



# Upper Delaware Council

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## Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2015

**(October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015)**

April 4, 2015 Photo © Anthony Ritter



***Working together to conserve the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River***

*Town of Hancock • Town of Fremont • Town of Delaware • Town of Cohecton • Town of Tusten • Town of Highland • Town of Lumberland  
Town of Deerpark • Damascus Township • Berlin Township • Lackawaxen Township • Shohola Township • Westfall Township  
State of New York • Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Delaware River Basin Commission • In partnership with the National Park Service*

## *Organizational Mission*

The mission of the Upper Delaware Council, Inc. (UDC) is to ensure the effective implementation and administration of the *River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River: New York and Pennsylvania* (Final 1986), utilizing the existing authority of its members and operating under the terms of a Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service.

The Council's existence evolved from special provisions in the 1978 legislation which designated the 73.4-mile section of the Upper Delaware River between Hancock, NY and Mill Rift, PA as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, eligible for federal protection due to its outstandingly remarkable values.

Established in 1988 as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, the UDC's voting membership is comprised of the two states and presently 13 out of the 15 local governments which border on the river. The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) is a non-voting member while the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is the federal partner.

The UDC provides the mechanism to address management actions for the river through a formal partnership of local, state, and federal interests. What sets the River Management Plan apart is the commitment to local land use controls and voluntary actions by landowners to protect the river valley's resources, contrasted with the traditional national park model in which the federal government owns all of the land. More than 85% of the land in the Congressionally-designated, 55,575.5-acre Upper Delaware River corridor remains privately owned.

The Council fulfills the role of advocate, forum, facilitator, educator, and protector as the situations warrant. On a continuous basis, the UDC monitors proposed projects, legislation, new developments, studies, and governmental policies to assess potential impacts on the Upper Delaware's resources, protect private property rights, and uphold the far-sighted vision of the River Management Plan to conserve the river area for present and future generations.

## *Management Structure*

UDC representatives and alternates are appointed to one-year terms by their towns, townships, and state agencies. In addition to a full Council meeting that convenes on the first Thursday of the month, three standing committees meet monthly: Water Use/Resource Management Committee on the third Tuesday; and Project Review Committee and Operations Committee, both on the fourth Tuesday. Subcommittees dedicated to such issues as Personnel, Buildings & Grounds, and Government Officials Liaisons, meet as the need arises. A full-time professional staff consisting of Executive Director Laurie Ramie (employed by the UDC since April 21, 1997), Resource Specialist Travis O'Dell (since October 9, 2012), and Secretary Cindy Odell (since August 29, 2011) carries out the board's directives and operates the Council's business office located at 211 Bridge St. in Narrowsburg, NY.

## *2015 Upper Delaware Council Membership Roster*

Elected to serve as Upper Delaware Council officers at the annual meeting held January 8, 2015 were:

**Chairperson:** Alan F. Henry, Berlin Township, PA

**Vice-Chairperson:** Susan Sullivan, Town of Tusten, NY

**Secretary-Treasurer:** Jeffrey R. Dexter, Damascus Township, PA

Pennsylvania Magisterial District 22-3-04 Judge Ronald J. Edwards administered the oaths of office to the 2015 officers at a swearing-in ceremony held February 5, 2015.

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**UDC Feb. 5, 2015 meeting**  
*Seated:* Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Dexter; Chairman Al Henry; Vice-Chair Susan Sullivan. *Standing:* Steve Adams; Steve Tambini; Fred Peckham; Bill Rudge; Tim Dugan; Nadia Rajsz; Kris Heister; Tony Ritter; Pat Jeffer; Ginny Dudko; Andy Boyar; Jim Greier; Dave Dean; Larry Richardson. (*Absent:* Delaware, Lackawaxen, and Westfall delegates)

As of Sept. 30, 2015, the UDC's board consisted of: (\* denotes a change from Fiscal Year 2014)

<b><i>UDC Member</i></b>	<b><i>Representative</i></b>	<b><i>Alternate(s)</i></b>
<b>Town of Hancock</b>	Fred Peckham	Samuel N. Rowe, Jr.
<b>Town of Fremont</b>	James Greier	George Conklin
<b>Town of Delaware</b>	Harold G. Roeder, Jr.	David Peters
<b>Town of Cochection</b>	Larry H. Richardson	Sean Nearing
<b>Town of Tusten</b>	Susan Sullivan	Tony Ritter
<b>Town of Highland</b>	Andrew Boyar	Debra Conway
<b>Town of Lumberland</b>	Nadia Rajsz	Jenny Mellan
<b>Town of Deerpark</b>	David M. Dean	Virginia Dudko
<b>Damascus Township</b>	Jeffrey R. Dexter	Steven Adams
<b>Berlin Township</b>	Alan Henry	Paul Henry
<b>Lackawaxen Township</b>	John S. McKay	1 <sup>st</sup> - Brian Stuart; 2 <sup>nd</sup> - Camille James
<b>Shohola Township</b>	Patricia Jeffer	1 <sup>st</sup> - Aaron Robinson; 2 <sup>nd</sup> - George J. Fluhr *
<b>Westfall Township</b>	Michael Barth *	Vacant *
<b>State of New York (NY)</b>	William J. Rudge, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Michael J. Flaherty, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
<b>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (PA)</b>	Timothy Dugan, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Rhonda Manning, PA Department of Environmental Protection
<b>Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) – non-voting member</b>	Steven J. Tambini, Executive Director	Vacant
<b>National Park Service (NPS) – UDC partner</b>	Michael Caldwell, Northeast Regional Director	Kristina Heister, Superintendent, Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

\* Appointment Changes: *Shohola* – Alternates Aaron Robinson and George J. Fluhr switched their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate positions via the township's January 2015 appointment; *Westfall* – Chuck Pranski resigned on July 6, 2015 after serving on the Council since Aug. 4, 2014. Mike Barth was appointed as the Township Representative on Aug. 3, 2015, leaving a vacancy in the alternate position he had held since Aug. 4, 2014.

