**Atchafalaya Trace Commission/**

**Atchafalaya National Heritage Area**

# **Minutes: September 4, 2019 Regular Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission (Commission), managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), was held Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 10 a.m. at the Capitol Park Event Center in Baton Rouge.

**Commissioners present:**

Assumption: Phillip Daigle, Sr. Ascension: Charles Caillouet Avoyelles: Wilbert Carmouche, Chair

E. Baton Rouge: Michael Proctor, Treasurer Lafayette: Wes Davis St. Martin: Carol Patin

St. Mary: Carrie Stansbury Terrebonne: Mart Black, Vice-Chair

W. Baton Rouge: Angélique Bergeron, Secretary

**Commissioners absent:**

Concordia: Linda Gardner Iberia: Chris Burton Iberville: Clifford LeGrange

Pointe Coupée: J. A. Rummler St. Landry: OPEN

**Others present:**

Steven Fullen, Executive Director; Justin Owens, Assistant Director; Cynthia Sanders, Director of Programs, Outreach, and Partnerships; Catherine Daigle.

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. by Chair Wilbert Carmouche, followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Phillip Daigle.

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

**Mart Black motioned** to accept the agenda. **Carrie Stansbury seconded the motion** and the agenda was **unanimously accepted.**

**APPROVAL OF MAY 15, 2019 MEETING MINUTES**

**Michael Proctor motioned** to approve the meeting minutes from the May 15, 2019 regular meeting. **Carol Patin seconded the motion** and the meeting minutes were **unanimously approved.**

**ADMINISTRATIVE & BUDGET**

The next Commission meeting is November 6, 2019.

1. Steven presented the Director’s Report, advising the Commission of the following:
   1. The process for grants and contracts has now been standardized. Additionally, all grant applications will now be preceded by a proposal written by Steven, which will be submitted to the Lt. Governor’s office for approval. Only after receiving approval from the Lt. Governor’s office will the request for permission to enter into the agreement be uploaded into the Louisiana Office of Tourism’s (LOT) internal database, where it will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate LOT personnel.
   2. H.R. 1049 is still stalled in Committee, but the bill now has the support of 118 Congresspersons.
   3. A contract commissioning Miller Studios, L.L.C., the entity which created and maintains the ANHA website, to provide a complete overhaul of the site, including new features, new color schemes, updated photographs, a redesign of site menus; etc. has been approved and work is underway.
   4. Steven has opened a line of communication with various contacts in an effort to develop partners who can take on the task of creating the new visitor profile for ANHA.
   5. The ANHA has a current balance of $1.6 million which must be spent by October 16, 2021.

