

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2024

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

Roll Call: by Fred Akers, Operations Manager

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), Daniel Patterson (Corbin City), Dave 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: Tom Baum (Egg Harbor Twp.), Paul Ludgate (GEHWA), Denise Appleget (Hamilton Twp.), Lynnee LoCicero (Hammonton), Bill Reinert (Somers Point City), Bill Stuempfig (Upper Twp.)

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

Others Present: Fred Akers (Operations Manager), Brooke Handley (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Darrin Ferguson (NPS), Risa Shimoda (RMS)

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.

Nomination and Election of Officers of the River Council: Fred Akers introduced the existing slate of officers as the nominees for 2024 and inquired if there were any other nominations to be made. None were made and the following motions were made to accept the slate of officers listed below:

Chair - Greg Gregory
Vice Chair - Rick Coe
Treasurer - Dick Colby
Secretary – Brooke Handley

Bill Christman made the motion to accept the nomination of **Greg Gregory** as Chair. Julie Akers seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Gregory Gregory made the motion to accept the nomination of **Rick Coe** as Vice Chair, Bill Christman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Bill Christman made the motion to accept the nomination of **Dick Colby** as Treasurer. Julie Akers seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Gregory Gregory made the motion to accept the nomination of **Brooke Handley** as Secretary. Bill Christman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Resolutions: Brooke Handley brought the following resolutions before the council for vote:

- Resolution 1-2024: Designating Depository of Funds and Fiscal Agent.
- Resolution 2-2024: Designating Official Publications.
- Resolution 3-2024: Notice of Meetings of the River Council

A motion was made by Julie Akers and seconded by Bill Christman, to approve Resolution 1-2024, 2-2024 and 3-2024. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Julie Akers made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2023, meeting. Bill Christman seconded the motion.

Public Portion: Risa Shimoda is the Executive Director of River Management Society (RMS). She stated that the RMS is supportive of the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers program. Darrin Ferguson from the National Park Service (NPS) said he is learning about the rivers and is willing to assist.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun)

In Schools, Nature Center, and Outdoor Classroom: The 2024 spring calendar is filling up with dates for educational programs.

Stockton University: Fred, Brooke, and Lynn will lead 2 Environmental Principals lab classes during an outdoor streamside event in March.

Events, Meetings and Continuing Education:

GEHWA Member Meeting: The last GEHWA Member Meeting was held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 6:30 pm at the Nature Center and via Zoom. Fred and Brooke presented “A Celebration of the Birds of the Great Egg Harbor”. The program was recorded and can be viewed at the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association YouTube site.

Upcoming Events, Meetings and Information:

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

GEHWA: The Annual GEHWA Member Meeting and program will be held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 6:30. The election of GEHWA Trustees will take place at the meeting. The meeting will be hybrid (in person and via Zoom).

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

CoCoRaHS: CoCoRaHS is a nationwide Citizen Science program where individuals measure and report daily precipitation. Fred, Julie, Lynn & John have participated in this program since 2008.

Tick: Lynn attended a webinar about ticks. Rutgers has a citizen science project enlisting people to submit ticks for identification and analysis of pathogens.

Hawaii 2024: Lynn presented some information regarding visitor restrictions to National Parks and State Parks in Hawaii. Also reported on the Rockmover Wrasse and the Humpback Whale.

NPS Report (Paul Kenney):

1. NJ DEP: Paul sent a letter to Assistant Commissioner Angarone thanking the NJDEP for meeting with Commissioner LaTourette on January 24, 2024, regarding the Wild and Scenic Rivers in NJ.

Paul reported that the NPS does not have a budget yet and if a budget isn't approved by mid-March there will likely be a 1 to 2% cut.

Old Business:

Other Old Business: None

New Business:

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers): Julie reported that a resident that lives along the South River has a concern with someone setting up camp on a property that is in the wetlands and wetlands buffer of the river.

Corbin City: (Daniel Patterson): Daniel reported that things have been quiet.

