

## Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



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

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

**DATE:** March 7, 2016

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

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

Bill Jackson, Supervisory Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

### **Members Present:**

Bill Barnes	Mike Drake	Rick Stokes
Phil Carr	Al Gathright	Dan Watson
Robert Cavanaugh	Arnie Habig	Howard Wright
George Dooley	Jerry Shields	

**Minutes:** The minutes from February 1, 2016 were approved as written.

**Announcements:** Al G. wanted to ensure that Bill Barnes was properly thanked for allowing the Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO) to store the playground equipment and pavilion materials in his maintenance storage area until the partnership issues were worked out between FOLO and the Corps of Engineers. Bill B. expressed his gratitude for being recognized and inquired whether all the materials and supplies had been found to be in order and no damaged had been found to any of the equipment. Al G. related that all was in order, just that the playground company had failed to provide all the playground equipment that had been ordered, but that was rectified and the equipment was shipped for installation. Bill J. responded in saying that some of the “tongue and groove” planking had been exposed to water and some of the boards had warped, but the RBS crew constructing the pavilion were able to use the boards for the pavilion’s ceiling.

**Way Forward Document Update:** Dan W. related that he will get the updated Way Forward document sent out to the committee members. Updates will include those projects that have been explored and discussed, but after exploration and discussion, the committee members have decided to remove from the list of proposed projects.

**Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO) Update:** Arnie H. inquired about the FOLO Financial Statement, from his review of the financial statement, he recommended to change the statement categories to combine the campground categories into one category, have the LOViT and miscellaneous items as two separate categories. By doing this, it would be easier to track the funding for each category and most especially now since there are no additional funds being added to the campground accounts.

Al G. related that Vivian Budimir continues to do an outstanding job of keeping FOLO's records and maintains copies of all the financial reports, as she did before when FOLO was active in the partnership program with the Corps.

Al went on to relate that FOLO had received a contribution of \$50.00 from a LOViT trail user who wanted to support the trail and continued maintenance of the trail. Rick S. informed the committee that the \$300.00 donation provided by Entergy, for the purchasing of Automated Electronic Defibrillators (AED) for Lake Ouachita, would be donated to the Corps of Engineers to help them in maintaining the AED's they have already obtained. It was noted that permission had not been obtained from Entergy to use the donation for this purpose, but rather the funds were donated for "support of AED's".

Al informed the committee members that there had not been a formal FOLO meeting since the FOLO members met after the February LOCFC meeting. Al went on to relate that there had not been a great deal of activities going on with the LOViT, other than some maintenance of the trail area and installation of new signage along the trail. Al wanted to thank Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita, for installing the new sign posts along the trail and providing the new wood routed directional signs that had been installed to replace the damaged signs. Al went on to say that there is a need for additional signage along the trail, but is hoping that this work would be included in the work being performed by members of the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) work crew being funded through the grant provided by Wal-Mart.

Robert C. stated that he had created a FaceBook page for the Friends of Lake Ouachita. He will continue to post updates and news concerning the activities that FOLO continues to work on for the betterment of Lake Ouachita and support of the Corps of Engineers.

**Lake Ouachita Vista Trail (LOViT):** Al went on to discuss the increased success of the, now annual, LOViT 100 kilometer and 100 mile races being spearheaded by Dustin Spear. According to information provided by Mr. Spear, the number of those individuals signing up for the two races had doubled from the 2015 race. Al went on to relate that Mr. Spear had informed him that due to the success of the race, they would be donating \$500 to \$700, along with a bench sponsorship, for the purchasing of materials for a bridge along Section 2 of the LOViT. Arnie H. inquired about receiving funds directly from groups hosting events on the trail, but was informed that there is no formal requirement and donations are always welcome, from whatever source available. Arnie asked about the fees charged by these organizations who are using the trail for these type activities, are they providing funds to support maintenance of the trail. Jerry S. related that the fees charged go for the race activities and support, such as purchasing snacks for the race participants and to cover any fees being charged by the Federal Agencies, such as the US Forest Service and the Corps. Jerry went on to relate that these organizations usually will donate funds to the trail for maintenance and upkeep.

Jerry S. stated that there is a portion of the trail, in Section 2, that must be re-routed, due to high water conditions affecting the trail route. Jerry inquired of Bill J. if it would be possible for the Corps to provide the equipment and operator to re-route approximately 300 to 500 feet of the trail. Jerry estimated it would take approximately two days to dig out the trail using the Corps small excavator. Bill J. informed the committee that he would provide the information to Mr. Sigman and get back with them to let them know whether this could be done.

Al G. noted that a bundle of the 2x6 posts and some of the other materials that were being stored at the Tompkins Bend storage yard had been used by the Corps for some of their projects. Jerry S. said he would speak with Stacy S. about getting the lumber replaced.

Al G. went on to inform the committee members that the "Trail Dogs" now have official "safety vests" and t-shirts to wear while working on the LOViT to readily identify them as volunteers on the trail. The vests and t-shirts were acquired from The Locker Room in Hot Springs, at a very competitive price.

