WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
August 18, 2026

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

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 18, 2026. Chairperson Padua called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Approval of the July 28, 2026 meeting minutes: A motion by B. Dudko seconded by Jeffer approving the 7/28 meeting minutes carried.

Public Comment on Agenda: None.

New Business:

NPS Roebling Bridge Maintenance Plans: Ramie said the UDC received an email on August 11 from Dr. Peter Kolesar, who travels across or visits the Roebling Bridge frequently and had noticed deterioration involving the bridge's wooden handrails. Kolesar included a photograph showing the condition that concerns him and asked what the National Park Service's plans were for maintenance. He raised concerns several years and feels that the situation has become worse. He asked the UDC to bring the matter again to the NPS's attention. Ramie subsequently notified Superintendent Lindsey Kurnath, Natural and Cultural Resources Manager Tom Kearns, and Facilities Manager Jessica Weinman.

Kearns provided a review of the routine maintenance that the National Park Service performs using its annual base funding and the larger capital projects that are currently in various stages of planning for the Roebling Bridge. On a routine basis, NPS maintenance employees walk the bridge at least monthly. During those inspections, staff specifically look for items such as nails or screws that may be protruding from the wooden surface and make sure that the metal grates are secure. Maintenance work also changes with the seasons. During the off-season, staff routinely remove debris and perform snow removal, along with other necessary maintenance activities. The handrails are part of that ongoing work. Kearns acknowledged that the handrails can deteriorate in several ways, including sections beginning to come apart, developing holes, or becoming badly splintered. NPS maintenance employees have tried different methods over time to patch and repair those areas. There is active maintenance taking place at the bridge and staff address the problems they can reasonably handle through the Park Service's annual maintenance program and available base funding. At the same time, some of the larger needs at the bridge have progressed beyond the type of work that can simply be handled through routine maintenance and therefore have to be addressed through separately funded projects.

There are several larger Roebling Bridge projects that NPS is pursuing in partnership with Federal Highways Administration. One is a pavement preservation project that would include repaving the roadway across the bridge. A separate Federal Highways project involves improvements to the parking lots on both sides of the bridge. That work is expected to include curb improvements, drainage work, and other associated improvements around the parking areas. NPS is also working with Federal Highways on a project that is expected to address the bridge's icebreakers, handrails, stonework that needs repointing, and other associated woodwork or related repairs that are needed on the structure. The project is also intended to replace the bridge's expansion joints. These larger projects cannot be paid for through the Park Service's normal annual base maintenance funding. Major projects of this type require NPS to apply for funding years in advance. The Park Service submitted the request for the larger project involving the icebreakers, expansion joints, handrails, repointing, and associated work back in 2021, and its only now reaching the planning stage.

Federal Highways also sends inspection teams to the bridge periodically to conduct routine bridge inspections and identify problems. Those inspections have confirmed that certain components, particularly the icebreakers and handrails, have reached or exceeded their expected useful lifespan. He compared it to an aging roof or deck: eventually, even with maintenance, those components reach the point where more extensive replacement or rehabilitation is necessary. The important distinction is that NPS is now actively working toward making those

larger corrections while continuing to perform whatever annual maintenance it can accomplish with its existing base funding. NPS plans to report a detailed project timeline as part of a future monthly NPS report once the planning has progressed enough to give the Council a clearer idea of when the various improvements are expected to be implemented.

B. Dudko said there is a noticeable bump at the end of the bridge and asked whether those were the expansion joints Kearns is referring to. Kearns said that they are and they will be addressed as part of the larger project that also includes the icebreakers, handrails, and repointing. There are three different projects being pursued for the Roebling Bridge overall. He agreed that the expansion joints need attention. B. Dudko observed that the condition of the joints can be seasonal, which contributes to the noticeable change or bump experienced when traveling across them.

