



Atchafalaya Trace Commission/
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: March 10, 2021 Meeting

A meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 10 a.m. As a result of the Governor's proclamation, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

Commissioners present:

Charles Caillouet, Ascension
Darrel Rivere, Assumption
Wilbert Carmouche, Chair, Avoyelles
Christine DeMyers, East Baton Rouge
Chris Burton, Iberia
Clifford LeGrange, Iberville
Stephen Pellessier, Lafayette
J.A. Rummler, Pointe Coupée
Carrie Stansbury, Treasurer, St. Mary
Mart Black, Co-Chair, Terrebonne
Angélique Bergeron, Secretary, West Baton Rouge

Commissioners absent:

Linda Gardner, Concordia
Herman Fuselier, St. Landry
Coach Patin, St. Martin

Others present:

Rebecca Lasell, Jean Lafitte National Park
Charles Hunt, Jean Lafitte National Park
Morgan Crutcher, Governor's Office of Coast Activities
Kristin Sanders, Office of Cultural Development
Justin Lemoine, Atchafalaya National Heritage Area
Caroline Byrne, Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

I. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Wilbert Carmouche called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Co-Chair Mart Black led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Caroline Byrne took roll and Justin Lemoine identified commissioners not in attendance.

II. Agenda Approval

Chairman Carmouche called for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. **Co-Chair Black made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Darrel Rivere. With no oppositions and no rejections, motion carried unanimously (11-0) with Linda Gardner, Herman Fuselier and Coach Patin absent.**

III. Minutes Approval

Chairman Carmouche called for a motion to approve minutes or to approve minutes with corrections. **Rivere made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Seconded by Angélique Bergeron. Motion carried unanimously (11-0) with Gardner, Fuselier and Patin absent.**

IV. 2021 Reauthorization Update

Lemoine updated commissioners on reauthorization efforts. ANHA legislation sunsets in October 2021. ANHA staff had a call with Rep Graves' office on legislation language. Rep Graves will introduce the house bill, and his office secured the support of the entire Louisiana congressional delegation.

ANHA staff is working with state Sen Paige Cortez on a resolution in support of reauthorization from the Louisiana legislature.

Lemoine reiterated that reauthorization of the Atchafalaya NHA has the full support of the Louisiana delegation. Bills should be submitted within the next few weeks. The bill is asking for straight 15-year reauthorization and has received bipartisan support. Lemoine hopes the bill will be submitted and passed by May 2021.

Lemoine encouraged commissioners to continue to send letters of support. ANHA also received a resolution from the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government supporting program reauthorization, courtesy of Co-Chair Black.

V. Executive Director Update

Lemoine reviewed the executive director report.

Lemoine is currently working with other DCRT agencies on the NPS budget justification. He will send reports once that is completed. ANHA received \$336,000 in funds from NPS last year and anticipates \$400,000 in funds this year.

The strategic planning contract continues internal signature circulation. LaFargue is eager to begin on the project. Once the contract is approved, LaFargue and ANHA staff will reach out to stakeholders for meetings. The strategic planning process should take approximately four months.

ANHA engaged Tele-Louisiane for French language translation, and the company is currently translating the Water Heritage Trail website. ANHA has also submitted a contract for French language translation for all ANHA communications.

Byrne shared ANHA's new grant tracker on the website. She also shared the new interactive map and encouraged commissioners to email her with updates and suggestions. Byrne updated commissioners on website analytics and Lemoine shared that our web developer noted the ANHA website has the most traffic out of any other website he manages.

ANHA engaged graphic designer Megan Barra to update the ANHA logo and marketing collateral. ANHA should receive the first draft of the logo next week. The updated branding should be completed by the middle of April. After the logo is updated, ANHA will engage Barra to redesign the tradeshow booth and banners. Additionally, the booth and banners will be bilingual.

ANHA staff engaged CARBO and Debra Credeur on phase two of the Water Heritage Trail. Staff will likely explore modifications and expansions to the trail toward the end of the 2021 calendar year.

There is a small database of ANHA brown signs that need to be replaced. ANHA staff located small road signs, but ANHA will have to pay for large brown signs. Approximately five to six signs need to be replaced, and each sign costs about \$5,000-\$6,000. Lemoine will reach out to commissioners who still need to send sign inventories.

Lemoine reviewed upcoming ANHA meetings. Staff will meet with Harold Schoeffler on March 11. The team is traveling to Eunice to document cultural heritage products from Key of Z Rubboards and Savoy Music Center. ANHA staff's trip to Bayou Pigeon has been rescheduled for March 16. Atchafalaya will present to the Morgan City Rotary Club in April. ANHA staff will also travel to Cane River NHA in April to discuss heritage area functions and reauthorization with Rebecca Blankenbaker.

Charles Caillouet thanked Lemoine and Morgan Crutcher for presenting to the Friends of the Atchafalaya meeting in January.

VI. Grants Update

Byrne reviewed updates for the 2021 grant cycle. The competitive grant application period is May 1-31, 2021. The Collateral Organization Sponsorships and Small Fund Grants categories have been omitted from the competitive grant program and reallocated to the new small fund grant program, which will accept applications for grants up to \$1,500 on a rolling basis. Byrne will email graphics and information for commissioners to share.

