

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
April 15, 2014

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, Al Henry, Pat Jeffer, Andy Boyar, Joe Demalderis
Committee Members Absent: John McKay
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton, Malcolm Wilbur
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Travis O'Dell, Cindy Odell
Guests: None

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 15, 2014 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

A motion by Boyar seconded by Jeffer to approve the March 18 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

March 24 UDSB Meeting Update: Ramie said there was a report by the nominating committee as April is the Byway's annual meeting at which they elect officers. The three current officers have consented to serve for another term. Nominations will still be accepted until voting occurs at the April meeting.

Ramie reported that the Tusten Town Board had requested a presentation at their April 8th meeting describing what the town gets for its donation to the UDSB. Nadia Rajs, UDSB Chairperson and Ed Boyer, Tusten's representative to the UDSB, agreed to make that presentation. Ramie compiled a fact sheet which shows the direct and indirect benefits accruing to Tusten as a result of UDSB actions. Ramie said that the meeting was videotaped and is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHYEg_8GCVE.

Ramie said there was discussion about the revised Viewshed Analysis for the Sullivan County 911 upgrade for the Narrowsburg tower. Correspondence from the Chazen Companies reporting a change in the height of the proposed tower from 180 feet to 199 feet was reviewed. Ramie shared the details of the discussion at the Byway meeting as towers have been a subject of discussion with the UDC and she wanted to let members know that another board is grappling with the same issue. She noted that the scenic viewshed is within the Byway's purview and is something they are watching as well.

Ramie said that regarding Delaware River accesses, it was reported that the LWRP steering committee has concluded that the existing Highland access is the most feasible for development of the six in Sullivan County. Helen Budrock from Sullivan Renaissance has offered assistance in writing a grant for further study and developing the site. Ramie said the Byway unanimously decided to send a letter expressing conceptual support for the idea of implementing the improvements at the NYS Route 97 Highland Pull-Off access.

Ramie noted that the NPS Tourism Economic Report was discussed. The press release reporting the issuance was provided. Glenn Pontier noted that the 105 jobs that are cited in the report need further clarification. He added that the two big area liveries easily employ that many during a season. Acting Superintendent Wilbur said that it is presumed those jobs would exist whether there was a national park presence or not so that is how the USGS economists who were responsible for the study arrived at that number.

Ramie said that in response to comments in the UDSB February minutes, Dean Smith from NYS DOT contacted Rajs seeking clarification of which pull-offs along Route 97 were identified as problematic. It was learned that the section of Route 97 from Lumberland to Tusten is plowed by Sullivan County, and that from Narrowsburg and north, the State does the plowing. Ramie was directed to contact Ed McAndrew of the Sullivan County Department of Public Works, with a copy to NYS DOT, addressing the concerns about the pull-offs not being plowed during this winter season, and to request clarification of the agreement and expectations for next season.

The next UDSB meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 28, 2014.

Boyar noted that when communication towers were erected in the Town of Highland, research was done to determine what provisions one would want in their contract. He thinks it is fairly standard to have a clause in those contracts that the tower will be dismantled when it becomes obsolete. He said that posting a

bond annually is one of the requirements in their contract. Discussion took place about emergency services being attached to towers and what happens to them should those towers become obsolete.

Ritter was glad that the Byway accepted the Town of Tusten's invitation to speak at their meeting. He said UDSB Chairperson Rajsz shared the Byway's mission statement and their past track record regarding grants.

Hamilton questioned Boyar about the bond that is required in the Town of Highland for the towers. Boyar said it is renewed every year and is through the insurance company.

Zane Grey Fishing Derby 3/28 Meeting Update: Ramie reported that the derby is underway. It started on April 12th with the opening of Pennsylvania's season. She said that 3,000 rulers were printed for the event and it appears they have already gone through the supply. Ramie shared the details of what tasks still need to be addressed. Derby promotion includes a page on the NPS website and articles in the River Reporter "Fish" section and the Spring/Summer edition of the UDC newsletter. A general press release was also issued, Ramie added. Alex Zidock's "**Out in the Open**" show on Blue Ridge Communications TV 13 also has a segment airing on the fishing derby. Ramie said another meeting of the planning committee will take place in the near future to address any loose ends.

