

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
December 17, 2025

Meeting Called to Order: at 6:38 PM by Greg Gregory, Chairperson.

Roll Call: by Brooke Fisher, River Administrator

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), Alison 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), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.)

Board Members Absent:, Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Ralph Bernard (Weymouth), Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.)

Quorum Present – Yes

Alternates in Attendance: Tom Baum (Egg Harbor Twp.), Paul Ludgate (GEHWA), Clay Emerson (GEHWA), Denise Appleget (Hamilton Twp.), Bill Reinert (Somers Point City)

GEHWA Trustees in Attendance: Julie Akers, Dick Colby, Clay Emerson, Paul Ludgate, Kyle Rumaker

Others Present: Fred Akers (Operations Manager), Brooke Fisher (River Administrator), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Paul Kenney (Retired NPS), Jenna Mudforte (Winslow Twp.), Kristin Welser (Winslow 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 October 15, 2025, meeting. Dick Colby seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Portion: Jenna Mudforte and Kristin Welser from Winslow Township introduced themselves and are interested in becoming Winslow's representatives on the River Council.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun)

In Schools, Nature Center, and Outdoor Classroom:

Fernwood MS School Macroinvertebrate Program – GEHWA provided macroinvertebrate programs for Val Flesch's, Jim Thoms' and Trevor Zompa's 7th grade students on 10/16, 11/11 & 11/13/2025 respectively.

Jordan Road School at Kennedy Park: Approximately 115 fifth and sixth grade students from

Jordan Road School participated in an outdoor classroom event at Kennedy Park on Friday, October 17, 2025. Each grade rotated between 5 stations.

Events, Meetings and Continuing Education:

Hammonton's 15th Annual Green Day Event: Hammonton's 15th Annual Green Day Event was held on Saturday, November 1, 2025. Fred, Julie, Brooke and Lynn tabled at this event.

GEHWA Member and Friends Meeting: GEHWA's Member and Friends meeting was held on Tuesday, November 25, 2025, at 6:30PM at the Nature Center. Fred Akers presented a program on the "Restoration of Tuckahoe Island and Jacob DeRose WMA 15 Watershed Ambassador discussed the NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador program.

Upcoming Events:

GEHWA Member and Friends Meeting: The next GEHWA Member and Friends meeting will be a hybrid meeting held at the Nature Center on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 6:30PM. Program details will be emailed later.

2025 Calendar Year Review: During 2025, GEHWA staff educated 7,372 students and 4,227 adults. Volunteers: Julie Akers and Tom Baum educated 3,190 students and 1,717 adults. Total outreach: 10,562 students and 5,944 adults.

Special Thank You to GEHWA Volunteers: Fred, Brooks, and Lynn thanked all the volunteers that helped make 2025 GEHWA programs a success: Julie Akers, Tom Baum, David Kreutz, Cheryl Fouts, Morgan Crouch, Bill Handley, Dave Brown, Jacob DeRose, Paul Ludgate, Lynnee LoCicero, River Council Members and GEHWA Trustees.

NPS Report (Sarah Bursky) & NPS Coastal Resiliency (Kurt Cheng):

1. **Inflation Reduction Act: Ecosystem Resilience:** Through the "Inflation Reduction Act" the NPS will work to increase coastal resilience through salt marsh restoration and conservation. Tuckahoe Island will be a demonstration project to develop restoration procedures for other marsh areas in the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. **New GEHWA Trustee: Kyle Rumaker:** Kyle Rumaker is a newly elected GEHWA Trustee. His background is Coastal Engineering.

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers): Julie will follow up on the issue of railroad ties that are piled in various locations in Atlantic County.

Corbin City: (Alison Stefanik): Ali reported that Kathleen has frequently seen a pair of bald eagles on the Tuckahoe.

Folsom: (Greg Conway): Greg reported that a road construction company recently shredded creosote railroad ties that had been stored on their property. NJDEP was notified with concern that the shredded railroad ties will leech toxic chemicals into the groundwater. He also reported doing a roadside

cleanup with scouts. The Folsom Environmental Commission recently collected and distributed gently used plastic toys to the community

GEHWA: (Dick Colby): Dick reported that the GEHWA Trustees had their annual meeting in November.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman): Bill reported that the channel buoys have not been pulled from the river. He stated that they are generally pulled by December 1st. He also reported that his Grandson caught 53" striper in Lake Lenape. Bill stated there is concern that Macys is going to close its anchor store at the mall.

Hammonton: (John Keenan): John thanked Fred for inviting him to help replace an osprey platform.

Somers Point: (Greg Gregory): Greg reported there is a lot of road construction in Somers Point. He reported finding a new tire dump in the middle of Hamilton Preserve.

Somers Point: (Alt. Bill Reinert): Bill reported there was a recent trail cleanup on Defeo Lane, and a tree planting along the bike path.

Upper Twp.: (Bill Handley): Bill followed up on a previous report regarding Upper Township's severe beach erosion. He said NJ has secured funding to replenish the beach but that they are also seeking federal funds to supplement state funding. He reported that the Deaville Inn has gotten permission to dredge and put dredge spoils on the beach. There is concern regarding the quality of those dredge materials. Bill reported that the Middle Twp. Rescue Squad will again sponsor a paddle race on 8/1/2026. He reported that the replacement of Mill Creek Bridge is almost completed and he thanked the RC for their support of the project.

Other New Business: None

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

1. Beesley's Point Project Update: After having received preliminary approval of a 1.7 million dollar grant from the Wetlands Mitigation Council for the Beesley's Point Project, GEHWA has withdrawn from the project because BPDG is unwilling to deed restrict the project area selected for restoration.

2. Tuckahoe Island Project Update: The Tuckahoe Island project is going well. GEHWA may receive a grant to manage the restoration of Tuckahoe Island and other marshlands in the mouth of the GEH and Tuckahoe Rivers.

3. Drexel/Stonybrook Report: During survey work on Tuckahoe Island, equipment was found and later identified as belonging to Drexel and Stonybrook Universities for research taking place from 2021-2024. They published a document titled "Assessment and Monitoring of Tidal Marshes Along the Tuckahoe River in June 2024.

4. TNC Grant Awarded for Pipeline Project: TNC was recently awarded a .989 million grant to study and create 5 restoration designs for areas of interest in the Great Egg Harbor Estuary.

5. Marine Debris Update – An abandoned work barge was removed from Stephen Creek using a \$15,000 grant from Stockton University. Shamrock Towing removed the barge on 11/5/2025.

6. Osprey Colony Update – On 10/25/2025, the GEHRC replaced an old osprey platform located on the marsh of the Tuckahoe River.

7. Oyster Spat Update: GEHWA has been asked to again participate in the Bureau of Marine Shellfisheries Oyster Spat program in 2026. Of the 4 oyster spat study areas, the Seed Beds location was the most active site.

8. Ocean City Visitors Center: GEHWA installed a new sign at the Ocean City Visitors center.

8. Annual NPS Report: The NPS annual report for GEHWA is due by December 29, 2025. Work is being done to finalize the report for submission.

9. Mill Creek Bridge Progress: The work on replacing Mill Creek Bridge is almost completed.

10. Other Items of Interest: None

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Bill Handley, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.