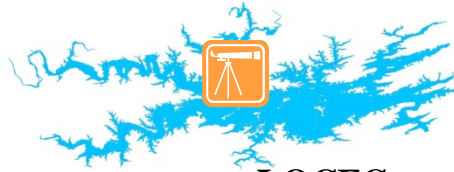


# Lake Ouachita Citizen Focus Committee



**LOCFC**  
**1201 Blakely Dam Road**  
**Royal, Arkansas 71964**

**MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:** Lake Ouachita Citizen Focus Committee Minutes

**DATE:** January 14, 2013

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m. by Al Gathright

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

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office  
Jason Mothershed, Facility Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office  
Amy Shultz, Park Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

## **Members Present:**

|                  |               |               |                |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Bill Barnes      | George Dooley | Jerry Shields | Jerry Williams |
| Tom Butler       | Al Gathright  | Walt Sitter   | Howard Wright  |
| Robert Cavanaugh | Larry Raney   | Rick Stokes   |                |

**Minutes in Review:** The minutes for November were approved as written.

**Comments:** Al G. related that Arnie H. is recuperating well from his recent surgery and there were no complications related to the surgery. Al G. went on to relate that Dave D. would not be actively participating in future LOCFC activities due to personal health issues, but Dave D. would continue working with FOLO until the end of August to assist with the transition of FOLO responsibilities. Dave D. and his wife will be moving from the Lake Ouachita area in August to a location closer to immediate family.

**Change in Meeting Dates:** Committee members discussed changing the proposed meeting day of the month and time to begin the meeting. After discussing the issues and possible conflicts, the committee members decided to change to monthly meetings to the first Monday of each month and begin at 6:00 p.m. The next LOCFC meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 4, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

**FOLO Update:**

**Crystal Springs Recreation Area** - Al G. related that the FOLO Board Members held a meeting on January 10, 2013 and the minutes from that meeting had been emailed to all the LOCFC members for their review. During the meeting, FOLO Board Members appointed Rick Stokes to serve as the primary point of contact for the Crystal Springs and Tompkins Bend Recreation Areas. Dave Doty advised the FOLO Board Members that he would be moving from the Lake Ouachita area in August and would be resigning from the FOLO Board. The FOLO Board recommended that Rick Stokes replace Dave D. as a FOLO Board Member.

**Tompkins Bend Recreation Area** - Al G. related that all the required partnership documents had been signed and FOLO began operating the Tompkins Bend Recreation Area on November 1, 2012. Al G. inquired about the status of the proposed road paving for the Tompkins Bend area. Stacy S. related that they paving contract had been delayed until spring when the temperatures began to rise. Stacy S. went on to remark that all efforts will be made to not have the paving conducted during the Arkansas' School's scheduled spring break timeframe. He further related that all campsites in the Tompkins Bend campground now have individual water connections at the campsites.

**Partnership Handshake Grant** - Amy S. related the Corps and LOCFC had been awarded the \$30,000 partnership handshake grant for construction of an ADA pond and fishing pier in the Avery Recreation Area below Blakely Mountain Dam. She handed out the nomination package, and the Challenge Partnership agreement that will need to be signed by Arnie H. before funds are allocated. Amy S. related that the matching portion of the grant calls for the LOCFC volunteers to provide in-kind services on the construction of the pier and use of small hand tools to clear the area.

**Status on Initiation of 2012 Projects, Crystal Springs Recreation Area** - Stacy S. related 75% of the drainage project to re-direct drainage water around the campground beach area had been completed. Stacy S. went on to say that once this project had been completed, a small working group would begin working on the proposed group camping area in Area 3 of the campground.

Stacy S. related the Corps' heavy equipment operator had transferred to another location and the position is currently vacant, therefore, hindering the completion of the proposed projects. The O&M contractor has scheduled their heavy equipment operator, but has been moved to various locations due to priority projects. Jason M. stated they would begin moving materials this week and begin work on the group area next week. He further related they have 2 electrical and 2 plumbing quotes, and will be placing an order for the materials and supplies.

