

Atchafalaya Trace Commission/ Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Minutes: January 9, 2019 Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, January 9, 2019 at 10 a.m. in the Capitol Park Event Center in Baton Rouge.

Commissioners present:

Ascension: Charles Caillouet

Iberville: Clifford LeGrange

Mary: Carrie Stansbury, Chair

W. Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron

Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Secretary

Lafayette: Jennifer Ritter-Guidry, Vice-Chair

St. Martin: Carol Patin

E. Baton Rouge: Michael Proctor

Pointe Coupée: J. A. Rummeler

Terrebonne: Mart Black, Treasurer

Commissioners absent:

Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr.

St. Landry: OPEN

Concordia: Linda Gardner

Iberia: Chris Burton

Others present:

Steven Fullen, Executive Director; Cynthia Sanders, Director of Programs, Outreach, and Partnerships; Justin Owens, Assistant Director; Gerard Overhultz, Laissez Faire, Inc.; Wesley V. Davis, Bayou Vermilion District.

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Vice-Chair Jennifer Ritter-Guidry 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 NOVEMBER 7, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

Commission Chair Carrie Stansbury noted that, as a quorum was not present for the entirety of the November 7, 2018 meeting, there were no official minutes to approve. **Mart Black** motioned to acknowledge the record of the November 7, 2018 regular meeting. **Wilbert Carmouche** seconded the motion and the record was **unanimously acknowledged**.

ADMINISTRATIVE & BUDGET

The next Commission meeting is March 13, 2019.

Steven introduced Cynthia Sanders as the new Director of Programs, Outreach, and Partnerships for ANHA.

1. Steven presented the Director's Report, advising the Commission of the following:
 - a) Issues with our payment-processing system (including the OnBase database) implemented last year by the Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism's ("CRT") Office of Management and Finance ("OMF") continue to delay payment of completed contracts. OMF now has up to three months to process a request, and they are taking the full three months with all requests.
 - i. Carrie Stansbury asked who is responsible for overseeing the financial transactions of the Commission. Steven advised that OMF oversees these transactions because, while ANHA is legislatively a department within CRT, it is under the management of the staff of the Office of the Lt. Governor.
 - ii. These issues continue to delay the design and manufacture of the logo outdoor canopy tents and pop-up banners that Justin spoke about during the November 7, 2018 meeting.
 - b) Steven advised that he is creating a new application document to allow educators to request financial sponsorship of educational field trips. The question was raised regarding whether or

not sponsorship must be limited to schools within the ANHA. Steven advised that he will let the Commission know as soon as he gets the answer to that question.

- c) Due to the Federal government shutdown, the scheduled National Park Service (“NPS”) training seminars in Atlanta and Philadelphia, which Justin and Cynthia were scheduled to attend, were cancelled.
- d) Cynthia has been working on an initial group of posts for the new blog feature on the ANHA website. Steven asked the Commission to feel free to submit requests or ideas for future material.
- e) Steven advised that there will be several opportunities through April 2019 to attend Boards and Commissions training. Workshops from 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. are scheduled for January 28, February 25, March 25, and April 29, 2019.
- f) The end-of-year NPS reporting has been submitted to the Southeast Regional Office and the Washington Office. ANHA ended the year with a 1:4 ROI due to new match tracking processes developed in coordination with CRT.
- g) Steven mentioned the upcoming Congres Mondial Acadien, an annual conference held in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island that promotes unity between all Acadian communities throughout the world. He advised the Commission that funding will be made available to any Commissioner who would like to attend the conference.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

