

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
November 18, 2014

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, Al Henry, Pat Jeffer, Andy Boyar, Camille James (7:10 p.m.)
Committee Members Absent: None
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Travis O'Dell, Cindy Odell
Guests: Richard Krochta

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 18, 2014 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. A motion by Boyar seconded by Jeffer to approve the October 21 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Unique Land Resources Follow-up: Ramie referred to two handouts in members' packets which included a copy of the letter from the committee to UDSRR Superintendent Kris Heister capturing the ideas the committee had to fulfill the Unique Land Resources education and interpretation goal in our work plan for 2015 and Heister's response to the letter. Ramie noted that staff met with Heister on November 5th and discussed what the UDC and NPS could do together to pursue this. Heister's letter states that "NPS is appreciative of the interest in unique landforms/geology interpretation and letter with ideas submitted by UDC. This provides some excellent opportunities for partnership with UDC and others." Ramie added that it was stated that the materials already developed in support of the NPS Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV) Workshop provide a good foundation for a variety of interpretive experiences. The letter also states that as part of the NPS Centennial Celebration, the NPS is considering pursuing the development of a "trail of geology." A list of other potential actions was provided. The letter states that most of these projects should not be anticipated before 2016, the year of the NPS Centennial Celebration. In the short term, although there is an overall description of park geology on the NPS webpage, the section will be improved with some of the detail provided in the ORV report once photos are available. Referring to the committee's letter to Heister, Ramie noted that Duane Braun is not with the National Park Service; he is a retired professor of geology from Bloomsburg University currently residing in Maine, according to Hamilton. Ramie suggested that committee members use the response from Heister to focus in on a particular strategy. Hamilton said he feels it is important to determine if some of the geologic features can be viewed from public locations. This would give some indication of how well they would lend themselves to a trail either from a roadway or the river. Boyar agrees that it is important to catalog these features and look at their vantage points and mark some of these with interpretive panels. Ritter noted that the geological interpretive panels could be comparable to the historical ones throughout the area. Ramie stated that some of these features would be more interesting to read about than as a visual image. Hamilton reiterated that some information on the geology of the area is currently on the NPS website. Members spoke of some of the ways that the UDC could work collaboratively on this effort with the Park Service. Ramie said that the WU/RM Committee's Work Plan task states that our goal is to formulate a plan to address the education and interpretation.

D&H Transportation Heritage Council 10/22 Meeting Update: Ramie said this quarterly meeting took place in High Falls, N.Y. at the D&H Canal Historical Society and Museum. A hike at the Kerhonkson Rail-Trail site took place prior to lunch and the meeting. Cliff Robinson and Bill Merchant were elected to serve as chairperson and vice-chairperson respectively for two-year terms. Ramie reported that the annual dues rates were approved. They are \$40 for full voting membership and \$20 for affiliate/individual membership, payable in January. Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in canal history and preservation of the sites and trails.

Ramie shared the newly revised D&H Transportation Heritage Council brochure with committee members. The organization ordered 4,000 from the online printer PS Print.com. The brochure is designed

to orient people to the fact that the canal and Gravity Railroad system is a cohesive system and let them learn about its historic significance.

During the announcements of member accomplishments, concerns, and upcoming events, many items were shared. Sally Talaga reported that a Boy Scout from Troop 1 is helping to develop a riverside trail at the Lock 31 site near Hawley, PA. She added that the Wayne County Historical Society hired Carol Henry Dunn as its new executive director. Dunn had chaired the Board of Trustees and began the part-time position on October 1st.

Lynn Burns reported that the Town of Deerpark Historian's Office has embarked on an oral history project. The interviews are to be recorded digitally on audio and video, and saved in the Historian's Office. A protocol to interview community members about their home lives, jobs, memories, and topic of local interest was developed. Burns said that she and Norma Schadt are working on a Common Core program for the New York State Historians' Association that will bring 500 7th graders on bus tours in December to learn about Joseph Brant and the Battle of Minisink.

