

**River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River**  
***Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes***  
***December 20, 2023***

**Meeting Called to Order:** at 6:35 PM by Greg Gregory, Chairperson.

**Roll Call:** by Fred Akers, Administrator.

**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), John Keenan (Hammonton), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.)

**Board Members Absent:** Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.), Ralph Bernard (Weymouth), Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.)

**Quorum Present** – Yes

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

**Others Present:** Fred Akers (Operations Manager), Brooke Handley (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Clay Emerson (Atl. GEHWA), Daniel Patterson (Alt. Corbin City), Lynnee LoCicero (Alt. Hammonton), Bert Lopez, (Atlantic City Electric), Tom Santacrose, (Atlantic City Electric)

**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 October 18, 2023, meeting. Greg Gregory seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Public Portion:** Bert Lopez from Atlantic City Electric (ACE) reported that a contractor had cleaned up the loose tires that had been dislodged from the tires that are stabilizing the bank and fallen into the GEHR from the ACE ROW. He said that ACE will continue to monitor this problem and act accordingly. They will also investigate a long-term solution to this problem. Also addressing the issues of ORV use in Hamilton Township. Tom Santacrose, also from ACE, said that between 10 and 15 tires were removed. He also reiterated that ACE would continue to monitor the issue with the tires and the installation of guard rail at the Hamilton Preserve. He stated that ACE's legal department needs to approve the installation of the guardrail.

**Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun)**

**Events, Meetings and Continuing Education:**

**Hammonton's 14th Annual Green Day Event:** Hammonton's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Green Day Event was held on Saturday, November 4, 2023.

**GEHWA Member and Friends Meeting:** GEHWA's Member and Friends meeting on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, was presented by Lynn Wood where she led us on an aerial tour of the GEHR via helicopter. The presentation can be viewed on GEHWA's YouTube channel.

**GEHWA Trustee Meeting:** GEHWA had a Trustee meeting at the Nature Center on Thursday, December 7, 2023.

**Upcoming Events:**

**GEHWA Member and Friends Meeting:** The next GEHWA Members and Friends meeting will be a hybrid meeting held at the Nature Center on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 6:30PM. Program details will be emailed later.

**Outreach:**

**GEHWA's 2023 Outreach:** A total of 8,048 students and 5,837 adults were educated in 2023 at 63 events.

**Presidential Volunteer Service Awards:** The Presidential Volunteer Service Awards program is an opportunity for GEHWA/GEHRC to recognize the outstanding volunteers that help facilitate our outreach efforts.

**NPS Report (Paul Kenney):**

**Water Quality Degradation from the Storm Surge Barrier (SSB):** Fred reviewed the antidegradation surface water quality standards in the GEHR. He pointed out the waters that have Category 1 (C1) designations. C1 waters are classified as antidegradation waters. The storm surge dam across the GEH Inlet will change the natural hydrology of those waters. Paul spoke about National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act Sec. 7(a) and how it pertains to the SSB and the issues surrounding it. Language from N.J.A.C. 7:9B states C1 waters cannot be degraded. The NPS would like the RC and GEHWA to consider hiring an environmental law attorney.

**Old Business:**

**1. Somers Point Grant Project Update:** Somers Point has received the "Osprey Sign" and the City and Environmental Commission (EC) is planning its installation. The EC also planted over 90 species of native plants at the Somers Point Natural Area.

**2. Marshallville Road Bridge Update:** The bridge has been totally closed off to foot traffic. To date no monies have been designated for repair.

**3. ACE Update on Guardrail and Tire Removal:** Illegal ATV and truck entry on Ocean Heights Ave. at the ACE ROW has dual unblocked access roads. GEHWA/GEHRC is currently working with ACE to get approval to install guardrail at these access sites. The loose tires were cleaned up from the GEHR. AC Electric will continue to monitor the site and remove tires as needed while also looking for a long-term solution to this issue.

**4. Corbin City Coir Logs:** The GEHRC has worked with Corbin City over the past 4 yrs. to install coir logs at Corbin City Beach resulting in the deposit of sediment and the growth of vegetation. The erosion around the cedar tree has also been halted by the coir logs.

**Other Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

**1. Resolution 11-2023 Supports the Current 2023 Level of the Corporate Business Tax (CBT)**

**Funding without Reduction:** A motion was made by Julie Akers and seconded by Bill Handley, to approve Resolution 11-2023 that provides funding for open space preservation. All in favor. Motion carried.

