**Friends of Lake Ouachita**

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Zoom meeting minutes

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

**DATE:** February 7, 2021

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

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

Derick Walker, Supervisory Park Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Amy Shultz, Natural Resource Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office

**Members Present:**

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

**Walmart Trails Grant Renewal for 2022:** Ron M. stated he had not seen anything from Walmart Foundation. Al shared he had not spoken to anyone but had received an email confirming the grant renewal. He stated this was unsolicited, but renewal was for 10K for FOOT and 5K for the trail dogs. Al was very happy they continued to fund the LOViT grant.

**Lake Cleanup Proposal for 2022:** Jo W. shared two optimal dates for the fall cleanup: September 17th and October 22nd. The committee decided to choose September 17th with a rain date of October 22nd. Jo shared they will be focusing on the east end of Lake Ouachita since the last few years, they have focused on the west end. Derick mentioned the islands on the east end near Points 3,4,5, Crystal, and Buckville have a lot of camper use and trash left on them. Going out from Brady ramp would be the most logical staging area. (Will have to launch from the AGFC Ramp at Brady due to the Corps ramp being closed for the City of Hot Springs Water allocation project.) Jo W. will notify Keep Arkansas Beautiful and Keep America Beautiful to sign up for event.

**Recreational Areas Tree Replacement:** Jerry asked if the tree sub-committee had met with Derick. Derick stated he sent a message to Joe Bailey, Natural Resource Program Manager, and Joe needed to schedule a day to meet them and go out and decide locations and types of trees to plant. Derick shared they need to meet in the next two weeks to be able to plant before the season opens.Derick further shared, Joe had compiled a list of optimal locations and maps of these planting locations. Derick will ask Joe to send the list of locations and maps to the committee. Derick stated the committee needs to decide on the types of trees they would like planted. The Corps will track the planted trees and keep this in a database and NRM staff will plant these using tree shrub mix. Jerry shared the best source he knows to purchase trees is Pittman Nursery in Magnolia. He stated if the Corps placed the order, they could get the trees at wholesale price. Bill Pell is the FOLO POC for this project. Jerry shared they plan to purchase 5–10-gallon plants. He asked that we let him know and he will write a check for the trees.

**LOViT Trail Update:** Al shared the new program recreation manager at Caddo Womble was Jake Raines.

Al related the boardwalk at the ADA trail has issues with rot when they inspected it in November and December. When Derick and Stacy S. followed up, they also saw the issues. The problem is how to re-build under-girding. They estimate that within a year it will need to be repaired. Jerry stated there is one section going to the bridge that needs to be fixed immediately or blocked off. The cross beam is gone. Derick will look at this section and block it off until it is repaired.

Shane asked Jerry and Al about a plan going forward for repair. Jerry asked George D. about the cost of concrete and iron. George stated Buzzy Williamson is the POC for the city. Tom B. said he would ask the city who built their bridges and also suggested composite decking. Jerry stated the walkway is approximately 925 feet long and they originally spent approx. 150K on materials. Tom B. will email pictures of the city bridges and find out about cost. Jerry will search for revenue sources.

Al shared there are a couple of events coming up on the LOViT: The 100mile/100K run is a yearly event scheduled for February 25, 26, and 27th.

Al further shared the Forest service will be conducting prescribed Burns. Shane S. has the maps and stated they were going to burn the whole north face of Bear Mountain segment. They are also planning to burn from the Crystal Springs trailhead going west to Charlton. Shane stated the burn plans go right up to the trail and looks like the fire break is rifle range road. He will find out more on the plans. Jerry will give Amanda at the Forest Service a call and ask about the burns near the trail.

Al asked Jerry to also inquire about the status of the harvesting projects at Gap Creek that have been planned since 2018 or 2019. He knows they have done some logging off Womble/Silver Road.

Al inquired about the possible grants from US Fish and Wildlife to provide money for fish habitat. Tom B. stated FOLO would want to be a partner in this. Derick will check with Josh Tyler tomorrow and find out about the process. Amy S. shared a support letter from FOLO might be required.

Al G. shared they had some new volunteer trail dogs: Stewart Ichiro- retired Forrest Service,

 Richard Abernathy, and Doug Jostad

Jerry stated Karen Griffin and her husband also have requested to volunteer.

**USACE Operational Review:** Derick shared the new Little Fir restroom at the boat ramp has been installed and sidewalk completed. LED replacement lights were installed at Crystal Springs and the Gable Roof on the restroom is 85% complete. They still must install LED lights at either Denby or Tompkins. Derick further shared the striping of the Tompkins Bend boat ramp is complete. The Corps has trimmed roadways from Brady Mountain to Denby Point, and also conducted prescribed burns at Avery, Spillway, Brady Mountain, Crystal Springs, Joplin, and Tompkins Bend. Derick shared the project re-key is complete. The Warrior Squirrel Hunt was held at Mountain Harbor. It was a success with 22 hunters and their families enjoying the hunt. Derick shared Fountain Lake East students were compiling a digital version of the Geo Float Trail, and 30 bream boxes have been placed at Spillway and Crystal Springs to enhance fisheries habitat. He also shared the new branch chief that took Johnny Kiser’s position is Jason Mooney.

Jerry asked about an update on the fee booths and volunteers for the summer. Derick shared that there will no longer be paid contractors in the booths due to the workload diminishing since all reservations are made through R1S, and budget constraints. He shared volunteers will be in the booths for 3-4 days/week 4-5 hours/day to serve as a point of contact giving out information. Jerry asked if all areas had enough volunteers. Amy shared there was still 1-2 openings and if they knew of anyone interested, to have them contact the Corps.

**Announcements:** Jerry stated since this was the 20th anniversary of the committee, he would like to have a celebration during the may meeting held at one of the pavilions where spouses are invited, and past members are invited. The committee thought this was a great idea.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:05