

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
June 16, 2015

Committee Members Present: Tony Ritter, John McKay, Al Henry, Deb Conway, Pat Jeffer
Committee Members Absent: Andy Boyar
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Cindy Odell
Guests: None

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 16, 2015 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

A motion by Henry seconded by McKay to approve the May 19 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway 6/1 Meeting Update: Ramie reported that this meeting was the re-scheduled May meeting which conflicted with Memorial Day.

It was noted that a letter was sent to the new Village of Hancock Mayor Eugene Morgan on May 28 offering assistance with the appointment of a UDSB representative to fill that vacancy. Ramie said she received a phone call from an individual who lives in the Village of Hancock expressing interest in getting involved with the Scenic Byway. Ramie referred her to the Mayor. The appointment of this individual was made by the Village on Monday, June 15.

The Byway committee had been reviewing the UDSB Points of Interest chart from the Enhancement Plan. The inventory of views along the Byway from Hancock to Port Jervis was originally done in 2002. UDC Hancock Representative Fred Peckham was contacted and asked about the accuracy of the thirty sites listed for the Delaware County area. Peckham reviewed the list and provided feedback to the committee.

Dorene Warner of W Design, webmaster for the Byway website, provided the quarterly report of statistics and mobile-friendly upgrade options. It was reported that there have been 146,993 visits to the website from the inception on July 1, 2007. Warner suggests developing a new responsive website to make it more user-friendly to the audience and search engines. She noted the website currently does not physically adapt to the device that it is being viewed on. The rough estimate cost for the full website upgrade as discussed is \$6,000 to \$8,850. Warner said that for the last six months, W Design has tracked what types of devices are viewing the Byway website through the Google Analytics report and learned that half of the visitors were using mobile devices. Ramie said the Byway has decided that it is a worthwhile investment to undertake this website upgrade. The Byway Committee has also talked about having a Byway promotional video produced. Grant opportunities were discussed. It was decided to submit a NYS CFA application for \$20,000 for the UDSB website upgrade and video project. Heather Jacksy of Sullivan County Planning has offered to take on the writing of the grant application. Support letters are now being requested from different entities that work with the Byway or have some sort of association with them.

The "This Place Matters" campaign launched by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) was discussed. Town of Highland alternate Deb Conway had recommended that the UDSB, Inc. participate. Anyone can download a sign from the <http://savingplaces.org/thisplacematters> website, take a photo in front of a personally or recognized significant site, and post it to Facebook on the UDSB page as well as to a couple hashtags designated by NTHP. Ramie was asked to issue a news release expressing UDSB endorsement of the campaign and encouraging people to submit photos depicting byway vicinity sites.

Ramie reported that a corresponding and recording secretary has been hired for the Byway. Her first meeting will be June 22nd.

A couple of publications were discussed, Ramie noted. A "2015 Explore the Scenic Byway" color booklet was an insert in the May 7th edition of the *River Reporter*. The *Times Herald-Record* had a "Living Here" summer directory with an article by Steve Israel featuring the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. The

committee opted to send Letters to the Editor to both newspapers expressing gratitude for the positive publicity and providing the UDSB website link for anyone who would like further information.

Ramie said that response letters from both NYS DOT Regions 8 and 9 to the Byway's request for 2015 maintenance and construction plans for Route 97 were discussed. It was suggested that the UDSB could invite the DOT regional directors to come to the next meeting to have a conversation about Route 97 and what needs to be done to maintain its scenic byway designation. Ramie sent invitation letters to NYS DOT Regional Directors Jack Williams (9) and William Gorton (8) to attend the June 22nd meeting. She noted she has not received responses from either of them.

Westfall Township's Hawk's Nest noise complaint was discussed. Copies of letters on this issue sent to the Westfall Township Board of Supervisors from the UDSB, Upper Delaware Council, and National Park Service were provided to members for review.

