



# River Currents



Winter 2025

[www.gehwa.org](http://www.gehwa.org)

Issue 77

## Ten Years Removing Marine Debris from the Great Egg

By Fred Akers, Operations Manager

Starting in 2014, the Great Egg Harbor River Council partnered with Stockton University, the City of Somers Point, and the National Park Service to remove ghost crab traps (pots) from the Great Egg Harbor Bay. This was a 2-year project, and hundreds of ghost crab traps were recovered and disposed of.



**Stockton Research Boat getting ready to launch at Kennedy Park on October 28, 2014, to search for derelict crab pots with advanced sonar systems.**

**Ghost crab traps staged at Stockton's Nacote Creek station for disposal (4/22/17)**

Greg Gregory, Chair of the Great Egg Harbor River Council, led a volunteer team for the removal of the first abandoned/derelict vessel from the marsh in Somers Point on 2/1/2018. PVC rollers were employed to minimize damage to the marsh, and the Somers Point Public Works Department took



the vessel to the landfill. The Somers Point Mayor and Council passed a resolution thanking the volunteers.



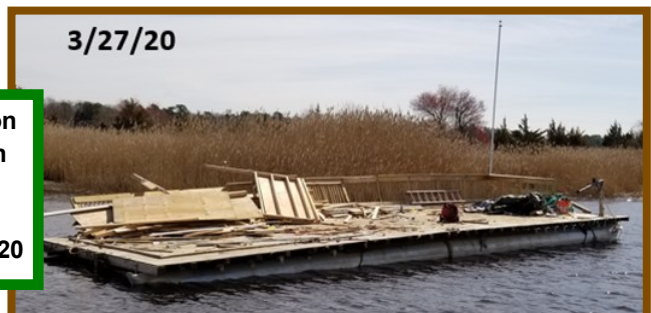
I launched an investigation after receiving a complaint in March of 2020, that large amounts of construction debris were floating down the river from a mysterious abandoned houseboat that was falling apart. During that investigation I not only found the floating remains of the derelict houseboat, but also, many other large marine debris items on the marsh. This situation demonstrated the need for a full-fledged marine debris program on the Great Egg Harbor River.

**August 2019**



**Derelict houseboat (on left) photographed in August of 2019 and what remained (on right) by March 27, 2020**

**3/27/20**

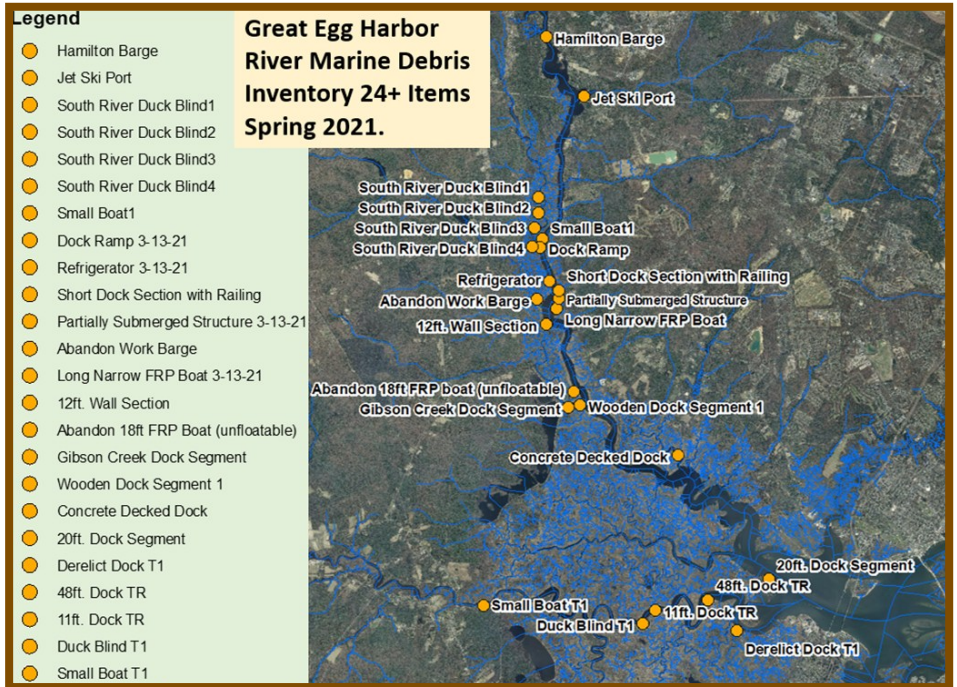


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...continued from page 1 Brooke Fisher (aka Brooke Handley), joined the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association as the first Marine Debris Program Intern in October of 2020. She created our marine debris program which includes an inventory of docks, boats and other large marine debris, some of which was "legacy" debris that had been on the marsh for many years. By physically searching the marsh and studying aerial photography on Google Earth the inventory of items listed on the map was created.

