

WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
July 17, 2018

Committee Members Present: Fred Peckham, Doug Case, Al Henry, Jim Greier
Committee Members Absent: Deb Conway or Andy Boyar, Pat Jeffer, Evan Padua
Staff : Laurie Ramie, Pete Golod, Linda Drollinger
NPS Partner: Don Hamilton
Guests: None

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 17, 2018 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Peckham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A motion by Case, seconded by Henry, to approve the June 19 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business

6/20 Green Infrastructure in the Delaware River Watershed: Ramie and Golod attended this workshop sponsored by the New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF) in Monticello. Golod said the mission of NYLCVEF is to educate, engage and empower New Yorkers to be effective advocates on behalf of the environment. Since 2017, NYLCVEF has been involved with the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, to conserve the land and water and protect the health of the Delaware River Watershed. Recently, NYLCVEF teamed up with Delaware River Watershed partners for a policy forum workshop on Green Infrastructure's role in protecting our waterways. The forum focused on the economic, social and environmental benefits of Green Infrastructure, investing in greener strategies for managing stormwater, and helping to equip local landowners and municipal leaders with the information and tools needed to bring more GI to their communities. Traditional stormwater management is called gray infrastructure and consists of sewerage mains, tunnels and wastewater treatment plants. Green Infrastructure is an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle. Gray stormwater infrastructure is designed to move gray stormwater away from the built environment. Green Infrastructure seeks to maintain and restore natural functions of watersheds by preserving as much natural area as possible in new developments while minimizing the extent of impervious surfaces and by using engineered practices to capture runoff and allow the water to either infiltrate to soils and groundwater, be taken up by trees and plants, or be reused for irrigation or other beneficial uses. This strategy seeks to protect local waterways by reducing the quantity of water flowing into them and by minimizing impacts to water quality from polluted runoff. Among the presenters were Steve Schwartz of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, George Schuler of The Nature Conservancy, Stephanie Dalke of the Pinchot Institute, Diana Weiner of Sullivan Renaissance, Simon Gruber of CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities, Freda Eisenberg, commissioner of Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management, Jeff Skelding, executive director of Friends of the Upper Delaware River, and Molly Oliver of the Delaware County Department of Watershed Affairs. Ramie remarked that Green Infrastructure is not a new concept, just a new term for best management practices which the UDC has long been promoting. Golod read aloud one section of the policy forum's White Paper:

“Although the upper Delaware River is mostly rural and forested, water quality is increasingly threatened due to booming industrial development, economic pressures on owners to sell farms and forested land to developers, and the growing influx of tourists. Currently, no local municipality in this area is designated as a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) by New York State, meaning that unless local communities choose to incorporate better stormwater management into community planning on their own, there is limited regulatory oversight for protecting waterways from polluted runoff. Continued protection and coordination among local leaders is required if the region is to continue providing its clean drinking water and recreational opportunities to millions of people. As the intensity of rainstorms in the region increases, more sustainable strategies for managing stormwater will be needed to mitigate flood damage and protect the river and its tributaries.”

To read the entire White Paper authored by Simon Gruber, CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities in partnership with the New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, visit http://nylcvef.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GI_Forum_Paper_061518_WEB.pdf. Henry questioned the assertion of “booming industrial development” in the area. Ramie agreed that characterization was an overreach. Golod conceded that the paper’s conclusions may not be applicable to all of the Upper Delaware, but he pointed out that Hancock has experienced acute runoff problems for years and that former Hancock Supervisor Sam Rowe, Jr. long advocated for better stormwater mitigation policies.

6/21 DRBC Water Management Advisory Committee (WMAC): Golod participated via webcast in this WMAC meeting. Kathy Klein of the Water Resources Association for the Delaware River Basin was elected new chair of the WMAC. Her term started July 1st and will run through June 30, 2020. John Thaefer of Artesian Water was elected vice chair, with the same term limits. Namsoo Suk has been promoted to Director of Science and Water Quality Management and the DRBC has hired Water Resource Engineer Seung Ah Byun, Aquatic Biologist Jake Bransky, and Public Affairs Specialist Stacey Mulholland. The hydrological report showed all New York City reservoirs were full, in good condition, and all above 95% capacity. The salt front is at River Mile 68; its normal location at this time of year is at River Mile 69. The DRBC Water Audit Program was conducted from 1994-2014. It was developed to track how efficiently water is moved from its source to the customer and to ensure that systems quantify and are accountable for water losses. It revealed that basin export trends have remained relatively flat while consumption use trends for three major sectors: public water supply, industrial, and thermoelectric have varied over time. Power/thermoelectric consumption use has declined due to power plant closures. Industrial water use has decreased over time due to loss of large facilities. Public water supply growth has been offset by conservation efforts. The next WMAC meeting is scheduled for October 18.

