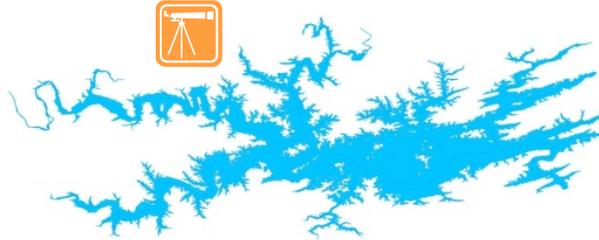


Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



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

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD: Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee Minutes

DATE: March 2, 2015

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

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

Bill Jackson, Supervisory Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office
Jason Mothershed, Facility Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office
Amy Shultz, Park Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office
Dustin Thomason, Wildlife Biologist, Ouachita Project Management Office

Members Present:

Tom Butler	George Dooley	Rick Stokes	Howard Wright
Phillip Carr	Mike Drake	Dan Watson	
Robert Cavanaugh	Jerry Shields	Jerry Williams	

Minutes: The minutes for the January 5, 2015 and February 2, 2015 meetings were reviewed and approved as written.

Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO): Rick S. related he had made contact with Mr. Johnny Kiser, Chief, Project Resources Management Branch, Vicksburg District, concerning the proposed FOLO Asset Transfer that had been submitted by the FOLO Board Members. Mr. Kiser informed Rick that he had not received any updated information concerning the FOLO proposal to “transfer” items to the Corps. Rick went on to clarify the variances in the amounts discussed as a result of the audit, explaining that the \$152,000.00 amount would be required IF the playground equipment installed at the Crystal Springs Campground Beach would be accepted by the Corps as a transfer of equipment. However, IF the Corps did not accept the playground equipment, the amount to be returned to the Corps would be \$184,000.00. Rick went on to share that during the contract, FOLO had made improvements in Crystal Springs and Tompkins Bend Recreation Areas totaling \$189,000.00 worth of asset improvements.

Rick further shared the Corps of Engineers cannot accept a “transfer” of goods, materials and equipment; but can accept “donations” of goods, materials and equipment. Rick continued in saying that he had been informed that even with FOLO “donating” the goods, materials and equipment, FOLO

would still be required to pay the Corps the \$152,000.00 as discovered during the audit. In the mean time, while FOLO is awaiting a decision, the new playground equipment purchased for installation at Tompkins Bend is being stored at the Mountain Harbor Resort Maintenance Area.

On February 3, 2015, FOLO Board Members sent letters of reply to Major General Michael G. Wehr, Commander, Mississippi Valley Division and Colonel John W. Cross, Commander, Vicksburg District, concerning FOLO's intentions as a result of the audit's findings.

It had been discussed among the committee members that they make contact with the area's Congressional Leadership to seek assistance in clearing up the issues with the Corps and FOLO's requirements in returning fees collected in the campgrounds. In discussion, Tom B. stated he had contacted Congressman Bruce Westerman's Field Aid, Jason McGee, but had not received a reply as of this date. Tom went on to say that he may check with Senator Tom Cotton's and Senator John Boozman's offices concerning the matter as well. Rick stated it was important to contact all of the Congressional leadership and make them fully aware of what has been taking place concerning the issues with the use fee money that had been collected under the agreements with the Corps of Engineers. George D. suggested drafting a one page letter or "fact sheet" of the situation to give to the Congressmen. The letter should include a simple explanation of what's taken place, what FOLO needs done, a proposed resolution, and who to contact with the Corps of Engineers in the Vicksburg District and Washington D.C. Jerry S. suggested mentioning fees such as legal, insurance, and storage that are being expended while FOLO is waiting that could be used at the project. Tom asked what will happen if the Corps will not accept the transfer and wants the money. Rick stated they would auction the equipment in place and return this amount of money to the Corps of Engineers. Motion was approved to draft a brief summary letter to be sent to Congressional leadership. Rick volunteered to draft the letter.

Subcommittee Progress Reports:

LOViT Update: Jerry S. related the 100 mile and 100k race took place over the weekend of February 20-21, 2015, with icy conditions. It began at 6:00 p.m. Friday night and then Saturday morning, the 100k race started. The last participant to cross the finish line took 34-hours to complete the course.

