Atchafalaya Trace Commission/Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: May 2, 2018 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, May 2, 2018 at 10 a.m. at the Capitol Park Conference Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:
Ascension: Charles Caillouet
Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Secretary
Iberia: Chris Burton
Iberville: Clifford LeGrange
Lafayette: Jennifer Ritter-Guidry, Vice-Chair
St. Landry: Caitlin Bussey
St. Martin: Carol Patin
St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury, Chair
Terrebonne: Mart Black, Treasurer
W. Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron

Commissioners absent:
Concordia: OPEN
E. Baton Rouge: Michael Proctor
Pointe Coupée: J. A. Rummler

Others present:
Steven Fullen, Executive Director; Justin Owens, Assistant Director; Janet Patin

As Commission Chair Carrie Stansbury had not yet arrived, Vice-Chair Jennifer Ritter-Guidry called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

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

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 31, 2018 AND MARCH 7, 2018 MEETING MINUTES
Chris Burton motioned to approve the meeting minutes from both the January 31, 2018 and March 7, 2018 regular meetings, as the lack of a quorum at the March meeting had precluded approval at that time for the January meeting minutes. Wilbert Carmouche seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Carol Patin was introduced to the Commission as the new representative for St. Martin Parish.

ADMINISTRATIVE & BUDGET
The next 2018 Commission meeting is July 11, 2018.

1. Steven presented the Director’s Report, advising the Commission of the following:
   a) Fiscal year 2018 NHA funding-delivery Resolution still remains in a delayed status.
   b) Educational Speaker Series contracts for NUNU’s Semaine de la Francophonie Creative Placemaking Summit, and the Outdoor Adventure Kids program by LASOAR (Louisiana Association of Sports, Outdoor Adventure, and Recreation), are in the final phase of the approval process.
   c) Contracts and trip preparations are finalized for the Gator by the Bay Festival in San Diego on May 10 – 13, 2018.
   d) The Waterway Improvement project being conducted at Spring Bayou by the National Park Service’s Student Conservation Association (“SCA”), is on schedule and progressing well, as per a letter from Mike Ducote, President of the Spring Bayou Restoration Team, which praised the efforts of the SCA team.
   e) The Commission was advised of line-item budget expenditures and remaining funds.
f) Traffic Solutions, Inc. has finally delivered all of the old Atchafalaya National Heritage Area road signs, and the extra new road signs (to be used in the event a sign needs to be replaced), to the warehouse on Foss Street.

ADVOCACY
1. Steven and Justin assisted Lt. Governor’s staff in the drafting of support letters for the National Heritage Area program. The letters will be distributed to state representatives and senators whose districts are in the heritage area.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION
1. The Commission discussed the $42,850 in remaining available funds within the FY 2018 budget. In order to take advantage of these remaining funds, the Commission was urged to advise Steven of any “shovel-ready” ANHA-applicable projects or programs they are aware of in their Parish.
2. Following Auggie Carlino’s presentation to the Commission at the March 2018 meeting, Steven took him to Morgan City for a two-day visit with representatives from Cajun Coast.
3. On March 21, 2018, Steven attended an LSGS meeting with J.A. Rummler.
4. Steven attended a Rails-to-Trails on March 28, 2018 to provide input and assist the group in its efforts to move ahead with project. It appears as though the OG Rail Program might form its own 501c3 in order to receive funds to push the project forward.
5. SOCIAL MEDIA:
   a) The ANHA Facebook page has topped the 3000-like mark, with 3009 current likes (+69 from March), and the page maintains its rank of 14th in likes out of 42 NHAs. This increase is purely organic (no ads used).
      i. Popular Recent Posts: Proposed 300-mile east/west bicycle route (reach of 7.3K with 207 likes); Water Heritage Trail site at Lake Dauterive (reach of 5.4K with 126 likes)
   b) The ANHA Instagram account (“atchafalaya_nha”) currently has 960 followers (+65 from March).
      i. Popular Recent Posts: Water Heritage Trail site at Blackwater Conservation Park
   c) The ANHA Twitter account (“AtchafalayaNHA”) currently has 475 followers (+6 from March).

COMMITTEE REPORTS
A. Natural & Outdoor Resources –
   a. Charles Caillouet attended a recent Friends of the Atchafalaya meeting, at which State Archaeologist Dr. Chip McGimsey gave a presentation on how the processing of various permit applications by the Corps of Engineers impacts the environment as well as those applicants. Ed Lyon, a representative of the Corps of Engineers, gave a similar presentation from the perspective of the Corps.
   b. Charles Caillouet presented the Atchafalaya Basin Update, advising that the water levels are once again very high. Cliff LeGrange mentioned that the high water levels are forecast to remain throughout crawfish season, meaning this season will likely be very successful. Philip Daigle mentioned that, unfortunately, the high water has a negative impact on many boat launches in the Basin because it completely submerges some ramps and parking lots.
   c. Charles Caillouet mentioned the ongoing Legislative debate relative to dredging restrictions in response to the Flood of 2016 (SB 430 and SB 490) and watershed maintenance.
   d. The Atchafalaya Basin Program has lost funding and is currently in a state of dissolution.
   e. Charles Caillouet spoke about the ongoing access restriction faced by sportsmen and professional fisherman in many areas of the Basin. Mart Black expressed his thoughts on the issue surrounding the access to Bob’s Bayou Black Marina being threatened by the Williams Land Company, leading discussion on possible ways the Atchafalaya Trace Commission could
assist in providing a solution to this issue. No solution was decided on and the matter was tabled.

f. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry recommended inviting Charles Reulet or Sarah Krupa to come address the Commission on the real-world on-the-ground issues in connection with the Atchafalaya Basin Program situation.

g. Steven and Caitlin Bussey met on March 28, 2018 with a representative of the Rails to Trails Program about the proposed walking/biking trail connecting Port Barre to Melville along the OG railroad trail.