Providing leadership for the UDC's standing committees in 2015 as voted by their peers were chairmen:

- Water Use/Resource Management:** **Tony Ritter**, Town of Tusten, NY
- Project Review:** **Larry H. Richardson**, Town of Cochection, NY
- Operations:** **Alan F. Henry**, Berlin Township, PA

## *Fiscal Year 2015 Accomplishments and Activities*

### *Advocacy*

**Upper Delaware Law Enforcement** – The Upper Delaware Council (UDC) provided input over a three-month period to its federal partners at the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River about the initiative to restructure its law enforcement and emergency services program, while seeking assurances that the Upper Delaware will retain its autonomy.

Superintendent Kristina Heister proposed in February 2015 to engage in more collaboration with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (Middle), including: having Middle Delaware staff take over routine law enforcement administrative functions for both units; and transitioning former Upper Delaware Chief Ranger Joe Hinkes to the position of Operations Supervisor stationed at Middle Delaware to oversee training, protocols, and patrol assignments for protection rangers to be tactically deployed in each park unit, while a Supervisory Park Ranger position at a lesser pay grade would be named at Upper Delaware. Current staffing levels, overall management responsibility, and budgetary control would be retained at the individual units.

Following its review of the pilot program description, the UDC offered comments in an April 2 letter stating that “Sharing additional resources can make sense for operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness as budgets remain static and demands on personnel increase. Law enforcement rangers are highly valued by many residents and visitors in the Upper Delaware for bringing order and peace of mind... Promoting river safety, protecting against any abuse of the river, and guarding private property rights are still top priorities. Therefore, maintaining adequate staffing levels and patrol capabilities of law enforcement rangers to cover the 73.4 miles of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is crucial. Equally imperative is that all law enforcement rangers understand the managerial distinction between the ‘Upper’ and ‘Middle’ Delaware units. Given that the majority of land in the Upper Delaware’s 55,575.5 acres is privately owned, NPS jurisdiction and authority is limited in comparison to the federally-owned Delaware Water Gap unit.”

The letter concluded that a robust orientation program for all rangers who work in the Upper Delaware is needed, there must be no consideration of any overall merger of the Upper and Middle Delaware units, and the law enforcement shared resources program should be regularly evaluated to assure that no diminishment of services occurs to negatively impact the Upper Delaware.

**Cannonsville Discharge** – While crisis was averted after an errant drill boring into an underground aquifer at the Cannonsville Reservoir sprung a turbid discharge leak into the West Branch of the Delaware River between July 8 and Aug. 1, 2015, the Upper Delaware Council urged the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to implement a better public alert system to protect downstream watershed residents.

The DEP held two public meetings at the UDC office on July 20 and August 27 to acknowledge the incident caused by a subcontractor preparing for construction of a hydroelectric plant, discuss the 1964 earthen dam’s stability, and explain the mitigation, testing, and monitoring measures taken.

After acknowledging the New York City agency’s successful containment of the situation, the UDC questioned the six-day delay in any official public notification after the discharge began and the effectiveness of their Emergency Action Plans to address local needs in the event of a dam breach or other

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mishap, for which the inundation threat has been calculated successively by NY and PA community. The Council asked about their communications and contact capabilities, whether an emergency warning system exists, and if a test of it could be arranged in an Aug. 25 letter.

**Hawk's Nest Noise** – The Upper Delaware Council facilitated a June 24, 2015 meeting to discuss complaints from the Westfall Township, PA Board of Supervisors expressed in an April 8 letter about “drivers racing their loud exhaust vehicles and motorcycles through the Hawk's Nest and the noise becoming intolerable.” Representatives from Westfall, the Town of Deepark, National Park Service, UDC, and the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. gathered to investigate the traffic complaint on the famous stretch of New York State Route 97 in Orange County, concluding that the main perpetrators appear to be local due to the repetitive weekday timing. NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River will entertain an application for law enforcement funding to assist with targeted patrols, loan its decibel meter for documentation, and work with all parties to promote safety education.

**Upper Delaware Bridges** – The condition of the Upper Delaware's 10 bridges under the jurisdiction of the New York-Pennsylvania Joint Interstate Bridge Commission raised concerns during FY 2015. The UDC generated a news release based on attendance at the commission's May 13 annual meeting in Dunmore, PA to inform the public about the inspection reports, and scheduled capital construction and maintenance plans for all of the bridges.

The ongoing saga of replacing the 1904 Pond Eddy Bridge moved closer to reality by the release of environmental clearance documents which incorporated comments submitted by the Upper Delaware Council based on a December 18, 2014 agency briefing with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and review of the first draft Wild and Scenic Rivers Section 7 Authorization Application and Aid to Navigation Boater Safety Plan received in February. Now in the final design and permitting phase, the contract is due to be advertised in March 2016 with construction of a new \$13.3 million single-lane truss bridge completed two years later.

