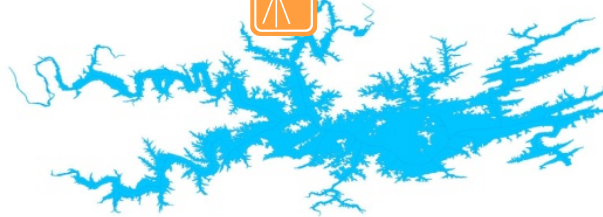


Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



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

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD: Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee Minutes

DATE: July 6, 2015

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

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office
Jason Mothershed, Facility Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office
Bill Jackson, Supervisory Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Members Present:

Bill Barnes	Mike Drake	Rick Stokes
Tom Butler	Al Gathright	Janice Vaughn
Robert Cavanaugh	Arnie Habig	Dan Watson
George Dooley	Tami Spurlin	Howard Wright

Minutes: The minutes from the June 1, 2015 meeting was discussed and it was determine additional information needed to be added that had been omitted. Bill J. requested the June minutes be tabled and re-addressed at the July 6, 2015 meeting prior to approval. Dan W. related he would email the additional comments and information he had from his discussions with Jerry S. that needed to be added to the minutes.

Announcements: Rick S. related to the Committee that as far as he knew, the July 4th Holiday Weekend had been a good and safe weekend. Bill J. informed the Committee the campgrounds began filling up earlier in the week and although the temperatures were cool and there was rainfall through-out the Holiday Weekend, there were very few incidents that occurred and there were no major accidents or injuries reported through the entire weekend.

Arnie related to the Committee he would volunteer to serve on the “Grant Writing” Sub-Committee. Tom B. stated that due to the increase in getting folks in the out-of-doors, Blue Cross/Blue Shield may be a resource to obtain possible grant monies for trail enhancement for folks that walk to improve their health.

Robert C. related that Jerry S. had shared with him the discussions with the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) were continuing on the establishment of a "Mountain Bike Ride Center" in Hot Springs and this would be the first of its kind in the Nation. Also, it is becoming more evident that the IMBA will be designating the section of the Ouachita National Trail from the Oklahoma State Line to the Arkansas Highway 7 Trailhead as the State's third "Epic" Bike Trail. A designation that would make Arkansas the first in the Nation to have three such designated trails in a state.

Jason M. shared with the Committee that an electrical pedestal had been installed at the Denby Bay ADA/Watchable Wildlife Trail for obtaining power when lighting is needed. The installation of a picnic table will be completed as soon as the work schedule allows.

Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO): Rick S. provided an update on the current situation with the FOLO/Department of Justice (DOJ) case, Ms. Alicia Hunt, the attorney representing DOJ, had not heard anything back from the proposal sent forward to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from two weeks prior. Rick continued in stating that the property appraisal had been completed and sent forward to the Headquarters Office of the Corps of Engineers in May for consideration. George D. inquired whether FOLO received a copy of the Corps' appraisal. Stacy S. related that the document sent forward was not an actual appraisal, just an evaluation of what is actually on-the-ground in the Crystal Springs Recreation Area.

Al G. informed the Committee that the owner of Super Docks, the contractor who constructed the two courtesy docks purchased by FOLO for Lake Ouachita, was getting a bit impatient and related the two docks were taking up needed space at his workplace, that if they remained on-site much longer, he would start charging FOLO for storage of the items. Bill B. offered to have Super Docks deliver the docks to Mountain Harbor Resort's Maintenance Storage Area to avoid the storage fees being charged to FOLO. Tom B. reminded the Committee members that the agreement was for Super Docks to install the courtesy docks at the designated locations and if the docks had to be moved more than once, Super Docks would charge an additional delivery and set-up fee. Bill B. recommended Super Docks to launch the courtesy docks at the launch ramp at Mountain Harbor Resort, and then the docks would be moored adjacent to the rental houseboat docks until it was agreed upon the location for installation at a later date.

Rick S. continued that his concerns were the Corps' value of donated items had overlooked the installation costs of the courtesy docks and the playground equipment purchased by FOLO. Tom B. inquired if FOLO had given a deadline on when the resolutions presented would end. Rick S. related no deadline had been presented, for the simple fact that he felt the resolution would have happen before now. George D. inquired how much longer are we going to allow the Corps to stall in making a decision on this matter and when are we going to start defending ourselves. Tami S. asked Rick S., what would be the worst case scenario from a decision by the Corps through DOJ? Rick S. stated that the worst case scenario would be the Corps would take all of FOLO's assets associated with the two campground operations. Robert C. related that currently FOLO has approximately \$27,000.00 remaining in the campground accounts, plus the purchased assets. Bill B. inquired as to why could FOLO not sue the Corps for "Breach of Contract, Harassment, Lack of Ethics or Incompetence" concerning this whole ordeal? Tom B. recommended withdrawing the offer for resolution and just spend the funds at the local

