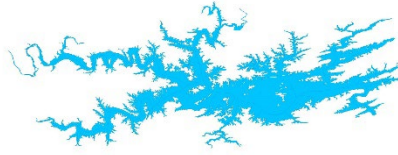


Friends of Lake Ouachita



1424 Blakely Dam Road
Royal, AR 71968

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD: Friends of Lake Ouachita Committee Minutes

DATE: March 3, 2025

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

Stacy Sigman, Natural Resources Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Derick Walker, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Members Present:

Tom Butler	Al Gathright	Shane Scott	
Robert Cavanaugh	Bill Pell	Jerry Shields	
George Dooley	Rob Sanders	Dan Watson	

Call to Order: Meeting started at 6:04 PM.

Approval of February 2025 Minutes: Al G. moved to approve the February minutes, George D. seconded, minutes approved with adjustment to CPA Expenses change from \$300 to \$350.

Financial Explanations: Jerry S. explained the differences between FOLO Inc. and FOLO Committee. He explained there were (5) board members on FOLO Inc. (Jerry S., Tom B., Robert C., Al G., and Dan W. Jerry S. noted an action on the \$150,000 worth of CD's the bank has, and he just rolled the 4% interest of them back into it. He also noted that Vivian Budamire is FOLO Inc. financial contact that has account access to handling banking processes. Stacy S. asked the committee if they felt it was appropriate to award Vivian B. will a Corps Foundation Volunteer of Excellence Coin. He said he would prepare package. Jerry S. and the committee agreed due to her long-standing assistance to the group.

LOViT Trail Recap: Shane S. noted the 100-mile race was this last weekend with no incidents occurring. They will be removing the flags they placed along the trail for guidance soon. SPECIAL GUEST- Steve C. attended to speak on behalf of the LOViT Marathon organizing group. Attended meeting to express his interest in helping the trail maintenance group however and with whatever was needed. Shane S. told him that his group could assist in the re-blazing effort currently underway. Steve C. asked how to paint the trees. The group noted the U.S. Forest Service standard was the offsetting of (2) marks (2" x 6") depending on the trail turn direction. Shane S. noted the distance between tree blazes should be 1000 feet and 50 feet in a curve. Discussion by the group was on if reflective paint would be beneficial and all present thought it would. Bill P. spoke from ex-U.S. Forest Service perspective stating it shouldn't be a problem as it will only help visibility as sun goes down. Rob S. noted that he has heard many calls come in for lost hikers within this low light time. Steve C. asked if help was needed to number the current benches along the route. Shane S. noted that the new app he was working with had all that data already populated. The actual bench may need numbering to coincide with it as the benches only shows the sponsor's name. Jerry S. explained the process to sponsor benches by paying \$500 but haven't taken any new requests in a while. Discussion by the group on erosion issues within the Joplin and Hickory Nut section.

ARDOT ADA Walkway Grant Status: Jerry S. stated the grant status in that it was held up due to the revision to design. He stated the bridge building section of ARDOT was reviewing instead of the trails/recreation section. He stated Rob S. could comment on how he has moved it along. Rob S. stated he contacted AR State Representative for Polk and Montgomery County- Mr. John Maddox to discuss FOLO's issue. Shortly after, ARDOT bridge building section contacted FOLO and said the send updated certified engineered stamped blueprint at 90 lbs per square foot and they would receive the "Letter to Proceed". Jerry S. noted this was a big step because no in-kind services can be recorded to the project until this letter is received. He shared an updated quote of changes to materials from Hamel Plywood (for planning purposes only): (847) 4"x8"x12" decking was \$61,746.30, (310) 4"x6"x12" decking was \$17,769.20, and (569) 2"x12"x12" structure framing was \$90,072.70. He noted the overall cost is now around \$547,000. Jerry S. noted that the change from 10" wide board to 12" wide board for the strings was a 20% increase in cost. Ashley with ARDOT informed Jerry S. that this project had funding details that the maximum Federal aid TAP for a construction phase of the project was \$409,000. Al G. showed the Agreement of Understanding between FOLO Inc. and ARDOT for the Elevated Walkway Improvements (TAP-23)(S). This document shows the percentage breakdown of the Federal % maximums and the Sponsor % minimums for each under the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA) Project. Jerry S. informed committee that Robert C., Al G. and himself were overseers of the daily maintenance while the project is going. He said that the WearWood company will cut all boards to length before shipping. After speaking with Jerry W., decision was made to choose (2) different colors. Tom B. spoke upon bid solicitation timeframe that must be for (2) separate – (2) week periods once we receive letter to proceed. He is working on preparation documents for that so it will be ready to go when able.

Committee Leadership Transition: Jerry S. stated last month meeting the committee passed a resolution to keep him as chair through the construction of the elevated walkway through the end of 2025 and to ask Shane S. to serve as Vice Chair through the transition. Shane S. accepted

during the meeting officially and will move into this role after Jerry S. steps down. Motion by Rob S. and Bill P. seconded.

New Business: Jerry S. asked the committee for any new business. None noted.

Corps 2025 Operational Goals: Stacy S. shared that he would have to get an update from Dustin T. on the Fisheries Habitat Grant that FOLO would be receiving as the partner to purchase supplies as he has not heard anything on it in a while. Derick W. shared the grant was for bream bed construction for those that may have not heard. He explained it was a \$15,000 in-kind grant, and no money was required for a match. Stacy S. shared that all parks have opened as of March 1st and USACE was working on minor water/electrical issues discovered but almost completed. Stated the fish cleaning station would start to open on March 10th. Stacy S. then shared the current government status on various topics and reminded the committee be starting that this discussion needed to keep politics aside and he would state current impacts or directives. He noted the current continuing resolution budget has USACE funded through March 14th and haven't received anything past that point on guidance as Congress is still working to pass the budget. He noted we are under a hiring freeze for the foreseeable future. Since the DoD was the largest government section of employees, USACE is currently going through various processes through our chain of command. He stated HR is conducting an analysis and must have plan to DoD by March 15th on how to reduce costs and implement by June 15th. Probationary employees and temporary/term appointment employees are pending, but no action yet. DoD is looking at a 5%-8% reduction. A reduction-in-force (RIF) has been started yet, only a deferred resignation from the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and voluntary early retirement action has been offered to employees from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Jerry S. asked about volunteers and if any impacts on them and when they would start. Derick W. explained they will start at various times from March 1st to May 1st as Law Enforcement and Security conduct backgrounds checks and clear them for work. Jerry S. shared with committee that he was impressed with all the campgrounds appearances upon openings as USACE has used high pressure machine blowers to clear roadways and campsites of leaves. He also noted he saw USACE's contractors (RBS) pressure washing concrete picnic tables. Rob S. expressed to USACE to let the committee know if there is anything they can do as he has seen impacts to government workers in the media. Derick W. and Stacy S. were appreciative of his offer and informed him they most certainly would as this DOGE process plays out over the next few months, and we see what the actual impacts will be.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:08 P.M.