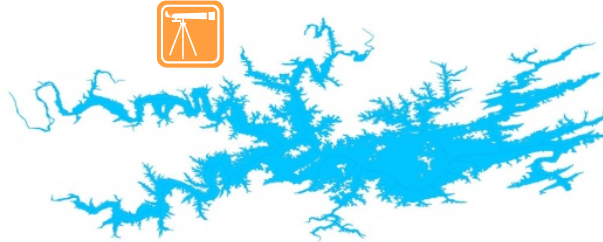


# Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



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

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

**DATE:** July 7, 2014

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m. by Arnie Habig

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

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office  
Bill Jackson, Supervisory Ranger, 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	Arnold Habig	Janice Vaughn
Philip Carr	Mike Drake	Larry Raney	Dan Watson
Robert Cavanaugh	Al Gathright	Jerry Shields	Howard Wright

**Opening Remarks:** Arnie H. requested Bill J. share the results of the secret ballot for the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Bill J. stated that Rick Stokes had been chosen for Chairperson and Al Gathright had been re-elected to serve as Vice-Chairperson. Arnie congratulated Al for being re-elected and then turned the meeting over to him in the absence of Rick. Al recognized Arnie for all his hard work and dedication to the LOCFC since the creation of the committee and his 14 years of service to the committee.

**Minutes in Review:** The minutes from the June 2, 2014 meetings were approved as written.

**Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO):**

Al related he did not have any updates on status of use fee audit. Al further related all the money from the trail grant had been reimbursed to the FOLO account. Arnie inquired if the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) legislation, which had been recently approved, would have any effect on the Corps's operations. Stacy S. related that at National Council had been established out of the Corps' Headquarters Office to determine listed in the WRDA that would affect the Corps' operations. This counsel is developing guidance for the field to follow concerning what authorities had been granted through the WRDA. Stacy went on to say that the WRDA refers to special use fees, but doesn't identify

which fees it is referring to in the bill. The National Council is working on determining which fees can be kept on project. The council will make recommendations to the Headquarters Office of Counsel on which fees they would like retained. Everything is currently in “hold” status until guidance can be provided on what fees can be retained at the project level. Bill B. asked if the Office of Counsel had given the National Council a deadline on when the recommendations had to be submitted. Stacy stated no deadline was given. Bill J. related the WRDA document was about 300 pages with only approximately 15 pages pertaining to the Corps’ operations. Bill J. did relay that under the new WRDA approvals, the Corps would begin selling the *America the Beautiful Passes*, but the field offices are still waiting on the guidance for that program as well.

Bill J. informed the committee members that Stacy had been recently selected to serve as a member of the Corps’ Partnership Advisory Council (PAC), a national committee tasked with setting guidance and procedures for the Corps’ partnership program. The fact of having Stacy serve as a member of the PAC is a great benefit for Lake Ouachita in the fact that we, Lake Ouachita, will have someone with a voice in making decisions that could affect our operations and partnership development.

**LOViT:** Jerry S. related the Trail Dogs had cleared about 10 miles of the trail, from Crystal Springs to Brady Mountain Road, where downed trees and limbs had fallen across the trail. They also trimmed the ADA Watchable Wildlife trail walkway and the Corps bushlogged the center of the ADA trail. Jerry further related there were a lot of weeds on the west side of Bear Mountain along the trail. This is due to the recent storm damage blowing down large trees that had the area shaded previously, therefore preventing the growth of weeds. Jerry went on to say that, other than that one section, the trail is in good shape. Jerry stated they would like an official ribbon cutting ceremony held in October, and were considering contacting Governor Beebe to attend the ceremony. If they contact him, they need a trail head sign/kiosk installed at Avery trailhead. Stacy stated RBS can construct a trail head sign. Jerry continued in stating he would contact Governor Beebe’s’ office tomorrow to see if the Governor could attend the ceremony in October.

**Aquatic Vegetation:** No report, Bill J. related there were no updates to provide concerning the aquatic vegetation program from the June meeting.

**Campgrounds:** Bill J. related that the weather had been perfect for the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend and all campgrounds were full except Twin Creek. The Crystal Springs Overflow Camping Area was opened on Wednesday, 2 July 2014, and 20 campers utilized the area through-out the weekend. The Twin Creek Overflow Area had been opened as well, but there were no campers who utilized the area. There were no major incidents during the holiday weekend, and only a few minor incidents, such as loud noise complaints, campsite “grabbing” issues, parking, etc. Both fireworks display events went extremely well and were well attended. Over the Holiday weekend, Park Rangers made 1,300 face-to-face contacts and 700 direct water safety contacts. Bill J. further related there were 4 boating violation notices issued, and 17 written warnings. The visitors were pleased with the upgrades to Brady comfort stations. There were not any major power issues over the weekend, and only a few individual sites with power problems. Bill J. went on to state, four campsites were occupied by Officers from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and these Officers were working from our campgrounds and were available to provide assistance to our Rangers, when needed. One Officer was camped at Tompkins Bend with the others camped at Denby Point.

