A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, March 7, at 10 a.m. at the Capitol Park Conference Center in Baton Rouge.

Commission present:
Ascension: Charles Caillouet
Iberville: Clifford LeGrange
W. Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron
Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Secretary
Lafayette: Jennifer Ritter-Guidry, Vice-Chair
E. Baton Rouge: Michael Proctor
Pointe Coupée: J. A. Rummler

Commissioners absent:
Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
St. Landry: Caitlin Bussey
St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury, Chair
Iberia: Chris Burton
Terrebonne: Mart Black, Treasurer

Others present:
Steven Fullen, Executive Director; Justin Owens, Assistant Director; Augie Carlino, Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area.

Commission Vice-Chair Jennifer Ritter-Guidry called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL
Wilbert Carmouche motioned to accept the agenda. Michael Proctor seconded the motion and the agenda was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 31, 2018 MEETING MINUTES
As a quorum was not present, no motion for approval was made.

ADMINISTRATIVE & BUDGET
The next 2018 Commission meeting is May 2, 2018.

1. Steven advised the Commission that the fiscal year 2018 NHA funding-delivery Resolution, which needs 70 votes to pass, remains in a delayed status with 64 votes. Lt. Governor Nungesser sent a letter to all Louisiana Congresspersons requesting that they provide their support by voting yes on the Resolution.
   • Secretary Ryan Zinke laid out his 2018 goals for the Department of the Interior, which appear to mirror much of the mission of the National Heritage Area Program. Steven advised that he is hopeful that an increase in funding will result from the implementation of Secretary Zinke’s goals.
   • Jennifer Ritter-Guidry requested details relative to the Educational Speaker Series expenditures. Steven advised that a request for those details will be submitted to Nancy Watkins, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Louisiana Office of Tourism and, in turn, will be provided upon receipt to the Education Committee.

2. Steven suggested that, as DNR’s Atchafalaya Basin Program has lost its source of funding and uncertainty exists as to whether or not the Legislature will provide funding from a different source, the Commission should consider managing the program until DNR is once again able to manage it.

3. Traffic Solutions, Inc. has advised that installation of all Atchafalaya National Heritage Area signs has been completed, including an additional $16,000-worth of posts, concrete bases, mounting brackets and
other associated components which had to be replaced due to damage, deteriorated condition, or because those components were altogether missing.

- Charles Caillouet asked for clarification on whether the additional $16,000 was included in the 2016-2017 budget or if it was a part of the 2017-2018 budget. Steven clarified that those funds were included in the 2017-2018 budget.
- A final invoice has been requested several times from Traffic Solutions, Inc. since the completion of sign installation. They have yet to submit an invoice.

4. Contracts for (a) Educational Speaker Series events for the NUNU Collective in Arnaudville and for the Louisiana Association of Sports, Outdoor Adventure, and Recreation (“LASOAR”), and (b) the honorarium for both artisans who were selected by the Commission to attend Gator by the Bay have been submitted for approval from Lt. Governor’s office.

- Steven advised that the hotel rooms for both of the Gator by the Bay participants are being paid for by the Gator by the Bay Foundation.

5. By request of the Sustainability Committee, Steven reported that he has spent ~15 hours so far on writing and editing contracts, meeting with representatives of the National Park Service’s Student Conservation Association (“SCA”) and driving them to Spring Bayou to introduce them to representatives of the Spring Bayou Restoration Team (“SBRT”) and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (“LDWF”) relative to the upcoming Spring Bayou cleanup project (a joint effort between the SCA, 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).

- LDWF has indicated that, if necessary, they will donate a boat and driver for the duration of the project.

6. Assistance was provided to the Lt. Governor’s office staff in drafting letters of support for House Resolution 1002, which is intended to (a) increase funding nationwide for the National Heritage Area Program and (b) cause National Heritage Areas to become a permanent line item in the overall Federal budget. Assistance to the Lt. Governor’s office staff was also provided relative to identifying which state representatives and senators should receive those letters.