Kerron Barnes reported that the Town of Mamakating submitted an approximately \$1.25 million grant application to the Transportation Alternatives Program. Ramie noted it was learned a few days after this meeting that they were successful in securing a grant of \$1,057,190.00. This funding will be used to develop 7,977 feet of the two miles of canal towpath the town owns with an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant trail linking the residential and business districts.

Carbondale, PA historian S. Robert Powell announced that he has published the first five of what will be a 24-volume series on "A History of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company Gravity Railroad". Each book ranges from 267 pages to 601 pages and has been produced as a PDF file on individual CDs and are being offered for \$25 each. The project entails ten years of research and offers the most comprehensive and detailed account of the Gravity Railroad history ever. The first five volumes were released October 9th of this year and he has committed to release the next five by October 9, 2015.

Jane Varcoe had announced that the Waymart Historical Society is in a bit of trouble. She said that if the society can't attract more volunteers to help operate the Gravity Depot Museum, they may be forced to close.

Ramie noted that the next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at the 1863 Schoolhouse Museum in Huguenot, New York.

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway 10/27 Meeting Update: Ramie said that Bill Cutler of Sullivan County Department of Public Works attended the meeting and reported on the recycling and litter control efforts in the county. He recommended that Byway members review the website for Keep America Beautiful as a possible source for funding of containers and signage along Route 97. He also suggested that Facebook, Twitter and radio be utilized for litter awareness PSAs. He noted that late Sunday hours at transfer stations might alleviate the problem of weekenders illegally dumping trash.

Ramie said the Byway has started to review the Enhancement Concept Plan which was developed in 2002. It was decided that any changes should be captured in an addendum so that the history of the original process is retained, and that the addendum could also serve as a progress report on how the original goals and objectives have been achieved.

Ramie reported that the Byway does intend to write a comment letter on the NYS Draft Open Space Conservation Plan as it does list the Scenic Byway as priority area. A draft comment letter will be ready for consideration at the November Byway meeting.

Regarding recent Byway publicity, Ramie shared the AAA NY Car & Travel Sept/Oct and Kaatskill Life Fall 2014 magazines which both contain articles about or reference to the Byway. She noted that requests for brochures increased significantly at the times of publication.

The Byway decided to take out an ad in the Sullivan County Visitors Association Travel Guide. The cost of a 1/8 page ad, as has been used in the past, is \$697.50, Ramie stated.

The next Byway meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 24, 2014.

National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) 11/15 Meeting Update: Ramie said she had sent out information in advance of this Saturday meeting in case members were interested in attending. She shared some of the handouts that were available at the meeting. Ramie read a statement from the *National Parks and Hydraulic Fracturing: Balancing Energy Needs, Nature, and America's National Heritage* booklet which states, "The National Parks Conservation Association does not oppose oil and gas development, and it acknowledges that hydraulic fracturing provides real value to an energy-dependent nation. Our goal is to

prevent an unexamined embrace of an oil and gas extraction method that can have far-reaching consequences for America's most cherished landscapes." The program *FracTracker Alliance* was introduced. The FracTracker Alliance has developed a mobile app to share maps, photos, data, and analyses to communicate impacts of the global oil and gas industry. Ramie covered some of the forms of media that the NPCA is using to make their viewpoint known. She said at Saturday's meeting, two speakers from western North Dakota spoke of their experiences with the oil drilling taking place there in the Bakken Shale play near the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Although they stated they do not oppose this form of energy development, they caution people where energy development hasn't started yet to get ahead of it and plan. They noted a first priority is to decide where you don't want it and where it is appropriate. Ramie shared more details of their presentation. Ritter questioned where someone could obtain the post cards to PA Governor-Elect Wolf that Ramie spoke of. She said from the NPCA. She will try and obtain more copies of the handouts that were available at this meeting for interested persons. Ritter asked if the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has anything to do with the National Park Service. He was told no. The NPCA has been in existence since 1919, and seeks to ensure that America's national parks and historical sites are protected in perpetuity. Henry suggested that perhaps the meeting was not greatly attended as one had to RSVP in order to find out where the meeting was being held.

