Padua asked what the total acreage is? Engelhardt said she isn't certain, but thinks about 60-70 acres. Padua pointed to a photo of that area behind Engelhardt in the UDC meeting room. Engelhardt said the property is across from the Hancock Cove Access. Padua said they've had Upper Delaware Bioblitzes there. He had thought that property had a conservation easement for some time now. Engelhardt said only a couple of years. The property was split off from a larger farm. Ramie said the BioBlitz was at the Gales property specifically. Engelhardt mentioned seeing an eagle while they were there.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: Padua said things aren't looking great; we need some snow or rain. We never got any big storms this fall. Cannonsville Reservoir is low. Rodgers said he was there yesterday and it looked like a stream. Padua said this time last year, things were worse. Hopefully we will get some rain.

Other: None.

Old Business:

10/22 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Meeting: Ramie showed a PowerPoint of photos from a tour of the Erie Canal Boat *Seneca Chief* that DHTHC President Bill Merchant had arranged at the Hudson Maritime Museum in Kingston, NY. The Buffalo Maritime Museum has constructed a full-size replica of this line boat. It took hundreds of volunteers to construct this replica inside the Longshed at Canalside on Buffalo's waterfront from October 2020 to June 2024. On September 24, 2025 the *Seneca Chief* set sail on a Bicentennial Voyage from Buffalo to the New York Harbor, commemorating Governor DeWitt Clinton's 1825 inaugural journey. The project was one of the largest community boatbuilding endeavors in the world and one of the few that was constructed on public display, with only two professional shipwrights leading the build.

The boat's keel, frames, and other articular timbers were made of White Oak. The keelson was a single 60-foot-long piece of reclaimed Douglas fir. The planking consisted of two layers of 1-inch-thick Cypress with a waterproof dynel cloth set epoxy between the layers. The outer layer of planking was caulked with cotton in the traditional manner. All of the bolts used in the backbone structure were forged in the BMC's own machine shop by a crew of volunteers. That crew also produced several specialized tools and hardware needed to build the boat.

Photos were shown of the cabin's interior, outfitted with cabinet-grade hardwood and finished in a style consistent with the 1820s. It measures 73 feet long and weighs 40 tons. A photo was shown of a barrel on top of the ship where they collected water from each port/section of the canal to nourish the White Pine trees they planted along the way as a symbolic tribute to the Haudenosaunee people.

A copy of the 10/22 DHTHC meeting minutes was included in the packet to read at leisure. The Board of Trustees will meet on 12/17 via Zoom and the UDC meeting room. The full council will meet again on 4/22/26. Rodgers asked where the boat will go? Ramie said back to Buffalo where it is from. Rodgers asked if Ramie traveled on the boat? Ramie said no, it was anchored at the port in Kingston, NY. Engelhardt asked if it will travel back to Buffalo via water? Ramie said she isn't sure. Rodgers said, so if you want to see it, you can only see it in Buffalo. Ramie said it traveled along the route via tugboat. There is no engine on the boat itself. Padua said it will probably be pulled back to Buffalo that way too. Ramie suggested checking www.buffalomaritimecernter.org for more information and videos. They've done an amazing job with publicity. Rodgers asked if the kitchen was operational back in the 1820s? Ramie said she thinks that was the intention. Engelhardt said people still live on long canal boats in England. Rodgers said that's true, Holland too.

10/27 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting & 11/12 Programming Workshop: Meeting minutes are included in the packet. Ramie said a new UDSB mural was unveiled on the side of Bisbee's Lumber in the Village of Hancock this past summer thanks to a grant program for $2,000 from Ithaca Murals. Payment was received for Program Manager David Krantz's service to build, paint, store, and have the mural shipped from Port Jervis to Hancock. Byway Treasurer Larry Richardson submitted the invoice for the Sullivan County Discretionary Funds for 2025; hopefully that funding will come through soon. The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association is putting out a new travel magazine format to replace their usual one-year travel guide. This will be the winter/spring version. The UDSB is taking an ad that Krantz designed and submitted by a 11/7 deadline. They worked on tax filings for 2024 since the byway was granted an extension through 11/15. They decided to work with Eckersley & Davis, LLP for their financial needs on a recommendation from Richardson based on the UDC's relationship since the byway's former accountant had retired.

