

# WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES

## May 19, 2026

Committee Members Present: Bill Dudko, Jim Rodgers, Al Henry, Christine Martin, Jim Serio, Pat Jeffer, Bob Lindquist (7:01, Zoom)

Committee Members Absent: Evan Padua

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Stephanie Driscoll

NPS Partner: Tom Kearns (Zoom)

Guests: Ginny Dudko, Shannon Pugh

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 19, 2026. Vice-chairperson B. Dudko called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

**Approval of the April 21, 2026 meeting minutes:** A motion by B. Dudko seconded by Rodgers approving the 3/17 meeting minutes carried.

**Public Comment on Agenda:** None.

### **New Business:**

**5/21 Water Safety Partners Meeting at 10am, Tusten Town Hall Community Room:** Driscoll said this is a reminder that the NPS Water Safety Partners meeting will be held at the Tusten Town Hall Community Room on 5/21 at 10am. UDC members are invited to participate. Rodgers has registered to attend. Ramie said the NPS requests that anyone who wishes to attend RSVP so they can plan for of how many people will be attending. We have that link.

**6/8 Citizens Emergency Preparedness Seminar:** Driscoll said this is a reminder that the UDC is sponsoring a second Citizens Emergency Preparedness seminar on 6/8 at 2pm at the same location as last time, the Tusten Town Hall Community Room. Advance registration is encouraged and required to receive a free "go-bag". Rodgers asked if we know how many people are registered as of now? Driscoll said not yet; it's a bit too far out. We can't see who/how many people register, but we can ask the National Guard/NYS DHSES who keeps track of registration and runs the seminar.

**Callicoon-Damascus Bridge Closure Reminder:** Ramie said this is a reminder that the Callicoon-Damascus Bridge is currently closed from 5/19-20 as part of its rehabilitation. B. Dudko asked what work they are doing there that they needed to close the bridge? Ramie said they are pouring concrete.

B. Dudko said they are still working on the Port Jervis-Matamoros Bridge. They are currently working on the down river side and will move to the upriver side next. The middle section is complete. Ramie said her press release on the 5/13 NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission meeting includes an October 2026 end date for the work.

**Delaware River Flow and Storage Report:** Included in tonight's packet. Rodgers said the reservoirs are still very high. Serio said they will likely drop releases tomorrow or the next day. When reservoir totals are less than 100%, they will drop releases into the L2 category. Pepacton will probably spill for a few more days. It all depends on if there is rain tomorrow. June 1<sup>st</sup> starts the official water year; they want to get the reservoirs to 100% if they can.

**Other:** None.

### **Old Business:**

**4/22 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Meeting:** Ramie reported that the council met in Wurtsboro on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. They viewed the sixth video in the DHTHC historic DVD series focusing on the Ulster County section. This is supposedly the last video in the series, but there was discussion of other options like a compilation of all 6 videos into a shorter time; a video on the current infrastructure, sites, and what has changed; or a teaser video to interest people into ordering the entire series. They also discussed figuring out a way to stream the videos and how to monetize on that. The DVD series is currently sold at D&H gift shops. There is a cost to pay for the videographer to create these DVDs, so giving them away for free to stream would be questionable. The DHTHC website was inherited from the last group and does not have enough capacity to host the videos. They plan to seek funds through the Hudson River Greenway Sponsorship Grant program or other sources to update the website to have full modern functionality.

There are not a lot of milestone events for the D&H 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026. They talked about creating a design for t-shirts, tote bags, or hats to commemorate the anniversary. The issue with merchandise is knowing how many to order. They will reach out to partner organizations to see if it would be worthwhile and potentially profitable.

UPDE Cultural Resource Management Program Manager Alex Maldonado-Garcia reported that Canal Days was coming up on 5/6-7 with a shorter schedule. He also talked about the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) having been on site at the Roebling Bridge to scope for the rehabilitation of the ice breakers and remove vegetation. This work is to preserve and protect the piers and the 1848 aqueduct.

Ramie reported on UDC presentations: At that time the upcoming 5/7 presentation on America250 in the Upper Delaware by John Conway; UPDE will give a presentation on the archeological study at Cowen Farm and Minisink on 6/4; and Professor Paul King will present on John Roebling and the Delaware Aqueduct on 7/2.

The next Trustees meeting will be on 6/24 at the UDC office and the DHTHC full membership will meet next on 7/24 at the Carbondale Historical Society.

