

# Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



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

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

**DATE:** September 14, 2015

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

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

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Amy Shultz, Park Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

**Members Present:**

Robert Cavanaugh	Arnie Habig	Dan Watson
George Dooley	Jerry Shields	Howard Wright
Mike Drake	Tami Spurlin	
Al Gathright	Rick Stokes	

**Minutes:** The minutes from the August 3, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

**Announcements:** Dan W. passed around the membership contact list and asked committee members to inform him of any changes needed. Dan also commented he appreciated the work the Corps does on the minutes each meeting.

Jerry S. provided an update on his recent health issues, informing the committee members that on Labor Day, he suffered a heart attack and now is scheduled, in October, for surgery on his pancreas. Jerry continued in stating that, only then will the doctors know for sure what is potential diagnosis may be, it is suspected to be pancreatic cancer, but it is only suspected as of now.

**Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO):** Rick S. related to the committee that Al G. had transferred \$27,610.00, the amount of funds agreed upon in the signed documents with the Department of Justice (DOJ). FOLO has now satisfied all obligations in the accepted proposal.

**Discussion of Mission Statement:** Dan W. presented to the committee members two proposals for revising the LOCFC's original "Mission Statement".

The current mission statement states: *"The mission of the Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee is to review local discretionary initiatives and provide constructive feedback so as to enhance management of Lake Ouachita, benefiting the human and non-human populations whose quality of life depends upon the lake."*

Proposal # 1:

*"The mission of the Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee (LOCFC) is to review local discretionary initiatives and provide constructive feedback so as to enhance management of Lake Ouachita and to encourage, initiate and support individual projects which benefit the human and non-human populations whose quality of life depends upon the lake."*

Proposal # 2:

*"The mission of the Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee (LOCFC) is to review local discretionary initiatives and to provide constructive feedback to the Lake Ouachita Project Management Director so as to enhance management of Lake Ouachita. The LOCFC is encouraged to be pro-active in initiating lake projects, which benefit the human and non-human populations whose quality of life depends upon the lake."*

Jerry S. stated he had served on the committee for almost 15 years, and has enjoyed the strong working relationship LOCFC has with the Corps. He believes proposal #1, "to encourage, initiate, and support" is a good proactive statement, and Jerry encourages adopting an improved mission statement.

Stacy S. related that it is his understanding that any changes to the mission statement will require being reviewed and approved by Rick Dwyer, Operations Project Manager, Ouachita Area Office. If there are significant changes made to the mission statement, the changes may require review and approval being made by the Vicksburg District's Office of Council as well. Rick S. related that it had been his experience that the District's Office of Council will be required to review and approve any changes to ensure the new mission statement does not put limitations on the government.

After further discussion, a motion was made to accept proposal # 1 with changes made. Motion passed subject to Corps approval.

The new proposed mission statement will state:

*"The Mission of the Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee is to review local discretionary initiatives and provide constructive feedback so as to enhance management of The Lake Ouachita Project, and to encourage, initiate and support projects which benefit the human and non-human populations whose quality of life depends upon the lake."*

**Lake Ouachita Vista Trail (LOViT):** Al G. stated the Trail Dogs had a meeting with the U.S. Forest Service, which covered a lot of ground, including Trail Dogs utilizing 4-wheelers while working on the trail. It was a meeting to get-acquainted with the new District Ranger, Shalonda Guy, who replaced Gloria Chrimer, former Caddo-Womble District Ranger who retired last year. Representatives from the Forest Service are requesting that the Trail Dogs complete an ATV/4-wheeler class and sign a Joint Hazard Attachment to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for safety on the trail.

The Joint Hazard Attachment will be signed each year by the Trail Dogs. Those attending the meeting included Mitzi Cole, who is filling a temporary assignment in the Womble District, and has volunteered to assist with signage on the trail project. The Trail Dogs will begin walking the trail with Ms. Cole in October to discuss issues and needed maintenance along the trail's route. Jerry S. related that the U.S. Forest Service officials have requested that a meeting be held quarterly with the Trail Dogs.

**Way Forward Committee:** Dan W. provided the members with a chart of the "Low-Hanging Fruit Projects" and related they had team leaders for each project except the Fishing Tournament Weigh-In Stations. Tami S. volunteered to be a team leader for this project. Dan W. related the "notes" section of the chart was comprised of comments that arose during the Way-Forward Committee meetings.

**Automated Electronic Defibrillators (AED):** George D. related he had contacted St. Vincent's Hospital requesting information on AED purchase, and St. Vincent needed to know how many AED's we need, and will send him a quote. George stated he told them ten units. George said he expected to have a quote for the costs of AED's by the October meeting.

Dan suggested it might be cheaper to lease them rather than purchase. Stacy S. related he needed to find out if the contract Park Attendants/Fee Booth Operators were required to be trained on AED use, if the AED's were located at the fee booths where they are working. George D. inquired about the availability of the AED's if the fee booth was locked. Rick suggested mounting the AED facing the window so someone could break the window to obtain the AED if the booth was locked. There was discussion about having one or two AED's in reserve and asking the Rangers to periodically check the deployed units.

**Fishing Tournament Weigh-In Station:** Rick S. volunteered to assist Tami on this project. Rick related he had spoken with representatives with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) at the Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA) Convention and Brett Hobbs, Biologist, AGFC, provided some good information on the cost of weigh-in stations. Brett worked on acquiring the one at Dardanelle Lake State Park on Dardanelle Lake. George D. suggested looking at purchasing a mobile weigh-in station. Stacy S. stated this might be a good option and this would avoid the appearance of showing favoritism towards one concession over another one. Howard W. also volunteered to assist with the fishing tournament weigh-in station project.