The experimental bus service, Upper Delaware River Valley Eagle Express, is ready to go, Ramie said. The four stops in Pond Eddy, Barryville, Narrowsburg, and Callicoon have been established and the online reservation system is operational at www.scva.net/eagleexpress. The Byway issued a press release expressing support for this concept.

Ramie said that information regarding The Delaware Company's "The Magical History Tour" on June 20 was handed out at this meeting. Also handed out was a May 13 article from *The Walton Reporter*, "State Advisory Board Approves Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway" offering news about the designation of the 65-mile byway on NYS Route 28 which stretches from the Town of Olive to the Town of Andes. The organization behind the seven-year effort is the Central Catskills Collaborative.

The next meeting of the Byway is scheduled for Monday, June 22nd.

Ritter suggested members re-check the Byway website on different devices before they do a total overhaul. He spoke of templates that are available to scale existing websites to mobile friendly sites.

Upper DeLAWARE River Roundtable 6/4 Meeting Report: Ramie referred to the written report provided in members' packets. She noted a webinar took place at this meeting on the complex Maryland Food System Map that was developed by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. Amanda Buczynski from Johns Hopkins was the moderator for the presentation. More information is available at www.marylandfoodsystemmap.org.

Penn DOT 6/9 Letter: Narrowsburg Bridge Public Meeting Assistance: Ramie referred to the copy in members' packets and noted this letter is response to the UDC's May 20th letter offering assistance with logistical arrangements and publicity for a public meeting regarding the Narrowsburg Bridge project. The letter states the meeting will include an audiovisual presentation followed by a question and answer period to allow residents and concerned citizens the opportunity to speak with project representatives. The meeting will take place in July, although a date has not been set. Henry asked Ramie what venue she recommended. Ramie said the Tusten Town Hall was suggested. She added that a list of July dates with known conflicts was provided to Penn DOT.

Friends of the Upper Delaware River 6/15 Meeting Report: T. O'Dell's written report was provided in members' packets. The meeting to discuss the flows of the Upper Delaware was attended by approximately 40 people representing members of the business community, river guides, local politicians, and concerned citizens. The conversation was geared toward methods to increase the awareness of how important adequate, sustained flows are for the ecology of the river and the local businesses. The report contains a list of "next steps" to attempt to address the issue. Ritter noted there is so much information available to individuals regarding river conditions nowadays. He commented that NYC Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Commissioner Paul Rush's statement on the extension of the Flexible Flow Management Program contained the statement, "New York City believes that adjustments to the current Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP) could improve spill mitigation efforts, formalize a thermal relief protocol for fisheries, and support responsible water supply management for all the cities and towns that depend on the Delaware River and its headwaters." Henry said that if people are serious about having the flows issues addressed, "They are going to have to step it up" to the point of maybe a lawsuit. Ritter thinks it would take a diverse group of interested parties to challenge the 1954 Supreme Court mandate. A discussion about the spring weather and river conditions and the effect on river-related businesses took place. Henry said he recalled that Tom Fikslin of the DRBC reported at the June full Council meeting that reservoir releases were at around 400 cfs beginning June 1st. Ritter noted that the USGS gage at Stilesville has been at around

250 cfs for the first half of June. He reported that in the last twelve hours, the release increased to 366 cfs. Henry suggested seeking clarification of Fikslin's report at the June 4th meeting which stated that New York City would be releasing 435 cfs. Ritter said the release information can be found by searching USGS Stilesville. Ramie agreed we could seek clarification on the difference in the releases.

Sullivan County Trail Committee 6/15 Meeting Update: Ramie said the majority of discussion at this meeting centered around the type of project this group could submit for the NYS CFA grant application process. They are leaning towards developing a 50-mile Sullivan County O&W Trail which would run along the O&W Railroad. Approval by the Sullivan County Legislature would be required to back this application. A lot of time was spent discussing the application process and match requirements and what the needs are for public support. Ramie shared information on the Sullivan County Plans & Progress small grants program. Project updates on various trail developments from around Sullivan County were provided. There were no projects in the river corridor. Ramie said the committee is discussing standardized signage to use on trails. The basis for it is what was developed for the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan for along the Delaware River. It was noted that Sullivan County Planning Division, which supports this committee, is the lead on the signage project.

