

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES May 1, 2014

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, May 1, 2014 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Andy Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Fremont-Jim Greier, Town of Delaware-Harold Roeder, Town of Cohecton-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten- Susan Sullivan, Town of Highland-Andrew Boyar, Town of Lumberland-Nadia Rajs, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeffrey Dexter, Berlin Township-Alan Henry, Lackawaxen Township-Brian Stuart, Shohola Township-Pat Jeffer, State of New York-Bill Rudge, National Park Service-Malcolm Wilbur. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Resource Specialist-Travis O'Dell, Secretary-Cindy Odell. Also in attendance: Tony Ritter, Town of Tusten alternate; Ginny Dudko, Town of Deerpark alternate. Absent: Westfall Township, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, & Delaware River Basin Commission.

Presentation on Japanese Knotweed by Jamie Myers, Biologist for the National Park Service: Myers stated that Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is a fast-growing invasive herbaceous perennial species that forms dense thickets of tall, arching, bamboo-like stalks. It regenerates at a remarkable rate when pieces of stem or root take hold on bare ground or disturbed sites, dominating large areas in only a few years. This exotic plant was introduced to North America from its native Asia in the 1800s for ornamental use. Easily dispersed by water, soil and people, it quickly invades our river banks, forming thickets that shade out smaller plants, creating a "jungle". It reproduces by seed and by large rhizomes which may reach a length of 15- 18 feet. Myers explained the biology of the plant noting it can be difficult to eradicate and keep from spreading. She said that animals and humans are a common vector of spreading of the knotweed. Myers shared ways of controlling Japanese Knotweed. She said it is important to consider the nature of the population that is to be treated before deciding on a course of action. Myers shared the management success story at the Junction Pool fishing access on the way to Hancock where the plant was cut close to the ground after it was allowed to grow to about 4 feet tall and the area was covered with a clear, 4 mil plastic. The plastic was secured and kept there for the duration of the growing season. It is suggested that this approach be used for two consecutive growing seasons, Myers added. She said that research shows that the most effective means of knotweed control is through herbicide application. This needs to be done at a time when the herbicide will be translocated from the leaves where it is being applied down through the stem into the root structure. The underground structure of the plant is the most important thing to be targeted in order to be effective in eradicating the Japanese Knotweed. A glyphosate based product should be used. Myers said that New York State has very strict herbicide regulations. Myers spoke of the J.K Injection tool which is used to deliver herbicide directly into the hollow cane of the plant. Henry questioned how much the tool costs. Myers told him it runs about \$200. This process has a high success rate, she added. She noted that there appears to be more knotweed along the northern section of the river than there is along the southern section. Peckham questioned if she knows why, stating that could be a key to eradicating it. Boyar stated we care so much about eradicating knotweed because where it grows, it will eliminate the understory and make the lands unstable which could change the complexion of the whole river valley. Myers said that a biocontrol, *Aphalara itadori*, which is a species of psyllid that feeds on Japanese Knotweed, may be approved in the near future. It was released in Great Britain and they are seeing positive results. Myers referred to this biocontrol as a "glimmer of hope."

Myers spoke of *Lythrum salicaria* (Purple loosestrife). A biocontrol beetle has been used for controlling this and they are seeing positive results. Boyar thanked Myers for her work and her presentation. Ramie said there are quantities of Japanese Knotweed brochures created by the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. available at the UDC office.

For information about the Japanese Knotweed (and other non-native invasive plants) – including how to recognize them, eradicate them and what to plant in their place – contact: National Park Service, Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River at 570-729-7842; jamie_myers @nps.gov; or www.nps.gov.upde.

Approval of April 3 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Rajsz seconded by Roeder to approve the April 3 meeting minutes was carried.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None

Committee Reports: Committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They were April 15 Water Use/Resource Management by Tony Ritter, April 22 Project Review by Larry Richardson, and April 22 Operations by Andy Boyar.

Ritter stated that a piece of property on Ferry Street in Long Eddy has come on the market. He provided copies of the listing to Greier, Rajsz, and Rudge noting that it may make a good access to the Delaware River.

