

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting
October 17, 2007

Meeting Called to Order: at 7:07 PM by Gregory Gregory, Chairperson.

Roll Call: by Fred Akers, Administrator.

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp), Bill Egan (Weymouth Twp), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Keith Kendrix (Hammonton City), John Olansen (Upper Twp), Joel Spiegel (Folsom Boro)

Board Members Absent: Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Bud Paynter (Winslow Twp), Gary Theno (Egg Harbor Twp), Tom Walker (Corbin City)

Quorum Present? – Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Beth Styler Barry (Executive Director of the Musconetcong River Watershed)

Open Meetings Act: 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, Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing and the GEHWA website.

Approval of Minutes: Bill Christman made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2007 meeting. John Olansen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Portion: Beth Styler Barry, Executive Director of the Musconetcong River Watershed, stated that she was attending the meeting to observe how the River Council meetings are run and she also gave a brief summary of her watershed. The Musconetcong is New Jersey's newest river in the Federal Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers program.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun)

- Somers Point Save the Bluffs Project Update: GEHWA continues to work with the Dawes Avenue School in Somers Point. Upcoming programs for the 2007/2008 school year are as follows: Clean up and maintenance work is scheduled for November 5th, 6th, and 7th with the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade classes respectively, at the bluffs in Kennedy Park, a environmental education day during the winter, date to be announced, in the school, and a environmental activity day at the bluffs in the spring.

An inspection of the condition of the bushes planted on the bluffs was conducted on 10/12/2007. Approximately ½ of the bushes planted in the spring and fall of 2005 have survived. A significant number of bushes on the top row have been cut down by lawn mowers. Debris from trimmed bushes and trees has been disposed of on the bluffs.

- **Dorothy Preserve Cleanup:** A clean up is scheduled on Saturday, October 20, 2007 for the roads surrounding the Dorothy Preserve. GEHWA helped Lake Lenape Pines Brownie Troop 3755 organize the event.

- **Stockton Water Watch Partnership:** GEHWA has been working in partnership with Stockton's Water Watch program. The Water Watch program, a partnership between NJPIRG and AmeriCorps, equips students and community members so they can work towards improving water quality through education and action.

GEHWA works with Water Watch participants: by instructing interns and students where and how to monitor streams and by providing tools for teaching environmental education.

- **Pinelands Discovery Festival Event:** GEHWA tabled at the festival on October 7, 2007. The festival is sponsored by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA). The event is supported by crafters and a diverse group of NPOs.

Administrator's Report (Fred Akers):

- **Bird Survey Report/CMBO River Cruise:** The 2006-2007 bird survey is completed. Copies were made available to River Councilors. This completes the fourth year of a five year study. The study was funded by a "Challenge Cost Share Grant" from the NPS for \$4,375.00 with the matching monies coming from a \$3,000.00 donation from Atlantic Electric and \$1,375.00 from the estate of Lynne Ward.

- **Eagle Scout Tuckahoe Osprey Project Report:** Adam Day, the scout working on his Eagle Scout project, will be erecting five osprey platforms on the Tuckahoe River. Adam has been fund raising to purchase the materials necessary to build the platforms. He is making headway on the project. Fred donated two platforms that he had previously built.

- **Watershed Institute Grant Update:** The Watershed Institute will only fund \$1,500.00 of the \$20,000.00 grant request. GEHWA requested the funds for a project that would use GIS to analyze municipal land use at the HUC 14 subwatershed level in the Great Egg Harbor Watershed.

- **Hamilton Watershed Flooding Committee Report:** Using GIS, Fred determined that 156 square miles of the 627 square mile Great Egg Harbor Watershed is within the flood hazard area. This data was obtained using the FEMA flood plain mapping layers. The flood zone data will be used in the analysis of the municipal land use changes. Fred will be attending the Association of Flood Managers meeting on October 18 & 19, 2007.

- **Maple Run Sewerage Discharge Report:** Raw sewage was discovered discharging from an outflow pipe at the Shore Mall: while on a tour of the watershed with the new NJDEP area representative. There has been no recent rain. The department of health was called to investigate the discharge. After several calls the outflow was tested. No word on results.

- **ORV Legislation Update:** Fred met with Assemblyman Reed Gusciora, who is the sponsor of the ORV legislation. Bill #4172 would require that all ORVs be registered and it would also increase fines. The DMV reviewed the legislation and returned it to the state legislature.

- **70 Acre BVT/South River Land Acquisition:** Buena Vista Township is working to acquire 70 acres of open space. This important acquisition will add to the existing preserved open space at Michael Debbie Park. It will also help to protect the head waters of the South River. Vernal ponds have been identified on the property.

- **700 Acre Babcock Creek Land Acquisition:** Atlantic County is working to acquire 700 acres from Cologne Associates. Fred has advocated for the acquisition of this valuable property. This property is part of the Elwood Corridor.

