

Upper Delaware Council
WATER USE/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMM. MEETING MINUTES
June 18, 2013

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

The UDC's Water Use/Resource Management Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 18 2013 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Tony Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. A motion by Henry seconded by McKay to approve the May 21 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Old Business:

Upper DelAWARE River Roundtable 6/6 Meeting Update: Ramie reported that this meeting was a follow-up to the May 14th Natural Economies Conference that took place in Matamoras, PA. Participants discussed ways in which to capitalize on and market the value of the natural assets in the Delaware River basin. Topics included coming up with some cohesive idea for joining communities together on both sides of the river, trying to determine what audience we are trying to attract to the area, and asking if we are ready for visitors in the terms of infrastructure in place.

The Upper DelAWARE River Roundtable has been meeting for six years, Ramie said. The convener, Laurie Stuart, will be going away mid-August for a 10-month internship. Discussion of what direction the group should go in took place. This group meets every two months and the meeting is usually timed so that it is the same day as the UDC's full council meeting.

The next meeting will be August 1st, but details of that meeting have not yet been decided.

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Update: Ramie said that the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management has received a \$100,000 grant from NYS Department of State's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program to develop site designs for new or improved river accesses in each of the six Sullivan county towns on the Upper Delaware River: Fremont; Delaware; Cochection; Tusten; Highland; and Lumberland. A Request for Proposals is to be issued by the end of this week to find a consultant to perform this job. Ramie referred to her written report where a list of responsibilities was included. They include meeting with representatives from each of the municipalities (each town is to appoint a committee), doing site reconnaissance work, preparing alternate schematic designs, and conducting a meeting to solicit public input. Ramie noted that this grant covers design and not construction. Proposals are due by July 19th; consultant selection will be made by July 31st by the Waterfront Advisory Committee of which Ramie is a member; the contract start date is anticipated to be by August 30th; and the consultant work should be completed by January 30, 2014, or five months after the contract is signed. Henry questioned if these accesses will ultimately be town accesses or DEC accesses. Ramie said she believes that is still up in the air and this is one of the subjects that will be addressed at the meetings. Ramie said the plan does specify to improve existing accesses in Fremont, Cochection, and Tusten; to create a new access in Lumberland; and to either improve an existing access or create a new access in Delaware and Highland. Much discussion about existing accesses took place. Henry asked if the Council is involved with this process and said they should be as there are guidelines for river accesses stated in the River Management Plan. He asked if the Park Service has been included. Ramie said that in addition to the six towns, the stakeholder partners are included. Stakeholders include the Park Service, NYS DEC, and UDC. Ramie said she will keep members informed of the progress of this project.

Future Presentations Discussion: Ritter reviewed the past presentations and introduced Jeff Skelding, the first Executive Director of the Friends of the Upper Delaware River who he said has a background in resource management and rivers. Ritter suggested a presentation on the proposed National Blueways designation for the Delaware might be a good one to have. Henry recommended having a presentation on the health of the Delaware River fisheries. Hamilton said he could reach out to Jerre Mohler of the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service's Delaware River Coordinator Office. Henry said there are some concerns currently with the Susquehanna River fisheries and he would like to know if those concerns could carry over to the Delaware. Discussion about bass fishing on the Delaware took place. Henry noted the earlier in the season we could get a presentation on the fisheries, the better. Hamilton said he could also reach out to Daryl Pierce, Delaware River Biologist, of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. It was decided after a brief discussion that a full Council meeting may be the best venue for this presentation. Hamilton said he will reach out to these individuals and see if they may be available as early as July or August. Ramie noted that our meeting in July will be held on July 11th as the first Thursday of the month is the 4th of July holiday. Ramie believes that the Blueways designation will come up at the July 11th Common Waters meeting, so we can gather some more information. She suggested that if we want more information after that meeting, we could seek someone out for that purpose.

Other: Ritter spoke of the 133 oral history interview tapes that were done by Mary Curtis, NPS Park Historian, with the assistance of Interpretive Seasonal Park Ranger Kitty Groesbeck Womer. Ritter said he had suggested to Superintendent McGuinness at the June 6th full Council meeting that the tapes be saved in a digital manner. He added that this history needs to be made available to the public. Ritter wonders if volunteers could be used to assist with this project. Henry said that there is a particular protocol that needs to be followed and there are certain specific standards that need to be met with regards to these recordings. Henry said it is his opinion that the priority with the tapes should be saving them digitally before having them transcribed. Henry said it would be enlightening to obtain a copy of the Code of Federal Regulations that pertain to these collections. Ramie said that McGuinness did pledge at the June 6th meeting to follow up on this issue and report back to the Council.

New Business:

Delaware River Flow and Storage Data Report: The monthly report was provided in members' packets for their review. Ritter said that both the Cannonsville and Pepacton reservoirs are still spilling and that total storage is 2.8% above where we normally are for this time of year. Rainfall for the month of June is already above the historical average for the month. Ritter said he finds it interesting that one can go 40 miles from Deposit, N.Y. to Callicoon and the water temperature is about the same. It is between sixty and sixty-three degrees. Ritter noted that the water level of the river is between two and three feet higher than normal currently.

Other: Hamilton reported that the Upper Delaware Bio Blitz will take place on the 28th and 29th of June at the Gales Property owned by the Norcross Wildlife Foundation near the confluence of the East and West branches of the Delaware River. Participating organizations include Delaware Highlands Conservancy, Delaware Highlands Mushroom Society, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Friends of the Upper Delaware River, National Park Service, NE PA Audubon Society, Norcross Wildlife, and Pennsylvania Native Plant Society. The event is open to the public on June 29th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Teams will begin identifying life forms at noon on June 28th, Hamilton added. A brief discussion about cicadas took place.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Henry seconded by Jeffer to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Odell, 6/21/13