level. Tom B. went on to make a motion to provide the Corps of Engineers to the end of July to provide a decision concerning the offer provided by FOLO concerning the funding and assets purchased, the motion was seconded by Bill B. Al G. stated to Rick S. "Point of Order"; the issue at hand is a FOLO Board issue and not an issue of the LOCFC. Bill B. then related to use the motion made by Tom B. as a motion for LOCFC to recommend to FOLO to withdraw the proposed resolution unless a decision was made by the end of July, then re-direct the funds and assets back to FOLO to be spent locally. The motion was voted on **and approved** by the **Members present**. Al G. recommended the FOLO Board Members meet immediately after the LOCFC Meeting to discuss further.

Arnie H. re-addressed the \$75.00 per area, Crystal Springs and Tompkins Bend, that the accountant is presently charging FOLO to maintain the **campground operation** accounts that are now inactive and there are no funds being contributed to these accounts. **He asked if it would** ~~it~~ be possible to re-negotiate the fees being charged and reduce the amount being charged to FOLO. Tom B. **stated**, in his opinion, the fees being charged were fair and that FOLO is getting a good price for what the accountant **was providing**. Al G. continued that there have been some transactions occurring, especially with the LOViT Trail funds and that Vivian **Budimir, FOLO's** volunteer bookkeeper, has been reconciling the accounts with the Certified Public Accountant (CPA). Tami S. **stated** that it has been her experience to always have a CPA working the accounts when dealing with tax issues.

Lake Ouachita Vista Trail (LOViT): Al G. provided an update on the LOViT in Jerry S.'s absence; Al G. related that a number of trail maintenance projects had been conducted. He and Dan W. had been out scouting the first through third legs of the trail finding areas that needed to be cleaned out from the recent storm damage. While they had performed some of the clearing, additional work was still required to remove downed trees and large limbs from the trail's path. Al G. continued that Ron Mayfield and Robert C. had been very busy clearing downed trees from the trail's path. Additionally, there are problems with vegetation invading the trail's path along the Bear Mountain Section, and the "Devil's Walking Stick" with its thorny stalks continue to take over in areas where the trail's canopy has been opened up by the downed trees. These areas were cut out approximately a month ago, but the vegetation has reclaimed what had been removed previously. There are a few areas along the trail that have significant erosion issues and there are areas that need additional signage along the trail to help trail users along their routes. Those working on the trail will wait until the weather is a bit cooler before trying to tackle a number of these needed projects.

Congressional Information: Rick S. shared with the Committee that a letter from Senator Tom Cotton's office had been received thanking LOCFC for informing him about the situation. As of the meeting date, there had been nothing received from Senator Boozeman's office and that the letter had been sent directly to his office. In addition, there had been nothing had been received from Congressman Westerman's office either.

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 W. went on to state that it is of his opinion the "Way Forward Committee" has completed what it was established to do in the beginning, by identifying and designating projects for Sub-Committees to seek out opportunities for solutions to issues around the lake. Now it was for the LOCFC Members to identify those specific projects to seek out and

complete the potential solutions by serving as Sub-Committee members to complete the projects. Arnie H. related that it has been the past practice of the LOCFC Sub-Committee's to be made up of three members for each identified project. The By-laws only requires the Sub-Committee chairperson be a LOCFC Member. Volunteers from outside LOCFC are acceptable. As for the "Campsite Evaluation" Sub-Committee, Janice V. had volunteered to take the lead on this project by evaluating each of the campsites in the major campgrounds of the Corps.

Arnie H. stated that in the past, when Rick S. was the Lake Ouachita Resource Manager, he provided a list of projects to the LOCFC Members, who then decided what was a priority to be addressed and if needed, to get legislature changed to make differences around the lake. The purpose of the "Way Forward Committee" to act as the Corps did before and identify issues that were to be addressed; with these projects having "fingers" connected to the various projects around lake. Dan W. continued in reminding the LOCFC Members this is exactly what the "Way Forward Committee" had done, then met with Stacy S. and Bill J. to learn what projects could be pursued and others that were completely "off-the-table". This is where the "low-hanging fruit" list came from for the committee members to pursue.

Rick S. stated that a list of these "low-hanging fruit" projects would be sent to all LOCFC Members and ask that each Member identify two projects they wish to volunteer to work on to seek a solution to the issues identified. Arnie H. made a motion that the "low-hanging fruit" list be an item that the LOCFC work on to seek resolution; the motion was seconded by Janice V and approved by the Members present.