Boyar “tipped his hat” to staff for their work putting together the Awards Banquet.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: The DRBC was absent, however, the hydrologic report was provided. The NYC Delaware River Basin Storage as of April 24 was at a combined capacity of 99.4% with Cannonsville at 100.4%.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Rudge referred members to the press release in their packets regarding the Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE) project. He said the DEC is looking to actively recruit citizen scientists to conduct water quality assessments. This year, citizen scientists can participate in the WAVE project in one of two ways: they can join a local WAVE group led by a trained local coordinator or they can sample independently. For the first time, DEC is offering training sessions for local coordinators so that they may train and coordinate their own team of WAVE participants. He noted that there is not currently a volunteer coordinator specific to the Delaware River. He said they are fortunate that there is a very strong professional sampling presence in the Delaware River. Sullivan said she believes that the Delaware Highlands Conservancy has offered this training to individuals. Rudge said that he will contact the Conservancy. Ramie noted that the Delaware Riverkeeper Network has also offered training for water quality.

Rudge referred members to the second press release in their packets. This one entitled “Hunting or Trapping of Wild Boars in New York Now Prohibited”, states that “A new regulation that prohibits hunting or trapping of free-ranging Eurasian boars in New York State was formally adopted, state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Joe Martens announced today. The regulation is designed to ensure maximum effectiveness of DEC’s statewide eradication efforts.” The law prohibits possession, sale, transport or marketing of live Eurasian boars as of September 1, 2015. Hunting wild boar is still allowed at enclosed hunting preserves until September 1, 2015. These regulations are an attempt to try to prevent this invasive species from becoming established in New York, Rudge added.

Rudge thanked Ritter for the information on the property for sale in Long Eddy. He said he is working with the Trust for Public Land in hopes that they can work with the current owner to acquire the property and eventually turn it over to the DEC for a fishing access. A brief discussion about the property took place. Rudge said if anyone knows of another organization interested in the property to please let him know as the state does not want to compete with another organization for the same goal.

PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources: No report in the absence of Representative Tim Dugan.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: Wilbur said that the Archives Survey Team visited UPDE and the UDC to identify records with long-term value and in need of preservation management to support future management needs. He noted their visit was very helpful and we look forward to receiving their written report and recommendations.

The annual meeting with fishing guides under Conditional Use Agreements (CUAs) was held on April 2nd in Hancock. Topics of discussion included law enforcement efforts, the CUA permitting program, resource management issues and a possible joint effort to support the NPS water quality monitoring program. There was also talk to try to do some constructive engagement of the clients of the river guides to develop a shared stewardship ethic along the river as well.

Wilbur reported that the Park Service was represented at the Hospitality Green forum at the Villa Roma resort. He said the event was very successful and brought together many players interested in developing an environmentally sensitive local tourism economy. NPS staff served on the steering committee and on a panel describing the many local natural and cultural resource activities and destinations.

Wilbur noted that UPDE hosted the Northeast Region Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers (WSR) Gathering at the Central House Resort in Beach Lake on April 10th and 11th. He said UPDE and UDC staff participated and gained a greater understanding of the UPDE role in the evolution of the Partnership WSR concept, while sharing ideas and lessons learned with other participants. Wilbur said he gained a much better appreciation for how the struggles that happened here, and the lessons learned by the Park Service, served to inform the evolution of the Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers concept and how that was later transported within the Park Service to other Wild & Scenic Rivers areas. He noted that the lessons learned here have resulted in the protection of Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) on hundreds of miles of partner-managed rivers throughout the Northeast and across the country. Ramie said it was interesting to hear that the Upper Delaware is considered to be the “granddaddy” model of this partnership program which has only been around since 1992. She added it was reported that only 1% of all the rivers in the entire United States are designated as Wild & Scenic so that’s a pretty exclusive club to be in. Ramie said she was able to obtain other river management plans from some of the participants and speak to them regarding their plans. T. O’Dell found the gathering very comprehensive and feels they learned a lot from us and we learned a lot from them.

