Atchafalaya Trace Commission/
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: September 26, 2012 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission) was held Wednesday, September 26, 2012 at 10:00 AM at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:
Ascension Parish: Charles Caillouet
Avoyelles Parish: Wilbert Carmouche
Assumption Parish: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
East Baton Rouge Parish: Gerren Sias
Iberia Parish: Chris Burton
 Iberville Parish: Gene Seneca
Lafayette Parish: Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Vice-chair
 Pointe Coupée Parish: J. A. Rummler, Chair
St. Landry Parish: Pam Cannatella
West Baton Rouge Parish: Julie Rose
Superintendent Carol Clark, Jean Lafitte National Historic Park, Ex Officio
Assistant Superintendent Joe Llewellyn, Jean Lafitte National Historic Park, Ex Officio

Commissioners absent:
Concordia Parish: Tommy Polk
St. Mary Parish: Carrie Stansbury, Treasurer
St. Martin Parish: Vacant seat
Terrebonne Parish: Patrick Thomas Gordon, Secretary

Others present:
Debra Credeur, Executive Director
Cathy Berry, Chief of Staff, Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne’s Office
Gerard Overhultz, Laissez Faire, Inc.
Pam Caillouet, Ascension Parish Resident
Charles Fryling, President, Friends of Atchafalaya
Willie Fontenot, Friends of Atchafalaya
Dana Naquin, DNR/Atchafalaya Basin Program
Jean Frigault, CODOFIL, Department of CRT
Randall Jarreau, Sons of Confederate Veterans and Pointe Coupée Historical Society
Teresa Dennis, City of Vidalia
Luke Venable, LSU School of Landscape Architecture

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Vice-chair Jennifer Ritter called the meeting to order and conducted business until the arrival of Chair Rummler at 10:15 AM. Debra introduced Cathy Berry, Chief of Staff in the Office of Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne. Mrs. Berry informed the Commission the Lt. Governor will be traveling to France October 12 with other Louisiana officials and will be distributing the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA) French DVD to tour operators and officials.

Mrs. Berry also informed the Commission the Director will submit an application for a Commission project to the Gulf Tourism and Seafood Promotional Fund for which BP is accepting applications.

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

Approval of July 25, 2012 Meeting Minutes
Jennifer Guidry moved to approve the July 25, 2012 regular meeting minutes. Wilbert Carmouche seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Atchafalaya Month and Experience Atchafalaya Days Report
Debra Credeur reported on the upcoming month’s awareness campaign of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area recreational opportunities. A copy of the Governor’s proclaiming October as Atchafalaya Month was distributed. Additional efforts included website calendar additions from all 14 parishes; an ad in Country Roads October issue; announcement throughout the month on WRKF; listing in The Advocate Sunday Magazine; posters distributed to 13 State Welcome Centers, 4 NPS Centers; 14 parish visitor centers and 18 State parks and historic sites; replenishing of brochures and DVD inventory to same locations; donated water bottles for Tour du Teche & Vermilion Boat Race registrants. In addition, I provided assistance with distribution of the Indian Mound booklet, a cooperative effort with the Archaeology Department because October is also Archaeology Month.

Civil War Activities
J. A. Rummler reported the National Park Service (NPS) will continue to commemorate the Civil War Sesquicentennial for the next couple years and there is a State Civil War Task Force to which two ANHA Commissioners are appointed (Rummler, Rose). J.A., Julie Rose and Debra Credeur met to discuss the Commission further developing the Civil War theme since the Civil War will have both a State and National focus. A number of venues and speakers were reviewed as a potential foundation for a Civil War Speaker Series provided by the ANHA next year. There are several ANHA parishes with resources to support such a project which would benefit all 14 parishes. In addition, there are several organizations that have expressed interest in working with ANHA on such a project including the Pointe Coupée Historical Society and the Sons of Confederate Veterans. J.A. also has had communications with the LA Archaeology Department and interested individuals about further research on Fort Burton, the Confederate Fort at Butte La Rose in St. Martin Parish that was occupied by the 16th New Hampshire trapped at the Fort by unexpected declines in river stages making the Atchafalaya River unnavigable. Willie Fontenot, a guest in attendance, commented on the national significance also of nearby Port Hudson. With the interest these efforts have generated, J.A. suggested the Commission establish a Civil War and Reconstruction Sesquicentennial Committee, with Commissioners interested in serving notifying Debra Credeur.

Julie Rose moved to establish a Civil War and Reconstruction Sesquicentennial Committee. Jennifer Guidry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Committees
J.A. Rummler summarized the existing committees of the Commission: 1) Executive (per bylaws); 2) Education; 3) Foundation; 4) Civil War & Reconstruction Sesquicentennial. There was discussion at the July meeting of additional committees to cover the issues of the Atchafalaya Welcome Center, exhibits and forest heritage. With the Commission’s direction and focus on particular projects, the need is indicated to establish an additional two committees: 5) Land & Water Heritage; and 6) Diversity of Cultural Heritage.