Ramie reported the next meeting is scheduled for July 14, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.

Other: None

New Business:

Senator Bonacic Request: Reply to Constituent River Level & Temperature Concerns: Ramie noted this letter was referred by the full Council to this committee to take action and come up with a response. Bonacic's letter asks that the Council reply to the concerns of Margaret Zanger, President of the Roscoe-Rockland Chamber of Commerce. Zanger's concern is that river conditions have shut down many river related economic activity. Henry said Zanger's e-mail dated May 13, 2015 requests an "immediate water release that will protect the cold water ecosystem of the Upper Delaware Rivers." Ramie noted that Zanger's e-mail was sent to Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Water Supply for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, originally. Ramie suggested that a response letter stating the UDC's position on thermal protocol be sent and that a copy of the June 8, 2015 Letter to the Editor of New York Outdoor News addressing Morgan Lyle's *On the Fly* column in the May 29 issue titled "Delaware's low flows bad for business" could be included. A motion to send a response letter to the Roscoe-Rockland Chamber of Commerce with a copy to Senator Bonacic regarding their low flow concerns was made by Ritter, seconded by Henry and carried.

Westfall Township 6/8 Letter: June 24 Meeting Re: Hawk's Nest: Ramie referred to the copy of the June 11th *Pike County Dispatch* article titled "Workshop To Tackle Hawk's Nest Noise Problem". She said as stated in the letter, also provided in members' packets, that a meeting has been scheduled to take place on Wednesday, June 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Westfall Township Municipal Building to try and come up with a solution for the Hawk's Nest noise problem. Ramie said that she will attend and welcomed participation from any board members. Ramie said in response to Westfall's original letter of concern, we sent a letter stating that the UDC is a forum to try to resolve differences and offered assistance facilitating a meeting. She noted the copy list includes New York State Police and Town of Deerpark Police as well as others. Henry stated it would be helpful if those affected by the alleged noise had decibel readings or some other evidence of it. Ramie said that would be a good point to bring up at the meeting. Henry said he will try to attend.

DRBC Water Management Advisory Committee (WMAC) Appointment: Included in members' packets was a copy of the letter appointing T. O'Dell to the DRBC Water Management Advisory Committee representing the Watershed Organization sector for a term of 5 years beginning July 1, 2015. Also included was a copy of the committee's practice and procedures. Ramie noted that a meeting of the WMAC took place earlier in the day. O'Dell participated via teleconference and provided a written report which was included in members' packets. Ramie said the committee meets three times per year. Henry noted he did not see the National Park Service as a member of this committee. He asked Hamilton if he

knew why they weren't. Hamilton said the NPS participates on a number of other DRBC committees, but would look into their participation or membership on the Water Management Advisory Committee.

Delaware River Flow and Storage Report: Ritter reported that total storage for the New York City Supply System as of June 16 was 96.3% while normal is 97.2%. He noted that precipitation for the month of June is already almost double the average just halfway through the month. Henry noted there are still deficits in some parts of Pennsylvania. Ritter stated that precipitation has been below normal since August of last year.

Other: Ritter referenced the copy of the June 5, 2015 *Times Herald Record* article titled "EPA: No widespread harm to water from fracking". Ramie said that was provided for members' information.

Conway reported that during the last weekend in June, anyone can fish the fresh or marine waters of New York State and no license is required. Pennsylvania's fish for free day is scheduled for July 4th. Both states recognize each other's free fishing day on the Delaware River.

A brief discussion about Congressman Gibson's potential attendance at the September full Council meeting to talk about the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act and his Watershed Advisory Committee took place.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Jeffer seconded by McKay to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 6/23/15