Henry acknowledged the Park Service's funding constraints but pointed out that the condition visible in Kolesar's photograph appears significant enough to present a more immediate concern. Someone running a hand along the damaged railing could potentially get a splinter or otherwise be injured and he wonders whether there might be an interim measure available rather than waiting for the larger rehabilitation project. Suggestions included some type of warning signage or possibly placing a temporary protective cover or film placed over the affected section. It is difficult to tell from one photograph whether the pictured area represented the worst section of railing or whether similar deterioration existed elsewhere along the bridge. Kearns said that NPS maintenance staff do walk the bridge frequently—at least monthly—with the specific purpose of identifying problems of this nature. Given the concern that had now been raised, however, he said he could coordinate directly with the maintenance staff and ask them to identify the location shown in the photograph. Once that section is located and its condition assessed, NPS could look at potentially addressing it during the upcoming fall or winter maintenance period. The timing is partly a matter of how the Park Service's maintenance workload changes throughout the year. During the summer, maintenance employees are heavily occupied with work at the river accesses, mowing, and the other routine tasks associated with the busy recreational season. Repairs such as deteriorated handrails are more commonly tackled during the fall, winter, and spring, when staff have greater capacity to concentrate on those types of projects.

Padua asked when the icebreaker work is expected to start. Kearns said NPS and Federal Highways have not yet determined exactly how that work will be implemented. At this point, the preliminary thinking is that the actual work would be targeted for approximately September or October. That period would be preferable because river levels are generally lower and the main recreational season has begun to wind down, making it a more practical time to undertake work in and around the river and bridge.

Henry asked if the NPS had the money or is still waiting on funding from applying in 2021. Kearns explained that the lengthy delay between requesting funding and actually receiving it is fairly typical for major NPS projects. For larger capital projects, the Park Service generally has to submit funding requests well in advance, and it can routinely take three, four, or even five years before the requested funding becomes available. The Roebling Bridge is somewhat unique because of the Park Service's working relationship with Federal Highways. Bridge-related work can potentially qualify for different funding sources that are specifically available through Federal Highways, depending upon the nature of the project. That gives NPS access to funding avenues that may not apply to other types of Park Service projects. However, those funds are still competitive.

Flexible Flow Management Plan Meeting with Friends of the Upper Delaware River – Jim Serio: Serio said, as a little background, the FFMP was originally developed to provide a more natural flow regime for the Delaware River and a more adaptive system for managing releases from New York City's Delaware River reservoirs than had existed under the previous operating regime. One of the basic concepts behind the FFMP was the recognition that reservoir managers could not anticipate every possible combination of weather, reservoir storage, river conditions, temperature, and other circumstances that might arise. The plan therefore needs some flexibility to respond to conditions as they developed. As part of that flexibility, two separate "banks" of water were established that can be used under certain circumstances. One is the Thermal Mitigation Bank, which provides additional water when necessary to help maintain cooler river temperatures. The other is the Rapid Flow Change Mitigation Bank, which is intended to soften abrupt reductions in releases. Serio gave an example of a situation in which the Delaware River Master determines that a release of approximately 1,000 cubic feet per second is no longer necessary and that it could immediately be reduced to approximately 200 cfs. Such an abrupt drop would create an unnatural change in river conditions. Water from the Rapid Flow Change Mitigation Bank can therefore be used to step the river down more gradually rather than allowing the flow to fall precipitously. Serio said FUDR, Peter Kolesar, and he have been examining ways of making this system more flexible. A visual analogy was offered to illustrate just how much water is contained in the mitigation banks compared with the enormous overall volume stored in New York City's

