

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES September 3, 2015

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, September 3, 2015 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Alan Henry called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Delaware-Harold Roeder, Town of Cochecton-Larry Richardson (7:05 p.m.), Town of Tusten-Susan Sullivan, Town of Highland-Debra Conway, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeff Dexter, Berlin Township-Alan Henry, Lackawaxen Township-John McKay, Shohola Township-Pat Jeffer, Westfall Township-Michael Barth (7:14 p.m.), State of New York-Bill Rudge, National Park Service-Michael Caldwell. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Resource Specialist-Travis O'Dell, Secretary-Cindy Odell. Also in attendance: Ginny Dudko, Deerpark Alternate, Tony Ritter, Tusten Alternate, Kris Heister, National Park Service Alternate, Carla Hahn, National Park Service. Absent: Town of Fremont, Town of Lumberland, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Delaware River Basin Commission. Media: Dave Hulse. Guests: John Beljean, Iris Helfeld, Bernie Handler, Ginny Fiero, Jane Luchsinger, Jeff Skelding, Scott Rando.

Presentation on Geotourism by John Beljean, National Parks Conservation Association's Delaware River Field Representative: Beljean noted that the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is the oldest, independent, non-partisan advocacy group working to address major threats facing the National Park System. He said he was in attendance to provide an overview of a Geotourism program to be implemented that will cover the Upper and Middle Delaware River. The idea is to spotlight the areas surrounding the river. NPCA received a two-year grant from the William Penn Foundation to achieve this and will be partnering with the National Geographic Society, local communities, local business organizations, as well as local residents. National Geographic's Geotourism program is designed to support the natural resource assets, cultural attractions and historically important places that make a region a unique and vibrant tourism destination. The program provides a forum for the strategic planning and implementation of a sustainable tourism strategy for a region, and develops an engaging digital platform to promote the region's unique attributes, attractions, and businesses. Beljean explained the program "deliverables" which will include a National Geographic branded website scheduled to be launched Memorial Day weekend in 2016. Beljean spoke of the creation of a Geotourism Stewardship Council. The Council is a regional body of stakeholders representing government, civil society, businesses and individual community members as well as different aspects of the destination, such as natural, cultural, scenic, religious, historic, or other important features of the destination. Beljean reported that there are currently 22 Geotourism projects completed or underway. Beljean said he will have more information on the program in the near future and told members to look for a public "roll out" in October of this year. Beljean referred to his contact information on the handout he provided. He asked members to share this information with people they think may be interested. He asked that the UDC consider a letter of support for the program down the line if they like what they see. Peckham questioned what the geographic limitations will be. Beljean said that is still to be determined. He encouraged members to visit Yellowstone's Geotourism website at <http://yellowstone.natgeotourism.com/>. Heister questioned who is currently on the Stewardship Council representing the Upper Delaware. Beljean said Elaine Giguere of the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance, Sue Currier, Buck Moorhead, and Roberta Lockwood are a few of the members currently. Hulse

asked why implement this program here. Beljean told him the area is special and unique, the type of area National Geographic is looking to promote responsibly. Henry thanked Beljean for his presentation and presented him with a UDC lapel pin.

Introduction of Michael Caldwell, National Park Service Northeast Regional Director: Caldwell noted that he serves as the Regional Director for the Northeast Region out of Philadelphia. The Northeast Region encompasses 13 states from Maine down to Virginia. Caldwell said he has served in the National Park Service for over 20 years and has been in the Regional Director position for just over two years. He noted he worked with Heister at Valley Forge National Historic Park, having hired her as the Natural Resource Manager there.

Caldwell spoke of the NPS Centennial taking place in 2016. He said a key component is the “Find Your Park” public awareness campaign designed to engage the next generation of stewards. The website for the program is www.findyourpark.com, he noted. It is hoped that this effort will emphasize other parks besides the federal ones. He encouraged members to check out the Find Your Park website.

Caldwell referred to the September 1 press release titled, “Administration Launches Every Kid in a Park Pass” provided in their packets. Starting September 1, fourth graders nationwide can visit the new Every Kid in a Park website to obtain a pass that provides free access to students and their families to all federally managed lands and waters – including national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and marine sanctuaries.

Ramie asked Caldwell if he had any information regarding the processing of the FY 2016 funding or Cooperative Agreement. He stated they are waiting on the appropriation and noted it looks like there will be a Continuing Resolution through at least the first quarter. He is hopeful that funding should be in place in October sometime. Heister added that the Cooperative Agreement should be received prior to the funding.

