

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
December 17, 2008

Meeting Called to Order: at 7:10 PM by Gregory Gregory, Chairperson.

Roll Call: by Fred Akers, Administrator.

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp), Tom Walker Alt. for (Corbin City), Gary Theno (Egg Harbor Twp), Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Joel Spiegel (Folsom Boro), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp), Keith Kendrix (Hammonton City), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp)

Board Members Absent: Bill Handley (Upper Twp), Bill Egan (Weymouth Twp)

Board Members Needing Reappointment in 2009: Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Dick Colby (GEHWA), and Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.)

Quorum Present? – Yes, Greg Gregory, Chairperson asked that the record reflect his commendation to the River Councilors for their good attendance.

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Clay Sutton

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 October 15, 2008 meeting. Joel Spiegel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Portion:

No comment from the public at this time. The Chair reserves the right to open the floor to the public at a later time.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun):

- **Cape May Bird Observatory (CMBO) Fall Birding Cruise:** CMBO has been organizing spring and fall birding trips on the Great Egg Harbor River. Usually Fred is asked to lead the trips.
- **ESRI GIS Training 10/21/2008:** Fred and Lynn attended training for new ArcView software recently released. GIS is a valuable tool when assessing changes within the watershed (i.e. landuse, preserved open space, etc). Our usage of GIS continues to increase.
- **Sahara Sands Fall Assessment on October 29, 2008:** Sahara Sands (site of a proposed ORV park). Many of the vernal ponds have ORV damage. We searched for marbled salamanders

(did not find any). RC received a copy of a letter that was sent to Lisa Jackson, DEP Commissioner from the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee advising against turning Sahara Sands into an ORV park.

Greg Gregory suggested sending the new commissioner of NJDEP a letter outlining the support GEHWA and the RC have extended to the DEP over the years. Clark Sprigman voiced his support of the suggestion. Tom Walker made a motion to send a letter to the new commissioner of NJDEP and Bill Christman seconded the motion. Motion approved.

- **Brownie Troop 11862 on 10/30/08:** Met with the Brownies at Estell Manor Park to help them work on their “Water Everywhere Try It” badge.
- **River Council Osprey Cruise 11/1/2008:** Cruise was sponsored by the RC, Duke of Fluke, and B.L. England Power Station. Installed last four platforms on the Middle River.
- **Pinelands Hall of Fame 11/8/2008:** Julie Akers, as an educator, was inducted into the Pinelands Hall of Fame on November 8, 2008.
- **ACCC GIS Day 11/19/2008:** Fred and Lynn setup a display at ACCC’s first GIS Day. Many different organizations were in attendance (i.e. state, county, local businesses). Fred gave a presentation in the afternoon. Many of the presentations were shortened versions of very long presentations; the speakers talked very fast so as to finish within the allotted 15 minutes. Fred tailored his presentation to fit the time allotment and also the audience.
- **Landscape Project Training 11/21/2008:** Fred and Lynn attending a training event. The landscape project data is a tool used in our GIS work.
- **GEHWA The Story of Stuff 11/25/2008:** The movie “The Story of Stuff” was shown at the last GEHWA member meeting. Discussion followed the movie. The RC was encouraged to promote the movie to schools and civic groups.
- **Stockton Issues Class Presentation:** Fred gave a presentation to Jamie Cromatie’s class on December 4th regarding planned changes in zoning on campus from forest to RGA. The Pinelands Commission’s new Ecological Integrity Assessment supports these changes.
- **Stockton Stream Monitoring: (Fred)** Stockton interns have been doing water monitoring on campus. The students have developed QA/QC guidelines.
- **Unexpected Patrol and Trail Mapping:** Two different GEHWA groups helped patrolled Unexpected Wildlife Refuge on December 6th & 10th during shotgun season. While walking the trails a GPS unit was used to gather points for mapping the trails using ArcView.
- **GEHWA Newsletter:** The November 2008 has been mailed and emailed. Greg Gregory suggested expanding our email list to include county officials and others.

Administrator’s Report (Fred Akers):

