

**Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2004**

Meeting Called to Order at 7:00PM by Greg Gregory

Roll Call by Fred Akers:

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Township), Gary Theno (Egg Harbor Township alternate), Joel Spiegel (Folsom Borough), Bill Christman (Hamilton Township), Rick Coe (Monroe Township), Greg Gregory (Somers Point), John Olansen (Upper Township), Bill Egan (Weymouth Township), and Dick Colby (GEHWA alternate),

Board Members Absent: John Brudon (Estell Manor), Keith Kendrix (Hammonton), Creed Pogue (GEHWA), and Marc Thyrring (Egg Harbor Township).

Quorum Present? – Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Belinda Irizarry (Coordinator), Dr. Emile DeVito, New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

Proceedings

Greg Gregory 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.

Approval of Minutes

Greg Gregory made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2004 meeting of the River Council. Dick Colby seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Portion

Julie Akers motioned to open the meeting to the public, seconded by Greg Gregory. All in favor. Dr. Emile DeVito (NJCF) made a brief presentation, with an associated request for funding from the Council. A potential development has been proposed in Weymouth Township of an 1800-acre parcel of land. This land abuts the NJCF's Dorothy Preserve and has significant natural resource values. Weymouth Township has concerns about the extent of residential growth proposed (minimum 33 homes on existing parcels, or up to about 120 homes if subdivided), and they are also proponents of open space preservation. The State and non-profit land trusts have also expressed an interest in purchasing the land at fair market value. Dr. DeVito has recommended that the Township hire an expert consultant (recommended Herpetological Associates) immediately to begin a Threatened and Endangered Species Inventory of the property prior to submission of a formal application by the developer. Of the \$15-20,000 anticipated for the study, a retainer of \$3,000 is requested of the River Council to get the project started. The balance will likely be available from other sources. The Council will review this request later in the agenda.

River Administrator Report – Fred Akers reported on the following:

1. **Watershed signage:**

Signs are completed, and are ready to be installed.

2. **Monroe Bridge project:**

Fred made a presentation with photos and aerial maps of the project area in Winslow Wildlife Management Area. He also showed photos of a recently fabricated recycled plastic bridge in the Wharton

Forest, and indicated that this may not be suitable due to the low span and need for pilings in the stream bed. The bridge should not be made of wood (arson concerns). The most likely alternative would be a metal truss free span style, although access to the site for installation will need to be researched. Lee Wicheskog of DEP Fish and Wildlife promotes the concept of the foot bridge, but indicated the DEP has no money. More research will be done by Fred. Rick Coe also will research a contact he has for bridges and piers.

3. *River tour for Municipal, County, and State Officials:*

Fred Akers showed photos from the river tour. Greg Gregory said he had made a phone call to the local radio station while on the boat, and he and guest Congressman Hughes spoke on air about the river.

4. *Upper Township presentation:*

John Olansen reported on his information presentation to the Twp Committee. He also put in a pitch for the pump-out boat concept. Fred Akers distributed copies of the handout he had prepared for John's presentation, and offered the same type for any municipal rep.

5. *Weymouth Township Environmental Resource Inventory:*

Discussion on Dr. DeVito's presentation was continued. Bill Egan commented that Weymouth Twp does not want development and that the Environmental Commission has already contacted the NJ Natural Heritage Program and received Block and Lot referenced T&E species. A motion was made by Julie Akers to approve the expenditure of \$3,000 to Weymouth Twp for the purpose of retaining an expert consultant. After discussion, the following conditions were added: 1) A resolution requesting the funding must be made by Weymouth Twp; 2) National Park Service must approve the use of funding for this purpose; and 3) A copy of the report must be sent to the River Council. The motion was seconded by Bill Egan. *Roll Call Vote:* Julie Akers:yes; Bill Christman: yes; Rick Coe: yes; Dick Colby: yes; Bill Egan: yes; Greg Gregory: yes; John Olansen: yes; Joel Spiegel: yes; Gary Theno: no. Motion carried.

6. *Changes in agriculture:*

In Buena Vista Twp, a zoning change has been made near South River, turning Forest Area into Agricultural Production. Fred Akers also reported on the issue of Ag use in the Pinelands. He explained that the definition of Ag includes sod farms, architectural plants, potted plants and greenhouse cover.

7. *Erosion at Pine Street, Hamilton Twp:*

Fred Akers showed photos and aerial maps of erosion problem where Pine Street crosses Babcock Creek. Sediment from the dirt road is washing into the creek after a section of road was paved for a minor subdivision and cul-de-sac construction. Bill Christman said he will contact Phil Sartorio, Community/Economic Director of Hamilton Twp, to follow up on the Planning Board development approval last year, that set development standards and responsibilities of contractor and homeowners. Fred reported that the Soil Conservation District, which oversees construction runoff, has given him a stock engineered plan to remedy the situation. With the unspent \$1,000 grant from the River Council to Hamilton Twp for a clean-up that has not been done, remediation per this road plan could be done.

National Park Service Report

Fred Akers reported that there may be an appropriation increase for the Partnership Rivers. He will be meeting with this group, along with Chuck Barcz and Paul Kenney from the NPS, November 4-5 in New England.

Old Business

1. *River Council 2005 Workplan*

This was discussed in context of earlier agenda items.

2. *Barge Removal Contract*

Gary Theno reported that the barge has started to break up. When he tested to see if he would even be able to tow it with his equipment, he determined that it was not possible for him to do, and that it would also need to be wrapped with cables before any attempted removal. His opinion is that it is high and dry and not going anywhere, and it is not an eyesore. He will talk to the owner of a towboat at his marina, and will ask about a ballpark price for removal.

New Business

1. *River Councilor Reports*

Dick Colby: 1) Congressman LoBiondo will be at Gaskill Park on Monday 10/25 at 10:00AM to receive an endorsement from the League of Conservation Voters. All are invited. 2) Army Corps of Engineers application denial of development in Hamilton Twp: River Beach II received a major denial to add a 100-slip marina for its campers. The use of Tug Run remains OK for launching of boats. Comments were added by Fred Akers and Gary Theno.

Bill Christman: 1) What is the update on Adams Branch? Fred Akers will send a copy of the email from Millie DeFeo, DEP Enforcement, who has not issued any enforcement actions, and requested instead that NPS give an award to the Mall for being a good business. 2) He visited a Peaker Plant substation in Lakewood to see operations there. He then compared the similar plant that is being proposed for Hamilton Twp at the border with Egg Harbor Twp. His opinion is the plant will not be detrimental to the area or the river.

Julie Akers and Dick Colby reported on the Lenape Dam fish ladder project, which is currently delayed due to minor repairs needed at the base of the dam where the ladder will be installed. Anticipated installation is still scheduled for the Spring, as per Atlantic County.

2. *Other New Business*

There was no new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00PM.