

Quarterly Whitewater Commission Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2013

Location: Corp of Engineers Office, Summersville, WV

Chaired: DNR LE Jerry B. Jenkins, Lt. Colonel, in absence of Director Frank Jezioro

In Attendance: Matt Knott (by conference call River Riders); Dave Bassage (ACE); Jerry Cook (ACE); Don Beyer (Private Boater); Doug Cooper (Private Boater); Roger Wilson (Adventures on the Gorge); Brian Campbell (Adventures on the Gorge); Tim Barton (Alpine Ministries); Will Miller (WV Tourism); Jeff West (National Park Service); Trish Kicklighter (National Park Service); Bobby Bower (WVPRO); Jerry B. Jenkins (WV DNR LE); Larry Case (WV DNR LE); Kelly Crago (WV DNR LE); Heather Kessel (WV DNR LE)

Call to Order

The Whitewater Commission meeting of September 10, 2013 called to order at 11:15 a.m. by Lt. Colonel Jerry B. Jenkins. Attendance sheet passed amongst attendees.

Approval of June 11, 2013, Minutes

Brian Campbell inquired whether the new appointments had been approved. Lt. Colonel Jenkins advised that to his knowledge they had not. Lt. Colonel Jenkins assured the Commission he would let them know immediately upon hearing from the Governor's Office. Doug Cooper made motion to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2013. Brian Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Budget

Matt Knott mentions that the beginning balance and estimated revenue is considerably less than previous years. He explains that at years end there will be around \$20,000 left in the account, estimated revenue not enough to compensate the allocated expenses. He's certain in approximately two years the account will be "wiped out". Matt explains that FY2014 projections and budgeted numbers appear to be pretty close to FY2013. He stresses that the Commission should think about increasing revenue or decrease expenses, otherwise the account will be in the negative within two years.

Lt. Colonel Jenkins asks Matt if there are expenses showing paid out to the Whitewater website. Matt advised that nothing had been allocated to computer services since July 1, 2013. But, that prior to that computer services shows an amount of \$23,269 paid.

Website Update

Heather Kessel explains that the website is functional, but still under construction. She states that the user numbers are still not corresponding with the correct rivers and that the Office of Technology is working on those. She mentions that they are also working on streamlining the injury reports and creating more accountability for those. She asked that all outfitters keep lines of communication open for ideas, concerns and suggestions. Brian Campbell asked that the trip leader reports hold in queue in order to review for inaccuracies. Lt. Colonel Jenkins stresses that he appreciates everyone's patience.

Updated Contact Forms for Outfitters

Heather Kessel asked for suggestions on whether an updated contact form should be filled out by all users for blanket e-mail notifications. She asked would it be advisable to ask for all of the user's contact information or would that be too much information. Discussion determined that to request information from all

users would be an overload of information. It was suggested that an update form should be sent to the Outfitters and let them determine who's information should be supplied to the DNR.

Discussion of Zone Changes on the New River

Lt. Colonel Jenkins opens the discussion tabled during the June 11th meeting regarding a study of the confluence of the Greenbrier to Brooks Falls. Doug Cooper states he believes that section of river should be changed. Brian Campbell stresses that there is already a law that defines that zone as whitewater and he doesn't feel "changing" the law to accommodate one instance is the correct thing to do. He states it's best to keep that section a whitewater zone at this time and for outfitters to reach out to whitewater license holders and work together. He mentions that it may be time to develop a "team" to revisit the rules and regulations on a thorough level. He explains that it's not a requirement to be a Commission member to volunteer for the Committee, but a Commission member must chair it.

Jerry Cook made a motion to form a Whitewater Regulation Review Committee. Brian Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Volunteers for Whitewater Regulation Review Committee: Dave Bassage, Don Beyer, Doug Cooper, Roger Wilson, Brian Campbell, Steve Kemper, Jeff West, Bobby Bower and Lt. Colonel Jenkins.

Thurmond Gauge Funding

Bobby Bower stresses that the Thurmond Gauge is scheduled to go offline the end of October 2013. He explains, as he did at the June meeting, that the Thurmond Gauge on the U.S.G.S. website will no longer be funded by the U.S. National Park Service. The cost was \$17,000 annually and just recently the U.S.G.S. agreed to lower the cost to \$14,000 annually. The Park Service and the U.S.G.S. have agreed to pay 1/3 of the cost, which figures to around \$4,700 each; this leaves 1/3 of the cost left to fund. Bobby explains that he attended a closed-door meeting at the DEP on 06-12-13 and the situation remains the same. The Fayette County Commission has mentioned they "might" contribute, but nothing solidified. Bobby states he's again, bringing the issue before the Commission to acquire funding to keep the gauge.

Jerry Cook made a motion to allocate \$1,000 to help fund the gauge. Brian Campbell seconded the motion. Matt Knott abstained. The motion carried.

Safety Training – Over \$2,500 Contract Necessary

Lt. Colonel Jenkins mentions that any plans to offer training and it looks like it will exceed \$2,500, a contract must be made. It was decided that it's best to get past the budget issues prior to conducting any new training.

Other Business

Jerry Cook mentions that there are two areas that needs addressed are improvements to whitewater zones and the promotion of whitewater zones. He mentions he'd like to see a committee look at ways to promote whitewater, having a proactive approach, get people interested in whitewater and ways to regulate. Brian Campbell states he feels the industry is not sure if the WV DNR is on the whitewater industry's side or against it. He feels the WV DNR has been somewhat passive in regards to the dries. He agrees that a committee or coalition should be formed to address the issues of any affects the whitewater industry may have on the dries. Jerry Cook stresses that ideas from all sides would be the best way to approach the issues.

Brian Campbell states that a committee can be formed and members can be from any agency, but to remember the chair must be a Whitewater Commission member.

Volunteers for Dries-Whitewater Zones Review Committee: Dave Bassage, Jerry Cook, Don Beyer, Roger Wilson, Will Miller, National Park Service Representative (to be named), and Bobby Bower.

Agencies that the Committee feels should be involved/invited: Division of Natural Resources, Fisheries, Department of Environmental Protection, County Commissions and National Parks Service.

Next Quarterly Meeting

The next quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting locale will be at the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Headquarters building in South Charleston on December 17, 2013. The Dries-Whitewater Zones Review Committee will meet at 10:00 a.m., the Whitewater Commission will meet at 11:00 a.m. and the Safety Commission immediately following.

Adjournment

Tim Barton motioned to adjourn the September 10, 2013 3rd quarterly Whitewater Commission meeting. Jerry Cook seconded the motion, and the Commission accepted. Meeting adjourned at 12:41 p.m.