

Lake Ouachita Citizen Focus Committee



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

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD: Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee Minutes

DATE: February 5, 2018

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m. by Jerry Shields, Chairman

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Amy Shultz, Natural Resource Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Members Present:

Bill Barnes	Bruce Engstrom	Jo West Taylor
Tom Butler	Al Gathright	Dan Watson
Robert Cavanaugh	Jerry Shields	Howard Wright
George Dooley	John Simpson	

Opening Remarks: Stacy S. asked members to introduce themselves to New LOCFC member, John Simpson. After introductions, Stacy went on to relay Erick Jenkins was selected as the new Ouachita Project Manager over Lakes Ouachita, Greeson, and DeGray. He has worked at all three lakes and brings a wealth of experience to the position.

USACE Operational Review: Stacy shared work has begun at Stephens Park to install upgrades and make it a Class A campground. They are removing some Gum trees and will be installing sewer, water, and 50 amp electric to the sites.

The upgrades and increase in camping fees at Stephens will generate more revenue and improve the clientele.

Stacy further shared the Brady Wastewater treatment plant is finished and online. The Brady Resorts water plant is also functioning. RBS is currently in the process of grinding stumps and cutting dead trees in the recreation areas. Stacy went on to say, several rangers are deployed to Puerto Rico. Derick, Byron and Joe are currently in Puerto Rico, but Joe is returning this week. Prescribed burning is also taking place in some of the recreation areas.

Jerry S. asked if Stacy had heard anything from the load test on the Joplin Bridge. Stacy stated the engineers loaded dump trucks full of sand and a track hoe on a lowboy and took them across the bridge numerous times while doing their calculations. He has not received the test information back yet. Stacy shared the Wounded Warrior Squirrel hunt was a big success and thanked Bill Barnes and Mtn. Harbor for all they did for the hunt. The hunt was held January 26-28th, and 12 adults and 14 kids participated in the hunt with a total of 80 squirrels harvested. Colonel Michael Derosier attended the hunt. Bill mentioned what a nice person the Colonel was. The hunt was a partnership effort between the Game and Fish, Park Service, and Forest Service agencies along with Mtn. Harbor Resort. Subway at Mtn. Harbor provided lunch and Joplin Store provided breakfast. The gift card donations from FOLO were given to the person who killed the first squirrel, the person who killed the most in the morning, the person who killed the most in the evening, and the person who killed their first squirrel ever.

Game and Fish cleaned the squirrels.

Jerry asked if the Corps would have another disabled deer hunt next year. Stacy stated they would in the fall. Jerry shared there is still \$300 in the account for prizes that could be used during this hunt.

George D. requested a goose hunt. Stacy shared DeGray Lake does a duck hunt at the lower lake refuge.

Jerry asked if Jason Mothershed found out anything regarding the second wood supplier for ADA elevated trail. Stacy shared all the Yellow wood is covered. Jerry shared they are 40% done and have 6 pallets of wood left. If they receive the \$6500 grant from Game and Fish, it will pay for all the wood.

Stacy shared the Tompkins Bend parking lot gravel is spread and job is completed. The Corps would like to pave it in the future.

FOLO Financial Update: Jerry S. shared he and Vivian had exchanged emails regarding FOLO bookkeeping issues and tried to reduce the number of accounts. Federal regulations states you must break down expenses if you have over \$25k.

Currently there is \$14,759 in the trail account, and \$500 in the grab-a-bag account. They would like to keep the recreation improvement money for larger projects. Jerry shared Kyle Garner is a CPA in Hot springs that files FOLO's taxes.

Jerry discussed the possibility of applying for a grant from the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department to pave the access to Hickory Nut vista. Bruce E. is on a trails funding committee for the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department and believes they could get funding through a TAP grant for motorized trails. Jerry shared awhile back he had met with the highway commissioner and was told they couldn't pave it because it was a federal road, but the assessed it for them and told them it would cost approx... \$800K to pave. Bruce shared the TAP grant is a matching grant where they have to provide 20% of funding up front, but they could probably do the road in stages. Jerry suggested meeting with Bruce and the new county judge to see if they could take it in as a county road to provide the maintenance once paved. Bruce requested to be put on a sub-committee for this project. Bill B. suggested paving the vista parking lot first and working down. Bruce related Bill was going to run an article in the newspaper about a cleanup day in March for cleaning the Hickory Nut vista. George D. asked what type of paving they are requesting in the grant. Jerry shared the estimate was for asphalt. Bruce believes there is approximately \$300K per year that is available for motorized trail grants.

Grab-a-Bag Program: Tom B. asked Amy S. to send him the number of pallets of bags the Corps still has in stock. Tom shared that they had used approx... 2500 bags last year, and suggested purchasing additional bags from SIGMA to utilize the rest of the \$500 grant. **Bill moved to buy 30 cases now and**

use the rest of the grant money and also ask Phillip C. for his contact at Sam's Club to ask for donations of additional bags. Jo W. seconded, and motion was approved.

Jerry stated they are still looking into the Bike Repair grant. They have applied for the \$6500 Game and Fish grant to be used for purchasing materials for the elevated walkway. The grant application has been written up and approved and will be presented at the next AGFC meeting.

LOViT: Al G. relayed there were several large upcoming events on the LOViT. The LOViT bike race will be held February 17th. Sponsor is Brian Fawley. There will be two races during this event: A marathon race from Denby trailhead to Blakely Dam (point to point), and there will also be an endurance race from Joplin trailhead east where bikers will be timed on their downhill runs. One to two hundred participants will be competing in these races, making it a large event. They will have aid stations, and first responders/volunteer fire departments on call. IMBA has been involved in getting the trail ready for this event by clearing 18 trees from the trail.

February 23-24, two endurance races will be held on the trail: The 100 K and the 100 mile race.

Al shared the Trail Dogs are working on the elevated boardwalk decking. They have worked 7 days and have 10-11 volunteers each day. The rehab project is about 40% completed. Jerry shared the Corps has provided two generators, 2 screw guns, fuel, and hauled the lumber. They will be working Thursday and Friday this week.

Jerry shared he and Mike Curran had attended a meeting on the Northwood Trail. This trail will use city owned land and utilize funds from the Walton Family Foundation to construct. Jerry shared he talked with Josi Hernandez and Jean Wallace about his current dreams of a bike trail from Hot Springs to Mount Ida along the highway, and of also lengthening the Northwood Trail to meet the LOViT and the State Park to form a network of trails.

New Business: Bruce E. stated he would like to know how the water allocation will affect the water level in Lake Ouachita. Jerry asked him to put it on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss.

Bill B. suggested assisting the Corps with positioning and maintaining additional low water buoys in unmarked low water sections of Ouachita. Amy S. stated the problem with putting out a lot more buoys, is that once an area is identified as a "low water" area, and marked with a buoy, that buoy has to be maintained forever. You can't ever take it up because the Corps is liable after the dangerous place is identified. Bill stated if they could identify 10 additional spots that should be buoyed in normal pool, the committee could maintain them. Jerry asked him to add it to the agenda for next month's meeting. Bruce asked about additional Crappie Condo construction. Amy shared there is a boy scout talking to Biologist, Dustin Thomason, about doing a fish shelter construction project for his Eagle Scout project. Bruce may contact Dustin to find out about the Crappie Condo's. Amy related Dustin would be deploying to Puerto Rico this week for a month.

Jo W. shared Ted Mullinex would be speaking at the Mount Ida Chamber of Commerce on April 12th.

Meeting Adjourned @ 7:15 P.M.