

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2024

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

Roll Call: by Brooke Handley, River Administrator

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), Ali Stefanik (Corbin City), 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: Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.)

Quorum Present – Yes

Alternates in Attendance: Daniel Patterson (Corbin City) Kathleen Federico (Corbin City), Tom Baum (Egg Harbor Twp.), Paul Ludgate (GEHWA), Denise Appleget (Hamilton Twp.), Bill Reinert (Somers Point City), Bill Stuempfig (Upper Twp.), Bill Egan (Weymouth)

GEHWA Trustees in Attendance: Julie Akers, Dick Colby, Paul Ludgate, Carol Jones, Bill Stuempfig

Others Present: Fred Akers (Operations Manager), Brooke Handley (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), David Kreutz (Beesleys Point Redevelopment Group)

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 February 21, 2024, meeting. Bill Handley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Portion: None

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun)

In Schools, Nature Center, and Outdoor Classroom:

Texas Avenue School – Atlantic City: Lynn provided a program on “Pollinators and Honeybees” on Thursday, February 29, 2024, for the Garden Club students.

Stockton University: GEHWA led 2 Environmental Principals lab classes during an outdoor streamside event on Monday, March 25 & Wednesday, March 27, 2024. The stream was flooded onto the floodplain following weekend precipitation of over 2 inches.

Williamstown MS: Lynn is currently providing programs at Williamstown MS on Stormwater Runoff and Groundwater. She will do 6 days of education, between April 5 - 26, 2024, stressing the importance of protecting our water resources in the GEHW and river.

Hammonton MS: Lynn provided a program on the “Frogs and Toads of NJ for 7th graders at the Hammonton MS on Wednesday, April 10, 2024.

South Main Street School - Pleasantville: Lynn and Julie provided a program on “Frogs and Toads of NJ” on Friday, April 12, 2024, for the students at the Fox Nature Center.

Texas Avenue School – Atlantic City: Lynn and Julie will provide a program on “Plants” on Thursday, April 18, 2024, for the Garden Club students. The students will plant a tomato plant and wildflowers that they will take home.

Events, Meetings and Continuing Education:

7th Annual Watershed Conference: Staff from GEHWA attended the conference both in-person and virtually on Friday, February 23, 2024.

Pinelands Short Course: Fred, Brooke, and Lynn attended the Pinelands Short Course at Stockton University on Saturday, March 9, 2024.

Junior Ranger Launch Party: Brooke and Lynn tabled at the Junior Ranger Launch Party at Estell Manor Park on Wednesday, March 13, 2024. Paul Kenney, NPS was also present. Participants were given a booklet with activities to complete to become a Junior Ranger. Once the booklet is completed, they will receive a signed certificate and a badge. Several homeschool groups attended. They were interested in what educational programs GEHWA offers. One of the groups has scheduled a program with us for Friday, May 3, 2024.

GEHWA Member Meeting: The last GEHWA Member Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 6:30 pm at the Nature Center and via Zoom. Fred presented a program on “The Climate is Changing Quickly in the Watershed”. The program was recorded and can be viewed on GEHWA’s YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/guvR15QSZJA>.

Upcoming Events and Meetings:

ACUA Earth Day Celebration: The 2024 ACUA Earth Day celebration will be held on Sunday, April 28, 2024. We will table at this event.

GEHWA: The next GEHWA Member Meeting and program will be held at the Piney Hollow Preserve on Tuesday, May 28, 2024. It will be our annual “Hike for Frogs”.

NPS Report (Paul Kenney):

1. Unpermitted Docks at the Sugar Hill Inn: The Sugar Hill Inn has installed docks in the tidal portion of the Great Egg Harbor River. Due to the type of anchoring posts used (Pipe Bracket and Pipe Augers) to secure the dock, the NPS will need to review an application to determine if the docks are a permitted use.

2. Inflation Reduction Act: The NPS is hiring a full-time employee that will work for ½ time for GEHWA. Funding will come from the Inflation Reduction Act for the new hire. The position will be 3 years.

3. Summer Intern: The NPS plans to hire a summer intern that will work with GEHWA.

Old Business: None

Other Old Business: None

New Business:

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers): Julie reported that there is a large volume of water in the watershed resulting from the rainfall events of the past couple of months. As a result, our amphibians population are utilizing these abundant bodies of water to reproduce.

Corbin City: (Alison Stefanik): Ali reported that there are many areas in Corbin City with standing water.