B. History & Culture –
   a. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry reported on the Committee conference call which took place on May 1, 2018. During the call, it was determined that the ANHA website needs to be made more dynamic and less content-heavy. The Commissioners were asked to take time to review the website and ensure their Parish is accurately represented, and to let Justin or Steven know of any corrections that need to be made.

OTHER BUSINESS
1. Progress relative to finding the original digital design files for the ANHA tear-sheet maps has come to a standstill. In addition to scouring physical office files, Justin and Steven have reached out to the Office of State Printing, Miles Media, other offices within the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, and other outside entities who may have been involved in the past at any point in the design, editing or printing of those tear-sheet maps. All of those contacts have advised that they have found no evidence of the digital files or any other associated items related to the tear-sheet maps.
2. Justin has been working on the updating of the ANHA maps; e.g. updating of CVB website links where necessary, removal of the Vidalia Welcome Center which is now closed and the Capitol Park Welcome Center which no longer serves as a welcome center, and the addition of the logo and web address of the Water Heritage Trail. A print request for a batch of the updated maps has been submitted to the Office of State Printing.
3. Justin has submitted a request for the reprinting of a batch of the ANHA postcards, which have proved to be very popular items at welcome centers and events throughout the Area.
4. Steven reminded the Commission that, to date, only one kiosk site nomination has been received for Phase II of the Water Heritage Trail project and encouraged them to submit additional nominations.

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

1. Mart Black: Derby on the Bayou, a fundraiser for Terrebonne General Medical Center celebrating the Kentucky Derby and Cinco de Mayo at Orange Grove Plantation, is scheduled for May 5th; Also scheduled for May 5th is Tradewinds Family Day Fishing Rodeo at Tradewinds Marina in Cocodrie, LA; The Rougarou Ball at Municipal Auditorium in Houma, LA, and TFAE’s 18th Annual Run for Excellence in Downtown Houma, are both scheduled for May 12th; on May 25th, Live After 5, featuring St. Nixx in Downtown Houma.
2. Phillip Daigle, Sr.: The church fair in Pierre Part was a big success; Mr. Daigle recommended that Debra Credeur be formally recognized in some way for her years of service as the Executive Director of the ATC
3. Cliff LeGrange: Iberville Parish is gearing up for a big crawfish season; he is scheduled speak Saturday at Canary Islanders Association; relative to the access restriction issue discussed earlier by the Commission, he referenced the information on that matter contained in his new book; finally, he suggested that the Commission consider including the impact of oil and gas upon the ANHA on the History page of the website.
4. **Angelique Bergeron**: The West Baton Rouge Parish Museum’s new permanent exhibit, “Juke Joint”, is open and drawing quite a few visitors; an upcoming exhibit on the subject of rural ingenuity is in the development stage; the museum recently received a grant from the NPS to develop an educational series on Civil Rights.

5. **Carol Patin**: The annual Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival on May 4 – 6 is expected to draw record numbers of attendees.

6. **Wilbert Carmouche**: The Crossroads Festival is coming up on May 4 – 5; the annual Cachon de Lait Festival is scheduled for Mother’s Day weekend in Mansura; the Tunica Biloxi Pow Wow is scheduled for May 19 – 20; the Corn Festival is scheduled for June 7 – 8; the Avoyelles Arts & Music Festival will take place on July 4th.

7. **Jennifer Ritter-Guidry**: The Festival Internationale de Louisiane and the Semaine de la Francophonie Creative Placemaking Summit were both huge successes; she and her team plan to make follow-up visits to all the communities which participated in the Summit; the Brownfield Workshop is scheduled for May 15 at NUNU in Arnaudville.

8. **Carrie Stansbury**: Preparations are underway for the Edgar Rice Burrough’s DUM DUM 2018 event celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of the theatrical release of *Tarzan of the Apes*, which is coming up in August; the Miss-Lou High School Fishing Challenge is coming up on May 12; the Bikers on the Bayou Kickoff Party celebrating the 50th anniversary of the *Easy Rider* movie will take place in Franklin on July 15.

9. **Caitlin Bussey**: The Krotz Springs Sportsman’s Heritage Festival is coming up on May 24 – 26; National Travel/Tourism Week kicks off on May 9 at Evangeline Downs; Atelier de la Nature, a nature reserve and education center near Cecilia, is a forthcoming project by Dr. Brandon Ballengée.

10. **Chris Burton**: The Fishing Rodeo at Cypremort Point is coming up on July 4th.

11. **Charles Caillouet**: The Jambalaya Fest will take place on May 25; the restoration launch of the Historic Donaldsonville General Store & Museum at the Chef John Folse Building is scheduled for May 16.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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