

## **Summer 2020**

### **Message from the Executive Director**

Though much of the impetus for the creation of river regulating districts by the State of New York (Black River Regulating District in 1919, Hudson River Regulating District in 1922) was driven by the need for flood protection, the below average inflow this year and the resulting water levels helps shine a light on the other – but no less important – part of our central mission: flow augmentation. This augmentation from river regulating reservoirs significantly improves the quantity of water flowing in each river system during periods of low flow, providing important ecological, recreational, economic, and public health benefits.

For instance, this year, since mid-April, precipitation and runoff in two of the State’s largest watersheds was more than 50% below average. Despite these widespread dry conditions in both the upper Hudson River and Black River watersheds, river flow in the Hudson and Black Rivers remained close to normal due to the release of water from the Great Sacandaga Lake reservoir, Indian Lake Reservoir and Stillwater Reservoir.

Consistent with the HRBRRD’s statutory mission and responsibility to beneficiaries, this important augmentation provides regular and constant flow necessary for numerous river benefits including recreation, water supply, waste assimilation, hydroelectric power, and navigation. Without augmentation from the State’s regulating reservoirs, significant low-flow related ecological, recreational, economic, and public health impacts along the Hudson and Black Rivers would be have been felt in these areas. So while it may be counterintuitive for people living along or recreating on reservoirs within the HRBRRD’s jurisdiction to see additional water being released from a reservoir which is already below its target elevation, it is simply a case of the reservoir working as it was intended to provide these important benefits.

We have also continued to work with our internal team, as well as stakeholders, to develop new tools to make it easier for people to do business with us. For instance, we continue to finalize a new online permit transaction tool which will be available to permittees on Great Sacandaga Lake beginning in 2021. This will be a quick, convenient way to process renewals, apply for a permit, and request other actions from the HRBRRD.



We have also, in an effort to better align Great Sacandaga Lake permit revenue with expenses, proposed changes to the permit fee structure which would become effective in 2021. Key to the HRBRRD's success at arriving at a proposal which is fair, reasonable and equitable was the early participation and insight of several groups, notably the [Sacandaga Protection Committee](#), the [Great Sacandaga Lake Association](#), and the Town of Day Property Owners Association. Additionally, we wish to thank Bob Campbell of Edinburg Marina and Hudson River Area Board Members Ken De Witt and Jeffrey Rosenthal for their participation and significant contributions to this process.

Generally speaking, under the proposal, the rates for renewing a permit area up to 10', 50', 100', and 200' in length would go from \$43, \$48, \$56, and \$72, respectively, to \$50, \$60, \$75, and \$100 annually, with a \$10 administrative fee which would be waived for online renewals. For a complete fee schedule and information on how to provide public comment, please visit <https://hrbrrd.ny.gov/gsl-permit-system/>

Finally, one of the heartening trends of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the innovative ways that people have sought to stay connected when disconnection has very much been (necessarily) the theme of the day. Even as time-honored events and traditions have been postponed or cancelled – neighbor gates, folding fence panels/ bar-tops, drive-by birthday, anniversary and graduation celebrations, and virtual family reunions and events have emerged to keep us in contact with those we love, albeit in a different way. We have endeavored through these many months to stay in close contact with many of you who are downstream beneficiaries, and our neighbors on and around the reservoirs within our jurisdiction.



Through social media, emails, phone calls, letters, and sometimes even shouts from moving vehicles...you have brought important concerns to our attention, asked for our help, provided beneficial information, offered constructive criticism, and thanked our dedicated team for what they do each and every day. Despite the “new normal” which sometimes changed how and how quickly we would respond or react, we have tried to not only keep the conversation going, but enhance and improve the discourse so that we truly live up to the “public benefit” in public benefit corporation. We want to thank you for being good neighbors, and all of us here at HRBRRD are committed to being good neighbors also both through these unprecedented times, and for the years ahead.

Thank you and be well!

*John*

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Hudson River-Black River Regulating District