

Quarterly Whitewater Commission Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2011

Location: National Park Service, Glen Jean, WV

Chaired: DNR Captain Lawrence O. Case, in absence of Director Frank Jezioro

In Attendance: Brian Campbell, Adventures on the Gorge; Jerry Cook, ACE; Adam Attarian, North Carolina State University; Don Striker, National Park Service; Tim Barton, Alpine Ministries; Don Beyer, private river user; Chris Ellis (by telephone @ 1410 hrs) private river user; Rob Dobson, WV Adventures; Skip Heater, New & Gauley River Adventures; Curt Cantrell, Cantrell Rafts; Adam Cantrell, Cantrell Rafts; Heather Kessel, DNR Law Enforcement recording secretary

Meeting to order

The meeting was brought to order by Captain Case at 1:10 pm.

Introductions

Captain Case asked that members and other attendees introduce themselves as there was a new employee present from the DNR Law Enforcement Section.

Approval of June 14, 2011 Minutes

Brian Campbell motioned to approve the minutes recorded from the June 14, 2011, quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting. Jerry Cook seconded the motion, and the Commission accepted.

Note here that Mr. Campbell wanted to address that a photocopy of the budget had been inserted in the minutes from the June 14, 2011 meeting. He mentioned that the budget was not voted on or approved at the June 14th meeting; therefore, he stressed that the minutes were approved for June 14th, but not necessarily the budget as seen in the insert.

Presentation of Accident & Injury Report by Aram Attarian

Mr. Aram Attarian explained his background in outdoor safety and the reporting of such. He explains that this project is his first dealing with whitewater incidents. He gives the status of his report through a Power Point presentation and handout. He explains that the data provided to him has been difficult to compile numbers and statistics because of their format. He mentions that he found all of the reports on-line except 2003. Brian Campbell states that the report from 2003 existed in draft form and was never officially approved. Mr. Campbell suggests that he use the monthly reports to get more accurate information and numbers. Mr. Attarian explains that the data he has processed thus far is outlined in the Power Point and handout in percentages and frequencies of accidents/injuries. There was further discussion between Mr. Attarian and the members in regards to errors on the reports, specific rapids, more follow up to reported injuries

and missing information on reports. He gave suggestions on streamlining the data gathering process; such as a revised report, a more thorough manager review and requiring that managers sign all reports. There were a few requests from attendees asking Mr. Attarian to provide stats on where or when accidents/injuries are occurring during the event; such as while flipping, while in the raft, while swimming, e.g. He mentions he can attempt to gather this info from the guides narratives. Captain Case asked when to expect the final report, he assured the members that he would submit it at the next quarterly meeting, tentatively scheduled for December 13, 2011.

Seat Allocation

Captain Case presents the agenda topic of changing allocation percentage from 25% to 35%. Tim Barton states that it was brought to his attention that due to various mergers, outfitters are encountering problems and finding it difficult to “borrow seats”. He states that it might benefit the single outfitter to increase the percentage. Brian Campbell states that he is opposed to the increase. He states that the current percentage is actually in the code, it’s not a regulation is in the law. He feels it would be difficult to change and stresses that the current system is working. There was further discussion about working together and “borrowing allocations” amongst outfitters. Skip Heater states that the difficulty he is encountering is the 24 hour advance notice to the DNR that they need to borrow allocation seats on the weekends. He mentions this is difficult when they have customers show up unexpectedly on weekends and no one to contact at the DNR send in a request to borrow. Jerry Cook states that he feels the current system works and states it would take a Legislative change to change the percentage rate. There was discussion about an “allocation form”. Mr. Campbell advises he has never used a form and that he would simply compose a letter to notify the DNR of what numbers were borrowed, with whom, when and where. There was further discussion.

Brian Campbell motioned the Whitewater Commission to recommend to the DNR to adopt a more flexible policy and procedure in regards to the borrowing of seats and allocations allowing for a notification within 24 hours after the seats have been borrowed. Don Beyer seconded, the motion carried.

Budget

Brian Campbell suggested a change to the *Industry Continuing Education* line from \$10,000 to \$15,000. He suggested the additional monies due to a loss of training reimbursements to WVPRO. He suggests that \$5,000 go to northern outfitters and the rest to go locally (the Gauley). The question was asked if this would be a permanent change or temporary. He suggests the budget could be adjusted over the years. He mentions it could be looked at each budget, doesn’t have to be every year.

Next Quarterly Meeting

The next meeting will tentatively be held on Tuesday, December 13, 2011, at 1:30 pm at the DNR Headquarters, South Charleston. Just prior to the quarterly meeting there will be a 10:30 am LAC Regulations Safety meeting held at the DNR Headquarters.

Adjournment

Tim Barton motioned to adjourn the 2011 third quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting at 2:47 pm. Brian Campbell & Jerry Cook seconded the motion, and the Commission accepted.