Egg Harbor Twp.: (Alt. Tom Baum): Tom reported that the Lakes Creek Bridge reconstruction project involves complicated road detours. He also shared that there were over two hundred swans in the impoundments near Gibson Creek Road.

GEHWA: (Dick Colby): Dick reported that work on the Long-distance Trail has run into a complication where the trail would use an existing bridge that crosses Mare Run. There is a question about who has ownership of the bridge.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman): Bill reported that the Mays Landing dam is now functional. Though the fish ladder is not working, and work to repair it will not begin until September. Once work begins on the fish ladder it may take a year to repair. Bill also reported that a resolution regarding litter (dumping) has passed.

(Alt. Denise Appleget): Denise said that since the Illegal Dumping ordinance passed, they will now order eighty signs that will include a phone number on who to call if a person witnesses illegal dumping. She also said an additional twenty signs will be purchased addressing the ATV issue. She is hoping to get funding for a trail camera. Denise also reported that the owners of Apple Farm received a resolution of approval from Hamilton Twp. to proceed with their application for Farmland Preservation.

Hammonton: (John Keenan): John reported that a draft of Hammonton's Master Plan is now available online. He said that there continues to be no mention of the Wild and Scenic designation or the position on the River Council in the plan and that he will try to rectify this.

Somers Point: (Greg Gregory): Greg reported that the Somers Point Nature Area is doing well.

(Bill Reinert): Bill reported that the installation of the interpretive osprey sign was completed and that it looks good.

Upper Twp.: (Alt. Bill Stuempfig): Bill reported of the need to move an osprey platform and solar panels due to the increasing rise of sea level that is encroaching on the current location.

Weymouth Twp.: (Susan Stiles): Susan reported that there has been erosion following the recent storms.

Other New Business: None

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

1. ACUA Environmental Stewards Presentation: On February 7th, Brooke gave a overview of the GEHWA and GEHRC at an Environmental Stewards class.

2. Upper Township Kayak/Canoe Race: The Upper Twp. Rescue Squad will revamp and sponsor the Upper Township Kayak/Canoe Race. The proposed date is 8/3/2024. GEHWA and the RC will help with the hope that the participant will want to get involved with river issues.

3. NJ Clean Communities Award: GEHWA has won the 2024 NJ Clean Communities "Marine Debris Clean Up Award". Brooke and Fred will go to AC to receive the award.

4. RMS Paddle for the Edge Article: Brooke authored an article for the River Management Society (RMS) Journal regarding the "Paddle for the Edge".

5. Updates on Railroad Resolution: A copy of the Railroad Resolution adopted by the RC was sent to each River Council municipality: Upper Township, Corbin City and Hamilton Township passed the resolution.

6. Patcong Creek Dredging: Dredge material from Patcong Creek will be deposited within the Beesley's Point CDF within the Beesley's Point Redevelopment area.

7. NPF Hill Day in DC: Fred went to DC on 2/7/2024 to participate in the "National Park Foundation Hill Day". He had nine meetings. He also met the Director of the NPS, Chuck Sams at the NPF event at the Botanical Gardens.

8. Hamilton Preserve Guardrail Updates: On 2-5-2024 the Atlantic Electric Company right of way gate was open on Somers Point Mays Landing Road. Bill Christman said the gate has been open for weeks following the removal of vegetation from the right of way. Atlantic Electric is not taking responsibility for their right of way, and in a legal agreement received by GEHWA, they want GEHWA to take full responsibility for the security of their power line right of way.

9. Hamilton Township RGA: A recent "Pinelands Climate Change Analysis" by the Pinelands Commission highlighted some actions that could be taken to protect the Hamilton Township Regional Growth Area from climate change.

10. Estuary Sea Level Rise Studies: New satellite-based research reveals that the east coast is sinking with Atlantic City sinking by four centimeters per decade. Fred shared slides of flooding from 2/13/2024.

11. Other Items of Interest: None

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Bill Handley, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.