1. Steven explained the Black History Month Programming being presented next month by BREC involving two “BREC On the Go” vans which are used to bring educational programming to needy communities within East Baton Rouge Parish. BREC is in search of funds to assist in the administration of this program and Steven asked the Commission to consider authorizing ANHA funds for that purpose. Steven also mentioned an African American Foodways program event also scheduled for Black History Month.
 - a) J.A. Rummeler asked about partnering with Islenos groups such as Canary Islanders, or other groups for similar ethnic programming opportunities. Steven offered himself, Justin and Cynthia to represent ANHA to any such ethnic group organizations which the Commission believes would be appropriate.
2. Cynthia briefed the Commission regarding her completed work on updating the three-volume educational curriculum, emphasizing the overwhelming response from educators who expressed a desire for interactive digital programming for students.
 - a) Carrie Stansbury invited Cynthia to come to Morgan City to attend a homeschooling program hosted by Cajun Coast in conjunction with the Eagle Expo next month, as it presents another opportunity for feedback from educators. Carrie also advised that she plans to apply for ANHA funds to assist in the administration of this program.
3. Steven presented his request that Commission meetings be held in different parishes throughout the ANHA in order to mitigate lengthy travel by certain Commissioners. The possibility of holding the meetings on different days of the week was also discussed.
4. Justin attended the Friends of Atchafalaya meeting on the evening of November 27, 2018 at the Atchafalaya Welcome Center in Breaux Bridge.
5. Steven attended the Louisiana Book Festival in downtown Baton Rouge, as well an advisory meeting of the Poverty Point Commission, an Assistant Directors meeting with the Office of Cultural Development to discuss overlap in education projects and programs, and a meeting with BREC on Black History Month programming.
6. **SOCIAL MEDIA:**
 - a) The ANHA Facebook page has 3863 current likes (+135 from November), and the page maintains its rank of 12th in likes out of 42 NHAs. This increase is mostly due to organic reach, although a handful of posts enjoyed increased reach via paid promotions.
 - i. Top Recent Post: Article about Poverty Point (reach of 25.1K with 141 likes);

- b) The ANHA Instagram account (“atchafalaya_nha”) currently has 1041 followers (+30 from November).
 - i. Top Recent Post: Photo of Water Heritage Trail kiosk at the Marguerite Moffett Audubon Sanctuary in Chauvin.
- c) The ANHA Twitter account (“AtchafalayaNHA”) currently has 503 followers (+0 from November).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Steven advised the Commission that he will prepare and send out a survey to everyone for the purpose of organizing dates and times for Committee teleconferences.

A. Natural & Outdoor Resources –

- a. Charles Caillouet presented the Basin report, informing the Commission that the water level in the Basin remains extremely high. Carol Patin mentioned that conditions are very similar to those that produced the catastrophic flooding of 1973. Charles Caillouet expounded on Carol’s comments by explaining the flow rates of the Mississippi, Red, and Atchafalaya Rivers and how the Corps of Engineers manages that flow with its control structures.
- b. Charles Caillouet attended a Gov’s Advisory Commission meeting along with Brian Lasina from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (“CPRA”). It was noted how often the Atchafalaya Basin and surrounding areas were mentioned during the meeting.
 - i. Steven offered to invite Brian to the next Commission meeting to provide an update on the Atchafalaya Basin Program.
- c. Cliff LeGrange explained why last year’s crawfish season was such a success, contrasted with the problems the industry is facing this year due to such high waters. He also mentioned the early ending of deer season by LDWF because of the high water.
- d. Charles Caillouet concluded his report by mentioning statements made at the Gov’s Advisory Commission meeting relative to efforts by CPRA to get involved in managing sediment for the purpose of increasing water movability within the Basin. This is a long-term project that will eventually cost ~\$550 million. Mart discussed Terrebonne Parish’s involvement in this program.

B. Sustainability –

- a. Steven once again stressed the importance of making progress on our sustainability plans, as per the request of NPS. He went on to advise that he will organize a Committee teleconference prior to the next Commission meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry addressed the Commission stating that, as she mentioned during the November 7, 2018 meeting, she must now resign from the Commission. She tendered her resignation effective immediately and introduced Wes Davis to the Commission as her nominated replacement. Jennifer also expressed her desire to remain involved with the Sustainability Committee due to the ongoing work that is necessary. Steven recommended appointing her as an ex-officio Commissioner, to which the Commission unanimously agreed.
2. Carrie Stansbury advised the Commission that she would open the floor to accept nominations for new Commission officers, stating that she wished to step down from her role as Commission Chair.
 - a. **Mart Black nominated Wilbert Carmouche for *Commission Chair*. Wilbert accepted and the Commission unanimously approved.**
 - b. **J.A. Rummeler nominated Mart Black for *Commission Vice Chair*. Mart accepted and the Commission unanimously approved.**
 - c. **Wilbert Carmouche nominated Angélique Bergeron as *Secretary*. Angélique accepted and the Commission unanimously approved.**

d. Mart Black nominated Michael Proctor as *Treasurer*. Michael accepted and the Commission unanimously approved.

