

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2023

Meeting Called to Order: at 6:30 PM by Greg Gregory, Chairperson.

Roll Call: by Fred Akers, Secretary.

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), Kathleen Federico (Corbin City), David Brown (Egg Harbor Twp.), Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Greg Conway (Folsom Boro), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Susan Stiles (Weymouth), Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.)

Board Members Absent: John Keenan (Hammonton), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.)

Quorum Present – Yes

GEHWA Trustees in Attendance: Julie Akers, Dick Colby, Clay Emerson, Clark Sprigman, Carol Jones

Others Present: Fred Akers (Operations Manager), Brooke Handley (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Clay Emerson (Alt. GEHWA and GEHWA Trustee), Daniel Patterson (Alt. Corbin City), Tom Baum (Alt. Egg Harbor Twp.), Bill Reinert (Alt. Somers Point), Bill Egan (Alt. Weymouth), Denise Appelget (Alt. Hamilton Twp.), Carol Jones (GEHWA Trustee), Jamie Fosburgh (NPS), John Helbig (Somers Point), Jodi & Troy Bolgen

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 GEHWA website calendar.

Approval of Minutes: Julie Akers made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2023, meeting. Greg Conway seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Portion: Fred introduced Jamie Fosburgh from the NPS.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun)

In Schools, Nature Center, and Outdoor Classroom:

St. Vincent De Paul School: Julie and Lynn provided elective programs in February and March for groups of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at SVDP school in Mays Landing.

Marsh Elementary School: Julie and Lynn provided indoor and outdoor programs for the 3rd grade students from Marsh Elementary School at the Fox Nature Center on March 15th and 21st.

Hammonton MS: Lynn provided programs for 7th graders on March 28 at Hammonton MS.

Williamstown MS: Lynn will provide programs for 21 5th grade classes at Williamstown MS in April.

Stockton University: Fred, Brooke, and Lynn lead 2 Environmental Principles lab classes during an outdoor streamside event on April 12th and 17th that used macroinvertebrates to assess water quality of a campus stream.

Texas Avenue School: Lynn provided a program for a “Garden Club” at the Texas Avenue School in Atlantic City on April 18.

Student Educational Programs: GEHWA will provide educational programs in May and June.

Upcoming Events and Meetings:

ACUA Earth Day Celebration: The 2023 ACUA Earth Day celebration will be held on Sunday, April 23, 2023. We will table and present a program at this event.

Folsom Green Day: The GEHWA/GEHRC will participate in Folsom’s Green Day on May 6th.

GEHWA Member Meeting: The next GEHWA Member Meeting will be held on May 23 and will be our annual “Hike for Frogs”.

NPS Report (Paul Kenney): Paul received a couple of very complicated reports from ACE regarding the NJ Back Bay Study. One was on flow, where they use particulate tracking to determine flow and the second was on the ecological impacts. Paul stated that there is a need for both a hydrologist and a biologist to review these complicated reports. He also said that the draft EIS will be out this summer. At this point, Paul turned his reporting time over to Jamie Fosburgh from the NPS. Jamie thanked the RCs for their service. Jamie also stated that there is a process where the NPS can bring in contractors to assess the reports. Paul is currently drafting a proposal to hire the needed experts. The NPS will have to issue a final comment when the final NJ Back Bay Study is presented.

Old Business:

Resolution 7-2023 seeking River Council endorsement of providing \$7,000.00 to the City of Somers Point for the Dobbs Avenue Natural Area, and Broadway Avenue interpretive Osprey sign: A motion was made by Bill Christman to approve Resolution 7-2023 and was seconded by Dick Colby. The resolution endorses giving \$7,000.00 to the City of Somers Point which will contribute towards the Dobbs Avenue Natural Area and the Broadway Avenue interpretive Osprey sign. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried.

Other Old Business: None

New Business:

Resolution 6-2023 supporting Cape May County’s reconstruction of the historic Marshallville Bridge over Mill Creek for pedestrian use: A motion was made by Julie Akers to approve Resolution 6-2023 and seconded by Jim Owen. The resolution supports the reconstruction of the Marshallville Bridge, and requests that the State Historic Preservation Office expedite the approval process. All in favor. Motion carried.

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers):

Folsom: (Greg Conway): Julie and Greg shared reporting on beaver issues involving Buena Vista and Folsom at Cains Mill Road in Collings Lakes. Plans are being proposed for signage about the environmental benefits of beavers as keystone species in the ecosystem.

