

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
April 17, 2012

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, Pat Jeffer, Al Henry, John McKay (7:13p.m.)
Committee Members Absent: Andy Boyar, Jay Shafer
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Cindy Odell
Guests: Anne Willard

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 17, 2012 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. The meeting was called to order at 7:14 p.m. A motion to approve the March 20 meeting minutes was made by McKay, seconded by Henry and carried with Ritter abstaining as he was not present at that meeting. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway 3/26/12 meeting Update: Ramie reported that April is when the Scenic Byway holds its annual meeting. In March a nominating committee presented a slate of officers. They are Nadia Rajsz as Chairperson, Ed Boyer as Vice-Chairperson, and Larry Richardson as Secretary/Treasurer. The election will take place on April 23rd. A change in the meeting schedule is also being considered. The Pond Eddy Bridge was discussed. The Scenic Byway's Representative to the Design Advisory Committee, Glenn Pontier, had resigned from that position due to his favoring bridge rehabilitation over replacement. The Byway Committee opted to replace him on that committee despite the fact there was only one meeting left. Carol Roig from the Town of Highland was appointed. An April 11 letter from Penn DOT to Pontier addressing his concerns point by point was provided in the packets. A copy of the letter the Byway opted to send to the Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives' Transportation and Infrastructure Committee informing him about the federal funding situation for the visitor's center project was discussed. Ramie said the letter asked for any assistance that would be possible to keep the funding going, knowing that Congress is not approving any earmarks at this time. The letter was done with much input from Congressman Hinchey's office as he was the original sponsor of the transportation bill that granted this funding for the visitor's center. Ramie noted that without the funding the project is in jeopardy of not being built. Ritter asked if UDSB is waiting for a response from his office. Ramie said she hopes the letter prompts a response.

Pond Eddy Bridge Update: Ramie noted that she gave a report about the March 29th Pond Eddy Bridge Design Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting at the April 5th UDC meeting so she would only cover a few points. She said the March 29th DAC meeting was the third and final meeting at which the members were tasked with selecting their alternative of choice from among the design options that were offered. Members of the committee were advised at the beginning of the meeting that \$10.5 million has been programmed for the project which appeared to knock out of contention most of the designs. It was stated that because that was the amount that has been allocated, it is not necessarily the final verdict on what they can build. They said perhaps other funding could be found or fundraising could take place. The budget was not meant to be a limiting factor. Six DAC members participated in the voting and ultimately it was a tie between the 3-Span Steel bridge and the Modified 2-Span Truss. Ramie said that the Pennsylvania and New York State DOTs personnel will consider the input that was given and come back in one to two months with their final determination, at which time there will be a final report-out meeting to the DAC. She did say they will consider setting up an architectural committee that would work with the DOTs on the final design of the project and would include such issues as the causeway, the staging of equipment, and architectural treatments for the bridge. Ramie reported we are still waiting to get the minutes from that meeting and for the report-out meeting to be scheduled. She referenced the Penn DOT letter to Pontier and stated that it does go over the concerns that have been raised by various critics of the project.

Common Waters 4/12 meeting Update: Ramie reported this quarterly meeting took place at Grey Towers in Milford. It started by allowing Ramie to announce that the Upper Delaware Council would be giving the

Common Waters Fund the UDC Partnership Award this year. She said it was nice to be able to tell them the significance of that and to invite anyone who would want to come to the banquet. An update was provided on a communications outreach campaign that is going on to attract corporate donors and explain to other potential partners what Common Waters is all about. An update on the status of the fund was provided including the latest grant round and how much has been distributed to property owners. Ramie noted there is always an opportunity at these meetings for partners to list what activities they have had going on. There have been website improvements made to the Common Waters site. Discussion took place about a fall forum that is being scheduled for October 11th. It is to be a retrospective of the five years that Common Waters has been around, what they've accomplished, and what the future vision is. The meeting has been booked at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton, Pennsylvania. July 12th will be the next quarterly meeting of Common Waters at a location to be determined.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 12/19/11 letter: Rio Hydroelectric Project: Ramie noted this letter is a follow-up to last month when the committee was discussing the Rio Hydroelectric Project. Members had expressed some curiosity about what the letter said, so Soete found it and it was provided in packets.

Other: Hamilton reported that some NPS rangers did have a meeting with Mr. Wu from the Big Island aquaculture operation and also a person from the Environmental Protection Agency. He had not heard the outcome of that meeting, but said it is still an ongoing investigation.

