Atchafalaya Trace Commission/
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: September 12, 2018 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, September 12, 2018 at 10 a.m. at the Capitol Park Conference Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:
Ascension: Charles Caillouet
E. Baton Rouge: Michael Proctor
Iberville: Clifford LeGrange
Lafayette: Jennifer Ritter-Guidry, Vice-Chair
St. Martin: Carol Patin
Terrebonne: Mart Black, Treasurer
W. Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron

Commissioners absent:
Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Secretary
Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr.
Concordia: OPEN
Iberia: Chris Burton
Pointe Coupée: J. A. Rummler
St. Landry: Caitlin Bussey
St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury, Chair

Others present:
Steven Fullen, Executive Director; Justin Owens, Assistant Director; Gerren K. Sias; Gerard Overschultz, Laissez Faire, Inc.

Vice-Chair Jennifer Ritter-Guidry called the meeting to order at 10:22 a.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

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

APPROVAL OF JULY 11, 2018 MEETING MINUTES
Angélique Bergeron motioned to accept the agenda. Carol Patin seconded the motion and the agenda was unanimously accepted.

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

1. Steven presented the Director’s Report, advising the Commission of the following:
   a) The NUNU contracts have been finalized and payment is being processed. LASOAR will be paid upon completion of all events covered under that contract.
   b) The Education Committee selected African American River Road Museum, ULL Dept. of History, Geography, and Philosophy for program funding.
   c) The National Park Service will be hosting a training seminar in Philadelphia in the near future (Date TBD). Steven advised that he would like to attend and bring one Commissioner, and that he will find out how the chosen Commissioner’s trip-related reimbursement would be processed.
   d) The National Park Service will also host a sustainability symposium for the Southeastern Division next January. Though the location has not yet been decided upon, Baton Rouge is being considered. When we have more information is received, a decision can be made on whether or not to also attend the Northeastern Division’s sustainability symposium. Steven advised that he believes we should attend as many of
these symposiums as possible to assist the Commission in designing and implementing its own sustainability program.

e) The Student Conservation Association Program report for the Spring Bayou cleanup project has been finalized and payment has been made.

f) A new internet hosting site/program may need to be purchased, as the current site has nearly reached the limit of its capabilities. Steven mentioned the expense involved with having current webmaster Paul Miller making modifications to the current site, suggesting a new more modern site would likely allow Justin to do most if not all of the processes that Paul Miller is currently contracted to take care of.

g) Governor Edwards’ Atchafalaya Month proclamation has been received. We are supporting three main Atchafalaya Month Events: Sugar Fest, Atelier de la Nature Art and Nature Festival, and the Voice of the Wetlands.

h) Our educational curriculum has been reviewed and Westaff contractor Cynthia Speer-Sanders is drafting all updates necessary for the revising/reprinting of the three volumes. Deputy Secretary Richard Hartley has secured the Lt. Governor’s support for this project, including the reprinting of the documents. The overview of the necessary edits and standard upgrades is expected to be completed within the next month. In addition to these revisions, the updated curriculum will include new graphics and lesson plans to meet or exceed current standards.

i) Parish-specific pop-ups for all of our partners (14 parishes, state partners, and other local partners) are being designed. Steven asked the Commission for images from their parishes to be used in the design. A follow-up email will be sent on Sept. 19th requesting a response by November 1st with images, logos, and text for the pop-up banners.

j) All of the First Time Fishing in the Atchafalaya Basin coloring books have been distributed and a reprint is needed. Charles Caillouet advised that the last batch was printed by the Louisiana Wildlife Association. The contact person there is Rebecca Triche.

k) A plan for the removal, preservation and display of the circa-1927 cypress flood-rescue boat (recently discovered in Concordia Parish) is currently being drafted by the Division of Archaeology and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The Commission will be given the opportunity to review and comment on the plan once the first draft is complete.

l) The eBird application on the “Birding” page of our website has be very successful.

**ADVOCACY**

1. Steven attended a meeting with the Mississippi River Commission in the offices of the Vermilion-Tech Teche Fresh Water Pumping Station on August 23rd. The importance of our partnership with USACE, the Teche-Vermilion Waterway Commission, and our partnerships with government agencies and other non-profits in the watershed was discussed. Following the meeting, a tour of the pumping station was conducted.
   a. Steven suggested hosting an event on the grounds of the Teche-Vermilion pumping station. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry suggested Acadiana Master Naturalists as a partner for such an event.

