

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
June 17, 2008

Committee Members Present: Wieland, Chase, Sundholm, Fluhr, Bowers
Committee Members Absent: Serio, McKay, Shafer, Flaherty
Partner: Hamilton
Advisory Council: None
Staff: Douglass, Soete, Coney, Ramie
Guests: None

Committee Chairperson Charles Wieland called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. A motion by Chase seconded by Bowers to approve the May 20 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

New York Regional Interconnect proposed transmission line, update on activities:

□CARI: Issued news release handed out that Dynegey Northeast Generation has stated “if the Line (NYRI) were energized, it would create system overload conditions on the Central Hudson transmission system in the vicinity of the Roseton and Danskammer units.” DNG is requesting permission to intervene in NYRI’s Article VII Application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need. DNG’s statements support the findings of Communities Against Regional Interconnect (CARI), whose technical experts agree that NYRI would not increase the reliability of the transmission system and if granted the Certificate could very well destabilize portions of the transmission system. NYRI has also failed to show public need for this project in New York State and the project would raise energy rates in communities throughout the upstate region.

□*The Business Review* article, “Lawmaker: No power plant siting laws this session”: The committee was provided with copy of an article from *The Business Review* of June 3, 2008. The article mentions that a new, streamlined process for siting power plants in New York will not be addressed during this year’s session of the NYS Legislature, according to the Senate’s energy committee chairman. The state’s former power plant siting law, called Article X, expired at the end of 2002 and the state has gone without a formal power plant siting process since then. One of the reasons that a new siting law wasn’t passed is that the legislature wants a statewide energy policy in place before a renewed Article X is enacted.

□NYS PSC: The NYS Public Service Commission has issued a Notice to Parties that on June 5, 2008, NYRI filed application supplement documents as requested which included a request for waivers on items they requested and did not receive and items they felt they provided that met the PSC requests. The PSC in the Notice indicated that replies to the motion must be served on or before June 25, 2008 to the PSC.

□FERC: Soete mentioned that NYRI is still trying to get a rate incentive rebate through the FERC.

Old Business

Sullivan County Democrat article “Gunther: Expand Greenway”: The committee received copy of a June 6 *Sullivan County Democrat* article indicating that NYS Assemblywoman Gunther has introduced legislation that would add two additional members to the Upper Delaware Greenway council—the Upper Delaware Council and the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway - thus bringing the council total to 14 voting members. By including the UDC and Byway organizations, planning for the Greenway would include these important stakeholders in the coordination of efforts with the state agencies also involved.

Also provided to the committee was copy of the Byway’s letter to Bonacic and Gunther welcoming the opportunity to have an official role with the Greenway council. Also included in the letter was a recommendation that a meeting should be scheduled locally with the eight Upper Delaware municipalities that originally supported participation on the Greenway to provide them with a status report of the greenway legislation since the last meeting was held in 2004. It was noted that this was a point of information for the committee and that the matter would be discussed at the Operations Committee meeting.

Delaware River Sojourn Update: Ramie reported the Sojourn registrations for Day 1 and 2, which would be in the Upper Delaware section, were below last year. The cost per day to participate in the Sojourn is

\$70. During the Upper Delaware section of the Sojourn participants would sojourn from Narrowsburg to Ten Mile with a program at Fort Delaware on Day 1, and Day 2 they would go from Callicoon to Narrowsburg with a program on the New Jersey claim line by historian Peter Osborne.

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Update: Ramie reported on the Byway meetings. There was discussion about the FY 2006 NYS grant applications and projects but no award decisions were made pending further information from the applicants. PayPal is being added to the Byway website for business members. The Sullivan County Legislature's capital planning and budgeting committees approved the County of Sullivan sponsoring the Byway visitors' center in the Town of Cohecton and approved the County being the lead agency on SEQR. A summer ad campaign on 1010 WINS radio has generated more Byway website hits. On June 9 the Marketing Subcommittee and the Narrowsburg model signage subcommittee met in Monticello with related county personnel. They discussed the ad campaign sponsored through Orange County and the NYS DOT model interpretive signs project with a placement ceremony to be held the end of August or beginning of September. The next Byway meeting is June 23.

