

UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES July 3, 2014

The Upper Delaware Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, July 3, 2014 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Andy Boyar called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

In attendance: Town of Hancock-Fred Peckham, Town of Cohecton-Larry Richardson, Town of Tusten-Susan Sullivan, Town of Highland-Andrew Boyar, Town of Lumberland-Nadia Rajs, Town of Deerpark-David Dean, Damascus Township-Jeffrey Dexter, Shohola Township-Patricia Jeffer, National Park Service-Malcolm Wilbur. Staff in attendance: Executive Director-Laurie Ramie, Secretary-Cindy Odell. Also in attendance: Debra Conway, Town of Highland alternate; Ginny Dudko, Town of Deerpark alternate, Carla Hahn, National Park Service. Absent: Town of Fremont, Town of Delaware, Berlin Township, Lackawaxen Township, Westfall Township, State of New York, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Delaware River Basin Commission.

Boyar asked that the minutes reflect the weather this evening is inclement and some of the members who committed to being here could not make it due to the weather.

Presentation by Heather Jacksy: Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Sullivan County River Accesses Design Project: Jacksy noted that she works for the Sullivan County Planning Department and is a resident of the Town of Highland. She reported she has been working on the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program administered by the New York State Department of State for the past couple of years and shared her PowerPoint presentation with members. Jacksy said there are currently three grants being implemented. One is to develop the plan; the second is to look at six river accesses; develop a water trail signage plan and install six water trail signs; and the third is to conduct a Pond Eddy parking study for the proposed Pond Eddy access. Critical issues identified include hamlet and main street revitalization, preservation of natural resources, balancing property rights, economic development and preservation, and finding the best way to brag about what this area has to offer. Jacksy explained the advanced schematics of the access improvements for the Long Eddy, Callicoon, Skinners Falls, Ten Mile River, Highland, and Pond Eddy sites. River access signage design options were shown and discussed. Boyar commented that each of these access designs have been vetted at the local level. Cost estimates were provided for each of the accesses. Jacksy said they were figured using the highest costs with prevailing wages for everything, therefore making the estimates the “worst case scenario”. Architectural elements and material and design precedence were reviewed. Jacksy said Sullivan County has applied for funding to help do the engineering, permitting, and environmental review for the Highland Access and to also start the discussion about maintenance and operations. The UDC will be a big part of the discussion of maintenance and operation, she added. Boyar asked if these projects will be reviewed by the UDC’s Project Review Committee. Hahn, a steering committee member, said yes, but it hasn’t gotten to that point yet. She added that by many different groups participating in the early stages of this program, the hope is that by the time it comes to Project Review, everyone will have had opportunity for input and the projects will be near ready to go. Ramie added that she and T. O’Dell are also both members of the LWRP Steering Committee. Jacksy stated that the County would like a more regional approach to the maintenance and operations of the accesses. Jacksy said the County has also assisted the Town of Fremont in advancing their access. Ramie asked what the time table is for the decision on the latest state funding round. Jacksy told her that by

October they will know if they've received the funding. Jacksy said that more information is available on the Sullivan County website, www.co.sullivan.ny.us. A brief question and answer period took place after the presentation.

Approval of June 5 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Richardson seconded by Dexter to approve the June 5 meeting minutes was carried.

Public Comment on the Agenda: None

Committee Reports: Committee reports were provided based on the meeting minutes. They were June 17 Water Use/Resource Management by Andy Boyar, June 24 Project Review by Larry Richardson, and June 24 Operations by Andy Boyar.

Status Reports

Delaware River Basin Commission: The DRBC was absent, however, the hydrologic report was provided. The NYC Delaware River Basin Storage as of June 30 was at a combined capacity of 99.5% with Cannonsville at 98.6%.

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation: No report in the absence of Representative Bill Rudge.

PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources: No report in the absence of Representative Tim Dugan.

National Park Service-Upper Delaware: Wilbur reported that NPS Chief of Maintenance Loren Goering has been selected to serve as the Acting Superintendent at Fort Stanwix National Historic Site in Rome, New York. He began those new duties on June 30, and is expected to be gone most of the summer. Richard Cox of Hagerman Fossil Beds will fill in for Goering while he is away.