We then contracted with Young Lemon LLC to create an interactive online inventory of all our marine debris items that included GPS locations, pictures, and descriptions. You can access this data on GEHWA's website at [www.gehwa.org/gehwa-mission-map](http://www.gehwa.org/gehwa-mission-map).



After determining that some of the items found probably had owners that might want to be reunited with their property, a letter was sent to all upstream riverfront property owners. Brooke included information in the letter regarding the need for their assistance in preventing new marine debris from getting into the river and a link to the online marine debris inventory showing the extent of the problem and also to serve as a sort of lost and found resource.



Jet Ski Port near Gravelly Run 6/18/20

**These two marine debris items were successfully returned to their owners.**



11ft. Dock segment on the Tuckahoe River 3/21/21

Brooke led a volunteer "Tug of War on the Tuckahoe" in April of 2021 to remove an abandoned boat near Mosquito Landing on the Tuckahoe River. Upper Township's BSA Troop 79 provided much needed muscle to move the boat from the marsh and up to the parking lot at Mosquito Landing so that it could be disposed of by the Upper Township Road Department.

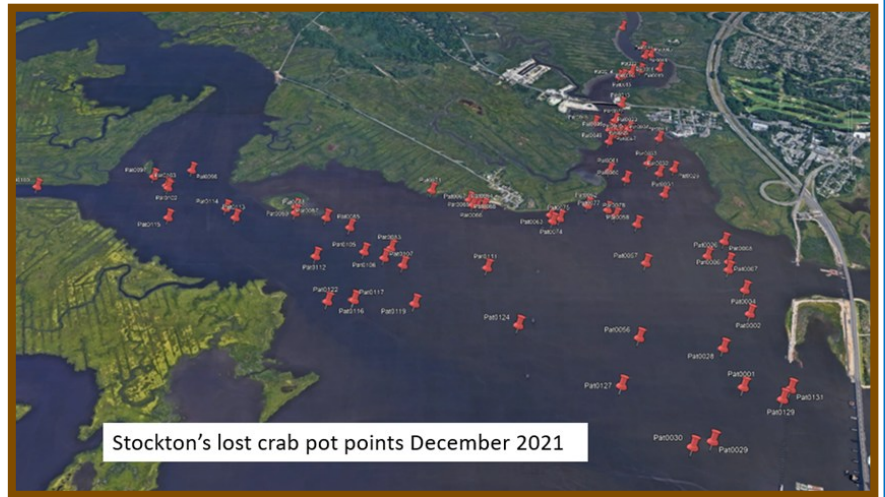


Tug of War on the Tuckahoe River 4/24/21

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...continued from page 2 In May of 2021, the Great Egg Harbor River Council sent a request to Stockton University to conduct another side scan sonar inventory of all the lost crab pots in the Great Egg Harbor Bay west of the Garden State Parkway. Stockton did the survey in December of 2021. The lost crab pot survey points were then given to the Somers Point Crab Company for their recovery and disposal. By 5/2/2022, 68 lost pots had been removed from the Great Egg Harbor National and Scenic Recreational River.



Stockton's lost crab pot points December 2021

We continued our search for abandoned/derelict marine debris. On 4/14/2022, Brooke and I found a derelict tandem kayak on the Great Egg Harbor River and hauled it out for restoration. Also on 4/14/2022, a reporter from the Press of Atlantic City, Vernon Ogradnek, joined us, and after interviewing Brooke and I, took pictures that can be accessed by: **Googling - "Press of AC GALLERY: Of Abandoned Boats"**. The Editors of the Press of AC also published an article on 4/28/2022 about the abandoned boats issue that can be accessed by: **Googling - "Press of AC NJ must quit ignoring its abandoned boats"**. Then on 5/1/2022, the Press of AC published an article by Vernon Ogradnek that featured our marine debris program in considerable detail, that can be accessed by: **Googling - "Press of AC Abandoned and derelict boats more**



Derelict tandem kayak found on the marsh 4/14/22.



Derelict Sunfish on the way to the landfill 4/29/22

**than just eyesores".**

We then found and removed 2 abandoned/derelict Sunfish sailboats from the marsh/river, one on each of the dates 4/29/2022 and 5/3/2022. Brooke and I towed the first one off the Tuckahoe River to Upper Township. The second one was recovered from the Great Egg Harbor River with the help of Egg Harbor Township River Councilor, David Brown. Both were towed to the landfill.