Mike D. inquired how many units per site were allowed during holiday weekends. Bill J. stated that two large units per site are usually allowed, but on busy holiday weekends, some exceptions were made, allowing two trailers and a large tent on some of the sites. In addition, small dome tents, 48 inches or less in height, are allowed, as long as the tents are not encroaching onto another campsite. Arnie requested Bill J. send him updates on campsite availability prior to holidays. Bill stated it was posted on the Face Book site, and he will send the screenshot of site to members of committee so they can "like" the page to get Lake Ouachita updates. Bill B. asked about the arrangement of law enforcement staying in the campgrounds. Bill J. stated the project's policy has been where if the officer has jurisdiction in the county they are camping and they have their marked unit on the campsite, they are allowed to camp free. The officers still must abide by the rules and regulations concerning camping, the 14-day limit, just like other visitors. We have observed that when a marked law enforcement unit is in the campground, there are fewer problems and when the patrolling Park Rangers need assistance, the officers are readily available to provide assistance.

**Way Forward Brainstorming Committee:** Dan W. shared that he, George D. and Arnie H. had met to take the big list of projects and categorizing by priority. They came up with sixteen items that could possibly be done in one to two years, if funding were available. They also formed a list of five smaller projects. The short term list were as follows: providing campground host/park attendants CPR/First Aid training and First Aid kits in the fee booths, placing donation boxes in the recreation areas, improve ventilation in comfort stations, request the campground hosts do more facility inspections, install broadband access (Wi-Fi) in the recreation areas, courtesy docks at the launching ramps, construct fishing piers, make improvements to the fish cleaning stations, request the Corps raise the power pool at Ouachita, expanding campgrounds, construct fish weigh-in stations, establish a recycling program, increase use fees, charging for multiple camping unit occupancy, keeping campgrounds open all year, and converting the toilets and sinks to automatic systems. Jerry S. stated most National Parks have spring loaded water faucets where the user must hold the handle to use the faucet. Jason M. shared that the ventilation fans had been installed at Crystal Springs comfort stations and the cost was approximately \$1,500.00 per fan.

Bill J. asked if the committee members could send the list of items being proposed to the Corps, in advance, to allow each item to be considered and addressed before the next LOCFC meeting. This will allow the committee and the Corps to evaluate what can and cannot be done within the Corps' requirements and regulations. For example, current policy at Lake Ouachita is that there cannot be an extra charge for dual occupancy on campsites, unless the campsite has additional amenities, such as two electrical boxes on the site. Bill further shared the Corps would like the committee to do research, as a committee, identify problems, research a vendor, and get cost estimates. The project needs to be a high priority, low maintenance project. Also, if the committee can work to identify grant opportunities, the Corps will assist in writing proposals. Dan W. also suggested initiating required boat inspections at the boat ramps, to insure no exotic species or non-native plants are being introduced into the lake. If inspections could not be performed, at least post educational signs for the public to understand the need to inspection boat hulls and live wells for exotic species before launching.

Dan W. requested that if there are other LOCFC members have concerns or suggestions for the Way Forward Committee, please get involved and provide the information concerning the issue. Janice asked why the fish cleaning stations were such a maintenance issue. Stacy shared that the grinder motors cost

approximately \$3,000.00 each, when large fish heads and foreign items are thrown into the grinders, the motors burn out. This is the reason the cleaning stations have been modified to reduce the amount of items that are thrown into the grinders. The remaining fish entrails and heads are thrown into the trash cans at the cleaning station. Stacy went on to say the Corps has explored more sanitary ways of disposing the fish heads and entrails, but so far have been unsuccessful in finding a way to dispose of them.

Arnie asked Phillip C. and Bill B. if they have Wi-Fi at their resorts. Phillip replied that Shangri La has it in the restaurant area, but not in the cabins or motel rooms. Bill B. related that Mountain Harbor uses the phone company *Sudden Link* at the condominiums and *Aristotle* at the marina, restaurant, cabins and motel rooms.

**Comments:** Mike D. asked if there could be extra trash dumpsters placed on the boat ramps during holiday weekends. Mike continued in stating that the trash dumpsters were running over during the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday weekend. Bill J. replied in saying that each holiday, the Corps requests more trash dumpsters, knowing there will be a lot of trash generated from folks coming off the lake and from camping on the islands.

Bill B. thanked Arnie H. for his many years of service, and the excellent work he has done as chairman. There is a bench dedicated to Arnie on the ADA trail.

**FOLO Financial Report:**

Month	April 30, 2014	May 31, 2014	June 30, 2014
Cash-Trail Account	(\$41,083.00)	(\$40,598.00)	\$2,204.00
Cash – Miscellaneous	\$461.00	\$461.00	\$461.00
Cash-Crystal Springs	\$156,539.00	\$156,464.00	\$156,389.00
Cash-Tompkins Bend	\$56,975.00	\$56,900.00	\$56,825.00
<b>Total Assets:</b>	<b>\$172,892.00</b>	<b>\$173,227.00</b>	<b>\$215,879.00</b>

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.