

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
November 20, 2012

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, Andy Boyar, John McKay, Al Henry
Committee Members Absent: Jay Shafer, Patricia Jeffer
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Cindy Odell, Travis O'Dell
Guests: Anne Willard

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 20, 2012 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. A motion to approve the August 21 meeting minutes was made by Boyar, seconded by McKay and carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Update: Ramie noted there had not been a quorum for the October UDSB meeting. Ramie reported that a recent surge in requests for the Byway's brochure was the result of an article posted on www.msn.com called "Ten Scenic Drives to Take This Fall." The article contained a photo and short narrative about the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. The article appeared on-line on September 17th and within a few days the site referred 2,445 visitors to the Scenic Byway website. She stated it was learned that Orange County Tourism had submitted the Byway for consideration for that article.

Ramie said that the Byway was taking applications for a recording and corresponding secretary. They ultimately received six applications and interviewed five of the applicants. The position is yet to be filled.

Ramie reported the Byway received a letter from the NYS DOT in response to their letter sent back in August regarding the potholes along State Route 97 between Port Jervis and Narrowsburg specifically. The response from Jack Williams, the regional director of DOT, pointed out that the maintenance crews in Sullivan County had paved the area from the Orange County line to Narrowsburg on August 27th. Ramie is not sure if the Byway's letter was responsible for the work being performed, but said that it did take care of the potholes.

Requests have been submitted to the three component counties in New York of the Scenic Byway for consideration of budget allocations in their 2013 spending plans.

A grant report was given of what the status is of several state grants that came due mid-August. None of those have been dispersed as of yet by the state, she added. Talk of approaching Senator Bonacic or Assemblywoman Gunther to ask if there is any state funding available for a project to produce some marketing products to promote the Byway took place.

Ramie said an informal decision was made at the October 22nd meeting, for which there was no quorum, for her to proceed with giving the agreement for the independent contractor of a secretary to the Byway attorney to review.

Hamilton stated that the current logo for the Byway is a good one and if that could be made into a window decal, he feels it would be pretty popular.

Common Waters October 11th Forum Report: Ramie noted that the agenda for the forum was provided in members' packets. She said she served on the planning committee for the forum and helped with registration the day of the event. Ramie reported there were 47 participants. The forum was essentially a five-year progress update on what Common Waters has accomplished. Break-out sessions took place to try and get input on what kind of visions of projects people who were participating in this forum would like to see accomplished collaboratively among all the stakeholders in the river basin. Dr. Gerald J. Kauffman, who had produced an economic study on the value of the Delaware River basin, in particular recreation, was the keynote speaker for the day. At this forum, he discussed the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act and talked about how that came into being. He also mentioned the economic contributions of the basin which he puts at 25 billion dollars annually and is responsible for over 600,000 jobs. He spoke about Marcellus shale and said he has a paper which is currently being peer-reviewed which concerns the economic value of the water resources in relation to the potential for gas drilling. Ramie said we will watch

for that paper to become available. After the keynote speaker's presentation, reports from the break-out sessions were shared. Eventually, a written report from the forum will be produced and Ramie said she will share it once it is available. Hamilton, who had attended the forum, said he feels that Common Waters has done a lot of positive things the five years they have been in existence. They are trying to help connect the dots between the value of the landscape in the upper basin and its ability to produce clean water for all users. Hamilton said he feels that Dr. Kaufmann's estimate of the value of the basin landscape is too low as many components were not evaluated.

D&H Transportation Heritage Council 10/24/12 Meeting Update: The October 24th D&H THC quarterly meeting minutes were provided in members' packets. Ramie reported that the meeting took place in Cuddebackville at Orange County's D&H Canal Visitor Center. In the morning, a walk took place along the Neversink Aqueduct area of the canal which previously was watered, but now is not due to a dispute with Orange County about whether it is going to invest in repairing a waste weir there that has been breached. The D&H THC agreed to write a letter to Orange County asking them to please consider taking action to protect that part of the canal. Ramie noted that the D&H THC is now accepting non-voting individual memberships for \$20 each. Informational videos on the D&H Canal and Gravity Railroad will be posted on the www.dhthc.org website as well as other venues like YouTube, Ramie said. They will be a series of videos 5-7 minutes in length to explain the significance of the canal, its history, and to tell about the opportunities that still exist for walking trails and clean-ups and the projects that are going on through the D&H groups that are involved. Since it was the last quarterly meeting of the year, the election of officers took place. Ramie said she did offer to be secretary as it only meets four times a year. She listed the officers for 2013 as Cliff Robinson, Jr., Chairperson; Bill Merchant, Vice-Chairperson; Jane Varcoe, Treasurer; and Laurie Ramie, Secretary. Ramie said that Dot Moon of the National Park Service reported that NPS is awaiting action from the Federal Highway Administration to repair a metal plate on the New York side of the Roebling Bridge that has sunk down, which has resulted in bolts sticking up. It could be a serious issue when plowing begins. Ramie noted that the next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 23, 2013. The tentative location is the Port Jervis Community Center. She said that is somewhat of a central location for this group which consists of members all the way from Carbondale, PA to Kingston, NY.