The National Scenic Byway Association asked Krantz to present on the Upper Delaware Scavenger Hunt at their First Friday Fellowship meeting virtually on 12/5. The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association is having their annual meeting on 12/18 at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts with their new CEO unveiling plans for 2026. Ramie plans to attend that, to hear about tourism initiatives. Tickets are sold out.

The committee briefly discussed a 9/1 article in the *Hancock Herald* of a new 501(c)3, "Wild West Wonder" Western Catskills Visitors Association. The article refers to Richard H. Lowe III as the Director of Regional Economic Development for this new organization to "unify marketing, tourism, and economic development efforts across the Upper Delaware River region" with its primary office located in the Village of Hancock and another satellite office planned at the new Visitor Center at the Callicoon Depot. Hopefully Lowe will be at the next byway meeting to provide an update on that.

The Visitor Center at the Callicoon Depot was at the stage during this 10/27 meeting of waiting to get comments back from the reviewing agencies of Central New York Railroad, the NYS Historic Preservation Office, the Town of Delaware, and the Upper Delaware Council/National Park Service. The Town of Delaware subsequently decided that they do not need to file for a special use permit, therefore the UDC won't be responsible for a Substantial Conformance Review. The railroad and SHPO returned comments since then.

On 12/7 Callicoon Depot Inc. Historian Randy Bushart arranged for Operation Toy Train to stop in Callicoon this year on a new route. This event is sponsored by the Northern Division of the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway Corp. They will be collecting new, unwrapped toys for the 2025 Toys for Tots program. The train will also be making stops in Narrowsburg, Shohola, and Lackawaxen.

The NYS DOT is updating the 2021 Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas to be completed. They had sent around surveys to the byway, UDC, and other like agencies to get comments by 11/30. Ramie filled out that survey for both the UDC and UDSB, particularly commenting on their format for public open house meetings. If they did a collective presentation and gave everyone an opportunity to ask questions and hear answers, it would be more productive for public education. She gave credit for the alerts we receive for road and bridge work and mentioned names of people most helpful.

On 10/28 the Town of Highland commemorated completing their Sullivan180 Silver Feather Grant award at the Eagle Observation Site (2) on Route 97. They extended the towpath trail to meet the Eagle Observation area there, where the ceremony was held. Sullivan County Legislator Matt McPhillips, Shannon Cilento of Sullivan180,

Sullivan County Historian and President of The Delaware Company John Conway, and Town of Highland Supervisor John Pizzolato all made remarks. There is more work to be done there, with The Delaware Company installing a bronze statue of a "hoagie" to commemorate the D&H Canal as a long range goal.

The next Upper Delaware Scenic Byway meeting will be on Monday, 11/24 at the UDC office.

A special programming meeting was held on 11/12 at the UDC office with 12 participants to discuss 2026 byway events and programs. Program Manager Krantz put out a questionnaire in advance of the meeting, then compiled the results on how people feel about existing program/grants, what they should do for marketing, whether they should do another scavenger hunt, how to raise awareness of the byway, etc. More of what happened at this meeting will come out at the next UDSB meeting.

The Sullivan County Legislature and Visitors Association have a new tourism grant program currently open for Phase 1 applications through 12/16. There are four different categories: Roomnight-Focused Grants, Arts & Culture Enhancement Grants, Village, Hamlet & Micro-Brand Grants, and Events & Festivals Support. There is $300,000 available for this and both the byway and UDC are looking into possible projects to submit. Any grants awarded would be announced by 1/15/26 and funds would be disbursed in March 2026. More information can be found online.