NPS Interpretation Management Assistance Program Evaluation: Ramie said this regional team was here from November 17 through November 19 to evaluate the NPS interpretive program in the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River. There has been a vacancy in the Cultural Resources position since Dot Moon retired over one year ago. The team was requested in order to find out how the Park Service can better meet the needs of the area's visitors, partners, and communities, and promote and inform the public of who we at the Upper Delaware are. Ramie said she met with this team Monday and shared details of her meeting. A report will ultimately be done that will be given to the Superintendent for her use in managing the program.

Letter to Steven Schwartz, Delaware River Water Quality Monitoring: T. O'Dell referred to the copy of the letter in members' packets. The letter is intended to show the WU/RM Committee's support of a central repository for the Delaware's water quality monitoring data that is being collected by multiple agencies throughout the watershed. Hamilton asked if this letter was in response to one sent to the committee. O'Dell told him the letter was the result of discussion at last month's WU/RM Committee meeting.

Other: Ritter said he checked on the Delaware Highlands Conservancy's efforts to raise funds to allow them to purchase a property near the Long Eddy river access and boat launch in the Town of Fremont, NY in Sullivan County and to make improvements to the site. He reported that as of today they had met 91% of their goal. Henry questioned if the Town is supportive of this initiative. Ramie noted that Greier stated at the November 6th full Council meeting that the Town will not be involved in any improvement or construction of the access. Boyar said he feels the Town of Fremont needs to be engaged in the process regarding the Long Eddy access. Henry agreed. A lengthy discussion took place. O'Dell said he believes a collective on-site visit, including the Town, is in the works. O'Dell said that he would reach out to Supervisor Conklin. Ramie said one of the roles of the UDC is to be a facilitator and bring people to the table. Boyar said that O'Dell calling Conklin is a great idea. The concept of these accesses being economic engines for their communities took place.

New Business:

Draft Letter to NYS DEC Commissioner Martens: 2014 Draft Open Space Conservation Plan

Comments: T. O'Dell said the letter included in members' packets was sent out in advance. The letter will also be reviewed by the Project Review Committee before ultimately going to the full Council in December. Hamilton suggested a change in wording on the second page of the letter in the "Page 103, Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Area" paragraph. Ramie asked Hamilton if the Park Service is working on a comment letter. Hamilton said they may be and questioned what the deadline for comments is. Discovering that it is Dec. 17, Henry asked that the link for the 2014 Draft Open Space Conservation

Plan be sent to him again. Referring to the suggested change for Page 112, Henry advised O'Dell that Girl Scouts do in fact own property in the Town of Lumberland. Any additional comments can be sent to O'Dell in advance of the full Council meeting.

Vandalism at Roebling Bridge: A handout from Superintendent Heister providing details of vandalism that occurred on November 15 was provided in members' packets. Ramie said it is very upsetting to have a national monument defaced like this. The graffiti extended half way across the bridge and across several different types of materials (wood, plexi-glass, metal and stone). Park staff is consulting with regional experts on Section 106 compliance and the safest and most effective methods for cleanup.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report: Ritter reported on the current releases. He said the current total storage for the NYC Water Supply System is at 66.8% with Cannonsville Reservoir at 45.9% and Pepacton Reservoir at 62.7%. Normal total storage is 75.5%. Ritter provided handouts showing the measured discharges for the Delaware at Trenton, N.J. and Callicoon, N.Y., and the Lackawaxen River at Rowland, PA. He noted we are below the median at Trenton and that is why they have been releasing so much water from Cannonsville. These charts were covered in detail. Ritter noted that actual average precipitation is below the historical and has been for the last several months. Henry asked how these lower levels would affect the proposed "Lordville Thermal Stress Relief Protocol". Boyar said there is a disclaimer in the Kolesar proposal that basically says the city's needs come before those of the fish and all bets are off in the drought years. A brief discussion took place about past droughts.

Other: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Boyar seconded by Jeffer to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 11/20/14