Gerren Sias moved to adopt the aforementioned committees. Charles Caillouet seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

J. A. reminded the Commission of Gerren’s suggestion several months ago that Committees provide a brief summary of activities, if any, at our Commission meetings.
Other Projects Update
Debra Credeur reported on Commission business items and ongoing projects:

1. The remaining 2012 meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission is November 28, the Wednesday AFTER Thanksgiving. Proposed dates for 2013 meetings are:
   - January 30 (5th Wednesday due to Lt. Governor’s Tourism Summit)
   - March 20 (3rd Wednesday, 12 days before Easter)
   - May 22 (4th Wednesday)
   - July 24 (4th Wednesday)
   - September 25 (4th Wednesday)
   - November 20 (3rd Wednesday to avoid interfering with Thanksgiving)

   If there are no objections to these dates, these will be entered permanently on the calendar.

2. Please turn in the Staff/Volunteer Hours Sheet which is used for documenting the match to Federal funds we receive. SEPTEMBER 30 completes this federal fiscal year’s activities.

3. The first report of a request for the ANHA stamp in the NPS Passport Program was at the Vidalia Welcome Center on August 29.

4. Federal Funds: Congress passed a six-month stopgap spending bill (through March 2013), so it is unlikely our federal funding will be confirmed before that time. That being the first consideration in our funding situation, please remember the second consideration is that NPS is in the process of creating a tiered national heritage area funding “formula” based on if heritage areas are new, are implementing their management plans and several additional factors. The details are somewhat confusing and are presently undergoing review. For more information, please contact Debra.

5. Atchafalaya.org Calendar: To keep postings on our updated website calendar manageable from a time-management standpoint, I will be posting parish events that are of an outdoor recreation and cultural heritage nature that I pull from the parish tourism website unless you or someone you designate sends me something different.

6. Land & Water Exhibit: The inventory spreadsheet in your packet is a working document for the content of the story that will be told about the water’s influence on the land and the people from Concordia Parish to the Gulf of Mexico. Please check your parish listings and provide the most significant feature or characteristic in your parish that distinguishes your parish from the others in the overall story of Louisiana’s land and water. I am currently doing research on exhibit content, programming and equipment. Guest Teresa Dennis gave examples found in Concordia Parish: the point where three rivers meet and the location of the town of Vidalia before the town was moved by the Corps of Engineers.

7. Signs: There are a few suggestions for additional sign placement. If you are submitting recommendations for signs to be added in your parish, please include the directional highway number or street and identifying landmark information or GPS coordinates.

8. The first Louisiana chapter of a Master Naturalist Program has been established in the New Orleans area; additional chapters under consideration. If interested, contact me for information.

9. Other agency plans and initiatives of interest are:
   - Lower MS River Resource Assessment [http://lmrра.com](http://lmrра.com), a project of input from river users and stakeholders to develop recommendations to Congress. Comments can be made at [http://lmrра.com](http://lmrра.com).
NPS’ American Latino Heritage Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary in which ANHA is featured along with the Parks & NPS programs in Louisiana.  
[http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/American_Latino_Heritage/Atchafalaya_National_Heritage_Area.html](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/American_Latino_Heritage/Atchafalaya_National_Heritage_Area.html)

Charles Caillouet reminded the Commission of the Inventory Assessment by the Department of Natural Resources.

**Other Business**

Julie Rose reported on the Education Committee’s past work in identifying the grade level expectations (GLE’s), important when working with curricula. The State is adopting common core standards which will impact the GLE’s that were identified previously, so this may have to be revisited.

Wilbert Carmouche reminded the Commission the original signage plan had a provision for decals to be placed at certain locations such as welcome and visitor centers and tourism attractions. There was discussion about such a program reinforcing our signs and overall awareness.

**Wilbert Carmouche moved to implement the decal-oriented part of our signage plan. Pam Cannatella seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**Announcements**

Jennifer Guidry reported on the Bayou Teche Paddling Trail progress. The 2-year planning process is complete; the logo is in the final stage of review; and the plan is on their website. They soon will be seeking nomination to the National Register of Trails and funding for implementing the trail plan.

Superintendent Clark distributed *Jean Lafitte State of the Park 2011* and informed the Commission of upcoming May’s “Bayou Bio,” a cooperative initiative with National Geographic for children to learn about ecosystems. The Park is continuing planning for the commemoration of the Battle of N.O.

**October Event Reminders:**

- **Avoyelles:** Cottonport Quilt Festival and Avoyelles Cookbook Festival  
  Assumption: Harvest Luncheon in Labadieville  
  Iberville: Acadian Festival, Water Ceremony, Swamp Life Expo  
  Pointe Coupée: New Roads & Old Rivers Book signing & exhibit  
  Lafayette: Acadian Creole Festival, Boudin Cook-off, Vermilionville Boat Parade & Bayou Fest, Black Pot Cook-off, LA Historic Bridge Study meeting, First Thursday Lecture Series  
  EBR: Buffalo Festival (end of September); Rural Life Museum Scarecrow Festival; *Free Man of Color* at Swine Palace (starring the narrator of our video, Isaac O’Neal!)  
  Charles: MS River Delta Restoration meeting. Info: [www.mississippidelta.org](http://www.mississippidelta.org)  
  Iberia: Sugar Cane Festival, Gumbo Cook-off

**Charles Caillouet moved to adjourn the meeting. Gerren Sias seconded the motion and, passing unanimously, the meeting was adjourned.**