

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2023

Meeting Called to Order: at 6:32 PM by Greg Gregory, Chairperson.

Roll Call: by Fred Akers, Secretary.

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), David Brown (Egg Harbor Twp.), Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Greg Conway (Folsom Boro), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.), John Keenan (Hammonton), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.), Susan Stiles (Weymouth)

Board Members Absent: Alison Stefanik (Corbin City), Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.)

Quorum Present – Yes

GEHWA Trustees in Attendance: Julie Akers, Dick Colby, Clay Emerson, Bill Stuempfig

Others Present: Fred Akers (Operations Manager), Brooke Handley (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Clay Emerson (Atl. GEHWA), Tom Baum (Alt. Egg Harbor Twp.), Jackie Baum (EHT), Lynnee LoCicero (Alt. Hammonton), Bill Stuempfig (Alt. Upper Twp.), Denise Appleget (Alt. Hamilton 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 GEHWA website calendar.

Approval of Minutes: Bill Christman made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2023, meeting. Dick Colby seconded the motion. Susan Stiles made motion to approve the minutes with the following correction, under Lynn’s report it should read Spring 2023 not Spring 2022, and under RC’s reports it was Bill Egan reporting for Weymouth not Ralph Bernard. Bill Christman seconded the motion with corrections. Motion carried.

Public Portion: None

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun)

Summer Programs –

SVDP: Students from SVDP met at the Route 52 causeway rookery on July 10, 2023, to learn how to use binoculars and about the birds present at the rookery. They met at Corson’s Inlet State Park on 7/24/2023 to learn about sea life and they met on 7/31/2023 at Estell Manor Park to learn about the frogs and toads found in the park.

Ocean City Yacht Club – Minnows Program: On July 12 & August 2, 2023, students from the Ocean City Yacht Club’s Minnows Program learned about the sea life at Corson’s Inlet State Park. The Yacht Club also made a \$2,000.00 donation to GEHWA.

Everest Gymnastics: The gym requested a program at the Nature Center on August 24, 2023.

Stockton University: On Wednesday, September 20 and Thursday, September 28, 2023, Fred, Brooke and Lynn will lead Catherine Tredick's Ecology lab classes during an outdoor streamside event.

Osprey Program Report:

State of NJ 2022 Osprey Project Report: The "2022 New Jersey Osprey Project Report", was released in February and gave a review of the 2022 osprey nesting season. A total of 733 occupied nests (pair present) were reported, which is an increase over 2021. There were 555 known outcome nests (active) that produced 720 young. Nesting productivity was 1.30 chicks per nest.

Ben Wurst, who heads the NJ Osprey Project, stated that the statewide productivity rate was 1.30 chicks per nest, which is the lowest recorded since 2003. He stated all colonies had reduced productivity in 2022 except for colonies in the northwest/inland locations and Monmouth County.

NOTE: The nests monitored by GEHWA/GEHRC, which are west of the parkway, had a higher productivity rate of 2.19 than the combined average for the Great Egg Harbor/Ocean City colony combined which was 1.35 chicks per nest.

Annual GEHWA/GEHRC Osprey Colony Monitoring Program: The 2023 survey of nesting activity for the GEHR osprey colony was completed on June 24 & 25, 2023. We found 10 dead chicks during this year's survey. Out of a total of 50 nesting sites, 24 were active, producing a total of 42 young. Nesting productivity was 1.75 chicks per nest which in the 15 years of surveys is the 4th lowest on record.

Ben Wurst attributed this to the inability of the adult male osprey to forage for fish in the ocean due to limited prey availability from a nor'easter in mid-June. Fred suggested that the smoke may have also been a contributing factor since the birds surveyed on the Great Egg are not foraging in the ocean, but in the area west of the Parkway.

Events, Meetings and Continuing Education:

GEHWA/GEHRC Annual Picnic: The 17th annual GEHWA/GEHRC's picnic was held on Tuesday, August 8, 2023. There were 16 adults and 4 children present. As usual, the food and conversation were great.

Somers Point Good Old Days Festival at Kennedy Park: Saturday, September 9, 2023, from 11 am to 5:30 pm

GEHWA/GEHRC Annual Canoe/Kayak Event: The GEHWA/GEHRC's annual canoe/kayak event will be held on September 30, 2023.