**Development of a Project Recycling Program:** Tami inquired who had been working on the program. Amy S. stated the Ranger who had previously been assigned to manage the project's recycling program retired in the spring, but Park Ranger Dave Pennington had been assigned the program recently, but he will also be retiring in December. Stacy S. stated the Corps cannot be involved should the recycling project attempt to make any funds from recycling materials such as aluminum.

**Demolish Out-Of-Date facilities at Crystal:** Rick S. stated he will meet with Stacy S. to discuss what will be required to remove the facilities.

**Create An Area Campground Map:** Arnie related he had no report or updates to provide on this project. There was concern regarding soliciting advertising for a campground map if the Corps logo was to be used on the printed maps. Stacy S. stated he would check the rules regarding this issue.

**Establish the Use of Non-Potable Water to flush toilets at the Comfort Stations:** Rick S. stated he would meet with Stacy S. and Jason M. to discuss this project further. Rick went on to state it is belief that the comfort stations serving campsites 1-26, 66-74 and 26-65 would be the greatest benefit in the Brady Mountain Area and reduce the need for potable water being used in the area. Stacy recommended identifying an area in which to do a test run for the project.

**Campsite Evaluations:** Dan W. stated Al G., Mike D., and Janice V. have done excellent work in evaluating the individual campsites and identifying work that needs to be completed. Dan W. has requested Bill Jackson integrate these reports into one spreadsheet to include “as of” dates on reports and asked Bill to add a column on the spreadsheet for sites that can be converted to “pull through” sites. Dan has requested a copy of the spreadsheet when completed.

**Pull Through Campsites:** There was discussion that this item should be combined with campsite revitalization. Arnie H. has proposals for pull-through sites and will send this information for inclusion as a column in the campsite evaluation spreadsheet being developed by the Corps. Jerry S. and others discussed how pull-through sites can increase safety, especially for larger campers.

**Donation Boxes:** Stacy S. provided a picture of donation box from Raytown Lake. Stacy stated they would have to decide the best location for the boxes, and stated he believes FOLO would have to purchase these boxes. Jerry S. suggested installing these near the fee booths with a sign and pictures of what could be accomplished with funds, and also stated they might ask the resorts to support this and install the box in the resorts.

**Events for Fundraising:** Stacy S. related Corps approval must be given for any special event, and they would need individual permits for each event planned. Howard W. volunteered to help with this project.

**General Discussion:**

Arnie H. related he sent out the ORVA report to all the committee members. Arnie continued in stating he was disappointed in learning that the appropriations for recreation at the Arkansas Lakes would be going down, with only \$3.7 million designated for recreation. Of the \$3.7 million, \$2 million being designated for a new Resource Manager’s Office at DeGray Lake, the remaining would be provided to Lakes Ouachita and Greeson. He was also disappointed that the meeting was not more focused on recreation. Arnie further related Dennis Norris, Chief of Operations, Mississippi Valley Division, will be retiring the end of December. Arnie stated there was a lot of talk about the benefits of forming partnerships during the convention. Rick S. stated he would like to attend his retirement ceremony. Tami S. stated she learned a lot about the Ouachita River Basin from the conference and that Bill B. did a great job on his presentation on tourism.

Arnie H. related he had received a letter from the Caddo-Womble Ranger District on a list of upcoming projects planned, to include the following: Bates Communication will be installing a new tower; NOAA installing a water-boost pump station; Windstream installing telephone lines; and the U.S. Geological Survey conducting earthquake studies. According to the letter the last day for the public to make comments to the U.S. Forest Service on these activities will be December 31, 2015.

Dan W. related Bill J. has provided some dates for a “behind the scenes” tour of Lake Ouachita. After some discussion, the week of October 5-8, 2015 was chosen as the possible timeframe for the tours.

**Corps of Engineers Report:** Stacy S. related the Corps will be replacing island markers one through ten with new sign markers recently acquired. The Corps skid-steer with the brush-cat attachment will be used in the Tompkins Bend Campground area this fall to clear brush/debris along the shoreline near campsites 55-74. Dustin Thomason, Ouachita Area Biologist, along with the assistance of the Lake Ouachita Field Office Staff have been constructing brim beds in the Spillway area of the lake and are looking to expand this project to other areas around the lake. Rick S. inquired about placing some of these gravel beds at the Denby Bay-ADA Trailhead Area as well. Stacy S. related the Corps will be installing parking and a concrete pad for the new Tompkins Bend Recreation Area pavilion in October.

If funds are available, the Corps will attempt to install a restroom similar to the one at the Denby Bay ADA Trail, adjacent to the pavilion/playground area. Stacy related 17 acres of food plots have been planted and there are plans to expand the quail program around Lake Ouachita. Stacy further related 32 fish attractors have been constructed with the assistance of Mena’s Upward Bound students, and will be placed in the lake and their locations recorded using GPS coordinates. In January 2016, additional “Hinge-Tree” fish habitat will be established around the lake. Stacy stated the Vicksburg District and Little Rock District will be hosting disabled or wounded warrior deer hunts, and requested that members send him an e-mail if interested in volunteering to assist with this event.

Stacy stated the Brady Mountain Recreation Area raw-water intake will more than likely be required to moved from its currently location, just below the water treatment plant, to along location for easier access when repairs are required. George D. inquired about the progress of Super Duty Boat Docks delivering and setting up the courtesy docks at the boat ramps? Stacy stated it will be approximately five weeks before delivery and set up can be completed by Super Duty Boat Docks.

Dan W. reminded everyone of the campground work day scheduled for September 26<sup>th</sup> at Joplin Campground from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Amy S. related that there will only be three Park Rangers available to work the event, so all volunteers are appreciated.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.