Stacy S. stated the campground beach playground equipment will be shipped the first of February and the proposed playground site preparation will be completed by the end of the week. Rick S. requested a meeting with Stacy S. to finalize a work schedule on the project priority list for the Crystal Springs Recreation Area. Tom B. inquired about the fencing and air vents to be installed in the comfort stations to increase ventilation. Jason M. stated they were getting 3 additional vents for Tompkins Bend Area.

Jerry S. requested that while the heavy equipment and operator were in the Crystal Springs area, the Corps construct a 5-7 car parking area near the LOViT trail crossing on Crystal Springs Road to allow trail users to park in a safe location and off the main roadway. Stacy S. stated he following up on the proposal, ensure the proposed location is on Corps property and not on U.S. Forest Service property.

**FOLO Financial** - Jerry S. related \$167,908.00 in use fees had been collected in the Crystal Springs Recreation Area for 2012 and this was more than had been collected by the Corps of Engineers in the previous two years. The operating expenses for 2012 were \$21,059.00, of which \$7,892.00 were for administration expenses, half being the cost of the required insurance for the recreation area operations. Tom B. inquired what the net available that is available to be spent at Crystal Springs to make improvements to the area, of which Jerry S. stated \$108,199.00 was available for these purposes. Tom B. further related stressed the importance of showing the members of the public that improvements were being made by FOLO, using those funds collected in the area, as had been promised through the information distributed in the area. Jerry S. related FOLO had expended \$29,000.00 for the playground equipment being installed at the campground beach. Tom B. provided a list of contacts for quotes to Stacy S.

#### **Sub-Committee Reports:**

**Lake Ouachita Vista Trail** - Jerry S. stated the Trail Dogs had completed the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> section of the trail that intersects with the Brady Mountain Road. Jerry S. related the U.S. Forest had agreed to name the overlook/vista on the 7<sup>th</sup> section of trail, "Trail Dog Vista". A bench with the U.S. Forest Service plaque would be installed at the location to identify the location. Jerry S. also related that the U.S. Forest Service had cut more trees at the location to improve the view of the lake and surrounding area.

Jerry S. stated the trail construction contractor's work had reduced the work being performed by the Trail Dogs by 75% and the contractor was able to complete ¼ to ½ mile per day using their specialized equipment. Jerry S. further related that the current trail construction contractor had expressed interest in completing the last section of trail, completing the route to Blakely Mountain Dam. Jerry S. advised the committee that they should hear by March whether the \$95,000 grant request, from the National Recreation Trails Grant administered through the Arkansas Department of Transportation and Highway Department had been awarded to complete the trail. Jerry S. stated that due to a new accounting system being utilized by Montgomery County, they had encountered issues in obtaining the funds to pay the trail construction contractors, but the funds should be available by Thursday, January 17, 2013.

Jerry S. has asked the U.S. Forest Service to GPS the route of the 8<sup>th</sup> section of the trail, which will enable the contractors bidding on the work to have a more accurate estimate to complete the work. Jerry S. asked if the Corps could install signs on Highway 270 at Hickory Nut Mountain, Crystal Springs and Brady Mountain Roads directing trail users to the trail's location. Stacy S. stated he would look into this. Jerry S. also requested painting a crosswalk at the Brady Mountain Road and LOViT Trail intersection for safety. Jerry S. future related that the proposed parking area location on Brady Mountain Road had been approved by the U.S. Forest Service. A

request has been made to the Garland County Judge's Office to provide the necessary gravel to construct the parking area along Brady Mountain Road.

