

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
Dec. 15, 2009

Committee Members Present: Wieland, Bowers, Chase, Sundholm, McKay, Shafer, Fluhr, Keesler
Committee Members Absent: Serio, Flaherty
NPS Partner: Hamilton
Advisory Council: None
Staff: Douglass, Soete, Coney, Ramie
Guests: Niflot, Roeder

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2009 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Committee chairperson Charles Wieland called the meeting to order at 7:51 p.m. A motion by Bowers seconded by McKay to approve the Nov. 17 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business

Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Update: Ramie reviewed the activities of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway group. On Nov. 19, the Sullivan County Legislature appointed a Representative and Alternate to the Byway, Luis Aragon and Heather Jacksy respectively. The ad sales business rep subcommittee met Dec. 10 to review 7 resumes for the ad sales position and three candidates were chosen for personal interviews. The Byway commented on the NYS DOT Ten Mile River bridge replacement project. A public meeting will be held Dec. 3. The interpretive panels that have deteriorated on the Main Street Deck in Narrowsburg will be replaced by the manufacturer at no cost. Sullivan County DPW will do the installation work. The Byway's proposed visitors center project is contained in the County's capital plan but no funds are allocated in 2011 and it looks iffy for 2010. A change in representative from the Town of Lumberland to the Byway board for 2010 was announced with Nadia Rajsz returning as Representative replacing Joe Carr. The next Byway meeting is Jan. 25.

Delaware River Sojourn Update: Ramie reported the theme chosen for the 2010 Delaware River Sojourn is "Bridging the Delaware Valley – Connecting Communities". The Sojourn Steering Committee has expanded to include a new member, the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission. The Sojourn will start June 20 and the Upper Delaware Section will be hosting three days this year, June 20-21-22. The Upper Delaware river sections have not been finalized as yet. There will be stops at the historical Roebling Bridge and the Zane Grey Museum. The new Sojourn website, delawareriversojourn.org, is up and running and the newly developed Sojourn newsletter has been posted on the site. The Sojourn is reviewing a request from PEEC (Pocono Environmental Education Center) for a support letter for a matching grant from the EPA. The next teleconference for the Steering Committee is Jan. 12.

New Business

Congress Approves Hinchey Request for Funding for Flood Warning System in the Delaware River Basin: The UDC was notified by Congressman Hinchey that he had won final congressional approval of his request of \$200,000 for the Delaware River Basin Commission for the continued upgrade and enhancement to the basin's flood warning system as part of the fiscal year 2010 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill. The Senate is due to easily approve the measure in the coming days. President Obama is then expected to sign the bill into law.

News article, "NYC pushes hydropower at 4 Catskill dams": The committee was provided with copy of a *Times Herald-Record* news article dated Dec. 13: "NYC pushes hydropower at 4 Catskill dams". The article reports that New York City wants to expedite a project that would build hydropower stations at four of its reservoirs in the Catskills. Local governments and environmental groups are lining up to oppose a licensing fast track by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The NYC DEP applied in August for a Traditional Licensing Process (TLP) review that would put licensing on a more aggressive time schedule. Locals have asked the FERC to deny the application because they fear it would impede public input. The

City won exclusive rights to study and pursue the project in March, but its exclusivity ends in early 2012, which is why it applied for a quicker review. The DEP wants to build a total of 11 hydroelectric turbines on dams at its Cannonsville, Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie reservoirs. The DEP would hook into existing power grids, but it's unclear what the produced electricity would be used for. NYC DEP has scheduled public meetings on the project in December.

The committee reviewed the issue. A motion by Bowers seconded by Shafer to issue a letter to FERC requesting they deny the City's request and instead require that the Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) be followed to ensure that participants in the licensing proceedings have full input; and the committee recommends full Council approval. The motion carried.

NYC DEP to shut down aqueduct to make tunnel repairs: The committee was provided with copy of a *Times Herald-Record* article of Dec. 4 indicating that the NYC DEP would shut down the Rondout-West Branch tunnel starting Dec. 5 for tunnel repair work. The DEP last shut down the aqueduct on Nov. 5.

DRBC Hydrologic Conditions Report of Dec. 8: The committee was provided, for review, a copy of the Delaware River Basin Commission's latest hydrologic conditions report on Dec. 8 for the Delaware River Basin.

DRBC Releases Results of Flood Analysis Model: The committee was provided with copy of a DRBC news release that announced its review of the 2004, 2005, and 2006 storm events utilizing the new Delaware River Basin Flood Analysis Model demonstrate that widespread river flooding would have occurred in each instance regardless of the pre-event storage condition in the upper basin reservoirs. The findings were announced by DRBC staff at a public meeting of the Delaware River Basin Interstate Flood Mitigation Task Force held in Flemington, NJ.

Of the 13 reservoirs simulated in the model upstream of Trenton, NJ, five did not spill during any of the three storm events and thus can provide no further flood mitigation with additional pre-event void space. For the eight reservoirs that did spill, the model results indicate that larger pre-event voids could have reduced flood crests, but much of the main stem would still have remained in the National Weather Service designated moderate or major flood stage. The amount of reduction in the flood crest that could potentially be achieved with pre-event voids was found to depend upon the characteristics of the storm event as well as on proximity to the reservoir, stream channel characteristics, and local topography.

NPS Report: Hamilton reported that the PA DEP has contacted NPS Upper Delaware wanting a GIS of the NPS unit's in the northeast PA region. The DRBC has asked the NPS to review its draft docket on the Matoushek wells. Hamilton noted that the PA DEP is doing the permit by rule process for gas drilling applications.

Hamilton noted that Jamie Myers of NPS staff will be participating in the Fisheries Cooperative meeting being held today. He will provide meeting notes to the WU/RM committee when they are prepared.

Public Comment

~ Wieland congratulated Alan Bowers on his retirement. He noted it's been good working with him over the years as chairperson and vice-chairperson of the UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee and he'd be missed on the Council.

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

Carol Coney, Office Manager