

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
December 16, 2014

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, Pat Jeffer, Andy Boyar
Committee Members Absent: Al Henry, John McKay
NPS Partner: Kris Heister, Carla Hahn
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Travis O'Dell, Cindy Odell
Guests: David Dean, Harold Roeder, Fred Peckham

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:28 p.m. A motion by Jeffer seconded by Ritter to approve the November 18 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Delaware River Basin Water Census 11/19 Webinar Report: T. O'Dell referred members to the handout in their packets. He said this United States Geological Survey National Water Census, also known as the WaterSMART program, has been reported on at previous meetings. He noted the two main goals of the program are to explore the questions "Does the Nation have enough freshwater for both human and ecological needs?" and "Will that water be around in the future?" The 11/19 webinar lasted almost four hours providing updates, O'Dell noted. The program which began in 2011 will continue through 2016. The first speaker, Kristin Linsey, talked about water use and broke down the percentage of water withdrawals for the Upper Basin compared to the Lower Basin, 17% to 83% respectively. Kernell Ries then spoke about the new StreamStats web application. It's a web based program that allows managers to delineate and edit sub-watersheds. Marla Stuckey talked about the historic streamflow estimation tool for ungauged sites. The estimates are derived by correlating the gaged vs. ungauged sites. Tanja Williamson spoke about streamflow simulations. The program Water Availability Tool for Environmental Resources (WATER) uses the OASIS modeling program to simulate streamflow throughout the watershed. Hydrologic models are similar to a water budget, measuring precipitation-evaporation-evapotranspiration. The WATER program also models land use cover through 2030. Jonathan Keenen spoke about the Delaware River Basin Ecological Flow Framework. He primarily discussed how water withdrawals, returns and discharges affect ecological stream characteristics. This program assessed the flow-ecology relationships through data archival and the relationship between invertebrate and fish communities. Kelly Maloney discussed how they are trying to incorporate the ecological flow science for the Upper Delaware into the Decision Support System (DSS) for the operation of the NYS Reservoirs. The DSS shows the consequences of decisions; it does not make decisions. Primarily the DSS uses Flow and the OASIS model using REV1, REV7, and the FFMP. See www.sciencebase.gov/DelawareREFDSS. Dave Blodgett discussed the National Water Census Data Portal and how, using the aquatic biology and stream stats, it can provide a water budget for any of the sub-watersheds in the Delaware River Basin. O'Dell said that more information on the National Water Census Program can be found at www.water.usgs/watercensus/Delaware.html.

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway 11/24 Meeting Update: Ramie said that Port Jervis Mayor Kelly Decker gave an update on the Port Jervis Whitewater Park Project at this meeting. A comprehensive packet was provided at the meeting. Anyone interested in the project can request a copy of the packet from Ramie. The project began in 2011 and is divided into two phases. The first phase, which is the lower or downriver one, is not affected by any environmental concerns and is designed for more general use. The second phase is designed to be able to support Olympic trials and will include the placement of local rocks that will be secured to the bedrock. This phase is not currently being pursued due to environmental concerns that have been raised after three endangered dwarf wedgemussels were found in that area. The cost is estimated to be approximately \$2.2 million for the whitewater features and \$4 million for the entire park. Funding is being sought from private sources, the Orange County IDA and corporate donations.

Ramie said members reviewed each page of Chapter 2 of the UDSB Enhancement Concept Plan, noting many instances where information is no longer accurate or applicable, or is in need of updating. There was discussion about how or whether to update the text. It was noted that the original purpose of the

document was to support the state designation of the Scenic Byway and as such, is a historical document. It was decided that if updates are to be addressed through an addendum, the addendum should note that the changes occurred since the document was first published. Ramie said this chapter provides a six-page list of points of interest, including a list of river viewing opportunities. It was decided that the list should be utilized to determine whether these viewing points are still accessible, and if overgrown vegetation has rendered them inaccessible, they should be cleared. The question was posed whether the DOT has a legal obligation to address these issues peculiar to the Byway. Jacksy noted that the DOT is not bound to work with the Byway. Sullivan County Planning Commissioner Freda Eisenberg stated that the UDSB should pursue opportunities to incorporate Byway objectives into DOT work plans.

The UDSB committee approved a comment letter on the NYS Draft Open Space Conservation Plan.

