

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
May 21, 2013

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

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2013 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Vice-chairperson Al Henry called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. A motion by Jeffer seconded by McKay to approve the April 16 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

NPS River Safety 4/19 Meeting Update: Ramie said she attended this meeting coordinated by Kevin Reish which took place at Konrad's Kitchen in Yulan, N.Y. with lunch sponsored by the National Canoe Safety Patrol. The main purpose of the meeting was to get people geared up for the season and to prepare for the safety program. A review of the 2012 season and discussion about mandatory life jacket use and properly fitting life jackets took place based on topics raised by participants. Ramie noted that Barbara Perry, assistant to the NPS Law Enforcement Division, will be retiring and a retirement dinner for her will take place on June 1st at Woodloch Springs.

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway 4/22 Meeting Update: Ramie reported the April meeting was the Annual meeting for the Byway. The election of officers took place. Nadia Rajsz of the Town of Lumberland will serve as chairperson; Ed Boyer of the Town of Tusten as vice-chairperson; and Larry Richardson of the Town of Cocheton as secretary-treasurer.

Ramie said there have been several meetings about the status of the UDSB Visitor Center. On May 9th, there was a meeting of the Sullivan County Legislature's Executive Committee at which county staff from the Planning and Public Works departments gave a report. The legislators that were present at the meeting supported the theory of moving ahead on the issue and seeking other funding presuming that the previously allocated federal and state funding is no longer available. Permission was given to county staff to apply through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application System for \$100,000 to do construction documents. Additional meetings will be taking place on the Visitor Center issue.

Ramie noted that the \$1,000 donation to the UDC was approved at the April 22nd meeting and has since been presented to the Council.

Ramie reported that the Village of Hancock, a member of the UDSB, will have the dedication of its Hancock Fitness Trail and Scenic Overlook on June 1st. The project was supported with National Scenic Byway funding. This event is open to the public and begins at 11:00 a.m. at the overlook on Old Bridge St., she added.

A Route 97 signage tour with Dean Smith from NYS DOT-Sullivan County that was announced at the April 22nd meeting took place on May 3rd. Ramie said she and Heather Jacksy of the Sullivan County Planning Office participated in this tour which went through the first two Sullivan County towns of Lumberland and Highland. The purpose of this tour was to do an inventory and needs assessment of byway signage along Route 97. Jacksy will be compiling a report. Eventually, all the Sullivan County towns will be visited for this purpose.

Ramie reported that the next meeting of the Byway will be on Monday, June 24, 2013 due to a May conflict with Memorial Day.

D&H Transportation Heritage Council 4/24 Meeting Update: Ramie said that the minutes from this meeting were provided in members' packets for their review. They consist mainly of reports from members of the D & H Council. She reported the next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 24, at the Pike County Historical Society's The Columns Museum in Milford, PA. Henry noted that Cultural Resources Manager Dot Moon will retire from the National Park Service at the end of July.

NYS DEC Letter on American Eel Draft Addendum: Ramie reported that this letter was a follow-up that Bill Rudge provided. It is a copy of the DEC's comment letter to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Service regarding their proposed amendment to the Eel Fisheries Management Plan. It expresses their support of the Status Quo option of the alternatives presented. O'Dell noted the comment period on this amendment ended May 21.

Common Waters 5/14 Natural Economies Conference Report: O'Dell said that he and Ramie attended this conference from the Council and Sean McGuinness, Carla Hahn, and Don Hamilton from the National Park Service. Sixty participants took part in break-out sessions that focused on identifying a means of branding the Delaware Region while also seeking to further capitalize on the natural assets of the river valley. Four speakers spoke about the economic value of the region and the importance of investing in our assets. Dr. Jerry Kauffman from the University of Delaware gave his keynote address on the Socioeconomic Value of Delaware River Basin Resources. He sets the value of the Delaware River basin at \$25 billion annually from the headwaters to the shipping yards at the mouth of the river. Kendra Briechle from the Conservation Fund spoke about Gateway Communities and how they contribute to regional conservation efforts and often times benefit from balancing nature and commerce. Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Patricia Elkins spoke about some on the ground successes the commission has had in preserving open space throughout a five-county region of southeastern Pennsylvania. Will Prince from the Progress Fund, a non-profit community development financial institution, discussed the Trail Town Program, and how trails can easily be used to connect regions while providing an economic boost to local economies. The conference concluded with summaries from each break-out group. Consensus was that the Delaware River Region is lacking a strong identity and could benefit from support and funding from down-basin users. Many groups also identified that utilizing the railroad system for rails-to-trails may be a great opportunity to connect the region on a large scale and sustain another outdoor recreational opportunity. O'Dell noted that a summary report will be issued by Common Waters at a later date. Ramie reported that the Times Herald-Record had a 3-page article in their Sunday, May 19th edition about branding the Upper Delaware. The article contained a lot of photos and side bars. McKay questioned if Dr. Kauffman's estimated \$25 billion value broke out what part was recreation and tourism. Ramie said Dr. Kauffman was asked if he could break that number down per watershed, like Upper Delaware for example. He said that he does have the methodology to do that. Hamilton commented that Kauffman's report was a good one and it could be shared with members electronically.

