

**WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 16, 2020**

Committee Members Present: Andy Boyar, Ginny Dudko, Fred Peckham, Al Henry, Dan Paparella  
Committee Members Absent: Pat Jeffer, Evan Padua  
Staff : Laurie Ramie, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas  
NPS Partner: Darren Boch, Don Hamilton  
Guests: Wayne Holmes- Boy Scouts of America- Ten Mile River Scout Camps

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 via teleconference. Chairperson Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Boyar welcomed NPS Upper Delaware Acting Superintendent Darren Boch and asked him to introduce himself. Boch arrived a week ago and he's working here during the week. He lives in Northern New Jersey. He is duty-stationed at the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park. Paterson was the 397<sup>th</sup> unit of the system that was established just eight years ago. Boch was the first Superintendent chosen to start a new National Park in an urban area, just 15 miles west of Manhattan. It has a river running through it but the similarities between the two units kind of ends right there. He has been in the NPS since 2006. He said relatively speaking, in comparison to many of his colleagues, in particular other superintendents, he's still somewhat of a newcomer to the agency. His work started in NYC; working for all of the units in Manhattan including the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Grant's Tomb, etc. His relationship with the Park Service has been in a very urban environment. Boch said he's somebody that spends his spare time outside of urban environments and has had the opportunity to hike and spend time in many parts out West and in the Northeast. Boch had the opportunity five years ago to raft a section of the river here, long before the idea that he would ever be here as an acting superintendent was contemplated. He said he felt like he was Lewis and Clark to some degree and was struck by how pristine and how conserved much of the landscape was and how clean the river was. It was a great experience for him and his friends. He plans on bringing his family up sometime this summer to find the same stretch or a different stretch of the river to enjoy. Boch said as all Superintendents do, in varying degrees, we work with partners. At Paterson he works with the local governing authorities, the County, the state, nonprofits, landowners, and business owners. In that sense he's ready over the next four months to be a positive influence and may be able to offer an alternative view. Several people have been briefing him on the many complexities and the many challenges that the UDC is facing. Boyar said he hopes Boch can make it down to Ten Mile River because that's the hot topic right now.

A motion by Dudko, seconded by Henry approving the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Old Business**

**Ten Mile River Access Closed to Trailered Boat Launching:** Boyar said as a follow-up, the UDC sent a letter protesting the unilateral action by the NPS in making that determination without vetting the issue in a more detailed fashion with this WU/RM Committee or the Upper Delaware Council as a body. Hamilton said a letter is coming from the Regional Director's office with her signature on it. They were on a call with Holmes and Christopher Guarniere of the Boy Scouts last Friday to make sure they were in agreement with what was in the letter, and had input into it. He expects UDC will be getting that letter by the end of this week or early next week. Boyar said we look forward to receiving it and hope some of the questions that we have in mind will be answered. Boyar said he's launched on and off from TMR for at least 45 years and he hasn't found it difficult to do so. He did not bring in a trailered boat but the situations did not look up particularly difficult to launch a raft, kayak, canoe, or a boat in his opinion. He took some photos where he stood on the water line recently and when he stepped back, he couldn't take a picture of his footprints because there were none. Hamilton said that shoreline varies from year to year with water conditions, with how much high water we've had, and how much sediments deposited recently. Last year, it was particularly soft and muddy. Peckham asked if UDC was invited to the meeting with the NPS and the BSA?

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Hamilton said that this meeting was to put together a response to the UDC letter that was received by the Regional Director. They were including the BSA to make sure they were in agreement with what the NPS would say in that letter. Boyar said we will wait for the response to see what the formal position is. Boyar wanted to thank Holmes and the BSA for enabling the use of TMR Access. He knows others on this committee actively use it and are very familiar with it. We appreciate that there has been a cooperative agreement in place between the BSA and NPS over the years. Boyar feel it's been very beneficial. Holmes said he didn't have anything to add to Hamilton's update.

Ramie said she wanted to ask NPS about the article that had appeared in the *River Reporter* to see if there are any active steps to take issue with the characterization of the "public safety hazard" posed by the mud at the TMR access? The last communication we had was from Jessica Weinman, who said that NPS would handle a response to that, but we have not heard anything since then. Hamilton said he wasn't sure if NPS was going to respond to that article or not stating there were a number of inaccuracies in that article. Dudko said she's concerned that the newspaper printed inaccuracies and isn't called to task about them. Henry said he would urge NPS to have that corrected; otherwise it stands that TMR access is a public safety hazard and that's far from the truth. Hamilton said that will be taken into consideration. Ramie said her question wasn't if we should address it. It was should UDC or NPS request the correction? It was covered at a UDC meeting, so normally Ramie would handle that but because it was a statement attributed to the NPS she didn't think it was appropriate for her to address it. She strongly believes someone should, otherwise people will think it's a public safety hazard and potentially avoid using it.