(Daniel Patterson): Daniel reported that the core logs are holding up. He also said that Cobin City will host a city-wide cleanup in June.

Egg Harbor Twp.: (David Brown): Dave reported that he saw his first osprey on 4/6. He reported that Egg Harbor Twp. Committee adopted an ordinance to preserve a 525-acre property. The Township has reached out to GEHWA for help in developing a management plan for the property.

(Tom Baum): Tom reported that he is continuing to help with Marine Fisheries ocean surveys.

Estell Manor City: (Jim Owen): Jim reported that the Stevens Creek Bridge was not repaired property. There have been issues with the surface of the road rising in areas.

Folsom: (Greg Conway): Greg reported that the Joel Spiegel Memorial Bench has been repaired. The missing board was replaced. One of the boards from the seat of the bench was stolen last year.

GEHWA: (Dick Colby): Dick reported that Friends of the Parks will host a program by Mark Demitroff next Thursday, April 25, 2024.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman): Bill reported hearing River Herring on the river in early in March. He said he has been seeing more eagles. Also, three power line gates are open, and the dam water control mechanisms are working. The municipality was able to control dam levels during all the recent precipitation events.

Denise Applegat: Denise state that the Sugar Hill has consistently not gotten permits for work done on their property.

Hammonton: (John Keenan): John said he saw his 1st hummingbird.

Somers Point: (Greg Gregory): Greg reported that the Dobbs Avenue Rain Garden is functioning and has helped to eliminate flooding in adjacent yards. He also reported that a new dock was built near the old Dolphin Dock property for high end boats. He said that Gregory's Bar is entering its 78th year of business.

(Bill Reinert): Bill reported that Bay Fest will be on April 27, 2024. He said that there are 2 occupied eagles' nests on Patcong Creek, and 1 on South River. All the nests have young. Osprey are using the nest platform in front of the interpretive sign near Kennedy Park. Bill said that the rookery near the visitors center on the Rte.52 causeway is extremely active.

Upper Twp.: (Bill Handley): Bill reported that the Upper Twp. Rescue Squad will sponsor a kayak race on 8-3-2024. He would like GEHWA to participate.

(Bill Steumpfig): Bill reported that he witnessed a lot of bird foraging activity on the Tuckahoe on 4/12/2024. He thinks it was because of herring. He also saw an unusual activity where Loons were foraging for mole crabs.

Weymouth Twp.: (Susan Stiles): Susan said that the Mays Landing Yacht Club will host a hometown celebration.

Other New Business: None

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

- 1. Clean Communities Award:** GEHWA received the “Marine Debris Award on 3/7/2024 from the NJ’s Clean Communities Program.
- 2. Pinelands Short Course:** Staff from GEHWA attended the Pinelands Short Course on 3/9/2024.
- 3. Junior Ranger Program Launch:** The Junior Ranger Program launch was a good event for both Atlantic County Parks and GEHWA. GEHWA connected with several Homeschool Groups with the potential of providing programs in the future.
- 4. Wild and Scenic River Hill Week in DC:** Fred went to DC a second time the week of March 18th for Wild and Scenic Rivers Hill Week. Fred met with Justin Unger and many others to discuss the multiple problems with the NPS Cooperative Agreements. Fred stated that the House “Dear Colleague Letter” for FY 2025 is circulating and is getting support. The ask for FY 2025 is \$5.648 million. GEHR is currently funded at \$210,000.00.
- 5. Engineering with Nature:** Brooke attended a webinar that uses natural based solutions to address marsh balding and flooding.
- 6. Paddle for the Edge Program Update:** GEHWA is planning to improve its “Paddle for the Edge” Program for 2024
- 7. Pinelands Land Conference:** Fred and Brooke attended the Pinelands Land Conservation Conference on 4/4/2024.
- 8. Noticing Nature Outing:** Brooke met with the “Noticing Nature Group” in Somers Point
- 9. Hamilton Township Bridge Work:** Two bridges will be replaced on Rte. 559 in Hamilton Twp. Work will be done one bridge at a time, and only one lane at a time will be closed.
- 10. Marshallville Road Bridge Update:** The State Historic Preservation Office is delaying repair work on the Marshallville Road Bridge.
- 10. Record of Flooding:** There has been river flooding following recent storms.
- 11. Other Items of Interest:** The Upper Township Rescue Squad will host a kayak race on the Tuckahoe on Saturday, August 3, 2024.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Bill Handley, the meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.