

Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Monthly Meeting
July 16, 2003

Meeting Called to Order at 7:10PM by Rick Coe, Chairperson

Roll Call by Fred Akers

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), John Brudon (Estell Manor), Bill Christman (Hamilton Township) Rick Coe (Monroe Township), Greg Gregory (Somers Point), Andrew Mair (Winslow Township), Bill McDermott (Upper Township), and Joel Spiegel (Folsom)

Board Members Absent: Gene Betz (Corbin City), Bill Egan (Weymouth Twp.) Keith Kendrix (Hammonton); Creed Pogue (GEHWA - gave prior notice) and Marc Thyrring (Egg Harbor Twp.)

Quorum Present? – Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Mary Vavra (National Park Service),

Proceedings

Rick Coe stated that the meeting was advertised pursuant to the NJ Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Notices were sent to official publications for the River Council – The Courier Post and The Press of Atlantic City. A copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Fox Nature Center and the Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing. An Affidavit of publication from the Courier Post was received.

Public Portion

A motion was made by Greg Gregory to open the meeting to the public at 7:15PM. Julie Akers seconded the motion. No members of the public were present. Motion made by Greg Gregory to close the public portion which was seconded by Julie Akers.

Approval of Minutes

Julie Akers made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 18, 2003 meeting. Joel Spiegel seconded the motion. Motion carried. (Rick Coe abstained from voting).

Old Business

River Administrator's Report

Fred Akers provided a paper outlining the goals and objectives for the River Administrator. Fred's monthly report will be distributed at the same time the minutes and agenda are forwarded to River Council members.

Fred continues to attend Pinelands Commission meetings to raise their awareness of the Great Egg Harbor River and watershed. He provided an update on Pinelands activities and mentioned the staffing changes that have occurred. Fred mentioned that the Pinelands Commission received funding from the Dodge Foundation and is providing Pinelands Excellence grants to Winslow and Hamilton Townships. Andy Mair and Bill Christman updated members on what has been happening on these grants.

A letter was received from the Hamilton Township Police Department thanking the River Council for their financial support and expressing their willingness to provide reports as requested.

Fred reported that it appears that Egg Harbor Township has decided to not permit the ATV development at the Betsy Skull area. Fred is on a subcommittee of the Endangered, Non-game Species Program (ENSP) and is working with that group to look at possible locations for ATV use in more appropriate areas.

Fred has applied for a \$20,000 grant to the Watershed Institute seeking funding assistance to allow him to work more time in the river corridor and watershed. Fred is also continuing to work with NJDEP and Stockton College on water-related issues.

Signage

Greg Gregory brought a sample sign for the watershed for members to view. Bill McDermott asked if it was possible to get a specific sign with the name Tuckahoe River. It was explained that each municipality would be able to add their river name if that is what they decided. Fred Akers will followup on the next step on finalizing the signs.

Items of Interest

Greg Gregory reported that he caught a bass in the Great Egg Harbor River that was tagged by the American Littoral Society (#550450). The fish traveled from the Arthur Kill area. Greg will be notifying the American Littoral Society that the Arthur Kill fish made it to the Great Egg Harbor River area.

Board Member Indemnification

Rick Coe stated that the River Council does not have insurance to cover municipally appointed members. Rick mentioned that as a Monroe Township appointee, he believes that his municipality would cover his participation in the River Council; however, he stated that it is much less clear about the rest of River Council members. Rick suggested that each member go back to their municipality to determine what the terms of coverage are and whether the River Council member would be covered. Julie Akers looked at GEHWA's insurance and noted that there is about a \$1,000 fee for board members; however, River Council is not officially part of GEHWA. Julie also mentioned the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 that applies to volunteers that perform services for a non-profit organization and protects them from liability. Julie will look into this Act further and report back to the group.

River Council Mission

Julie Akers discussed the differences between GEHWA and the River Council and suggested that GEHWA continue in the role of being the river advocate and allowing the River Council to concentrate on education and other positive projects. The mission of the River Council was discussed at length. It was recognized that inadequate funding by the National Park Service is hampering activities that could be undertaken by the River Council. Julie mentioned that the Senate recommended an additional \$600,000 for northeast partnership rivers. This additional funding would help the River Council and GEHWA undertake important initiatives in the river corridor. Julie will draft a letter for the municipalities to send to their congressional offices to support additional funding for the river.

It was also recognized that the public does not have a clear understanding of the role of the River Council. Rick Coe will draft a statement to be used prior to public input at River Council meetings explaining the mission, goals and objectives of the Council. Rick will also prepare a statement that River Council members can take back to their municipality to determine if members are protected under municipal insurance policies.

New Business

Suggested projects for river council funding

Andy Mair will work on a form for soliciting and reviewing potential projects. Members should come prepared to suggest and discuss projects that have river-wide impact. Approximately \$21,000 in River Council funds remains to be obligated.

Adjournment

Greg Gregory made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10PM. The motion was seconded by Bill Christman.