10/30 Sullivan County Local Emergency Preparedness Committee Meeting: Ramie said this committee meets two times a year, in the spring and in the fall. Recently they dedicated the building to Richard A. Martinkovic; the former Commissioner of Public Safety for Sullivan County and a dedicated emergency responder. He was Town of Liberty Supervisor when she moved here in 1992 and started working for the *Sullivan County Democrat.* She said he was a great person and public servant. It was very appropriate to honor him in this way. Sullivan County Fire Coordinator John Hauschild reported that 23 people graduated through the Search and Rescue low angle training class. The next one will be high angle rescues. They welcome ideas from local fire companies on what kind of trainings people need. He mentioned that electronic fires have been happening lately with two examples: one by a battery pack, and another by ear buds (headphones). 911 Coordinator Alex Rau gave an update on the county's broadband initiative, saying they installed fiber cable through trenches. The goal is to bring internet to underserved areas of the county. By next December they will have 280 more miles to install the cable. The 911 system is lending their towers to the project to connect end points for the broadband service. The company is called Archtop and the county received a $30 million grant for this. Phase 1 which goes through the end of 2026. This will cover 60-70% of the region they want to cover. They hope to get additional funding to cover 100%. This is a transformational project for Sullivan County, and will hopefully assist with our service issues in the river valley.

When this committee held the roundtable in the spring, Ramie told the group about the citizens emergency preparedness seminar that we are holding at the Tusten Town Hall Community Room on March 11 at 5pm. Everyone was very excited to hear that we are sponsoring one of these seminars in the western part of the county. The Sullivan County Fire Commissioner and New York State Police asked us to put a flyer together and share it with them when we have it, saying these programs help all of their agencies. They discussed how the federal government shutdown trickles down in ways you might not expect, such as the withdraw of SNAP and HEAP benefits you see more theft due to food insecurity and more house fires due to the use of improper heating sources.

They are hoping to conduct a tabletop exercise at the spring meeting for an emergency scenario, similar to the Geographic Response Plan that NPS is working on. Martin asked if anyone could attend that tabletop exercise? Ramie said due to the room's capacity limit, it is invite only. Rodgers said they usually want agencies who participate in providing emergency service, not observers.

11/5 Sullivan County Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan Virtual Workshop: Ramie said they started this project in January and progressed pretty far since then. For the last six months they've been gathering community input at local fairs, festivals, and events with surveys and a map to see what could be improved. The survey closed in September and they have translated that information into key locations for which they hope to come up with specific projects for. They are still refining everything. This workshop was to get the steering committee together to see if what was mapped lined up with what was discussed at the last 10/3 meeting. The software was digitized and put on a map which people were able to mark up to prioritize long term and short term goals. In Western Sullivan County, the areas are Narrowsburg and Callicoon/Jeffersonville. Engelhardt also attended this meeting and participated in the

mapping exercise. Ramie said they will be looking at that data to figure out what to do next and will have another meeting in the new year. It's part of the Master Plan being developed with grant funding. Padua commented it will be nice to get more bike paths here. Ramie said yes, it's safety focused such as crosswalks and intersections.