3. With all new Commission officers installed, Carrie closed the nomination process.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioners announced upcoming events and projects in their parishes:

1. Charles Caillouet: A scoping meeting hosted by the Corps of Engineers to inform the public on the Amite River and Tributaries project, which addresses problems with dredging the Amite River, is being held at 6 p.m. on January 10 at the Corps offices in New Orleans. All interested persons are invited to attend.
2. Carol Patin: The Bayou Bridge Pipeline lawsuit has been completed, with affected landowners being awarded only \$75 apiece in damages.
3. Cliff LeGrange: The East Grand Lake restoration project is of great importance due to its impact on the ANHA and the sportsmen who use it. Bayou Plaquemine will have new boat launch constructed by Iberville Parish. Suggested the Water Heritage Trail kiosk at Bayou Plaquemine, currently located directly across from the Iberville Parish jail, be moved somewhere else. The Catholic diocese of Baton Rouge shut down Bayou Pigeon and Bayou Sorrel churches, leading a group of citizens to form a 501 (c)(3) and obtain the lease on Bayou Pigeon property in order to save those church buildings from being demolished. Angélique was thanked for her substantial work on translating a 19th century French document into English.
4. Mart Black: In partnership with BTNEP, Terrebonne Parish is implementing a program utilizing discarded Christmas trees to construct coastal erosion barriers. Student volunteer groups have been organized to provide the labor necessary in loading/transporting/unloading of the trees. Mardi Gras season begins with a parade on Feb. 22, followed by numerous parades throughout the season.
5. Wilbert Carmouche: All Mardi Gras celebrations in Avoyelles Parish will be packed into a single weekend on Feb. 23 - 24. Wilbert will attend the Canadian Snowbird Conference in Florida and bring ANHA brochures and tote bags to distribute. Along with Jennifer Ritter-Guidry, Wilbert is participating in the Miss/Lou tourism initiative project.
6. Michael Proctor: The Louisiana Marathon, one of the qualifying races leading up to the Boston Marathon, is Jan. 19-20. Top Golf is opening a location in south Baton Rouge.
7. Carrie Stansbury: The annual Eagle Expo is coming up in February, along with the Water and Nature Expo on February 23. Brittany's Project will host a car show in Franklin on March 16. The Songs on the Bayou songwriting festival will run from March 25 – 29.
8. Angélique Bergeron: The latest featured exhibit at the West Baton Rouge museum appears on this month's cover of Country Roads magazine. A reception will be held on January 20 to open a new sculpture exhibit at museum. A travelling Blues exhibit will be on display at the museum from February 6 – 9, while an exhibit on movement, art and music will be featured in April along with an exhibit on the Underground Railroad. The West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitor's Bureau will host a kite festival in April.
9. J.A. Rummier: The Pointe Coupée Arts Council will host a series of music events this spring. The National Barrel Horse Association's Barrel Race Competition will take place in April at the Pointe Coupée Multi-Use Center. The Pointe Coupée Historical Society will host a jazz brunch April 7 at the LeJeune House outside New Roads.
10. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry: Thanked the Commission for supporting Deep South Digital project event in December. An Eight-week workshop will be hosted this spring by the History Dept. at ULL. Previously unseen photograph negatives by Greg Guirard have been donated to the Center for Louisiana Studies. A draft proposal for ANHA funding of the development and digitalization of these undeveloped negatives and slides will be submitted to the Commission. Outsourcing of the digitalization process is necessary due to the poor condition of some negatives and slides. A Louisiana Folklore Society meeting is coming up on March 22 - 23 in Houma.

ADJOURNMENT

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