Wilbur stated that he and Carla Hahn met with the Delaware Valley Job Corps Center staff to explore the potential for establishing a mutually beneficial relationship where Job Corps students could support NPS operations that contribute to their educational objectives. In addition, the Job Corps supports a variety of community service projects and expressed interest in helping with Japanese Knotweed control, and may be willing to "adopt" a river access or two. NPS awaits the arrival of the new Job Corps Workplace Coordinator to continue discussions. Wilbur said the UDC may wish to explore this opportunity as well.

Wilbur said Upper Delaware participants in the Viewshed Analysis training met to discuss the next steps. He noted there was general agreement that the tool has the potential to be very useful, but that municipalities and the counties need to see the benefits as well. He said the participating organizations agreed that the UDC is the logical organization to move the idea forward, and each will send a letter to the UDC requesting them to fill that role, particularly the concept of a valley-wide "viewshed collaborative". Wilbur stated that Sullivan Renaissance and Pike County have agreed to hold seminars to further explain and explore potential applications to municipalities and others, hoping to stimulate interest in a repeat of the viewshed analysis training to take place possibly in late October.

Wilbur reported that the NPS is requiring all park Superintendents to amend their compendium to prohibit the launching, operation and retrieval of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) on NPS property. This policy recognizes the increasing popularity of UASs, and the negative impacts they can have on wildlife and the visitor experience. A brief discussion about drones and some uses for them took place.

Wilbur said the second Upper Delaware BioBlitz was held June 28th and 29th at the Ten Mile River Boy Scout Camp. Participation was good and the results are still being compiled, he added. Malcolm noted it has been discussed that better ways to market the BioBlitz to a wider audience need to be developed.

The Resources Management staff is conducting bi-weekly quality monitoring as part of the Scenic Rivers Monitoring Program, and maintaining continuous water quality monitors at other Delaware River main stem and tributary sites.

Wilbur, in response to questions regarding trash receptacles raised by members of the WU/RM Committee, said that last summer the NPS began a pilot test to encourage the "pack it in, pack it out"

program that has been widely adopted in public recreation sites throughout the country. This was begun largely in response to the large volume of household trash being dumped in and around the receptacles intended for river users. He said the program is still being evaluated, but noted that so far it seems to be working reasonably well. The test program is not based on finances, Wilbur said; it is just inappropriate to use the river access as de facto transfer stations for household trash. Bags with the carry in, carry out message are to be printed for distribution to river users to promote the environmental stewardship ethic that will help to ensure the long-term preservation of the values we are here to protect, he added. No final decision on the program will be made without consulting with the UDC, Wilbur noted. The NPS is still collecting information so that a good decision will be made.

Wilbur said that Kris Heister enters on duty as Superintendent of the Upper Delaware on July 13. He said he has enjoyed his time here and has learned a lot from the park staff and from the UDC staff and members. He reported that he has accepted a position in Omaha, Nebraska as the Midwest Region's Associate Regional Director for Administration and Information Technology. He said he will have an office by a river, but it will be the Missouri, not the Delaware. Members congratulated him and wished him well.

Wilbur said he would like to offer a suggestion before he leaves. He noted it seems to him that the UDC has a capacity problem – the states never provided the funding envisioned by the UDC's staffing plan, and inflation has eroded the NPS' contribution. The NPS did come very close to receiving an increase in 2010, but appropriations were not received and the outlook remains dim. He said it is unrealistic to think that either state will fund a new line item for the UDC so many years after it came into being. Rajsz feels the UDC should not give up seeking the funding that the two states committed to. Wilbur suggested it should be possible to approach the state university systems with a proposal to use the Upper Delaware as a living laboratory for local conservation and land use planning, in a local/interstate/federal collaborative environment. A joint, university-based approach could bring considerable academic expertise to the practical concerns of implementing the River Management Plan, as well as develop creative strategies for strengthening the protection of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values. States should find it easier to fund their own university systems for this effort, and universities are likely to be accepted as neutral third parties. Wilbur said he hope that this idea can be considered as the UDC moves forward.

