

Atchafalaya Trace Commission/ Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: May 15, 2019 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, May 15, 2019 at 10 a.m. in the 4th Floor Conference Room of the Capitol Annex in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:

Ascension: Charles Caillouet

E. Baton Rouge: Michael Proctor, Treasurer

Pointe Coupée: J. A. Rummler

W. Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron, Secretary

Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Chair

Iberville: Clifford LeGrange

Terrebonne: Mart Black, Vice-Chair

Concordia: Linda Gardner

Lafayette: Wes Davis

Commissioners absent:

Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr.

St. Martin: Carol Patin

Iberia: Chris Burton

St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury

St. Landry: OPEN

Others present:

Steven Fullen, Executive Director; Justin Owens, Assistant Director; Cynthia Sanders, Director of Programs, Outreach, and Partnerships; David Dahlquist, TECHE Project, Tad Britt, National Park Service; Gerard Overhultz, Laissez Faire, Inc.

The meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m. by Chair Wilbert Carmouche, followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Vice-Chair Mart Black.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Linda Gardner motioned to accept the agenda. **Mart Black seconded the motion** and the agenda was **unanimously accepted**.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 9, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Mart Black motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the January 9, 2019 regular meeting. **Charles Caillouet seconded the motion** and the meeting minutes were **unanimously approved**.

ADMINISTRATIVE & BUDGET

The next Commission meeting is July 10, 2019.

1. Steven presented the Director's Report, advising the Commission of the following:
 - a) Working with the CRT review team and the Lt. Governor's general counsel, Justin has developed a now-standardized method regarding the processing of grant and contract documents. Justin is having success in working with them and progress is finally being made towards getting payment issued for all of our outstanding grants.
 - b) H.R. 1049 is still stalled in Committee, but Steven has been advised that there is some support for it.
 - c) A meeting is scheduled for this afternoon (May 15) with Doug Bourgeois to finalize details relative to Mart Black, Angélique Bergeron and Wilbert Carmouche attending the Congres Mondial Acadien.
 - d) The canopy tents and retractable pop-up banners have, at long last, been delivered.
 - e) Steven attended several meetings with Office of Tourism employees following the finalization of ANHA's transfer from the Lt. Governor's office.
 - f) After July 1, Steven will reach out to UNO relative to creating a new visitor profile for ANHA.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

1. Steven updated the Commission on the ongoing revision of the ANHA three-volume educational curriculum. Following a meeting between Steven, Cynthia and Richard Hartley, procedural guidelines were established and a systematic search for educational contractors will soon begin. Cynthia and Steven have received contact information for individuals in the education field provided by the Division of Archaeology. The contacts will be utilized for updated curriculum input.
2. Steven has coordinated with Lafayette Travel and the Lafayette Consolidated School system to develop a pilot program for student field trips. As the program develops, artist Brandon Ballengee's Atelier de la Nature organization will be recruited to provide programming.
3. Cynthia gave a summary of her attendance at the Gator by the Bay in San Diego. She was pleased at how well-received
4. Wilbert Carmouche gave a summary of his attendance at the Western Canada Summit.
5. Steven will attend two upcoming sport-fisher tourism summits, the first in July and the second in August. Commissioners were encouraged to attend and Steven advised that funding can be made available.
6. Steven met with Sharon Calcote to discuss partnership opportunities with the Byways program.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Natural & Outdoor Resources –

- a. Charles Caillouet presented the Basin report, informing the Commission of the goal of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) to keep river flow in New Orleans to 1.2 million sq. ft. per minute or lower. At this time, the COE does not think it will be necessary to open the Morganza Spillway, but the situation is precarious and they are monitoring it very closely. The Ohio River appears to have crested at Cairo, Illinois. Atchafalaya Basin water levels at Butte La Rose are above the media level, but are not high enough to necessitate the opening of the Morganza Spillway.
- b. Cliff Legrange advised that water levels should be falling by this time of year, but they are not. Levels remaining high will have a significant negative impact on this year's crawfish season and also require fishermen to continue catching crawfish into the fall. He also expressed regret over the danger posed to land-borne wildlife by the water levels.
- c. Charles Caillouet presented the National Weather Service 28-day prediction graph, which is based on a 16-day period of rainfall at Baton Rouge. According to the graph, water levels are higher and falling more slowly than predicted. Current levels throughout the Mississippi Valley Watershed are at 200% of normal water levels.

B. Sustainability –

- a. Mart Black advised that the Committee conducted a teleconference on March 4.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. J.A. Rummler suggested that Justin create a LinkedIn page for ANHA.
2. David Dahlquist, of the TECHE Project, provided to the Commission an overview of the TECHE Project's kiosk and signage programs, a cooperative endeavor project for which they seek funding assistance.
3. Tad Britt, of the National Park Service, provided to the Commission an overview of his agency's alternative mitigation strategy program, for which he is seeking funding assistance. The objective of the program is to identify endangered traditional cultural archaeological sites and implement mitigation strategies to save those sites.
4. SOCIAL MEDIA:
 - a) The ANHA Facebook page has 4278 current likes (+180 from March), and the page is ranked 13th in likes out of 42 NHAs. This increase is due to organic reach.

- i. Top Recent Post: Water Heritage Trail site at Cypremort Point (reach of 8.8K with 123 likes and 73 shares);
- b) The ANHA Instagram account (“atchafalaya_nha”) currently has 1070 followers (+12 from March).
 - i. Top Recent Post: Photo of abandoned café at Bayou Manchac in Prairieville.
- c) The ANHA Twitter account (“AtchafalayaNHA”) currently has 520 followers (+6 from March).

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioners announced upcoming events and projects in their parishes:

1. Wes Davis: The Teche-Vermilion freshwater district renewed its millage for another 10 years.
2. Charles Caillouet: The annual Jambalaya Festival will occur May 24 – 27 in Gonzales.
3. Linda Gardner: For six consecutive Saturdays beginning Jun 22, CBS will air video of the Major League Fishing tournament which took place in Concordia Parish.
4. Mart Black: The Bud & Burger competition will take place on June 15, while Coastal Day will take place on June 19.
5. Wilbert Carmouche: The Tunica-Biloxi PowWow and the annual Corn Festival are coming up.
6. Angélique Bergeron: The Rural Tourism Summit will take place on May 16 at the West Baton Rouge museum. A showing of “Green Book Guide to Freedom” will take place at the Manship on May 17 at 7 p.m. The third Sunday of each month will be the Cajun music jam at the West Baton Rouge Museum. A lunch & learn w. Bryan Wagner will take place on May 22 at the West Baton Rouge museum. The museum’s Underground Railroad exhibit currently on display is drawing considerable foot traffic.
7. Cliff LeGrange: The new Atchafalaya Basin permanent exhibit room will open on May 25 at the Iberville Museum in Plaquemine.
8. J.A. Rummler: At the 13th annual Louisiana water symposium at LSU earlier this month, a shallow aquifer connecting the Mississippi River valley to surface waters was discussed. A recommendation was made to invite Wade Crest with the USGS to give a presentation at an upcoming Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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