Delaware reservoirs. He asked the committee to imagine that the entire meeting room represented all the water stored in NYC's Delaware system. Against that enormous volume, the amount of water currently allocated to the mitigation banks would represent only a 5-gallon bucket that he held up to show members. In the overall reservoir system, the amount being discussed is relatively small. He said the total amount in the banks is one-half of one day of New York City water consumption. Yet that same quantity represents approximately ten years of water consumption for the entire Village of Hancock. One of the difficulties with the existing system is that the two water banks have separate rules governing when and how each may be used. There have consequently been occasions when one bank has been depleted while water remained available in the other bank, but that remaining water could not be transferred to address the immediate need because it had been designated for a different purpose. The Thermal Mitigation Bank, as its name suggests, tends to be needed primarily during hot summer weather. The Rapid Flow Change Mitigation Bank tends to be used more heavily during the fall. Under the existing arrangement, however, water left in the thermal bank cannot necessarily be used later in the year for rapid flow mitigation simply because that happens to be where the need exists. That has led to what appears to be one of the principal proposals emerging from the current planning effort: combining the two mitigation banks into a single, more flexible pool of water. Rather than having separate allocations locked into separate purposes, the combined water could potentially be used wherever the actual river conditions demonstrate that it is most needed. A second potential request would be to increase the overall amount of water allocated to that combined bank. The challenge will be demonstrating to the Decree Parties that such a change would improve river management without adversely affecting the other interests governed by the decree. Proponents cannot simply argue that greater flexibility seems preferable; they will need to assemble data and demonstrate that the proposed approach produces a better result. At this stage, the effort is therefore very much in the information-gathering phase. Compiling that information has proven somewhat cumbersome because the relevant data is spread among different sources. Reservoir levels may be found in one place, information concerning actual water use in another, and the FFMP tables specifying what releases should occur under various reservoir conditions in still another document. The River Master and Delaware River Basin Commission information systems do not make it easy to assemble all of those pieces into one analysis. Nevertheless, work is proceeding, and there was optimism that the group will eventually develop a useful and beneficial proposal. The ultimate question will then be whether the Decree Parties can be convinced that the proposed changes are worthwhile.

G. Dudko thanked Serio for the "bucket" visual analogy and asked how much additional water proponents would ideally like to obtain. If the existing allocation represented one bucket, she asked whether they were talking about adding merely another cup or something substantially larger. Serio said, ideally, they would like to obtain approximately a second bucket, effectively doubling the amount available for these mitigation purposes. Even that will still represent a very small amount of water compared with the overall volume stored in the New York City reservoir system. Serio recalled that Revision 7, the older operating regimes, included minimum flow targets. Under that system, if the West Branch at Hale Eddy was projected to fall below approximately 225 cubic feet per second (CFS), additional water could be released. Those minimum targets disappeared with the adoption of the FFMP because, at the time, it was believed that they would no longer be necessary. The FFMP generally provided substantially higher releases, so there was an expectation that the river would not routinely encounter the very low-flow situations the old minimums had been designed to prevent. Experience has since demonstrated that there are occasional circumstances when having those minimum flow protections would still be useful. Restoring that type of protection is more of a "pie in the sky" objective and a much more difficult request to win from the Decree Parties. The ideal scenario would be to obtain the additional "bucket" of water, combine the existing thermal and rapid-flow mitigation allocations into a flexible bank, use that water first for thermal protection and rapid flow mitigation, and then—if water remained available—allow some of it to be used to maintain a minimum river flow. Approximately 300 CFS passing Hale Eddy is needed to keep the West Branch wet from bank to bank, while the former operating regime had used a minimum target of approximately 225 CFS. The emerging strategy is therefore a series of increasingly ambitious requests. The first would be to explore combining the existing banks and allowing their water to be used more flexibly. The second would be to ask for additional water to increase the size of the combined bank. If that additional water could be obtained, the third question would be whether some of it could be authorized for another beneficial purpose, such as maintaining a minimum flow during particularly low-flow periods.

Henry asked whether some portion of the approximately 38 million gallons currently being lost in the Delaware Aqueduct could eventually be made available for river flows. Serio said that they have been asking that same question for approximately 15 years. Similar questions have also been raised regarding additional reservoir storage that might eventually become available through other New York City projects. Historically the response to requests to dedicate additional or conserved water directly to releases has generally been no. Additional stored water can still

benefit the river indirectly. Even if it is not formally dedicated to a mitigation bank or release program, having more water in storage could allow the reservoir system to remain out of drought operations for several additional days. That is important because drought conditions trigger reductions in releases. Therefore, additional storage can provide a river benefit simply by postponing the point at which drought-related release reductions become necessary.