Jerry S. and Al G. remarked that they had spoken with Stacy S. about the need to make improvements to the "Boulder Crossing" on Crystal Creek, near Crystal Springs Road. The boulders that were put in place have been moved by the high water conditions and this has created issues with trail users being able to cross the creek. Stacy related that he would have a crew work on it as soon as he could.

**Dropbox and Access to Documents:** Dan W. related to the committee members that if anyone may be having trouble accessing the documents he has placed in the "drop box" to please give him a call and he would provide assistance to them. Dan went on to say that initially the permissions granted to the committee members will be "read only", but once everyone was comfortable with the program, the permissions could be changed to allow "edit" permissions as well. Rick S. related he had tried to download some documents, but apparently Dan could not view the documents Rick had downloaded.

Rick inquired if items downloaded into the drop box could be viewed by others, of which Dan replied that only those who have been granted permission to view items in the drop box could see the documents listed.

**Corps of Engineers Report:** Bill J. shared with the committee members that the Lake Ouachita Field Office had been awarded grant money for the sponsorship of the Corps' participation in the "Every Kid in a Park" program that was kicked off this last fall. Through the grant award, it would provide funding for the purchase of lunches for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from the area schools that would be participating in the Lake Ouachita "Every Kid in a Park" programs scheduled for April 21<sup>st</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup>, for Lake Hamilton and Mountain Pine Schools. Lakeside Elementary would also be participating in the "Every Kid in a Park" programming also on April 26<sup>th</sup>. A total of 850 students would be participating in the "round-robin" information stations set up by the Lake Ouachita Field Office Staff and volunteers participating in the events being held at Avery Park.

Bill J. went on to relate to the committee members that all the parks had been re-opened for the Springs camping season and there had been very few issues with the opening of the parks. Due to the nice weather conditions, a great deal of work had been accomplished in the parks in preparation for the

Spring and Summer recreation season this year. New electrical lines, electrical pedestals and above ground water spigots had been installed at various campsites through-out the campgrounds. Electricity had been installed at all the campsites in Joplin Campground and new underground cable had been installed to replace the deteriorating ones that were causing multiple outages through-out the camping season. The Joplin Campground campsites were still 30 amp service, but improvements had been made to reduce the outages due to the electrical line issues, as before.

Rick S. inquired about the above ground water spigots, if they were equipped with the valve to prevent cross-contamination of water coming for the camping unit connected to the spigot and also to prevent surface water from entering the drinking water system. Bill J. stated that the above ground spigots were the same type of spigots that were being utilized through-out the other campgrounds and all efforts were being made to remove and replace the in-ground water spigots that had been installed previously.

Jerry S. inquired as to whether the Corps of Engineers had a Junior Ranger program similar to the one that the National Park Service promotes. Bill J. related that the Corps does have a Junior Ranger program and that he would be willing to provide Jerry with all the details of the program. That the Corps' Junior Ranger program provides the young person with a detailed list of requirements and upon completion they are awarded a certificate and a Junior Ranger patch for their accomplishments.

Bill J. continued in informing the committee members that the Avery Restroom had been repaired, that actually it was the sewage lift station from the Avery restroom that was causing the issue and that the electrical service to the lift station had been replaced and the lift station was back operational and ready for the recreation season.

### **Progress Reports:**

**Removal of Old Facilities at Tompkins Bend and Crystal Springs:** Bill J. related that the previous bid received by GSA for the old wastewater treatment facility at Crystal Springs had fallen through and the project had been advertised again, with a closing date of March 23, 2016. Bill J. went on to say that the old wastewater treatment plant filter that had been removed from the Tompkins Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant had been picked up by the successful bidder for a cost of \$20.00. Arnie H. asked about the revenue from the selling of the scrap items, where does it go, would it be returned to Lake Ouachita. Bill J. related that the revenue is paid into the General Treasury and the funds are not returned to Lake Ouachita as revenue.

**Habitat Boat for Lake Ouachita:** Rick S. informed the committee members that he had contacted a number of the boat manufacturers concerning the donation of a boat to be used as a habitat boat for Lake Ouachita, but he had not heard back from any of those he had contacted. When he contacted Ranger Boats, he was told that they do not participate in activities such as donating boats to organizations. Arnie H. inquired if FOLO could place a classified ad asking for a donation of a boat that could be converted into a habitat boat to be used. Phil C. related that he had a couple of options, but one had fallen through and he could not commit to the other one right now.

Committee members began to discuss various options of obtaining a boat to be converted into a habitat boat, a possible boat owner wanting to donate to a worthy cause, open discussion led to questions concerning who would be responsible for maintaining the boat, who would be responsible for the insurance on the boat, would FOLO or LOCFC be responsible for damages caused by those who were using the habitat boat. Bill B. and Phil C. volunteered to provide a slip for the habitat boat, if needed at Mountain Harbor Resort and Marina or Shangri-La Resort, once a boat had been obtained. Jerry S. inquired where the funding would be coming from for the operational costs for the habitat boat, were there grants available for the operation and maintenance of such a vessel.

