

# **3rd Quarterly Whitewater Commission Meeting Minutes**

## **September 14, 2021**

**Location:** WV DNR Headquarters – 324 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303

**Chaired:** Lt. Col. David Trader

### **In Attendance:**

Commissioners: Chris Ellis (private river user via Zoom); Bobby Bower (Sandstone Jetboats via Zoom); Don Beyer (private river user via Zoom); Heather Johnson (River Expeditions via Zoom); Ed Wooton (private river user via Zoom); Carmen Chapin (NPS via Zoom); Lt. Col. David Trader (WV DNR)

Others: Amy Lucas (WVDNR via Zoom); Duane Michael (NPS via Zoom); Cpl. Whittington (WV DNR via Zoom); David “Tug” Chamberlin (public member wanting to obtain WW license via Zoom)

### **Call to Order**

The Whitewater Commission meeting of September 14, 2021 was called to order at 1:06 p.m. by WVDNR Lt. Colonel David Trader. Introductions were made.

### **Approval of June 8, 2021 Minutes**

Ed Wooton made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 8, 2021 meeting. Motion seconded by Chris Ellis. The motion carried.

### **Budget**

Lt. Col. David Trader noted the budget reports in the packets for review. No discussion on the budget. Heather Johnson made a motion to accept the budget. Motion seconded by Ed Wooton. The motion carried.

### **Update – Commission member terms**

Lt. Col. Trader updated everyone on new members and terms. No further discussion was made.

### **Tygart Watershed Experience**

New application was received from Bob Layne for Tygart Watershed Experience. Motion was made by Ed Wooton to accept and approve. Motion seconded by Chris Ellis. No further discussion was made. The motion carried.

### **General Discussion**

- Lt. Col. Trader explained the ongoing issues regarding online reporting of numbers and hopes that ongoing issues will be resolved quickly. If anyone is having trouble reporting, please email numbers to Amy Lucas.
- David “Tug” Chamberlin (Fayette Institute of Technology) was approved to speak to the commission regarding a class/training program for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students on the Upper New River, but would not be charging a fee. He is asking to be “grandfathered” in and obtain a license that way. It was explained to him that he would need to go under an established outfitter. Cpl.

Whittington explained the moratorium on the New River and how he cannot obtain a license, although he may be able to obtain “slots” from other outfitters, and he explained that process as well. Rick Johnson (River Expeditions) explained his process of when he started out under another outfitter and stated that it is easier to work with another outfitter. He will be willing to work with Mr. Chamberlin, should he choose to reach out to him. Mr. Chamberlin stated that he would be willing to purchase a license even though he would have zero seats. Mr. Chamberlin states that he is not in this to “run a commercial business”, this is simply for the Board of Education and training purposes. He has his own rafts, gear, bus, drivers, etc.

- Rick Johnson talked about “emergency protocols on the river”. There was an operational meeting between the Army Corp of Engineers and the National Park Service on water release protocols in the instance of an emergency and/or drowning on the river. Water will be cut back to 1800 while recovery is in process until completed and then normal release will resume. Rick explained how for the whitewater industry, a huge decrease in water flow for long periods of time would be unacceptable due to loss of profits.
- Duane Michael (NPS) talked about the water negotiation meeting that takes place annually before the start of Gauley season. This was in place before his employment with the NPS in 2016. He stated that invites were sent out to Army Corp of Engineers, Cpl. Shane Duffield, Cpl. CJ Whittington and other agencies involved with Gauley season. He will reach out to the Corp, along with Cpl. Whittington to get another meeting set up.
- Carmen Chapin (NPS) found the old agreement between the NPS and the WV DNR. The original is from November 1982. She stated that she will review it and get back with us after finding out more information.

### **Next Meeting Date and Place**

The 4th Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting to be held WV DNR Headquarters via Zoom, 324 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303 on Tuesday, December 14, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. Ed Wooton made a motion to accept this date. Motion seconded by Chris Ellis.

### **Adjournment**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting adjourned at 1:45pm.