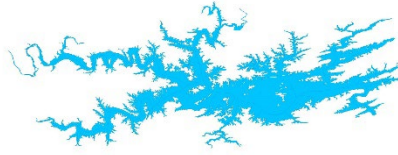


# Friends of Lake Ouachita



1424 Blakely Dam Road  
Royal, AR 71968

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

**DATE:** August 4, 2025

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

Derick Walker, Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office  
Matt Mitchell, Supervisory Facility Operations Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office  
Amy Shultz, Natural Resources Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office

**Members Present:**

Tom Butler	Al Gathright	Shane Scott
Robert Cavanaugh	Ron Mayfield	Jerry Shields
George Dooley	Bill Pell	Jo West Taylor

**Call to Order:** Meeting began at 6:00 PM.

**Approval of June 2025 Minutes:** Jo W. moved to approve the June minutes, Robert C. seconded, minutes approved as written.

**April Financial Report:** Jerry S. shared there was \$210,059 in the FOLO accounts at the end of July. FOLO received \$129.19 from ATLAS Guides. Robert C. shared they received a \$250 donation from Ouachita Challenge. Jerry further shared there was 15K for the reservoir fisheries grant and 408K for the ARDOT grant. FOLO has 11CD's with the Owen's Corning 80K CD maturing on 10/19. Seven other CD's mature on 8/22. Jerry further shared it looked like the Owens' Corning grant money would be the only funds they would need besides the ARDoT grant. The committee shared appreciation for Vivian keeping the books and Rob S. moved to approve the financial report. Tom B. seconded. Financial Report unanimously approved.

**ARDoT ADA Walkway Grant Status:** Jerry S. shared the site was fairly dry except for drainage but it would probably be September 1<sup>st</sup> before any work could be done. The contractor

believed they could start around September 1. Tom B. asked if any material had been ordered. Jerry S. stated they were dealing with a supplier out of Arkadelphia, Hardman Lumbar supply company, and the lead time for supplies is 2-3 weeks. The decking materials are Owens Corning and come from Florida. Jerry S. stated he would like to have the walkway completed by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Jerry stated there was a requirement to have a pre-construction meeting with an ARDoT engineer out of Russellville prior to 9/2/2025, and they were going to request if an engineer out of Hot Springs can be re-assigned. Robert C., Shane S., Al G., and Rob S. all volunteered to be designated inspectors for the project. Jerry will send the list to Ashley Smith, engineer at ARDoT. Shane S. will be the coordinator for inspectors. The Contractor must complete daily status reports, And ARDoT requires a quarterly status report. Derick W. and Matt M. stated they would attend the pre-construction engineer meeting. Jerry shared it was 3 years ago on October 22<sup>nd</sup> that the old walkway was torn down. Jerry further related that in the past, FOLO could do In-Kind service for \$31/hour credit, but Ashley S. said there were a lot of forms to fill out with this grant and the credit was much less, so it is probably not worth it to do any in-kind on this project. Bill P. asked if the benches had to be put up by FOLO members. Jerry stated the contractor would put them back up, and only thing FOLO would have to do is install the plaques. Tom B. inquired about purchasing asphalt to re-surface the ADA portion of trail. Jerry stated they can probably get an RTP grant for that. Bill P. asked about possibly posting signs at the kiosk about the starting date for construction. He also stated it would be great to put in the county paper and would be nice to get the county judge and ARDoT representatives for a ribbon cutting ceremony after it is completed. Jerry stated he would send the dates of construction to the committee once finalized.

**2025 Lake Clean-Up Plan:** The Corps shared the dates for the cleanups were September 18<sup>th</sup> for the kid's cleanup, and September 20<sup>th</sup> for community cleanup. Mount Ida and Caddo Hills have both said they would send approx. 50 students each. Jo W. asked about sending a press release to the papers. Amy S. will contact Jo W on the news release and send Sentinel Record contacts. Derick W. suggested a digital sign-in option. Matt M. asked about an Instagram possibility. Rob. S. offered to set up an Instagram account. Derick W. stated the Corps would identify some areas to clean prior to the cleanup events.

**Gap Creek Blockage Clearance:** Matt M. shared they could re-route Gap Creek to the original channel and add riprap with boulders. He stated the Corps has a plan in place to fix the issue. Derick W. stated the Corps has been researching different options. Jerry shared concerns about fiberglass railing on top of the bridge that cuts your hands. Matt stated the only solution would be to re-surface it and paint it. The committee discussed the possibility of using leftovers from Owens Corning for new railings.

**New Business:** Jerry brought up the Crystal Mine proposals. Derick W. stated the comment period for the north side was open and Michael Welker has two sites for proposals, and one is in the Avant area No-Cut zone. Committee needs to voice concerns during the comment period. Ron M. related the large Brady sign (map) has been stolen from the trailhead parking area. Derick W. will check to see if Corps can get map replaced. Ron shared they are replacing 3 trailhead signs on the Womble Trail.

**Corps 2025 Operational Issues:** Derick W. related the Corps requested damage assessment funding due to the flooding, and this is in the second round, but they do not know yet if they will be receiving funding for repairs. If funding is received, it will cover roadways, waterlines, retaining walls (damaged one at Brady), equipment area damage, Owl Creek Culvert undermining, and moving sites 8-12 at Little Fir out of the flooding zone. Derick shared he had responded to the bench request from Mr. Smith.

Derick shared the Corps received a 1K grant for the mobility impaired hunts from the Spinal Association. Derick also shared the houseboat at Twin Creek is currently the only abandoned vessel, and related that the insurance company had dropped the owner. Citations had been issued by the Corps and the case is going to court. Derick related the Vicksburg Leadership Development Program will be visiting Lake Ouachita August 11-14<sup>th</sup> and will attend the ORVA conference which will be in Hot Springs the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. Derick also shared Lake Ouachita had conducted a Boots on the Ground meeting for the 4 drownings on Ouachita this year. Derick shared the Lake Ouachita Corps is down to 21 employees, and full staff is 47. Unfortunately, if the hiring freeze isn't lifted, the Corps will be looking at possible closures. Plans for the off-season are to refurbish a few more sites in Joplin recreation area. It will depend on number of personnel how many the Corps is able to do.

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