Ritter spoke of Alex Zidock's show regarding last year's Bioblitz and noted he is glad he has done a segment on the fishing derby. Boyar spoke of this year's upcoming Bioblitz to be held at Ten Mile River. He noted they are looking for a botanist to be involved. Hamilton added they still do not have confirmation on the invertebrate person for insects which is really important. T. O'Dell suggested reaching out to Molly Marquand, CRISP Coordinator, regarding assistance with the botany aspect of the Bioblitz. Other members offered suggestions. Hamilton said that in addition to team leaders, team members are also needed for the Bioblitz. A brief discussion took place regarding last year's and the upcoming Bioblitz. Wilbur suggested reaching out to Alex Zidock and inviting him to film during the Bioblitz. Hamilton said he would do that. A brief discussion took place regarding the Zane Grey Fishing Derby prizes. Boyar commented that the judges for the derby will be himself, Don Hamilton, and Harry Datys of the Barryville Sportsman. Henry questioned what waters the derby is taking place in. Boyar told him it is the fishing waters of Zane Grey which would be all the moving waters of Pike and Wayne Counties.

Upper Delaware River Roundtable 4/3 Meeting Update: T. O'Dell reported that the meeting started with Larry Hartpence from Moscow, PA discussing farming grasses as a sustainable biofuel heating alternative. Hartpence has been experimenting with Miscanthus which is similar to switchgrass. It is a perennial grass that can reach 10+ feet in a season and has been identified as one of the leading energy crops with yields of 10 to 15 tons per acre. Miscanthus can be harvested and baled with modern haying equipment. Hartpence has developed a machine that compresses the grasses into 2" by 2" briquettes for use similar to that of a pellet stove. The BTU's produced are equivalent to seasoned dry oak. O'Dell said the grass is native of Germany and there was concern that it could become an invasive species in this region. Hartpence reassured those in attendance that the grass produces sterile seeds and can only reproduce via rootstock. It was noted that Miscanthus takes three years to establish.

O'Dell said that Jill Weyer and Tom Kappner briefed the Roundtable on Sullivan County's Strategic Economic Development Plan with respect to agriculture and the Sullivan County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. Sullivan County has received a grant from NYS Department of Ag and Markets to update the county Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. The grant is being administered through the county Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. Input from county residents is very important so the feelings about farming in Sullivan County can be understood. They are looking to determine what issues need addressing and what residents' ideas are related to agriculture. More information about the project is available at www.planningbetterplaces.com/sullivancountyfarmplan. Kappner reported he is working with Isaac Green Diebboll on a documentary film titled, "The Changing Face of Agriculture" which they hope to have developed by the end of 2014 or early 2015.

O'Dell said the Roundtable members heard from Sonja Hedlund from Apple Pond Farm in Callicoon Center. She discussed her weekly radio program on WJFF and stated that the station is looking for more local programs and would like to see a program on the station focusing on what's happening on the Delaware River.

Stop Eurasian Boar 4/8 Training Report: O'Dell stated that this program was more of an update on the status of boars in NYS rather than training. He said it was hosted by Delaware County Cornell Cooperative at the Hancock Town Hall. The program began with a presentation from USDA Disease Biologist Justin Gansowski. It is estimated that between damage and control costs, feral swine cause in excess of \$1 billion annually. Feral swine are known carriers of over 30 diseases and 37 parasites transmittable to livestock, people and pets. They cause a significant threat to the health and welfare and could potentially devastate the pork industry if agricultural herds should come in contact with feral swine. Through various management options the NYS DEC with cooperation from the USDA is set to eradicate feral swine in New York. A recently passed state regulation banned the importation, release or breeding of feral swine in the state. Another program is scheduled in Sullivan County on April 22nd from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Gerald J. Skoda Education Center on Ferndale-Loomis Road in Liberty.