Other: Ramie reiterated that Thomas Murphy Jr., P.E., chief of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Water Supply, Reservoir Releases Policy Development, will be giving a presentation at the June 6th full Council meeting. He will be discussing the operation of the New York City Reservoirs.

New Business:

Review FY 2014 Work Plan: Ramie noted the committee's annual work plan is being addressed now in order to meet the Park Service's deadline for processing our financial application for next fiscal year. A copy, which was sent out in advance, was also provided in members' packets. She noted that the most major change was the addition of Unique Land Resources. It was identified in the Five-Year Plan to be tackled in FY 2014. There are four tasks associated it. The great news, however, is that Don Hamilton forwarded to us the geologist's technical report and map from the Outstandingly Remarkable Values workshop that took place. The report goes through river mile by river mile every important geologic feature in the Upper Delaware. Hamilton added that there is a wealth of great information in that report. Discussion took place concerning the use of the word "unique". A motion to recommend the FY 2014 Work Plan to the full Council for approval was made by Jeffer, seconded by McKay and carried unanimously.

Joint Interstate Bridge Commission 5/14 Meeting Report: Ramie said this annual meeting took place at the Penn DOT headquarters in Dunmore, PA. She said she attends specifically for the sake of doing a press release that tends to be well-received by the newspapers. The press release was provided in members' packets. Discussion of the Pond Eddy Bridge replacement took place. Henry questioned when the work on the Narrowsburg bridge is scheduled to begin. Ramie told him June 10th was the date she had heard. She

reported that the Skinner's Falls bridge was re-opened as of today following detours since December. Ramie noted that the Design Advisory Committee for the Pond Eddy Bridge is to re-convene to discuss such issues as aesthetics before final engineering takes place. That meeting has been targeted for "early summer."

Deputy Delaware River Master 5/21 Meeting Report: T. O'Dell reported that on May 8th, he, Al Henry, and Andy Boyar traveled to Milford, PA to meet with Marie Stewart, the Deputy Delaware River Master. She explained her job duties and answered questions. She stated that her main duty is to maintain the 1,750 cfs Montague Minimum Flow Target. O'Dell said that Boyar summed up their meeting by saying, "What impressed me the most is how focused Marie Stewart is on objectively meeting the Montague Flow Target and not being at all engaged in the politics of the day. Her commitment to objectively meeting the goals and objectives of her position was very evident as she talked about the various tasks that she is responsible for. Also important to note is that very office once had a staff of 5. The responsibilities haven't changed but that office is down to one person with maybe a part-timer coming aboard. I believe she said that she has put in up to 90 hrs in a week just to make sure the job gets properly done. At her behest, we should be looking elsewhere for political policy deciders on questions of increased flows, thermal event protocols and other issues that pertain to the health of the river." Henry agreed that Stewart is "an army of one." He suggested to her that the next time she is in the Upper Delaware region, that she get in touch with National Park Service staff. McKay questioned if Stewart is the Deputy River Master, who the River Master is. O'Dell said that the actual title of Delaware River Master belongs to Robert Mason who operates out of Washington D.C. His duties are primarily dealing with the operation's financing. Henry said that Stewart brought up the name Mark Hartle of the PA Fish and Boat Commission as a person to speak to about such issues as conservation and flows. Hamilton noted that Hartle is the current chairperson of the Subcommittee on Ecological Flows for the DRBC. Ramie said that the UDC presented Hartle with an award the year that the Joint Fisheries White Paper was recognized. He was the co-author on behalf of Pennsylvania. Henry said that Stewart would be interested in some of the information that is available from the datasondes in the river. Hamilton said he would send her weblinks for those.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report: The monthly report was provided in members' packets for their review.

Other: A press release from NYS DEC representative Bill Rudge about the Emerald Ash Borer being confirmed in Delaware and Otsego counties was provided in members' packets.

Ramie said she does have paper copies of the geologist's technical report and map from the Outstandingly Remarkable Values workshop that Hamilton referred to if anyone wanted them.

Henry questioned if the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway had considered using space in the old Narrowsburg School building for a visitor center, even temporarily, if the proposed sale goes through. Ramie said it hasn't been considered, but it is a good idea.

McKay asked if there is any update on the proposed PA DEP nitrate abatement policy. T. O'Dell said that there is legislature going through the House right now that would basically negate the whole policy, but should that not pass or be delayed, PA DEP will incorporate the comments they receive by the deadline date of June 3rd and move forward with the policy. Henry asked if we received anything back in writing in response to our comments. O'Dell said no, but added that Jeff Dexter met with some DEP representatives earlier in the week.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Jeffer seconded by McKay to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 5/29/13