

Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Monthly Meeting
January 21, 2004

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

Roll Call by Fred Akers

Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Township), John Brudon (Estell Manor), Rick Coe (Monroe Township), Bill Christman (Hamilton Township), Bill Egan (Weymouth Township), Greg Gregory (Somers Point), Keith Kendrix (Hammonton), Andy Mair (Winslow Township) Creed Pogue (GEHWA), Joel Spiegel (Folsom Borough), and Marc Thyrring (Egg Harbor Township)

Board Members Absent: Gene Betz (Corbin City)

Quorum Present? – Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Dick Colby, (Treasurer) Mary Vavra (National Park Service), Gary Theno (Alternate for Egg Harbor Township)

Proceedings

Rick Coe 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 December 17th meeting of the River Council. Julie Akers seconded the motion. Motion carried. Creed Pogue abstained from voting.

Public Portion

Creed Pogue made a motion to open the meeting to the public at 7:15PM. Julie Akers seconded the motion. No members of the public were present and the public portion was closed through a motion by Creed Pogue which was seconded by Julie Akers.

Old Business

Administrator's Report

Fred Akers reported on the Stormwater Management Rules that are going into effect on February 2nd and the implications to municipalities. Fred will provide additional details on the rules once they go into effect. Dick reported that the Atlantic County Environmental Advisory Board recommended that the county provide technical expertise to municipalities in their development of storm water management plans.

The supply and quality of groundwater will continue to be explored in 2004 and Fred Akers will continue to work with Atlantic County on this issue. An 89-page report prepared by the state indicated that the Great Egg and the Mullica River watersheds are already adversely affected for groundwater depletion. Much of this depletion is due to the lack of recharging the aquifer. More in depth study will be undertaken.

Fred reported on a meeting with Tony Petrongolo, NJ Parks Department, about the State's interest in building a small bridge over the Blue Hole in Monroe Township. Fred will follow up on this project. The concept of canoe trails was also discussed at the meeting

National Park Service Report

Mary Vavra distributed a copy of a recently published article in the Fall 2003 issue of Park Science Magazine about the Great Egg Harbor River Social Science Study that was completed in 1998. While it did take five years to get published, there is a benefit of having the Great Egg Harbor River in this publication because it gets distributed throughout the NPS.

Mary Vavra provided copies of the November 2003 Progress Report on the Great Egg Harbor River that was sent to the Director of the National Park Service for distribution in Washington and to federal legislators. The report is prepared every two years in an effort to provide information on the progress being made in managing the Great Egg Harbor River as a partnership unit of the National Park System.

Mary mentioned that there are several projects/permits presently under review and consideration at the National Park Service. Atlantic Blueberry in Hamilton Township has a project to breach two dams along Watering Race tributary; Conectiv Power provided information on the cleanup efforts underway as a result of the accident at the B.L. England Power Plant at Beesley Point; Atlantic County hired a consultant to explore environmental information about the replacement of two bridges in Hamilton Township near the Weymouth Furnace Historic District; and Scott Brubaker, Manager of the NJDEP Enforcement office in Trenton, NJ is following up on two significant violations in the Borough of Folsom.

Mary also discussed the presentation made by Hidden Mill Marina at the Joint Permit Processing Meeting in Trenton coordinated by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the NJDEP. The marina owners are interested in upgrading the facility by legalizing work that was performed prior to their ownership, providing 10 additional boat slips, replacing the bulkhead as well as other site improvements. The proposed work appeared to be well received by the agencies attending the meeting. In addition to the improvements noted above, the marina will be providing a pumpout facility and will be operating a recycling center for boaters.

River Council Meeting Schedule

Rick Coe discussed a Resolution regarding the schedule of River Council meetings. It was decided in December that River Council meetings would continue to be scheduled each month, although full council meetings may not be held. On alternate months, subcommittees will meet at the Nature Center or other business can be conducted. Julie Akers stated that the Nature Center was reserved for the entire year for River Council purposes.

Resolution R:01-2004 Revising Appointment of River Administrator

This Resolution recognizes the River Administrator as a GEHWA employee not under the management of the River Council. Financial management of the River Administrator position will be under GEHWA, although the Administrator will continue to provide assistance to the River Council. A discussion of the changes authorized in the Resolution ensued. Creed Pogue made a motion to adopt the Resolution as written. Greg Gregory seconded the motion. Roll Call vote: Julie Akers - abstained; John Brudon - abstained; Bill Christman - yes; Rick Coe - yes; Bill Egan - No; Greg Gregory - yes; Keith Kendrix - yes; Andrew Mair - yes; Creed Pogue - yes; Joel Spiegel - yes; Marc Thyrring - abstained. Motion carried.

New Business

Selection of New River Council Chair

Since Rick Coe will be unable to continue as Chairperson, Fred Akers suggested that the River Council consider the nomination of both a Chair and a Vice Chair for the River Council. A discussion of this option ensued. Marc Thyrring nominated Creed Pogue. Greg Gregory nominated Andy Mair. It was noted that Rick Coe would continue to prepare appropriate Resolutions for the RC although he would no longer be functioning as chairperson. It was agreed that Dick Colby would continue as Treasurer. A decision will be made at the February organization meeting.

Organization Meeting

Rick Coe will prepare the necessary notices for the February annual organization meeting.

Day At the Bay

Greg Gregory updated members on the Sunday, June 13th, all-day event called “Day at the Bay”, an Atlantic County festival presently being planned. Twenty-three municipalities are expected to participate with a number of events taking place in the area and at Kennedy Park. Congressman LoBiondo has been approached to assist event planners in securing the assistance of the Coast Guard. GEHWA will have a booth at the event and the river will be showcased.

Great Egg Harbor River Bird Study

Fred Akers reported that between 1970 and 1980 there was only one pair of bald eagles in NJ. Since 1980 the numbers have increased with 40 pairs of territorial bald eagles being reported in 2003 with most of them in the southern New Jersey area. Fred reported that Clay Sutton has been hired by GEHWA to conduct the first birding study in the tidal area to provide baseline information.

ANJEC Grants

Andy Mair provided information about the ANJEC grants that are presently available. A motion was made by Andy Mair (and seconded by Creed Pogue) to send municipalities a letter from the River Council informing them that funds may be available to assist them in writing a grant proposal for ANJEC funding. Motion carried.

Marketing

Greg Gregory recommended that GEHWA and the River Council pursue the use of public radio to promote the river and the availability of marinas that provide pumpout stations to promote better boating practices. A possibility of getting financial assistance from local marinas was discussed. Fred will explore procedures for public service announcements for radio and cable stations and provide additional information. This issue will be further discussed at the February meeting.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Creed Pogue and seconded by Greg Gregory to adjourn the meeting at 8:50PM.