

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2017

Meeting Called to Order: at 6:35PM by Rick Coe, Vice-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.), Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Ira Grindlinger (Alt. Folsom Boro), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.), John Keenan (Hammonton City), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Ron Meischker (Alt. Somers Point City), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.), Bill Egan (Alt. Weymouth Twp.), Jenn Jennings (Alt. Winslow Twp.)

Board Members Absent: All Towns Represented, 100% Attendance!

Quorum Present – Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Chuck O'Donnell (Alt. Corbin City), Bill Reinert (Atlantic County Parks & Environment Advisory Commission), Ryan Coe

Open Meetings Act: 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, Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing and the GEHWA website.

Approval of Minutes: Bill Christman made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2017 meeting. Dick Colby seconded the motion. Rick Coe abstained due to absence. Motion carried.

Public Portion: Bill Reinert, retired Atlantic County employee and current Chair of the Atlantic County Parks & Environment Advisory Commission (ACP&EC), reported on proposed bike and pedestrian trails in Atlantic County and connections to Cape May County. Projects cited were trails between Pleasantville and Somers Point and the Garden State Parkway into Upper Township. The NJ Dept. of Transportation has a pot of money for bike and pedestrian trails; municipalities must be the applicants. Jim Rutala, a professional planner, has been working with several towns to apply for grants, and the ACP&EC plans to approve a resolution to the Freeholders to support these municipal efforts to get grants and to promote environmental tourism through increased trails and access. Fred will send GIS mapping to Bill Reinert showing the NJ DOT's North/South bikeway project that runs down Route 50; this route could perhaps be diverted through the Atl. Co. Parks. Bill also plans to attend future River Council meetings and invited us to participate in their meetings too.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Fred Akers provided this report in Lynn's absence)

Fred showed the new cloth shopping bags to promote the River Council, reuse, and recycling.

Absecon Marsh School: Lynn provided a program at the school in June.

Absegami HS: The annual Earth Day program was on Monday, April 24, 2017.

St. Vincent DePaul School: The 5th Grade did a great job presenting the annual puppet show.

Spring Programs at Nature Center: Programs were scheduled this spring at the nature center for Pleasantville School, Dawes School, and Atlantic City - Pennsylvania Avenue School.

Fernwood River Cruise Program: The Fernwood Avenue School “River Cruise Program” began on Tuesday, May 23, 2017. There were a total of 4 spring trips on the Duke of Fluke. The ACUA did a nice press article on this program in their quarterly newsletter.

Alder Avenue Water Festival: GEHWA participated in the annual “Water Festival” on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, which was attended by about 400 2nd grade students.

Dawes Avenue School: The annual Dawes Avenue School outdoor program was held from June 7 to June 9, 2017 -- the 12th year (2006). Paul Ludgate and Lynn Wood were a big help with activities.

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

Environmental Stewards: We found a diverse population of macroinvertebrates in the sample that the Environmental Stewards Class examined on May 3rd. Guest Zach Greenburg from Pew also presented on forage fish advocacy. The students were very enthusiastic.

ACUA Earth Day Event: The ACUA annual Earth Day Event on Sunday, April 23, 2017. Dick Colby and Julie Akers helped staff the GEHWA/GEHRC table. The event was well attended.

Clean-Up: The GEHRC, GEHWA, Atlantic County Parks, Friends of the Parks, ACUA and AC Parks and Environmental Advisory Board partnered in a clean-up on Saturday, April 29, 2017.

Patcong Creek Clean-up: The annual Patcong Creek Clean-up was held on Saturday, May 21, 2017 from 10 to noon.

Tuckahoe River Clean-up: Chuck O’Donnell and Brian Camp also did a clean-up on May 21, 2017.

GEHWA Member Meeting: Our annual Frog Walk was held on Tuesday, May 30, 2017 at 7:30 PM at Sahara Sands in Monroe Township. It was rescheduled from May 23rd due to inclement weather.

Upcoming Events and Meetings:

Assault on Patcong Creek: This annual event will be held on Saturday, June 24th. Last year, the Patcong Creek Foundation donated \$500 in proceeds to the RC; this year they will donate \$1500.

