Atchafalaya Trace Commission/
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: May 22, 2013 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission) was held Wednesday, May 22, 2013 at 10:00 AM at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:
Ascension Parish: Charles Caillouet
Avoyelles Parish: Wilbert Carmouche
Concordia Parish: Glenn McGlothlin
East Baton Rouge Parish: Gerren Sias
Iberville Parish: Gene Seneca
Lafayette Parish: Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Vice-chair
Pointe Coupée Parish: J. A. Rummler, Chair
St. Mary Parish: Carrie Stansbury, Treasurer
Terrebonne Parish: Patrick Thomas Gordon, Secretary
West Baton Rouge Parish: Julie Rose

Commissioners absent:
Assumption Parish: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
Iberia Parish: Chris Burton
St. Landry Parish: Pam Cannatella
St. Martin Parish: There is no appointee from St. Martin Parish.

Others present:
Debra Credeur, Executive Director
Gerard Overhultz, Laissez Faire, Inc.
Willie Fontenot, Friends of Atchafalaya
Luke Venable, LSU School of Landscape Architecture

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Commission Chair J. A. Rummler called the meeting to order.

Agenda Approval
Julie Rose moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Jennifer Guidry seconded the motion and the agenda was accepted unanimously.

Approval of March 20, 2013 Meeting Minutes
Patrick Gordon moved to approve the March 20, 2013 regular meeting minutes. Gerren Sias seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

Civil War and Reconstruction Sesquicentennial Committee
J. A. Rummler reported that 3 presentations in the Speaker Series have occurred, the next being Donald Frazier at the end of May in Baton Rouge and Marksville. Wilbert Carmouche explained Dr. Frazier’s presentation was expanded into a symposium featuring local historian presentations and site visits to Civil War battle sites. Debra reported the LA Department of CRT is planning Civil War commemorative events for next year has developed a process for promoting these, State Parks. and Heritage Area Civil War events on www.louisianatravel.com and through a statewide email list. Julie Rose, a member of the Lt. Governor’s Civil War Task Force, reported on plans for the Task Force to circulate a traveling exhibit.
J. A. Rummler distributed copies of a letter from the Pointe Coupée Historical Society to the Atchafalaya Basin Levee District regarding the historical significance of a site at Morganza, LA that is being considered by the District for a Proposed Borrow Area. The intent of the letter was to encourage the District and Corps of Engineers to consider an alternate site for proposed work.

**Land & Water Heritage Committee**

Trail Project
Luke Venable made a presentation on the Land and Water Trail project, the subject of his final project before graduating from the LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture. The presentation included driving, hiking, biking and paddling trail specifications and routing; and suggested video and graphics outlining the geological significance for use as kiosk content. The features of the presentation, met with favor by the Commission, are intended to be combined with self-guided tours of a trail of marked sites, an educational series and eventually a guided boat tour. There were suggestions and discussion about mobile phone applications, recruiting sponsors, combining existing trails, using levees as trails, investigating Rails to Trails as a means of connecting the parishes that don’t have levees, and more.

Debra reported confirmation of non-state funding is needed before decisions can be made about the order and length of time for completion of the project phases.

Other Agency Activities
Charles Caillouet reported that the Sierra Club is planning development of a current trail guide. The Atchafalaya Basin Program is planning to develop primitive campgrounds and is beginning to identify State lands.

**Education Committee**

Debra reported the curriculum is online at [www.atchafalaya.org](http://www.atchafalaya.org). State Printing will estimate the printing of the curriculum, and options for making the curriculum available to teachers are being discussed.

**Director’s Report**

1. **NPS and Federal Updates**
   - NPS is working on development of a Sustainable Tourism Guide.
   - At the Alliance of National Heritage Areas April meeting, there were discussions of the federal NHA legislation that will regulate feasibility studies, sunsets and more. It was announced that Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, having an approved Management Plan, is eligible for Tier II level funding this federal fiscal year. Past discussions about Tier II by the NPS indicated Tier II funding was proposed at $400,000 but this has not been officially adopted or confirmed.
   - Tier II level funding could possibly open doors for the Commission to develop a grant program as many heritage areas have. Debra is researching other NHA grant programs. Most heritage areas with grant programs now administer their programs based on the previous year’s funding due to the frequency and duration of Congressional continuing resolutions. The Commission discussed the ability of one staff person to handle the additional work certain to be generated by a grant program, as well as the increased requests for ANHA presence at events and other needs as the NHA grows.

   **Gerren Sias moved that a portion of increased federal funding be used for additional staff for the Management Plan implementation programs.** Jennifer Guidry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

2. **Administrative**
• Commission Meeting Dates are **JULY 10**, September 25 (4th Wednesday)      November 20 (3rd Wednesday)
• Election of FY 14 officers will be held at the July meeting.

3. J. A. Rummler and Debra Credeur made a presentation with to the Pointe Coupee Historical Society this month.

4. Projects
• There are several requests for signs to be added in a couple of parishes, and a couple of replacements installed. The cost estimate for this is approximately $8,000 and can be considered when federal funding is confirmed. There was a discussion about decals being used for promotional purposes instead for membership or partner programs to indicate support of the ANHA.
• The American Birding Association Guide is in first-draft form and undergoing review.

5. Marketing & Promotions
• Please like and post to our Facebook page if you use Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Atchafalaya-National-Heritage-Area/209051232475462](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Atchafalaya-National-Heritage-Area/209051232475462)
• LOT put a link to the French version of the video on our landing page for our Canadian campaign, which recently ended. The landing page offers a quick menu of interests for the Canadian to choose from for more information, and there are about 20 choices. After “New Orleans” (where Canadians fly into) the number one click-through was to the ANHA video.
• Louisiana Office of Tourism featured ANHA full page in the 2 publications being distributed at the International POWWOW, the premier travel show featuring 1200 buyers from 70+ countries.
• The Atchafalaya video is accompanying an exhibit just shipped to Lyon, France for a display period in a museum as well as at an international festival with attendance of 40,000.
• U.S. Gulf States Geotourism Program: National Geographic promotion—Anyone can post, small, rural, cultural attractions strongly encouraged at [www.usgulfcoaststatesgeotourism.com](http://www.usgulfcoaststatesgeotourism.com)

6. Organizations Update:
• Leave No Trace: ANHA is now a member and looking into how to work together on educational initiatives in each parish. Be thinking about audience and setting for your parish.
• LA Master Naturalist Program: Chapters are forming in Lafayette, Shreveport-Bossier, Lake Charles (New Orleans already formed).
• Research on forming a foundation or friends group is ongoing. Such a group could be valuable in fundraising.

Other Business
Chris Burton was unable to attend today’s meeting but had requested Debra distribute a letter from the State Historic Preservation Officer to LA DOTD and LA FHWY in support of the historic value of the Vida Shaw Bridge in Iberia Parish. The Cultural Landscape Assessment and the heritage mission of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area are referenced in the letter.

Announcements of upcoming parish events and other parish updates were made by the Commissioners.

**Gene Seneca moved to adjourn the meeting. Wilbert Carmouche seconded the motion and, passing unanimously, the meeting was adjourned.**