Traffic on the 1954 Narrowsburg Bridge that was reduced to one lane with controlled traffic signals in August 2013 following emergency repairs will continue that way until a major rehabilitation takes place starting in Spring 2017 for completion by Fall 2018 with limited closures necessary. The length of time involved to commence the job prompted a community petition drive with 400 signatures and collection of 350 letters seeking redress. The Upper Delaware Council sent a letter to PennDOT on March 5 offering to assist with arrangements for a public meeting to confirm the status of the \$10 million project and coordinate with emergency services providers. That meeting took place on July 29 in Narrowsburg.

**Low Flows** – On June 8, the UDC submitted a Letter to the Editor of *New York Outdoor News* to counter the negativity of a column headlined “Delaware's low flows bad for business.” It stated in part, “The Upper Delaware Council is similarly concerned about setting a tone which discourages visitors who may think the river conditions described in mid-May are accurate today or that the ability of commercial fishing guides to float their drift boats and catch trout is the sole arbiter of success for the river-based business economy... Our non-profit organization consistently advocates for a more equitable, balanced regime of Delaware River flows and releases to protect the local fishery and enhance the river recreation industry, including boating. Specific recommendations have been to install a targeted gage above Montague, increase minimum conservation releases, provide flood mitigation, determine New York City actual consumption, fix leaks in the aqueduct system, and establish a protocol to proactively and systematically provide thermal stress relief during high water temperature events to protect habitat. As we work on these long-term issues, the UDC stresses that the Upper Delaware River remains open for business.”

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**Eel Fishery** – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s American Eel Management Board on October 27, 2014 approved an addendum to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan which “allows the continuation of New York’s Delaware River silver eel weir fishery under a transferable license cap, limited to nine permits annually.” This action, effective in 2015, echoed the Upper Delaware Council’s recommendation based on the relatively small impact that this historically traditional local industry has on the overall population of American eels.

**Railroad Safety** – Railroad-related safety was at the heart of two letters that the Upper Delaware Council penned to the New York Susquehanna & Western Railway/Central New York Railroad in Cooperstown. On November 10, 2014, the Council questioned the condition of the access roadway along the tracks starting at Railroad Bridge #2 in Mill Rift, PA and extending approximately 10 miles to the Pond Eddy Bridge as a potential hazard to local emergency access. An April 2, 2015 letter alluded to the wake of recent, nationally reported train accidents which raised alarm over the contents of the railcars traversing the Upper Delaware River Valley. It urged the railroad company to inform local municipalities and first responders about any hazardous or potentially hazardous cargoes being transported there to allow for proper preparation and training in the event of an emergency.

**Grant Support** – UDC support letters were provided for four grants applications made through the New York State Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council Round 5 competition in July 2015. They requested funding consideration for projects to Market the New York State Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Implement a Schematic Design for the Skinners Falls River Access (project subsequently withdrawn and deferred), Town of Tusten Water District Improvement Project, and Upper Delaware Heritage Walking Trail submitted by the Town of Lumberland.

### *Directory of UDC Approved Resolutions*

- 2014-12: Approving Technical Assistance Grants for Fiscal Year 2015, 10/2/14
- 2014-13: Authorizing Signatories for New Banking Accounts at Jeff Bank, 10/2/14
- 2014-14: Award the Printing of “The Upper Delaware” Newsletter to Courier Printing Corp. for FY 2015, 12/4/15
- 2014-15: Amend the Upper Delaware Council’s Contract With Eckersley and Ostrowski, L.L.P for a Fiscal Year 2014 Financial Review, 12/4/14
- 2015-01: Signature of Corporate Resolutions and Bank Cards, 1/8/15
- 2015-02: Enter Into a Contract With Eckersley and Ostrowski, L.L.P. for the Upper Delaware Council’s Fiscal Year 2015 Financial Review, 1/8/15
- 2015-03: Amending the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget, 1/8/15
- 2015-04: Approving 2015 River Clean-up Grant Applications, 5/7/15
- 2015-05: Approving Revisions to Cooperative Agreement P11AC90818/H487011001, 5/7/15
- 2015-06: Approving a Five-Year Program for October 1, 2015 to Sept. 30, 2020, 5/7/15
- 2015-07: Adopting the FY 2016 Budget, 5/7/15
- 2015-08: Adopting the Water Use/Resource Management Committee Work Plan for FY 2016, 5/7/15
- 2015-09: Adopting the Project Review Committee Work Plan for FY 2016, 5/7/15
- 2015-10: Adopting the Operations Committee Work Plan for FY 2016, 5/7/15
- 2015-11: Authorizing an Amendment to the Health Insurance Section of the Personnel Policy, 5/29/15
- 2015-12: Adopting New York State M/WBE Procurement Policy, 7/2/15
- 2015-13: Clarifying Corridor Boundary in Lackawaxen Township, 7/2/15
- 2015-14: Authorizing an Amendment of the UDC Medical Insurance Provision, 7/2/15

## *Administration*

**Federal Funding** – The Upper Delaware Council began Fiscal Year 2015 under the limitations of a U.S. Congressional Continuing Resolution which resulted in no availability of funds through its Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service until November 5, and then provided access to only 19.72% of its federal allocation through Dec. 11, 2014. The one percent decrease to the static \$300,000 federal allocation that the UDC had been advised to account for in passing its Fiscal Year 2015 budget was restored effective December 12 when a new federal spending plan was enacted. This allowed the UDC to amend its budget via approval of Resolution 2015-03 which directed the use of the restored \$3,000 to subsidize a River and Shoreline Grants Clean-up Program.