In a joint effort on 5/15/2022, led by Upper Township (UT) River Councilor Bill Handley, the Upper Township Public Works Department and over 20 volunteers towed 6 large marine debris docks from the Tuckahoe River to Mosquito Landing. The volunteers deconstructed the docks and stacked it for disposal by UT Public Works.



Brooke and Bill Handley by the marine debris pile 5/15/22.



Volunteers dismantling marine debris docks at Mosquito Landing on 5/15/22.

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...continued from page 3 The Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association was awarded the 2024 NJ Clean Communities Marine Debris Cleanup Award, by the New Jersey Clean Communities Council, on 2/7/24. Brooke and I went to Atlantic City to receive the award.



Brooke and Fred receive the 2024 NJ Clean Communities Marine Debris Cleanup Award 3/7/24.

The work was not done removing abandoned/derelict marine debris. In the fall of 2024 we addressed the issue of 3 un-floatable legacy derelict vessels abandoned on the marsh of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River. We



Long Narrow FRP Boat on the Great Egg Harbor River 3/13/21, removed 12/10/24.

contracted with Shamrock Towing to remove 2 of those vessels. On 12/10/24, Shamrock Towing removed and disposed of a long narrow FRP boat that was discovered on the marsh on 3/21/21. They also removed and disposed of an un-floatable 18 ft. fiberglass boat that was discovered on the marsh on 6/8/20.



18 ft. FRP Boat on the Great Egg Harbor River 6/8/20, removed 12/10/24.

There is still one large derelict metal work barge that remains to be removed. It is located on the phragmites choked marsh of Stephen Creek. The barge is approximately 30 ft. long by 10 ft. wide. It has been at this marsh location for 10 years. It is unlikely to be floatable and may need to be dismantled in place. At this time, we do not have a contract for removal.

Our work is not done. Moving forward, our next challenge for our "Marine Debris Program" will be to advocate for better rules and regulations and a mechanism for removing newly abandoned boats as soon as they are discovered.



Derelict work barge on Stephen Creek 4/8/21

# *Calendar of GEHWA and GEHRC Meetings 2025*

*(Check out our calendar at [www.gehwa.org](http://www.gehwa.org) for additional information about upcoming events)*

*Our hybrid meetings are held at the Warren Fox Nature Center in Estell Manor and via Zoom. Meetings begin at 6:30 PM. The Zoom link will be sent by email.*

**Tuesday, January 28, 2025-** GEHWA Member Meeting - Program by Fred Akers “The History of Wild and Scenic Rivers in New Jersey”

**Wednesday, February 19, 2025** - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council Meeting—Annual Reorganization Meeting

**Tuesday, March 25, 2025-** GEHWA ANNUAL Member Meeting, Program by Bill Reinert “New Jersey’s Threatened and Endangered Shorebirds”.

**Wednesday, April 16, 2025** - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council Meeting

**Tuesday, May 27, 2025-** GEHWA Member Meeting—Annual Frog Walk (Location details will be provided closer to the event)

**Wednesday, June 18, 2025-** Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council Meeting

**Tuesday, July 22, 2025** - GEHWA Member & Friends Picnic and Campfire (Location and details will be provided closer to the event)