6/22 Local History Roundtable: Ramie attended this meeting of the Thomas Kennedy Local History Roundtable held at the Environmental Learning Center (Brookfield Renewable) at Lake Wallenpaupack. On July 21, there will be a book signing by the three authors of the “Route 6 Guidebook,” which details attractions within 25 miles of Route 6 (some included are in Wayne and Pike Counties). Route 6 runs from Matamoras, PA to the state’s border with Ohio – 363 miles. The authors will be at the Wayne County Historical Society in Honesdale from 10-12, then from 1-3 at the Waymart Area Historical Society. A tour of the Williams House, which serves as the museum for the Wallenpaupack Historical Society, followed the meeting as well as a tour of the former Paupack School, which was purchased by a local resident who is turning it into apartments and a café. Ramie mentioned upcoming events to the LHR: 7/21 UDSB “Dollars and Sense of Preserving Community Character;” 7/25 D&H Transportation Heritage Council meeting in High Falls, NY; and 8/5 UDC Raft Trip. A request has been made to the general public for information being sought by a graduate anthropology student interning at WCHS. Reputedly, there are seven Native American dugout canoes in Wayne County, but the whereabouts of only four are known. If anyone has information about dugout canoes in the county, they are asked to contact WCHS. The next meeting of the Local History Roundtable will be at the Wyoming County Historical Society in Tunkhannock on September 21.

6/25 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Meeting Minutes: (Copy of minutes provided in members’ packets.)

Promoting Butterfly Habitat Grants: One application was received from the Callicoon Business Association to supplement a planting area on NYS Route 97 at the cross-light on Upper Main Street where a Callicoon welcome sign is located. No action could be taken since there was no quorum for the meeting.

Status of UDSB Visitor Center Partnership Project and Next Steps: Heather Jacksy reported that Sullivan County Attorney Cheryl McCausland is reticent about the county signing a draft lease with the railroad company, a requirement for development of the Callicoon Train Station into a visitor center. However, Jacksy said the Sullivan County Legislature’s leadership is supportive of the project. Per Jacksy, Sullivan County Planning Commissioner Freda Eisemberg had a preliminary meeting with Sullivan County Visitors Association (SCVA) CEO Roberta Byron Lockwood to discuss the situation. A June 29 site tour of the train station was arranged for Lockwood, County Division of Public Works Commissioner Ed McAndrew, and DPW architect Kristin Porter. Architect Buck Moorhead, a member of the Train Depot Committee, in conjunction with architect Michael Chojnicki, has come up with preliminary design plans that accounts for \$250,000 in expenses to develop approximately 800 square feet to house the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitors Center. Additional work is envisioned for development of an outdoor reading area for the Western Sullivan Public Library, creation of a mini-amphitheater, stage and

performance seating area, development of an outdoor eating area plus landscaping and plantings. The total estimated project cost is \$550,000-\$700,000, depending on the percentage of work subject to prevailing wage rate. Ramie said roles are being determined for various partners in this project.

July 21 Presentation: "The Dollars and Sense of Preserving Community Character": Ed McMahon's presentation will be held at the Narrowsburg Union from 10 a.m. to noon. There are 45 reservations to date. Certificates of Continuing Education for two credit hours will be available to New York town planning and zoning board members who attend.

Miscellaneous: Ramie reported that Orange County has a new Tourism Director. Amanda Dana will start work in July. Richardson has suggested that UDSB, Inc. invite her to an upcoming meeting. Ramie showed photos of the Hancock Veterans Memorial Bridge dedication that she attended on June 21 and described the ceremony. The next meeting of UDSB will be Monday, July 23, 2018.

6/30 Upper Delaware BioBlitz: Golod and Drollinger staffed a UDC information booth at the BioBlitz event in Starlight, PA at the confluence of the East and West Branches of the Delaware River. The event featured nine teams investigating aquatic insects, birds and fish, mammals, mosses and lichens, mushrooms, reptiles and amphibians, plants, grasses and trees, and terrestrial bugs. There were mushroom walks, forest walks, birdwatching walks, photography and art programs, music, and a performance by the NAACL Theatre of "Trees." The night before the BioBlitz, there was a bat capture and release demonstration. Preliminary BioBlitz results will be presented by Steve Schwartz at the August 2 UDC meeting.