**River Management Plan** – A “Technical Review Report for the 1986 Upper Delaware River Management Plan” was finalized in November 2014 after its conclusions were summarized to the Upper Delaware Council on October 2. The UDC contracted with Environmental Planning and Design, LLC of Pittsburgh to undertake an analysis of the River Management Plan. The consultants researched any inconsistencies with current regulations and other documents, inventoried and documented areas of the Plan that should be revisited or modified, outlined the procedures to make revisions, identified editorial mistakes, and compiled a matrix of roles and responsibilities for the partners involved with the Plan’s ongoing administration. Their conclusion was that the River Management Plan has been successful in both its longevity and ability to prevent incompatible development within the river corridor. It has been implemented in a flexible manner to accommodate variations when needed. None of the updates that were recommended to reflect changing times and conditions since the Plan’s adoption in 1986 were egregious enough to warrant extreme concern. The Technical Review Report of this working document now catalogs issues to examine into one resource and provides a springboard for future discussions of potential River Management Plan updates.

**Agreement Renewals** – In addition to working through the process to develop an annual budget and set of work plans for the three standing committees of Operations, Project Review, and Water Use/Resource Management, the Upper Delaware Council’s Five-Year Operating Program and its Cooperative Agreement renewal with the U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service came due this fiscal year in order to submit the Fiscal Year 2016 Application for Federal Assistance by the May 15, 2015 deadline. The Five-Year Operating Program, which offers a long-range vision to inform and guide the Council’s policies, was approved on May 7 to cover the period of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2020. Revisions to the Statement of Work and Reports/Deliverables section of the Cooperative Agreement were negotiated with the NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River, to lead to mutual approval of that legal document which covers that same five-year term.

**Records Management** – The Upper Delaware Council embarked on a three-phase project to inventory, organize, and archive its organizational records. Staff began consulting records management experts at the National Park Service in December 2014 to strategize over procedures and discuss available resources to facilitate the major effort to provide order for hundreds of dusty boxes of uncategorized files and papers in the office, some dating back to the late 1960s from predecessor groups. Two phases of work were completed in August and September, respectively. Local contractors were hired to prepare the attic by making repairs to the flooring and window, installing blinds, vacuuming, assembling wire storage shelves, and purging non-records material as directed; then to organize the attic space by identifying and labeling contents of boxes by year and category, grouping like subjects together, transferring certain documents upstairs, producing an inventory list, and organizing the temporary storage on the provided shelves. The third phase of developing a records disposition plan and retention schedule, and electronically digitizing and archiving files will be addressed next.

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## *UDC Grant Programs*

**Technical Assistance Grants** – The Upper Delaware Council offers Technical Assistance Grants for research, planning, educational projects, and studies conducted by its member municipalities and the five river valley county governments in Orange, Sullivan, Delaware (NY), Wayne and Pike (PA).

The UDC voted on October 2, 2014 to award \$28,928 in competitive Fiscal Year 2015 Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) for 11 projects that help fulfill goals of the River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

Combined requests for applications submitted by the August 22, 2014 deadline totaled \$49,438. A special meeting of the Project Review Committee took place on September 9, 2014 to review the applications and make recommendations to the full Council. The projects were completed by August 21, 2015.

The approved Fiscal Year 2015 TAG recipients were:

- **Town of Delaware** - \$6,670 to complete three phases of codification for all its local laws and ordinances;
- **Town of Fremont** - \$4,018 to acquire and install a Building and Code Enforcement Software Program with training provided;
- **Shohola Township** - \$3,900 to graphically design and produce history-related kiosk panels;
- **Sullivan County** - \$3,000 to contract with the Delaware Highlands Conservancy for an eagle educational and interpretive initiative;
- **Town of Lumberland** - \$2,800 to create topographic maps, and to acquire and install Complaint Tracking software for the Code Enforcement Office;
- **Damascus Township** - \$2,500 to revise the Township Communications Ordinance;
- **Berlin Township** - \$2,312 to prepare and publish a construction manual for sanitary sewers and appurtenances, and to print new Sign & Subdivision Ordinances;
- **Town of Highland** - \$1,500 to upgrade the town's website and draft a written social media policy;
- **Town of Fremont** - \$1,134 to print and distribute "The Echo" newsletter as published by the Basket Historical Society of the Upper Delaware Valley;
- **Town of Tusten** - \$552 to create topographic maps with parcel boundary lines and the river corridor boundary; and
- **Town of Highland** - \$542 to create soil maps and update the town's zoning maps to include an overlay of the river corridor.

The latest round brought the cumulative amount to \$774,322 that the UDC has provided to its member municipalities from 1988 to 2015. In all, 230 projects have been funded through the Technical Assistance Grant program.

**River Clean-up Grants** – In the second year of its River and Shoreline Clean-up Grants Program, the Upper Delaware Council disbursed \$4,072 to help subsidize seven landscape beautification projects. Approval was given at the May 7, 2015 UDC monthly meeting to designate that portion of the Council's federal funding allocation as received through the National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River's budget to assist with litter removal from the bi-state river and its banks.