Martin asked who would have the authority to approve the request for more water. Serio said the decision would rest with the five Decree Parties which are the four Delaware River Basin states together with New York City. Any change of this nature would require their unanimous consent, underscoring why proponents will need a well-supported proposal that can demonstrate benefits convincingly to all the parties rather than simply to Upper Delaware stakeholders.

Padua recalled an experience approximately ten years earlier when putting a boat into the river at Stilesville. On that day, releases had apparently been cut dramatically, with flows possibly falling below 300 CFS. Large portions of the river bottom were exposed, leaving him struggling to navigate. The extremely low condition lasted only eight or ten hours, possibly because releases had temporarily been reduced to allow some type of inspection or maintenance activity. Padua asked about the ecological significance of a short-duration event like that compared with a prolonged low-flow condition. It seemed intuitive that extended drying of the riverbed would eventually result in less aquatic insect life and fewer fish, but he wondered whether an eight- or ten-hour exposure was substantially less damaging. Serio said that is probably true to some degree, although an important exception would be extremely hot weather. If exposed rocks are sitting under direct sunlight when air temperatures are around 90 degrees, they can heat very rapidly, making even a relatively short period of dewatering potentially harmful to aquatic organisms. Serio said when he first came to the area roughly three decades earlier to manage West Branch Angler, river advocates were already working to secure better flows. Under the old operating regime that preceded both Revision 7 and the FFMP, conditions on the West Branch could be extraordinarily low. By comparison, under the current FFMP, summertime releases can be approximately 500 CFS, although winter releases can drop to approximately 150 CFS. The contrast with conditions three decades earlier was dramatic. At that time, the Cannonsville Reservoir release was reportedly only about 45 CFS until June 15. It then increased to approximately 325 CFS beginning around June 16, before dropping back to approximately 45 CFS after August 16. Photographs from that era showed fish, particularly shad - stranded and flopping around. G. Dudko said she remembers the extremely low river conditions of those years, recalling extensive exposed rocks and areas where the river became shallow enough that a person could almost walk across it without getting their feet wet.

The group acknowledged that enormous progress has therefore already been made. The changes now being contemplated are not expected to be as transformational as some of the earlier revisions to Delaware River flow management. Stilesville was noted as a particularly revealing location because it lies immediately downstream of Cannonsville Dam and therefore experiences changes in reservoir releases very quickly, without much intervening tributary flow to moderate their effect.

Henry said that politics inevitably play a role when dealing with the different agencies and Decree Parties and suggested that the UDC should consider becoming involved once the technical proposal has been developed. Based on the work being done by FUDR, Kolesar, Serio, and the others involved in the effort, the Council should potentially help seek political support and apply pressure where appropriate, particularly regarding New York City DEP. He expressed frustration over the long-running Delaware Aqueduct leakage issue, noting that the leak has been known for decades and could potentially continue for at least 5 more years before the repair process is finally completed. Serio said that type of broader support is exactly what proponents hope to pursue once they have something concrete to show people. At the moment, the priority is to develop the data and proposal. Once there is a specific, defensible recommendation on the table, the hope is that organizations such as the UDC and other interested parties can be asked to support it.