**OUTREACH & EDUCATION**

1. Steven updated the Commission on his outreach efforts since the May 2019 meeting. He attended the following meetings, sessions and programs in support of ANHA:
   1. Assistant Directors Meeting with Office of Cultural Development (discussing overlap in education products and programs.)
   2. Legislative and Budgeting meeting of with the Lt. Governor’s executive staff.
   3. Ancient Mound Commission meeting
   4. Louisiana Wildlife Foundation meeting
   5. Education Curriculum Consultation meetings
   6. Communications Meetings
   7. Azalea Trail groundbreaking
   8. TECHE Project main street (Justin and Cynthia also attended)
   9. Partner meeting with McGee’s Landing
   10. The addition of Marksville as a possible Main Street USA project
   11. BREC partnership meetings
   12. Fete Du Teche
   13. Tourism Summit
   14. ICAST Orlando
   15. Louisiana Sportsman Show
   16. Baton Rouge Gallery partnership meeting
   17. Mobile Museum Meeting (new design being handled by the Office of Cultural Development’s Division of Archaeology)
2. Steven briefed the Commission on the level of participation by ANHA staff during the recent Lt. Governor’s Travel Summit. Though ANHA has been under the supervision of the LOT for several months, no reference to ANHA appeared in the Summit brochure, nor was it or its staff mentioned in any presentations given by LOT staff, nor was it invited to give a presentation of its own. The only participation offered to ANHA staff was a space for a promotional display table. Steven advised that he did not know why this happened.
   1. Steven also expressed his belief that the mission of the Atchafalaya Trace Commission is more closely aligned with the Office of Cultural Development (OCD) and, as such, should be moved there from the LOT.
   2. Carrie Stansbury gave her recollection of when ANHA was originally incorporated into the LOT and subsequently removed and placed directly under the supervision of the Lt. Governor’s office due to misalignment of missions, as well as other issues surrounding interference by the LOT relative to how ANHA was using its funds.
   3. Steven expressed his opinion relative to ANHA being placed back under the supervision of the LOT and advised the Commission on the continuing roadblocks encountered by staff relative to the processing of grants and contracts.
3. Steven advised the Commission on the updated matrix for its Master Plan.
4. Cynthia will be travelling throughout the ANHA to meet with current and potential partners on the subject of the curriculum update and other potential projects.
5. Cynthia gave her report, updating the Commission on the progress of the curriculum resource guide update, her development of new outreach and partner support programs, and the ANHA Blog. In closing, she encouraged the Commission to send her any input they may have relative to her projects.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Natural & Outdoor Resources –
   1. Charles Caillouet presented the Basin report, informing the Commission of the following:
      1. After a record-setting high-water spell, which impacted fishing and crawfishing, waters are finally receding.
         1. Carol Patin clarified that the 2019 crawfish season failed to meet expectations.
      2. Representatives from the Nature Conservancy and Atchafalaya Basin Program toured various areas within the Basin and, as a result, were motivated to further their conservation efforts.
      3. A recent uptick in the number of major accidents on the Basin bridge is alarming.
   2. Carrie spoke about the low water level of the Atchafalaya River at Morgan City, which has resulted in the recent appearance of sandbars..
2. Sustainability –
   1. Steven thanked Mart Black for taking on the task of drafting the by-laws necessary for 501(c)(3) incorporation.
   2. Mart recommended procuring the services of an attorney or Certified Public Accountant who is knowledgeable on the subject of 501(c)(3) incorporation.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. SOCIAL MEDIA:
   1. The ANHA Facebook page has 4793 current likes (+515 from May), and the page is ranked 12th in likes out of 42 NHAs. This increase is due to organic reach.
      1. Top Recent Post: Eucharistic procession along Bayou Teche (reach of 9.3K with 44 likes and 87 shares);
   2. The ANHA Instagram account (“atchafalaya\_nha”) currently has 1080 followers (+10 from May).
   3. The ANHA Twitter account (“AtchafalayaNHA”) currently has 539 followers (+19 from May).

**COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioners announced upcoming events and projects in their parishes:

1. Wes Davis: The Festivals Acadiens et Créoles is coming up on October 10-13 in downtown Lafayette.
2. Phillip Daigle: Several recent health concerns have forced him to miss past meetings, but he is better now and happy to be in attendance. A museum and welcome center are under development in Pierre Part and construction is expected to begin soon.
3. Charles Caillouet: The “Anything Outdoors Fall Fest” and the Hot Air Balloon Festival are coming up in October. The Friends of the Atchafalaya were recent recipients of a grant from a local group and plan to partner with ANHA on a future project. \***Charles, feel free to add the other things you mentioned, e.g. a Pow-wow in November and the Wildlife Federation convention and passed resolutions**\*
4. Michael Proctor: Spoke about the disappointment he experienced during a recent visit to a State historic site. An employee was unable to answer any questions he had about the site. As such, he recommended to staff that, when making those types of contacts, attempts should be made to ensure the contact is familiar with ANHA and its mission.
5. Angélique Bergeron: The Cajun French Music Association will host a jam session on the first Sunday of each month at the West Baton Rouge Museum. A new Blues-music-themed exhibit is now on display at the Museum. The State recently designated the city of Port Allen as a Cultural District. SugarFest is coming up next month. Numerous attendees at Congres Mondial Acadien were very knowledgeable about the lesser-known rural areas of Louisiana. A suggestion was given to ANHA staff to revive the French immersion excursion program. \***Angélique, I know I missed a few things here. Feel free to add them if you’d like**\*
6. Mart Black: Spoke about the Congres Mondial Acadien in New Brunswick in August, which was a very successful event that he was glad to have attended. While there, he was unexpectedly asked to give a short speech during a conference he attended. The Louisiana pavilion was, by far, the most popular pavilion, with huge numbers of visitors mentioning that they have visited Louisiana before and cannot wait to visit again. The Louisiana pavilion featured Acadian music each afternoon and, within moments of kicking off, was filled to capacity.
7. Wilbert Carmouche: Voiced his agreement with Mart regarding the success of Congres Mondial Acadien.
8. Carrie Stansbury: The “From Berwick Bay to Etouffee” shrimping exhibit is now on display at the State museum in Patterson. The Tour du Teche, Berwick Lighthouse Festival, Chitimatcha Pow Wow, and Harvest Moon Festival are all coming up next month.
9. Carol Patin: The receding water levels in the Atchafalaya Basin have brought large numbers of sports-fishing enthusiasts to Lake Henderson.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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