Wilbur reported the UDC federal funding package for FY 2015 has been sent to Philadelphia and he thanked Ramie for her diligence in meeting the early deadline.

UDC Executive Director's Report: In regards to the topic of trash receptacles, Ramie referenced the copy of the letter in members' packets sent to the Park Service from the UDC concerning this matter. She stated we are a partnership here and we didn't hear about the receptacles being removed until after the fact rather than get consulted on the decision.

Ramie announced that T. O'Dell and his wife Kayla welcomed their new baby daughter, Alynn Dakota O'Dell on June 29th. He will return to work after a short time home with his family.

Ramie reported that it had been discussed at last Tuesday's Project Review Committee meeting the idea of the UDC subsidizing production of digitized and hard copy zoning maps with the river corridor overlays from the Park Atlas project for each participating town and township. She said T. O'Dell contacted several of the county GIS departments and found that's not feasible to accomplish in our timeframe by September 30th and it would be more cost-effective for the towns to request them, noting that this service is apparently half-price for local governments. She also noted that each town and township is at various stages of needs regarding their mapping, making it difficult for the UDC to step in to administer and organize this. Ramie said these maps could be pursued by the towns and townships as TAG applications. Peckham suggested that the USGS in Reston, VA could be contacted for assistance with mapping needs. Ramie stated that the UDC could opt to offer preference for digitized mapping projects when awarding grants. Letters could be sent to members advising them of this priority and offering suggested verbiage. Dean said that was a great suggestion. Members agreed that the maps would be a TAG priority, and Ramie said she would get the letters out to the towns and townships as quickly as possible.

Ramie said she has issued a Request for Proposals for a preliminary review of the 1986 River Management Plan. It is being advertised as legal notices in four newspapers and was sent to the five county planning departments with a request to circulate it. Bids are due by July 21st, will be reviewed at the July 22nd Operations meeting and awarded at the August 7th full Council meeting. The consultant would have

until September 30th to have the project substantially completed, Ramie said. A brief discussion about the surplus FY 2014 monies took place.

Ramie asked that anyone interested in joining the Government Officials Liaison Subcommittee should let her know. Once Superintendent Kris Heister comes on board, meetings will be set up. It has been suggested that the first meeting be with Congressman Chris Gibson. Ramie said that all members will be notified of meetings that are set up. Boyar said he feels it is the task of the Chairman to establish relationships with the public officials, noting he has reached out to Chris Gibson and has already established relationships with Bonacic and Gunther. He stated next year Pat Jeffer will have the responsibility to reach out on the Pennsylvania side. Rajs spoke of the structure of the committee in the past noting the Chairman and Executive Director usually participated in any meetings with officials. Sullivan said it is a good idea to establish and maintain relationships with the public officials. Boyar noted that the topics of the meetings should be UDC concerns. Ramie clarified that the Vice-chair does not automatically ascend to the Chairperson position, noting that Jeffer previously indicated she was not interested in serving as 2015 chairperson. Ramie asked Jeffer if she had changed her mind. She said she has not.

Ramie referred to the UDC's 26th Annual Family Raft Trip registration flyer in members' packets. The trip is scheduled for August 3rd. The host livery is Lander's River Trips and the section of the river is Skinners Falls to Ten Mile River. Reservations are due by July 25th.