A second presentation by Molly Marquand, Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) Coordinator, focused on early detection and rapid response of invasive species. She touched on a few invasive plant species with the potential to have wide spread economic and ecological damage should they become established. These species include Japanese Stilt Grass, Mile-a-Minute Vine, Pale Swallow Wort, Wisteria, Narrowleaf Bittercress, Giant Hogweed, and Japanese Angelica Tree. O'Dell said if anyone sees any of these plants to contact him and he will contact Marquand or contact Marquand directly. Boyar asked why Japanese Knotweed was not on the list. O'Dell said she is focused on early detection and Knotweed is pretty well established in the area. Hamilton said the Park Service has issued press releases asking the public to be on the lookout for certain invasive species. A brief discussion about the Mile-a-Minute vine took place. Hamilton said they had removed some Water Chestnut from the river. He noted it grows in some of the quieter areas. He feels they may have nipped that in the bud, as they have not seen it during subsequent surveys for several years in a row. Ramie reminded members that we are having a presentation on Japanese Knotweed by Jamie Myers at the May 1st full Council meeting.

A brief discussion took place about hunting boars, eradication efforts, and where these animals are problems. Ritter commented that Narrowsburg will be hosting its third annual Pig Mountain Festival and he will provide more information when it becomes available.

Common Waters 4/10 Meeting Update: O'Dell said that meeting began with an update from the William Penn Foundation similar to that presentation which was given at the April 4th full Council meeting. The update highlighted the clusters identified by the initiative, the money available and timeframe for implementation. The Foundation is focusing efforts on conserving land through easements and acquisitions. The Pinchot Institute is in the process of creating a job description and will be hiring a coordinator to implement the \$35 million initiative.

As a follow up to the Natural Economies conference that was held in May of 2013, the Common Waters group sent a smaller group to a three day conference in West Virginia focusing on gateway communities. The conference focused on building economies based around the natural environment. There was recognition that in order to be viable, the economy needs to be diverse. An example of such diversity would be promoting a manufacturing company that produces kayaks which are specific to the Upper Delaware right in the Upper Delaware region. This would be a great way to invigorate the economy and help to keep the money local.

O'Dell reported that the Climate Adaptation Plan prepared by Susan Beecher of the Pinchot Institute is complete and available at www.mfpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Upper-Delaware-River-Region-Climate-Adaptation-Plan-FINAL.pdf. The 172 page report contains a lot of interesting information, O'Dell stated. Sources of funding are being identified for printing, distribution and implementation. It is felt that the best form of implementation would be at the municipal level, O'Dell said.

O'Dell said discussion took place regarding capacity and funding needs for the Common Waters Partnership. The funding is minimal and they are trying to identify sustainable areas of funding.

Other: Ritter referred members to the copies of resolutions in support for “The Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition (UDRTC) Position Statement Seeking Changes For Improved Water Releases Under the Decree Party Revised Flexible Flow Management Plan (FFMP) and Operation Support Tool (OST)” provided in the packets. The resolutions were by the Delaware County Board of Supervisors, the Town of Colchester, the Town of Deposit, the Village of Deposit, the Town of Hancock, and the Village of Hancock. Ritter commented that a common word used in each of the resolutions was “transparency”. Ritter said he, as a town councilman, may introduce this issue as an agenda item at his May town board meeting.

