

# Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



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

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

**DATE:** March 10, 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  
Jason Mothershed, Facility Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office  
Bill Jackson, Supervisory Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office  
Amy Shultz, Park Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

**Members Present:**

|                  |              |               |                |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Robert Cavanaugh | Al Gathright | Rick Stokes   | Jerry Williams |
| George Dooley    | Arnold Habig | Janice Vaughn | Howard Wright  |
| Mike Drake       | Larry Raney  | Dan Watson    |                |

**Minutes in Review:** The minutes from the January 6, 2014 and February 3, 2014 meetings were approved as written.

**Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO):** Al G. related the information for the audit had been submitted to US Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District Office as requested. Rick S. shared he contacted Johnny Kiser, Chief Project Resources Management Branch, Vicksburg District and was told Wayne Stirgus, Vicksburg District, Internal Review, had received the information package today, March 10, 2014. Arnie H. inquired if there was a suspense date on when the audit information had to be submitted to Vicksburg and Rick S. stated FOLO had submitted the information prior to the deadline that had been given to them. Rick S. continued, in his discussions with Johnny K., it may take 3-4 weeks for the audit to be completed and the results to be sent back to FOLO for review. Upon being notified of the amount of funds that must be returned, FOLO will have 30 days to submit those funds to the Corps. Rick S. shared he had received two 2012 IRS tax reports and thought it was a mistake, but as it turns out since FY2013 begins in October 2012, the reports were correct. Arnie H. expressed his concern that funds are still being used from the campground operations accounts to cover expenses being incurred by FOLO. Rick S. related that FOLO will continue to incur expenses involving the campground operations until the

audit has been completed, and that all obligations from the contracts and accountant would be covered from the campground operations accounts.

**Media Attention:** Arnie H. stated he had received a phone call from Caleb Taylor, a reporter at The Sentinel Record, Hot Springs and from Mr. Peter Irwing, Stephens Media, concerning the termination of the cooperative agreements between the Corps and FOLO. Arnie went on to say that Mr. Bill Hobgood, Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA) had contact him about providing a presentation on the cooperative management partnership program between the Corps and FOLO at Lake Ouachita at the next Mississippi River Commission meeting scheduled for this Spring.

Arnie H. shared with the committee members that there are currently two similar Congressional actions that have been introduced recently concerning the Corps of Engineers' authorization to partner with non-profit organizations in the management of the Corps recreation areas. On February 27, 2014, Arkansas Congressman Tom Cotton, introduced legislature, which is co-sponsored by Congressmen Crawford, Griffin and Womack, referred to as the "Local Organization Cooperative Agreement for Land and Facility Maintenance (LOCAL) Act (H.R. 4100). This legislation would allow the Corps of Engineers to restore joint management programs with local non-profit organizations to construct, operate and maintain recreational facilities at Corps lakes and reservoirs.

On the same day, U.S. Senators John Boozman and Mark Pryor introduced legislation the Corps of Engineers Cooperative Joint Management Restoration Act (S.2055), that reestablishes the Corps of Engineers practices that allow cooperating partners to collect and reinvest recreation fees. This legislation will empower the Corps to partner with local non-profit organization in the cooperative joint management of recreation facilities and reinvest those fees collected to operate and maintain those recreation facilities for the public's use.

#### **Sub-Committee Reports:**

**LOViT Trail:** Al G. shared the Progressive Trail Design team had crossed Spillway Road today and will be crossing Rick's Road within the week on the last section of LOViT Trail to be completed. The Trail Dogs are about a ½ mile behind the contractors working on the trail. Al G. stated the U.S. Forest Service had inquired about the possibility of extending the LOViT on beyond Blakely Mountain Dam to the Lake Ouachita State Park. Al G. shared that while they would support this project, they would not take the lead nor seek funding to construct the additional trail. Bill J. shared that on March 27, 2014, a training conference had been planned for those emergency response agencies to provide aid to LOViT Trail users would be held at the Ouachita Project Management Office. During this training session, Park Ranger Mike Wade would be sharing the detailed mapping and books with those in attendance to use for reference when an emergency call came out to provide assistance to those along the trail. Ranger Wade has done extensive mapping and established various contact points along the trail for emergency response personnel to quickly recover and extract injured trail users when needed.

**Aquatic Vegetation:** Bill J. shared the following from Johnny Cantrell, Biologist, Ouachita Project Management Office, plans are to finish construction on the last of the exclusion cages for the planting of the *Southern Vallisneria* as soon as the water elevation levels would allow. Approximately 12,000 plants have been planted so far and reproduction has been documented in most all of the cages. A final performance report for the fisheries grant will be completed the end of March. Bill further related that

students from the Mountain Pine EAST Lab and Centerpoint High School Agriculture students had been working on the exclusion cages.

Janice V. asked if there had been any reports of a large shad die-off in the lake. Stacy S. stated the shad die in large numbers when the water temperature is very low, as it has been over the last several months.

**Campgrounds:** Bill J. shared that all the recreation areas opened on March 1, 2014, with the exception of a few loops in Tompkins Bend and Brady Mountain Campgrounds and Spillway Day Use Area. The comfort station in area 1, Brady Mountain is closed while the roof is being framed. The area around the comfort station has been blocked off to prevent people from driving through the construction area, causing problems for the contractors working on the roof. After they finish area 1 comfort station, the contractors will move to area 3 and begin work on that comfort station's roof.

Bill J. further shared that everything is first come-first-serve until May 1, 2014, when the campsite reservations go into effect and we have 265 campsites available on the south side of the lake in class A campgrounds for campers to use. Check out time is 4:00 p.m. and Check-In time is 6:00 p.m., according to the information provide to the public on the National Recreation Reservation System reservation receipts. Arnie H. recommended establishing a policy where a camper who is occupying a first-come, first-serve campsite notify the fee booth whether they are leaving or staying for another night prior to 4:00 p.m. on their day of departure. Arnie H. went a bit further and related it would even be better if the camper occupying a first-come, first-serve campsite to notify the fee booth the day prior to their departure whether they are renewing or staying. This would allow the fee booth operators to maintain a list of those campsites that will be available for campers arriving to obtain a campsite. Bill J. the Corps is trying to manage the campgrounds as flexible as possible to accommodate the campers. Rick S. suggested a staff study on this matter would be good. George D. suggested tabling this until a staff study has been completed, and add it to next month's agenda. Motion was made and approved to conduct a staff study to renew or extend the site stay policy. Arnie H. stated he would do a primary draft of study and send it to members.

**Cleanup:** Campground Beautification Day is set for Saturday, May 10, 2014.

**Comments:** Arnie H. stated the Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA) Conference is August 26-27, 2014 in Monroe, Louisiana. Arnie H. went on to say that he plans to attend and represent to LOCFC, and will pay his own expenses to attend this conference. Arnie H. continued in stating that although he had received an invitation to attend and make a presentation at the Mississippi River Valley Conference, he has not yet decided if he will attend this event.

**FOLO Financial Report:**

| Month                | December 31, 2013   | January 31, 2014    | February 28, 2014   |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Cash-Trail Account   | \$6,371.00          | \$6,371.00          | \$7,871.00          |
| Cash – Miscellaneous | \$698.00            | \$648.00            | \$648.00            |
| Cash-Crystal Springs | \$157,907.00        | \$157,299.00        | \$156,794.00        |
| Cash-Tompkins Bend   | \$58,343.00         | \$57,735.00         | \$57,230.00         |
| <b>Total Assets:</b> | <b>\$223,319.00</b> | <b>\$222,053.00</b> | <b>\$222,543.00</b> |

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 7:10 P.M.