New Business:

WU/RM Committee Advisory members: Ramie noted that at the March 27th Operations Committee meeting the question was asked about what our policy was on advisory members. In the past, it was specifically for the Water Use/Research Management Committee that advisory members were appointed. She referenced a 1988 "The Upper Delaware" newsletter article soliciting interested people to serve as public advisory participants in a non-voting capacity. It stated that the objective was to give the committee additional expertise on technical matters of resource management and to assure that a broad point of view is represented when considering complex issues. Some of the industries that were specifically mentioned that would be appropriate were representatives from valley heritage, fishing, hunting, conservation, and wildlife organizations, as well as experts in fish and wildlife cultural resources and water resources management. The chairman of the committee at the time was Bruce Selneck from Shohola Township. He said that the River Management Plan calls on the committee to recruit public and private persons with diverse perspectives and knowledge of the river. The article went on to suggest canoeing organizations, river safety groups, conservation groups, livery associations, fishing organizations, law enforcement organizations, and others who can contribute to the development of law enforcement, safety management, and education programs. Ramie talked about prior advisory members' participation and noted that many of those individuals are deceased or inactive. She said that if it is something that is of interest to the committee, it could be resurrected. McKay commented he did not think advisory members could hurt. Discussion took place of who would make good members. McKay thinks it should be a blanket request like was put out in 1988. Ramie said she felt it would be best to set some criteria for how many people would be accepted and from what industries. Ritter asked how the committee would go about getting the word out. Ramie said a press release is what she would suggest. It could be posted on the UDC website. Ramie said if the committee liked, she could draft a press release for their review prior to posting it. She said we could ask people to submit a letter of interest and take it from there. A motion to endorse the concept of re-establishing advisory members for the WU/RM Committee was made by Henry, seconded by Jeffer and carried unanimously.

NPS 3/23 Letter: Callicoon Access: Ramie noted that this is a follow-up to a report that McGuinness gave at the April UDC meeting. It puts in writing the fact that the Park Service is withdrawing from managing the Callicoon Access. They do not want to be involved anymore because of the issues with the diversion channel. Henry asked if we know whether it is still an active access. After brief discussion, it was not determined. Hamilton said it will be an ongoing maintenance issue with the channel. Ramie said she understands that Carla Hahn met with the town supervisor to discuss whether there is an alternative

location in the Town of Delaware, specifically Callicoon, where they could consider developing a better access. She is not aware of the outcome of that meeting. Discussion about Tower Road in Callicoon took place. Ritter commented that would be a great place for an access. Hamilton said he would check with Hahn to see about the outcome of the meeting and find out whether Tower Road was brought up or considered.

NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission Annual Meeting: May 16, 10:00 a.m., NYS DOT Region 9 Office, Binghamton: Ramie reported this is an annual meeting that UDC staff always attends to find out what the plans are for the coming year for bridge maintenance and construction. A press release will be issued following the meeting.

Other: Ritter questioned the handout titled “Obama Administration Announces New Partnership on Unconventional Natural Gas and Oil Research”. Ramie said that Soete thought it was something the committee might be interested in. It was provided for informational purposes. The question of what the difference is between conventional natural gas and unconventional natural gas was posed. Hamilton believes that what they are referring to as unconventional natural gas is horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing.

Ritter noted the Wild Trout Flyrodders handout also included in members’ packets. He said that Soete had e-mailed him notice of an application for individuals wanting to put boulders in the East Branch of the Delaware River north of Hancock near Shinhopple. Ritter was curious about this so he called NYS DEC in Stamford and was sent the complete application. The application is for stream improvement work to be performed in the riverbed at Tomannex State Forest on the East Branch of the Delaware on lands owned by the State of New York. Ritter said that although the property is not located in the Upper Delaware Scenic River, he felt members might be interested in it.

Ritter reported that the water has gotten very low. The West Branch is at 2 feet and Callicoon is at 3.2 feet. Water temperature has warmed up to around 63 degrees and it’s only April 17th, Ritter added. Releases are at around 137 cfs. Both reservoirs are below 90%. Ritter said he tried to access the NYC DEP site before the meeting, but it was down today. Discussion about the upcoming weekend weather forecast took place.

Henry asked if Soete had sent out information on the Flexible Flow Management Plan. Ramie said that he may have and also noted that Carol Collier had reported at the April UDC meeting that the current plan does expire at the end of May and that the parties have been working on revisions. Collier suspects that it may be a one-year plan again instead of the three years they would prefer. Hamilton reported that the Regulated Flow Advisory Committee had met today. He said a National Park Service employee was to have sat in on it by phone, but he had not heard any results of the meeting yet. He said he will see what he can find out about the meeting. Ritter commented that he has never seen the river this low this early in the season. McKay added that the Susquehanna River is low too.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Jeffer, seconded by Ritter to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 4/18/12