

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES

August 20, 2024

Committee Members Present: Evan Padua, Bill Dudko, Fred Peckham (Zoom), Christine Martin (Zoom), Jim Rodgers, Al Henry, Pat Jeffer

Committee Members Absent: None

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Stephanie Driscoll

NPS Partner: Lindsey Kurnath

Guests: Ginny Dudko

The UDC’s Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2024. Chairperson Evan Padua called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Approval of the July 16, 2024 meeting minutes: A motion by B. Dudko seconded by Henry approving the 7/16 meeting minutes carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

New Business:

Letter on USGS Barryville Gage Funding: A draft letter regarding funding to restore full functionality of the Delaware River Gage at Barryville is included in the packet. This topic came out of the presentation by Guy Foster on USGS gages at the August 1st UDC meeting. Ramie said the letter will be sent to any potential stakeholders asking “who would like to partner to fund the Barryville gage?” The call to action proposes a meeting of interested parties that the UDC would facilitate. Since the presentation on 8/1, UDC and NPS staff met and Kurnath said there was a possibility that NPS could provide stop gap funding for Fiscal Year 2025. Kurnath said UPDE received an email that the gage was going to be turned back on through NPS, but that needs to be approved through Congress. Kurnath found [this](#) webpage, which does a little bit of the job of explaining how the Federal Priority Streamgages and the NGWOS fit together as part of the overall USGS monitoring effort. NPS funding it through FY25 buys time to assemble a local coalition or to see if USGS will make it part of their new system. Rodgers said all the features that private boaters on the river need are still available at the other gages. Is there a reason why we need the Barryville gage? Padua said the Barryville gage is the first gage downstream of the Lackawaxen. He uses it a lot for his fishing guide business. The Cubic Feet per Second (CFS) measurement is what has been discontinued at the Barryville gage, and that’s what they are trying to get turned back on. The next gage after Barryville isn’t until Matamoras. Henry thanked the NPS for working on this; but is not having the CFS really a problem? Kurnath said yes. Henry said adding people that benefit from knowing the difference downstream to the funding letter would be useful. When they released water from Wallenpaupack in 2006, it was easier for downstream users to track the difference in CFS with the Barryville gage. Martin thanked UPDE NPS for taking on the funding into 2025, giving local entities time to sort out funding. She asked what other gages were shut down; this feels kind of random. Padua said that’s why he noticed that it’s the one thing not being recorded. It isn’t a huge issue, but people use it and that’s why we’re discussing it. Martin asked if we could add Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) to the letter’s recipients list. The Town of Highland has reached out to FUDR about the gage. B. Dudko said Lumberland, Deerpark, Shohola, Westfall, and Port Jervis should be added to the recipient list as well. A motion by Henry to send the letter, with the revisions mentioned about the impacts downstream and additional recipients added, seconded by Rodgers, carried.

Kurnath said that Andy Waite from USGS said the CFS is based on the model that correlates on river height. When they turn that function back on at the Barryville gage they will find out if that model is still accurate and may be able to backfill the data to April. She knows Robinson was concerned about the gap in data. USGS is willing to work with NPS to get that data back.

Update on Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge: The UDC’s concern about the Skinners Falls-Milanville Bridge was a front-page story in last week’s issue of the River Reporter, gaining lots of positive attention. Ramie said she feels satisfied by PennDOT’s response to the matter; sending out Wayne County inspectors on Friday that week and then their consultant inspectors on Saturday. The consultants did a more thorough inspection and found the hanging steel piece that Dexter had photographed, which was removed. The consultants will send another crew out to inspect under the bridge as well with rigging in place. NPS also responded by sending staff out to assess the danger for boaters underneath the bridge. Henry had suggested that we send the letter to federal and state legislators. Ramie

said NYS Senator Oberacker's aide Camille O'Brien called on 8/8 to acknowledge the letter and get more details to brief Oberacker's new Chief of Staff. O'Brien also said she would try to get the Senator to another UDC meeting when his schedule allows. B. Dudko commented that he thinks the bridge is too far gone to repair. Padua said he hopes the repairs get done soon so no one gets hurt. He mentioned that the construction at the Callicoon Bridge hasn't started yet and the buoys there have been washed upstream. Ramie said she saw some action happening at the Callicoon Bridge just this morning. Padua said the port-a-john must have washed away at the Darbytown Access from the high water. Kurnath said it has and that someone has stolen one of the port-a-johns at the Skinners Falls Access.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: Included in the packet for review. Padua commented that the reservoirs are starting to fill up.