- **Osprey Project Update:** Fifteen platforms were installed in one year. The RC received a \$2,000.00 grant from BL England for the project. There are now 27 platforms within the Great Egg estuary. Fred, Lynn & Greg will train to band osprey and monitor the nests.
- **Watershed Radio Update:** Thirty-one “Watershed Minutes” have been produced to date. “Fall Colors” was played for the RC.
- **BoatUS Grant:** Fred reported that he is continually looking for other funding sources. He applied for a \$2,500.00 grant from BoatUS for 5 months of “Watershed Minutes” about “Boating Safety” to be run in the summer (he is expecting the hear from them soon). Fred is looking to do a future BoatUS grant regarding water quality.
- **Mare Run Assessment:** The Mare Run tire cleanup project preliminary cost estimate is \$3,000.00. Fred has been working with Brandon, a Stockton Intern on this project. State funding for tire removal is not available.
- **New Open Space Acquisitions Update:** Fred received a call from the Trust for Public Land. The Trust would like to preserve the Liepe properties near Jack Pudding Branch. Fred is working on a project to determine how many acres of preserved land have been added to the watershed since 2000. GIS will be used to analyze the amount of open space that has been added to the watershed.
- **Pinelands Mandatory Clustering:** Clustering: The answer to sprawl or the route to more development. PPA published this article in their publication “Inside the Pinelands”.
- **Pinelands Ecological Integrity Assessment (EIA):** Pinelands Commission (PC) is proposing to add 1,306 acres of new urban Regional Growth Area to the Great Egg Harbor Watershed. They are using their EIA to support the change. GEHWA is analyzing the PC’s data using ArcView 9.3. Based on the PC assessment, anything less than 70% has less ecological integrity and so has less value and would receive less protection, resulting in possible rezoning (i.e. Forest to Regional Growth Area).
- **South River Restoration Project:** The RC received a \$2,500.00 grant from Conservation resources to do shoreline stabilization in Estell Manor County Park on the South River.
- **Corbin City Wetlands Mitigation Bank:** A two hundred acre wetland mitigation project is planned for the Kellerher tract in Corbin City. A portion of this area falls within the federal wild & scenic boundary. The property will be owned and managed by the NJ Conservation Foundation. This area may help to mitigate the effects of sea level rise.
- **Cape May National Wildlife Refuge:** Not covered.
- **ASMFC River Herring Amendment 2:** Not covered.
- **RWSR/NPS Funding Update FY2008, FY2009, FY2010:** In FY 2007 GEHWA received \$75,000 from the NPS; total Federal Appropriation for PWSR was \$858,000. In FY 2008 GEHWA received \$135,000 from the NPS; total Federal Appropriation for PWSR was \$1,500,000. For FY 2009 the total Federal Appropriation request is \$2,746,000 with a possible \$2,000,000 to be allocated.

- **River Council Budget for Calendar 2009:** Total projected project obligations for 2009: \$33,492.00. Julie Akers suggested that it would carry more weight if the River Council sponsored major projects rather than if the project came under the GEHWA umbrella. Tom Walker is concerned about the RC's accountability to the NPS. Paul Kenney, NPS stated that only GEHWA is accountable to the NPS, not the RC. There is legislation that allows the NPS to support NPO. The RC spent \$10,362.00 in 2008.

Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers Update

NPS Report (Paul Kenney): No Report

Old Business:

- **Watershed Radio Continuation:** Continuation of the WIBG Watershed Radio Program from January 5th to May 31, 2009 will cost \$2,500.00. Current contract will end December 31, 2008.

Dick Colby made a motion to continue the Watershed Radio Program at a cost of \$2,500.00. Keith Kendrix seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Yes-Julie Akers, Yes-Tom Walker, Yes-Jim Owen, Yes-Rick Coe, Yes-Greg Gregory, Yes-Keith Kendrix, Yes-Clark Sprigman, Yes-Dick Colby, Yes-Bill Christman, Yes-Joel Spiegel, Yes-Gary Theno. Motion approved.

New Business:

- **Avian Studies and Research Budget for 2009:** Five years of avian studies have been completed. The 2008-2009 survey is now in progress. Changes from previous studies are planned for current survey year. Clay Sutton addressed the RC. He has made some important discoveries with having five years of solid baseline data. Clay plans to continue doing the core winter season raptor and waterbird survey, but with less days during the winter and extending the survey into the spring migration and breeding season and fall migration. There is a need for volunteer assistance in monitoring wildlife. Clay reported sighting twelve bald eagles at the fish ladder at Lake Lenape on 12/15/2008.

Julie Akers made a motion to approve the Avian Studies and Research Budget for 2009 for up to \$11,000.00. Keith Kendrix seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Yes-Julie Akers, Yes-Tom Walker, Yes-Jim Owen, Yes-Rick Coe, Yes-Greg Gregory, Yes-Keith Kendrix, Yes-Clark Sprigman, Yes-Dick Colby, Yes-Bill Christman, Yes-Joel Spiegel, No-Gary Theno. Motion approved.

Keith Kendrix would like to see the data comparing all 5 years. Clay is working on providing this information.

- **River Council Meeting Schedule for 2009:** Continue the same bimonthly schedule as previous years.
- **River Council Newsletter for 2009:** Not covered.
- **Other New Business:** None

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers): GEWHA needs a new banner.

Egg Harbor Twp.: (Gary Theno): Questioned whether or not GEHWA was aware of the certain destructive activity occurring within the river corridor. He is concerned and wants to know who has authority over things that occur, especially if it is in violation of Federal, State or County code.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman): Township of working on problems with retention basin.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Julie Akers, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.