Atchafalaya Trace Commission/
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: March 8, 2017 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, March 8, at 10 a.m. at the Capitol Park Conference Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:
Ascension: Charles Caillouet
E. Baton Rouge: Gerren Sias
Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Secretary
Iberia: Chris Burton
Iberville: Clifford LeGrange
Lafayette: Jennifer Guidry, Chair
St. Martin: Aaron Flegeance
St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury, Vice Chair
Terrebonne: Mart Black, Treasurer
West Baton Rouge: Julie Rose

Commissioners absent:
Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
Concordia: Glenn McGlothlin
Pointe Coupée: J. A. Rummler
St. Landry: Herman Fuselier

Others present:
Debra Credeur, Executive Director; Ashley Herrick, Assistant Director; Alex Strader, Carbo Landscape Architects; Michael Sias; Maida Owens and Cheryl Castille, LA Division of the Arts; Lance Hatten, Jean Lafitte National Park and Preserve; Karen Westphal, Audubon Louisiana; Charles Reulet, LDNR; Willie Fontenot, Friends of Atchafalaya

Commission Chair Jennifer Guidry called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL
Carrie Stansbury motioned to accept the agenda. Gerren Sias seconded the motion and the agenda was unanimously accepted.

APPROVAL OF Jan. 18, 2017 MEETING MINUTES
Gerren Sias made a motion to approve the Jan. 18, 2017, regular meeting minutes. Wilbert Carmouche seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Louisiana Folklife Bayou Teche Project
Maida Owens presented about the Bayou Teche Folklife Project, which will document traditions and share them with the public. The project is in a preliminary phase now. Maida is determining what could and should be documented, what groups could use the research (audio recordings of interviews, photographs and consultants’ reports) for programming, etc. Next year she will host community meetings in each parish to see what the public is looking for. With this project she is not trying to duplicate current research but instead fill in gaps that exist. Maida is also working with two contractors on the Musical Instruments Project, which documents makers and repairers (for all types of musical instruments). The end product will be a map identifying all those makers/repairers who want to be included. Debra asked where we can see the people Maida is documenting to get ideas for programming and projects. Maida said she does not have funding available for projects and programming. Debra suggested that some of these tradition bearers could be speakers for the ANHA’s Educational Speaker Series. Cheryl Castille added that the Division of the Arts could possibly help to find grants for this as well. Jennifer agreed that there are a lot of ways the ANHA and commissioner’s organizations can work together using this research.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY REPORTS
NATURAL & OUTDOOR RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Trail Project Update
Debra said she and Ashley have been working diligently with the consultants on kiosk narratives and showed the Roadside Geology book they’re using as a reference. This part of the project has been like a hydrology boot camp. She asked commissioners to look at the list of site narratives included in their packets and explained that
these narratives are being shared with the Natural Resources Committee, commissioner of the parish, site managers and tourism directors in each parish. She asked commissioners to let her know if they have any information they want included. This phase of the project is scheduled to wrap up March 31, so please point out errors (but don’t re-write the entire narrative). The invitations to bid on kiosk production and installation and way-finding signage are posted. Bids are due March 15 and 16, so Debra will know at that time how much federal money will be taken up by this project. Charles Caillouet asked if there was a timeframe for installation. Debra said that the process involves state purchasing, which is not entirely in the ANHA’s control, but she estimates a mid-April start-date and would like to complete it in three months. Charles asked if the project could get slowed down in the bond commission or DOTD. Debra said the money is already dedicated for the ANHA, and DOTD will not be making these signs, so that should not be an issue. There have been some delays as expected because of multiple agencies and departments involved, and time involved getting permissions such as from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers District Real Estate office. The Morganza Spillway, for instance, is not solely-owned by the USACE so alternate sites are under consideration for that part of the story. Debra said if we had done this project a long time ago it would have been a benefit to previous programs and projects. When we find conflicting facts/stories for the kiosk narratives, we are presenting general information with detailed information reserved for the website. The brochure was also developed in this manner. She asked commissioners to submit any comments on the narratives by next Wednesday, March 15. Mart asked if the site list was set in stone. Debra said Phase I is capped at the 53 sites listed, but a Phase II list already has 6 sites that fit the criteria but didn’t make the deadline because of construction and other reasons. Mart suggested including the Bayou Terrebonne Waterlife Museum in Houma which Debra said is on the Phase II list. Debra said that when she knows more about kiosk installation dates, she will contact commissioners about possible ribbon cuttings.

Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser thanked Julie Rose for her service on the commission with a proclamation and reference letter. He also thanked the entire commission for its dedication to promoting the ANHA and the Atchafalaya Basin and asked them to reach out to him if he can be of service in some way. Debra thanked Julie again for her contributions to the commission. She said Julie is moving to the Baltimore National Heritage Area where there are exciting programs underway and Debra would provide an introduction to the NHA Director. Julie thanked the Lt. Governor, Debra and the commission and said she has learned so much and that Louisiana is all the better for the Atchafalaya Trace Commission.

Actually, the Basin Program commented on the Bayou Bridge Pipeline Permit, proposing that the pipeline should be buried deeper than the current draft permit requires. Charles Reulet seemed to be saying that the comment might have been only for specific areas where there are plans for restoration. I think that Don Haydel said at the FOA meeting that the Corps was in agreement on that change but it might have been Charles who said it.

In any case, if you say that the Basin Program proposed the change and the Corps is considering it, we should be ok.

Atchafalaya Basin Update
The Atchafalaya Basin Program proposed that the Bayou Bridge Pipeline be placed deeper in the ground than the current draft permit requires, and the USACE has taken this under consideration. The Wilson’s Boat Landing project is ongoing and will take about three months to complete. Charles reminded commissioners that, even though the DNR Atchafalaya Basin Program is almost out of money, the public can still submit nominations for the project evaluation process. Charles Reulet added that the ABP can’t fight for more money in the capital outlay budget without these nominations. A few projects that have been approved and will not cost a substantial amount of money include a walking trail at the Atchafalaya Welcome Center and a geocaching program, which should be ready in the second half of 2017. He said they are working on a cost-share program with a pipeline company for the depth restoration of Grand Lake project (the state will do the work and the company will reimburse them for part of it). Jennifer asked what “out of money” meant and for an historical overview of the ABP’s funding. Charles Reulet explained that funding was originally earmarked for projects and they eventually switched to the current nomination process. In recent years they also received approval to move
funding for stalled projects (ex. issues with landowner approval or Corps permitting) to other projects that can move forward, which is very beneficial. Gerran Sias asked if the stalled projects have to be re-approved in the future. Charles Reulet said that if the project issues could be resolved and funding became available for them again, they would not have to be re-approved. Clifford asked if cost-sharing had been considered for the Bayou Bridge Pipeline project. Charles Reulet said he thought The Nature Conservancy may have had a discussion about this but was not sure.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Speaker Series Update
Debra thanked Clifford for presenting to several area grammar schools about the Atchafalaya Basin and the ANHA. The last Educational Speakers Series event was the Eagle Expo Feb. 16-18 in Morgan City and the surrounding areas.

HISTORY & CULTURE COMMITTEE
Atchafalaya Welcome Center Exhibit Update
Charles encouraged commissioners to stop by the Atchafalaya Welcome Center to see the new exhibits. They are still working on sound for the artisan videos and trim work around some of the new monitors. He said the projector has been replaced with a new monitor that offers much better resolution.