**4/27 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting:** Ramie said this was the Byway's annual meeting with elections. All of the officers agreed to another term; Chairperson Rosie DeCristofaro (Town of Delaware), Vice-chairperson Mike Edison (Town of Highland), and Secretary-Treasurer Larry Richardson (Town of Cochection). They had a presentation by Town of Deerpark Deputy Police Chief Mike Worden on the mobile surveillance units that Deerpark Police will be deploying before Memorial Day. B. Dudko said they will probably at least get them out on Route 97. He added they had police stationed on the Hawks Nest this past weekend and made several arrests and impounded a few cars. Ramie said the units will be placed in problem areas such as the Hawks Nest and Number 2 Railroad Bridge beach. The units run on solar batteries (with locks) and have built in alarms to prevent them being moved or vandalized. Worden offered to come back in the fall to give a report on the statistics. Rodgers asked if these are to assist the police. Ramie said the units cannot issue tickets remotely. There had been a bit of an "uproar" on Facebook suggesting that it was a money grab by the town. Worden said the units are not capable of that nor is that legal.

The Byway submitted a grant application on 4/24 to the Sullivan County Legislative Discretionary contracts program for \$45,000 for 2026 with \$30,000 allocated to the UDSB Program Manager Contract Renewal for a 12-month period; \$10,000 for UDSB Visitor Center Support to offset the estimated \$25,714 in start-up expenses for the facility at the soon-to-be renovated Callicoon Depot, and \$5,000 for UDSB Grant Programs and Operations to supplement the \$7,000 received in 2026.

Town of Highland Historian Deb Conway submitted a close-out report on 4/15 for the Signage Along the Byway grant that provided \$75 toward replacing the Town of Highland Time Capsule marker at the Minisink Battleground Park. That location is where the only Revolutionary war battle in the river valley happened and they will be commemorating that for America250 on 7/18-19. The time capsule will be opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> as part of the commemoration weekend.

The Byway was asked to provide a letter of support for the Cochection Pumphouse to Cochection's Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), who is currently hearing the Pumpehouse's variance application. Larry Richardson is a member of the ZBA and said a letter of that kind would have no value in their decision making. The Byway opted to table that and will see how it plays out with the town. They discussed the complications of the septic and well being on state property without permits and their need for two variances. The Pumpehouse opened on 5/1 despite all this happening. Rodgers asked if they are in violation. Engelhardt said yes. Theoretically they will pay fines if the town issues citations. The current owners may not have realize that the well and septic were on state property without permits before purchasing.

Program Manager David Krantz has been working to keep the calendar of events up to date on the byway website. That calendar covers anything happening in the byway from Hancock to Port Jervis. He's had over 100 listings this calendar year alone. Ramie encouraged people to use that as a reference if you're looking for something to do along the byway. Krantz has also been working on the UDSB photo contest that recently launched. Anyone with landscape or attraction photos is welcome to submit them online.

Krantz submitted a revised application for the Visitor Center marketing campaign to the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association for phase two of their Tourism Grants. Awards were supposed to be announced on 5/15 but SCVA needed more time to review applications and awards will be announced tomorrow, 5/20.

A Comprehensive Plan has been drafted for the Callicoon Depot Visitor Center to serve as a vision document for the development. When the Byway applies for grants and does fundraising, having a comprehensive plan helps. It includes the budget for utilities, maintenance, security cameras, bathrooms, Zoom subscriptions, taxes, marketing, cleaning, plowing, etc. Rodgers asked if Ramie is creating the plan. Ramie said the Program Manager David Krantz is drafting it. The committee discussed the repairs at the Callicoon Depot and the limitations with the \$250,000 state grant. They have applied for another grant that would pay for the roof replacement to avoid diverting that \$80,000 cost from the \$250,000, rather than diminishing the restoration of the Visitor Center and set back progress significantly. Additionally, the value of the \$250,000 would go down over time.

Ramie said NYSDOT is creating internal GIS maps showing points of interest for all 28 Byways in New York State. The first phase will be released in June. The map will serve the public to find these attractions listed. Krantz reviewed the list for UDSB and provided the location coordinates.

Because of Memorial Day, the May UDSB meeting is rescheduled to 6/1. The regular Byway meeting will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of June, 6/22.

**4/30 DRBC Water Resources Resilience Plan Webinar:** Driscoll said the DRBC's Water Resources Resilience Plan's vision is to recommend actions the DRBC can take to manage the basin's shared water resources through the known and potential impacts of climate change and other challenges. Phase 1 was launched in 2024 to develop the WRRP framework and collect stakeholder input. That was completed in March 2026. Over 150 people engaged during Phase 1 in all four basin states. Participants included state governments, non-profits, basin residents, public utility, academia, private utility, federal government, and community groups. The feedback showed that they most valued the aesthetic beauty, recreational activities, and that the river is an important source of water. They were most concerned with flooding and drought. In Phase 2 they hope to increase the number of stakeholder respondents and build upon Phase 1 participation, promote public awareness of the WRRP process, identify assets/hazards, and understand how the basin community prioritizes hazards related to climate change. The QR code for the Phase 2 survey is included in tonight's packet and was sent out before the meeting.

