

**River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River**  
***Regular Monthly Meeting***  
***October 19, 2005***

***Meeting Called to Order*** 7:00 PM by Gregory Gregory, Chairperson.

***Roll Call*** by Fred Akers, Administrator

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

***Board Members Absent:*** John Brudon (Estell Manor City), (Winslow Twp), (Corbin City)

***Quorum Present?*** – Yes

***Others Present:*** Fred Akers (River Administrator), Gary Theno (alternate, Egg Harbor Twp)

### **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 and the Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Dick Colby made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2005 meeting. Bill Christman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Public Portion**

None.

### **Administrator's Report (Fred Akers):**

Fred presented the following agenda items for information and/or action:

1. GEHR draft report on Status of Selected Aquatic And Wetland Resources done by Pinelands Commission staff: Fred summarized the recently released document, noting that copies could be made available to any councilor. The conclusion notes that the GEHR watershed makes up 25% of the Pinelands, and that much of it is degraded.
2. 2005-06 GEHR Bird Survey: GEHWA will again be contracting with Clay Sutton and Jim Dowdell to do the third year of study of tidal raptors and waterfowl. A Mullica River component will be done this year for the second time, to help provide a comparison with the Great Egg and Maurice Rivers. Atlantic City Electric Company contributed \$4000 to the bird survey project this year.

3. Meeting with Rep. Pallone: Fred met with Rep. Pallone to discuss an upcoming bill about better water testing procedures in coastal waters.
4. Corbin City presentation: Fred made an informational presentation about the wild and scenic designation in Corbin City, and highlighted the presence of spacious wetlands that perform the valuable function of protecting property from storms and flooding (as a juxtaposition to recent flooding catastrophes from hurricanes along the Gulf Coast). A new appointee to the River Council should be made soon.
5. Monroe Twp presentation on open space: Fred, who was appointed to the Monroe Twp. Open Space Committee, is developing a GIS presentation of Monroe for presentation at a future meeting.
- 6 Rattle Snake tracking: Fred showed pictures about how the snakes are monitored.
7. Wild and Scenic Partnership event Nov. 1&2: The GEHR will be hosting the annual meeting of partnership rivers this year. Fred proposed that the Council provide two lunches and a buffet dinner for the attendees, who will be paying for their own transportation and lodging. Activities would begin in the Maurice River locale with a canoe trip, followed by the dinner meeting Tuesday evening. Wednesday morning activities would consist of a van tour of the tidal GEHR from the Tuckahoe WMA impoundments to the Atlantic County Park in Estell Manor. Participation in the 2-day event was extended to any River Councilor who wished to attend. Fred requested up to \$1000 to cover costs of food and rental of the van (canoes and kayaks would be furnished through a Maurice River partner, The Natural Lands Trust).  
-- A motion was made by Bill Christman, and seconded by Keith Kendrix, to approve this funding. A roll call vote was made: Julie Akers – YES; Bill Christman – YES; Rick Coe – YES; Dick Colby – YES; Bill Egan – YES; Greg Gregory – YES; Keith Kendrix – YES; John Olansen – YES; Joel Spiegel – YES; Marc Thyrring – NO. Motion carried.
8. Dawes Ave. School, Somers Point: Fred met with teachers at the school, who recently received funding from Hewlet-Packard (\$30,000) to create a school community project to “Save the Bluffs”. Greg Gregory is also involved, and noted that Fred will be assisting with information as needed.
9. Fish Trawling / School Program: Upon suggestion from Brooke Koeneke (Duke O’ Fluke captain who runs pontoon tours of the river), Fred will investigate getting a permit and trawling net equipment to extend educational opportunities for students. A teacher at EHT Middle School currently does this successful activity with his students to show them first hand what types of sea creatures can be found in local waters.
10. Sahara Sands ORV Park: Fred made a presentation about the recent acquisition by DEP Green Acres of land in Monroe Twp bordering Buena Vista Twp. The state plans to turn the gravel pit site and adjacent lands of the property into an ORV park to replace the privately run facility at Chatsworth in 2007. Fred has been working extensively on the issue of ORV damage in the watershed and statewide, especially in wetlands and streams. He and GEHWA have partnered with other groups in the state over the past several years to make recommendations for better management and enforcement to protect natural resources, quality of life issues, and user and non-user safety. Fred presented a letter from Pineland Preservation Alliance (PPA) to NJDEP, asking that no ORV parks be established on state lands until partnership-recommended guidelines for ORV licensure, registration and enforcement programs are in place. PPA requested other organizations to sign-on.  
-- Julie Akers, representing the expressed interests of Buena Vista Twp Committee against this park, made a motion to have the GEHR River Council sign on to this letter. The motion was seconded by

Rick Coe. Due to the extended discussion of opposing viewpoints, a roll call vote was made: Julie Akers – YES; Bill Christman – YES; Rick Coe – YES; Dick Colby – YES; Bill Egan – ABSTAIN; Greg Gregory – NO; Keith Kendrix – NO; John Olansen – YES; Joel Spiegel – YES; Marc Thyrring – NO. Motion carried.

Julie Akers proposed that the River Council also write its own letter to the Governor of NJ, noting the need for coordination of different departments involved in the ORV issue (Division of Motor Vehicles, as well as DEP). Discussion of opposing viewpoints and concern about lack of information followed. -- Marc Thyrring made a motion to table the discussion, and Joel Spiegel seconded. All in favor.

### **NPS Report (Paul Kenney):**

NPS issues were covered in Fred's report.

### **Old Business**

1. Watershed Sign Update: Fred reported that he is still getting the runaround from NJDOT – different offices continue to direct our request to other offices – and has not received “permission” to have signs installed on state roads yet.
2. Other Old Business: none

### **New Business:**

#### **1. River Councilor Reports**

-- Hamilton Twp: Bill Christman requested that Fred lead a Sunday morning walk in the Gravelly Run area for the Planning Board and Environmental Commission. Fred will schedule.

-- Egg Harbor Township: Marc Thyrring and Gary Theno reported that an EHT marina just received \$85,000 from the NJ Clean Marina Program.

-- GEHWA: Dick Colby reported that 7 applications for the Coordinator position had been received, and interviews would be conducted toward the end of the month.

#### **2. Chairman Report/Closing (Greg Gregory):**

-- Digest ORV information; a civil discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

-- Request that each Councilor come up with projects and positive actions in their communities to present at the next meeting.

### **Adjournment:**

Upon motion by Dick Colby and second by Bill Christman, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.