Referring members to the July calendar of UDC Meetings, Deadlines and Activities, Ramie noted there are just three days left to enter the Zane Grey Catch-and-Release Fishing Derby. Prizes will be awarded at the NPS Zane Grey Festival on July 12th. She said the UDC will have booths at the Zane Grey Festival and at the Narrowsburg Riverfest on July 27th. Ramie encouraged members to review the calendar, which contains a preview of August, and ask any questions they may have. She noted that upcoming presentations include NPS Chief Ranger Joe Hinkes at the August 7th full Council meeting on Emergency Response Issues and Water Safety; and there has been a request by the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition to preview their September 12th conference to be held at West Branch Angler Resort in Hale Eddy at our September 4th meeting. This request came through the Friends of the Upper Delaware River, she added. Ramie asked members if it was okay to add them to the schedule. She read the mission of the Upper Delaware River Tailwaters Coalition which states, "To develop and implement science-based initiatives and policies that enhance the local economy, the coldwater fishery, and mitigate flooding in the Upper Delaware River and tailwaters." She said Coalition members include the Towns of Colchester, Hancock and Deposit, Friends of the Upper Delaware River, and the villages of Hancock and Deposit. Members agreed to add them to September's agenda.

Old Business: None

New Business

Draft Letter to Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission: Comments on Draft Addendum IV to the Fishery Management for American Eel: Ramie noted that this letter was circulated in advance. She said she researched this issue and also shared the letter with our DEC representatives for their input. Boyar said the meeting held in the UDC office on Monday, June 30th regarding this issue was attended by approximately 15 local eel harvesters, UDC and NPS representatives, and DEC officials. These individuals said the science is not in and they want to continue with their operations. They are asking for an extension to allow the commercial silver eel fishery to remain active in the New York State portion of the Delaware River and its tributaries beyond the current regulatory expiration date of December 31, 2014 based on the fishery's continued significance to the regional culture and economy. A motion to send the letter was made by Dean, seconded by Richardson and carried. Richardson questioned if there are 15 active weirs on the river. Ramie said 16 permits are currently issued, but there are ten racks on the Delaware and Neversink rivers.

Draft Letter to Malcolm Wilbur: Letter of Appreciation: Boyar told Wilbur that he does not feel a letter can adequately express the appreciation this Council has for his brief tenure here. He told him he has gained the respect and appreciation of our collective group. Richardson said he would like the privilege to

move the letter. The letter was seconded by Rajsz. Boyar read the letter which stated, "The board and staff of the Upper Delaware Council, Inc. (UDC) would like to formally express our appreciation for your exemplary service as Acting Superintendent of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River from January 27, 2014 to July 13, 2014.

"Our non-profit organization enjoys a close working relationship with NPS as our federal partner in the cooperative management of this beautiful bi-state river corridor which the U.S. Congress designated in 1978 as a unit of the National Parks System in recognition of its Outstandingly Remarkable Values.

"When Superintendent Sean McGuinness retired from NPS on Jan. 24, 2014 after a highly-esteemed, four-year tenure in the Upper Delaware, the UDC was concerned about the leadership transition and its potential impact on our organization and the river valley community that we represent.

"We are grateful that the Northeast Regional Office recognized your administrative capabilities and offered you the assignment. Not only did you honor the shared management concept at the core of our mutual operations, but you also offered high standards of professionalism, innovative ideas based both on your career experience and fresh perspective, and a personable, approachable demeanor.

"Your efforts to facilitate the development of the Park Atlas in response to the UDC's request for better mapping tools, open up Viewshed Analysis training opportunities to Upper Delaware representatives, support Council activities, and initiate weekly meetings with UDC staff to promote dialogue are just a few examples of how you fully immersed yourself in your role and made lasting contributions.

"We wish you great success in your new position as Associate Regional Director for Administration and Information Technology for the National Park Service Midwest Region based in Omaha, NE."
The letter was carried unanimously.

NYS Insurance Fund Exclusion of Executive Officers from Worker's Compensation Coverage: Rajsz made the motion that the Executive Officers be excluded from Worker's Compensation. The motion was seconded by Dean and carried unanimously.

Other: Dean stated that Westfall Township has missed three meetings. Boyar noted that as a result their monthly stipend can be suspended as a result of the UDC's Member Participation Policy. A motion by Dean to have the Executive Director send a letter to Westfall Township advising them that they have missed three consecutive meetings, urge them to attend and notifying them that their stipend is suspended until participation resumes. The motion was seconded by Peckham and carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Peckham, seconded by Dean, to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell 7/14/14