

Upper Delaware Council  
**WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES**  
May 17, 2016

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

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Vice-chairperson Jeffer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

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

**Old Business:**

**Upper Delaware Scenic Byway April 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of the April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway were provided in members' packets for their information. Ramie noted that this was the Byway's Annual Meeting at which the election of officers took place. The new officers are Town of Highland representative Glenn Pontier, Chairperson; Village of Hancock representative Nancy Furdock, Vice-chairperson; and Town of Cohecton representative Larry Richardson, Secretary-Treasurer.

**D&H Transportation Heritage Council April 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting Update:** Ramie reported that this meeting took place at the Westfall Township Building in Matamoras, PA. A presentation by Honesdale businessman Paul Ludick on Pennsylvania High-Hazard Dams was given. Ludick is concerned about the fate of five dams that were built for the D&H Canal in the 1830's. He had come to the Council to see if they had any suggestions for him to prevent this from happening. Members advised him that if the Commonwealth had declared them high-hazard, it was unlikely to be overridden.

Planning and funding discussion for the educational videos highlighting the Gravity Railroad and D&H Canal took place. The edited version of the Carbondale to Honesdale video segment by Bollinger & Rutter, viewed originally at the last meeting, was shown. A motion was carried to purchase 100 DVDs of this first video segment and release parties were discussed.

The roll-out of National Geographic's "Scenic, Wild Delaware River" MapGuide was discussed as canal-related properties have numerous listings on the website.

Details about a PA Route 6 Alliance Heritage Mini-Grant for D&H Canal and Rail Area signage were shared. They are approximately 18-inch interpretive signs under the theme of "Do Route 6".

There is now a DHTHC Facebook page, Ramie reported. Administration of that page was discussed.

Ramie said that a cost-sharing proposal to photograph the historic hand-drawn maps of the D & H Canal and the Gravity Railroad that are in storage by Canadian Pacific Railroad in Montreal was discussed. It was recommended that the Council seek funding from the five counties involved (Ulster, Orange, Sullivan, Pike, Wayne) to pay the approximately \$2,500 cost to photograph the first book.

The announcements of member accomplishments, concerns, and upcoming events took place. Ramie said that she introduced Pete Golod who had attended the meeting with her.

The next quarterly meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 27 at the DePuy Canal House in High Falls, N.Y.

**NPS April 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Water Safety Meeting Update:** Odell reported that this meeting was held here in the UDC office and attended by representatives of local liveries, National Canoe Safety Patrol, Town of Deerpark Director of Emergency Services Jack Flynn, Town of Lumberland Chief Constable Pat Cahill, NPS and UDC staff.

Kris Heister opened the meeting with the announcement of Larry Neal being selected as the Chief of Law Enforcement for the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River. She introduced Pete Golod and

shared the story of Salvatore Lombardo and Joshua Turner's July 20, 2015 rescue of a drowning boater in cardiac arrest at Butler's Rift on the Upper Delaware River. Anya Shaunessy provided Centennial information. Brandon Diefenbach spoke of the Happy 100<sup>th</sup> on the River celebration that will be held August 13 with a rain date of August 20 at the Fireman's Field in Narrowsburg. Larry Neal provided a 2015 recap from the law enforcement point of view.

Ingrid Peterec and Jamie Myers showed a power point presentation covering drowning statistics and water safety message initiatives. The water safety talk has been translated to Russian, French, Spanish, and Romanian. They asked if people had suggestions for other languages to have it translated to, to let them know. Conway suggested Yiddish.

It was reported that the life jacket wear study will continue this year. In 2015 of 1,350 people that were observed, 837 were wearing their jackets. That works out to 62% wear rate which is up from 52.5% in 2012. The national life jacket wear rate is 11.2%. Details about the Water Safety Focus Group were shared. The liveries were asked to please let these interns conduct their interviews at their accesses. It was noted that the life jacket loaner stations are in the development and design stage and it is hoped that they will be up for the 2017 season.