11/18 Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee Meeting: Engelhardt reported that she attended a Lackawaxen Parks and Recreation Committee meeting on 11/13 to explore the option of camping at the Veterans Park in Lackawaxen. The committee politely declined, but pointed her to the Lackawaxen Fire Department and gave her the fire chief's phone number. She is going to hold off on contacting him though until the steering committee decides if camping in Lackawaxen would affect the campers' experience with the new trains and transloading railroad yard there. She is going to reach out to Ten Mile River Boy Scouts Camp to see if they can camp there. She also talked to the Parks and Recreation Committee about using the new Lackawaxen Township Lackawaxen River Access to access the Lackawaxen River. They said that wouldn't work since they already have an agreement with Kittatinny (reserved the right to use that access during certain times of the year, so no other livery can use it). Engelhardt said they are also trying to limit that access to Lackawaxen residents only, though she doesn't think that's enforceable, so they are just putting signs up and saying that. When the sale was happening, residents were concerned it would bring more traffic and criminal presence to the area. This is the township's way of dealing with that. Rodgers said there were the same concerns when they were doing the Long Eddy Access. Engelhardt said she brought that information to the steering committee today. She plans to meet with Jess Yoeder from the upper day planning team and Lydia Freethy from Delaware Highlands Conservancy (who is taking on some roles from Rachel Morrow who is leaving Delaware Highlands Conservancy) to talk about what to do for the third river stretch to replace the Lackawaxen River. The steering committee had a great discussion today, going over camping and paddling. She may reach out to Sullivan County Historian John Conway for programming since next year's sojourn focuses on history due to the 250th anniversary of America. After the new year, the upper day planning team will start to have more meetings. Padua asked if they are using Northeast Wilderness Experience (NEWE) this year? Engelhardt said for the livery, but not for camping. Padua said the riverside campgrounds in Barryville make the most sense, but you can't do that with the livery conflict. Engelhardt agreed. They also decided to switch two of the paddling stretches going from Callicoon to Ten Mile River, and then Ten Mile River south. National Canoe Safety Patrol (NCSP) Jacqui Wagner requested to not have Skinners Falls first, so she can ease everyone into it and gauge people's paddling skills. Henry asked how many people sign up? Engelhardt said around 110. Padua asked what dates? Engelhardt said 6/20-26. Ramie said Freethy from Delaware Highlands Conservancy was at the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway's Programming meeting. She commented that she is very enthusiastic and wants to delve into everything. Henry asked where they are looking to camp, Lackawaxen? Engelhardt said Lackawaxen or Ten Mile River would work. Henry said you might want to check with Rick Lander; he bought property from the Boy Scouts at Ten Mile River that he hasn't developed yet. It's worth asking him.

Skinners Falls Bridge Pennsylvania Abutment Update: Engelhardt explained what she saw during a November 4 site visit. She said the guiderail looked solid, but the temporary snow fencing and wasn't doing much of anything, describing it as sagging, torn, or hanging in places. She said the fencing appeared to be more symbolic than functional, adding that anyone could easily bypass it. She also described the extremely limited turnaround area and noted that she had to execute a "double K-turn" to avoid using nearby private driveways, saying the residents have made it clear they do not want vehicles entering their property. Henry said the whole site "looked unsafe," especially with no explicit hazard signage warning people of the steep drop. Rodgers said he had measured, or at least estimated, the fall at over thirty feet straight down and he found it concerning that people could approach the edge without realizing the danger despite the guiderail blocking it. Henry said PennDOT should install at least a simple warning sign.

Kearns gave a detailed explanation to clarify the abutment issue. He explained that when NPS issued the special use permit to PennDOT, they included a condition dealing with the PA abutment. They put that condition in because whenever federal action occurs in the river corridor—like PennDOT's emergency action—it auKearnsatically triggers a Section 7 review under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. He said that when they went through Director's Order 46 and the reference manual, the guidance was very clear: if a bridge is to be removed, the remaining components—including abutments—have to be removed as well. But he said that during the emergency action, NPS made a conscious decision not to hold up the urgent structural work by requiring everything at once. Instead, he explained that NPS only required PennDOT to remove the parts directly associated with the emergency action, and PennDOT stated that the PA abutment was NOT part of that emergency action. So they allowed PennDOT to proceed quickly and added the abutment condition on the "back end" as something that would only come into play

later—but only if the PEL study eventually concluded that no replacement bridge would be built. Kearns emphasized several times that the abutment removal was never meant to be part of the emergency action itself. He said the River Reporter had even published the permit conditions back in February, so this wasn't something new or hidden, but it was being misinterpreted as if NPS was suddenly demanding the abutment's removal right now. He said that if PennDOT ultimately decides not to rebuild the bridge, then under Wild & Scenic River law and policy, the abutment would have to be removed. But—he added—if PennDOT does decide to rebuild the bridge on the same alignment, that new bridge would require the old abutment to be removed anyway. So one way or another, if a decision is ever made, the abutment likely comes out—but the key is that the removal would only happen after a standalone, fully separate federal action with its own public review, Section 106, NEPA, and so on. Kearns said this is where NPS felt "caught off guard"—not because the condition wasn't real, but because it was suddenly framed in the PEL meeting as part of the emergency action, when that was never the case.

