

20141125 - FOA Board meeting - 6:30 PM - Delahoussaye Station

Attendees

Charles, Willie, Charlie, Jim, Carolyn, Ray
Pam, Rebecca, April, Woody, JoAnn

Charles - opened preliminary discussion before

Background information offered by Woody Martin of Delta Chapter of Sierra Club

The Sierra Club Executive Committee considered the suggestion of Harold Shoemaker to propose designation of portions of Lake Fausse Pointe, Lake Dauterive and Grand Avoille Cove as a National Monument or National Park. The ExCom was divided on the proposal with some members objecting on the grounds that traditional uses might be restricted. Woody decided that FOA might be a better organization to lead the discussions because we don't have the same divisions.

The central tenet of the proposal is to limit the destruction of the remaining old cypress trees around the lakes. The current proposal would not limit other traditional uses, like crawfishing, fishing, and powered recreation.

Marty Beasley, former Administrator of the LA Office of State Lands told FOA in October that he thought the idea was a good one, but had no resources available to survey the extent of the State-owned land and suggested that we try to get a Federal agency on board to lead the effort.

At the October meeting, the FOA Board discussed a tentative date of January 24 for a public meeting and Woody has tentatively reserved the Henderson Town Hall for the meeting. The Board will decide whether to proceed with the plan.

The Sierra Club has approached the Chitimacha tribe about the proposal and has received unofficial support.

The proposed Area would include State-owned land within the three lakes, would not propose to take any private land, and would not include currently designated areas, such as Lake Fausse Pointe State Park. It would not be a National Wilderness Area nor a National Park because those normally carry restrictions on access and hunting and/or fishing.

Charlie opened the official meeting at 7 PM, after being caught in traffic.

The Board approved the agenda: working meeting to decide approach to handling Sierra Club Request for FOA to lead public input effort for National Conservation Area in Basin

Charles recapped Woody's background presentation for Charlie

Discussion of the Proposed Conservation Area in the western part of the historic Atchafalaya Basin

Some options for the designation are National Preserve, Conservation Area or National Monument. Charlie still prefers the National Monument designation because it can be exercised by the President, without Congressional action, although that avenue is becoming more difficult as the Congress attempts to tighten the limits on Presidential Action.

The Board reviewed the current informal proposals made by Harold Shoemaker and Woody's latest interpretation and arrived at the following conclusions:

The proposal should be for some type of "conservation area" with the following characteristics:

The primary goal should be to preserve the remaining resources.

Preservation projects might include:

flora, especially native cypress and tupelo;

fauna, including fish, birds, reptiles and amphibians;

wetlands;

estuary areas, including breeding areas for a special type of eel identified in the area;

public access;

and cultural, historical and aesthetic resources.

Commercial access would be allowed but with conditions requiring sustainable plans for extraction of designated resources. It is not clear who would manage enforcement of conditions.

Recreational hunting and fishing would not be limited beyond the limits on other State-owned land in the area and would be managed by the appropriate State or Federal agencies.

Provisions would be made for development of a restoration plan for the lakes in order to offset some of the damage caused by levees, pollution and accelerated sedimentation caused by human activities.

Possible agencies which might manage the Federal area are:

US Forest Service, US Dept. of Agriculture

Bureau of Land Management, US Dept. of the Interior

US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Dept. of the Interior

National Park Service, US Dept. of the Interior

The initial preference of the FOA Board is for a National Monument area, managed by the National Park Service, but the results of public input and discussions with the agencies involved could change this conclusion. A second choice would be a National Preserve, a type of National Park Service protected area

The working name of the Area is Graineà Volée Cypress Preserve National Monument.

The Board liked the use of the traditional spelling of one of the three lakes in the area, based on a characteristic plant product in the lakes, the lotus seed, combined with the cypress tree, which is a focus of the preservation effort.

The Board voted to authorize President Fryling to create a committee from the membership to pursue the development of a National Monument or other type of conservation area in the traditional Atchafalaya Basin.

Woody Martin and Charlie Fryling will co-chair the new Cypress Preserve committee.

Woody Martin volunteered to work on the committee and to draft an introductory letter from the FOA President, describing the effort and the currently proposed area.

The following members volunteered or were suggested to approach interested parties in the area concerning the effort:

Charles Caillouet will act as liaison with the National Heritage Area, canoe groups, and photography interests;

Lu Cutrera should be our liaison with the local parishes and conservation efforts in the lakes;

Woody Martin will represent the Sierra Club and will keep Harold Schoeffler in contact with the effort;

Ray Brassieur will talk to the Chitimacha Tribe, the New Acadia group and other historical/cultural groups and the Teche-Vermillion Freshwater District;

Jim Delahoussaye will liaise with the Archaeology community;

the committee will endeavor to inform all area legislators and public officials of the status of the effort and to solicit input from them; and

April Newman and Sara Krupp will keep the Atchafalaya Basin Program and its Research and Promotion Board informed on the activities.

The Secretary will add Harold Shoeffler to the Advisors List and to the Committee list.

Old Business

Reports

Charles

Secretary's report

The President reported that the Board approved the minutes from the August meeting.

There was no meeting in September.

Because he was absent from the October meeting the Secretary will contact Karen Westphal to get notes and will create a draft version of the minutes from that meeting.

Treasurer's report

The financials have not changed since July.

Web site update

The web site continues to be updated.

New Business

Plans for upcoming activities

Mississippi River Commission high-water-trip meeting should occur in the spring.

Partnership activities

The Atchafalaya Crowd-funding campaign with LWF and the Boy Scouts is still in planning and should be up in December. Charles and Rebecca are working on it.

Upcoming Events

Corps Henderson SEIS

Corps Recreation SEIS

ANHA/Trace Commission Meeting January 7, 2015, 10AM, Capitol Park Welcome Center

Mississippi River Commission river trip meeting - TBD

Next meeting place and time

December 23, 2014 (fourth Tuesday)

President Fryling Home at 6:30 PM

It will be a Christmas Party with minimal business.

adjourned at 9:30 PM