GEHWA/GEHRC Annual Picnic and Campfire: The annual picnic and campfire will be on Tuesday, July 25, 2017 at 5:30 PM at Lake Lenape Park

NPS Report (Paul Kenney): Not able to attend due to job constraints.

Old Business: None

Other Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Balloon Release Ban Resolution: Ron Meischker made a motion to pass the proposed Resolution # 04-2017 of support for state legislation to ban helium balloon releases. Jenn Jennings seconded the motion. Motion carried. Rick Coe will sign the resolution.

2. Draft Water Supply Plan Comments: NJDEP has finally released their updated Draft State Water Supply Plan on May 1, 2017. The public comment period ends July 19, 2017, after three public meetings, the closest being July 13th at Stockton. The Draft covers a 5-year period (2017-22). It predicts that 5 watershed management areas will have a groundwater deficit, including the Great Egg and Maurice River WMA’s 15 and 17. Fred is working with the NJ Council of Watershed Associations and Atlantic County Groundwater Advisory Committee to prepare comments. Fred will send out a copy of the Draft Plan and comments that can be made on behalf of the RC.

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

GEHWA: (Dick Colby): Dick reported that GEHWA had completed the annual audit satisfactorily.

Hammonton: (John Keenan): John reported on the NJ Green Infrastructure award program, which promotes innovative ways to encourage storm water infiltration. Working with NJ Future, PPA, ANJEC and others, Hammonton was selected to create the demo project in South Jersey: a rain garden in the front of the Hammonton Library.

Weymouth Twp.: (Bill Egan): Bill reported that several river residents who are members of the Mays Landing Yacht Club are looking to get more involved in river activities again, including bringing back a river raft event and doing clean-ups.

Other New Business: None

Administrator's Report (Fred Akers):

1. PWSRs FY 2018 Appropriations Update: The NPS Green Book for FY2017 shows appropriation levels that brought all the PWSR's up to \$170,000 each. Although the GEHR has already reached that level and did not get an increase, any cuts to our total line item appropriation that could be diverted to other rivers are now less likely. The GEHR is looking to receive a Cooperative Agreement of \$140,000. Additional grants from the Patcong Foundation of \$1,500 plus \$1,750 from Stockton for participation in the marine Debris Removal project (derelict crab traps) are added to our funding for next year. The RC's budget for small municipal grants is \$12,800.

PWSRs 25th Anniversary – and GEHNSRR's 25th Anniversary -- Celebration: Proposed dates are Saturday, October 7th with Sunday October 8th, 2017 as a rain date. Fred will check to see if other earlier dates could also work with Brook Koenke.

2. Block 809 Lot 6 Green Acres Update: GEHWA and Hamilton Twp have received approvals from NJ Green Acres for their applications to acquire this property. GEHWA was assisted by the NJ Environmental Law Clinic to obtain certification as a "charitable conservancy", making it eligible to apply for funding. The next step is to get an appraisal done, which should cost about \$3000.

3. Hidden Creek Shooting Ranges Update: After an extensive presentation and public hearing, the applicant withdrew this development proposal and will move forward with applying to build houses.

4. Sign Projects Update: Replacement road signs are in. Several signs will be installed by the sign company, and it is anticipated that Atlantic County will assist again with installing county road signs. Fred needs to coordinate the delivery of 60 bags of cement and fasteners to Atlantic County for installation of the big River Park signs. The Camden County sign project is stalled as Fred has not been able to communicate with anyone.

5. Osprey Colony Maintenance Updates: The window for inspection and banding is 6/20 – 7/10. There are 41 sites to check.

6. River Herring and Forage Fisheries Update: Fred reported that the trawl net has been towed 13 times and the seine net pulled 30 times so far this year yielding a robust diversity and abundance of local fish.

7. Other Items of Interest: Results of trawl net surveys between Tuckahoe River and Rainbow Channel show an overall excellent species diversity and abundance of aquatic marine life this year.

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