Approval of August 6 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Dexter seconded by Richardson to approve the August 6 meeting minutes was carried.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None

Committee Meeting Minutes Comments: Committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They were: August 18 Water Use/Resource Management by Ritter, August 25 Project Review by Richardson and August 25 Operations by Roeder.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: The DRBC was absent, however, the hydrologic report was provided. The NYC Delaware River Basin Storage as of August 28, 2015 was at a combined capacity of 79.9% with Cannonsville at 68.8%.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Rudge noted there were three press releases provided in members’ packets for them to read at their leisure. Those releases were “DEC Adopts New Rules for Antlerless Deer Hunting in Parts of the State”, dated August 6, 2015; “DEC Launches Pilot Project to Improve Collection of Public Input About Deer Populations”, dated August 24, 2015; and “DEC Announces 2015-16 Waterfowl Season Dates”, dated September 1, 2015.

Rudge reported that the Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner officially opened the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center on Route 28 in the Town of Shandaken, Ulster County on July 1st. He said the Center features a topographic floor map display with projected images from above that highlights the natural resources and other interesting assets in the region extending all the way down to the Upper Delaware Region. The Center is staffed through a partnership including the Catskill Center, the NY-NJ Trail Conference, Catskill Mountain Club, Ulster County Tourism and Catskill Mountainkeeper as well as volunteers. More information is available at www.catskillinterpretivecenter.org.

Rudge stated that New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), as lead agency, has accepted the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Modified Belleayre

Resort at Catskill Park. The next step is for DEC staff to complete its responsibilities under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) by issuing a Findings Statement. The actual Permits are expected to be issued following issuance of the Findings Statement.

Dexter questioned what the solution is to too many deer in portions of New York State. Rudge said one of the ways to address this issue is by issuing deer management and damage permits. The number of deer management permits issued is based on much input, including stakeholder input, Rudge added. He referred to the August 24th press release in members' packets regarding the pilot program to improve the collection of public input about the deer populations. The new process is intended to replace the existing Citizen Task Force (CTF) model for seeking public recommendations on desired deer population levels within individual Wildlife Management Units (WMUs), in place since 1990.

Roeder questioned how DEC's goal to eradicate Eurasian boars from New York is progressing. Rudge said he will have to get back to Roeder as he does not have any numbers to provide him, but he understands that progress has been made in eradication. Roeder said he would appreciate an update.

Peckham said he heard it is illegal for an individual to spear eels. Rudge said he does not know that off the top of his head, but he will check into it. Barth said he believes it is only legal to spear carp in the Delaware.

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

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: Heister reported that the Annual Report will be completed by October 15 and will be available to the Council.

Heister said the NPS Photo Contest is currently underway. The contest runs through October 31st. She encouraged members to solicit individuals that may be interested in entering the contest and shared some of the photos submitted to date.

Heister reported that the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River will be holding a series of volunteer events on September 26, National Public Lands Day (NPLD). NPLD is an event held all around the country geared towards educating Americans about the environment and natural resources, and the need for shared stewardship of these valued, irreplaceable lands. A press release issued on August 28th seeks local Boy Scout troops to help do trail maintenance on the Tusten Mountain Trail. Other project opportunities are available and the NPS is looking for groups and individuals to get involved.

Heister provided a project update. She reported that the total amount spent in FY 2015 to start the process of bringing the critical resources back into some level of good condition was \$1,391,675. She provided a list of those projects accomplished or to be accomplished and the funding required for each. She referred to a September 2nd Briefing Statement regarding rehabilitation of the Roebling Bridge noting that \$532,785 has been secured to rehabilitate the bridge. Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2016.

Heister noted that UPDE Museum Technician Lauren Hauptman has been very busy with the Oral History program. A separate September 2nd Briefing Statement regarding this program was provided in members' packets. Heister noted that between 1986 and 2005, 150 oral history interviews were conducted. Of those, 118 have been indexed. The index is like a table of contents for the interview and allows one to have a basic understanding of the topics covered and where to locate specific information on the recording. Thirty-nine interviews have complete transcriptions. Over 100 of the interviews have a signed release form. Signed release forms grant the NPS permission to use the interviews and allow others to use them. All but eight of the oral histories were recently converted to a digital format that will allow the Park Service to post a directory of excerpts of the interviews highlighting stories of the river valley's history on the NPS webpage. Heister reported that UPDE has purchased a software program to help work in transcriptions and that Hauptman will be attending training on oral histories in September to improve familiarity with the program. Heister said that the NPS would welcome volunteers to assist in the transcription process. She added they are looking for photographs that would help illustrate the stories and they request assistance from the communities in obtaining permission to use images from their collections which would be appropriately credited on the website. Heister provided members with a list of interviews that do not have release forms. She said NPS is seeking help in obtaining contact information for the people listed. In the case that the individual has passed away, the next of kin can sign the release form. Heister stated that if

members observe gaps in the stories, places, or people, please let the Park Service know so that they can pursue them.