Other: None.

Old Business:

7/22 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting: Ramie said the vegetation grown up along Route 97 was mentioned to the NYS DOT ahead of the July 4th holiday. DOT wasn't able to get to it before 7/4, but it has been mowed down since in the segment between Callicoon and Narrowsburg that Ramie travels most. The UDSB appreciates their work on that. An application for a Culture and History Along the Byway grant was awarded for TriVersity Pride Center's Paddle for Pride event in the amount of \$500. That amount covered attendance by their teen group of 10-12 kids. Originally there was concern if the event was linked with highway promotion enough to qualify for the grant, so they added an interpretation program on Route 97 and the UDSB communities during the bus trip up from Matamoras to the Staircase Access. The event was an all-inclusive river rafting trip with LGBTQ+ programming by the NPS that happened on 7/27. Ramie said she's heard that it was successful with 31 guests.

The UDSB website is still down. The byway had received a grant for \$25,000 from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Notification of the approved contract was sent via email on May 15th to the byway's email address that is not working, so unfortunately no one saw it to submit the claim paperwork. Since discovering this, Ramie now has the information and is working on it.

Sullivan County awarded \$40,000 of discretionary funds to the UDSB for administrative support for the Program Manager position and visitor center development. The voucher has been submitted. That funding is for this calendar year and needs to be spent by 12/31. There may need to be an extension requested since we are already eight months into this year and haven't received the funds.

There was a town hall style meeting for the Callicoon Depot restoration held at the Delaware Youth Center on 7/16, the same night as last month's WU/RM meeting. Since Ramie wasn't able to go, she heard people were satisfied with questions answered during the meeting.

The DOT report at last month's UDSB meeting noted emergency work was being done at the Pond Eddy Bridge. After looking into it, it had mistakenly not been added to previously completed projects.

B. Dudko asked if the byway lost the \$25,000 grant with the miscommunication. Ramie said no, although there had been a 6/14 deadline, she told them the issue with not receiving it and was given more time.

The next UDSB meeting is Monday, August 26.

7/24 D&H Transportation Heritage Council Meeting: This meeting was held at the D&H Canal Park at Lock 31 in Hawley where the annual Canal Fest was held this past Saturday. They were able to get a preview of the Daniels Farmhouse that is being renovated by the Wayne County Historical Society where great work is being done to get the farmhouse back to its authentic appearance. There are 21 organizations and individuals that are members of the DHTHC this year; representing groups, sites, or people that are concerned about the preservation and promotion of the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad. The updated historic listing through the National Register of Historic Places has been pending for almost a year now. They needed to revise the nomination that was done in the 1960's to add in the 420 extant features that remain. Garcia-Maldonado from NPS said that he has had a lot of dealings with National

Register projects. Since it's a collaboration of different NPS regions working together, it does tend to take a long time to reach the end.

Chapter 5 of the historic DVD series covers southern Ulster County, and Chapter 6 will cover northern Ulster County. After all six of the chapters are complete they plan to combine them into one long movie and make it available on a streaming platform. There was talk of putting a 7th promotional video together with all of the sites featured. Since it's been so long since Chapters 1 and 2 have been done, there have been some major changes since then. For Chapter 5 the creators wanted more diverse voices and asked Ramie if she would be willing to do it. Ramie said yes, if she could have cue cards on the information for Ulster County since she is not a historian. They met at Minisink Battleground Park on 8/7 to film her segment for Chapter 5.

The 200th Anniversary of the D&H Canal is still being celebrated with various activities keyed to signify major milestones. Anniversary events will continue through 2029.