Members that applied to coordinate projects were:

1. **Lackawaxen Township**, \$736 for river trash patrols within the township's borders conducted by contractor John Traver;



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2. **Town of Lumberland**, \$775 for a clean-up from the town line to the Mongaup Access conducted by contractor Ann Steimle;
3. **Damascus Township**, \$250 for a July 26 river sweep from Callicoon to Milanville by members of the Calkins Ag 4-H Club;
4. **Town of Highland**, \$661 for weekly river refuse patrols within town boundaries by canoe and foot;
5. **Town of Tusten**, \$640 for river and shore clean-ups conducted by K&D Freda Enterprises and the Ten Mile River Boy Scouts Camp;
6. **Town of Deerpark**, \$750 for a litter pluck along the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway New York State Route 97 Hawk's Nest area by the Town Highway Department on August 24-25; and
7. **Damascus Township**, \$260 for a specifically-targeted, summer's end clean-up at the popular Skinners Falls River Access by the Calkins Ag 4-H Club on September 3.

The UDC's goal is to help maintain the pristine quality of the 73.4 miles from the confluence of the East and West Branches of the Delaware below Hancock downstream to Railroad Bridge No. 2 near Sparrowbush that was designated for protection under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1978.

### *Water Use/Resource Management Issues*

**NYS Fracking Ban** – Governor Andrew Cuomo on December 17, 2014 announced his decision to prohibit High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing in New York State based on the recommendations of the Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation after six years of studying potential pros and cons, and weighing the over 260,000 public comments received. The final Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement was issued on June 29, 2015 to formally enact the ban. Drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation remains a potential issue for the Upper Delaware Council for any activity that might occur in Pike and Wayne Counties of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania if the Delaware River Basin Commission were to approve natural gas development regulations and lift its moratorium on fracking that has been in place since 2010.

**River Accesses** – In December 2014, Sullivan County was awarded a \$35,150 grant to complete final design and engineering to upgrade the Highland River Access site in Barryville and to pursue maintenance and operational agreements for river accesses in Long Eddy, Callicoon, Skinners Falls, Ten Mile River, and Pond Eddy. The accesses are all part of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan for the Upper Delaware River Corridor to which the Upper Delaware Council actively contributes as a Steering Committee member.

The Upper Delaware Council monitored plans by the Delaware Highlands Conservancy to purchase a flood-damaged residential property on Ferry Street in Long Eddy that would be conveyed to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to improve the nearby Long Eddy River Access, and participated in several public meetings on the subject.

The status of land beneath the Barryville-Shohola Bridge being utilized by a private commercial livery on the New York side was questioned in the summer and early fall of 2015, given its proximity to a public fishing access site upstream of the bridge. The Upper Delaware Council reached out to the Town of Highland, National Park Service, New York State Department of Transportation, and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation through letters and meetings to seek clarification of property lines, lease arrangements, permitting authority, and signage.

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On September 15, 2015 the UDC wrote to Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Superintendent Kris Heister requesting consideration of ideas to improve the muddy launch site conditions at the Ten Mile River Access in Tusten owned by the Greater New York Council, Boy Scouts of America, and co-managed by NPS.

**Land Resources** – The UDC’s Water Use/Resource Management Committee pursued the formulation of a plan to address the educational and interpretive opportunities cited for the unusual or unique landforms identified in the National Park Service’s Delaware River Basin Outstandingly Remarkable Values Geologic Report. Projects suggested for implementation with NPS partners include developing wayside exhibits at key public locations of land resources, dedicating articles and website pages to explain the significance of various formations, hosting presentations about them, and exploring the establishment of a “Trail of Geology”. At the committee’s February 17, 2015 meeting, it was announced that NPS secured a \$110,000 grant to conduct a Geologic Resources Inventory which will cover the entire length of the river corridor.

**Mast Hope Wastewater** – Based on complaints received, the Upper Delaware Council sought answers from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection about alleged problems with effluent discharges from the Mast Hope Development Wastewater Treatment Plant in Lackawaxen Township, PA, particularly when increased visitation occurs at the Masthope Mountain Community that it serves. The UDC met with NPS and Lackawaxen Township officials in December 2014 to discuss the issue, wrote a letter to PA DEP on January 8, 2015 expressing concerns over the capacity and monitoring of the facility, followed up with the Delaware River Basin Commission which also permits the operation, and hosted a presentation from plant owners Aqua Pennsylvania Wastewater, Inc. on June 4.

**Oral History Tapes** – A long-standing cultural resources concern of the Upper Delaware Council’s approached resolution as the NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River turned its attention to the 150 oral history interviews that were conducted of river valley subjects between 1986 and 2005. A September 2, 2015 briefing from newly-hired Museum Technician Lauren Hauptman related that 142 of the tapes have been converted to a digital format, 118 have been indexed, 39 have been transcribed with newly-purchased software, and a list was produced of interviews which lack release authorization forms for which UDC assistance was requested to provide contact information for known individuals or their estates. The UDC wishes to see the historically valuable tapes preserved and made publicly accessible.