**River Councilor Reports for each Municipality**

**Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers):** Julie received an email from a person in Berlin regarding beavers being removed. Julie reached out and provided information.

**Corbin City: (Daniel Patterson):** Daniel thanked the RC for their help with the coir logs. He also reported that there was a lot of standing water in Corbin City following the last rainstorm.

**Folsom: (Greg Conway):** Greg asked for a copy of the resolution regarding the railroads and the Corp. Business Tax. He also said that repair to the Cushman Lake Dam at Collins Lake should be finished this spring.

**GEHWA: (Dick Colby):** Dick said that the Annual GEHWA Trustee meeting was held in December and that the GEHWA budget was approved.

**GEHWA: Clay Emmerson:** Clay stated how the recent heavy rainfall has been beneficial to the watershed.

**Hammonton: (John Keenan):** John said he had 5 inches of rain this week.

**Somers Point: (Greg Gregory):** Greg has heard complaints from residents on Gale Ave., Hamilton Twp about dump trucks going by their properties because they cannot cross the historic bridge at Weymouth Furnace. He has also seen a lot of action by a pair of bald eagles.

**Upper Twp.: (Bill Handley):** Bill said that Upper Twp. plans to have the Marshallville Bridge replaced by June 2024. He also said the state is looking for ways to educate residents regarding water safety to try to prevent drownings. Bill spoke to the owners of Beach Tiki, and they would be willing to pick up at the Tuckahoe Inn for the August RC meeting.

**Other New Business:** None

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

**1. Marsh Balding in GEH Bay:** Fred reported that areas on the marsh are going bald. The vegetation is gone. Fred plans to reach out to US Fish and Wildlife service regarding this issue.

**2. 10 Year Anniversary of GEH Avian Studies:** Fred reported that the Great Egg Avian Species Studies from 2003-2013 that studied the raptors and waterbirds of the GEHR celebrated its 10 yr. anniversary. He pointed out some highlights from the study.

**3. Upper Township Increased Dumping Fines:** Upper Township increased their illegal dumping fines from \$1000 to a minimum of \$2,500 up to \$10,000. They will also offer a reward of \$1000 to anyone who reports an illegal dumper. Rick suggested sending out a boiler plate of Upper's ordinance to the RC municipalities and the RC passed resolution 12-2023 in support of doing so.

**Resolution 12-2023 Supports Sending a Boiler Plate of Upper Township's Illegal Dumping Fines to all the RC Municipalities:** Rick will work with Brooke to craft the resolution. A motion was made by Gregory Gregory and seconded by Rick Coe, to approve Resolution 12-2023. All in favor. Motion carried.

**4. Hamilton Increased Dumping Fines:** On December 4<sup>th</sup> the Hamilton Township Committee considered adopting a similar ordinance using Upper Townships as a model.

**5. 525 Acres to be Preserved in Egg Harbor Township:** EHT voted to accept a land donation of 525 acres from Zell Enterprises.

**6. BL England Stack Implosion:** Brooke showed pictures of the implosion.

**7. New Pinelands Water Rules:** The Pinelands did a study and is implementing new rules to protect the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer. The old water management standards for withdrawals from the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer only applied to diversions over 100,000 gallons of water per day. The new rules would lower that threshold to 50,000 gallons of water per day.

**8. Post Sackett Wetland Protection:** Brooke attended a webinar about the Clean Water Act that was weakened by the Supreme Court's ruling in Sackett vs EPA. Attendees were educated on what can be done at the local level to protect our waters and wetlands.

**9. Sidewalk Proposal in Hamilton Township:** There are plans to build sidewalks along the BH pike from ACCC to the Hamilton Mall.

**10. NPS Received a Citizen Complaint Regarding 1095 Somers Point Road in EHT:** Jamie Fosburgh from the NPS received a complaint about water discharging from a private property into the street. The property owner is addressing the issue and NJDEP and Atlantic County Public Health Department are watching the issue.

**11: Corbin City Bricks:** GEHRC and GEHWA donated bricks to Corbin City's Patio at their Town Hall.

**12. Other Items of Interest:** Brooke participated in the annual Pilgrim Paddle on GEH Bay on Thanksgiving. She also said there was high surf on Monday following the storm.

**Adjournment:**

Upon motion by Rick Coe and second by Bill Handley, the meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM.