

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting
October 18, 2006

Meeting Called to Order: at 7:15 PM by Dick Colby, Treasurer.

Roll Call: by Fred Akers, Administrator.

Board Members in Attendance: Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp), Bill Egan (Weymouth Twp), Joel Spiegel (Folsom Boro), Gary Theno (Egg Harbor Twp)

Board Members Absent: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp), John Brudon (Estell Manor City), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Keith Kendrix (Hammonton City), John Olansen (Upper Twp), Bud Paynter (Winslow Twp), Tom Walker (Corbin City)

Quorum Present: No

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Sherry Peck (NPS) filling in while Paul Kenney (NPS) is on Leave-of-Absence, Lynn Maun (Coordinator)

Open Meetings Act: (Not read/did not have a Quorum present)

Approval of Minutes: The August 16, 2006 minutes were not approved. The River Council meeting did not have a Quorum present. Minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

Public Portion: None

Administrator's Report (Fred Akers): Fred presented the following agenda items for information and/or action.

1. **Tuckahoe River Boy Scout Cleanup:** Scout Troops #79 and #55 met on September 9th and 16th respectively at Mosquito Landing in Tuckahoe to cleanup the river. The cleanup started from the Head of the River and continued down to the mouth of the bay. Approximately 50 members were present on both dates. Prior to the scheduled cleanups Fred meet with each troop to present a power point program "What is a Watershed". The program was received well by both troops. Each troop had strong adult support, both at the meetings and during the cleanup.
2. **Save the Bluffs Project Update & \$1,500.00 Donation:** The River Council and GEHWA will continue to support the Dawes Avenue School "Save the Bluffs" project. GEHRC and GEHWA recently received a \$1,500.00 donation from the Somers Point Parks Commission for the Bluffs project. Approximately 60 bushes planted on the Bluffs in the spring have died. After meeting with the teachers at Dawes, it was decided to replace the bushes and place mulch around the bushes on November 7 & 8. The 4th, 5th and 6th grade classes will participate in this activity. Fred and Lynn will be responsible for mowing the area around the bushes, identifying the dead bushes, obtaining and transporting the replacement bushes, and ordering the mulch.
3. **Bird Survey Report and \$3,000.00 Conective Donation:** The 2005-2006 bird survey for the Great Egg Harbor River and the Mullica River has been completed. Copies were made available to members of the River Council. Conective recently donated \$3,000.00 towards the 2006-2007 bird

survey. A brief power point presentation using GIS and the NJ Landscape Project, demonstrated the similarity between the Great Egg and Mullica River habitats. This similarity supports the findings of the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 bird surveys.

4. **New Jersey Trails Update & Winslow WMA Bridge Project:** The Great Egg Harbor River is officially listed as a trail in the New Jersey Trails Program. The handout NJ Trails provides information on the GEHR trail. Fred and Lynn have been working on identifying trails within the Winslow Wildlife Management (Blue Hole) area that could be included within the New Jersey Trails Project. They have been using GIS and GPS to identify and map these trails.

5. **Osprey Platform Project:** Work has stalled on the osprey platform project. Fred has been waiting for NJFWS to identify possible locations. Adam Day, a Boy Scout from Troop 55 would like to take on the project for his Eagle Scout Badge.

6. **River Council Sign Update:** As a final process for the permit application to install road signs on state roads, Fred must send a letter to DOT stating that the signs (measuring from the bottom of the sign to the ground) will be seven feet off of the ground, and that GEHRC will be responsible for the maintenance and installation of the signs. Upon receipt of the letter the permit application will be signed.

7. **Tax Neutral NJ Parks Maintenance Ballot Referendum:** The Corporate Business Tax (CBT) was used in the past to pay for the repair/removal of underground storage tanks. Since the problem of these tanks has been addressed, the monies from the CBT could now be used to fund the capital repairs, improvements and renovations at state and local parks and natural areas. This would not involve new tax, but a reallocation of an existing tax. The handout on Public Question #2 addresses this issue.

8. **ORV:** A handout on articles that appeared in the Burlington County Times regarding ATV riders with a reference to the proposed park in Monroe Twp. at the Sahara Sands location.

9. **Meerwald Cruise with Congressman LoBiondo:** During a recent cruise on the Meerwald, Fred had the opportunity to speak with Congressman LoBiondo about the possible collapse of the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers program. Fred stated that Congressman LoBiondo is a strong proponent of the environment. Dick and Fred will meet with Congressman LoBiondo on Monday. The Sierra Club is endorsing the congressman. Congressman LoBiondo has voted against drilling in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge and offshore drilling.

10. **Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Update:** The Delaware Valley Rivers (Lower Delaware, Great Egg Harbor, Maurice, Musconetcong and White Clay Creek rivers) will be meeting with the NPS in Philadelphia on November 20 to discuss appropriation and funding issues.

NPS Report (Sherry Peck): Sherry stated that she would act as a messenger in Paul's absence.

Budget: Until Congress votes on the 2007 budget the NPS is able to function based on a continuing resolution.

Challenge Cost Share Grant: A grant for the 2007 bird survey has been filed. Once the budget is passed and regional allocations are made, grant recipients will be determined.

Musconetcong River: Paperwork for the Congressional Designation is still in both the House and Senate. Once it is completed it will go to the President for signature.

New Business:

BoatsUS Safety Grants: The council members were asked if there was any interest in pursuing a grant. A handout was provided detailing the guidelines of the grant. Gary Theno stated that he provides handouts on boating safety, etc. at his marina and that there are organizations that provide safety training. He expressed concern regarding the growing number of personal watercraft (i.e. wave runners) that he observed during the recent boating season over prior seasons. Gary expressed the need for water craft safety education for the operators. The three fatalities that occurred as a result of personal watercraft accidents may have been preventable with adequate safety instruction.

River Councilor Reports:

Egg Harbor Twp: Gary Theno reported that Egg Harbor Twp. has adopted all of the state mandated storm water regulations.

GEHWA: Dick Colby expressed concerns regarding the pending sale of the BL England Power Plant. He questioned the current contaminant level of mercury coming from the smoke stacks and the impact this was having on fish in the bay (i.e. fish kills, amount of mercury found in the fish). Dick also asked if any studies had been made or are needed to determine if the river water used by the power plant for cooling was/is having an impact on river ecology. He then inquired if the buyer would be required to implement the necessary upgrades to improve the function of the smoke stacks so as to decrease the amount of mercury released and if so, what time frame was given for this to take place.

Hamilton Twp: Bill Christman stated he had heard that the buyers of the BL England plant would not have to comply with the current allowable limit for mercury emission, but would be able to increase mercury emissions to 1984 limits.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.