In regards to the upcoming Viewshed Analysis Workshop at Delaware Water Gap (DEWA), Wilbur said the UPDE role will be to send staff and partners to participate in the training, followed by discussions evaluating the applicability of this tool in the UPDE/UDC environment, as well as by partners such as the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. If it seems useful, we will pursue holding a repeat session locally in the fall, he added. Wilbur said he looks forward to learning about the idea of a viewshed cooperative which may help span the viewshed concerns when you have a state boundary right down the middle of the viewshed.

Wilbur reported that the “Issues Team”, a joint committee of UDC and NPS staff, met on April 24th. The mission of the “Issues Team” is to ensure that all actions potentially affecting the Outstandingly Remarkable Values that we are charged with protecting are promptly identified, evaluated, and, if appropriate, referred to the necessary parties for review. At the last meeting, the Land & Water Use Guidelines and River Management Plan requirements were reviewed, and there were discussions of each organization’s responsibilities for tracking and acting on issues led to agreement to refine the tools necessary to that task. He is optimistic that this team will make us more efficient.

Wilbur said that NPS Management Assistant Hahn instructed a class for the Orange County Community College Honors Biology Class centered on the National Park Service. He said that Park staff continues to participate in the Appalachian Gateways Team and that several NPS staff attended the UDC’s Communications Towers Workshop, and found it to be a useful learning experience. It is hoped that the upcoming Viewshed Analysis Workshop will provide additional tools to enhance protection of the corridor’s visual resources.

Wilbur noted that the NPS Chief of Maintenance Loren Goering has graduated from NPS Facility Manager Leaders Program, with honors. The year-long award winning program builds capabilities in asset management, operations and maintenance, project management, resource stewardship, business management, supervision, and leadership. He added that crews have been busy with post-winter repairs and clean-up, and with preparations for the Canal Days events to take place the beginning of May.

Wilbur said that Law Enforcement staff continues to participate in joint training and event planning activities with state, county and local counterparts, and continues to provide and attend training to maintain their professional competencies. Law Enforcement Rangers have begun using newly-acquired equipment purchased with the goal of safely conducting additional patrols in areas and during times that it is unsafe or undesirable to utilize vessels such as canoes or motorized vessels. Park staff met with canoe livery owners and operators, local emergency service providers, National Canoe Safety Patrol and other stakeholders for the third annual Water Safety Program meeting. Many topics were covered during this well attended meeting. Commitments were received by a number of the liveries to actively participate in water safety efforts for the 2014 season. Ranger Neal conducted TASER Refresher Training for the Town of Highland, NY Constabulary, a law enforcement partner. Ranger Babus will represent the NPS at an assembly at Honesdale High School on the eve of Senior Prom targeting underage drinking, driving and other risky behavior. Throughout the month of April, rangers participated in several prescribed fires at DEWA as well as pre-suppression efforts maintaining and building their wild land firefighting and prescribed fire skills, abilities and qualifications.

Wilbur said that within the Interpretation Division, staff is working to set up this year's Watershed Stewardship program. *Out in the Open*, a local television cable show, interviewed staff about Zane Grey and the Zane Grey Catch-and-Release Fishing Derby. Several of the NPS educational "traveling trunks" are out on loan to local school districts. The Water Snapshot program continues. The students learn about the Delaware watershed in which their schools and homes reside and the importance of stewardship of the natural resources followed by a field study that includes water testing. As the D&H Canal Days approach, the pre-site program was presented to two of the schools participating. Interpretive staff also participated in PPL's Earth Day Celebration and Sullivan West School District's first Annual Fun and Fitness Day. Wilbur reported that seasonal employee hiring is complete and interns have been selected. He said we have a fine group of eager employees coming on board, and a nice mix of returning seasonals and new hires.

