

3rd Quarterly Whitewater Commission Meeting Minutes

September 4, 2018

Location: US Army Corp of Engineers, 2981 Summersville Lake Road, Summersville, WV 26651

Chaired: DNR LE David Trader, Lt. Colonel, for Director Stephen S. McDaniel

In Attendance:

Commissioners: Ed Wooton (by phone private river user); Chelsea Ruby (by phone WV Tourism); Rick Johnson (River Expeditions); Chris Ellis (by phone private river user); Roger Wilson (AOTG)

Others: Jerry Jenkins (WVDNR); Heather Kessel (WVDNR); David Trader (by phone WVDNR); Dennis Feazell (WVDNR); Clarence Whittington (WVDNR); Brian Campbell (AOTG); Christopher Carnefix (ACE); Tyler Bussard (River Expeditions); Duane Michael (NPS); Meghan Roberts (Mountain Surf Paddle Sports); Bryant Baker (ACE); Rob Dobson (WV Adventures); Randy Rothwell (WV Adventures)

Call to Order

The Whitewater Commission meeting of September 4, 2018 was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Lt. Colonel David Trader. Introductions were made. Attendance sheet provided for attendees to sign; attendance by telephone noted during introductions.

Approval of June 5th, 2018 Minutes

Roger Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 5th, 2018 meeting. Motion seconded by Rick Johnson. The motion carried.

Budget

Lt. Colonel Trader noted that the budget reports could be found in the meeting packets. No discussion on the budget.

Rick Johnson made a motion to accept the budget. Motion seconded by Roger Wilson. The motion carried.

Tyler Bussard w/River Expeditions – Request to change Upper New age requirements

Tyler Bussard with River Expeditions proposes to change the guide age requirements, on the New River from Sandstone to Cunard/Manns Creek, from 18 years of age to 16 years of age. He mentions the requirements would mimic those on the Shenandoah (12.1.d & 12.3). He explains that the classification for this section of the New is the same as on the Shenandoah; 1 through 3.

Chris Ellis mentions that the companies do not have to allow a 16 year old to guide. It would be at the discretion of the company. Cpl. Whittington suggested to expand the river section from the upper portions of the New all the way to Manns Creek. Roger Wilson stressed that the change would encourage young adults to become more involved with the outdoors and when they are the most impressionable.

Rick Johnson made a motion to propose rule changes, on the New River, for guide age requirements from 18 years of age to 16 years of age on the Upper New sections 1, 2, & 3 to Manns Creek. The proposed

changes would mimic those guide requirements on the Shenandoah. Motion seconded by Chris Ellis. The motion carried.

Whitewater Injury Report – Form Update

Heather Kessel explained the suggested changes to the injury report form were provided by commission members and whitewater guides. Heather explained that major changes to the report could cost approximately \$90 per hour. She explained if the changes were only cosmetic the cost could be applied to the existing agreement with the WV Office of Technology for basic weekly maintenance to the system. It was agreed to use that agreement instead of creating a new one for the work.

Discussion regarding medical information fields and HIPPA concerns. The decision was made to remove the fields. No gathered data would be lost or deleted, only hidden in the background and archived. It was decided to remove “feet” from the form and leave CFS as the only option. It was decided to change “Probable” injury to “Possible”. In the “Evaluated By” section it was decided to add “Hospital Medical Professional Staff” and delete all other options for simplicity purposes.

Roger Wilson made a motion to approve the changes to the Whitewater Injury Report Form using the existing WVOT agreement. Motion seconded by Rick Johnson. The motion carried.

Waiver from WVDNR Director McDaniel to train underage – Dion Carroll

Lt. Colonel Trader advised the commissioners that a copy of the waiver/letter was included in their packet.

Whitewater Allocations - Discussion

Heather Kessel asked Brian Campbell, with Adventures on the Gorge, for a bit of history regarding historical allocated numbers on whitewater. Brian advised that in earlier years there was conflict about how the numbers were allocated which led to the 1992 allocations. Those allocations set forth the minimum numbers of 120 on the Gauley River and 150 on the New River for each section, if the company already had a larger number they kept that amount. Studies conducted on whitewater allocations brought about suggestions of 90% fixed allocations and 10% floating allocations. Because the suggestion brought conflict, in 2001 new legislation capped the numbers at 120 (Gauley) and 150 (New), taking away the 10% floating allocations. Also, this legislation allowed those companies with larger numbers than 120 and/or 150 to keep their set numbers.

Brian Campbell and Rick Johnson explained that the Boy Scouts were “donated” user numbers by other whitewater outfitters. The numbers were to total approximately 700 - 900 daily on Upper New and on weekdays only. Rick Johnson mentioned that the numbers may be incorrect for the Boy Scouts on the allocations report. Heather Kessel advised she would go back and try to determine through archived files what that approximate number is for the Boy Scouts.

The Commission members agreed that the allocations report provided in the packets appear to be correct and if a problem existed, the outfits would notify DNR.

General Discussion

Brian Campbell discussed the push to elevate the New River Gorge become a National Park. He provided a resolution of support and asked that the Whitewater Commission adopt the resolution. He advised that there are several other groups that have already adopted the resolution and shown their support.

Rick Johnson made a motion for the Whitewater Commission to send out a resolution of support to elevate the New River Gorge to a National Park status. Motion seconded by Roger Wilson. The motion carried.

Next Meeting

The 4th 2018 Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting to be held at WVDNR HQ 2nd Floor Conference Room, 324 4th Avenue, South Charleston, WV on Tuesday, December 11th, 2018.

Adjournment

Roger Wilson motioned to adjourn the September 4th, 2018 3rd Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting. Rick Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.