

GEHR Watershed Minute #1

Starting as a Trickle: (197 words)

Starting as a trickle near Berlin, the Great Egg Harbor River gradually widens as it picks up waters from over 4 dozen tributaries on its way to Great Egg Harbor Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. In its 59-mile southeasterly course, the river passes through or by pine and cedar forests, vegetable and fruit farms, large and small communities, office and industrial sites, county parks and state wildlife management areas.

As the river flows on, the waters become increasingly tea-colored from iron and tannin dissolved from cedar roots and fallen leaves. A dam at Mays Landing holds back the river to form Lake Lenape. Below the dam the river widens and the “cedar waters” become mixed with the tidal saltwater of the ocean.

Roadways, at many points, afford views of the waterways and expansive marshlands. As they have for centuries, these marshes serve as major feeding, resting, and breeding havens for waterfowl on the east coast. Dutch explorers in the 1600s were so astonished by all the breeding birds and eggs at the mouth of the river they named the bay Great Egg Harbor, and they named the river that fed the bay the Great Egg Harbor River.