

Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River Council  
Meeting Minutes  
January 16, 2002

1-16-02

Meeting called to order at 7:15PM by Chairperson, Rick Coe

Roll Call by the Secretary, Belinda Irizarry

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers, Bill Christman, Rick Coe, Dick Colby, Bill Egan, Greg Gregory, Creed Pogue, Joel Spiegel, Marc Thyrring

Board Members Absent: Robert Almeda, Eric Fooder and Bill Zapisek,  
Quorum Present? Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers, Belinda Irizarry (Alternate from GEHWA) Paul Mowbray, Mary Vavra (National Park Service) and Greg Vizzi

Proceedings

Rick Coe 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 bulletin board of the Fox Nature Center and the Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing. An Affidavit of publication from the Courier Post was received.

Approval of Minutes for December 19, 2001

Creed Pogue made a motion to approve the minutes from December 19, 2001. Bill Christman seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

River Administrator Position: Mary Vavra stated that interviews for the River Administrator position have been scheduled for January 29th at the Fox Nature Center. The first interview is scheduled for 6:15PM and all five interviews will be conducted in one evening. A list of questions based on interviews conducted for the GEHWA Coordinator position were provided for consideration. The interview panel will meet at the Fox Nature Center at 5:30PM to discuss questions, strategy and procedures.

Update on River-Related Issues:

Mary Vavra distributed a copy of a NJDEP permit application to legalize Mark Norell's dock system in Hamilton Township. The proposed plan indicates a dock that extends 103' channelward with a boatlift. The balance of the unpermitted structure (approximately 140') will be removed.

Greg Gregory mentioned that he had an opportunity to speak with Secretary of the Interior Gail Norton on a radio show. Greg mentioned

some of the issues on the Great Egg Harbor River to raise awareness of what is happening at the local level.

Mary Vavra provided updated information on the wetlands issue at Mr. DiNatale's property and the progress being made by the US Army Corps of Engineers. A recent letter to Mr. DiNatale from the USCOE provided a revised mitigation plan for restoring the area.

Mary Vavra provided a copy of the Fish Study that the National Park

Service funded. The USGS and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore conducted a two-year fish study in 1998 and 1999 to provide a baseline study of anadromous fish in the Great Egg Harbor River. The final report was delayed due to problems experienced by the contractor (USGS). The final report is being reproduced and will be distributed shortly.

Mary Vavra stated that a letter from the National Park Service was sent to the US Army Corps of Engineers thanking them for the enforcement support on the Great Egg Harbor River and expressing the importance of continued enforcement. Creed Pogue made a motion that the River Council also prepare a letter to the USCOE regarding the importance of continued enforcement. Julie Akers seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Julie Akers - yes; Bill Christman - yes; Rick Coe - yes; Dick Colby - yes; Bill Egan - yes; Gregory Gregory - yes; Creed Pogue - yes; Joel Spiegel - yes; Marc Thyrring - yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Weymouth Furnace Bridge Project - A copy of an article in the Pinelands Preservation Alliance's December newsletter was distributed. Atlantic County is pursuing the bridge replacement project at Weymouth Furnace and has not responded to letters from both the National Park Service and the River Council. Mary Vavra will be writing a letter from the National Park Service to Brad Campbell, the new Commissioner of NJDEP and also to the Atlantic County Board of Freeholders about the need for NPS input since the bridge is located in an historic area of the Great Egg Harbor River. Atlantic County has issued a preliminary RFP requesting that interested parties submit credentials to be able to be considered for three bridge projects; however, the RFP did not mention that the Great Egg Harbor River was a nationally designated river. Creed Pogue made a motion that the River Council send a letter to Kirk Conover and Mr. Levinson reminding them of both the wild and scenic river designation and the historic designation at Weymouth Furnace and the fact that these two issues must be taken into account when considering any bridge replacement or construction. Stressing the need for the least impact on the river must be strongly made in the letter. A friendly amendment was made by Greg Gregory to provide a copy of the letter to Bob Lindaw, and Scoop Kaye. A separate similar letter will be sent to Brad Campbell (NJDEP) and Regina Thomas, Secretary of State. The motion was seconded by Bill Christman. Motion carried.

