

20150331 - FOA Board meeting - 6:45 PM - Butte LaRose**Attendees:**

Board Members: Ray Brassieur, Charles Caillouet, Jim Delahoussaye, Carolyn Delahoussaye, Charlie Fryling,

Advisors/Members: Pam Caillouet, Sara Krupa, Woody Martin, April Newman, Ben Pierce (SwampBase Director)

Guests: Andre Lyon (Documenter)

President Charlie Fryling opened the meeting at 6:45 PM.

The Board approved the standard agenda.

All attendees introduced themselves.

Special presentation: Ben Pierce, SwampBase

Ben Pierce gave the group an update on the status of the SwampBase operation and thanked the Friends for the recently completed Atchafalaya Campaign.

Ben noted that this will be the third summer of operation and the available trips are sold out, as is the 2016 season. There are 8-11 coed trekkers per group, including two adults and one guide. SwampBase will own 84 boats this year and 72 will be on the water at any given time.

The adventure trek season takes place in June and July and the treks run 61.6 miles, start at Port Barre, and the group paddles through Indian Bayou Recreation area, stays at houseboats on Henderson Lake and on Sheriff's Island in Lake Fausse Pointe and ends up at Myette Point. Crews camp at primitive campsites on State Land. Crews are encouraged to pick up trail trash and learn about the importance of the wild areas. The trips are proving to be an excellent opportunity to change opinions about the value of the swamp.

The Evangeline Council is working with the State and with the Camp Atchafalaya Board to plan and construct a permanent facility on State Land in Catahoula to provide a staging facility for SwampBase and an accessible meeting, training and camping facility for public use. The concept is based on "Camp for All" near Houston. The new facility would operate year-round. During the adventure season, SwampBase crews would be prepared for the trek at the facility. They are now using University of Louisiana at Lafayette facilities.

SwampBase is planning to introduce a new trail on the east side of the Floodway and will pilot the trail at the end of this year's season. The new route will take paddlers from Grand River, through Bayou Sorrel, Indigo Bayou and Murphy Lake, down the Atchafalaya Main Channel, through Bayou Chene and take out at Patterson. The trip will take five days, cover 71.5 miles and will be much more of a challenge for experienced trekkers.

Along the way, the Evangeline Council has continued to work on clean-ups and tree-planting activities in the Basin, planting 50,000 trees since the Atchafalaya Basin commitment was made.

In discussions about the Atchafalaya crowd-funding campaign, Ben indicated that he had found out how Ann Lowry, the winning contributor got involved in the campaign. She attended a presentation made by one of the Evangeline Council Scouters and wanted to contribute to the program, so she was directed to the Atchafalaya Campaign. This is an example of how our project worked in concert with the other promotion activities of the Council.

Ben volunteered to let Ann know about the next westside meeting and to invite her to attend.

Old Business

Reports

FOA Officer reports

Secretary's report

The Board approved the minutes from the February meeting.

Board email activity was discussed and there were no official actions necessary to follow up on emails.

Treasurer's report

Balance as of 12/31/2014: \$2,970.63

+ Net Income for 2015: \$1,690.61

= Total Capital: \$4,661.24 (Regions: \$3,451.82; PayPal: \$1,209.42)

- Dedicated funds for Atchafalayaks: \$2,400.00

= Available funds: \$2,261.24

Webmaster report

Events continue to be posted to the web site.

Updates to minutes and documents on the site are still pending and should be completed soon.

FOA Committee Reports

Cypress Preserve Designation - Charles Caillouet, Woody Martin, Harold Shoemaker

Adeline Swamp Coastal Forest Conservation Initiative project

The CPRA CFCI project south of Lake Fausse Pointe is near agreement with the landowner - see attachments for details.

Harold met with Senator Cassidy's local guy and sent pictures to the Senator

Senator Cassidy may come down - Harold is waiting for a response

Bayou Portage Dredging

Harold reported that dredge spoil from the project was dumped into cane fields and that the contractor did a good job of avoiding damage to trees in the dredging process. The first phase is complete; there is no sediment trap; there was no need to dredge Bayou Portage to 8 feet because it was already that deep.

Harold has a Boy Scout working on reflective paint signs on six un-lighted platforms in the Floodway and the Lakes and one is completed.

Coastal Land Loss

Harold noted that Texas is not losing marsh like we are because they made better decisions about oil and gas exploration.

Atchafalayak

The SwampBase Atchafalayak Campaign is completed; funds have been transferred and a check was written at the meeting to SwampBase for \$2,400 for two kayaks. The Piazza book will be presented to Ann Lowrey.

Heritage Area update - Charles Caillouet

At the March meeting of the Trace Commission, it was announced that Jeffrey Carbo Landscape Architects was selected as the contractor for the ANHA Heritage trail. The project's team includes Suzanne Turner Associates, Center for Planning Excellence, LEO, LLC, Stantec and The Nature Conservancy. The Commission has already done quite a bit of preliminary research, so now the contractor will be able to use this information to get started. ANHA Executive Director Debra Credeur noted that the initial list of proposed sites is still a work in progress, so sites can be submitted, and that the contractor will begin to focus now on feasibility and sustainability of potential sites. An expected outcome of the trail is that it will complement projects that parishes are already doing.

