Minutes: May 19, 2011 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission) was held Thursday, May 19, 2011, at 1:00 PM in the Capital Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:
Assumption Parish: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
Ascension Parish: Ramon Gomez
Avoyelles Parish: Wilbert Carmouche
Concordia Parish: Tommy Polk
East Baton Rouge Parish: Charles Fryling
Iberville Parish: Gene Seneca, Vice-Chair
Lafayette Parish: Jennifer Ritter, Secretary
Pointe Coupee Parish: J. A. Rummler
Terrebonne Parish: Patrick Thomas Gordon
West Baton Rouge Parish: Julie Rose
Assistant Superintendent, Joe Llewellyn, Jean Lafitte National Historic Park, Ex Officio

Commissioners absent:
St. Landry Parish: Vacant seat
St. Martin Parish: Vacant seat
Iberia Parish: Chris Burton
St. Mary Parish: Carrie Stansbury, Treasurer

Others present:
Debra Credeur, Executive Director, Atchafalaya National Heritage Area and Trace Commission
Willie Fontenot, Friends of Atchafalaya
Charles Caillouet, Friends of Atchafalaya
Jim Delahoussaye, Friends of Atchafalaya
Pam Caillouet, Ascension Parish Resident
Catherine Daigle, Resident Assumption Parish
Pam Bordelon, Baton Rouge Advocate
Gerard Overhultz, Laissez Faire, Inc.
Mathew Reonas, University of LA at Lafayette
Stuart Johnson, LA State Parks
Bowman Henderson, Zach Frazier & Madison Galle, Students, McMurry University, Abilene, TX
Dr. Donald Frazier, McMurry University, Abilene, TX-Guest Speaker

A quorum was present and Vice-chair Gene Seneca called the meeting to order.

Agenda Approval
Phillip Daigle moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Jennifer Ritter seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approval of March 1, 2011 Meeting Minutes
Patrick Gordon moved to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2011 regular meeting. J. A. Rummler seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Nonprofit Friends Group
Charles Fryling, East Baton Rouge Commissioner and current President of Friends of Atchafalaya, presented a letter to the Atchafalaya Trace Commission from Friends of Atchafalaya. The letter expressed interest in opening a discussion with the Commission regarding the National Park Service recommendation that the Commission develop a structured relationship with a nonprofit organization.
that would serve as a “Friends” group. Such a group would have a mission complementary to that of the Commission, which Friends of Atchafalaya does, Mr. Fryling stated. Collaboration with and assistance to the Commission could be in the areas of fundraising, volunteering, research and outreach. Additional help in an expertise/advisory role for projects could be included as well.

Credeur said she will provide examples of Friends Groups of other NHA’s and of State Parks, as well as contact the State’s legal counsel. Julie Rose will forward the bylaws of BREC’s Magnolia Mound Plantation Friends Organization to review. Charles Caillouet will provide the Friends of Atchafalaya bylaws and mission statement. Pat Gordon and Jennifer Ritter volunteered to serve on a committee to analyze the various documents via email and conference call before the next Commission meeting.

**Director’s Report** (complete report attached)
Credeur presented the bi-monthly report of activities. Highlights of the report include:
- Resignations of Kristen Kordecki (St. Landry) and Brenda Comeaux-Trahan (St. Martin)
- Seven of 10 Commissioners reappointed; Forms: willing-to-serve-as-officer and time sheets
- Visitor/Marketing: Media tour, video shown to group in NC, NARRP conference field trips
- New meeting schedule: Wednesdays at 10:00 AM
- NPS: Funds for current year expected within 2 weeks; postcards will notify public that the Plan is available in 2 weeks; Collaboration with Jean Lafitte NHP on Trails & Rails program
- Tax Credit Program 2-year extension sponsored by Rep. St. Germaine; passed House, goes to Senate next.
- Experience Atchafalaya Days: Some paddling trips and presentations planned but parishes are encouraged to hold an event or exhibit.
- Signage: Working on sign fabrication and installation schedules

**Civil War Presentation**
In commemoration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial, the Commission hosted a special educational program. Dr. Donald Frazier, Professor of History at McMurry University in Abilene, TX, and renowned Civil War author and historian, made a presentation on Civil War history. Dr. Frazier presented his findings on the previously under-researched accounts of Civil War activity in the Atchafalaya region and South LA.

**Other Business/Announcements**
Bayou Teche Paddling Trail: Jennifer Ritter reported their group is continuing to work with the NPS Rivers & Trails Conservation Assistance program. Their steering committee meets next week. An FHA application has been submitted for signage and access enhancements on the Bayou in 4 parishes. Tommy Polk announced the Ferriday May 28 Soul Survivors Festival, an event featuring celebrity musicians. Charles Fryling announced there will be a smart Growth Summit in Baton Rouge August 18-19. He is working with the Planning Committee on featuring the Atchafalaya NHA in a panel discussion.

**Tommy Polk moved to adjourn the meeting. Ramon Gomez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**