Ramie noted that the UDSB Litter Strategies subcommittee is researching the Keep America Beautiful program for potential grant opportunities for the Byway to pursue. She added that she was directed to send a letter to Sullivan County legislators recommending that they look into offering Sunday hours at the transfer stations in Highland and Cohecton to accommodate weekend visitors to the area.

The next Byway meeting is scheduled for January 26.

Upper DelAWARE River Roundtable 12/4 Meeting Update: O'Dell said that Upper Delaware scenic values were the main topic of the meeting. O'Dell reminded members that he and Shohola Representative Jeffer participated in Viewshed Analysis training sponsored by the NPS back in May. The tool, developed by the NPS, can be used to provide a systematic and defensible means of describing the visual resources that a community values and desires to protect. To date, O'Dell stated, there has not been much interest in individuals attending a three or four day training to rate viewsheds. At the 12/4 Roundtable meeting an idea was shared to hold a competition amongst the counties of Orange, Sullivan, Delaware, Wayne, and Pike with the focus on favorite views of the Upper Delaware. The tourism bureaus and visitor associations could be engaged to promote this. Visitors could be asked to take picture of their favorite views and social media could be used as the judging platform. Peckham asked if a short presentation could be given at a full Council meeting to explain the viewshed analysis. O'Dell noted that the concept of the viewshed analysis is being replaced with the concept of a scenic view inventory which could be used as a marketing tool to promote the region. A brief discussion about the proposed competition took place. Roeder commented on the amount of traffic on the lower end of Route 97 and questioned what will happen in the future with more people visiting the area. Dean spoke of the increase in Harley Davidson motorcycle traffic on Route 97, noting the attraction with that group is the road and not the river. Ramie said that an article in the *Pike County Dispatch* stated that Westfall Township supervisors have asked their UDC representative Chuck Pranski to bring the issue of motorcycle noise on the Hawks Nest on Route 97 up at a meeting. Ramie said she will suggest that is a topic to address with the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Committee. Ritter brought up the issue of motorized kayaks on the river and noted that it does upset many of river guides. Hahn said that since they changed the use on Route 97 to permit special dimension vehicles, there are a lot more very large tractor trailers running three and four in a row and she does not feel this is conducive to other types of uses, such as motorcycles and bicycles, along this road. She feels this use is unsafe. Ramie said that was an open ended approval that was given by NYS DOT at the time and that was one of our objections when we wrote the letter. Hahn shared some of her personal concerns with this issue.

Other: Ramie said we did receive more requested literature from the National Parks Conservation Association and it is available to those interested.

New Business:

2015 Delaware River Sojourn Update: Ramie reported that the 2015 Delaware River Sojourn will take place Saturday, June 20 to Saturday, June 27 and the 2015 theme will be "Birthplace of America". In the Upper Delaware, the sections covered will be Balls Eddy to Buckingham on June 20th; Buckingham to the Northeast Wilderness Experience campground on June 21st; and on the third day, June 22nd, rafts will be taken down the Lackawaxen River. More details will be shared once they become available, Ramie noted. Ritter asked if invitations could be extended to Governor-elect Tom Wolf and Congressman Gibson to

participate in this event. Ramie said that the Council is no longer on the Sojourn Steering Committee, but would pass that on.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report: Ritter reported that the main stem is currently free of ice. He said he has a photo that was taken on January 3, 2014 of the Big Eddy in Narrowsburg and it was completely frozen. He said that combined total storage of the New York City reservoirs is 70.5% with Cannonsville at 51.3% and Pepacton at 63.1%.

Other: A discussion regarding legal sampling of water below the Masthope Mountain Community Treatment Plant in Lackawaxen Township took place. Dean stated there are certified labs that will conduct such work on the weekends. Heister stated again that the approach that she would like to take on this issue is to try and work with Aqua Pennsylvania, the owner of the sewer treatment plant at Masthope, first. She plans on meeting with the company in January. Heister said that if someone sees a discharge on a weekend, they can call the DEP hotline and someone will come out to do sampling. Boyar questioned how many homes the system was designed for. O'Dell said that question will be posed in the letter that is being drafted to be sent by the UDC. Heister said there are many complexities contributing to the issue. Ritter said this is not a new issue. He suggested the NPS share the DEP hotline number with the licensed river guides at the annual meeting in the spring. Heister said the sharing of that number has been discussed. Ritter said there is now good cell service on that section of the river.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Boyar seconded by Jeffer to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 12/30/14