Atchafalaya Trace Commission/
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: July 27, 2011 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission) was held Thursday, July 27, 2011, at 10:00 AM at 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: Gerren Sias
Iberia Parish: Chris Burton
Iberville Parish: Gene Seneca
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
St. Mary Parish: Carrie Stansbury (Jury Duty)

Others present:
Debra Credeur, Executive Director, Atchafalaya National Heritage Area and Trace Commission
Charles Caillouet, Friends of Atchafalaya
Jim Delahoussaye, Friends of Atchafalaya
Charles Fryling, Friends of Atchafalaya
Gerard Overhultz, Laissez Faire, Inc.
Lillie Thorps, Office of State Parks, Lake Fausse Pointe State Park

A quorum was present even with the late arrivals and Vice-chair Gene Seneca called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM, welcoming the new East Baton Rouge Commissioner, Gerren Sias.

Agenda Approval
Ramon Gomez moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Julie Rose seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approval of May 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes
Patrick Gordon moved for approval of the May 19, 2011 regular meeting minutes. Wilbert Carmouche seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Election of FY 2012 Officers
At the May 2011 meeting, the Commissioners were asked to indicate their willingness to serve in the capacity of an office. The nominations received for the FY 2012 Executive Committee were Chair, Carrie Stansbury; Vice-chair, J. A. Rummler; Secretary, Jennifer Ritter; and Treasurer, Patrick Gordon. Phillip Daigle moved to accept the nominations for officers. Ramon Gomez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

(Arrival 10:15 AM: Jennifer Ritter).
Nonprofit Friends Group
Credeur distributed information regarding other Friends’ groups for purposes of analyzing the Commission’s interest in forming a relationship with a Friends’ group. Included were LA State Parks’ guidelines for forming a Friends Group; Friends of Rosedown’s cooperative agreement with LA State Parks; and East Baton Rouge’s agreement with Friends of Magnolia Mound. After reviewing these documents as well as additional information on a recently-formed Foundation as a partner to a State Commission to be sent by email to the Friends Group Committee, the Committee will discuss what should be included in a cooperative agreement the Commission might have with a Friends Group. The Committee will then have a discussion with members of Friends of Atchafalaya, the non-profit that has shown support for the Commission and Heritage Area, and has expressed interest in serving in a Friends group capacity.

The legal advisor for the State Dept. of CRT advised that the same individual not serve both on the Commission and the Board of the Friends group with which an agreement is developed, for both ethical and management purposes.

Gerren Sias volunteered to join Jennifer Ritter and Patrick Gordon on the Committee that will be analyzing this and making a recommendation to the Commission.

Update on Projects and Budget

Signage
Due to the requirement of bidding out the installation of the 257 signs as a construction project, installation of the signs will begin in approximately 2 months. The final cost for the project will be determined once bids are received and a contractor is awarded the contract.

Experience Atchafalaya Days (EAD)
This year promotion for EAD events will be toward fewer events with greater awareness impact. It is difficult to accurately promote all appropriate parish events as done in the past. To date, EAD events have been scheduled in partnership with Friends of Atchafalaya, Office of State Parks and the Parish of Iberville as of this date, with the kick-off being at the Swamp Life Expo October 1. Events include the Expo with demonstrations, music and food; 2 canoeing activities at Lake Fausse Pointe State Park; and presentations on birding, culture and history. Parishes are encouraged to hold events that raise awareness of the Heritage Area’s resources. Gene Seneca suggested inviting the agencies that have participated in such events in the past to be present to tell about their work in the Heritage Area. Charles Caillouet is graciously providing web site modifications in order to have a more uniform look in presenting the events.