Other: None

New Business:

Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report: Ritter referenced the Delaware River Flow and Storage chart provided and noted that it looks to be above normal. Storage as of November 16th was at 77% and normal for this time of year is 57%, he added.

Narrowsburg, Skinners Falls, & Pond Eddy Bridges Update: Ramie said she wanted to let members know about the inspection schedule. Pond Eddy has already had its inspection and an October 26th Sullivan County Democrat article titled "Pond Eddy Bridge passes annual inspection" was provided. Ramie reported that the Skinners Falls and Narrowsburg bridges are both being inspected now. She said the Council knew nothing of the inspections until we saw the detour signs for the Skinners Falls bridge go up. A copy of an e-mail provided by NPS in response to its inquiries about the inspections with dates and specific information about the inspections was included in the packets. The inspections began on November 12th and the work is expected to continue until November 30th. Ramie said she wishes that Penn DOT had better communication since she has specifically requested that the UDC be notified of work on the Upper Delaware bridges. She noted that the Park Service complained as Penn DOT is supposed to at least notify the emergency management officials of when these detours and closures will be in place, but they had not contacted the 9-1-1 centers in Wayne or Sullivan counties until the Park Service pointed out to them that had to be done. Ritter asked Hamilton if he knew anything about work being done on Kellam's Bridge 2 ½ months ago. He said no. Ritter noted that there had been some heavy equipment in the water at Kellam's on the New York side back in September. Hamilton said he had not heard of any scheduled work up there.

Penn State University Dirt & Gravel Road Workshop Report: T. O'Dell said that Len Grover of the Wayne Conservation District invited him to attend this workshop. It consisted of a two-day training held at

the Wayne Conservation District building in Honesdale, PA on November 14th and 15th. The material focused on Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) of dirt and gravels roads in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The information was beneficial to any directly or indirectly involved in road maintenance as well as individuals that consult municipalities on issues that may adversely affect natural water systems. O'Dell said the Dirt and Gravel Road program is state wide with a \$5 million annual budget. \$1 million is designated to the Bureau of Forestry roads and the remaining is distributed by county based upon the amount of established worksite (problem areas) near high quality streams and exceptional value streams in the county. He said the basic concept is to keep the stream out of the road and the road out of the stream. In order to be eligible for funding, at least one individual in the municipality must have completed a workshop within the last 5 years. The county conservation districts run the program and should be the first point of contact about program issues. Hamilton asked if the program is for only exceptional value tributaries or for high-quality also. O'Dell told him it is for both. Hamilton noted that most all the tributaries on the Pennsylvania are high-quality cold water fisheries. He added that what some refer to as the Millcreek is of exceptional value.