**NYC DEP Cannonsville Reservoir Hydroelectric Plant and SEI Study Updates:** Padua had asked Ramie if she had any updates about the permitting for the Cannonsville Hydroelectric project in particular. Ramie wrote an email to Adam Bosch, the public affairs director for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection on that subject as well as the status of the NYC DEP study for the public notifications improvements for emergency alerts. He hasn't gotten back to her yet.

**Sullivan County Litter Pluck Update; Bags & Stickers Available at UDC Office:** Ramie said that the UDC has been distributing the litter bags and disposal stickers. The program runs through 6/30. So far we have given out 99 out of the 150 bags that we have in stock and we're happy to let more of them go. Boyar came in to get a supply for Trout Unlimited and other groups such as the Narrowsburg Beautification Group used them for a litter pluck. A few other individuals have been picking them up here and there. Boyar said he picked up bags on behalf of the Town of Highland and Trout Unlimited which covers multiple towns. He noticed at the Narrowsburg boat launch they did a great cleanup. Ramie said that the UDC office is now open, so anyone can come in during office hours to pick up materials for the Sullivan County Litter Pluck.

**6/1 Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Inc. Meeting Report:** The 6/1 UDSB Report were made available to the committee in advance. The next meeting is 6/22.

**Other:** Peckham said he talked to many locals regarding Jensen's Ledges and fishing accesses, stating if there were call boxes in those areas it would be hours saved from emergency situations. Peckham said he would also bring the issue up in Project Review.

**New Business**

**2021 Upper Delaware BioBlitz Report:** Hamilton participated in a 6/4 planning call. They are still in a scoping process of whether to do another. They've held four Upper Delaware BioBlitzes since 2013; every other year. Two of them have been on the Boy Scouts Ten Mile River properties and two have been near Starlight, PA on the lower West Branch where the West Branch flows into the main stem along Shehawken Creek. Hamilton said it's an opportunity to highlight our biodiversity, water quality and ecosystem services we have going on here in the Upper Delaware. In the past, over 50 scientists attended and formed different teams. The public comes on the second day to see what the findings are and experience the public programs. There's a lot of criteria that have to be met for a site that would bring the public into it. One option that was being considered was Delaware Highlands Conservancy's new property, the Van Scott preserve, which is a 140-acre property in Berlin Township a few miles outside of the river corridor. There's a lot of coordination that needs to occur and a lot of volunteers are needed to head up

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different committees. There has to be event coordination and fund raising to pull these events off. There's a follow-up call scheduled for next month.

Boyar asked if this is an ad hoc group, or is there some umbrella agency or group that sponsors this? Hamilton said the NPS has been heavily involved in the past. Steve Schwartz has been a primary organizer of it. A core group has been an ad hoc group that pulled this off. There is no formal organization, but they have always had good participation from the Academy of Natural Sciences, Drexel University, different universities and different agencies and Wayne Conservation District. Some of the school district teachers have been involved. The Boy Scouts have been involved in the past. Boyar said as a spectator in the past at the Boy Scout property, the project was absolutely incredible, he learned so much and it was so well attended. Hamilton said they documented close to a thousand taxa or species of organisms, plant and animal life. A lot of new occurrences were found for both Sullivan and Wayne counties. He said hopefully they can stage another BioBlitz next summer.

**Sparrowbush & Narrowsburg River Accesses Updates; Traffic Counters Question:** Ramie had shared with the committee the exchanges about confusion over what sort of launching is allowed at the Sparrowbush access, which is technically outside the river corridor, but still part of our river valley and very close to the Southern Terminus. This was all prompted by a citizen calling UDC to see what the rules are because a police officer from the Town of Deerpark had stopped him from hand launching a kayak with his four-year-old granddaughter. He had pulled his pickup truck to the shoreline to do that because he didn't want to get the child out of her car seat. He got scolded and told that was improper. He looked on our website and the brochure where we do have trailered boat launch listed there as an amenity of that river access. Ramie said when he brought up the question she posed it to the Deerpark Police, the Town of Deerpark, Orange County, and NYS DEC. It turns out that the police officer was mistaken, and what the gentlemen was doing was appropriate and lawful. After Ramie asked these questions she found that it's a shared site between Orange County and the Town of Deerpark and the Town maintains it. The DEC also has a smaller portion of that site, specifically 1.5 acres, which is a fishing access site and a car top boat launch. The individual who started the line of inquiry said that as of 6/10, he spoke with Gary Spears, Deerpark Town Supervisor. He gave a rundown of the evolution of ownership at the No. Two Bridge site, and said his understanding is the usage shown on our brochure is still correct. You can use the boat ramp to launch a boat from a trailer or vehicle. There is fishing access plus parking. The individual said he tested out the system with success and thanked the UDC for the assistance.

