

4th Quarterly Whitewater Commission Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2018

Location: DNR HQ's, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 324 4th Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303

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

In Attendance:

Commissioners: Ed Wooton (private river user); Kara Moore proxy for Ruby Chelsea (WV Tourism); Lizzie Watts (NPS); Rick Johnson (River Expeditions); Chris Ellis (by phone private river user); Roger Wilson (AOTG); Patrick McCann (by phone Blackwater Outdoor Center)

Others: Jerry Jenkins (WVDNR); Heather Kessel (WVDNR); David Trader (by phone WVDNR); Brian Campbell (AOTG); Christopher Carnefix (ACE); Duane Michael (NPS); Jonathan Grose (Mayor Town of Gauley Bridge); Patrick Baisi (Town of Gauley Bridge); Bobby Bower (by phone WV PRO); Isaac Colvard (Summit BSA)

Call to Order

The Whitewater Commission meeting of December 11, 2018 was called to order at 1:04 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 September 4th, 2018 Minutes

Roger Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 4th, 2018 meeting. Motion seconded by Ed Wooton. The motion carried.

Budget

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

Ed Wooton made a motion to accept the budget. Motion seconded by Roger Wilson. The motion carried.

Whitewater Injury Report - Update

Heather Kessel explained all updates were made and the form has been uploaded to the Whitewater Reporting Site.

Town of Gauley Bridge – Deregulation of Zones – Bridge to Jodi

The Town of Gauley Bridge, Mayor Jonathan Grose, asks that the Commission remove the section 3.1.b.3 (from the Bridge at Jodie to confluence at Gauley Bridge) as whitewater zone classification. Mayor Grose asks that it be removed because it's mainly shoals and no whitewater exists in that section. And he goes on to explain that section 3.1.c.8 (Railroad Bridge below the Hawks Nest hydro) should also be removed or reclassified. He stresses that reclassification would be an economic benefit as currently only those businesses with whitewater licenses can conduct business on these sections.

Bryan Campbell asked if the sections are written in regulations or code. Lt. Colonel Trader advised it's in both. Rick Johnson asked Mayor Grose to clarify the exact section, which he clarifies from the railroad trestle down to the confluence of the New. Bryan Campbell advised that a rule change allowing canoes and like types to conduct business in that section, instead of changing the classification.

Further discussion determined that a sub-committee should be created in order to study the sections and bring back findings for the Commission at the next meeting. The sub-committee would consist of Bobby Bowers, Cpl. C.J. Whittington, NPS representative, Chris Ellis and Rick Johnson. The sub-committee will be tasked with studying sections on the New from Railroad Bridge below the hydro to the confluence and on the Gauley from Jodi Bridge to the confluence. They will study user numbers, gauge flow, put ins and take outs, e.g. The sub-committee will determine the best types of crafts to be allowed and any impacts the proposal would have on fishermen.

Motion was made by Roger Wilson to allow the sub-committee to study sections on the New from Railroad Bridge below the hydro to the confluence and on the Gauley from Jodi Bridge to the confluence and bring back findings to the Commission at the next meeting. Motion seconded by Rick Johnson. The motion carried.

General Discussion

Bryan Campbell asked for an updated report on put-ins and take-outs on the dries. Roger Wilson advised there is movement in getting a final status update. Wilson advised there is still some controversy about the put-ins. He advised the releases are required, regardless. Lizzie Watts confirmed Mr. Wilson's statement that there is some controversy about the put-ins. Roger Wilson wished to recommend that the put-in be located at the Old Cable Road.

Lizzie Watts inquired why the Whitewater Commission isn't contributing to the payment of the Thurmond Gauge. Ms. Watts advises that the USGS is going to pull the gauge if it's not funded completely. She advises that NPS will no longer pay the entire cost. The amount is \$15,000 per year. Bryan Campbell suggests that the Commission pay for the gauge using money from the Study Fund. It was agreed to table the discussion and make it an item on the next meeting agenda. Rick Johnson proposes that the Commission help pay for it and that the DNR has offered to inquire with some other agencies to acquire additional funding, such as Homeland Security.

Next Meeting

The 1st 2019 Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting to be held at the National Park Service office located at 104 Main Street, Glen Jean, WV 25846 on Tuesday, March 19th, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Roger Wilson motioned to adjourn the December 11th, 2018 4th Quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting. Ed Wooton seconded the motion. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.