Jerry shared the Trail Dogs had purchased a piece of equipment to maintain the brush along the trail. The U.S. Forest Service has agreed to purchase and donate another one to the Trail Dogs. Jerry requested the Corps fix an erosion problem along Gap Creek bordering the asphalt walkway of the Denby Bay ADA trail. During one of the many storms that passed through the area, a large tree had been washed out and pulled the root ball away from the creek's bank, allowing for the erosion to begin in the area. Jerry stated if the area is not repaired soon, the erosion will begin taking portions of the pavement on the trail.

Jerry further related that the Trail Dogs had installed three additional benches on the trail, two along the Brady Mountain and one at Hickory Nut Mountain section of trail. Jerry related they have four new Trail Dog volunteers since the first of the year. Jerry inquired if there would be any issues in obtaining a photo "collage" similar to the one displayed in the office area to be used at the ADA Trail kiosk? Jerry also inquired if electrical power could be installed at or near the ADA kiosk. Bill J. stated he would look into getting power installed at the kiosk to be used when events are being staged at the location.

Way-Forward Committee Projects: Dan W. provided the committee members a revised project listing of the suggested items to be considered in pursuing after meeting with Stacy S. and Bill J. last month. The revised listing had removed those projects that are just beyond what the LOCFC would be able to accomplish in any significant amount of time.

As a result of the discussion from the February meeting, concerning obtaining more automated external defibrillators (AED's) for the project staff to use in case of an emergency, Phillip C. stated his wife had researched possible grants for AED's, and found the following resources for grants: CPR Saver; AEDgrant.com; and the American Red Cross. Phillip went on to say, the grants for the AED's are fairly simple to write. Phillip went on to say that he had discussed the lake's need with the Southwest Ambulance Service personnel who serve the Montgomery County area and learned that the Service has a program where they can provide AED's in their service area. Phillip continued that someone would need to research and learn if there is a similar program in the Garland County area to serve the entire lake.

One of the items that had been discussed by the Way-Forward Committee members was a need for a formal weight-in station area to support the numerous fishing tournaments held on Lake Ouachita each year. Jerry suggested purchasing a mobile fish tank, similar to the one the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission uses at the State's outdoor shows. A mobile tank would allow for the live fish to be displayed after the tournaments, then transported back to various areas around Lake Ouachita. Bill J. related he would still like for the Way-Forward Committee members to visit some of the area lakes such as Nimrod Lake and Lake Dardanelle to see the facilities they have to offer at their projects.

Aquatic Vegetation/Fisheries: Dustin Thomason, Biologist, Ouachita Project Management Office, provided an update on the recent Aquatic Vegetation Program, relating that fifty (50) *Vallisneria* cages had been installed last fall in the Denby Point area of Lake Ouachita by Mountain Pine High School EAST Lab students. Dustin went on to say that there are approximately 100 cages remaining that could be installed with more *Vallisneria* plants once the lake elevation recedes next fall. Dustin continued in saying that there are plenty of *Vallisneria* plants remaining in the tanks for planting in the cages.

Dustin further shared he had assisted a group of Boy Scouts recently installing additional *Crappie Condos* around the lake. Also, Brett Hobbs, Biologist, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, along with the Arkansas Black Bass Coalition had been working with him installing more brush shelters in various areas along the shoreline around Lake Ouachita. Each of these *Crappie Condos* and brush shelters had been GPS'd, with the coordinates being mapped and made available to the general public.

Jerry S. asked if volunteers were needed to re-pot the *Vallisneria* plants as was done previously by the Master Gardeners. Dustin shared it is easier to have volunteers construct the *Crappie Condos* and then provide them to the Corps, because volunteers can construct them on their own time. Tom B. asked Dustin to let him know if volunteers were needed.

Comments: Rick S. relayed a question from Arnie H. who wanted to ask the Corps to rewrite regulations where non-profits can retain user fees. No further action was taken upon this request.

Bill J. shared Robert C. had attended a grant writing class presented by the Arkansas Department of Highways and Transportation concerning applying for trail grants and Bill J. went on to say that he had provided information to the Way Forward Committee a list of grants relating to recreation that could be applied for through the application process.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.