

2nd Quarterly Whitewater Commission Meeting Minutes

June 14, 2016

Location: River Expeditions – Fire Creek Lodge – 900 Broadway Avenue, Oak Hill, WV

Chaired: DNR LE Jerry B. Jenkins, Colonel, for Director Robert Fala

In Attendance:

Commissioners: Director Robert Fala (WVDNR); Don Beyer (Private Boater); Brian Campbell (AWVR); Tim Barton (Alpine); Trish Kicklighter (NPS); Matt Knott (River Riders by phone)

Others: Jerry Jenkins (WVDNR); Heather Kessel (WVDNR); Rick Johnson (River Expeditions); Dennis Feazell (WVDNR D-4); Roger Wilson (AWVR); Duane Michael (NPS); Jeff West (NPS); Bobby Bowers (WVPRO); Sam England (WVDNR Parks)

Call to Order

The Whitewater Commission meeting of June 14th, 2016 was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Colonel Jerry B. Jenkins. Introductions were made. Attendance sheet provided for attendees to sign.

Approval of March 15th, 2016 Minutes

Brian Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 15th, 2016 meeting. Motion seconded by Tim Barton. The motion carried.

Budget

Matt Knott (at 1:10) advised there was revenue around \$44,000 for regular user fees and \$6,000 for the Gauley. He explains \$11,900 was spent in DNR personnel/benefits and \$775 for computer. Mr. Knott says the balance in the account is at \$85,000. Brian Campbell asked if any of that will change substantially by fiscal year. Mr. Knott explains that he does not expect it to change much.

Choose replacement name for Commissioner Doug Cooper

Colonel Jerry Jenkins mentions that Commissioner Doug Cooper has asked to be removed from the Commission. He explains that Chapter 20 allows for one private boater from each whitewater section and since the Commission already has a private boater for the New and Gauley the person would need to be from one of the other rivers.

Ed Wooten with Harmon's North Fork Cabins for the Shenandoah area was mentioned as a possible option. Rick Johnson offered to make contact with Mr. Wooten, but Colonel Jenkins suggested getting a list together of other possible names first.

Whitewater & WVDNR Parks Mutual Opportunities

Sam England with WV Division of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation discussed the idea of working in conjunction with the whitewater industry to create tourism opportunities that would benefit both the DNR and Whitewater. He stressed that Parks and Recreation are very open to any ideas and type of mutual operations that would benefit both. Specifically he mentioned Hawk's Nest and wanted to discuss any and all

possibilities to make Hawk's Nest and other areas work best to increase tourism and business. Mr. England mentioned that Parks and Recreation are open to any type of outfitters in the Babcock area, small or big.

Brian Campbell asked about the status of Mid-Mountain Trail. Trish Kicklighter advised that the group is ready to proceed and they are currently waiting for more funding to finish the project. There was further discussion on how to improve that project and other trails.

Other Business

Brian Campbell expressed a need to discuss conducting another whitewater injury analysis. He suggested that we research options, whether using the same vendor as previous or bidding out another. He expressed the appropriate persons should review whitewater injuries and establish a plan. Mr. Campbell explained that a group out of NC State did the last study and it was very economical. He mentioned that during the last Legislative audit fatalities were not thoroughly reviewed and he stressed the Commission needs to address those issues to prevent further problems. Colonel Jenkins suggests meeting prior to the next quarterly meeting to discuss injuries. Mr. Campbell asked that the DNR provide a summary of injuries for the Commission to review prior to the next meeting, in order to discuss.

Bobby Bowers brought the Commission up to date on the New River Dries. He advised he filed a motion to intervene on behalf of WVPRO and they are working with American Whitewater. He mentions that there has been no State agency to file a motion to intervene since the last meeting. There has been no change of minimum flow. Trish Kicklighter advised that the Fish & Wildlife Service have intervened because they are concerned for the endangered species in regards to the minimum flow in the dries. There was further discussion in regards to asking for more weekends and a new minimum flow. Director Fala states that he understands the WVDNR did indeed intervene and that some releases would occur.

Brian Campbell stresses that he doesn't believe the Commission has authority to intervene in regards to releases. He feels it's necessary to work together in regards to releases, access (put ins and take outs) and he suggests that if the plant closes the permit should be revisited.

Brian Campbell made a motion for the Whitewater Commission make a recommendation or an attempt to intervene in regards to the process. Recommend a compromise release program, improve access and if the plant should close the entire process should be re-opened and started over. Seconded by Tim Barton.

Matt Knott showed concern that no signs regarding life jackets exist at Stone Edison. He feels that signs should be put in place. Colonel Jenkins advised he would alert officers in the area.

Trish Kicklighter questioned a boat launch at McQuery and was advised to discuss with WVPRO. Also, she advised the Commission that she plans to retire and that Jeff West would be acting superintendent.

Next Meeting

The 3rd 2016 Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting to be hosted by Adventures on the Gorge on Tuesday, September 13th, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. An Accident Review meeting will precede the Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Tim Barton motioned to adjourn the June 14th, 2016 2nd Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting. Brian Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.