- **South River Diversion and Assessment:** In the past the flow of a portion of the South River was dammed and diverted to accommodate cranberry farming. The river remains diverted even though cranberries are no longer farmed.

- **GEHR Marina and Boat Launch Access Inventory:** At the request of the NPS, GEHWA has been using GIS to identify and map marinas, and commercial and public launch sites for boats. The NPS will use this information when approving or denying the request for additional marinas and/or docks on the river.

- **NPS Special GIS Project Contract:** The NPS has contracted with GEHWA, for \$2,000.00, to create 5 Regional Context Maps for the 5 Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers that it manages from the Philadelphia office. The rivers are White Clay Creek, Great Egg Harbor River, Maurice River, Lower Delaware River and Musconetcong Creek.

- **Blue Hole Bridge Project Update:** The “Rivers & Trails Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is the community assistance arm of the NPS. RTCA could help with the Blue Hole Bridge Project. GEHWA has done some trail mapping of the area using GIS.

Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Update

NPS Report (Paul Kenney):

Paul stressed the importance of the following three points made by Fred.

1. The GEHR Marina and Boat Launch Access Inventory will be a valuable tool. Generally Paul reviews a request for a marina and/or docks every six months in Trenton. The inventory will help in the decision making process.
2. RTCA is a good program to facilitate the Blue Hole Bridge Project. The program works well when crossing municipal boundaries, as this project would (Gloucester and Camden Counties, Monroe Twp. and Winslow). The RTCA staff provides technical assistance.
3. The NPS has already received a request from the Denver office for a copy of the maps that GEHWA will create for the five rivers.

Old Business:

- **Additional River Council Road Crossing Signs:** The cost to place and additional 24 signs at 12 locations is \$2,112.00. Cost per sign is \$88.00. The Atlantic County road department will place the signs at no cost to the GEHRC.

A motion was made by Dick Colby, and seconded by Bill Christman to approve the purchase of an additional 24 road crossing signs to be placed at 12 locations. Motion carried.

A roll call vote was made to accept the motion: Julie Akers YES; Rick Coe YES; Dick Colby YES; Bill Christman YES; Bill Egan YES; Greg Gregory YES; Keith Kendrix YES; John Olansen YES; Joel Spiegel YES. Motion carried.

- **Renew Support Resolution for GSPT:** Fred Akers brought the following resolution before the council for vote:

Resolution 06-2007: GEHRC Supports the Green Acres, Farmland, Blue Acres, and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2007.

Bill Christmas expressed concerns about the legislation behind the bond act. He stated that approval of the Act will result in the increase of NJ Sales Tax from \$.07 to \$.08 as a means of funding the Act. He also stated that the Act authorized the acquisition of property through the use of Eminent Domain.

A motion was made by Julie Akers, and seconded by Rick Coe with the provision that the resolution will be sent to counties and municipalities within the watershed, to approve Resolution 06-2007. Motion carried.

A roll call vote was made to accept the resolution: Julie Akers YES; Rick Coe YES; Dick Colby YES; Bill Christman NO but asked that the record reflect that he supports what it stands for but not the legislation that is behind it; Bill Egan YES; Greg Gregory YES with reservations; Keith Kendrix ABSTAIN; John Olansen YES; Joel Spiegel YES. Motion carried.

New Business:

■.....Resolution in Support of Isard Property Mitigation/Acquisition Project

Fred Akers brought the following resolution before the council for vote:

Resolution 07-2007: Support the Acquisition of the Isard Property

Fred stated that Atlantic County is replacing three bridges. The County has applied to the state for the permits. The new bridges will be widened and as a result encroach on wetlands. The County will need to do wetlands mitigation. The County must also provide public access. The Isard property will be bought as part of the mitigation.

Greg Gregory raised concerns that replacement of the bridge will enable truck traffic on the bridge and on Mays Landing Road. He stated that the resulting increase in road traffic will cause inconvenience to the residents and create unsafe driving conditions on the road. The old bridge does not support truck traffic.

Paul Kenney said that the Army Corp of Engineers must approve the bridge work because it is in federal tidal waters. He has not yet seen this paper work.

Rick Coe suggested that further discussion of the resolution be tabled until December.

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

GEHWA: Dick Colby questioned Beth Styler Barry about the lack of a ¼ mile boundary on the Mustconetcong River. He pointed out to Paul Kenney (NPS) that it as hard to determine location on park service maps. And he asked Lynn Maun about animals grazing on the bushes at the bluffs in Kennedy Park.

Hamilton Twp.: Bill Christman stated that the township has been presented with a private driveway ordinance that Trenton wants all municipalities to adopt.

Hammonton: Keith Kendrix stated that his mayor wants him to report on River Council meetings.

Weymouth Twp.: Bill Egan is investigating wetlands that have been filled.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Julie Akers, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.