SUSTAINABILITY
Debra said she is planning to attend an NPS sustainability workshop for national heritage areas this spring. Julie asked what had happened to discussions to form a 501(c)3. Jennifer said the discussion had stalled but not been forgotten in the wake of completing the projects we have going. Gerren asked when the ANHA’s funding sunsets. Jennifer said it will sunset in 2021.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE
1. Remaining meeting dates for 2017 are on the SECOND WEDNESDAY. Mark your calendars for May 10, July 12, September 13 and November 8.
2. The following commissioners have been reappointed for 3-year terms: Charles Caillouet, Carrie Stansbury, Wilbert Carmouche, Mart Black, Glenn McGlothin and J.A. Rummler. Seats currently needing appointments: St. Martin and West Baton Rouge parishes, and by May: East Baton Rouge and St. Landry parishes. Debra noted it is a good practice to stagger board member or commissioner terms such as eight for 3-year terms; and six for 2-year terms to decrease the chance of having too many new commissioners at once, if this is permitted by law (Note: It is not permitted).
3. The newly appointed Secretary of the Interior is Ryan Zinke from Montana.
4. 2017 Bartram Trail Conference: Today, March 8, is the last day to register for the national Bartram Trail Conference to be held in Baton Rouge March 24-26 with events at Magnolia Mound, LSU Herbarium and Library Special Collection, Rural Life Museum, Burden and Windrush Gardens, church and Pointe Coupee Parish tours (LeJeune Home and St. Francis Chapel). Go to www.bartramtrail.org.
5. The artisan video featuring NUNU’s won 2 Gold Addy awards (Cinematography and Video Editing) in the Baton Rouge chapter competition of the American Advertising Awards
6. An Advocacy Day in D.C. for heritage and preservation is March 15. The state historic preservation officer is attending and offered to update our congressional members (listed in handout) on the work of the ANHA.

OUTREACH
• EVENTS ATTENDED/HOSTED & MEDIA MENTIONS: Attended 2017 Eagle Expo Feb. 17 in Morgan City and NPS SER Training Jan. 10-12 in Atlanta; ANHA mentioned in Garden & Gun advertorial (April/May issue) with Louisiana Office of Tourism, The Daily Advertiser article about family fun in the Atchafalaya Basin
SOCIAL MEDIA: The ANHA Facebook account has 2,509 likes (+82 from Jan.)—and the page ranks 15th in likes out of 42 NHAs. This increase is purely organic (no ads used). Popular recent posts: Louisiana phrases (reach of 2K); Isle Dernière (reach of 3.1K); and Atchafalaya community in Basin (reach of 22.2K). The Instagram account, atchafalaya_nha, currently has 514 followers (+37 since Jan.). The ANHA Twitter account, AtchafalayaNHA, has 375 followers (+15 since Jan.).

OTHER BUSINESS
Commissioner Announcements
Commissioners announced upcoming events and projects in their parishes. Reports also included:

- Chris Burton: Festival of Live Oaks March 18 in New Iberia; Dragon Boat Race fundraiser March 25 for City Park
- Julie Rose: WBR Museum recently received a trail grant with several partners to build a trailhead to the top of the levee so visitors will be able to walk from the WBR Museum to the Old Ferry Landing site on the Atchafalaya Water Heritage Trail; National History Day is March 25; new WBR Museum exhibit about Frank Lloyd Wright opening March 25
- Wilbert Carmouche: Tour de Spring Bayou featured in Louisiana Life magazine; have installed wood duck boxes to incorporate into Tour de Spring Bayou; Egg-knocking competitions Easter weekend in Avoyelles Parish
- Carrie Stansbury: Eagle Expo went well; March 18 is Basin Brew Fest in Morgan City; April: Bayou Teche Bear Festival and Wooden Boat Festival
- Charles Caillouet: Flood of 1927 talk April 5 at Jeanerette Museum (Jennifer Guidry expressed interest in working with Charles on this); April 7 is Mississippi River Commission’s annual high-water trip; EBR/Ascension/Iberville parish dredging of Bayou Manchac
- Clifford LaGrange: Crawfish season has begun – the agricultural side is doing well but the Basin side is not doing as well (normal for the last decade or so)
- Jennifer Guidry: LA Folklore Society conference this weekend in New Iberia; remaining floating docks for Bayou Teche have been ordered and installation is scheduled for beginning of June

There being no further announcements or business, Wilbert Carmouche made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carrie Stansbury seconded the motion and, passing unanimously, the meeting was adjourned.