Regarding the Natural Resources Division, staff drafted a letter for the NPS Northeast Regional Office with comments supporting a proposed PA Fish and Boat Commission regulation banning the sale, transport, and possession of non-native invasive species of crayfish in the Commonwealth. They are working on the 2014 Upper Delaware Bioblitz. The BioBlitz will take place on Ten Mile River Boy Scout property on June 28th and 29th. Staff has started planning for the 2014 water quality sampling season with inventorying and ordering supplies and getting the laboratory in order. Natural Resource staff participated in a White Nose Syndrome conference call. White-nose syndrome (WNS) is a disease affecting hibernating bats. The fungus continues to spread with new states being added after this past winter's hibernation. Wilbur said that \$15,000 in research funds has been received to continue investigation in the Upper Delaware in partnership with East Stroudsburg University.

Wilbur reported that there is now a usable link for the real-time water quality monitoring efforts. The link has our stations on the map, which when selected will provide the most recent readings, graphs of the data, and the option to create reports or spreadsheets. The link is www.sutronwin.com.

Wilbur noted that the Park Atlas website that was created in support of the Foundation documents may be able to meet our mapping needs once it is loaded onto the public website. He is optimistic that we are getting close to having usable maps.

UDC Executive Director's Report: Ramie told Wilbur that over the years, the UDC has, at times, been invited to participate at the orientation for the seasonal employees. She said it is a good opportunity to let the new people know how the management works and stress the private property issues. She offered to attend and give a presentation to those new employees.

Ramie reported that there was a 10% increase in life jacket wear from 2012 to 2013 up to 62%. She said that is a good result for the Water Safety Campaign.

Ramie said that 81 paid guests attended the 26th Annual Awards Banquet on April 27th at Henning's Local in Eldred, N.Y. Keynote speaker, Congressman Chris Gibson, was very well received and stayed until every guest who wanted to speak to him had an opportunity. Ramie said she felt there was a nice, unexpected synergy among the award winners this year. The event was covered by WJFF, the Sullivan County Democrat, and a group photo was sent out to other local media. O'Dell recorded parts of the event. Ramie said that extra souvenir programs are available. Boyar said he liked the implementation of

Roeder's suggestion to streamline the winner's biographies and have them available in the booklet. Ramie agreed that was a good change.

Ramie reported that the balance of FY 2014 funding will be available next week. Ultimately, the restoration of the majority of our federal sequester cut and the \$3,000 added by Wilbur on April 17th, bumped the UDC back up to \$300,000 revenue. She noted that the two unanticipated funding additions do require action of our parts. Funds were allocated to the budget lines of Outside Consulting Service and Capital Expenditures. We are working on recommendations to allocate these funds to specific projects. She said we received our Energy Assessment on April 28th from the NYSERDA contractor. It is a very comprehensive report that is being analyzed and will help to make informed decisions regarding the expenditures. The report was e-mailed out to Operations Committee members, Ramie stated, but is available to any members that would like to review it. Boyar pointed out that this service is available to all the New York municipalities.

Ramie noted that the FY 2015 budget and work plans need to be ready for May committee meetings to vote on at the June 5th UDC full Council meeting. She is working on collecting fixed cost information, but will have to estimate some costs such as health insurance because of the timing. Ramie said that the Personnel Subcommittee will need to perform staff evaluations in early May to make salary recommendations. Ramie said when asked how much federal funding to expect, she was advised to plan for a 1% reduction.

Ramie said that an article in the April 2014 edition of the **New York State Conservationist** magazine contained an article titled "*GET OUTDOORS at New York's National Treasure*" which featured a segment on the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. She read an excerpt from that article and passed the magazine around for members to view.

Ramie referred members to the May calendar of UDC Meetings, Deadlines and Activities. She noted that the NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission annual meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 14th at 10:00 a.m. at the State Office Building in Binghamton, N.Y. She said she will attend this meeting and prepare a press release of the construction and repair plans for the ten bridges.

Ramie referred members to the press release titled "Cold Water Economic Study Shows \$414 Million Impact and \$274 Million More Potentially Available with City Cooperation" in their packets. This study was previewed at our February full Council meeting and funded in part through a UDC Technical Assistance Grant.