He noted that during the PEL meeting, PennDOT would not commit to whether they planned to rebuild a bridge or not. The PEL study's Needs and Purpose statement did say that a bridge is needed at that location, he said, but PennDOT also said they don't have the funding for one. And Kearns said that there has never been any clarity—either to NPS or the public—about how long PennDOT can wait before making a decision, whether there's a timeline, or whether there's ever a cutoff. He said, "That's the big question"—when does PennDOT say yes or no? He didn't have an answer, and he said that's something they'll have to raise again now that everyone is back from the federal shutdown. Kearns said he wanted everyone to understand that the abutment clause was always intended as a future, conditional action—not part of the emergency repairs. He said that in the days before the PEL meeting, PennDOT floated the idea of removing the abutment as part of the emergency action, and NPS had immediately objected. He told them on that call that doing so would go against all the actions already taken (repointing the abutment, pouring the concrete pad, fabricating the railing), none of which suggested removal. He also mentioned that he told PennDOT that they had never conveyed to the public that abutment removal was being considered under the emergency action, and that this likely contributed to the confusion that "derailed" the PEL meeting. Kearns concluded by saying this all came out right before the shutdown, and that NPS will need to regroup with PennDOT now that staff are back. He finished by saying he just wanted to clear that up and have a meeting with PennDOT this Friday. Padua thanked him for the clarification and said we will see what happens next.

Update on Water Quality Monitoring Station at Camp FIMFO: Engelhardt said she'd contacted Adam Schellhammer from American Rivers first, and he got back to her to say this kind of monitoring setup really isn't in their wheelhouse. He did suggest that she reach out to local sewage enforcement officers, or possibly someone at a county conservation district, because those individuals deal more directly with the types of testing and regulatory questions the committee is thinking about. She said she on the New York side conservation districts work differently than the ones in Pennsylvania, so she wasn't entirely sure who would be the right person to talk to. Ryan Coulter forwarded her message to an engineer in the DEC's Region 3 Division of Water. And then that message was forwarded again to Brian Duffy in Albany, but she said she never heard back, so she followed up with him too. She said Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) Executive Director Molly Oliver responded and was very helpful. Oliver told her that their office has worked with the Community Science Institute (CSI) in Ithaca to do water sampling in the past. She described their model: CSI trains someone locally and after the training, Watershed Program Manager Drew Jacobs would go out, take the samples at the designated locations, then drive them back to Ithaca, where CSI's lab would do the analysis. Oliver said CSI then posts the results online so the public can see them. She said this might be an approach they could consider if they are looking for periodic sampling rather than installing anything permanent. Oliver also mentioned they've partnered with some folks near Port Jervis who do continuous monitoring using data loggers, which collect far more frequent readings. But she cautioned that the loggers are high-maintenance, and sometimes they physically wash away in high-water events. She said she'd be happy to have a phone call to talk through options but had several events coming up. Martin thanked her for the update and said it was encouraging to hear there's already some movement. She added that she'd recently run into Matt McPhillips, and that he told her he wants to get involved, particularly to help secure funding. Martin also mentioned that Supervisor Pizzolato expressed interest as well and said he wants to be part of the conversation. She said she's not entirely sure how to get everyone in the same (virtual) room — maybe some kind of conference call or Zoom meeting — but she thinks it's time to start pulling the stakeholders together. Engelhardt said that when she talks to Oliver, she'll mention setting up a bigger conversation, and after she and Oliver speak one-on-one, they could organize a Zoom session with everyone else.