#### New Businesses

Mary Vavra mentioned that the annual rivers' workshop is scheduled for February 24th & 25th in Stockton, New Jersey. The workshop was previously sponsored by American Rivers and held in Washington, DC; however, this year a decision was made to change the location. Two people from each river generally attend the workshop and there are representatives from rivers in New England that also participate. The workshops provide a forum for discussing issues and deciding appropriate future actions. Julie Akers mentioned some of the topics discussed at last year's workshop. It was decided that Creed Pogue and Rick Coe would represent the River Council and two people from GEHWA would also participate. Reimbursement for travel-related expenses is an appropriate cost to be paid from NPS funds to both the River Council and GEHWA.

Amended CAFRA Rules Proposed: A copy of the amended CAFRA rules regarding wild and scenic rivers in NJ was distributed. Mary Vavra explained the purpose and changes of the proposed rules. The NPS already sent a letter in support of the proposed changes. Greg Gregory made a motion that the River Council send a similar letter in support of the changes. The motion was seconded by Julie Akers. Roll Call Vote: Julie Akers - yes; Bill Christman - yes; Rick Coe - yes; Dick Colby - yes;

Bill Egan - yes; Gregory Gregory - yes; Creed Pogue - yes; Joel Speigel - yes; Marc Thyrring - yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Projects for FY 2002 - A discussion took place on how to spend approximately \$50,000 of NPS money for the Great Egg Harbor River. Rick Coe suggested that the next River Council meeting should be a short one so that a substantial amount of time could be spent discussing funding options. Dick Colby will e-mail budget information prior to the February meeting.

Greg Gregory mentioned that now is the time to do river cleanups since the water is uncharacteristically low. Creed mentioned that Clean Communities money is not available and funding river cleanups may have to come from River Council/GEHWA. Creed Pogue will draft a letter to Clean Communities coordinators in each of the twelve municipalities recommending river cleanups using GEHWA/River Council funds. The benefit of a Public Service Announcement regarding coordinating a river cleanup in individual municipalities was discussed. Greg Gregory made a motion that the River Council sponsor river cleanups in light of the fact that the Clean Communities Program has not been funded. Creed Pogue seconded the motion. Motion carried. River and river-bank clean-up grants will be promoted to augment existing municipalities' Clean Communities mini-grant programs (municipal coordinators will continue to make all arrangements with groups, and insurance will be covered under municipal policies.

Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan revisions - Rick stated that he received a response from the Pinelands Commission regarding a letter sent by the River Council. The Commission stated that they will contact the River Council to further discuss and/or set up a meeting regarding the issues and recommendations included in our letter. The Pinelands staff will be completing a report in January for consideration by the Commission describing what has happened since the last review of the Comprehensive Management Plan. There will be public meetings held in late winter/early spring to discuss the review with all interested parties.

Marc Thyrring updated members on the controversial off-road vehicle park proposed in Egg Harbor Township. Marc is working with a committee to look at the Betsy Scull recreational trails plan and will keep River Council members up-to-date. In addition, on January 22nd Egg Harbor Township will be conducting a hearing for their Master Plan with a continuation date of 1/30 (Wednesday) at 7PM at the Egg Harbor Township municipal bldg. on Bargaintown Road. The Master Plan contains a section recommending a River Conservation Zone. Complaints were heard that copies of the Master Plan were not readily available for public review. Creed Pogue mentioned that it is a violation to not have copies of the Master Plan available and that the public has the right to demand that the hearing be delayed to allow adequate time to review the plan prior to any public hearing.

Rick Coe mentioned that February is the annual organization meeting and that he will prepare the necessary paperwork. Rick suggested that members evaluate their status as a council member and consult with their mayor to check on the status of their appointment to make sure that everyone is authorized. A letter or form would be appropriate. Mary Vavra will prepare a letter to each municipality requesting that each mayor reappoint a representative for a 2-year term.

Public Comment

A motion was made by Creed Pogue to open the meeting to the public. Julie Akers seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Fred Akers provided a brief report on a recent meeting of the steering committee for Watershed Management Area #15. The process is slowly moving along and a list of issues was generated. The issue of carrying capacity on the river was considered not to be within the scope of the watershed process. The issue of creating a "No Discharge" zone in the river was considered by the steering committee; however, Fred Akers will comply with their request to research this issue and provide additional information.

Creed Pogue made a motion to close the public portion. Dick Colby seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:20PM by Rick Coe.



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