Arnie H. went on to share with the Committee about his experience with the "Shady Grove Campground" in Mississippi, where they have installed an "honor box" in the campground to allow those camping to pay their camping fees in the honor box versus being required to use the registration booth when the booth is not open. Bill J. related that honor boxes have been installed at Stephens Park, Brady Mountain, Crystal Springs, Joplin, Tompkins Bend, Denby Point and Twin Creek Campgrounds for campers to use for paying their camping fees when the fee booth is not open when they arrive and depart. The reason the honor boxes were not currently being used is because upon installation it was discovered the Corps has a conflict with the mixing of "monies" taken through the honor vault and collected by the Park Attendants. A solution is being developed and plans are to have the solution implemented by the 2016 Camping Season. The honor boxes at Stephens Park and Twin Creek Campgrounds have enabled Rangers to keep up with the camping fee collections better than in the past years of "roving patrols" in these areas.

Arnie H. also shared that it has been his camping experience at Gulf Shores State Park, Alabama, where campers were required to deposit their campground passes upon their departure, thus allowing the booth operators to know when and how many campsites were open when they began their daily patrols of the campground.

Janice V. brought up the issue of trees that are in need to be removed and trimmed around the campgrounds and various campsites are posing a danger to the campers. Bill J. related that the Park Rangers will begin working in the campgrounds and various recreation areas removing trees and vegetation in September. Janice V. continued in providing information establishing "donation boxes" in the campgrounds for campers to donate to help make improvements and maintenance in the

campgrounds. Janice V. went on to inquire whether the Corps could accept donations if the LOCFC set up these donation boxes. Stacy S. related he would check into it further.

Dan W. discussed the photos he had taken while on the field trip to Nimrod and Dardanelle Lakes in the Little Rock District with Janice V. and Bill J. Dan W. shared with the committee members that the fish cleaning station recently installed at one of the campgrounds on Nimrod Lake was being used by fishermen during the trip and during the discussions with the fishermen they had shared their experiences in using it and how pleased they had been with the installation. Dan W. went on to share that the station was on its own septic system there in the campgrounds. Also, the campground had a centralized dumpster system, where the campers were responsible for taking their own trash to the dumpsters and not having a contractor to pick up trash from individual trash cans scattered through-out the campgrounds. Arnie H. asked if it would be possible to place 55-gallon barrels at each of the campsites, allowing the campers to place their trash in these cans, then upon their departure, remove their trash and take it to a centralized dumpster. Stacy S. shared that if cans were placed at each of the campsites, campers would not remove the trash and this would increase the workload on the clean-up crews to remove trash from more trash cans than they currently service now. Bill J. shared that in a number of campgrounds where centralized dumpsters have replaced individual trash cans, the Corps provides campers with trash bags upon check-in and will provide additional bags if necessary, this cuts down on the workload of clean-up contractors spending time removing trash from the individual trashcans and centralized dumpsters do away with the contractors having to “double-handle” the trash each time through an area. Arnie H. asked why centralized dumpsters are not in Joplin, Tompkins Bend and Denby Point then. Bill J. related that Montgomery County Sanitation Service does not have a vendor or the capability to use centralized dumpsters and only Garland County Sanitation Service is able to do so. Bill B. suggested the Corps contact the “Keep Arkansas Clean” group to ask about providing trash bags for the campers to use. Bill J. reminded the committee members that since the Lake Ouachita Staff participates in the “Adopt-A-Highway” program, that the “Keep Arkansas Clean” organization and “Keep America Beautiful” do provide trash bags to the Corps for projects related to those events.

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 sharing that the Corps would be asking for help from members of the LOCFC to cook hot dogs for the kids volunteering to install the decking on the pier.

Annual Cleanup: Bill J. related that the “Campground Workday” would be September 26, 2015 at Joplin Campground and that a list of projects would be put together asking volunteers to complete in the campground.

Status of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED): Rick. S. requested discussions on the AED project be tabled until the July meeting.

Comments: Al G. shared with the committee members that the Twin Creek Fishing Pier dedication was a success with a good attendance from a number of folks from the local area and representatives from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Corps of Engineers, City of Mount Ida, Montgomery County

and LOCFC members. It was learned during the dedication that long-time supporter and partner, Stuart Wooldridge, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, retired June 26, 2015. Stuart has been instrumental in working with the Lake Ouachita Staff and LOCFC in the accomplishment of a number of projects around the lake for the enhancement of recreation opportunities for the public.

Rick S. reminded the committee members of the Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA) Conference scheduled for August 27-28, 2015 being held at the Hot Springs Convention Center and Ouachita Project Management/Lake Ouachita Field Office. He continued in saying that due to a personal commitment, he would not be able to attend the conference and asked if someone else could volunteer to attend in his place. Arnie H. stated he would be attending as a member of the association; Tami S. volunteered to attend the conference, representing LOCFC.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.