Padua said that Highland Access, which is co-managed by NYS DEC and the National Park Service, is just downstream from where Camp FIMFO would be. He said depending on what type of monitoring ends up happening, that access point could be a logical site for sampling or equipment. He also noted that the USGS gage at Barryville Bridge, which is federally funded, already collects some data parameters — he wasn't sure exactly which ones, but said turbidity might be one of them, and there might be pH or other measures. He emphasized that USGS wouldn't pick up sewage inputs, but the existing gage could at least provide context. Martin said that she believed the Town of Highland had once discussed requiring FIMFO to perform their own water quality monitoring as a condition of their permit. She said it made sense that the entity introducing the wastewater load should also be responsible for documenting how it affects the river. The planning board has finished reviewing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), and now they were just waiting on some final engineering reports and other agency responses before the full environmental review moves back to FIMFO. She said she knows there are monitoring components listed in the documents, but she hasn't seen the updated FEIS herself yet. The big question is whether the town should do its own independent monitoring to make sure data is actually collected, or whether they should trust the monitoring requirements already built into FIMFO's obligations and wait to see how those unfold. She genuinely doesn't know the best answer. Martin said if the project does move forward, it would be reasonable that a responsible business would want to proactively do regular sampling anyway. She said it wouldn't cost them much to collect a jar sample once a week at a set location and send it to a lab, which would give them a baseline and protect them from accusations that they're polluting the river. Henry also mentioned that New York State sewage enforcement officers will be monitoring the septic systems regardless, so there will already be some oversight. He said depending on what gets recommended, they could take weekly or monthly samples, whatever makes sense. Henry emphasized that this can all be done without installing permanent infrastructure. Martin agreed and said that the concept of establishing a baseline is really important; testing before the development opens, or before major use begins, helps everyone understand whether the site changes water quality over time.

Other: Padua reported on the significant riverbank disturbance he witnessed between Callicoon and Damascus. He said it looked like someone bulldozed trees straight toward the river. He said residents brought the issue to him, so he went to see it himself. He took pictures and dropped a pin to get specific coordinates. Engelhardt said she forwarded it to the Wayne County Conservation District during the shutdown but had not heard back. Everyone agreed the information should now also be forwarded to NPS.

Members discussed a *Sullivan County Democrat* article included in tonight's packet that reports nine escaped elk from a private hunting preserve. Several incidents have occurred, causing confusion among law enforcement and wildlife agencies. Rodgers noted conflicting public information about how the elk escaped—whether a fence was cut or failed. The animals were ultimately taken down by the Game Commission.

Ramie reminded the committee that prior to the shutdown, UDC, NPS, and Lackawaxen Township officials and fire service were preparing to meet about a proposed dry hydrant installation in Lackawaxen Township. She said Jessica Weinman sent an email recently asking whether stakeholders still wanted to move forward with the meeting. Kearns said he had seen the email but that no follow-up date had been scheduled yet since the 10/6 meeting that was cancelled during the government shutdown. He acknowledged reading the discussion from previous WURM meetings about static water options and safety concerns.

Public Comment: Anie Stanley said Damascus Citizens for Sustainability had sent correspondence (just before tonight's meeting) urging towns to update their zoning to prevent AI data centers or similar large industrial facilities from being developed in the river valley. She said they wanted UDC in the loop and apologized for the late notice.

Ramie said Barbara Arrindell sent an email about 90 minutes before tonight's meeting regarding this topic. Since the UDC has a Project Review Committee that deals with land use planning issues; this would be better suited for that meeting. Stanley thanked Ramie and said she would follow up via email.

Stanley also encouraged establishing water quality testing near Camp FIMFO now, citing the operator's publicized estimate of 40,000 river users during the last season, existing campground use, and two consecutive summers of drought impacting local wells and aquifers. She emphasized the importance of capturing baseline water quality conditions before any potential campground expansion. Everyone thanked her for the comments.

Adjourn: A Motion by Henry seconded by Rodgers to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. was carried.

Meeting minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 11/20/2025