Henry asked whether there had been any fish kills during the current year. Serio said none had been specifically recognized or observed. However, another developing concern was identified involving the temperature of water being released from Cannonsville Reservoir. Because significant amounts of water had been released during the spring to prevent the reservoir from spilling, the reservoir has begun using up the deep, cold water that normally provides the West Branch with its cold-water releases during the summer. As that deep cold-water supply becomes depleted, the release begins drawing closer to the reservoir's thermocline, the transition zone where warmer and colder water mix. Sediment can also accumulate or remain suspended around that layer. This helps explain why people at Stilesville may have noticed the released water becoming increasingly discolored. Instead of the very

clear, cold bottom water characteristic of much of the summer, the reservoir is beginning to release water influenced by the thermocline. The effect is also beginning to show in the temperature gage, with the baseline water temperature starting to rise. Normally, releases may come out at approximately 45 degrees during much of the summer, but there was concern that by the end of the summer the release temperature could approach 60 degrees because so much of the reservoir's cold-water reserve had already been used.

Henry asked whether the City measures how much silt has accumulated on the reservoir bottoms over time and whether that accumulation effectively reduces reservoir depth and usable storage capacity. He recalled that sedimentation had been discussed briefly during the recent reservoir presentation at the UDC. At Cannonsville, sediment accumulation was apparently not considered a significant problem at this time. The other reservoirs were believed to have somewhat more sediment, although still not enough to constitute a major concern based on the information that had been presented. Serio said that the river release outlet is located at a fixed elevation in the reservoir, meaning managers cannot move the intake up and down through the water column. The release therefore normally draws water from the same depth, which is one reason the West Branch receives consistently cold water from the reservoir during much of the year. The water diverted toward New York City leaves the reservoir system through a different intake and tunnel system than the water released to the river. He referred to the tunnel system carrying water toward Rondout Reservoir and ultimately toward New York City, including the aqueduct section that is slated for repair. Some sediment inevitably moves through different portions of the system. He wondered whether New York City periodically measures changes in reservoir depth. It was generally believed that such measurements have been made, but participants noted that the documented amount of water available from the reservoirs has not changed significantly. The implication was that if many feet of sediment had accumulated and substantially displaced usable storage, the City's calculations of available water would presumably have to reflect that loss. B. Dudko said that the City of Port Jervis is dredging its own reservoir.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: Padua said that looking at the current reservoir storage graph, it's reported that Cannonsville Reservoir is at approximately 79.8 percent, which he believes to be above average for this time of year. The graph shows a noticeable recent increase following the latest significant rain event, with the storage line jumping above the gray line representing the historical average. The current situation is encouraging, particularly given how late it is in the summer. He recalled that in previous years, the reservoir had already undergone seasonal turnover well before this point, with sediment or discolored water appearing in releases while the region was still experiencing 90-degree August temperatures. Those circumstances can create considerable concern about maintaining sufficiently cold water in the West Branch. With the end of August in sight and cooler weather typically beginning to arrive thereafter, the river is getting relatively close to making it through the most difficult portion of the summer temperature season. Serio said overall combined reservoir storage is also somewhat above average. The recent rainfall had created a visible bump on the storage graph and pushed the current storage level above the historical-average line. That increase was significant enough to move the reservoir system into the next FFMP storage level: L1. As a result, releases increased during the previous week because of the additional storage produced by the rain. G. Dudko reflected on the major Upper Delaware flood years approximately two decades earlier, recalling 2006 and 2007. Serio said Fall can bring some of the region's larger rain events, raising the question: how quickly could the reservoirs fill if several significant storms occurred while storage was already above average? Padua said that if a major flood event does not occur this year, perhaps the region could see one in a subsequent year based simply on the passage of time since the last major events. Serios said that the reservoirs are already starting from a relatively high storage position. It would not necessarily take an extraordinary number of storms to bring Cannonsville Reservoir to full capacity if several large October rain events occurred. Pepacton Reservoir is quite high and capable of reaching full storage relatively quickly following another substantial rainfall event. B. Dudko asked whether New York City typically tries to lower reservoir levels somewhat in anticipation of hurricane season, thereby creating additional storage capacity should a major tropical system produce heavy rainfall. Serio said that reservoir operations can provide a degree of seasonal consideration, but he doesn't want to characterize the policy too specifically without having the operating rules in front of him.