### ***Presentations***

Upper Delaware Council representatives and alternates heard from speakers on a wide variety of informational topics throughout FY 2015. The following presentations were made:

Oct. 2, 2014 – “Technical Review Report Summary for the River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Project” by Jennifer Cristobal, project director for Environmental Planning and Design, LLC of Pittsburgh, PA

Nov. 6, 2014 – “Acoustic Monitoring of Bats in the River Valley” by Dr. Howard Whidden and Larry Laubach from the East Stroudsburg University Biology Department

Dec. 4, 2014 – “Overview of the National Park Service Natural Gas Summit for Federal Agencies and Partners” by Kristina Heister, superintendent, NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

Mar. 5, 2015 – “Eagle Express Commercial Transportation Initiative” by Jane Luchsinger, president, Narrowsburg Chamber of Commerce

Apr. 2, 2015 – “Prototype of a Geographic Information System for the Upper Delaware River Region” by consultant Shannon Thol, NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River GIS Coordinator Jamie Myers, and NPS Chief Cartographer Roger Johnson

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May 7, 2015 – “Historic Markers of the Upper Delaware Valley” by Norma Schadt, assistant historian for the Town of Deerpark, NY

May 26, 2016 – “National Park Service Commercial Use Authorization Permit Program Overview” by Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Coordinator Bonnie Sheard and Acting Chief Ranger Larry Neal

June 4, 2015 – “Masthope Mountain Community Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations” by a team of representatives from Aqua Pennsylvania Wastewater, Inc.

July 2, 2015 – “Policies and Regulations at Delaware River Accesses” by Lt. David Clayton of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission’s Northeast Assistant Supervisor Bryan Bendock and Waterways Conservation Officer David Kanaski

Sept. 3, 2015 – “Geotourism Project for the Upper and Middle Delaware Rivers” by John Beljean, Delaware River Field Representative for the National Parks Conservation Association.

### *Project Review Issues*

**Design Handbook** – Sullivan Renaissance awarded the Upper Delaware Council a \$300 Environmental Initiatives Grant on November 18, 2014 to help bridge a budget gap to print copies of its graphically revised “Design Handbook for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.” One hundred and three copies of the 36-page, color document designed by W Design of Barryville, NY were printed by Spencer Printing of Honesdale, PA in December to supplement the UDC’s electronic version. Originally released in 1990 to provide guidance for undertaking construction in the river corridor that ensures harmony with the existing landscape, the updated Design Handbook features a more contemporary graphic look, new photos and illustrations, and updated information.

**Substantial Conformance** – To fulfill its re-emphasized Cooperative Agreement reporting responsibility to the National Park Service to annually review its municipal members’ enforcement programs, the UDC sent a letter to the 13 towns and townships on April 7, 2015 to request a summary of all building permits issued, variances granted, and land use projects approved within their river corridor boundaries dating retroactively from Jan. 1, 2014 to that current date. The UDC sent a letter to the National Park Service on June 15 requesting a written explanation of the agency’s formal process for making final determinations of substantial conformance based on UDC project review recommendations.

**Review of Projects** – Among the proposed land use changes and development projects that the Upper Delaware Council reviewed or discussed this fiscal year were:

- Lackawaxen Township’s revision to its zoning code to modify definitions
- Sullivan County Planning’s request for review of a special use application for the Big Dog Sawmill in the Town of Tusten
- Separate proposals for an archery range and a mini-golf course in the Town of Highland
- A 10-site recreational vehicle campground in Damascus Township
- Addition of “farm brewery” as a Special Permitted Use in the Town of Highland Code
- Separate proposals for a real estate/law office, a two-room hotel suites, and an eating/drinking establishment in the Narrowsburg hamlet of the Town of Tusten
- Amendments to Shohola Township’s Zoning Code and further review of amended zoning regulations to prepare a UDC Substantial Conformance review report
- Proposed revisions to the Town of Highland Code regarding Supplementary Parking Regulations
- A special use permit for a light industrial redevelopment of a portion of the former Narrowsburg School in the Town of Tusten
- A site plan review for construction projects at Morry’s Camp in the Town of Lumberland

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- Investigation of complaints about cabin construction and tube take-outs at properties in Barryville
- A special use permit for a home-based business, Natural Contents Kitchen, in Narrowsburg, Town of Tusten

**Project Review Workbook** – The Upper Delaware Council approved a bid from Environmental Planning and Design, LLC of Pittsburgh on September 3, 2015 to evaluate and recommend changes to the 1988 Project Review Workbook that outlines procedures and provides checklists to determine substantial conformance of zoning and land use development proposals with the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Management Plan’s Land and Water Use Guidelines. The goal of the project to commence in Fiscal Year 2016 is to streamline the format and improve the functionality of the Workbook.

### *Special Meetings*

A sampling of non-UDC meetings and special events attended includes:

- Oct. 3, 2014 – Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership meeting, Arkville, NY
- Oct. 9, 2014 – “Celebrating Catskill Waters: Past and Present” exhibit opening at The Time and The Valleys Museum, Grahamsville, NY
- Oct. 14-15, 2014 – 5<sup>th</sup> Annual “Water, Water Everywhere” Conference hosted by Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc., Hale Eddy, NY
- Nov. 5, 2014 – UDC Resource Specialist Travis O’Dell gave a presentation on the UDC’s Project Review Procedures to Lackawaxen Township
- Nov. 15, 2014 – National Parks Conservation Association FracTracker Alliance informational meeting, Narrowsburg, NY
- Nov. 17, 2014 – “Sustainable Development Strategies” with Randall Arendt of the Natural Lands Trust, Monticello, NY
- Nov. 17, 2014 – National Park Service Interpretation Management Assistance Program Regional Team Interview, Beach Lake, PA
- Nov. 19, 2014 and Nov. 19, 2015 – U.S. Geological Survey Delaware River Basin Water Census project update webinars
- Dec. 18, 2014 – UDC Resource Specialist Travis O’Dell gave a presentation on the UDC’s Project Review Procedures to the Town of Cohecton
- Jan. 14, 2015 – State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Educational Conference, Rock Hill, NY
- Mar. 26, 2015 – Western Orange County Trails Forum, Huguenot, NY
- Mar. 26, 2015 – Long Eddy River Access Business Stimulation Discussion, Long Eddy, NY
- Apr. 14-15, 2015 – Green Tourism Conference, Hawley, PA
- May 1, 2015 – National Park Service Water Safety Partners 2015 Seasonal Kick-off Meeting, Yulan, NY
- May 5, 2015 – Delaware River Basin Committee One Permit/One Process webinar
- May 13, 2015 – New York/Pennsylvania Joint Interstate Bridge Committee annual meeting, Dunmore, PA
- May 19, 2015 – UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie provided a UDC overview at the 2015 Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Seasonal Staff Orientation, Beach Lake, PA
- June 16, 2015 – Delaware River Basin Commission’s Water Management Advisory Committee, West Trenton, NJ
- June 23, 2015 – Delaware River Sojourn, Day 3, Narrowsburg to Zane Grey Access