He questioned if it should be brought up to the UDC Council in May. Ramie noted that the FFMP revision is scheduled to take effect June 1st so the May full Council meeting would be the last opportunity to weigh in on the issue. She added the Council has taken similar positions in the past. Demalderis stated that New York City would like to put a long-term plan in effect. He feels that the thermal stress issue may be one that is being considered although nothing is definite. He added that there is very little understanding of the Operations Support Tool and it is very frustrating. After a lengthy discussion, Demalderis reiterated Ritter's point that transparency is a big issue. Ritter said he was previously unaware of the resolutions that were provided and stated that his intention is to bring it up to his town board. He noted these resolutions are different than those shared earlier requesting the 10% void in the reservoirs. Boyar said he feels the town support of The Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition (UDRTC) Position Statement is important and he intends to bring the issue up in his town as well. He noted the Upper Delaware Council has not been silent in regard to these issues, noting several resolutions that have been adopted by the Council. Ritter spoke of a report by NYC DEP to the American Meteorological Society about the OST. He said it was noted that security issues are a consideration when it comes to transparency with the OST. O'Dell agreed that should be a consideration. Demalderis stated it would be good if NYC could be transparent with how they come up with their release numbers. Boyar said they have never agreed with or disputed the science regarding releases that has been provided to them over the past few years. After more discussion, Henry made a motion to draft a letter to New York City requesting an explanation of the basic principles of the OST and access to it for review and approval by the full Council. The motion was seconded by Boyar. Henry suggested pulling from the River Management Plan when drafting the letter. Boyar suggested reaching out to those with scientific knowledge such as Pettinger, Kolesar, Skelding, and Serio for input on the letter. The motion was carried unanimously.

Ramie reminded members that Friday, April 18th is the deadline for reservations for the UDC Awards Banquet. Ritter noted that the keynote speaker is Congressman Chris Gibson.

New Business:

Unique Landforms FY14 Work Plan Task: Ramie noted that one of the tasks of the Water Use/Resource Management Committee deals with unique landforms. Within the FY 2014 WU/RM Work Plan, there are four tasks associated with this subject. As part of the National Park Service's Outstandingly Remarkable Values report, a geologic report of the Upper Delaware region was done by Duane Braun. Copies of that report and maps to go along with it were provided in each member's packet. The report is quite comprehensive, Ramie noted, and satisfies some of the tasks listed in the Work Plan. Wilbur stated that some of the tasks such as developing a program to protect and interpret the unique landforms of the Upper Delaware River still need to be accomplished. He agreed that some of the tasks have been accomplished, but questions what is next. Ramie said those outstanding issues will be in next year's Work Plan. She encouraged members to review the report and map and said the issue will be addressed again next month to discuss how to proceed with the remaining tasks. Jeffer pointed out her property on one of the maps and told members that she learned her property is an alluvial, which is made up of or found in the materials that are left by the water of rivers, floods, etc. A brief discussion took place regarding the triangular eel traps listed in the report.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report: Ritter noted that the Cannonsville reservoir was at 98.2% and the Pepacton reservoir was at 97.1% as of April 14, but he suspects they will both be spilling soon due to the rain that fell over the past 24 hours. Discussion took place about reservoir releases. Henry commented he does not think a lot of people understand what is involved to dump one inch of water from the reservoirs. Demalderis posed the question, "What does an inch of rain equate to in the reservoirs?" and noted there are so many factors involved. These include how fast the rain fell, what the air temperature is, and ground saturation to name a few, he said. The flooding that took place in the region in 2004 and 2006 was discussed. Demalderis stated that New York City's water year starts June 1st and the goal is to have all the reservoirs full on or around that date. Ritter stated that the river at Hale Eddy was at 7.3' when he checked before he came to the meeting.

Other: Ritter noted that the Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) sponsored 'One Bug' event will take place April 25 through April 27 in Hancock, N.Y. The catch-and-release trout tournament raises

money from entry fees and auction items for the charitable organization's river conservation work. The dinner and the auction are open to the public, Ritter said. More information is available on the FUDR website.

Demalderis said he spoke at the April full Council meeting of a permit application filed with the NYS DEC, PA Fish and Boat Commission, and the National Park Service, by an individual in Hancock, NY who wants to start a fish tagging study on the wild trout in the Delaware. He said Ben Rinker has put proposals for this study together for consideration. Rinker had shared his proposal with Demalderis who sent the information to people he knows at Cornell University for their input. By submitting the proposal to Cornell, it has opened up an opportunity for a possible genetic study of the trout. He said that Friends of the Upper Delaware River and Cornell are in the beginning stages of looking at this possibility. He noted the main objective of this study would be to identify different genetic strains of fish. A very lengthy discussion took place about this possible study and other studies that have been conducted.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Jeffer seconded by Demalderis to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 4/22/14