**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:** October 4, 2021

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

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

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Joe Bailey, Natural Resource Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Amy Shultz, Natural Resource Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office

**Members Present:**

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| Alan Atkins | Al Gathright | John Simpson |
| Tom Butler | Ron Mayfield | Jo West Taylor |
| Robert Cavanaugh | Bill Pell | Dan Watson |
| George Dooley | Jerry Shields |  |

**Review of Minutes:** Robert C. moved to approve the minutes from August 2nd meeting, Tom B. seconded. Minutes approved as written.

**Announcements:** Jerry S. shared the guest speaker from the USFS could not be there tonight due to COViD restrictions but hopes to be able to present in near future.

**2021 Lake Clean Up Recap:** Jo W. thanked volunteers and praised NEEF for providing the shirts and bags for NPLD event. Jo asked if everyone received a shirt and distributed shirts to those who did not get one. Tom B. suggested getting a group together to clean an area in a cove between Shangri La and Denby Point Campground that they missed on the cleanup but can be seen from the LOViT trail. He stated there is a buoy in front of the cove. Jo stated Derick W. had mentioned to her two other areas that might need cleaning. She also asked any volunteers who worked outside the cleanup date to send their numbers to her and to Al G. who will share with the Corps for volunteer reporting.

**Trail Enhancement Program:** Jerry S. stated he contacted the personnel who coordinated the interpretive sign procurement from the Park Service and Forest Service, and they both used the same company the Trail dogs have used in the past for the interpretive wildlife signs along the elevated trail. These signs are guaranteed to last for 20 years and cost $1200-$1500/panel. Jerry stated they would like to purchase 10 of these to go along trail at areas such as the Old Homestead. Jerry will put together a plan and present it to the Corps and Forest Service. Jerry asked if the FOLO members agreed to spend the funds on purchasing these interpretive panels. He further stated the National Park Service has approximately 200 interpretive signs currently in place. Jerry asked for further suggestions on items to purchase to enhance trail.

**Guest Speakers for 2022:** Jerry discussed contacting AGFC to speak about fish stocking for Lake Ouachita. Alan A. offered to contact Brett Hobbs.

**USACE Initiatives:** Stacy S. shared the fall/winter closure and spring re-opening plans for Lake Ouachita recreation areas. He also shared that the Highway 27 road project was finished, and he was thankful for Sam Jones and his crew for providing the dirt. Stacy shared pictures of this project. Stacy further related the new pay machines will be installed at Brady Mountain, Crystal Springs, and Twin Creek areas. He also related the three lakes will not have fee collector contracts moving forward due to the fact all reservations are now through R1S, and the contracts cost $100,000/year. The Corps will be advertising for volunteers to man the fee booths for awhile each day and provide information to visitors. Stacy explained the self-check in process for campers. Jerry S. asked about the extensions during the winter. Stacy explained they campers could request extensions up to 56 days during the off-season. Jerry asked if rates were the same during the winter, Stacy shared the rates were the same year-round, as services are the same in the open areas.

Stacy stated $998,000 was collected in recreation fees not including August and September which was an increase in revenue over the last several years. Stacy further shared; the Little Fir bathroom will be torn down this week to be ready for January installation of the new facility.

Stacy asked Jerry if FOLO was still planning to purchase trees for the recreation areas. Jerry stated they were, and Stacy suggested Red and white Oak trees and Dogwoods. He stated if they could find larger trees to purchase (7 ft), the success rates would be near 90%. Joe B. stated dogwoods would look nice around the bathrooms in the recreation areas.

**LOViT:** Tom B. asked if there was an agreement on the improvements at the sign at ADA trail? Jerry stated the contractors were backlogged and asked them to try back in November.

Alan A. asked if the invasive species signs from AGFC were up at the launch ramps telling people to drain their boat before moving to another body of water. Stacy stated he would check non these and contact Brett Hobbs about being a guest speaker at a FOLO meeting. Alan shared AGFC should have information back in December on the traps set for zebra mussels.

**Due outs:** Jerry requested FOLO members to send thoughts on presentations they would like to see at meetings and where they thought optimal locations for interpretive signs along the LOViT should be.

Bill P. related the Forest Service is not supposed to open offices until March of 2022.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.