Education Projects
A project for school children in which the DVD made last year is made available to educators with an accompanying fill-in-the-blank puzzle highlighting words key to the culture is underway. Richard Hartley of the Lt. Governor’s office will be able to distribute this at meetings in the late summer. Additionally, preliminary research is underway for a French version of the video for use in schools as well as for use promoting Louisiana and the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area to francophone countries. Jennifer Ritter pointed out that French subtitles would be appropriate for adding to the English version also.
Julie Rose, Chair of the Commission’s Education Committee, reminded the Commission that Education is not only for K-12 grades in traditional school settings. Examples of this include traveling and virtual exhibits which are developments the Commission might investigate.

**Map & Handout**
The NPS Denver Service Center is developing a one-piece map that will replace the 4 regional, tear-off maps. There will also be a coordinating brochure (rack-card size) that will summarize the heritage area.

**Facebook**

(J.A. Rummler: arrival 11:00)

**Director's Report**
Credeur presented the bi-monthly report of activities. Highlights of the report include:

- ANHA program and administrative offices were moved to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.
- St. Landry and St. Martin Parishes’ Commissioner positions are still vacant.
- Future Commission meetings to record on calendars:
  - September 28, 2011
  - November 30, 2011
  - January 25, 2012
  - March 28, 2012
  - May 23, 2012
  - September 26, 2012
  - July 25, 2012
  - November 28, 2012
  - January 25, 2012
  - September 26, 2012
  - November 28, 2012
  - July 25, 2012
- **ANHA was featured on NBC's Today Show America the Beautiful series**, hosted by Jenna Bush Hagar on June 29, first heritage area featured in the series. NBC contacted me after watching the video on our web site during a Google search.
- Upcoming panel presentations: **Miss-Lou Conference August 10 (Oak Grove) and Smart Growth Summit August 18 (Baton Rouge)**
- **We are in the 30-day final public review period for the Management Plan.** Comments are being accepted until August 1, and once comments are recorded, the Plan will go to the Secretary of the Interior for approval. For a quick synopsis of anticipated projects, refer to page 66.
- **Please submit your parish’s LA Bicentennial events so they can receive extra promotion through the LA Bicentennial Commission’s promotional efforts.** Suggestions for an ANHA event to commemorate the LA Bicentennial in the year 2012 are welcome.
- **The NPS SE Regional Heritage Areas Program Manager will be visiting the area the week of August 15.**
- Michael Farrar’s article in 225 Magazine was available for those who had not read it. A regular column of such articles as proposed would be considered through a future Heritage Area grant program.
- There is a paddling workshop in North Louisiana sponsored by LSU Ag Center on September 28. We have 3 Commissioners involved with these efforts.

**Other Business & Commission Announcements**
- Tommy Polk: Requested printing of the Atchafalaya posters for placement in Welcome & Visitors’ Centers.
- Chris Burton: Informed the Commission on the preservation efforts of the Vida Shaw Bridge on Bayou Teche in Iberia Parish.
- J.A. Rummler: The Louisiana Woodcock Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society will hold a banquet February 2012.
- Jennifer Ritter reported Bayou Teche Paddling Trail continues to work with RTCA.
• Joe Llewellyn: The Heritage Area can pull events from the Acadian, Prairie Acadian and Wetlands Acadian Cultural Centers of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park for posting.
• J.A. Rummler: A potential issue from the 2011 flooding is that of invasive tallow trees taking over in areas disturbed (i.e. denuded of previously extant vegetation) by the flooding in the Atchafalaya Floodway. The potential can be compared to problems that the Pearl River basin had with disturbance after Hurricane Katrina.
• Phillip Daigle, Sr.: Commissioners should attend the DNR/Atchafalaya Basin Program meetings in their parishes if possible to provide input on the changes occurring in the Basin. (Ms. Credeur to send Commissioners the meeting schedule).

Other Announcements
• C. R. Caillouet: The DNR Atchafalaya Basin Program will hold public meetings in August as the first step to their 2013 Annual Plan formation. There will be several informative and interesting reports on data collected by several agencies given at these meetings.
• Gerard Overhultz commented on The Swamp People, the popular series on The History Channel.

Jennifer Ritter moved to adjourn the meeting. J. A. Rummler seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.