Henry asked Heister to keep the Council apprised of the closures required during the rehabilitation work on the Roebling Bridge. Heister said she would and noted that the closures will not occur during the primary boating season. Stakeholder meetings regarding potential closures and bridge maintenance plans will be held prior to project implementation.

Hulse noted that at the July 2 full Council meeting, the NPS 2014 Statistical Abstract showing projections for reduced visitorship was provided to members. Heister said she intends to research the method for making that determination, but has not been able to do that as of yet.

Heister stated that any and all youth groups are welcome to participate during the National Public Lands Day scheduled for September 26th.

UDC Executive Director's Report: Ramie thanked John Beljean for attending the meeting and noted we are happy to have Mike Caldwell in attendance. She stated he is the official UDC Representative, but it is delegated to the local Superintendent to attend UDC functions.

Ramie acknowledged *The River Reporter's* 40th anniversary and congratulated them on that milestone, noting she is appreciative when community journalism can survive and thrive these days. She added that a special section of today's issue of *The River Reporter* includes a highlight of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River's designation.

Regarding membership, Ramie reported that the Westfall Township Board of Supervisors officially appointed Mike Barth as its UDC representative effective August 3 after originally joining the board as an alternate on August 4th of last year. The Westfall alternate position is currently vacant.

The UDC originally funded five River & Shoreline Clean-up projects by Damascus, Lackawaxen, Tusten, Highland, and Lumberland. At the August 25th Operations meeting, the committee authorized two additional projects to expend the \$1,010 balance remaining due to two of the projects coming in less than their allocated grant amounts. The Town of Deepark did a litter pick-up along NYS Rt. 97 through the Hawk's Nest to the Town of Lumberland border on August 24-25 for which the UDC is contributing \$750. Damascus Township arranged for the Calkins 4-H group to do a shoreline cleanup at the Skinners Falls River Access for which we will provide \$260. That clean up happened earlier in the day, Ramie noted. Dexter provided details of that effort.

Ramie noted that an additional printing of 100 copies of the Design Handbook, updated at the end of 2014, was ordered from Spencer Printing on August 31st. That order was ready by September 2nd and copies are available to anyone who wants them, she added.

Ramie reminded members that a Special Project Review Committee meeting is scheduled for September 8 at 6:30 p.m. to review the 2016 Technical Assistance Grant applications. September 8th is also the date requested to indicate your interest in signing up for the "Water 101 Workshop" to be held on September 24 from 12:30-4:30 at the Delaware Youth Center in Callicoon. Ramie asked members to let her know by noon on September 8 so that they can be added to the UDC group registration that will be submitted.

Ramie referred to the September calendar of UDC Meetings, Activities, and Deadlines. She noted the scheduled plumbing work will now take place on September 8 as opposed to September 4. She added that the NYS DOT municipal level meeting scheduled for September 17 regarding the bridge replacement over Beaver Brook in the Town of Highland will start at 1:30 at the Yulan Firehouse. Ramie said she is actively working on the Fall/Winter edition of The Upper Delaware newsletter. That is due to the printer by September 16 to be published October 1st. The calendar also includes a preview of October dates for members' information.