Jamie Myers provided a bridge repair update. Ramie will be attending the NY-PA Joint interstate Bridge Commission meeting May 18<sup>th</sup> and a press release will follow.

Anya showed the public safety announcements that have been produced. Those were placed on thumb drives and people in attendance were encouraged to take one and were told they could use them on their own websites.

Bonnie Sheard handed out a new form that the liveries will be required to use beginning in 2017. The new Commercial Use Authorization annual report asks for the income derived from the commercial services offered. This stirred up quite the reaction. Dave Jones and Dimitri Zaimis said that a deal was reached they believed in 1984 between the liveries and the NPS which states that they would not have to offer that information. Sheard explained that she has been figuring that information based on the numbers the liveries provide her. Efforts are underway to find that agreement.

**Geotourism May 5<sup>th</sup> MapGuide Launch Event Update:** This event was held at the Narrowsburg Union, Odell reported. The program was opened by Sullivan County Visitors Association President/CEO Roberta Byron Lockwood. She reported that tourism in New York State is a \$62.8 billion industry impacting total business sales of over \$100 billion. It generates over 750,000 jobs and has a \$7.8 billion impact on our local and state taxes.

Elaine Giguere, co-chair of the Geotourism Stewardship Council and Executive Director of the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance, addressed the group next. She reported that the website has launched and referred to it as "pretty fascinating".

Geotourism Stewardship Council chairman Bryan Cope said that over the last nine months of working on the program, a "sense of place" for the area has been developed. The website will help users locate the "local flair" of the communities, he added. Cope said the Geotourism website will be used to support and promote local projects and activities. Some of the activities currently listed are the National Park Services' 100-mile Paddle Challenge; Kittatinny Canoes Annual Delaware River Clean-up; Monarchs and Migrations; and Buy Fresh, Buy Local. Cope said the site will constantly be changing with additional nominations being made and events added.

Kris Heister, Superintendent of the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River, stated that this initiative is really timely. She said that she personally feels there is a tremendous "sense of place" here and the website will allow for the whole country to understand what that "sense of place" is and will allow us to share it with them.

Cope said they are appreciative of the initial funding for the Scenic, Wild Delaware River geotourism initiative provided by a grant from the William Penn Foundation, with funding also from the Claneil Foundation, to the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).

James Dion, National Geographic Maps' director of tourism programs, gave a demonstration and explained the features of the website. He said that after nine months of working on the project, he feels we've discovered what he considers a "world class tourism destination." He reported that over the course of the last nine months there were over 611 content contributors that have contributed 603 active content entries. Those entries have been reviewed, vetted and approved. There are currently 52 entries in the pending pile; these nominations have been completed, but are still in the review process, and 221 incomplete entries. Dion demonstrated the "Trip Plans" and other features of the website. He referred to it

as “an integrated story told by over 600 people within this region and the tools for people to be able to use that information to plan their travel in ways that will benefit, better the people, the place of the Upper and Middle Delaware River.”

A brief question and answer session took place. It was noted that the website will be publicly unveiled on May 19 at an event in New York City. Certificates suitable for framing along with window decals were available to those with active nominations on the website.

Ramie spoke of the Local Voices and itinerary sections of the Geotourism website and shared an example of an itinerary for an eagle watching weekend locally. She noted that the website address is [www.delawareriver.natgeotourism.com](http://www.delawareriver.natgeotourism.com) and that it is currently live. Conway suggested that a fly fishing itinerary might be a good one to collaborate on for submission.

**Sullivan County Trail Committee May 17 Meeting Update:** Ramie reported that the meeting was held in Mountandale, NY. She reported that the Sullivan County Trailkeeper website is being relaunched as a mobile responsive one next week. She said it will be vastly improved over the current website.

The next meeting of the Trail Committee will be June 13<sup>th</sup>. The tentative venue for the meeting is Hurleyville, NY. She spoke of the Center for Discovery initiatives in that hamlet.