Bill Rudge from the DEC contacted UDC on 6/9 to advise that DEC staff installed the Narrowsburg boat launch docks that day. He told Ramie that much of their work to reopen access sites has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to the meeting Padua asked Ramie if there were individual reports produced for the traffic counters at river accesses. Hamilton said NPS maintains them and doesn't put out any external reports for the traffic counters but they do have internal reports. e imagines that information could be made public.

**DRBC Water Management Advisory Committee Reappointment, 6/18 Meeting:** Boyar noted Ramie was appointed for a five-year term beginning 7/1 through 6/30/2025. They also recommended that an alternate be designated. We used to have our Resource Specialist as the representative. Boyar said until we get a Resource Specialist, he would like to be considered as an alternate if Ramie can't make it. The Chairman of the Water Use/Resource Management Committee would be a logical person to attend those meetings as an alternate. Ramie said the next meeting is 6/18 by WebEx and she will participate. She will provide Boyar's contact information as the UDC alternate.

**The Trust for Public Land's Callicoon Park Steering Committee, 6/19 Site Visit:** Ramie said Harold Roeder has reported on this and we have read in the paper that the Trust For Public Land (TPL) had closed on their acquisition of the former Upper Delaware Campgrounds in Callicoon within the Town of Delaware. The intention is to turn that into a park in conjunction with Sullivan County. In order to advance those plans, they have formulated a steering committee and they asked if Ramie would represent the UDC on that steering committee. TPL Project Manager

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Francis O'Shea sent an email setting up a site visit for Friday. They said that Environmental Planning & Design (EPD), from Pittsburgh, is the consulting firm hired to do the public design process. UDC had also hired EPD to do the technical review of the River Management Plan (RMP) a few years ago and they worked with Sullivan County on the river access design projects. O'Shea says by year's end it's their intention to produce a comprehensive vision plan for a new public park in Callicoon to serve as a community hub, provide quality open space, and improve water quality and access to the mighty Upper Delaware river for locals and visitors alike. He said it will be interesting conducting a public participatory design process in the midst of COVID-19 to say the least, but rest assured they will be taking all the necessary precautions to keep everyone safe. Ramie will provide an update after the meeting. Henry asked Ramie if she could find out if that group anticipates putting in ramp where you can launch a trailered boat. There never was one at the DEC access at Callicoon; there is one on the Pennsylvania side. He said unfortunately, it gets so shallow there you have to back your boat halfway across the river to get enough water to launch it. Ramie said DEC is a partner in the project and she understands their contribution was some sort of fishing access and boat launch. She will check.

**Delaware River Flow and Storage Report:** A copy of the 6/15 DRBC Hydrologic Conditions Report was provided in members' packets. Total combined storage was at 96.5%.

**Other:** Henry asked Ramie what the final outcome of the Sparrowbush River Access was. He asked if he heard correctly that you can launch a trailered boat there? Ramie said the ramp was developed for emergency providers. Dudko said it's supposed to be for emergency trailered vehicles but they don't say too much if others use it. Otherwise, it's supposed to be a carry-in. It is pretty narrow and fairly swift there, but there is a little bit of an eddy. It is heavily used and popular with the locals. It's been kind of a gentleman's agreement between the DEC, the County and the Town. Henry appreciates the update but finds that unbelievable comparing the amount of times that an emergency vehicle needs to launch there versus the time that John Q. Public needs to launch.

Peckham said up near Hancock private boat launchers are becoming more and more prevalent every year. He wonders how many of them are licensed; if they need to be licensed? Hamilton said a factor is if they are going to alter the bed and banks of the river in the process of creating a boat launch, they would have to get a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers.

Ramie provided an update for New York State that as of 6/23 our Mid-Hudson Region which includes Sullivan County will be moving to phase three of reopening and Governor Cuomo has increased the gatherings limit from 10 to 25 at that stage. She thinks that the 7/2 UDC meeting will be able to resume in person here at the office. We rarely get more than 25 people. If people are comfortable with that, that's how we could proceed.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Dudko, seconded by Boyar, to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. was carried.