2. Steven attended an open-house event in Monroe, at which Senator Bill Cassidy discussed the reason the Caddo Lake NHA legislation was pulled from the Senate.
OUTREACH & EDUCATION
1. Steven and Justin attended the Lt. Governor’s Tourism Summit in Lake Charles from August 21-23.
   a) Steven asked the Commission to let him know if they are interested in attending next year’s summit, as funds can likely be allocated to reimburse their trip-related expenses.
2. Steven and Justin attended the Edgar Rice Burroughs “Dum Dum” Convention on August 2\textsuperscript{nd}, which celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of the making of the 1918 silent movie *Tarzan of the Apes*, which was filmed in the swamps of St. Mary parish.
3. Steven hosted the quarterly NPS Louisiana State Directors Meeting.
4. Justin attended the Louisiana Scenic Byways Program conference in DeRidder from July 24-25.
5. Steven met with representatives from Bike Baton Rouge to discuss partnership possibilities.
6. SOCIAL MEDIA:
   a) The ANHA Facebook page currently has 3263 likes (+109 from May), and the page’s rank in likes has moved from 14\textsuperscript{th} to 13\textsuperscript{th} place out of 42 NHAs. This increase is purely organic (no ads used).
      i. Popular Recent Posts: Department of Wildlife & Fisheries report on the bald eagle population (reach of 3.3K with 78 likes and 21 shares); Photo of the Evangeline Oak (reach of 4.4K with 104 likes and 38 shares)
   b) The ANHA Instagram account (“atchafalaya_nha”) currently has 1006 followers (+14 from July).
      i. Popular Recent Posts: “Canoes at Lake Martin” photo (150 likes)
   c) The ANHA Twitter account (“AtchafalayaNHA”) currently has 496 followers (+9 from July).
7. Cynthia Sanders expressed interest in managing a blog from our website. Justin reached out to webmaster Paul Miller for a price quote on designing and building the blog into our website.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
A. Natural & Outdoor Resources –
   a. Charles Caillouet presented the Atchafalaya Basin Update. He attended the most recent Friends of the Atchafalaya meeting, which didn’t have a quorum. During the meeting, discussion was had about expanding the cypress preservation program to include action relative to preserving the original portions of the Atchafalaya habitat.
B. History & Culture –
   a. The committee held a few conference calls and made several suggestions for expanding website content, which have been incorporated. Another conference call will be held in the near future to look at the second half of the management plan and to discuss the Phase 2 development for the Water Heritage Trail.
C. Sustainability –
   a. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry encouraged Commissioners to volunteer. She went on to mention that the funding for the ANHA is scheduled to sunset in 2021 and, while most NHAs have been successful in their attempts at recertification, the possibility exists that Congress might deny the renewal of funding.

OTHER BUSINESS
1. Another batch of ANHA logo lapel pins has been ordered. Steven mentioned that there is still $15,000 in the budget to spend on promotional materials and encouraged the Commission to send their ideas or suggestions for new materials to him or Justin.
2. Steven mentioned research being done by Tad Britt w/ the National Park Service on shell midden sites along the Gulf coast of Louisiana. Mr. Britt is seeking support with costs related to research, identification and mitigation (sites are sinking as ocean levels rise). He is scheduled to attend next Commission meeting.

3. Louisiana Swamp Base has requested assistance with the expenses related to printing their brand-new brochure.

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

1. Charles Caillouet: The 2nd Anything Outdoors Fall Fest occurs September 15th; the Hot-Air Balloon Festival occurs September 21st.

2. Clifford LeGrange: The Iberville Parish Heritage Club will meet at the Iberville Museum on October 4th; the Swamp Life Expo is coming up on October 6th. Cliff suggested we consider designing and producing an ANHA challenge coin as a “thank you” to our partners.

3. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry: The Bayou State Book Talk Series is underway at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) through November; ULL is partnering with the Louisiana Historical Association (LHA) for a preservation workshop on October 5th and December 10th to create a baseline for preservation procedures. Registration for the workshop is done through the LHA website. Next Spring, the ULL History department will host and 8-part series on preservation training, leading up to fieldwork next summer. ULL is also hosting folklorist Roger Mason on Oct. 11th at the Hilliard Art Museum on the ULL campus for a presentation on his work in Louisiana. The TECHE Project has been installing kiosks along Bayou Teche.

4. Mart Black: Bayou Festival occurs September 15th in downtown Houma; the Crafting Cajuns festival occurs September 29th.

5. Angélique Bergeron: The West Baton Rouge Museum will host a lunchtime lecture about the relocation of the Aillet House on September 20th; the Country Roads Supper Club will host an event at the West Baton Rouge Museum’s Juke Joint house on the evening of Sep 30th; Sugar Fest is coming up in October; Angélique asked the Commission for nominations of artisans or craftspeople, the Veterans Parade occurs November 4th.
   a. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry suggested Steven and Justin begin compiling a list of artisans and craftspeople who live and work in the ANHA.

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further announcements or business, Mart Black made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Angélique Bergeron seconded the motion and, passing unanimously, the meeting was adjourned.