New Business

NYS DEC press release "Heat Wave Triggers Water Releases to Aid Delaware River Fishery": The committee was provided with copy of a NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation June 10 press release that stated at the request of NYS DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis, emergency releases of cold water from the Cannonsville Reservoir to the Delaware River have begun to protect trout during the current hot spell. Chase commented the releases were good to see. The next day we got 400 cfs since Wallenpaupack cut back. The Neversink Gorge water temperature was 77 degrees Tuesday. Bowers mentioned that at Lordville water temps were pushing 79-80 degrees just before water was released so it wasn't at stress levels very long.

The Delaware River Master issued a directive and on June 13, a 400 cfs water release from Cannonsville was made to meet the Montague flow target.

PA Gov. Rendell May 28 meeting with flood victims: Pennsylvania Governor Rendell met with flood victims May 28 and provided them with a forum to make their case about why PA should do more to force New York City to permanently provide safety voids in its three Delaware reservoirs to lessen the threat of severe downstream flooding. This meeting was reported in the *Tri-State News*. The groups meeting with Rendell, his aides and other agencies were The Delaware Riverside Conservancy, North Delaware River Watershed Conservancy, and Aquatic Conservation Unlimited. The Governor will be reviewing a number of the suggestions made by the group. Rendell is the chairperson of the Delaware River Basin Commission this year.

Hamilton from NPS offered that we're seeing higher frequencies of extreme flood events recently. Flooding is still a threat. Chase noted that the people in Trenton did their math work and showed if the reservoirs were down 20% it would help some flooding in the areas downstream. Bowers mentioned that a 10 inch rainfall below Stroudsburg would not be helped by a 20% void. If the flooding is a tribs problem, voids won't help. The Town of Deerpark would get helped with the void since there are less tribs between Neversink and Deerpark. Douglass added that New York City wants their reservoirs full by June 1 every year.

Sullivan County Democrat article "Penna gas wells will need DRBC backing": The committee was provided with copy of a *Sullivan County Democrat* June 13 article that stated a new requirement by Pennsylvania to make natural gas drillers seek Delaware River Basin Commission approval may very well have impacts in New York. The DRBC has indicated they would include a listing and review of impacts on surface and groundwater. The DRBC oversees planning, developing and regulating major activities that affect the Delaware River watershed. The members of the DRBC are the basin states of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware along with the federal government. How this will affect gas drilling activities in New York remains uncertain as DRBC is continuing its discussions with New York State regarding what requirements they'll be imposing. DRBC wants to ensure coordination but not duplication of efforts and also to make sure that the proper environmental scrutiny occurs.

Upper delAWARE River Roundtable press release “Counties partner to produce regional map”:

The committee was provided with copy of an Upper delAWARE River Roundtable news release announcing the production of a regional development map. The map, which is a collaboration between the county planning departments of Delaware, Sullivan and Orange in New York, and Wayne, Pike and Monroe in Pennsylvania, and Warren and Sussex counties in New Jersey, shows existing dense development, proposed residential development of over 20 lots that have been approved or are pending since January 2006, commercial development over 10,000 square feet, and conserved lands. The map is the first project of the Roundtable, which is a voluntary partnership of representatives from state agencies, county governments and grass roots organizations who meet every other month to communicate and explore collaboration to enhance the future of the Upper Delaware River Valley. The National Park Service GIS division of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area served as the clearinghouse for information and created the map. Information about the map can be obtained by contacting your county planning department. Douglass displayed and explained the regional map to the committee. The committee was impressed with the effort.

Other New Business

~Sundholm announced that the Town of Highland was conducting a public hearing on June 24 at 6:30 p.m. regarding a gas drilling moratorium. He also provided copies of a NYS Assembly bill proposed that deals with changing the spacing (to smaller) on gas drilling sites. He mentioned that the Sullivan County Partnership is supporting gas drilling as an economic force.

~Soete announced that UDC has downloaded and has available a report “Shale Gas: Focus on the Marcellus Shale”. The report covers potential oil and gas development in the Marcellus Shale formation in northeastern Pennsylvania and southeastern New York. The report was developed through the efforts of the Catskill Mountainkeeper, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, Earthworks, and the Oil & Gas Accountability Project. It was developed by Lisa Sumi for OGAP and Earthworks in May 2008. For information go to www.earthworksaction.org.

Public Comment None

Adjourn A motion by Sundholm seconded by Chase to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. was carried.

Carol Coney, Office Manager