Ramie referred to the additional handouts in member's packets. An August 28 response letter from NYS DOT to our July 23 correspondence regarding property ownership under the Barryville Bridge was included. This letter will be referred to either the Water Use/Resource Management or Project Review Committee, she added. A list from Sullivan County Planning of upcoming water education and networking opportunities was provided. A flyer to save the date of November 14 for a forum hosted by The Delaware Company on "The Future of History: Roles, Resources and Relating Our Stories" at SUNY – Sullivan in Loch Sheldrake, NY was included. Ramie said the RMP has a large component for cultural history in it and is something that the Council should be actively involved in. Also included with the handouts was a news

release about an online contest by USA TODAY to name the 10 Best Scenic Autumn Drives, with the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway being the only New York State road selected for nomination. People can vote on-line at www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-scenic-autumn-drive or through social media sources through September 28th.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Project Review Workbook Project Proposals: Ramie reported that September 1 was the deadline to submit proposals under the RFP that was issued. She sent out in advance a summary of the proposals that were received along with a recommendation. A motion to accept the proposal of Environmental Planning & Design, LLC was made by Richardson and seconded by Dexter. A brief discussion about the additional add-on of \$4,500 for Consensus Building tasks with additional interview sessions and refinement of recommendations in draft report took place. A vote was taken on the base bid and the motion passed with McKay and Roeder abstaining.

Approval of FY 2015 Budget Expenditures: Ramie referred to the FY 2015 Profit and Loss Report and Budget Expenditure Report provided in members packets. Approval was sought for a number of projects to be accomplished within the current fiscal year.

A motion by Dean seconded by Richardson to approve the purchase and installation of three solar exhaust fans for the attic was carried.

A motion by Jeffer seconded by Conway to approve retaining the services of Dick Comi, director of The Center of Municipal Solutions, to present at the October 1st UDC meeting on "Current Trends in the Telecommunications Industry" as an update to our 2014 workshop was carried. Peckham suggested that Comi not be limited to the typical half hour time frame due to the level of the interest and complexity of the topic. Members agreed.

A motion to put a cap of \$500 for sponsorship of the 6th Annual "Water, Water Everywhere" conference by Friends of the Upper Delaware River on October 19 and 20 at West Branch Angler in Hale Eddy at which O'Dell will be a speaker on UDC topics; and to cover the \$10 per person registration fees for UDC members to attend the September 24 "Water 101 Workshop" in Callicoon was made by McKay, seconded by Conway and carried.

A motion to approve \$150 per load for the hauling of trash and recyclables from the attic was made by Dean, seconded by McKay and carried.

Ramie provided a list of pending or potential projects to possibly accomplish by September 30. They included: repair of the dusk-to-dawn lights at the back door; potential replacement of the two 250-gallon fuel tanks after consultation with UDC contractor Don Bellotti; deposit on cost for the Project Review Workbook update; and stock up on additional office supplies.

Other: Conway spoke of an annual program run by the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce called Leadership Sullivan. It is an existing platform that expands leadership potential of participants. The group looks to accomplish a community action project and it is a great opportunity for non-profit organizations to apply to receive the benefits of many hours of enthusiastic volunteer service to accomplish a project that will have a positive community impact. She provided some background on the program. In light of the National Park Service upcoming Centennial, Conway would like the Upper Delaware Council to apply on behalf of the NPS to accomplish some work at the Corwin Farm. Conway believes this would be a good opportunity for the group to become familiar with the NPS and UDC. Conway said she would be willing to do the proposal as Ramie is consumed with the newsletter deadline. The application for the program is September 15, Ramie noted. A motion to submit an application by the UDC to Leadership Sullivan, to nominate a community service project to clean up canal remnants at the NPS Corwin Farm office and request a river valley visit by the Leadership Class was made by Conway and seconded by Dean. McKay asked Ramie what type of commitment this would be for her. Ramie said she believes it would not encumber too much time. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Dean thanked Ritter for the handout titled, “Truckloads of trash choke Catskills swimming holes” provided in members’ packets. He referred to the situation of garbage in many outdoor hotspots in the Catskills spiraling out of control as “sad”. Rudge said the DEC is charged with managing some of these spots. He said they are looking into putting special regulations in place to help manage the issue. He said this is a great example of what social media can do. They had not had a trash problem at the Peekamoose Blue Hole for years, but have seen an explosion of visitors this year as a result of social media. With the increase in people has come the increase in litter. Roeder commented that these problems often accompany an increase in visitation to any area. Sullivan asked Heister if the “Carry in Carry out” program has been effective this past year. Heister said they have implemented a “Leave No Trace” program in area schools. She said the Park Service is seeing far less trash than when the dumpsters were in place. They still have to pick up trash in heavily used areas, but it is a fraction of what they used to have to pick up. She said the issue is better, not perfect, but they continue to work on it. Heister said education is key. Rudge said that many of the visitors are used to visiting areas where the trash is taken care of; they take it for granted that if they leave it, it will be removed.

Public Comment

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder, seconded by Barth, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell 9/16/15