Atchafalaya Basin Program (ABP) Update - April Newman

Buffalo Cove Status -

The Corps hopes to be complete by the end of 2015.

Mississippi River Commission low-water-trip meeting presentation

Don Haydel made a presentation at the MRC hearing in Baton Rouge and emphasized the problem of extended delays in Water Management Unit design, engineering and construction efforts. Buffalo Cove

has taken years to complete from the initial authorization to where we are today. Don requested faster completion of projects and warned other partners to be prepared for a long wait.

2016 LA Budget

There is apparently no line item for ABP administration. It has not been removed but is included in the Secretary's total budget. This could be an omen of things to come but it is not an immediate problem. It corresponds to Gov. Jindal's attempts to remove dedicated funding from the budget and to force agencies to cut across the board.

Louisiana Wildlife Federation report - LWF Representative Charles Caillouet

The LWF Awards Banquet was held last on Saturday, March 28, in Baton Rouge and the Conservation awards were presented.

Rebecca has requested 5 minutes at the upcoming USACE NGO Partnership meeting for FOA to make a short presentation. It will be held on April 17 at 1 PM at the Corps offices in NOLA. I will not be able to make the meeting so if no one else can make it, i will draft a statement for Rebecca to present for us.

[Post Meeting Update: Rebecca will delay the presentation to a future meeting for us, after we have more information about the Cypress Preserve proposal.]

New Business

Election of officers for 2015

The current slate of officers was unanimously re-elected for the coming year.

Plans for Annual Meeting

Charlie Fryling will call Paul Kemp to see if he can talk to us about high water demarcation around the three lakes for the Cypress Preserve proposal. It is clear that more details need to be available about the boundaries before landowners will consider talking to us.

Harold offered his place on the Vermillion River, near the LAF airport for the annual meeting on April 28. He also offered to cook fish and provide boat rides on the River before the meeting.

Boat rides will begin at 5:00 and the meeting will begin at about 6:30.

Charles will try to get the meeting plan out early._

Upcoming Events

Plans for upcoming activities

TBD: EA Every Day - Year-Round Events

"Ask me" program at visitors center -

ANHA/Trace Commission Meeting 05/06, 10AM, Capitol Park Welcome Center

Mississippi River Commission low-water trip and hearing - 08/xx/2015 - around third week in August.

Earth Day - April 19 in Baton Rouge and in Lafayette

Next meeting place and time

4/28/2015 (fourth Tuesday)

Harold Schoeffler's place in Lafayette at 6:30 PM?

adjourned at 21:15

Attachments:

Adeline Swamp Coastal Forest Conservation Initiative project report

Based on information from Jim Bergan at The Nature Conservancy (TNC), i made contact with Chris Allen at Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) this morning. He is a project manager at CPRA and works on property evaluations for the Coastal Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI). (Chris is also working on the Shell Island Restoration project which is apparently going out for contract today.) He was very open in discussing the project.

Background:

- The property of interest to us is the 2,500 acre Adeline Swamp area south of Lake Fausse Pointe, brought to our attention by Jim Bergan of TNC when i distributed the Cypress Preserve letter to the NGO partners early this year.
- The Nature Conservancy worked on the management plan for the project described below for CPRA.
- This will be a conservation servitude and negotiations with the landowner are almost complete.
- The landowner has to approve the conditions but most are not negotiable.
- The CPRA has not been in contact with the Tribe, so i suggested that he let them know about the activity.
- There are no plans for public access, so it should not be a big issue for the Tribe.
- The project has now been turned over to the land rights and acquisitions folks.
- There is one other area south in St. Mary Parish along Bayou Sale.
- Two pieces were purchased in Maurepas Swamp and were turned over to Wildlife and Fisheries to be part of the Wildlife
- Management Area; all others have been Conservation Servitudes and remain property of the landowners.

History:

- The Coastal Forest Science Working Group, created under Governor Blanco became the Coastal Forest Conservation Initiative under the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. The CPRA received some CIAP money to fund CFCI projects and advertised for applications from landowners for fee purchase or conservation servitudes over land containing threatened coastal forests.
- The CFCI Project Goal:
 - The goal of the CFCI is to conserve and protect in perpetuity coastal forest resources in Louisiana which provide a significant benefit to the citizens of Louisiana from multiple perspectives. The primary objective of the CFCI is to acquire land rights (fee title or conservation servitude) from willing landowners of properties that meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Provide direct storm damage reduction potential or protection of hurricane/storm protection features and measures (e.g., levees, cheniers, etc.);
 - Areas of high ecological significance; or
 - Tracts that are in danger of conversion to non-forested uses.
- The Adeline company applied under the program and was accepted.
- TNC had had it on their radar already and worked on a management plan for CPRA.

Servitude Conditions:

- There will be no harvesting unless there is an ecological benefit and a benefit based on the program goal.
- Any harvesting proceeds would go back to the CFCI program as a disincentive to lumbering.
- There will be no new levees, canals, roads, or other impediments to hydrology.
- There will be no new structures, no grazing, and no food plots.
- There will be no herbicide or pesticide use unless approved for invasive control.
- All mineral rights stay with the landowner.
- Any oil or gas extraction will be required to use directional drilling to minimize environmental impact.

Access:

- There is boat access but no public access is anticipated; the landowner retains control of the property.
- TBD vehicle access - it is not clear whether there will be any vehicle access to the property.