

Upper Delaware Council  
**WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES**  
**December 18, 2013 (Re-scheduled from Dec. 17)**

Committee Members Present: Al Henry, Pat Jeffer, Andy Boyar  
Committee Members Absent: Tony Ritter, John McKay  
NPS Partner: Sean McGuinness  
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Travis O'Dell, Cindy Odell  
Guests: Jeff Dexter

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 18, 2013 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Vice chairperson Al Henry called the meeting to order at 8:22 p.m. A motion by Boyar seconded by Jeffer to approve the corrected November 17 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Old Business:**

**Upper Delaware Scenic Byway 11/25 Meeting Update:** Ramie said that at the November meeting, Treasurer Larry Richardson distributed a budget vs. actual year-to-date expenditure report and reviewed the various line items. He also introduced a new voucher system to be utilized.

Ramie reported that a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) Sullivan County River Access Update was given. The November 19<sup>th</sup> kick-off meeting was well attended with at least one representative from each of the six Sullivan County towns as well as from the Boy Scouts, NPS and Sullivan Renaissance. The next meeting of the LWRP is scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the UDC office. A copy of the agenda was provided in each member's packet.

Ramie noted that since this November meeting, the NYS CFA grants have been announced. The Town of Lumberland, on behalf of the Scenic Byway, had applied for funds to acquire a property that could potentially be used for a Visitor's Center. This proposed project was not among those that were awarded funding. She stated there is still a \$250,000 capital construction grant on the table that Senator Bonacic had secured. She said she is unclear what will happen with the visitor center now as it does not have a home.

Ramie reported that a memo has gone out to all the Byway municipalities requesting that they provide to the Scenic Byway organization a list of their safety concerns and highway improvements for their designated section of Route 97. The goal is that an inventory will be collected so that the Byway can work with the NYS DOT and other organizations on projects that may come up or if any grant money were to become available.

Ramie said the Town of Lumberland had applied for and was successful in securing a Technical Assistance Grant to hire a consultant to conduct a study estimating the economic impact of tourism to the Scenic Byway. The consultant, Peter Fairweather, has initiated work on the project. The project needs to be completed by August 22, 2014.

Ramie said a letter was received from James Buck, NYS DOT, confirming that over-the-rail mowing will occur during the winter, and that he has contacted his counterpart in Orange County to communicate the Byway's concerns with overgrown vegetation near the Hawk's Nest.

Ramie reported that requests were sent to the member municipalities for 2014 voluntary funding contributions, as well as 2014 appointments.

The next meeting of the Scenic Byway is scheduled for Monday, January 27, 2014.

McGuinness asked what has happened to the Scenic Byway sign in the Town of Cohecton. Ramie told him it had been damaged and is in Supervisor Gary Maas' possession for repair.

**12/5 Upper Delaware River Roundtable Report:** T. O'Dell said a large wall calendar was displayed at this meeting and intended for participants to list any upcoming events or projects for 2014. The keynote speaker for the meeting was UDSRR Superintendent Sean McGuinness. Although retiring in January 2014, McGuinness highlighted a series of projects and events for the upcoming year he would like to see realized by his successor. They include understanding and continue to work with the UDC on the project review procedure; continued collaboration with the LWRP and river accesses project; investigating potential benefits of a federal Water Trail designation for the Upper Delaware; working on a sustainable budget for NPS; filling the Cultural Resources position under the Interpretive Program; completing the Oral History

project; collaborating with the UDC on a valley-wide Communication Towers Master Plan; and striving for consistency between NY and PA regulations.

O'Dell said that tentative dates for the 2014 Upper Delaware Bio Blitz were given. They are June 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. They hope to secure the Ten Mile River area as the location for the event.

It was reported that Pike County Planning will be restarting work on the Lackawaxen/Upper Delaware River Greenway Project in 2014.

O'Dell said there was concurrence that the UDC should draft a letter that supports the role Superintendent McGuinness has played at the Upper Delaware and to encourage a similar leader to fill the vacancy left by his retirement.

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy will be celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014 and has many events scheduled for the upcoming year.

The next Roundtable meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2014 and will have an agricultural focus.

**12/9 Eastern Shale Webinar Report:** Ramie said she participated in this call and learned that the Park Service has a Natural Sounds Night Skies Division (NSNS). She said that Frank Turina of the NPS NSNS presented. He noted that the motivation to protect soundscapes and night skies comes from survey results that 91% of Americans cite a wilderness experience as a reason to visit national parks. Noise and light sources from oil and gas activities were reviewed and ways to mitigate those impacts were offered. A brief question and answer session took place after the webinar. It was noted that a lot of education is required to influence oil and gas facilities to comply with mitigation efforts for noise and light. The NPS NSNS Division can provide science, technical expertise, and rationale. Ramie's written report was provided in members' packets. Ramie commented it was good to learn that these resources are available to consult. Boyar stated that our night sky in the Upper Delaware is incredible and one of the most valuable resources that we have. He spoke of a friend's experience in the North Dakota oil fields. Members talked about their night sky experiences. McGuinness said that the night sky is one of those resources, "that once it's gone, it's gone".

**Delaware River Sojourn Update:** Ramie reported that the Sojourn steering committee has selected the dates for 2014. The event will be held from June 22 through June 28 and the theme will be "Sharing the Journey for 20 Years". The tentative sections for the upper section would be on June 22<sup>nd</sup> paddling from the Corwin Farm to Staircase Access and on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, from Staircase Access to Kittatinny's River Beach Campground in Matamoras.

**Other:** Henry spoke of the Big Island illegal tilapia farm in the Town of Delaware and what an impact it had on the river. He does not feel that the Council was kept abreast of the situation while it was being investigated. A brief discussion of the Big Island issue took place. Henry feels that the NPS should keep the UDC abreast of any environmental issues on and near the Delaware River. McGuinness said the NPS continues to investigate an issue down at Mast Hope. Henry said that if the Council is aware of these ongoing issues, they could perhaps offer assistance in the form of a letter or otherwise. Henry said he was told that the tilapia farm was to be a food source for the proposed school at the old Delaware Valley School site. He noted that he does not know if there is any truth to that or not. Boyar suggested that issues appear continuously under *Old Business* until they are resolved. Henry agreed that certain issues need to be discussed on a monthly basis. Boyar also suggested that certain targeted issues be discussed during committee reports at the full Council meetings for the benefit of the press. Henry said that the Council could have questioned the NYS DEC representative about the Big Island issue if they had been kept informed about the status of it.

### New Business:

**12/19 Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) Meeting 6 p.m. UDC Office:** Ramie said that meeting is opened to anyone that is interested and the agenda is included in the members' packets.

**Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report:** Ramie said that report is included in members' packets for their review.

McGuinness said he received a report from the National Weather Service in Binghamton earlier in the day calling for potential flood conditions for Saturday and Sunday. He questioned the level of the reservoirs. Dexter said he thought the reservoirs were at 75 % capacity.

**Other:** Ramie noted that a news release by the Delaware County Economic Development and Friends of the Upper Delaware River titled “Cold Water Fishing and Boating Economic Impacts Under Study” was included in members’ packets. She added this study was funded in part by a UDC Technical Assistance Grant although that was not mentioned in the news release. McGuinness said this would have been a good opportunity to show the good things that the Upper Delaware Council does. Ramie agreed and said that she had contacted the project sponsors.

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** A motion by Boyar seconded by Jeffer to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. was carried.

*Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 12/31/13*