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July 18, 2015 – Grave of the Unknown Soldier Commemoration, Lackawaxen, PA; and Battle of Minisink Observance, Minisink Ford, NY

Sept. 17, 2015 – NYS DOT Public Consultation Meeting for the Town of Highland Beaver Brook Bridge Replacement, Yulan, NY

Sept. 24, 2015 – “Water 101: Fundamental Water Resource Challenges and Needs” workshop, Callicoon, NY

Sept. 28, 2015 – Long Eddy River Access Visioning Meeting, Long Eddy, NY

Sept. 30, 2015 – Upper and Middle Delaware River Geotourism Stewardship Council meeting, Hawley, PA

Additional meetings in which the Upper Delaware Council participated included the Common Waters Partnership, Upper Delaware River Roundtable, NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River Water Safety Committee, Eastern Shale Group, Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc., Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the Upper Delaware River Corridor Steering Committee, D&H Transportation Heritage Council, and Sullivan County Trail Committee.

### *Public Outreach*

**Annual Awards** – One hundred guests gathered at the Upper Delaware Council’s 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Ceremony on April 26 to pay tribute to individuals, organization, and communities that have acted to improve the quality of life or protect the resources of the Upper Delaware River Valley.

Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry Director Daniel A. Devlin served as keynote speaker for the banquet held at Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake, PA.

Honored for their contributions in 2015 were:

***Distinguished Service Award ~ Glenn H. Voss*** of Beach Lake, PA

Chief Ranger, 1984-1999, National Park Service Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River (retired)

***Robin M. Daniels Memorial Lifesaving Award ~ Eric J. Mankowski*** of Bethlehem, PA

July 26, 2014 rescue of a drowning swimmer near Staircase Rapids, Town of Lumberland

***Partnership Award ~ The Weather Project: Harnessing the Power of Science, Art & Community***

Recognizing: NACL Theatre, Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development, and the Town of Highland

***Outstanding Community Achievement Award ~ Damascus Township, PA***

Execution of a Dirt and Gravel Project on River Road to improve storm water run-off conditions

***Community Service Award ~ Tusten Energy Committee***

Solar research volunteer mission by Brandi Merolla, Star Hesse, Charles Blanchard, and Carol Wingert

***Community Service Award ~ Jeff Skelding and Sherri Resti***

Superior staff support for Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. based in Hancock, NY

***Cultural Achievement Award ~ Sally Talaga*** of Honesdale, PA

Contributions to historic preservation and interpretation in greater Wayne County for over 25 years

***Volunteer Award ~ Ginny Fiero*** of Sioux Falls, SD

NPS Upper Delaware Watershed Stewards Program Volunteer Coordinator service

***Special Recognition Award ~ Kelly O. Maloney***, U.S. Geological Survey, Wellsboro, PA

Development of a Riverine Environmental Flow Decision Support System Model for the Delaware River

***Special Recognition Award ~ Mikki Uzupes***, Bold Gold Media Group

For journalistic excellence as News Director of the Pocono Lake Region Office

***Oaken Gavel Award ~ Andrew Boyar***, Supervisor, Town of Highland, NY

Leadership as Upper Delaware Council chairperson in 2014

**New Website** – The Upper Delaware Council contracted with W Design of Barryville, NY on June 23 to create a new, mobile responsive website at [www.upperdelawarecouncil.org](http://www.upperdelawarecouncil.org) by Sept. 30. The website was

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built to be fully accessible on multiple devices including smart phones and tablets in addition to personal computers, and easier to update using a Wordpress Content Management System. The organized delivery of information aims to be more visually engaging and user-friendly overall. It replaces the UDC's prior website which had debuted on July 4, 2008 with an entirely updated look, functionality, and many new features. Navigation tabs include Membership, Meetings, News, Grants, Photo Gallery, and Contacts which includes a quick response form to request a copy of the UDC's Visitor Information Map & Guide brochure or its latest 12-page newsletter.

**Raft Trip** – The Upper Delaware Council held its 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Raft Trip on August 2, 2015 under sunny skies and excellent paddling conditions. The event attracted 88 guests, including 12 children ages 5-12. Kittatinny Canoes served as the host livery for the seven-mile river trip from Barryville to Pond Eddy. The UDC non-profit organization coordinates the public excursion at deeply discounted rates to promote stewardship and enjoyment of the nationally-designated river it works to conserve.