**OUTREACH & EDUCATION**

1. Steven:
- Met with representatives from the Louisiana Office of State Museums on February 5, 2018 to discuss possible partnership opportunities.
- Attended the Lt. Governor’s Assistant Secretary Meeting on February 6, 2018 during which the ANHA program was reviewed and communications initiatives were discussed.
- Met with representatives from LDWF on February 15, 2018 to discuss program partnership opportunities within Wildlife Management Areas.
- Met with representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on February 16, 2018 to discuss program partnership opportunities.
- Attended a Friends of the Atchafalaya meeting on February 27, 2018
- Drove representatives from the SCA to Spring Bayou on March 1 – 2, 2018 to introduce them to representatives from the SBRT and LDWF.

2. Steven and Justin:
- Attended the Eagle Expo in Morgan City on February 22 – 24, 2018.

3. Steven updated the Commission on the C.A.S.T. for Kids program, first discussed at the January 31, 2018 Commission meeting, advising them that four separate fishing events could be scheduled for each Saturday in October 2018 (“Atchafalaya Month”).

- Lt. Governor Nungesser has pledged to collaborate with Bass Pro Shops to get rods and reels and other fishing supplies donated
• Soft commitments have been received from numerous volunteer groups and individuals relative to helping the children fish.
• The full proposal for this event will be emailed to the Outdoor Committee.

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.

5. Steven suggested that the Commission consider absorbing DNR’s Geocaching Program until such time as DNR is able to fund it once again.

6. Printing of a new batch of ANHA tear-sheet maps is needed. However, an exhaustive search of physical files, electronic files, emails and email archives of former employees Debra Credeur and Ashley Herrick for full-size high resolution digital or physical copies produced no evidence of the maps. As such, quotes on re-designing and printing brand new maps have been requested.
• Michael Proctor offered to assist in the search for the digital files by reaching out to contacts he has within the Office of State Printing, provided that we are able to give him an approximate date range in which the last printing occurred.

7. New promotional materials have been ordered.

SUSTAINABILITY:
A presentation on heritage area sustainability was given to the Commission by sustainability expert Augie Carlino, who is the President and CEO of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

OTHER BUSINESS
1. The reappointment of Angelique Bergeron, Cliff LeGrange and Chris Burton to the Commission by their respective Parish Presidents is complete.
2. Requests for Commissioners to replace Glenn McGlothin and Aaron Flegeance have been sent to the Presidents of St. Martin Parish and Concordia Parish.
3. Charles Caillouet spoke about DNR’s Atchafalaya Basin Program, informing the Commission that the Program has lost its funding, although everyone associated with the program is waiting to see what DNR will do relative to getting funding restored.
4. Charles Caillouet informed the Commission about the latest river stage numbers and anticipated flooding in March and April. He explained that the Corps of Engineers establishes its baselines on the amount of river water passing through New Orleans and uses those data to determine which control structures will be opened and how many bays will be opened on each structure. The Corps’ stated optimum goal during flooding is to send 50% of the floodwaters down the Mississippi River and the remaining 50% down the Red and Atchafalaya Rivers.

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

1. Charles Caillouet: Attended the Friends of the Atchafalaya meeting, during which a lively conversation about the preservation occurring in the area took place. In connection with Augie’s presentation, he pointed out the number of abandoned cane mills throughout the ANHA, which could eventually be acquired, restored and rented out for use in weddings, concerts, television productions; etc. The Louisiana Sportsman Show will be held March 15-18; and the Extreme Rodeo will be held March 21-24.
2. Cliff LeGrange: Offered copies of his new book for sale at cost to the Commissioners.
3. Angelique Bergeron: Several lunchtime lectures are coming up at the West Baton Rouge Parish museum. The Juke Joint Room is nearly complete and will soon open to the public.
4. Wilbert Carmouche: Several St. Patrick’s Day and Easter festivals are coming up in Avoyelles Parish.
5. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry: Spoke about the Acadiana Food Alliance, which provides resources to food-related businesses as well as to the Acadiana community at large. NUNUs Creative Placemaking event will take place from April 22 - 26 in several communities around the greater Lafayette area.
6. J.A. Rummel: The Spring Street Festival in New Roads will take place on March 17. Parish officials have some concerns over rising river levels. The Commission was asked to consider the possibility of the ANHA serving as a sponsor for the upcoming 12th Annual Water Conference.

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further announcements or business, Jennifer Ritter-Guidry called for the meeting to adjourn.