Other: Ritter asked if anyone had any suggestions for guest speakers for 2013. Ramie said that Brennan Tarrier from the NYS DEC had been invited to this meeting to speak about the state's role in the flows and releases from the Delaware River Basin reservoirs. Tarrier had asked Ramie if he could provide a handout on the topic as it was hard for him to receive authorization to travel to Narrowsburg. Ramie said that an interactive question and answer session would have been preferred but agreed. No handout was received for the meeting. Ramie said that no informational session would be scheduled for December as it is the combined meeting night due to the holiday schedule. In January, Dennis DeMara from the PA DCNR would like to attend with another individual to do a small scale "Grant Workshop" of the basics of the Community Conservation Partnership Program. He would like to give an explanation of who qualifies, what the guidelines are, and what the process is. Ramie said she had received an e-mail from DeMara earlier today stating that the Governor had just announced the awards for the 2012 round of this Community Conservation Partnership Program. He was sharing the good news that Pike County is among the recipients. They will receive a planning grant for \$30,100 for the Lackawaxen/Upper Delaware River Greenway. Ramie noted that Shohola Township also won a grant for \$94,000 for the rehabilitation and development of Rohman Park. She listed the projects that are to be completed with the money. Also, Pike County received a grant of \$819,000 to acquire approximately 448 acres off of Silver Lake Road adjacent to the Delaware State Forest in Delaware Township for connectivity with a municipal greenway, open space, and passive recreation. She noted there were no grants for Wayne County. Boyar said he had a recent conversation with Peter Kolesar who indicated that he was working on some very interesting projects and would like to share them with the WU/RM Committee. Ramie said that she and T. O'Dell thought after hearing Kolesar's presentation on alleviating thermal stress at the Water, Water Everywhere conference, that it would be excellent to bring him here to share that with the committee. Hamilton said that Rich Evans from the Delaware Water Gap got a project funded with SUNY ESF (State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry) to do some modeling with flows for 400 years here based on past climate conditions. The objectives of this study are to test the hypothesis that, prior to large-scale deforestation (prior to ~ 1760) summer-early fall flows of the Upper Delaware River were higher (& possibly cooler) than in the "baseline" period used in the TNC (The Nature Conservancy) Study of Hydrologic Alteration (~1942 - 1962). Boyar noted that one project he would like to get involved with is to try and encourage zoning to encourage the growth of trees in and around tributaries to help relieve thermal stress. Ritter commented that Callicoon Creek has changed dramatically in the last ten years as the result of numerous floods. Discussion about flooded homes, the FEMA flood insurance program, and 100-year floods took place. Ritter asked when we should invite Dr. Kolesar in for a presentation. Boyar said that he will get in touch with him and see what his schedule allows and report back on his availability. Hamilton provided copies of a "Current National Park Service/Partnering Agency Natural Resource Studies on the Delaware River" report that was previously handed out at the November 1 full Council meeting to those who did not receive it. Henry suggested to Hamilton that the Park Service should conduct water testing during high water events to try and determine what is in there during these events. He feels this is a test that should be done once a year. Hamilton said there was a study done here a number of years ago with the USGS where they sampled a lot of high flow events. He told Henry he could provide him with a copy of the report that was generated as a result. Hamilton said sampling is being done bi-weekly at certain sites according to a schedule, and sometimes they catch run-off events and high water, but the river is only like

that a small percentage of the time. They are sampling to define existing water quality on sections of the river and tributaries over a number of years. Hamilton told Henry he has a good point and perhaps some more sampling efforts during high water events could be done. Boyar said a thought he had is that the spread of the Japanese Knotweed kills the understory and then the frost kills the Knotweed and all that is left is dirt. When the high water hits it, that dirt that was previously contained is being washed into the river. He wonders if we will end up with so much more sediment in the river because of the knotweed. Henry reiterated his recommendation that testing during high water events be done once a year. Ritter commented on the abundance of algae in the river this year. He said the water was very clear, but that for three or four months, the algae was everywhere. Hamilton said the warm summer could have contributed to the amount observed this year. Ritter feels the amount of weed beds has increased also. Hamilton said the Park Service is involved with a project started this past summer mapping Delaware River Aquatic Vegetation using Hyperspectral RemoteSensing and Bathymetric LiDAR. The objectives of this study are to determine aquatic vegetation community composition, and relate vegetation composition to physical habitat characteristics. The study will map river channel environments, and identify the location and extent of invasive algae (didymo), and species composition and extent of submerged and emergent aquatic vegetation.

Ramie reminded members that next month's meeting will be on December 18th and is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m.

Discussion about the lack of participation on the committee took place. The suggestion was made to ask those that are not going to be able to attend to notify the committee chair or Council staff in order to be able to determine a quorum to save others from making an unnecessary trip to the Council office.

Public Comment: Anne Willard asked if the FFMP is to be renewed on May 1st. Ramie said she believes the current plan expires on May 31st, 2013 and renews June 1st. Willard suggested having Dr. Kolesar come in and give his presentation prior to the decision on renewing the plan is made in case the UDC wants to offer input. Ramie believes a presentation in March would be sufficient for that purpose.

Adjournment: A motion by Boyar, seconded by McKay to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 12/4/12