Ramie asked whether the subject of the FFMP proposal should remain as a standing agenda item. She asked Serio whether he anticipates there will be enough continuing activity to justify keeping the topic on future agendas, or whether it would be better to add it when there is something substantial to report. The preference was to keep the subject on the agenda. If there is nothing new to report at a meeting, they can pass over the item. Serio said the next year or two will be an important period for the FFMP, and keeping the issue visible will allow the Council to follow developments as they occur rather than having to reintroduce the subject each time something significant happens. The current FFMP is approaching its expiration. The process of negotiating what comes next needs to occur well

before the May 31, 2028 expiration date, making the present period important for developing proposals such as the changes to the mitigation banks discussed earlier. If the Decree Parties fail to reach unanimous agreement on a successor or extension to the FFMP, it could be detrimental. Serio said that New Jersey has raised the possibility that, if the FFMP expires without an agreed replacement, operations could revert to the much older Revision 1 regime, which could mean a Cannonsville release on the order of only 45 CFS, dramatically below the summer releases the river receives under the current FFMP.
New Jersey has its own water-supply requirements and interests within the basin and therefore approaches the negotiations from a different perspective.

NYS DOT Tree Cutting Along Route 97: Ramie reported that on August 14, the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway had been contacted by Robert Castelo, Assistant Landscape Architect with NYSDOT Region 9, regarding vegetation maintenance that DOT will undertake along portions of the highway. NYS DOT plans to begin the tree-cutting work on or after August 15 to clear and maintain the highway right-of-way along Route 97. The work will occur on the northbound side of Route 97, extending outward to the limits of the State's right-of-way. Castelo's notification identified the specific locations by mile markers and included a map. Committee members reviewed the map and determined that the highlighted red and yellow segments include areas in or near the towns of Lumberland and Highland.

G. Dudko asked whether anyone had observed NYS DOT tree-cutting underway. Padua said that tree cutting had been taking place along Route 97 at Ten Mile River area during the last week or two, but he believes that is a different project from the NYS DOT work. There is also tree maintenance related to the utility lines happening. Ramie confirmed that she has seen crews working along the route she travels from Callicoon to Narrowsburg.

Henry asked whether the tree cutting had anything to do with the highway's status as the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway—specifically, whether DOT was undertaking the work to open or enhance scenic vistas along Route 97. Ramie confirmed that this is not a scenic vista-clearing project. The work is being undertaken strictly as routine right-of-way maintenance, as stated in NYS DOT's notification. The subject was presented tonight primarily as an FYI for the committee, so members and the affected municipalities would be aware that NYS DOT had notified the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway in advance of tree-cutting activity along the designated Route 97 segments.

Other:

<u>Old Business</u>:
7/22 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Meeting: Ramie said this July 22 meeting was held in Carbondale, PA where the historic Gravity Railroad operated. The council meets three times a year and likes to rotate its meetings among locations along the D&H canal and transportation system so members can visit historic sites and preservation projects firsthand. One highlight was the Carbondale Historical Society's restoration of a Gravity Railroad car, which has been placed on track outside Carbondale City Hall. A formal grand opening and ribbon cutting will be held once the project is completely ready. Meeting attendees could not enter the car because another set of steps still needs to be constructed. She said the interior is attractive and luxurious according to photos that were shared. Once the opening is scheduled, information will be shared.

She provided an update on the Neversink Valley Area Museum at the D&H Canal Park in Cuddebackville, Orange County. At the time of the July meeting, the museum was awaiting action from the New York State Board of Regents on its request to have its charter reinstated. Since then, the reinstatement has been granted, allowing the organization to return to its museum building and resume operations. There had previously been some controversy involving access to the building and questions concerning organizational records, but those details were not considered relevant to the UDC discussion. Mike Worden, Town of Deerpark Historian, has been assisting the Museum trustees with the reinstatement effort, and the successful outcome is great news.