**Wednesday, August 20, 2025** - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council Meeting

**Saturday, September 27, 2025** GEHWA— Annual Canoe/Kayak event on or near the Great Egg Harbor River

**Wednesday, October 15, 2025** - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council Meeting

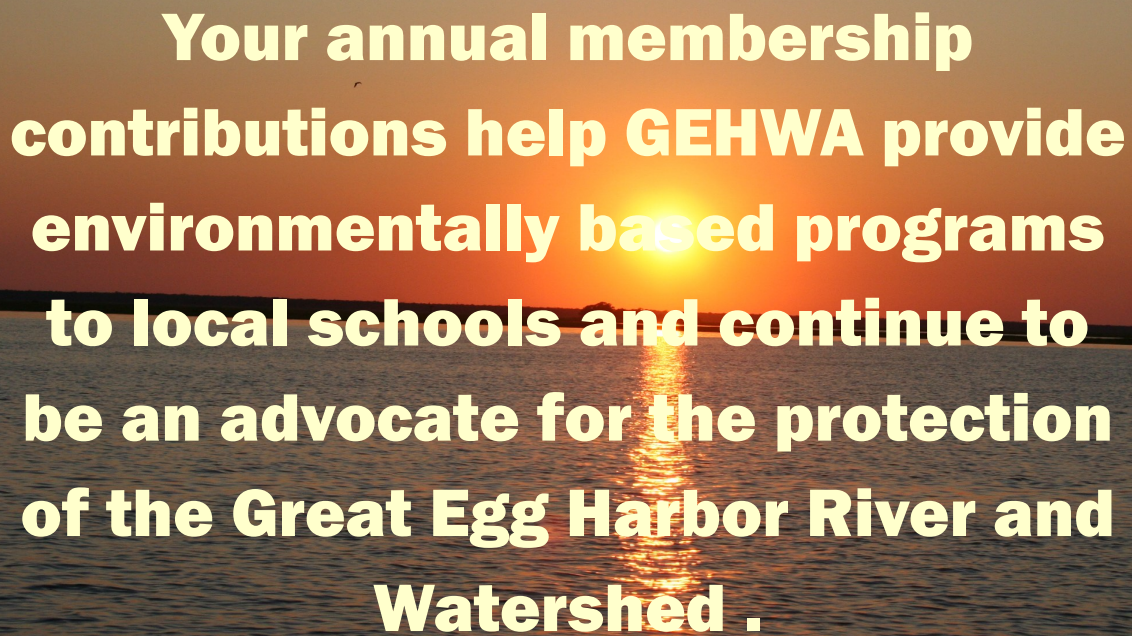
**Tuesday, November 25, 2025** - GEHWA Member Meeting— Program to be announced.

**Wednesday, December 17, 2025** - Great Egg Harbor NS & R River Council Annual Holiday Meeting

*Please plan on attending these events.*

*(If you are interested in attending a meeting via Zoom, and need the link, please contact Lynn Maun @ [lynnkmaun@comcast.net](mailto:lynnkmaun@comcast.net))*





**Your annual membership contributions help GEHWA provide environmentally based programs to local schools and continue to be an advocate for the protection of the Great Egg Harbor River and Watershed .**

### **GEHWA Membership Information**

Your membership supports our mission and ensures our survival as a non-profit advocate, as we work to protect and preserve the Great Egg Harbor River and Watershed throughout the year. Your support is needed now more than ever. Without you, we could not exist. Thank you for your support!

Name/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes, I would like to receive notices by Email.**

**Annual Membership:** Individual: \$10; Family: \$15; Supporting: \$35; Patron: \$50; Corporate: \$100

**Please mail this form along with your check to:** Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association,  
Membership P.O. Box 109, Newtonville, NJ 08346

**The Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association's Environmental Programs are FREE**

We offer our environmentally focused programs **free** of charge to augment existing school curriculum. A school's environmental programs are often

threatened when faced with annual budget cuts. If you are a parent, and/or an educator, and feel our programs would enhance the environmental education that your child/student is receiving, please contact the appropriate individual in your school and request that they take advantage of the Great Egg



**Outdoor Classroom at Corson's Inlet**



**Student holding a Dragonfly Nymph**

Harbor Watershed Association's **free** programs. If you would like additional information please contact Lynn Maun, Education Outreach Coordinator at 856-649-2792 or [lynnkmaun@comcast.net](mailto:lynnkmaun@comcast.net)

**REMEMBER our environmentally focused programs are FREE!**



**Students from Alder Avenue School searching for macroinvertebrates**

**Contact Information**

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Lynn Maun, Edu. Outreach Coord. (856) 649-2792 Email: <a href="mailto:lynnkmaun@comcast.net">lynnkmaun@comcast.net</a>
<b>National Park Service</b>
Paul Kenney (610) 203-4248; <a href="mailto:Paul_Kenney@nps.gov">Paul_Kenney@nps.gov</a>
<b>NJ DEP Hotline</b> 1-877 WARN DEP

<b>NJ DEP Watershed Management Office</b>
(609) 777-0580
<b>Atlantic County Department of Planning</b>
(609) 645-5898
<b>US Army Corps of Engineers</b> (215) 656-6725
<b>NJ DEP Regulatory Office for Atlantic County</b>
(609) 292-8292
<b>NJ DEP Enforcement Officer</b> (732) 255-0787
<b>Pinelands Commission</b>
(609) 894-7300

To report an environmental incident impacting NJ, call the Toll-Free 24—Hour Hotline  
**1-877WARNDEP, 1-877-927-6337**

If you should see debris or shoaling while traversing on New Jersey waters please call:  
**1-877- WARNDEP (1-877-927-6337)**





**Orange Filefish**



**Juvenile Jack**

**Cool Animals We Found While Exploring the Bay at Corson's Inlet State Park with Students**



**Needlefish and Sea Horse**



**Gulfweed Nudibranch**

Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association  
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