

# **1st Quarterly Whitewater Commission Meeting Minutes**

## **March 13, 2018**

**Location:** J.W. and Hazel Ruby West Virginia Welcome Center, 55 Hazel Ruby Lane, Mt. Hope, WV 25880

**Chaired:** DNR LE Jerry B. Jenkins, Colonel, for Director Stephen S. McDaniel

### **In Attendance:**

Commissioners: Ed Wooton (by phone private river user); Chris Ellis (by phone private river user); Roger Wilson (AOTG); Rick Johnson (River Expeditions); Patrick McCann (by phone Blackwater Outdoor); Don Beyer (private river user); John Ganano (by phone River & Trails Outfitters)

Others: Jerry Jenkins (WVDNR); Heather Kessel (WVDNR); David Trader (by phone WVDNR); Clarence Whittington (WVDNR); Dennis Feazell (WVDNR); Larry Nibert (West Virginia Experience); Sammy Pugh (New River Trophy Outfitters); Bobby Bower (WVPRO); Kara Moore (by phone WV Tourism); Greg Berry (Berry's Campground); Eddie Riggler (Berry's Campground); Joe Catalano (AOTG); Chris Hayes (AOTG); Brian Campbell (AOTG); Isaac Colvard (Summit BSA); Christopher Carnefix (ACE); Jinyang Deng (WVU)

### **Call to Order**

The Whitewater Commission meeting of March 13, 2018 was called to order at 1:06 p.m. by Colonel Jerry B. Jenkins. Introductions were made. Attendance sheet provided for attendees to sign; attendance by telephone noted during introductions.

### **Approval of December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Minutes**

Rick Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting. Motion seconded by Roger Wilson. The motion carried.

### **Budget**

Colonel Jenkins noted that the budget reports could be found in the meeting packets.

No discussion on the budget.

### **2017 Whitewater Usage Number Report**

Heather Kessel provided handouts of the 2017 WV Whitewater Usage Numbers.

No discussion on the reported numbers.

### **2011 – 2016 Whitewater Injury Report Presentation by Jinyang Deng from West Virginia University**

Jinyang Deng from WVU presented his whitewater injury report summary.

Motion was made by Don Beyer to do a similar comprehensive report, such as Mr. Deng's, in five (5) years. Motion seconded by Roger Wilson. The motion carried.

It was decided to determine at the next meeting when the summary report can be released and/or published; in whole or a portion of the report.

## **Sandstone to Meadow Creek – New River**

Chris Ellis explained that there was only one concerned party regarding this section and tubes. He explained that Roy Blankenship with Son Dad's New River Outfitters, LLC discussed with Mr. Ellis the dangers of tubes due to high water on that section and he suggested that tubes should not be allowed on that section of the New. Colonel Jenkins asked if the Commission wished to have more discussion about tubes on this section and there was no response. Colonel Jenkins suggested since there was no further discussion, how did the Commission wish to proceed.

Rick Johnson stated that the Commission should proceed as Chris Ellis suggested in his report (Attachment A – Ellis Report).

Mr. Ellis explains that after looking at historical data for the month of June, the maximum cut-off flow may be the only issue and he has suggested a cutoff of 8,000 cfs would be a good standard.

Colonel Jenkins has suggested that a committee take a more thorough look at the issues, concerns and any proposed changes to the rule. Sandstone to Meadow Creek committee consists of Chris Ellis, Cpl. Whittington, Roger Wilson, Rick Johnson, Sammy Pugh, Bill Parker, Andy Lyons, Larry Nibert and Joe Catalano.

Colonel Jenkins asked about any discussions or trips on the Tygart. Bobby Bowers advised due to weather and other issues no trips were taken down the Tygart and nothing new to report. Colonel asked that someone should reach out to Tygart River Outfitters to determine if they still wish for changes to that section.

## **General O&G Safety Requirements – Language & River Sections**

Sammy Pugh provided a handout outlining his suggested safety requirements for General Outfitter & Guides providing services in whitewater zones. (Attachment B – Pugh Report).