The D&H Transportation Heritage Council Board of Trustees will meet next on September 23, at the UDC office and by Zoom, followed by the next full membership meeting on October 28. The October meeting may be held in Cuddebackville as part of a celebration of the Neversink Valley Area Museum's reopening, although that has not yet been confirmed. B. Dudko said the Deerpark Schoolhouse is also available. B. Dudko said there will be a Civil War presentation in Huguenot on October 18 by Worden and the history of a The Orange Blossoms from the Civil War.

8/12 D&H Video Meeting: Ramie said that out of the previous meeting, a five-member subcommittee has been formed to explore the possibility of producing a seventh video connected with the Council's historical video series,

The Delaware and Hudson Canal Company: Its History and Legacy. The D&H group has been working on the series since 2016, producing six videos that trace the history of the D&H transportation system from the Gravity Railroad through the canal route to its Hudson River connection. With the six-part historical series now completed, the group is considering a shorter "teaser" video that would introduce viewers to the existing videos while also promoting the museums and historic sites located along the D&H canal corridor. Videographer Bill Bollinger described the concept as similar to a movie trailer, something short and engaging that would encourage viewers to take a deeper dive into the six existing videos, which generally run approximately 15 to 20 minutes each. Recognizing that many viewers may not initially commit to watching all of the historical DVDs, the shorter video would be designed to capture their interest and direct them toward the full series and information about how to obtain or view it. There are several technical and logistical issues that must be addressed before the project can move forward. One is the capacity of the D&H Transportation Heritage Council's existing website, dhthc.org. The site was created using an older format and currently does not have sufficient capacity to host even the approximately five-minute promotional video being contemplated. The subcommittee is looking not only at the video's content, but also its format, production process, and where and how it would ultimately be distributed. Potential uses include making the video available through streaming and online platforms and distributing it to schools as a way of introducing students to D&H Canal history. The group discussed the need for a narrator and an advance written script, with the material ultimately being brought together creatively by the director. The subcommittee will meet again on September 2 to compare ideas, with each member expected to make a preliminary attempt at developing the script. The goal is to have some type of proposal ready for the September 23 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Board of Trustees meeting, outlining what the proposed seventh video would contain and how it might be produced and distributed. Chapter 6, the final installment of the existing series, is now available through the Watne Count Museum in Honesdale and covers the Ulster County section of the D&H system.

7/27 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting: Ramie said New York's scenic byways had been asked to submit information to their byways to be included in a statewide summary during the August 11 Empire State Development Interagency Tourism meeting. The information was due August 6, which Ramie provided, was made on behalf of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway to ensure the region was represented.

Ramie said David "DK" Krantz stepped down as Scenic Byway Program Manager, with his contract ending July 15. His departure is a substantial loss because of the excellent work he has done in the position. Krantz had taken on several major freelance projects and determined that he could no longer devote the time necessary to the Byway position. The organization is now conducting a search for his replacement. The Program Manager position is advertised on the UDSB website as a 12-month independent contract paying $30,000, funded through Sullivan County's allocation to the Byway. The organization is seeking a self-motivated individual who can work remotely, attend monthly meetings, travel along the Byway as necessary, and handle marketing, graphics, visitor-centered development, and the organization's various ongoing projects. Applications are due August 31, although the deadline could be extended if necessary. There were already a couple of potentially interested candidates. Although Krantz has formally left the position, he has continued volunteering time to assist the organization, including maintaining the Byway website and events calendar and helping with social media. His continued assistance is greatly appreciated. B. Dudko said Krantz did an excellent job. Krantz's departure also affected plans for the National Scenic Byway conference scheduled for October 6-8 in West Memphis, Arkansas. Krantz had originally planned to represent the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway at the conference, where the organization is to receive a Partnership Award for its scavenger hunt program. The Byway had planned to pay his travel and attendance expenses, but Krantz subsequently determined that he could no longer make the trip. With no one else available to attend, the National Scenic Byway Association was notified that the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway would have to accept the award in absentia.