During the discussion, a question came up as to why the committee was seeking to obtain a habitat boat, which Rick S. stated that the idea came from discussions about supporting the creation of fish habitat in Lake Ouachita and a means to place brush piles in the lake for fish attractors. Rick went on to say that in discussing the proposed weigh-in station for fishing tournaments on Lake Ouachita with members of the Arkansas Game and Fish, they recommended not pursuing the proposed plan of a weigh-in station, but to obtain a boat to build fish habitat around the lake instead, they felt this would be a better project for the committee members to work towards than the construction of a tournament weigh-in center for fishing tournaments.

Jerry S. recommended approaching the Arkansas Game and Fish Commissioners about obtaining a fish habitat boat, very similar to those stationed in the Northwest Arkansas area lakes, for lakes Ouachita, DeGray and Greason, the boat would be utilized at these three lakes and maintained by the Arkansas Game and Fish, but moored at Mountain Harbor Resort and Marina or Shangri-La Resort. After discussion, Jerry S. made the motion not to pursue obtaining a habitat boat due to the long-term maintenance costs. Committee voted, and unanimously approved not purchasing or obtaining a habitat boat.

**Ventilation for Comfort Stations:** Dan W. asked Bill J. if there were any updates concerning the ventilation fans being purchased by the Corps for the comfort stations in Denby and Joplin. Bill J. related he would talk with Stacy S. to get an update on the status of the ventilation fans and pass along the information to the committee members.

**Campsite Revitalization Inventory:** Bill J. related that Dan W. had requested that another column be added to the campsite inventory lists to indicate what campsites could be converted to pull-through campsites relatively easily. Bill J. stated that this would be accomplished as those campsites are identified in the campgrounds. Bill J. went on to say that most visitors prefer the pull-through campsites because it is easier to set up their campers on these campsites, plus there is often more room for parking their vehicles and the vehicles of their visitors as well.

Bill J. went on to relate that he is working to convert the spreadsheets to pdf files and will email those spreadsheets to the committee members. Arnie H. asked why the spreadsheets themselves could not be just emailed to the committee members and Bill J. related that he would provide pdf files so the data could not be changed that was listed in the spreadsheets and the Corps would maintain the Master files for the spreadsheets.

Bill J. continued in saying that as the Corps has the maintenance contractor working in the campgrounds and additional work can be accomplished while they are there, the spreadsheets will be used to identify campsites that can be renovated and improvements made, as had been identified by the inventory provided by the committee members.

**Park Benches in Recreation Areas:** Janice V. had recommended that various locations in the recreation areas be identified and park benches be placed at those locations for visitors to sit and enjoy the lake scenery. Dan W. asked, on behalf of Janice V., about having the Corps place park benches around the lake. Bill J. related that he had spoken with Janice V. about this project and stated that as soon as Janice V. could meet with him and identify these locations, the proposal would be presented to Stacy S. about obtaining permission to place the park benches currently on-hand at the project would be installed at those locations.

**FOLO Placement of Donation Boxes at the Fee Booths:** George D. provided examples of the proposed donation boxes that he had recently purchased to show the committee members. The proposal is to place a donation box at the Brady Mountain Fee Booth and Crystal Springs Fee Booth. The committee members must agree upon the proper signage that would be placed near the donation boxes to advise the potential donors what their donation would be used for on the lake. It was agreed upon by the committee members that a strong introduction of "Help Your Campground" would be used to grab the potential donor's attention. Suggestions were made to have photos of the completed projects at Crystal Springs and Tompkins Bend, the playground equipment and courtesy docks that were provided by FOLO for the recreation areas.

Jerry S. volunteered to draft up the wording for the donation box signs. Jerry went on to say that he would have some examples soon and send them to the committee members for their review and approval.

**Fundraising and Awareness:** Arnie H. related that he recalled when he was the LOCFC Chairman, that he would often attend local Chamber of Commerce and Rotary meetings and other area organizational meetings to promote the activities and accomplishments of the Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee. Through these efforts, he was able to ensure those who were interested in what was happening around the lake were kept fully aware of the LOCFC's work with the Corps of Engineers and how issues were being addressed for the betterment of the lake and resources around the lake. Arnie went on to say that he recommended that members of the LOCFC initiate these activities again, reach out to the surrounding community and seek support for the efforts being identified by work being conducted by the LOCFC with the Corps.

Arnie H. went on to inquire about potential fundraising ideas for the LOCFC, to include LOCFC members to pay membership dues to be a committee members. Arnie remarked by saying when we are asking others to donate to FOLO, they may often ask what the committee members are donating to the cause. Discussion among the committee members were that they donate their time and energy to the cause, without being required to pay a membership fee or dues. Their time in participating in and supporting the efforts of the LOCFC in what the committee has been able to accomplish thus far through the hard work and efforts of the committee members.

**Automated Electronic Defibrillator (AED):** Rick S. asked that the proposal to obtain AED's be removed from the Way Forward listing due to the fact that the Corps cannot accept units obtain to be donated to them.

**Recycling in the Campgrounds:** Through the discussion of the committee members, the fact that the logistical issues in trying to conduct a recycling program in the campground could not be accomplished, it was determined that a recycling program for the campgrounds be removed from the Way Forward proposal list at this time.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

DRAFT