

**River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River**  
***Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes***  
***October 16, 2024***

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

**Roll Call:** by Brooke Fisher, River Administrator

**Board Members in Attendance:** Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), Daniel Patterson (Corbin City), David Brown (Egg Harbor Twp.), Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.), John Keenan (Hammonton), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.), Susan Stiles (Weymouth)

**Board Members Absent:** Greg Conway (Folsom Boro), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.)

**Quorum Present** – Yes

**Alternates in Attendance:** Denise Appleget (Hamilton Twp.), Bill Stuempfig (Upper Twp.), Bill Egan (Weymouth)

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

**Others Present:** Fred Akers (Operations Manager), Brooke Handley (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Kurt Cheng (NPS), Joe Hayburn (Ocean City)

**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 August 21, 2024, meeting. Dick Colby seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Public Portion:**

Joe Hayburn from Ocean City introduced himself. He helps Bill Stuempfig to monitoring the Ospreys.

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

**In Schools, Nature Center, and Outdoor Classroom:**

**Ocean City Yacht Club – Minnows Program:** On July 10, 31 & August 7, 2024, students from the Ocean City Yacht Club’s Minnows Program learned about the sea life at Corson’s Inlet State Park. The Yacht Club has made several donations to GEHWA over the years.

**Stockton University:** On Wednesday, September 18, and Thursday, September 26, 2024, Fred, Brooke and Lynn led Catherine Tredick’s Environmental Principals lab classes during an outdoor streamside event. The students sampled the macroinvertebrates from the Morse’s Mill stream as a tool to determine the water quality in the stream.

**Homeschool Group at Estell Manor Park:** Lynn led an indoor/outdoor classroom for a group of homeschool students on Monday, September 23, 2024. The students learned how to use binoculars and how to use the Merlin App to ID birds.

**Fernwood MS School Outdoor Program at Corson's Inlet** – Jim Thoms' 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in outdoor classroom events at Corson's Inlet on October 11, 13 and 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Events, Meetings and Continuing Education:**

**Osprey Program Report 2024:**

**State of NJ 2023 Osprey Project Report:** The "2023 New Jersey Osprey Project Report", was released in February and gave a review of the 2023 osprey nesting season. There were approximately 800 occupied nests (pair present) reported. Which is an increase over 2022. There were 657 known outcome nests (active) that produced 762 young. Nesting productivity was 1.16 chicks per nest.

The productivity rate in 2022 was 1.30 chicks per nest. Productivity in 2023 was 1.16 chicks per nest. Productivity had been declining since 2014.

NOTE: The nests monitored by GEHWA/GEHRC, which are west of the parkway had a higher productivity rate 1.75 then the combined average for the Great Egg Harbor/Ocean City colony which was 1.02 chicks per nest.

**Annual GEHWA/GEHRC Osprey Colony Monitoring Program:** Most of the 2024 survey of the GEHR osprey colony nesting activity was completed on June 25 & 28, 2023. We found 1 dead chick during this year's survey. Out of a total of 50 nesting sites, 17 were active, producing a total of 36 young. Nesting productivity was 2.12 chicks per nest.

**GEHWA/GEHRC Annual Picnic:** The 18<sup>th</sup> annual GEHWA/GEHRC's picnic was held on Tuesday, July 23, 2024. There were 15 adults and 2 children present. As usual, the food and conversation were great.

**Upcoming Events:**

**Hammonton's 15th Annual Green Day Event:** Hammonton's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Green Day Event will be held on Saturday, November 2, 2024, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

**GEHWA Member and Friends Meeting:** The next GEHWA Member and Friends meeting will be a hybrid meeting held at the Nature Center on Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 6:30PM. Program details will be emailed later.

**NPS Report (Paul Kenney) & NPS Coastal Resiliency (Kurt Cheng):**

1. Kurt Cheng introduced himself. He is a new NPS hire who will work part time on GEHR issues.
2. Paul wrote a letter to the NJ Fish and Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species Committee asking them to not delist the bald eagle.
3. Paul also followed up with NJDEP enforcement regarding the Sugar Hill Inn dock issues. He has not gotten a response.

**Old Business:**

**Other Old Business:** None

## **New Business:**

- 1. Resolution Supporting Buena Vista Township:** Resolution 4-2024 supports Buena Vista Township in dealing with unpermitted development on South River. A motion was made by Bill Christman and seconded by Bill Handley, to approve Resolution 4-2024. After some discussion Bill Christman and Bill Handley rescinded their motion until modifications could be made to Resolution 4-2024 which will then be sent to the River Councilors for their approval.

Resolution 4-2024 was tabled following suggested modifications. After Resolution 4-2024 modifications are made, a copy of the revised resolution will be sent out to the RC. If there are no responses to the email it will be considered approved and sent to the listed authorities.

## **River Councilor Reports for each Municipality**

**Corbin City: (Daniel Patterson):** Daniel reported that Corbin City's Council has discussed replacing the wooden docks at Corbin City's beach.

Fred reported that coir logs and vegetation at the beach are doing well.

**GEHWA: (Dick Colby):** Dick reported that GEHWA will have its annual Trustee meeting in Dec.

**Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman):** Bill reported that Hamilton Township has added to the blockade at the Ocean Heights Ave entrance. He also said there are tons of fish in the river and large blue claw crabs.

**Somers Point: (Greg Gregory):** Gregory reported that the Good Olde Days event went well, and that GEHWA was missed.

Fred reported that the Somers Point Environmental Commission got a \$5,000.00 grant from Sustainable Jersey to study the feasibility of a trail program.

**Upper Twp.: (Bill Handley):** Bill H reported that the county will some get bids on the Marshallville Road.

**Upper Twp.: (Alt. Bill Steumpfig):** Bill S would like to put a camera on the osprey nest near Kennedy Park.

**Other New Business:** None

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

**1. Activity on Railroads in Winslow:** There are now thousands of railroad ties dumped in the right of way of the train tracks from Winslow Junction to Milmay following work by the Seashore Line and NJDOT. Fred has documented the locations of all the piles of discarded railroad ties.

**2. Upper Township Kayak Race:** The Upper Township Kayak Race was held on 8/3/2024. It was a very positive event.

**3. GEHWA Marsh Assessment Program:** GEHWA started a Marsh Assessment project this summer using ESRI's 123 Survey app. GEHWA contracted with Young Lemon LLC to develop a program that would enable data collection in the field. The data collected is available for public viewing.

**4. Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Speaker Series:** Brooke presented at the PWSRs Speaker Series on Coastal Resiliency.

**5. NPS Coastal Resiliency Meeting:** GEHWA staff had a meeting with the NPS on 9/27/2024 to discuss Ecological Uplift projects in the GEHW. As a result of the GIS data collected from the Marsh Assessment program GEHWA has prioritized Tuckahoe Island for restoration.

**6. August River Council Cruise:** The August River Council meeting on the Duke of Fluke was a success.

**7. Patcong Creek Dredging Site Tour:** NJDOT gave Fred and Brooke a tour of the Patcong Creek dredging operation at the BL England site at Beesley's Point.

**8. Hurricane Helene Damage:** Brooke attended a webinar hosted by NJLCV that addressed how climate change can impact hurricanes.

**9. GEHWA Film Update:** The RC saw a preview the new GEHWA movie.

**10. Other Items of Interest:** None

**Adjournment:**

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Dick Colby, the meeting adjourned at 8:14 PM.