**Friends of Lake Ouachita**

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1424 Blakely Dam Road

Royal, AR 71968

**MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:** Friends of Lake Ouachita Committee Minutes

**DATE:** November 1, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 PM by Jerry Shields

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

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Derick Walker, Supervisory Park Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

**Guests Present:**

Brett Hobbs-AGFC-District Fisheries Management Biologist

**Members Present:**

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| Alan Atkins | Bill Pell |
| Tom Butler | Shane Scott |
| Robert Cavanaugh | Jerry Shields |
| Al Gathright | John Simpson |
| Ron Mayfield | Jo West Taylor |

**Review of Minutes:** Motion was made by Robert C. to approve OCTOBER minutes, Ron M. seconded, minutes approved as written.

**Guest Speaker-Brett Hobbs:** What he does?-Manage Fish, Habitat, & People. He covers the range from Mena to Ouachita to Arkadelphia. AGFC raises fish at the Andrew Hulsey Fish Hatchery for Lake Ouachita. Species raised and stocked are largemouth bass, catfish, crappie, walleye. He does Creel Surveys ad Electrofishing Surveys. Walleye are doing GREAT in Lake Ouachita and are not having to be stocked anymore due to natural reproduction. Striped Bass ARE having to be stocked every year to maintain population. Walleye reproduction is best in late February and when temperatures are in low 50’s. AGFC uses electrofishing to dip out walleye for their reproducing process. They pull females to squeeze out eggs and to fertilize. Monitor process in tubes as they grow and pull off dead, non-fertile eggs. Once growing, they put in larger container and feed them. They transport to their nursey ponds and they feed on zooplankton in various monocultures in each. Striped Bass reproduction happens in April using long fishing or gill nets and transport them to their holding tank trucks at closet boat ramp. Striped Bass do not reproduce naturally in the Lake Ouachita. AGFC runs spawning tubes 24/7. AGFC monitors fingerlings growth for 1 month and then, stock in the lake. AGFC has an 18-acre nursery pond on Lake Ouachita, NNW of Joplin Recreation Area. They are currently raising 250 Crappie for spawn. The AGFC developed a Fisheries Management Plan for Lake Ouachita in 2019. Why does AGFC shock bass in Ouachita?-To monitor the health of the fishery. Best times to conduct is between 60-70 degrees, in spring and fall. They run the boat parallel to shoreline in 10 feet of water on contours. Some fish are sacrificed to age the otolith at the brain stem of the fish. Annuli aging is done similar to aging tree rings. AGFC does health assessments on the fish for bacteria or diseases by their staff trained in conducting these. Their “2 ton” transport trucks take fish to various boat ramps across the state to stock the fish. They are kept alive by their liquid oxygen enrichment onboard tank system. From 2007-2017, AGFC stocked 100,000 fingerlings of Florida Strain Bass per year in Lake Ouachita. Tom B. asked where the Yellow Bass came from. Brett H. stated they were brought in by fisherman and they are a cousin of the white bass, but smaller.

**Trail Enhancement Program:** Jerry S. presented handout complied of ideas on various dioramas for places around the lake. He wants group to brainstorm where to install and for group to work up layout plans. He wants to spend 10-15K on the project. Bill P. brought up idea of adding QR codes to all signs. He has seen at various places and believes a good thing for the visitors.

**Programs/Presentations for 2022:** Jerry S. asked group for ideas on presenters for next year. He brought up various ideas: Watershed & Water Quality, Invasive Species, USFS Glade Restoration, AR Parks & Tourism-Effects on Economy, Night Sky Initiative.

**USACE Operational Review:**

-Road repair at the 1st dip, Crystal Springs road next week

-Little Fir boat ramp bathroom- pad work, estimated deliver around 10 January

-Tompkins Bend wastewater treatment plant, will be down for 60 days for routine maintenance, with reduced funding we will pump-out ourselves verses pay a contractor

-Hired a new Facility Manager- Matt Mitchell

-NRM staff will start cutting limbs and cutting back the canopy in the Class A recreation areas

-ADA mobility hunt will be held second week of deer season

-LED lighting- staff will continue replacing lighting with inventory we have in stock.

Jerry shared there will not be a meeting in December, so next meeting will be first Monday in January.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.