

**Citizens Focus Committee
Lake Ouachita**

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

DATE: 08 March 2004

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee (CFC) Meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:02pm, Ouachita Project Management Office, Arnold Habig, Chairperson

Attendees:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

Titus V. Hardiman, Park Ranger Supervisor Office Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Members Present:

Jerry Shields
Al Gathright
Howard Wright
Rick Farmer
Joy Pensinger
Doug Johnson
Patty Roddenberry
Arnie Habig
Dave Doty

Announcements:

Arnie Habig welcomed the two new members to the CFC, Mr. Doug Johnson and Mrs. Joy Pensinger. Both gave the CFC a short bio about themselves and were welcomed by the members.

Mr. Habig called for a correction on Mrs. Pensinger's E-Mail Address.

Minutes Review:

Minutes for February 09, 2004 were approved as submitted.

Aquatic Weed Control Status: Titus briefed the members about the timeframe and outline for spending the 140k. He also informed the CFC of the positive responses that the Corps Water Safety and Aquatic Weed Control Booth received during the recent Hot Springs Boat, Tackle and RV Show.

Habig asked if there would be an Audit Trail made available to track the 140K. Titus stated that there would be.

Shields asked for the Aquatic Vegetation Display to be set up at the Mt. Ida Chamber of Commerce and the CFC in the near future so that members of both could get a visual understanding of what actually is going on with the project. Titus said that wouldn't be a problem.

Denby Trail and Hwy 270 Bridge Relocation Project: Jerry Shields gave briefing on the Hwy Departments Plans to destroy the 270 Bridge and build a new one. The AR Hwy Dept is willing to turn the old bridge over but it needs documentation of the different Agencies and Organizations that are willing to utilize the old bridge structure.

Shields submitted a letter to the committee, addressed to Dan Flowers, Director of the Arkansas State Highway Commission requesting that the bridge be allowed to remain standing and used as part of a Visitor Center and serve as a trailhead for the proposed trail system. The letter was signed by the Arnold Habig (CFC Chairman), David White (Mt. Ida Mayor), Ted Elder (County Judge, Montgomery County), Philip Carr (Mt. Ida Chamber of Commerce President). The letter was given to Titus for Mr. Stoke's signature.

Shields then gave a briefing for the benefit of the new members on the trail. He discussed the initial marking of the trail that measured 8 miles by land. The members and Corps employees marked it with ribbon. The 2nd time the trail was walked it was placed on a GPS Unit provided by the LOFO. Mr. Shield expounded on the beauty of the area and the suspected cultural sites that were noted. The Forrest Service is also willing to try to incorporate the GPS unit's data on the trail and mapped information into an integrated map that can be used by all parties involved.

The issue of funding was the next topic for the project. Mr. Al Gathright stated that he had discussed these funding concerns with Senator Mike Ross's and his office. Sen. Ross was not optimistic about funding due to the President's proposed budget cuts. Shields began to emphasize the fact that Congressional Adds and line items will be our best choice. His research into applying for Grants has been halted due to the realization that the CFC is not officially a Non-Profit Organization (501.3.C). The CFC is however, is moving forward by ensuring that those groups/agencies that support the Trail and Information Center have signed and that it is documented.

The question was then asked concerning who would manage the funds.

It was also noted that the Corps doesn't control a large amount of land in the project due to the fact that they only maintain property below 610 elevation.

Habig asked if it would be possible to request the funds that were promised during the 2001 Ice Storm Cleanup that were never received. Titus responded that it would not be likely to acquire those funds ever.

Shields posed the question if the CFC would support petitioning the Corps and Forrest Service for support of the Trail and Information Center. Discussion among the members themselves.

Patty Roddenberry made a motion to proceed forward and arrange a visit to Vicksburg to discuss with Col. Clapp the Corps' support of such a facility and trail. Richard Stokes was tasked to facilitate the meeting. Dave Doty seconded the motion.

Subcommittees

Advocacy: Al Gathright-Still collecting data on stakeholders. Al and Patty are working with the Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce and look to talk with Montgomery County Chamber next week.

Rick Farmer stated that the owner of Wilson's Cabin in Hot Springs was supposedly interested in becoming a stakeholder.

Gathright said that two of his students work on the data base of the stakeholders.

Public Relations: The news release on aquatic vegetation. Titus stated that the Lake Ouachita Field Office submitted the article describing the aquatic vegetation problems and our plans of action to the Water's Edge.

Fisheries & Campground: Habig reported that there is no new news to report.

Farmer asked if the Lake Ouachita Field Office was focusing on building a new office building for the staff in the time of such budget problems. Titus informed the CFC of the present conditions of the field office and the fact that a recent ceiling failure had recently occurred in an employee's office that could have resulted in serious personal injury had the employee not been away from there work station at the time. Point taken.

Motion to adjourn by Doty and seconded by Habig.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.