

# Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



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

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

**DATE:** June 1, 2015

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m. by Rick Stokes, Chairman

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

Jason Mothershed, Facility Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Bill Jackson, Supervisory Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

**Members Present:**

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

**Minutes:** The minutes from the April 6 and May 4, 2015 meetings were reviewed and approved as written.

**Announcements:** Rick S. informed the committee members that Arnie H. would not be attending the meeting due to being out of state for a few days.

**Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO):** Rick S. provided an update on the current situation with the FOLO case being turned over to the Department of Justice (DOJ). Rick went on to state that there has been no additional correspondence between FOLO and DOJ since the last meeting when FOLO provided the various options to seek a resolution concerning the funds and expenditures as a result of the Cooperative Management Agreement and but, again stated he believes one of the options will be accepted by the Corps' management staff.

**Lake Ouachita Vista Trail (LOViT):** Jerry S. passed along to the committee members that the Trail Dogs volunteers continue to perform maintenance on the trail by removing the downed trees and cutting brush back from the trail's pathway. Jerry went on to say that the brush trimming equipment provided by the U.S. Forest Service and the one donated by Tom Butler has been a tremendous help in maintain the trail. Jerry again voiced his concern about the eroding bank at the paved trail area of the Denby

ADA/Watchable Wildlife Area and related that the eroded bank continues to get closer to the paved area. Bill J. informed the committee that the Lake Ouachita Field Office is seeking a solution to the issue, but must obtain the necessary permits through the Vicksburg District's Regulatory Branch before beginning the armoring of the stream bank with rock and creating a protective area against the water during high water periods. The concern is getting the material over to the worksite without damaging the paved pathway or equipment burying up into the soft and wet area surrounded by the paved pathway. The Lake Ouachita Field Office Staff will continue to seek alternatives to correct the erosion at the trail.

Jerry S. shared with the committee members that there were on-going discussions with the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) to establish an "Ouachita Ride Center", being one of the first of its kind, in the Hot Springs area since there were two "Epic" Mountain Bike Trails located within a short distance of each other near Hot Springs. In addition, Robert C. related IBMA has taken up consideration of designating a section of the Ouachita Trail from the Oklahoma State Line to Arkansas State Highway 7 as another "Epic" trail, making the designation of three "Epic" trails within a short drive or bike ride of each other within the Hot Springs area. A designation that would make Arkansas the first in the Nation to have three such designated trails in a state.

Jerry continued in stating he had been contacted by many LOViT trail users of the need to provide shuttle services from one section of the trail to the other when trail users are wanting to make a one-way trip along the trail's route. Jerry related that providers are being sought to provide this service.

**Congressional Information:** Rick S. shared the final draft of the letter being proposed to be sent to Senator Boozman concerning the retention of Use Fees by non-profit organizations who have established partnerships with the Corps of Engineers, allowing them to be utilized in the operation and maintenance of the recreation areas. After a lengthy discussion among the committee members and it was decided that the copies of the letter would be sent to Major General Michael C. Wehr, Commander, Mississippi Valley Division; Colonel John W. Cross, Commander, Vicksburg District; Senator Tom Cotton, and Representative Bruce Westerman. In addition, Jerry S. reminded the committee that a copy of the letter should be sent to all the Friends Groups who have been involved with the Corps and again ask them to draft their own letter to send to their respective representatives. Motion was made to send out a letter to Major General Wehr, Colonel Cross, area representatives and other Friend Groups who were involved in Cooperative Joint Management Agreements. Vote was taken, and motion approved.

**Avery Pond and Pier:** Bill J. provided an update on the Corps' progress in installing the piers for the ADA fishing pier at Avery. Bill J. went on to say that as soon as the piers and stringers are installed, volunteers will be asked to help install the decking to finalize the construction phase of the pier. Bill J. continued in related that a group of Lakeside High School students worked in the area by under brushing the roadway leading to the Avery Boat Ramp and Fishing Pier Area.

**Annual Cleanup:** Due Amy S. not being able to attend the meeting, discussion on plans for the proposed "Campground Workday" was postponed until the July meeting. Bill J. did inform the committee members that Joplin would be the recreation area where the work would be concentrated this year during the month of September.

**Way Forward Committee:** Dan W. provided an update the Way Forward Committee's revision of the proposed list of items for the betterment of the project. Dan also related that plans were still in place for those committee members who could, go on the field trip with Bill J. to visit Nimrod, Blue Mountain and Dardanelle Lakes to see their facilities and how they operate their facilities.

Rick S. related that in his opinion, in order to accomplish the projects being proposed, it will require obtaining funding through grants. He recommended setting up a sub-committee for the sole purpose of seeking out grants to help fund those projects and ask for any volunteers. Jerry S. stated he thought that was one of the things the Way Forward Committee was working on as well as coming up with ideas on making improvements to the project. No one volunteered to serve on the grant sub-committee.

After additional discussion among the committee members, Tom B. asked if the Way Forward Committee could chose two or three projects from the list that could be accomplished relatively easily and keep moving forward with the list of items being proposed. Rick S. agreed, seek out "low hanging fruit" that would show the visitors results and the improvements being completed by the suggestions of the LOCFC.

**Status of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED):** Rick. S. shared with the committee members he was able to obtain \$300.00 from Entergy-Arkansas for the purchasing of an AED unit for the lake.

**Comments:** Before closing, Tammi S. provided the committee members a copy of the magazine "Bike Arkansas", where the LOViT Trail had been mentioned and how the importance of biking has grown in the State of Arkansas. Tammi went on to say that this would be a good way to promote the need for support in maintaining the LOViT and seek out groups who would be willing to participate in helping the Trail Dogs to ensure the trail remains open and available for use, year-round. The committee members agreed and thanked Tammi for providing the information.

Jerry S. inquired about having a picnic table installed at the kiosk at the Denby Bay ADA/Watchable Wildlife Trail, in which Bill J. related that it could be done, but the table would be required to be anchored to the floor to prevent the table from being removed from the location. Bill J. continued that the request would be placed on the "to do" list of items needing to be done at the trailhead.

Jerry S. requested that electrical service be provided near the kiosk for special events when the starting times were before daylight and electrical lighting would be required. Jason M. stated this request would be placed on the work task list for the electrician to complete before the next LOCFC meeting.

Bill J. shared with the committee members the recent work being performed by Dustin Thomason, Ouachita Area Biologist, at the Denby Bay ADA/Watchable Wildlife Trail for the enhancement of the Quail population. Dustin began spraying centralized locations to provide open areas for the Quail population to seek food in the open areas, once the grass dies back, Dustin will return and burn the areas to help clear the areas even further.

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