Egg Harbor Twp.: (Tom Baum): Tom reported that NJ Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Marine Fisheries, has been sampling the river for River Herring.

GEHWA: (Dick Colby): Dick shared that a report on the replacement of the Lake Lenape Dam has been distributed.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman & Denise Appleget): Bill reported hearing the River Herring at Gravelly Run 2 weeks early; that HT Police were stopping ATV-ers at Gravelly Run; and questioned when the work plan at Lake Lenape Dam will finally be completed. Denise added that the HT Administrator made a lengthy report at the 4/17 Committee meeting about Lake Lenape Dam (can be viewed on HT's YouTube.)

Somers Point: (Greg Gregory & Bill Reinert): Bill reported that there are chicks on 2 eagles' nests. Gregory noted Bayfest will take place on 4/29 and Good Old Days Festival will happen on 9/9.

Weymouth Twp: (Susan Stiles & Bill Egan): General discussion about the channel markers and No Wake buoys being installed and questions about their accuracy. NJ DEP has just recently installed them.

Estell Manor: Jim Owen reported that Stephen Lake dams have been fixed and water levels are back to normal.

Other New Business: None

Administrator's Report (Brooke Handley) & Operations Manager's (Fred Akers) Report:

1. Stockton Alumni Panel: Brooke was one of the presenters on the "Stockton Alumni Panel" on February 20th. She had a chance to interact with the students following the program.

2. Wild and Scenic Rivers Hill Week in DC: Fred and Brooke traveled to DC and participated in Wild and Scenic Rivers Hill Week where they visited over 20 congressional offices and met with the NPS Washington Office. The ask for Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers funding for FY 2024 is \$5,768,000. They also attended the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Coalition Hill Week.

3. Hamilton Township ATV Ordinance: On March 24, 2023, the Hamilton Township Committee adopted Ordinance 2033-2023 which designates illegal ATVs and dirt bikes as contraband subject to forfeiture.

4. Update on Barriers for the Hamilton Preserve: Fred reported that a land survey of the Atlantic City Electric ROW is needed prior to ACE approving the installation of a barrier at the Hamilton Preserve.

5. Pinelands Commission on Illegal ATVs: On 3/31/2023, the Pinelands Commission's Policy and Implementation Committee addressed the need for ATV regulation and proposed that the Pinelands Commission draft an ATV ordinance that will be promoted to Pinelands Municipalities. They also recognized Fred and Julie's work on the ATV issue. On 4/14/2023, at the regular Pinelands Commission meeting, Executive Director Susan Grogan recommended to the Pinelands Commission that the model ATV ordinance be sent to Pinelands Municipalities.

6. Monroe Redevelopment: Monroe Township has adopted ordinance 0:04:2024, the Hexa Builders Redevelopment Plan for 158 acres of undeveloped forested areas and farmland. The lots are adjacent to Hospitality Branch. GEHWA requested that the Pinelands Commission approval of the ordinance require that any development will maintain the maximum buffer setback from wetlands and follow the newest stormwater rules for any development occurring on the site. We also asked that there be no waivers or variances regarding the stormwater rules.

7. Offshore Wind and Whales: Fred and Brooke have joined the "New Jersey Wind Works Coalition which supports offshore wind and seeks to debunk the myths surrounding it.

8. Upper Township Beach Plum Planting: Brooke participated in a Beach Plum planting on 4/8/2023 on the dunes in Strathmere.

9. Somers Point City Wide Clean Up: On 4/15/2023, Brooke participated in the "Somers Point City Wide Clean Up".

10. Beesley's Point Revolutionary Reenactment: There was a Revolutionary Reenactment on 3/26/2023 at Beesley's Point. Brooke and Bill Handley rowed one of the reenactors in the bay. Brooke was later that day recognized as one of the Outstanding Women in Upper Township.

11. River Herring Updates: There have been sightings of River Herring on the river, using the fish ladder, and in Lake Lenape.

12. BL England Stack & Boiler Implosion: The BL England stack will not be imploded, just the boilers on 4/21/2023.

13. Other Items of Interest: Brooke shared some of the interesting finds on her property and at Strathmere Beach. The new boat ramp at the Tuckahoe WMA was under construction on 4/10/2023.

14. Survey of Osprey Nests: GEHWA/GEHRC identified a new osprey nest in Somers Point. Fred also did a survey of the existing nests that are monitored and 40 out of 49 nesting platforms had birds on 4/10/2023.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Greg Conway, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.