VII. LaNERR Project

Morgan Crutcher of GOCA presented on the LaNERR project. The group is looking at several zones across the state to house a national estuarine research reserve. One of the sites is in the Atchafalaya area. Crutcher reviewed the process and teams involved in site selection. The three zones that have advanced are Atchafalaya, Barataria and Pontchartrain.

More information on the project can be found at www.laseagrant.org/deltanerr.

Lemoine served on the site selection group and was able to review the data that narrowed down the three zones. Additionally, this is the first public announcement on the three sites that have moved on in the site selection process.

VIII. Other Business

A. Comments from Public Attendees (if any)

Caillouet and Clifford LeGrange updated commissioners on the status of the Atchafalaya River over the last few months. LeGrange noted the Atchafalaya Basin fisheries benefit from some flooding, and the Atchafalaya Basin Task Force should explore adaptive water management to aid the crawfish and fishing industry as needed. Rivere agreed that this has been done in the past and, therefore, should be a plausible solution.

IX. Commissioner Announcements

Ascension: Caillouet noted that Tour Ascension rebranded to “Louisiana’s Sweet Spot.” The company launched a new website that includes information on events. He noted everyone is excited about getting out and starting up events again.

Assumption: Rivere shared that the Assumption Parish Police Jury just passed the second phase of the master drainage plan so Assumption can start participating with other parishes. The recreation district is starting to open up in the parish for sports, and events may be able to be revisited.

Avoyelles: Carmouche shared that events have started to pick up with the movement into Phase 3. Currently, events are mostly local. Fishing tournaments in Spring Bayou are scheduled. The Trials to Treasure Passport Program has been a success. There will likely be events around Easter to celebrate egg knocking. Avoyelles is the Egg Knocking Capital of the World, and Carmouche will send information on this to Byrne to share on social media. Carmouche noted events updates will be posted on www.travelavoyelles.com.

East Baton Rouge: The library system made several cultural events available online. The Baton Rouge Botanic Garden is having an event on March 13 related to the Louisiana Iris and native pollinator plants. The Louisiana Governor's Climate Task Force is identifying strategies to reduce greenhouse gases across the Louisiana economy. Christine DeMyers noted the group is taking public proposals until April 30. Proposals can be submitted at <https://gov.louisiana.gov/page/climate-initiatives-task-force>.

Iberia: Chris Burton shared that Shadows-on-the-Teche hosted the Arts and Crafts Show March 6-7, 2021. He noted things are picking up and anticipates there will be other live events forthcoming.

Iberville: LeGrange noted that boat launches have been busy and that there has been lots of fishing activity. Lemoine asked LeGrange to keep ANHA posted on events around the boat launches. LeGrange also offered basin tours to commissioners.

Lafayette: Stephen Pellessier noted that things are starting to open up in Lafayette. The Natural History Museum will open April 10, and he expects a surge in outdoor activity. Pellessier also noted that the Wildlife Department is at a fiscal crossroads and ANHA should stay updated on happenings and decisions. Lemoine agreed.

Pointe Coupée: J.A. Rummler shared that things are opening up but there are no major events to report. Bergeron shared the Spring Car Show is March 13.

St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury noted that the Cajun Coast CVB is starting to see more visitors. A birding event is scheduled for April 17 to celebrate Migratory Bird Day. Bayou to Main Marketplace and the Bayou Teche Music Series are scheduled for April 3. There will be a shopping promotion in May and a culinary event in June. ANHA will stay updated on possible involvement in these upcoming events.

Terrebonne: Black shared there is a lot going on in March. On March 12, Matt Chauvin is playing at Bayou Terrebonne Distillers. March 18 is the Warriors and Whiskey yoga event at Bayou Terrebonne Distillers. March 26-27 is the Mardi Gras parade of Rods.

March 27 is the Southdown Plantation marketplace, Over Under Tunnel Run and Grand Caillou White Boot Cleanup. The four area museums are open. More information can be found at www.houmatravel.com.

West Baton Rouge: Bergeron shared that the Louisiana Creole Voices lecture starts tomorrow. Cafe Francais continues on the first Friday of the month. March 14 is Old Time Jam at 3 p.m. Happy Hour is returning to the West Baton Rouge Museum. Exhibits are also opening at the museum. May 22-23 is the WBR Kite Fest.

Jean Lafitte: Charles Hunt shared the cultural centers are slowly resuming normal operations, although they are still dealing with AC issues in Eunice. They are getting out in the Eunice community and recently hired two French-speakers that work in the park. Hunt also shared information on the Underrepresented Community Grant. The due date is March 31 and more information can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/preservation-grants/community-grants.html>

X. Adjourn

Lemoine noted ANHA is planning for the next commission meeting in May to be in-person. He will coordinate as the date gets closer.

Carmouche thanked everyone for participating. With no other comments, he asked for a motion to adjourn. **Black moved to adjourn. Rivere seconded. With no objections, motion carried unanimously (11-0), and the meeting was adjourned.**