

# Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



**1424 Blakely Dam Road  
Royal, Arkansas 71964**

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

**DATE:** February 1, 2016

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m. by Dan Watson, Chairman

**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:**

Tom Butler	Al Gathright	Dan Watson
Robert Cavanaugh	Jerry Shields	Jerry Williams
George Dooley	Tammi Spurlin	Howard Wright
Mike Drake	Rick Stokes	

**Minutes:** The minutes from November 2, 2015 and January 4, 2016 meetings were approved as written.

**Announcements:** The committee welcomed back Jerry Shields.

**Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO) Update:** Al G. inquired about the status of the pavilion and playground installation. Stacy S. related the pavilion installation was complete, and the border for the playground equipment will be installed as soon as RBS completes the clean-up of the Little Fir campground from the December high water event. Jerry S. stated the courtesy docks, playground and pavilion look really nice. Stacy related the challenge with the courtesy docks will be maintaining them when the lake is fluctuating during high water periods. Stacy went on to say the docks are very durable and are made from high quality material.

Tom B. asked if there had been any inquiries or suggestions to the FOLO board on how to use the remaining money in the campground account. Al related they had not received any inquiries outside LOCFC.

**Lake Ouachita Vista Trail (LOViT):** Al shared that the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) Trail Specialists will return to the area later in February to continue working on the trail. Al related a film crew from television station, MTV, had met with Phillip C. and discussed possibly filming individuals riding on the LOViT from Avery (Blakely Dam) to Tompkins Bend (Shangri-La Resort). If they choose to do the filming, it will be done around the third week of April and Phillip will provide transportation for the bikers, by boat, to the dam, where they can ride the trail back to Tompkins Bend (Shangri-La Resort) area. Al further related most of the trail is in great shape and Mike Curran had been removing downed trees from along the trail. Jerry S. noted there are a couple of problem areas along the trail that will require the trail to be re-routed due to being flooded during high water periods. Al shared the Crystal Springs Creek boulder crossing will also need to be re-worked since the boulders have shifted due to the flooding.

**Dropbox and Access to Documents:** Dan W. inquired if anyone was having problems accessing the “drop box” from the link he had provided everyone. Tammi S. and Jerry S. stated they were experiencing problems and were unable to access the files from the link. George D. asked Dan to re-send the access information to him. Dan stated he would resend the access information and if anyone continued to have problems, feel free to contact him and he would be glad to assist.

**Corps of Engineers Report:** Stacy S. shared the electric line replacement project at Joplin is nearing completion and would be completed prior to opening the campground the first of March. Stacy further noted the high water damage at Little Fir is nearing completion as well, that the contractor’s crews were removing the debris deposited in the area by the high water. He went on to relate that the Park Rangers NRM and RBS crews are busy removing dead and hazardous trees in all the recreation areas while they are closed as well.

Finally, Stacy shared that the old wastewater treatment facility at the Crystal Springs Campground had been sold and the buyer will be removing the facility soon. The Tompkins Bend wastewater treatment filter was also sold and the buyer will be pick it up soon as well.

**Progress Reports: Discontinued Projects:**

**Automated Electronic Defibrillator (AED):** Rick S. asked FOLO Board Members what they wanted to do with the \$300.00 donation that Entergy had given them to be used towards purchasing AED’s. FOLO decided they would meet to discuss possible safety projects where the funds could be used and then contact Entergy for their approval.

**Recycling in the Campgrounds:** Tammi S. related that due to the issues of someone committing to collecting and delivering the items for recycling, the project may not be feasible to pursue, at this time.

**Non-Potable Water for Flush Toilets:** Stacy shared with the committee members, upon further review of the proposed project, the net savings would be difficult to justify maintaining two separate water systems for service in the recreation areas.

Dan W. stated he would remove the recommended projects from the list that had been explored, and found to not be attainable or feasible at this time, then send the amended project list to the committee members for their reference.

**Fisheries Habitat Boat:** Tom B. inquired about the fisheries habitat boat. Rick S. explained that after meeting with members of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, (AGFC), he had been informed there is a need for such a boat in this part of the state. The AGFC does have a boat that is designed for and used for establishing fishery habitat in area lakes, but due to the demand, the boat has remained in the northern area of Arkansas most of the time. Rick further related Phillip C. had found two pontoon boat owners who were willing to donate their old boats to be used as a habitat boat, but Phillip related he is unsure of condition of these pontoon boats. The proposed habitat boat would be designated for use on Lake Ouachita, Bill B. and Phillip C. have volunteered to provide a boat slip to store the boat on the lake as well. LOCFC would be responsible for oversight of the habitat boat and when organizations, such as the Black Bass Coalition, wanted to utilize the boat to construct fishery habitat on the lake, the LOCFC would loan the boat to them. Tom asked if there may be any possible grants to provide funding to purchase a habitat boat. Rick S. stated his research for such grants had been unsuccessful.

