A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, January 31, at 10 a.m. at the Capitol Park Conference Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:
- Ascension: Charles Caillouet
- Iberia: Chris Burton
- Iberville: Clifford LeGrange
- Lafayette: Jennifer Ritter-Guidry, Vice-Chair
- Pointe Coupée: J. A. Rummler
- St. Landry: Caitlin Bussey
- St. Martin: Aaron Flegeance
- St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury, Chair
- Terrebonne: Mart Black, Treasurer
- W. Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron

Commissioners absent:
- Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
- Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Secretary
- Concordia: Glenn McGlothin
- E. Baton Rouge: Michael Proctor
- Terrebonne: Mart Black, Treasurer
- W. Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron

Others present:
- Steven Fullen, Executive Director; Justin Owens, Assistant Director; Amy Tilley, La. State Parks; Jessica Dixon, La. State Parks; Gerard Overhultz, Laissez Faire, Inc.

Commission Chair Carrie Stansbury called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL
Jennifer Ritter-Guidry motioned to accept the agenda. Caitlin Bussey seconded the motion and the agenda was unanimously accepted.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 8, 2017 MEETING MINUTES
Aaron Flegeance motioned to approve the November 8, 2017 regular meeting minutes. J.A. Rummler seconded the motion and the amended minutes were unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE & BUDGET
The next 2018 Commission meeting is March 7, 2018.

1. Steven advised the Commission that the fiscal year 2018 NHA funding-delivery Resolution remains in a delayed status.
2. Recently-received Educational Speaker applications received from LASOAR (Louisiana Association of Sports, Outdoor Adventure, and Recreation) and the NUNU Collective were presented to the Commission for review and approval. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry noted that such applications are usually reviewed in Committee instead of being reviewed by the full Commission during its regular meeting. She also noted that the applications were not complete. As such, the applications were remanded to the Education Committee for further review.
3. Payment to Traffic Solutions, Inc. (the installer of the replacement Atchafalaya National Heritage Area signs) had to be increased by $12,000 to cover the unanticipated costs associated with replacement of missing sign posts.
   - Steven has requested a status update from Traffic Solutions, Inc. relative to the installation of the new signs.
4. DNR’s Atchafalaya Basin Program has lost its source of funding, resulting in the resignation of Program employee April Newman, although it was noted that DNR is hopeful that funding will be forthcoming.
PARTNERSHIPS

1. Our affiliations with LASOAR (Louisiana Association of Sports, Outdoor Adventure, and Recreation), BREC, and LDWF continue to advance.

2. Steven spoke about the C.A.S.T. for Kids Program, which aims to expose children (who otherwise do not have the opportunity) to the sport of fishing and the enjoyment of the outdoors as well as educating children and their parents about the value of fish as a natural resource.
   - A request for $2,500 to host a fishing event was made to the Commission. After lengthy discussion, the Commission declined to approve the funds at this time due to possible conflicts with other events and some uncertainty about the level of necessary involvement by staff, recommending that the matter be discussed at a future meeting.

3. Steven reached out to the Louisiana School for the Deaf and the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired on the possibility of bringing together or sponsoring more fully accessible programming for Louisianans within the NHA. J.A. Rummel suggested programming focused on the history of the schools, referring by way of example to the burning of the School for the Deaf during the Battle of Baton Rouge during the Civil War.

4. In response to a request from Steven, Lt. Governor Nungesser approved $25,000 to be applied to a joint effort between the National Park Service’s Student Conservation Association, the Spring Bayou Restoration Team, LDWF, ANHA and the Lt. Governor’s office to fund the utilization of a trained cleanup crew to properly remove debris and trash, clear back bank-line encroachment and perform repairs to the boat launch at Spring Bayou beginning in April 2018 and lasting approximately one month.
   - Jennifer Ritter-Guidry requested that the minutes clearly reflect the fact that the $25,000 being provided for this project by the Lt. Governor’s office is coming from a source outside of the ANHA budget.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

1. Steven was a guest on the Gumbo Show on KANE Radio AM 1240 and has been asked by the station to occasionally return to the show as a guest.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA: The ANHA Facebook account has 2870 likes (+30 from November) and the page ranks 14th in likes out of 42 NHAs. This increase is purely organic (no ads used). Popular recent posts: Color-coded river basin map (reach of 4.4K); LDWF clearing of felled trees in Spring Bayou (reach of 4.1K); and a boudin ball recipe (reach of 1.4K). The Instagram account (“atchafalaya_nha”) currently has 793 followers (+50). The ANHA Twitter account (“AtchafalayaNHA”) has 460 followers (+9).

3. The Commission was advised regarding which of their nominees for the “Gator by the Bay” event had expressed availability and interest in participation.
   - After discussion, Jennifer Ritter-Guidry motioned that painter Melissa Bonin and woodworker Henry Watson be selected to represent the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area at the event. J.A. Rummel seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

4. As a visitor survey has not been conducted since 2009, a fresh survey will be drafted and forwarded to all Commissioners for their review and approval. Upon approval, the survey will be sent to the Atchafalaya Welcome Center for visitors to complete for the purposes of learning more about those who come to the ANHA.

SUSTAINABILITY:

A workshop on heritage area sustainability will be presented to the Commission at the March 2018 regular meeting by sustainability expert Augie Carlino.
OTHER BUSINESS

1. Laura Palmer, the founder and CEO of the Louisiana Association of Sports, Outdoor Adventure and Recreation (LASOAR) spoke to the Commission about her organization, explaining its mission and how it receives its funding. She also asked the Commission to consider the possibility of sponsoring an honorarium to allow biologists and other scientists to deliver lesson plans to children who participate in LASOAR programs.

2. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry advised that, once the completed Educational Speaker series applications have been received, the Education Committee will convene to review them. She also advised that the Sustainability Committee will convene to formulate questions to ask Augie Carlino during the March meeting.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS
Commissioners announced upcoming events and projects in their parishes:

1. Charles Caillouet: Ascension Parish is gearing up for Mardi Gras. The LSU State livestock show will be held February 10-17; the Louisiana Sportsman Show will be held March 15-18; and the Extreme Rodeo will be held March 21-24.

2. Cliff LeGrange: He gave a presentation in January at the Iberville Museum about the heritage of the Atchafalaya Basin. The Atchafalaya Room at the Iberville museum might be completed in February. The Bayou Bridge pipeline permit has been approved for Iberville Parish.

3. Caitlin Bussey: The “Bringing Amédé Home” event, featuring the unveiling of a forged steel statue of Amédé Ardoin, will take place March 11 at the St. Landry Parish Visitor’s Center in Opelousas.

4. Carrie Stansbury: St. Mary Parish is gearing up for Mardi Gras. This year’s annual Eagle Expo will include a new program called “Wings to Soar”.

5. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry: Lafayette Parish is gearing up for Mardi Gras, which will include a brand-new walking parade on Feb. 9th. The Vermilion Voyage is coming up on March 22.


7. Chris Burton: The primary Mardi Gras parade in Iberia Parish has already occurred and was a success.

8. Aaron Flegeance: The city of St. Martinville has eliminated its Mardi Gras parades because the events have gotten too large for the city to handle relative to safety and parking.

- Aaron Flegeance announced his resignation from the Commission, citing the health concerns of a family member. The Commission thanked him for his years of service.

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further announcements or business, J.A. Rummler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Aaron Flegeance seconded the motion and, passing unanimously, the meeting was adjourned.