There was general discussion about safety requirements and the same committee above would address the suggested requirements and make the necessary proposals for changes to the rule.

## **Other Discussion**

Brian Campbell mentions that 2018 marks 50 years since whitewater began in the state of West Virginia. Colonel Jenkins recognized the milestone and advised DNR would mention it to Director McDaniel. Also, someone would reach out to WV Tourism to alert them as well.

## **Next Meeting**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting to be held at ACE Resort, #1 Concho Road, Oak Hill, WV 25879, on Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 1:00 p.m.

## **Adjournment**

Rick Johnson motioned to adjourn the March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting. Roger Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

## Attachment A

**From:** [chris](#)

**Sent:** Thursday, September 21, 2017 2:21 PM

**To:** 'William Parker' <[bill\\_parker](#)>; Andrew.L.Lyons ([Andrew.L.Lyons](#)) <[Andrew.L.Lyons](#)>

**Subject:** Initial Thoughts

Heather,

New River – Sandstone to Meadow Creek – boat rental research. September 21, 2017. 2028 CFS.

### Notes

1. Plenty of public access on both sides of river – both WVDNR and NPS
2. No major rapids during typical summer flows
3. Easy access to section for first responders
4. Catch and release on majority of section – makes section attractive to trophy anglers (smallmouth and walleye)
5. Lodging, stores, outfitters, NPS new visitor's center, NPS future campground, easy access from I-64 – all make section attractive

### Concerns

1. Livery renting correct/appropriate boats for whitewater – inflatables, composite canoes/kayaks. No metal canoes, jon boats or inner tubes.
2. Safety briefing before each rental needs to include foot entrapment warning and river side channel warning. Bill Parker has suggested a safety video to cover the topic. Something that is used by everyone operating a livery, and is thorough and consistent. Park Service could assist with this.
3. A maximum flow needs to be determined as a rental cutoff – we suggest using average spring monthly flow as a parameter for example, the monthly mean (1981 to 2017) in June is 7170 cfs at Thurmond gauge. So perhaps a cutoff of 8,000 cfs is a good standard to look at.
4. PFD's are a must on entire section

Chris

## Attachment B

The following are recommended guidelines for those Commercial fishing guides/trainees who intend on working for an established outfitter operating in the whitewater study zones of West Virginia specifically the following sections of water:

- New River (Cunard access or Manns creek downstream to Teays landing)
- Gauley River (Summersville Dam downstream to upper Swiss access on river right)

Fishing guides whom work or intend to work on these sections of water must keep a Guide Info Sheet DNR-LE-335 on file with each outfitter or guide service who employs or contracts their services.

Fishing guide trainees for these sections may be no younger than 16 years of age to train and must be 18 years of age before they may guide.

Fishing guide trainees must perform all training runs in a comparable vessel or craft used by commercial fishing outfitters.

Fishing guides who have completed 40 commercial trips on a comparable section of water may guide on these sections after 2 familiarization runs.

Commercial fishing guide trainees must complete a minimum of 15 training and two familiarization trips. Each training trip must be logged on Guide Info Sheet DNR-LE-335.

A commercial fishing guide qualified to guide on these sections prior to the effective dates remains qualified to guide on any of these sections of water as long as he/she meet other qualifications for commercial fishing guides (DNR-LE-334 Grandfather sheet).

Each guide on these sections must have a general knowledge of emergency access/evacuation routes. Guide or guide trainees must be familiar with floating and swimming under whitewater conditions in a type 3 or better US Coast Guard Approved Personal floatation device (PFD).

While established commercial fishing outfitters who operate within the Whitewater Study Zones of West Virginia have an exceptional safety record we can all agree that certain sections of water harbor more safety risk than others. The number of outfitters who operate on these sections as well as those who may intend to are very limited. Established outfitters who are providing their services in these areas are well aware of the risk and currently operate on a higher standard. The number of user days on these sections is very limited to say the least. The suggested guidelines are not intended for any other reason than to continue to build on the safety and success of those who operate or intend to operate in these designated areas.