

**Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River Council**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**October 15, 2003**

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

*Roll Call* by Belinda Irizarry, Secretary

*Board Members in Attendance:* Bill Christman (Hamilton Township), Rick Coe (Monroe Township), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Egan (Weymouth Township), Andrew Mair (Winslow Township), John Brudon (Estell Manor), Joel Spiegel (Folsom)

*Board Members Absent:* Eugene Betz (Corbin City), Julie Akers (Buena Vista Township), Gregory Gregory (Somers Point), Keith Kendrix (Hammonton), Marc Thyrring (Egg Harbor Township) and Bill McDermott (Upper Township).

*Quorum Present?* - Yes

*Others Present:* Belinda Irizarry (GEHWA Education Coordinator) and Mary Vavra (NPS)

**Open Meetings Act:**

Rick Coe states 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 the 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.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Bill Christman to approve the September 17, 2003 minutes of the River Council. Joel Spiegel seconded the motion. Motion carried. (Andy Mair abstained from voting).

**Public Portion**

Although no members of the public were present, the meeting was opened (and closed) to the public by motions made and seconded by Bill Christman and Joel Spiegel.

**Old Business**

*Signage:* Fred Akers provided members with a package containing maps of their particular municipality along with road crossings in an effort to determine the appropriate location for signage along the river. River Council members will review the information and decisions will be made.

**Personnel Evaluation Committee**

Concern was expressed over the delay in getting an evaluation for the past year's activities of the River Administrator. There were a variety of reasons for this delay; however, it was recognized that a subsequent meeting of the evaluation subcommittee which includes Rick Coe and Mary Vavra needed to take place. It was agreed that any personnel evaluation process needs to include a discussion with the employee so that achievements, goals and objectives can be clearly recognized and understood. Dick Colby mentioned that the Administrator's goals and objectives are listed in the employment agreement and that information should provide guidance for

evaluation. Rick Coe will arrange a follow-up meeting for those involved in this process within the next two weeks.

Mary Vavra mentioned the need to re-evaluate the River Administrator position to determine if it is more appropriate for the Administrator to be a GEHWA employee only. The Administrator, at present, serves two organizations and sometimes receives confusing and sometimes conflicting directions. If the Administrator was a GEHWA employee, he could continue to provide staffing assistance to the River Council but receive his/her overall guidance and direction from the GEHWA Board. This option will be discussed at the follow-up evaluation meeting.

***River Administrator Report*** (Belinda Irizarry provided this report in Fred Aker's absence)

- Somers Point Planting: Fred conducted a site inspection and recommended approval of the \$3,000 expenses previously approved by the River Council. Dick Colby made a motion to approve the payment and the motion was seconded by Bill Christman. ***Roll Call Vote:*** Bill Christman – yes; Rick Coe – yes; Dick Colby – yes; Bill Egan – yes; Andrew Mair – yes; John Brudon – yes; and Joel Spiegel – yes. Motion carried unanimously.
  
- Stockton Fish Report Application – A copy of the grant application for the fish report was provided to the River Council for their use and information. An advance payment of \$1,000 was requested to provide funding to Professor Rudy Arndt, Stockton College, to begin the project. A motion was made by Dick Colby to approve the advance payment. The motion was seconded by Bill Christman. ***Roll Call Vote:*** Bill Christman – yes; Rick Coe – yes; Dick Colby – yes; Bill Egan – yes; Andrew Mair – yes; John Brudon – yes; and Joel Spiegel – yes. Motion carried unanimously.
  
- Photographs of the stormwater issues at Adams Branch near the Atlantic City racecourse were provided to River Council members. Fred continues to work toward better stormwater management at this site.

***National Park Service Report***

Mary Vavra provided information on the Interior appropriation process and the fact that the Senate recommended a \$600,000 increase in funding Northeast Wild and Scenic Partnership Rivers. This increase would then provide \$1.2 million to eight rivers (including the Wekiva in Florida), which would equate to approximately \$195,000 for use in managing the Great Egg Harbor River. River partners have been contacting their congressional delegation in support of this increase. Time will tell if the additional funds will be approved.

Mary reported that the National Park Service is in the process of responding to a letter sent to the US Army Corps of Engineers by Mr. Byrd's lawyer providing information as to why Mr. Byrd's after-the-fact permit should be approved. There is a 30-day response time and the NPS response letter is presently being reviewed. A discussion about the project ensued. A question arose as to whether there was a permitting process for private property owners to own exotic species of birds. Some of these birds cause destruction of the natural ecology when they leave private property. The question will be researched by John Brudon.

Mary Vavra reported on the Atlantic County bridge replacement project along Route 559 that crosses Patcong Creek in Somers Point. Atlantic County representatives and their consultants attended a meeting in Trenton with state and federal officials to discuss the alternatives for the

bridge project. The preferred alternative with the least amount of impact is building a bridge approximately 30 feet south of the existing bridge so that traffic can continue on the old bridge. The old bridge would be removed upon completion of the new one. The replacement structure will have less spans and pilings and will contain a pedestrian walkway, with possible bump out areas, to accommodate recreational pursuits such as fishing, hiking, and biking. Initial feedback was provided to the County. The County will continue to work closely with agency representatives to address concerns.

### ***Funding Options***

Andy Mair provided information on potential funding sources that municipalities could pursue. The River Council at a previous meeting authorized by Resolution funding for grant writing and other services for municipalities. Fred Akers drafted a letter to send to municipalities announcing potential grants. The Center of Place Program grants have the potential to fund scenic overlooks that may have an impact along the river. Green communities grants are also available to establish forestry management plans in municipalities. Andy Mair and Fred Akers will continue to circulate information to municipalities.

### **New Business**

***Weymouth Township Funding Request*** - Fred Akers received a call from Mike Hogan (Weymouth Township Environmental Commission) requesting funding assistance to purchase a graphic printer to complement a GIS-based system purchased through a NJDEP grant. Weymouth Township will provide training to other environmental commissions throughout the river corridor on how to use the equipment. It was suggested that Fred Akers contact Weymouth Township and request a specific written proposal and to get the Township to put into writing their intention of providing training to other municipalities. This information will be given to Rick Coe so that he can prepare a Resolution for the next meeting. There were some concerns expressed over the Township's request so the additional information required may answer some of the questions raised.

### ***Timber Cutting Along Route 54 in Folsom***

Belinda Irizarry mentioned that there was a significant amount of clear cutting that occurred near the Great Egg Harbor River near Route 54 in Folsom. Fred Akers is in the process of investigating this issue and Lou DeStefano, Folsom Zoning Officer, will also be contacted.

### ***Removal of Woody Debris***

Dick Colby mentioned the importance of finding out who is responsible for managing the removal of woody debris in the river. This issue has been researched before with no clear answer to the question. Mary Vavra will investigate the issue and try to determine who is responsible for this management responsibility.

### ***Evelyn Braeunig***

Bill Christman reported that Evelyn Braeunig, alternate River Council member for Hamilton Township, suffered a heart attack and was still hospitalized. Belinda will send a card expressing get-well wishes from Council members.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.