The members did a roundtable of what they have going on at their sites. The Lackawaxen River Conservancy is still working on the Wild and Scenic Rivers designation for the Lackawaxen River. Peterec brought up the success of the Zane Grey Festival and D&H Canal Days, as well as the vintage baseball game coming up on 8/24 in Lackawaxen. Garcia-Maldonado said UPDE is working on oral histories collected over four decades. Ramie reported then that the UDC exhibited at Zane Grey Festival and Narrowsburg Riverfest, and were holding their 36th Annual Family Raft Trip on 8/4. The 36th Annual River Valley Awards banquet is coming up on 9/22 and the UDC is currently accepting nominations through 8/23 for Cultural Achievement and nine other categories.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be on September 25th at noon at the UDC office, and the DHTHC full membership will meet on October 23rd at Sullivan County's Delaware & Hudson Canal Interpretive Center in Summitville.

8/13 Upper Delaware Watershed Plan Re-Grant Subcommittee & 8/14 Steering Committee: Ramie attended both of these meetings. The Upper Delaware Watershed Plan Re-grant Subcommittee program is funded through the NYS DEC as a pass-through grant program. \$232,500 will be available to municipal governments, 501(c)3 nonprofits, universities, and tribal entities. The money must be spent in calendar year 2025. People serving on the committee include Ramie, Kurnath, Ryan Coulter from NYS DEC, Heather Jacksy from Sullivan County Planning, and Molly Oliver and Sherri Resti Thomas from FUDR. They discussed guidelines and points to rank application criteria. Applications will be due by 10/18 and the awards will be made by 11/22. Their next meeting will be on 9/12.

At the 8/14 Steering Committee meeting, 19 people attended via Zoom. The Action Agenda document is now in the hands of the DEC, and nothing can move forward until the DEC responds. They spoke about the Upper Delaware River Rendezvous being held at Villa Roma on 10/16-10/17. Ramie advised the WU/RM Committee that the UDC opted to pay the registration for up to 5 staff/members to attend. Ramie, Engelhardt and Driscoll will attend as well as Ginny and Bill Dudko. As part of the Upper Delaware River Watershed program, they are obligated to have a more public online presence. They created a new website, www.udrwatershed.org, which is still being populated. There have also been social media platforms created. The next meeting will be on 10/30.

8/14 Water Safety Committee: Notes from the Water Safety Committee meeting by Engelhardt are included in the packet. Kurnath asked Ramie if she has received any nominations for the Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award yet from the Water Safety Committee? Ramie said not yet, the deadline is Friday 8/23. Kurnath said there were no Challenge Coin nominations this month. They spoke about year end budget needs such as new signs. There was a request to color-code the lifejackets based on size, but that just isn't possible. There was a 26-person tube rescue in Lackawaxen last weekend on the Lackawaxen River. Everyone was fine and one drybag found during the rescue was returned to its owner. During the Deerpark Road Show, one of the councilmembers asked for more/different information on river safety. Peterec said all of the information would be in the "Plan Your River Trip" brochure. Kurnath plans to get some of those over to Deerpark and hand out those brochures in the remaining Road Show packets. Another issue raised was the condition of the path down to the river at the Mongaup Access. B. Dudko said there is a large pothole where Route 97 starts in Deerpark near the Mongaup Access. Kurnath said she will reach out to the DEC about that. Padua thanked NPS for their quick turnaround cleaning up after the recent storms. He knows they were able to clean up Ten Mile River Access quickly. Kurnath said she knew Jessica

Weinman was coordinating clean ups at Narrowsburg and Town of Highland Accesses as well. Padua said PA Fish & Boat Commission plans to re-do the ramp at the Damascus Access soon. He wondered if it would be before or after Labor Day. Kurnath said she will ask Weinman to follow up with PFBC.

Other: Padua said he noticed under the Substantial Conformance example on the UDC website that there is a photo of a clearcut on the Lackawaxen side of the river. B. Dudko said they did a lot of things they weren't supposed to there, but they were fined.

Kurnath said as a follow up to last month's discussion, when someone gets cited for operating without a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) the first time, they get fined. When they get cited a second time, there is a mandatory court appearance. Chief Ranger Winslow said he can come in to answer any more questions there might be. There has been only one repeat offender. Kurnath will share that information with the fishing guides at the fall meeting. Park Rangers will also ask the guides to keep their eyes out and let them know if they see someone operating without a CUA. Henry suggested the citation include seizing the offender's property. Kurnath said Winslow has considered all the options.

Public Comment: None.

Adjourn: A Motion by B. Dudko seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 7:25p.m. was carried.

Meeting minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll, 8/22/2024