Hammonton's 14th Annual Green Day Event: Hammonton's 14th Annual Green Day Event will be held on Saturday, November 4, 2023, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

NPS Report (Paul Kenney): The conclusion of our last 5-year cooperative agreement is August 19, 2023, and a new agreement will now start. GEHWA will receive approximately 1 million dollars over the next 4 ½ years with the new cooperative agreement. Paul reviewed an application to dredge almost 1 mile of Patcong Creek. The redevelopers of Beesley's Point have developed a plan to take the

Patcong Creek dredge spoils. The GEHR National Parks Passport station at Estell Manor Park's Nature Center needed a new stamp and NPS has facilitated the acquisition of that stamp. Paul is working on other locations along the river that can facilitate having additional stamps.

Old Business:

1. Somers Point Grant Project Updates: Somers Point had a complication with the vendor for the sign. The vendor did not have the required license needed by Somers Point. Somers Point will return the money for the sign to GEHWA, and GEHWA will instead pay directly for the sign.

Other Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Resolution 8-2023 to Grant Corbin City \$2,995.00: A motion was made by Greg Gregory and seconded by Bill Christman, to approve Resolution 8-2023, to install coir logs to slow the long-term erosion at Corbin City Beach. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried.

2. Resolution 9-2023 to Grant Hamilton Township \$4,500.00: A motion was made by Julie Akers and seconded by Greg Conway, to approve Resolution 9-2023, for funds not to exceed \$4,500.00, to furnish and install signs to deter illegal dumping on public lands. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried.

3. Beachy Tiki – Big Tiki: Brooke inquired if there was an interest in getting out on the river for the August RC meeting in 2024. The Beachy Tiki, a pontoon type boat which is based in Ocean City could facilitate this event. The consensus was to pursue additional information, of special interest was whether the boat could be boarded closer to the river, instead of in Ocean City.

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers): Julie had an inquiry about how to obtain No-Wake Zone signs. They must be approved by the State Police.

Egg Harbor Twp.: (David Brown): Dave reported that the day after the Night in Venice event he picked up a bunch of mylar balloons and then later out in the ocean he collected an additional 100 balloons.

Egg Harbor Twp.: (Alt. Tom Baum): Tom's Fish Tidbits: Tom reported seeing 5" and 7" flounder upriver. He also ran into the Bureau of Marine Fisheries surveying the river herring. They reported that they hadn't found any. He stated that the upriver temp. was 88 degrees, and the downriver temp. was 66 degrees 3 weeks ago.

Fred and other River Councilors remembered Walt Vreeland, who served as Alternate Councilor.

Folsom: (Greg Conway): Greg said they are working on logistics for the beaver signs. It is a joint project between Buena Vista Twp. and Folsom.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman): Bill asked if anyone knew what type of small fish he is seeing in the cove? Tom Baum said they are peanut bunker.

Somers Point: (Greg Gregory): Greg announced that the Good Old Days Festival at Kennedy Park will be held on Saturday, September 9, 2023, from 11 am to 5:30 pm, with more activities for kids.

Upper Twp.: (Bill Handley): Bill has composed a letter to Jeff Van Drew stating the need to be informed about what types of hazardous materials are carried on trains in the event of an accident. Julie suggested that instead of the letter coming just from Bill it should come from the RC. Paul stated that if the RC supports this issue the NPS can also support it. River Councilors are asked to present this letter and issue to their affected municipalities to get support for a River Council resolution at our October meeting.

Other New Business: None

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

1. Paddle for the Edge: Brooke reported our participation in this program in July and hopes, if GEHWA participates next year, to have a smoother transition into the program. It was a challenge finding the time and good conditions to do the survey.

2. GEHWA Film: GEHWA staff, NPS, River Council Chair and President and a local historian did interviews for the new film on 7/26/2023.

3. Hamilton Preserve Guardrail Updates: The Natural Lands Trust has given us approvals, but Atlantic City Electric is demanding a professional survey before the guardrails can be installed.

4. Dumping Issues in Hamilton Township: There are tires on the bank of the GEHR near the power lines that were installed by Atlantic City Electric for bank stabilization decades ago. The tires are slowly eroding from the bank and ending up in the river. Some kind of maintenance needs to be done to remove the loose tires before they end up in the river.

5. New GEH River Website: The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System has a new website on www.rivers.gov. It has great information.

6. NJCWA/NJDEP Meeting: The attendees at the meeting with the Coalition of Watershed Associations (NJCWA) and the NJDEP were informed that wetlands would be assessed for their functionality, flood attenuation and wildlife support and water quality enhancement.

7. NJ Aids Counties in Transportation Improvements: Every county will receive approximately \$981,000 in funds to help improve local transportation by improving bridges.

8. FY24 Appropriations: The President wants to increase funding by \$450,000.00 for PWSR's.

9. Hill Week Meeting Outcomes - Murphy: Senator Murphy's office pushed for the funding increase.

10. Other Items of Interest: None

Adjournment:

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