Jerry S. related that the Trail Dog members had been doing maintenance on the trails and removing downed trees from the recent storm damage. Approximately 17 miles of the 35 mile trail had been completed and work on 5<sup>th</sup> section of the trail would begin on Wednesday. Bill B. inquired to how much of the proposed trail had been completed thus far, of which, Jerry S. related there had been 35 miles of the trail completed, not counting the 3 miles of spurs along the trail's route. Jerry S. went on to say that there is approximately 5 more miles of trail construction to complete the route from the Denby Bay Area to Blakely Mountain Dam.

Robert C. related that the 7<sup>th</sup> section of the trail makes for a great mountain bike ride and encouraged Walt S. to tell the Mountain Biker's Association about this section. Robert C. shared that Stanley Mason had volunteered to develop an electronic map with the GPS coordinates along the trail for reference and plans are to have this map available by mid-spring. Jerry S. stated that Judge Alvin Black, Montgomery County, would be conducting an economic impact study on the trail. Jerry W. inquired if ATV's continued to be a problem in using the trail. Jerry S. stated that the issues were not as bad as before, he had learned that ATV riders had cut their own trail on Brady Mountain Road to Rifle Range Road and the U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers had issued citations to the offenders. Jerry S. expressed appreciation to Bill Barnes and his Mountain Harbor Staff for providing a place for the trail construction contractors to stay while working on the trail.

**Aquatic Vegetation:** Amy S. related that Johnny C., Area Biologist, had been out due to heart surgery and is recovering very well. Amy S. continued that Joe Bailey, Natural Resource Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office, had provided information on the distribution of the cages constructed for protecting the transplanted native species around the lake. According to the information, 50 cages had been installed in two different areas in coordination with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, these areas the *Vallisneria* plants were planted, cages and anchored down with rebar to secure the cages in place. The locations were selected based on water fluctuation and soil type conducive to support the *Vallisneria* plant growth. These sites will serve as "test sites" for future planting based on the survival rate of the *Vallisneria* plants. The cages that are out now are being implemented as test sites and survival rate will determine future application."

**Fisheries:** Amy S. related that there is approximately \$4,000.00 remaining in the account from the Fisheries Habitat Grant awarded in 2012. Amy further related that information provided by Joe B., work is being performed to select the proper hydrology and soil type characteristics to support the growth of Bald Cypress trees around the lake. Once a site had been determined, a plan would be developed for the planting of the trees and Bald Cypress seedlings would be purchased.

**Water Safety Grant:** Stacy S. related two \$2,000 water safety Wal-Mart grants had been applied for to be used toward purchase of lifejackets for loaner stations. Stacy S. further related, we have received \$500 grants in the past from Wal-Mart on Albert Pike. This year we applied at Wal-Mart on central and Sams Club.

**Campfire Programs:** No report this month.

**Lake Ouachita Cleanup:** Amy S. suggested to set up a possible clean-up/campground beautification work day for early to mid April, before the busy recreation season began. It was recommended to wait until the February 4, 2013 meeting to discuss further and set a possible date, allowing more LOCFC members to be present for the meeting.

**Comments:** Al G. stated Dave D. and Robert C. had worked on the Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA) newsletter article concerning the Friends of Lake Ouachita and accomplishments in support of the Corps and Lake Ouachita.

Al G. related the ORVA membership dues of \$50.00 were due and asked if the committee would like to continue this membership. Rick S. made a motion to continue their ORVA membership. Motion was approved.

Jerry S. thanked the Corps for use of the workboat and Crystal Springs Resort for providing a place to moor the boat while working on the trail near Crystal Springs Recreation Area.

Al G. provided a copy of the FOLO Financial Report provided to the Corps as part of the annual report required.

**FOLO Financial Report as of December 31, 2012:**

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Assets:                        |                      |
| Cash-Trail Account:            | \$10,733.00          |
| Cash-Miscellaneous:            | \$402.00             |
| Cash-Crystal Springs Rec. Area | \$108,199.00         |
| Cash-Tompkins Bend             | \$6,597.00           |
| <b>Total Assets:</b>           | <b>\$ 125,931.00</b> |

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 1910 hrs.