**Friends of Lake Ouachita**

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1424 Blakely Dam Road

Royal, AR 71968

**MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:** Friends of Lake Ouachita Committee Minutes

**DATE:** August 2, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 PM by Jerry Shields

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:**

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Amy Shultz, Natural Resource Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office

**Members Present:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Alan Atkins | Ron Mayfield | Jo West Taylor |
| Tom Butler | Bill Pell | Dan Watson |
| Robert Cavanaugh | Shane Scott |  |
| George Dooley | Jerry Shields |  |
| Al Gathright | John Simpson |  |

**Review of Minutes:** Robert C. moved to approve the minutes from June 7th meeting, Tom B. seconded. Minutes approved as written.

**Announcement:** Jerry S. announced the guest speaker, Mary Brown was not able to attend this meeting, but would be presenting in the September meeting.

**Corps Recreation Area Tree Replanting Program:** Jerry stated the Corps was re-planting some trees in the recreation areas and some members were concerned that the Corps was re-planting non-native Saw-Tooth Oak trees. Bill P. stated he wished the Corps wasn’t using Saw Tooth Oak because it is a non-native that produces fast but might out-compete the native trees. John S. had contacted Derick who provided a list of alternative trees the Corps can purchase. Stacy S. stated this was a non-issue, that other trees can be purchased and planted. Stacy shared the Corps is 25 years behind in trying to replace trees. He further shared that usage of recreation areas had caused trees to die over time. Jerry S. suggested FOLO help with the purchase of the trees. Suggestion was made to use Southern Red Oak. Alan A. suggested Shumard Oak. Jerry S. suggested wild Azalea trees. John, Shane, Bill, and Alan are on the Naturalist sub-committee. George D. made a motion to let the Naturalist Sub-committee meet with Derick to proceed with purchase of trees. Jo W. seconded. Stacy suggested putting a list together of trees they want to order and locations they think trees are needed. Bill P. suggested a field trip to the recreation areas to see where trees are needed.

**LOViT Trail and ADA Trail:** Robert shared that he, Ron, Al, Jerry, Matt Williams, and David Shields had built a bridge east of Homestead. It was 10 feet long with ramps for 16 total feet. They assembled it in approx. 3 hours. Robert stated they had placed hardware cloth on top of all the bridges to keep them from being slick. Jerry shared they had power washed the sign at the ADA trail and are working on re-painting the letters. Jerry made a proposal to use some of the grant funding to hire a contractor to upgrade the sign and add flagstone steps and walkway to the two benches. Tom suggested using some of the funding to enhance parking areas at trailheads on Mountain Harbor Road and Crystal Springs Road. He stated Crystal trailhead needs a larger parking area and better signage. Stacy suggested better signage that directs hikers to additional parking down the road at the church arbor. Tom asked if FOLO donates the materials, can the Corps do the work. Stacy stated only if it is on Corps property. Jerry shared he would also like to look at the cost of having the ADA parking lot paved.

**2021 Lake Cleanup:** Jo W. shared the cleanup was set for September 25th. She wasn’t sure about any future COViD restrictions. Jerry stated he will get the announcement in the Montgomery County Newspaper, and Jo W. will place it in the Sentinel Record. Jerry suggested encouraging teams of no more than 2-4 in a boat. Stacy recommended family pods and social distancing. Stacy shared the Corps would take care of the trash after it is collected and the large island trash. George suggested inviting civic groups and college groups. Tom B. asked if Derick could let him know how many Grab-A-Bag boxes were left and he gave Stacy new Grab-A-Bag signs to replace the old signs at the ramps and marinas.

**USACE Operational Review:** Stacy shared the Little Fir Bathroom delivery date has been moved back from November. Stacy further shared the Corps will replace culverts at Highway 27 after Labor Day. He shared the Corps has collected 25% more in recreation fees this year as compared to 2020. Stacy related that although funding will be less in 2022, the Corps has bought enough electrical wire to replace primary and secondary line on Joplin Point. The Corps will also be cutting hazard trees and limbs in the campgrounds. George suggested raising the campsite fees. Stacy stated it is not a good time to do that with the COViD pandemic. He shared the prices have been raised on sites that have been upgraded with added amenities. Shane S. asked if there were common complaints that could be addressed easily. Jerry stated most complaints were about not enough level campsites or sites that could accommodate two campers. Stacy shared the Corps is replacing lighting with LED lights at ramps, bathrooms, and pavilions.

Stacy shared the Corps has received many compliments on the upgraded campsites at Joplin and the addition of electricity at the tent sites, which was FOLO’s idea.

**Ouachita Trail:** Ron M shared the Ouachita Trail ends in Little Rock, and he and Bill P. are on a committee to replace all trailhead signs on 240 miles of trail. (21 signs total) They will install a new sign on the west end in October. The signs will be 3X5 laser cut signs with depiction of the trail.

Jerry found road crossing signs for bikers and asked Stacy if they could place them on each side of the road where the ADA trailhead crosses. Stacy stated that would be fine. Stacy asked them to report if they notice wasps on the ADA trail, as he and Derick had killed a bunch in that location.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 7:05 P.M.