Ramie referenced the "Funding Available for River Clean-ups; Proposals Needed by May 30" draft memo in members' packets. The 2014 pilot grant program is intended to encourage volunteer-based river and shoreline clean-ups this spring and summer to maintain the pristine quality of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. The memo sets the parameters that the towns and townships would follow should they apply for this funding. She said the memo would be sent out, if approved, to the UDC member towns and townships tomorrow. Members suggested that it be clarified that the total of \$3,000 would be divided among the applicants. Funding amounts will be determined based on the need expressed and the number of applications received. Priority will be given to projects that get local adults and/or youth involved, and which reflect a commitment to become self-sustaining. After brief discussion, a motion to send the memo with the suggested clarification was made by Stuart, seconded by Henry and carried unanimously.

Old Business: Boyar said he recently had the opportunity to visit the Lordville Access. He stated it is a suitable access and questioned why it isn't available to drift boats. Peckham noted that access is intended as river access for kayaks and canoes. A brief discussion took place.

New Business

Draft Resolution 2014-06: Enact a Member Participation Policy: A motion to move the Resolution was made by Henry, seconded by Rajsz and carried unanimously. This policy will be attached to the UDC Bylaws, effective immediately.

Draft Letter to NYC Mayor de Blasio: Flexible Flow Management Plan and Operations Support Tool: Boyar said this discussion took place at the Water Use/Resource Management Committee meeting

and it was suggested that Kolesar, Pettinger, Serio, and Skelding be consulted for input, which Boyar said he did. A first draft was sent out and feedback was received from several members. Those suggestions were incorporated into the draft before members. A motion to send the letter was made by Henry, seconded by Rajsz and carried.

Draft Letter to NYS DOT: Town of Tusten Pedestrian Links and Sidewalk Improvement Proposal:

The Town of Tusten may be applying to the Federal Transportation Alternative Program for a project that would create a designated pathway between municipal parking lots located on Bridge Street and Main Street, and improve the existing sidewalk condition along Bridge Street. The UDC has been asked to express conceptual support of these projects. A motion to send the letter of support was made by Sullivan, seconded by Henry and carried with Peckham abstaining.

Other: Roeder referred to Rudge's handout noting it reads that to date, more than 150 animals (wild boars) have been captured and destroyed. Roeder asked what the time period was for this result. Rudge told him less than one year. Roeder suggested that the DEC may want to entertain the idea of working with sportsman's federations on a coordinated hunt to eradicate even more animals. He said it would be a great way for the DEC to unite with hunters. Greier stated that the boars are nocturnal animals and they do their foraging and damage at night. He said a sow can have up to four litters per year with an average of 10 – 12 per litter. He spoke of nighttime tactical hunts that take place in the state of Texas. Dean asked Rudge if there is an estimate of how many of these animals are in New York. Rudge said he did not know, but he could find out for him.

Sullivan said she read of a Sullivan County viewshed analysis in the April WU/RM minutes. She asked if that was available. T. O'Dell said that was for a specific project; an emergency cell tower going up in Narrowsburg. It was necessary to raise the tower another 19 feet so another viewshed analysis simulation was done.

Sullivan suggested that when O'Dell sends his follow up memo to the Communication Towers Workshop that he include a deadline for response. Ramie said we typically do and added that the municipalities are being asked to let the UDC know about what ordinances already exist for towers. Sullivan asked if the UDC is looking to find out if the municipalities want a regional approach to the towers. O'Dell said we are looking to see if the municipalities would like the assistance of the UDC in drafting a model ordinance and to put them in touch with Dick Comi from the Center for Municipal Solutions who can help the municipalities with this issue at no charge to them.

Ritter said the Town of Tusten just uploaded their Request for Proposals for remote net metering in an attempt to lower their utility bills. He suggested that this could be used as a template for other towns.

Rajsz said that Pete Comstock is holding a seminar on solar power Saturday, May 3 from 9am – 12pm at The Homestead School for anyone interested in attending.

Public Comment:

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder, seconded by Sullivan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell 5/9/14