

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2015

Meeting Called to Order: at 6:40 PM by Richard Colby, acting Chairperson.

Roll Call: by Fred Akers, Administrator.

Board Members in Attendance: : Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), Brian Camp (Corbin City), David Brown (Egg Harbor Twp.), Ira Grindlinger (Folsom Boro Alt.), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.), Chris Jage (Hammonton City), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.), Jennifer Jennings (Winslow Twp. Alt.), Bill Egan (Weymouth Twp. Alt.)

Board Members Absent: Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Joel Spiegel (Folsom Boro), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.), Ralph Bernard (Weymouth Twp.)

Quorum Present – Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Chuck O'Donnell (Corbin City Alt.), Ralph Cooper (Upper Twp. Green Team)

Open Meetings Act: Richard Colby 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 February 18, 2015 meeting. Bill Handley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Portion: None.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun written report, at Boy Scout meeting)

Schools: The next two months are filling up with school programs and programs at the Fox Nature Center.

Events and Meetings: GEHWA sponsored and/or supported the following events.

GEHWA Member Meeting: The program for the March 24, 2015 meeting was “Fish Tales” presented by Fred Akers.

Upcoming Events and Meetings:

Atlantic County Parks Road Clean-up: Saturday April 18, 2015 from 8:15 to noon, followed by lunch at the Nature Center.

ACUA Earth Day Event: Sunday April 26, 2015 from 10 to 4, rain or shine.

GEHWA Member Meeting: The next event will be a frog walk at Sahara Sands in Monroe Township on Tuesday, May 26, 2015 at 6:30 PM

NPS Report (Paul Kenney): No Report, out of town.

Old Business:

Resolution #04-2015 Approving \$300.00 to match an NPS grant of \$2,400 for 3 Student Trawl Trips in June:

No objection or changes to this resolution proposed meeting of 2/18/2015. Roll call; all in favor.

Other Old Business: None

New Business:

Resolution #05-2015 Approving \$100.00 to bus Alder Avenue students to Lakes Creek:

A motion was made by Bill Handley, and seconded by Bill Christman, to approving \$100.00 to bus Alder Avenue students to Lakes Creek. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried. This project involves setting up a new outdoor classroom opportunity at the Atlantic County Lakes Creek Wetlands Mitigation bank site (old Berman property). (30) students will participate in studying the site and installing an osprey platform on 6/12/15. Fred also noted that he has constructed an additional 3 platforms that will be installed to replace broken or missing platforms along the river.

Resolution #06-2015, A Resolution Authorizing the River Council to grant \$100 for transportation to bring 25 students to the new Outdoor Classroom at Mosquito Landing on the Tuckahoe River in Upper Township. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried. This project involves setting up a new outdoor classroom opportunity at Mosquito Landing on the Tuckahoe River for the Upper Middle School, as well as establishing this site as an American Littoral SpillSpotter site and using the Upper Middle School students to help collect the data as a service based learning opportunity.

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers): Julie reported that there are lots of frogs and toads calling this spring due to wet conditions.

Corbin City: (Brian Camp): Brian reported that there was a small diesel spill at Yank's Marine due to an old oyster boat sinking. DEP came out 4 hours later.

Egg Harbor Twp.: (David Brown): Dave reported that the bridge on Somers Point-Mays Landing Road that crosses English Creek will finally be opening mid-May, 3 years after damage done by the Derecho.

Folsom: (Ira Grindlinger): Ira reported that it appears there will be no signage for weight limits on the new bridge over Hospitality Branch at 8th St (per questions asked by Joel Spiegel of the County).

GEHWA: (Dick Colby): Dick advised that it is a bountiful year for ticks. He also noted that there has been a proliferation of Green Teams around the watershed, and questioned if we should be meeting with them. Atlantic County Parks and Environment Advisory Commission will be having a presentation on eagles at their meeting of May 6th; they are also currently considering the Bikeway East extension, given that all the Rights of Way are owned by the County.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman): Bill concurred with Dick that the ticks are alive and well this year. He reported that he has not heard the sound of the herring so far this year in Gravelly Run, indicating no spawning activity. He is also keeping an eye on the restored basins at the Mall.

Hammonton: (Chris Jage): Chris reported that water conservation promotion has worked “too well”, and base water rates have been raised. He brought up some of the issues with old South Jersey Gas coal gasification sites.

Somers Point: (Fred Akers for Alt. Ron Mischker): Fred reported that Ron has a \$300 donation from the annual Somers Point crab catching contest to pass on to the River Council. Fred suggested that this go towards one of the Dawes School projects in Somers Point.

Upper Twp.: (Bill Handley): Bill reported that he is working with Ralph Cooper and the Green Team to do a Boy Scout river clean-up. They hope to get river access permission from the Head of River Church.

Weymouth Twp.: (Bill Egan, Alt.): Bill noted that he has been seeing a lot of eagles on the river. He also reported that property tax reassessment just done in Weymouth is resulting in a doubling of taxes for Riverside Drive properties.

Winslow: (Jennifer Jennings, Alt.): Jenn reported that Berlin is excited about the sign project for the headwaters of the Great Egg, and they are also trying to initiate planning with Camden County.

Other New Business: None

Administrator’s Report (Fred Akers):

1. PWSRs FY 2016 Appropriations Update: Fred explained the history of budget funding requests for individual rivers, and the success of the “Dear Colleague” process. He reported that this year, a record 39 members of the House representing 17 states signed on to the House letter, while 11 senators from 7 states signed the Senate letter. Both letters advocated for \$3 million and were signed by 46 Members of Congress in total.

2. Regional Directors Call to Action Grants Award: There is another NPS grant for \$7,350 to support 8 student trawl trips for October through June 2015-2016.

3. National Park Foundation Subaru Grant Update: There are three trawl trips left in the grant. The May 2015 trawl trips will try to assess River Herring in the main stem from Mays Landing at the bulkhead to Shady River Marina area.

4. Water Trail Signs Eagle Scout Project: Fred reported that there is still money in the river signage grant for (10) numbered signs to be placed on the river. Scout James Colbertson has met with Adam Witcraft and Eric Husta to incorporate goals of Atlantic County’s Emergency Management Plan.

5. NOAA Crab Pot Removal Grant Update: A grant submitted by Stockton University (involving River Council and NPS as partners) has a good chance of being funded. The goal is to clean up derelict pots (those that have lost their floats and therefore become “ghost pots”). Work would have to be done outside crabbing season (winter).

6. Administrators Appointment to Pinelands Committee to Review MOAs: Fred has been appointed as the sole public member of this new sub-committee. The first meeting will be 4/24/14.

7. Rail Crossings in the Watershed: In response to a concern raised by Dick Colby at the last meeting, Fred reported that the main railroad line which crosses the Great Egg main stem or tributaries goes to BL England, and no Bakken heavy crude oil is carried (as was the case in Paulsboro).

8. Upper River Exploitation Threat: Fred reported that he had been contacted by a consulting firm called "Land Dimensions" to support recreational exploitation of the river from New Brooklyn Lake to Piney Hollow Road, primarily through the Winslow Wildlife Management Area. Their approach is to get a river trails grant to pay them to open up a remote stretch of the river to extensive use, under the guise that people will appreciate the river more.

9. Bass Pro Shops Connection: Fred has communicated with the new Bass Pro Shops in Atlantic City about "conservation / education" program assistance they may offer.

10. River Herring and Menhaden Protection Update: A March 2005 report done by New Jersey noted river herring locations. Also, a NOAA Technical Expert Working Group has been established to create a River Herring Conservation Plan.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Bill Handley, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.