Ramie said the TriVersity Pride Center submitted its closeout report for its 3rd Annual Paddle for Pride, held June 27. The event attracted a record 90 paddlers, paddling from the Staircase access to the Matamoras area. Before and after the river trip, booths and activities provided information about river ecology, river safety, and LGBTQIA+ programming. The Scenic Byway supported the event through a sponsor contribution.

The Callicoon Depot renovation project remains scheduled to begin in December, with Green Earth Co. of Kenoza Lake selected to perform the work. One final approval from the Callicoon Business Association is still pending on the revised scope of work. Each of the three partner organizations are also appointing one representative who can make timely decisions during construction without having to wait for an entire board or monthly meeting. Larry Richardson agreed to serve in that capacity for the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, having previously participated in

reviewing the contractor applications. Several upcoming Depot events were noted. A Day of Music and Dance, originally listed for September 5, has been rescheduled to November 7 because of musician availability. Other upcoming activities include the monthly Depot Market on 2nd Saturdays, a Birds and Bees event on September 26, including a birdhouse-making competition, and Indigenous Peoples' Day programming on October 17. The Depot had also recently held a very successful Railroad Day, featuring railroad history presentations by CDI historian Randy Bushart, live performances of railroad songs, model railroad displays in the freight room, tours, children's train whistles and lollipops, and railroad-themed books in the used book sale. The event raised approximately $1,000 through donations and sales of books, T-shirts, hats, and other items, making it one of the Depot's most successful fundraisers.

A July 13 response from the NYS DOT Regional Director Andy Stiles agreed with the Byway Committee's assessment that guide rail along Route 97 was in very poor condition along numerous portions of the highway. DOT developed an expedited plan to address several priority sections, including an area near Skinners Falls, another just south of the Tusten-Cochecton town line, and two sections near the hamlet of Callicoon. Work is to proceed as priorities and resources allowed, and it's confirmed that repairs have already been observed taking place. The Byway's advocacy helped bring greater attention and urgency to the problem.

The next monthly Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Committee meeting is scheduled for August 24.

Other: Henry asked if the UDC has heard anything about the Skinners Falls Bridge project; anything on plaques or signs specifically. Ramie said the only new developments are posting of documents on the Consulting Parties notification platform.

Henry recalled that a passenger train came through the Callicoon Depot a couple of months ago. He thought passengers were prohibited from riding along that railway. Ramie said that was a retirement celebration for four Norfolk Southern Railroad executives. They will be bringing Operation Toy Train back this winter which includes passengers like Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and their Toys for Tots helpers. There are special excursions that happen on that railway.

Martin said that she has brought the funding for the Barryville gage back up to the Town of Highland Supervisor and included Legislator Matt McPhillips. McPhillips seems interested and plans to work on the funding. Ramie said she sent a new letter on the Barryville gage funding, in the form of a memo, to Kurnath today to double check figures listed since the NPS has been issuing stop-gap funding the last two years for that gage. She will share the final version with all interested parties.

Padua said a concerned citizen reached out to him regarding the lack of warning or directional signs at Case's eel trap and asked why the signs normally directing boaters around the eel trap were no longer in place. He believes that the signs had been there earlier in the season but were likely washed away during the high-water event several weeks earlier. River levels have remained high since that time. The eel trap itself was reportedly not operating at the time, with the structure blocked off and the river flow diverted around it. Although the signs are missing, the higher water currently makes it relatively easy for boaters to pass around the structure, so it was not believed to present an immediate navigation hazard. It is assumed that the signs will be replaced once the eel trap is reopened. The unusually high water appears to have made it difficult to get the trap fully operational this season. Padua said he would reach out to Doug Case regarding the situation and the signage. Martin asked where the eel trap is located. As far as members were aware, there are only two functional eel traps remaining on the Upper Delaware. One is approximately a mile downstream from Narrowsburg, which was identified as Case's location, and the other is at Pond Eddy, NY.

Public Comment: None.

Adjourn: A Motion by B. Dudko seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m. was carried.

Meeting minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 8/20/2026