**5/7 Wayne County Natural Heritage Area Advisory Board, Al Henry:** Henry said this group has 33 sites in Wayne County they plan to survey. They are working with two or three biologists to improve the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index since it hasn't been updated since the 1990s. Henry listed off some locations he thought Jim Serio might know in order to seek permission from the landowners to go on their property. Serio said he knew of some of the properties. Rodgers asked if this is for biodiversity? Henry said this group is focused on National Heritage Sites. One of his concerns is that a lot of these sites are old farmlands that all have dumps. If you invite people onto that property, and someone ends up calling the Department of Environmental Protection, they won't allow you back. The next meeting is scheduled for 5/22.

**5/12 Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee Meeting:** Engelhardt said this is the second to last meeting before the Sojourn. There are already 50 people registered, which is good for opening registration numbers. They still haven't figured out the launch for day 3 in the upper section but are working on a solution.

**5/13 NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission Meeting:** Ramie said this annual meeting was held in Dunmore, PA. The press release is included in tonight's packet and was shared on social media, websites, and other media sources. She didn't include in the press release mention of an issue with Kellams-Stalker Bridge right of way. There was an old toll house removed around 7-8 years ago there and someone has built a new structure in that spot. The landscaping is encroaching on state property where the state needs access. It sounds like the DOT will be in touch to work with the property owner for a possible easement or land purchase. The Port Jervis-Matamoras Bridge work will be finalized in October 2026. The Callicoon-Damascus Bridge repair is ahead of schedule since crews worked through this past winter. They originally planned to finish in November of 2027, but anticipate being "substantially complete" this year. There was no discussion on the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge. During the public comment period, Ramie asked about the status of the PEL Study and fate of the PA abutment. It's still under discussion if the

abutment can stay there. NPS has said that if there is no bridge there, the area should be returned to its original state. It's still to be determined if a replacement bridge will be constructed there.

Henry said on page 2 of the press release they said the demolition cost was \$5 million with an additional \$4 million for planning, making the total around \$10 million. Ramie said yes she understands his implication that for that amount of money the bridge could have been repaired or replaced. Henry said we should highlight that to enlighten more people. Ramie said this wasn't an opinion piece; it was what happened at the meeting. Henry said it's a fact the public should know. Ramie said the PEL Study was a requirement of the Section 106 process due to the bridge being on the National Register of Historic Places. That was mandatory to explore whether to repair, replace, or remove the 1902 bridge.

Rodgers said then it's still in limbo whether there will be a replacement bridge put there? And NPS says if a replacement bridge is not constructed at that location, the abutment needs to be removed? Kearns said yes, that's correct. Rodgers said the NPS opinion is that the area should be returned to its original state; is there a timeline that PennDOT has to give a final answer? Kearns said the PEL Study showed there was a purpose and need to replace the bridge. PennDOT has not committed to when a final answer will be given. The NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission says there needs to be 10 bridges from NY/PA. They need to go back in and look at changing that if they don't plan to put a bridge in. Rodgers said so there is no clock running for PennDOT? Kearns said that's right. They've pressed them a couple of times for an end date. PennDOT said if the money shows up, they can act on replacing the bridge. It's open ended.

Ramie said there will be a meeting mid-June to resume the Cultural Resources Mitigation phase. The UDC submitted a proposal for a new Historic Preservation and Interpretation Grant program that would be funded through that program.

**Other:** Henry said he recommends that the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, UDC, and NPS get together to pursue cleaning the Hawks Nest. The trash along it looks terrible. NPS can try to get some money together. The three entities need to make it a priority. B. Dudko said the fire department did it years ago and got in trouble with the property owner. Ramie said it will be on the June 1<sup>st</sup> Byway agenda to inquire with the DOT about getting a contractor to do that work since that had been done a number of years ago.

Lindquist said he knows the committee has talked about the river access on Tower Rd. in Callicoon. Engelhardt said that was discussed during the Project Review Committee meeting. That property is owned by the railroad and not a public access, though many people use it. She believes NPS was going to talk to them about possibly leasing the property to the town or something along those lines. Lindquist said the access got beaten up over the winter and now there's a lot of mud. People can slip and fall there so it's becoming dangerous. Engelhardt said right, but it isn't a public access so anyone that's there is technically trespassing. The NPS is going to reach out to the railroad to get a discussion going. It isn't owned by the town, DEC, or NPS. Lindquist asked who he could contact about bringing down an excavator to do work there? B. Dudko said you'd need to get permission from the railroad. Ramie agreed; Central New York Railroad would be the contact. She believes an easement would be the best strategy, but if he wants Central NY Railroad's contact information, she can give that to him. Henry said when he worked for the NPS, there had been numerous complaints and he dealt with Conrail Police about it. They haven't done anything about it and they likely won't do anything about it. Rodgers said he once saw a person get an excavator stuck there and Encon Officers were there almost immediately. Lindquist said someone had recently thrown some stone down there which helped. Henry made a motion to send a letter to Central New York Railroad on behalf of the UDC to address the access, Lindquist seconded and the motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjourn:** A Motion by Jeffer seconded by Serio to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. was carried.

*Meeting minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 5/21/2026*