Atchafalaya Trace Commission/
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: September 13, 2017 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, September 13, at 10 a.m. at the Capitol Park Conference Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:
Ascension: Charles Caillouet
Iberia: Chris Burton
St. Landry: Caitlin Bussey
West Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron

Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Secretary
Iberville: Clifford LeGrange
St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury, Chair

E. Baton Rouge: Michael Proctor
Poitev: J. A. Rummler
Terrebonne: Mart Black, Treasurer

Commissioners absent:
Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
St. Martin: Aaron Peggance

Concordia: Glenn McGlothin
Lafayette: Jennifer Guidry, Vice-Chair

Others present:
Steven Fullen, Executive Director; Debra Credeur, Special Projects Manager; Justin Owens, Westaff contractor/Program Assistant; April Newman, LDNR/Atchafalaya Basin Program; Gerard Overhultz, Laissez Faire Inc.; Amy Tilley, La. State Parks; Jessica Dixon, La. Office of State Procurement; LeAnn Weill, La. Office of Tourism; Jennifer Lorenz, Profitable Non-Profits.

Commission Chair Carrie Stansbury called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL
Mart Black motioned to accept the agenda. Michael Proctor seconded the motion and the agenda was unanimously accepted.

APPROVAL OF JULY 19, 2017 MEETING MINUTES
Charles Caillouet made a motion to approve the May 10, 2017, regular meeting minutes. J.A. Rummler seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

SUSTAINABILITY
Carrie and Steven both addressed the Commission clarifying the concept of forming a nonprofit entity to support the sustainability efforts of the NHA. Jennifer Lorenz of Profitable Non-Profits gave a presentation to the Commission on the benefits of forming a land trust to serve as the NHA’s nonprofit sustainability partner, stating that the primary function of the land trust should be relative to water quantity (flooding) and quality (drinking, seafood, fishing, recreation).

ADMINISTRATIVE & BUDGET
The remaining 2017 Commission meeting is Nov. 8.

Water Heritage Trail
Steven advised that installation of the Water Heritage Trail kiosk foundations has suffered delays due to rainy weather. Debra relayed the contractor’s guarantee that all foundations will be installed no later than Sep. 14 and all kiosks will be installed no later than Sep. 22.

Atchafalaya Basin Update
Charles Caillouet addressed the Commission on water levels at Butte La Rose, explaining that the overall level has fallen since July, with levels spiking in correlation to periods of heavy rain associated with hurricanes.
Budget
Steven addressed the Commission on the following budgetary matters:

- The allocations and Cooperative Endeavour modifications for Fiscal Year 2016 and 2017 have been finalized and the funds are accessible
- Congress passed the Continuing Resolution on Sep. 8
- The appropriations package for Fiscal Year 2018 has passed out of committee and looks likely to be approved by the House this week and maintains Fiscal Year 2017 funding levels

Staff Changes
Steven advised that Debra has been officially moved to Special Projects Manager and her employment has been extended through January 2018. The Commission was also advised that the search for Assistant Director is ongoing, with interviews expected to begin Sep. 18 and a candidate tentatively being chosen by the end of September.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- The COOL Cooperative is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing at-promise youth with academic support, mentorship, and hands-on training through film education. Steven advised the Commission that COOL could possibly create “PSA”-style videos for the NHA.
- LASOAR (Louisiana Association of Sports, Outdoor Adventure, and Recreation) is a nonprofit Organization based in Lafayette that provides a wide variety of year-round youth sports programs held at multiple host locations. Steven advised the Commission of a possible partnership with LASOAR to further promote outdoor recreation and education in the NHA.
- The Rails to Trails Project is the proposed conversion of an old O&G railroad track located in St. Landry Parish into a walking/bicycling ingress and egress point adjacent to a portion of the Water Heritage Trail. Steven advised the Commission of a possible partnership with St. Landry Parish to promote the tourism-related benefits of this idea. Caitlin Bussey offered to join Steven in meeting with Parish officials on the matter.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

- The upcoming launch of the Water Heritage Trail was promoted at the Lt. Governor’s 2017 Louisiana Tourism Summit in New Orleans on Aug. 22 – 24.
- The Atchafalaya NHA “Quiz Wheel” was loaned to Atchafalaya Basinkeepers for the Brown Foundation Service Learning Event for grades K – 12, taking place on Sep. 12.
- One hundred sets of the NHA education curriculum was given to Atchafalaya Basinkeepers for distribution at various educational functions.
- Steven advised the Commission that he will be attending the Alliance of NHA’s meeting in Great Basin, Nevada on Oct. 9 – 13.
- Steven and Debra reminded everyone that October is Atchafalaya Heritage Month and that a request for proclamation has been submitted to Governor Edwards’ office.
- SOCIAL MEDIA: The ANHA Facebook account has 2801 likes (+158 from July) and the page ranks 14th in likes out of 42 NHAs. This increase is purely organic (no ads used). Popular recent posts: Martin Accordion workshop and showroom (reach of 2.1K); Adam Ponthieu Grocery Store/Museum (reach of 2.1K); and the Fete-Dieu du Teche boat procession (reach of 5.4K). The Instagram account (“atchafalaya_nha”) currently has 719 followers (+61). The ANHA Twitter account (“AtchafalayaNHA”) has 437 followers (+9).
- A photo of the State Capitol taken by former Assistant Director Ashley Herrick was chosen by the Bayou Krewe Ambassador Program as one of the top five images for the #OnlyLouisiana promotional campaign.
• Photos of maps donated by the Geology Dept. at LSU to the Atchafalaya Welcome Center, which were framed and are on display at the Center, were shown to the Commission.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS
Commissioners announced upcoming events and projects in their parishes:
• Angélique Bergeron mentioned the current Water Heritage exhibits at the West Baton Rouge Museum and the educational speakers who will be presenting there.
• Mart Black mentioned the upcoming Bayou Festival in Houma on Sep. 23 – 24.
• Wilbert Carmouche mentioned the formation of an Arts Council for Avoyelles Parish, and that the Council extends an invitation to Art in the Rafters, their annual membership drive and art show, on the first Thursday of October.
• Carrie Stansbury mentioned the Tour du Teche on Oct. 6 and the Harvest Moon Fest in downtown Franklin on Oct. 28.
• Caitlin Bussey mentioned the Fall Ramble & Tour of Homes on Oct. 28 in the town of Washington and the Tour du Teche on Oct. 6.
• Charles Caillouet mentioned the Hot Air Balloon Festival on Sep. 22, the Flambeau Music Fest on Oct. 7, and the Cajun Village Fall Fest in Sorrento on Oct. 28.
• Chris Burton mentioned the Tour du Teche on Oct. 6 and the Gumbo Cookoff on Oct. 14.
• LeAnn Weill of the Office of Tourism proposed adding a link on their website to the NHA’s website Events Calendar.

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