Jerry S. suggested Rick contact Kirsten Barlow, AGFC, to see if she may know of possible grants FOLO could apply for to purchase a boat. Stacy stated he would seek a potential contact for Bass Pro and will send the contact information to Rick. Bass Pro has been a cooperative partner with other organizations in the past and they may have some mechanism available to support a project such as obtaining a habitat boat. Jerry suggested contacting Aloha boats, and Tom suggested also contacting Express boats to see if either would be interested in sponsoring a boat. It was noted that the habitat boat could also be used to ferry all-terrain vehicles (ATV's) to various locations near the LOViT for maintenance and rescue operations.

**Additional Ventilation in Comfort Stations:** Tammi provide photos of some of the comfort stations that are still having ventilation issues due to the low ceilings in the buildings. She stated there is a need to either install ventilation fans or raise the ceilings to allow more ventilation in the building. Stacy S. stated the Corps is attempting to purchase five more exhaust fans, with duct work, to be installed in these remaining comfort stations, three at Denby and two at Joplin.

Stacy further explained that the Corps has been renegotiating the maintenance contract with RBS, and under the temporary negotiated contract, the spending limit is low, so therefore, any major projects, such as raising the ceilings in the comfort stations, would need to wait. Tom asked if the exhaust fans, installed in the comfort stations at Crystal, were working well. Jason M. stated they were working very well in Crystal comfort stations.

**Campsite Revitalization:** Dan W. asked if members of the LOCFC could have access to the Campsite Revitalization Spreadsheet developed from the campsite evaluation information provided by Janice V. and her assessment team. Stacy S. asked if Dan had asked Bill J. about the spreadsheet and Dan stated he would contact Bill J. about the spreadsheet.

Stacy went on to explain, just because a project was listed first on the spreadsheet, did not mean the Corps would work on that project first. If the Corps already has a project going in a recreation area, for example, it is more cost effective to take care of all the projects in that area before moving to a different campground.

**Donation Boxes:** George D. shared that the proposed donation boxes would cost \$50.00 to \$60.00 each, plus purchasing signs to put near donation boxes. George asked what should be placed on the signs, to explain what the donations would be used for on the lake. Stacy related that the sign wording must identify the project that the money collected would be used for on the lake. Rick S. suggested placing a photo of the project being proposed. These boxes will be placed at the fee booths at Brady Mountain and Crystal Springs Campground, as a test to see if the proposal will be successful. Dan suggested all committee members send sign ideas to George. Rick stated he would look at project list to see what project they would like to fund with these donations. Jerry suggested inter-locking rock borders around campsites might be a good project for Crystal Springs. After some discussion on the need to develop a Facebook site for FOLO, Robert C. agreed to set one up similar to the one he manages for the Trail Dogs. Jerry stated he would send the FOLO logo to Robert. Jason M. suggested putting business cards for FOLO on the donation box for visitors to pick up.

**Fundraising:** Tom B. shared his concern that LOCFC is not sponsoring a large lake cleanup as they have in the past. He would like to see how Entergy organizes their event. Amy S. stated she would send Tom a contact number for the person who organizes the Trash Bash for Entergy. Tammi believes the committee needs more community outreach to get people involved around the lake, so they get to know about LOCFC. Tom also noted he thought Tammi's idea of a marathon fund raiser was a good idea. Tammi stated she had talked with Stacy about the participants using a closed off camping area during the off season. Stacy asked to know well in advance, and if there isn't maintenance going on in a closed recreation area, there is a possibility of opening it for the race participants. However, if an open campground nearby had enough available campsites, the group would use the open campground. Also, if the race was planned right after recreation areas are scheduled to close, the Corps could just leave the recreation area needed opened for the race since it is much easier to leave an area open than to open facilities in an area after it has been closed for the season. Robert C. suggested they start off with a shorter race. George shared information on the triathlon held at DeGray with Tammi. Amy stated she would send information on the ultra-marathon on the LOViT coming up in February with Tammi.

**Closing Remarks:** Stacy S. informed the committee that travel orders have been signed and vouchers processed. He asked the members to let Amy know if they drove each week because we have a good chance of being audited and need to maintain accurate records.

Members who informed Amy they drove their own vehicles to the meeting are as follows: Robert, Tammi, Tom, Howard

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:20 P.M.