**“The Upper Delaware”** – Since 1988, the Upper Delaware Council has published a free newsletter about the environment and the people of the Upper Delaware River Valley in New York and Pennsylvania.

“The Upper Delaware” is currently published twice a year. It is sent to a mailing list of more than 9,000 subscribers and posted on the UDC's website for online viewing or printing.

The Spring/Summer 2015 issue released on April 1 featured articles including: “Upper and Middle Delaware NPS Units to Increase Law Enforcement Collaborations”; “New York State to Ban Fracking”; “UDC to Present Awards April 26”; “River Management Plan, Bats, Gas & Buses on UDC Agenda”; “D&H Enthusiasts Invited to Show Support”; “UDC Raft Trip to Launch August 2”; and a profile on Commonwealth of Pennsylvania UDC Representative Timothy Dugan.

Featured articles in the Fall/Winter 2015 issue, prepared during Fiscal Year 2015 and released on October 2, included: “Reservoir Mishap Creates Concern”; “UDC Honors River Valley Contributors”; “National Park Service Ready for Centennial”; “Delaware River Sojourn Celebrates Birthplace of America”; “UDC Funds Seven River Clean-ups”; a profile of UDC Shohola Township Alternate Representative Aaron Robinson; and a photo essay of “Historical Happenings in the Upper Delaware”.

Visit the Publications page of the UDC website to find an archive of “The Upper Delaware” past issues.

### **UDC News Releases:**

In addition to the regular publication of notices with agenda descriptions for regular and special meetings, the Upper Delaware Council issued the following news releases in Fiscal Year 2015:

- 10/02/14 – Upper Delaware Council Awards 11 Technical Assistance Grants
- 10/06/14 – “The Upper Delaware” Fall/Winter 2014 Newsletter Available On-line and by Mail
- 10/08/14 – UDC Updates Design Handbook
- 12/16/14 – Sullivan Renaissance Grant Helps UDC to Print Design Handbooks
- 01/09/15 – Upper Delaware Council Elects 2015 Officers
- 01/29/15 – UDC Welcomes New PA Governor
- 02/05/15 – Highland Completes 2015 UDC Grant
- 02/06/15 – Upper Delaware Council Names Roster for 2015
- 02/12/15– Upper Delaware Council Seeks Nominations for 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards by Mar. 9
- 03/12/15 – PA Bureau of Forestry Director to Speak at Upper Delaware Council Awards April 26
- 03/18/15 – UDC Announces Honorees for Awards Ceremony on April 26
- 04/01/15 – “The Upper Delaware” Spring/Summer 2015 Newsletter Available On-line and by Mail
- 04/02/15 – Reserve for UDC Awards by April 17
- 04/26/14 – PA Bureau of Forestry Director Delivers Keynote Address at UDC Awards
- 05/04/15 – Upper Delaware Brochures Available
- 05/05/15 – UDC Raft Trip to Launch Aug. 2

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- 05/11/15 – UDC Awards River Clean-up Grants
- 05/14/15 – Four Upper Delaware River Bridges Set for Replacement or Major Repairs
- 06/09/15 – Berlin Completes 2015 UDC Grant
- 06/20/15 – Take the Eagle Express to the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway
- 07/02/15 – Lumberland and Damascus Complete UDC Grant Projects
- 07/20/15 – Narrowsburg Bridge Rehabilitation Subject of July 29 Public Meeting
- 07/29/15 – Fremont Completes 2015 UDC Grant
- 08/05/15 – Apply for UDC Grants by August 28
- 08/27/15 – Final 2015 UDC Grants Completed
- 09/08/15 – UDC Funds More Litter Pick-ups

**Informational Booths** – Exhibits, literature, information, and occasional benefit river valley t-shirt sales were offered by the Upper Delaware Council at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Green Tourism Conference held at Woodloch Pines Resort in Hawley, PA on April 14 and 15; the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Zane Grey Festival sponsored by the National Park Service and Zane Grey’s West Society in Lackawaxen, PA; and the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Narrowsburg RiverFest, a Festival of Art, Music & Ecology on the Delaware River, on July 28.

**NPS Centennial** – As the National Park Service geared up to celebrate President Woodrow Wilson’s August 25, 1916 legislation to create the federal agency, the Upper Delaware Council helped to brainstorm and promote activities to highlight the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. The goal of the NPS Centennial is to connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates. Local campaigns that kicked off in 2015 included “Find Your Park” to raise public awareness and share stories; hiring a Centennial Volunteer Ambassador paid intern as only 17 parks in the Northeast Region won the right to do; sponsoring a Favorite Views Facebook-based photo contest from June 1 to October 31, 2015; planning events for National Public Lands Day on Sept. 26 that included a river clean-up, trail maintenance work, and planting a pollinator garden; and starting the filming to create a Virtual Visitor Experience tour of the Upper Delaware for world-wide marketing purposes.

**Geotourism Initiative** – A William Penn Foundation grant-funded initiative by the National Geographic Maps Division and the National Parks Conservation Association to develop an interactive website to highlight distinctive destinations, experiences, and businesses in the Upper and Middle Delaware River officially launched with the Sept. 30 convening of a Geotourism Stewardship Council on which the Upper Delaware Council was asked to serve. The “Scenic, Wild Delaware River” MapGuide will encompass portions of nine watershed counties in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, with site nominations made locally. A Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism will be crafted to support the network of place-based authentic sites and activities into the future.



*Fiscal Year 2015 financial data for the Upper Delaware Council is available by contacting:*

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