7/10-11 NPS Long-Range Interpretive Plan Meeting: Golod and Hamilton attended Session II of ongoing NPS stakeholders meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 10-11. The LRIP vision is for 5-7 years. A component of the UPDE comprehensive interactive plan intended to guide the UPDE into the future, it is comprised of three parts: the interpretive database; the LRIP (emphasis of the workshop); and the Annual Implementation Plan, or work plan. At the workshop, recommendations were developed for the NPS UPDE's Interpretation and Education program's next five to seven years. Specific ways partners, special interest groups and volunteers could help improve and provide interpretive and educational services were identified. The essential role played by the UPDE Interpretation Division was emphasized, specifically with regard to visitor interactions relating to water quality and invasive species. Internal and external challenges and opportunities that affect UPDE's interpretive and educational programs were described and discussed. Working in groups, the scenic, recreational, geological, ecological and cultural characteristics of a river stretch and its municipalities were identified and consideration was given to how each could be incorporated into an NPS interpretive program. The recommendations were then linked to target audiences and the park's interpretive themes. The workshop was facilitated by Toni Cufficy of Harpers Ferry Center.

Other:

Barnes Landfill Update: By a targeted date of July 25, Hamilton will draft a letter from NPS to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to follow up on questions raised by the DEC's June 13 response on the status of the Barnes Landfill. Golod will draft letters to the Office of the New York State Attorney General and the Department of Health requesting additional information on identifying a responsible party and well testing results, respectively. Henry said writing letters to various New York State departments should be unnecessary; he thinks Rudge should handle it since NYS is a UDC member. Golod said according to the June 13 letter, the UDC was told we may obtain a closure plan with a FOIA request. Hamilton said the NPS letter will remind all parties that they have responsibilities under the River Management Plan. Ramie said Lumberland Representative Nadia Rajszyk checked with the Sullivan County Real Property Office and discovered that no taxes have been paid on two parcels of land, one believed to be 15 acres, the other 22, and both are listed under Tax Code 1138.

Aquatic Weed Concern: Henry said local fishing guide Tony Ritter is concerned with proliferation of aquatic weed that is breaking off and traveling downstream. He would like to know what it is and expressed concern that a lack of recent reservoir releases has caused warmer-than-usual water temperatures that may be making the weed grow uncontrollably. Ritter wondered if it could be detrimental to the river ecosystem. Hamilton said he suspects it may be filamentous green algae and that he'll get in touch with Ritter to explain. It was observed that the water temperature in Kunkelli's Eddy hit 89 degrees one day this summer.

New York Outdoor News Article: Greier provided a June 29, 2018 article entitled, "Gathering highlights role of Upper Delaware watershed." The River Summit described in the article was attended by Ramie in Hancock to launch the "4 The Delaware" campaign. DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said, . . . "New York State is committed to protecting the Delaware River as a treasured natural resource, wildlife habitat, and a vital clean water supply that the region can benefit from now and for our future generations to enjoy." As noted in the article, legislation passed earlier this year awarded \$5 million to the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program. Greier asked why New York Governor Andrew Cuomo would put such a premium on the Delaware's clean water and still refuse to fund the UDC's 30-year effort to keep it that way. Greier suggested that UDC write another letter to New York State seeking the \$100,000 annual New York state funding called for in the River Management Plan. Said Greier, "Both NY and PA have been in arrears for 30 years. As long as the states are in arrears, state representatives to the UDC should have their voting privileges suspended." Greier remarked that 15 million people, including those in the City of Philadelphia, get drinking water from the Delaware River, so if PA tacked a 5-cent surcharge per year on each customer's water bill, the state's funding obligation to the UDC would be more than met.

New Business

National Weather Service Changes to Flood Stages: Ramie said local journalist Peter Becker first called this DRBC news release included in members' packets to her attention when he asked for her comment on it. She had not been aware of it as it deals with stream gages below the Upper Delaware. The release, entitled "NWS to change flood category stages at two Delaware River stream gages" states that on August 6, 2018, NWS will be changing the major and moderate flood category stages for the Matamoras/Port Jervis stream gage, and will change the major flood category for the stream gage at Montague. Peckham asked if this would change FEMA floodplain criteria; if not, which would take precedence? A motion by Peckham, seconded by Henry, to draft a letter to the NWS and DRBC asking for more information and which agency determines floodplain criteria was passed unanimously.

Delaware River Flow & Storage Report: Committee members reviewed the New York City Water Supply storage report and Delaware River Basin Commission Reservoir Levels report, both updated as of July 16. Total storage is at 90.7%. Normal for this date is 90.6%. Cannonsville Reservoir is at 85.9% of capacity, with 95.7B gallons.

Other: A motion by Greier, seconded by Henry, to bring to the attention of the full council Greier's suggestion for UDC letters demanding state funding for the UDC was carried unanimously. Henry brought to the Committee's attention that the PA Fish and Boat Commission is requesting permission from the PA Legislature to increase fees for fishing licenses. He asked Golod to look into that. Golod noted that the packets included an article dated June 12, 2018 entitled, "Bradford County Water Quality Improves; Impacts Rare Near Shale Gas Wells," based on a Penn State study that Peckham had referenced at the last meeting.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Case, seconded by Greier, to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Linda Drollinger, 07/19/18