**Update on FERC Project No. P-13287-004 – Cannonsville Hydroelectric Project:** Ramie referred to the May 4<sup>th</sup> press release in members’ packets. She said it was emailed in advance also. The release states that “The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Wednesday announced that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has granted a two-year extension of its license to build a hydroelectric facility on the release works at Cannonsville Reservoir.” Ramie said she checked into the status of Bill H.R. 4434 which authorizes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), upon the request of the licensee for FERC project numbered 13287 (Cannonsville Hydroelectric Project, New York), to extend the time period during which the licensee is required to commence the construction of the project for up to four consecutive two-year periods from the date of the expiration of the extension originally issued by FERC. This bill was introduced by Congressman Gibson and passed in the House on March 16 with a vote of 417 - 2, she added. The bill moved on to the Senate on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Henry commented that he was surprised to read that NYC DEP has nearly 6,000 employees. He said the National Park Service only has 20,000.

**Upper Delaware River Bridge Update:** Ramie reported that Carla Hahn of the National Park Service has been following up with both Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and NYS Department of Transportation on the issues with the Skinners Falls detour signs. Henry suggested that Ramie ask, when she attends the NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission meeting, which bridge DOT intends to detour people to during the times of full closure of the Narrowsburg Bridge. He questions how it may impact the construction if they were intending on detouring people up to the Skinners Falls Bridge which is currently closed. Ramie said they have been questioned a number of times if both states consider coordination of closures and always answer affirmatively.

**Other:** Ramie noted that the April, 2016 report titled “Climate Change Trends, Vulnerabilities, and Hydrology in Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area, USA”, by Patrick Gonzalez is available to members in hard copy or by a PDF link on request. Hamilton shared the details of a meeting that he had attended on this subject.

### New Business

**Delaware River Flow and Storage Report:** A copy of the May 16<sup>th</sup> New York City DEP Current Reservoir Levels report was provided in members’ packets. Total storage as of that date was 99.7% with Cannonsville at 101.2%. Normal total storage for this date is 98.0%.

**Other:** Ramie referred to the May 12<sup>th</sup> news release included in members’ packets titled, “Leadership Sullivan Class to Clean Canal Bed as UDC Service Project”. She noted the clean-up will take place on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Hamilton reported that on May 21st, World Fish Migration Day, the National Park Service will celebrate this rite of spring with a shad viewing float trip on the Upper Delaware River between 10:00am and 2:00pm. He said he still has a few spots available. He hopes to see some American Shad in the river during the peak of their spring spawning run. Conway asked what the shad count is this year. Hamilton said there is no real scientific count happening on the river. Conway asked if he had a general sense on the population. Hamilton said the American Shad had made a pretty good comeback in the 1990's but they've seen a "worrisome" decline again in last ten years.

Conway wanted to share a water safety concern. She said there have been an increased number of camps sending their campers in large numbers with different liveries tubing on the river. She questioned what the UDC might recommend that the liveries or NPS can do in terms of supervising these campers in order to prevent an accident. Conway spoke of some of the incidents that occurred involving these camps in the Barryville area last summer. Henry said he feels the onus should be on the livery owner if there is a safety concern, but noted that it is not the standard on the Delaware River for the liveries to use guides. He said it is not the job of the Park Service to "babysit" people. After a very lengthy discussion, it was decided that Conway would contact NPS Superintendent Kris Heister regarding her concerns over the large groups of river users who appear to lack proper skills and supervision being put on the river in the Barryville area.

Conway said the owners of the Narrowsburg Union would like to bring back the Narrowsburg Eaglefest. Hamilton noted that it was John and Yoke DiGiorgio, founders of the Delaware Valley Eagle Alliance, that were the organizers of that event. He believes they would be the logical people to approach. Hamilton said he could reach out to them to advise them of the interest in reviving the event. Other potential sponsors of the event were discussed.

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** A motion by Henry seconded by Conway to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. was carried.

*Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 5/23/16*