

20140225 - FOA Board meeting - 7:30 PM - Audubon Conference Room

Attendees

Board Members: Charles, Charlie, Jim, Carolyn, Ray

Advisors: Don Haydel, DNR; Barney Callahan, LWF; Karen Westphal, Audubon

Guests - William Tyson, Atchafalaya Basin Levee District

Charlie Fryling opened the meeting at 07:45 PM, after the presentation at Pennington

Biomedical Research Center by board member Ray Brassieur.

The Board approved the agenda and Charlie recognized William Tyson, Executive Director of the Atchafalaya Basin Levee District.

Special discussion - Executive Director Tyson of the Atchafalaya Basin Levee District

The Atchafalaya Levee District was created in 1890 and currently oversees 320 miles of main line levee with 55 employees.

One hundred, ten miles line the west bank of the Mississippi River, from Old River to Bayou Lafourche, and 210 miles are along the Atchafalaya River and surrounding the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway. The District levees include part of St. Landry Parish and, as of a few years ago, none of St. Mary Parish.

Dir. Tyson explained the functions of the Devee District, including the maintenance and policing of all levees in the District. Most of the levees are privately owned, except for the Belle River Boat Landing and one place in Point Coupee Parish. The US Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for design and construction of levees and the levee boards handle maintenance.

The Levee Board consists of 13 appointed members and meets monthly at the Board office in Port Allen, at 4 PM on the first Wednesday of each month. District activities are funded by parish property taxes. All structures in the District belong to the Federal Government or to individual parishes.

Dir. Tyson suggested that the best way that we can support the Levee District is by addressing siltation in Basin. Increasing siltation threatens to make it harder to handle the largest floods on the rivers and the rising floodwaters can undermine the levees.

Old Business

The Board approved the minutes from the November meeting (no meetings were held in December and January), and received a Treasurer's report showing a 2013 end-of-year balance of \$1,449.70 and a current balance of \$2,049.70 (from \$600 in donations.) They reviewed email activity, including the statement below, made by Charles Caillouet for the Board at a workshop on Diversion in Baton Rouge.

I see similarities between environmental efforts in the ABFS and those being discussed here with respect to diversions.

In my experience, there is an issue that cuts across all restoration efforts and makes implementation much more complex.

That is the reality that many decisions about public works projects and community and commercial development were made before NEPA requirements were enabled or in the absence of any consideration of long-term environmental impact.

Given the Section 408 impact restrictions described earlier, it proves difficult to Change existing implementations and operational scenarios after construction.

That fact, plus many changes that have occurred since construction, and the high cost of reversing or even modifying any negative effects of those projects, has made implementation of significant restoration efforts extremely hard to accomplish.

For these reasons, it is very important that we raise the priority of the current environmental needs, beyond the assumptions that were made in the original project decisions.

Our ultimate goals should be to improve environmental health over broad areas and for years to come, with the result of improved habitat for humans and other living things.

Charles reported that the web site is being updated with current news and events. A discussion of recent events included the Eagle Expo in Morgan City the previous weekend. Charles reported that Heritage Area is developing a new speaker series to continue after the popular Civil War Sesquicentennial events and that a Request for Proposal is being prepared for support of the development of an Area-wide Atchafalaya Heritage Trail. Don Haydel of the Atchafalaya Basin Program reported the release of primitive campsite locations in the Floodway. Information can be found on the Basin Program [web site](#). The Basin Program is also working on the long-planned nature trail at the Atchafalaya Visitor Center at the I-10 Butte LaRose exit, and is accepting nominations thru the end of May for projects on State land to be included in the next Annual Plan.

New Business

Upcoming activities of interest to the group:

LWF meeting - March 8
Green Army at Capitol - March 8
Legislature convenes - March 10
CRT culture Awards due - March 26
LWF Banquet - March 29
Culture Connection - April 22
LA Earth Day - April 27
Mississippi River Commission high-water-trip meeting

Third week in April: boat trip and presentation

Proposed FOA Board activities in the coming months

EA Every Day - Year-Round Events
“Ask me” program at visitors center - Summer
LWF Affiliate meetings are ongoing and are a good venue for promotion of the Basin.
Charlie and Charles agreed to meet to draft thank-you letters to the Heritage Area and Josephine Nixon for generous donations and dues contributions to the Friends.
It was agreed that we should also draft letters to the agencies that have completed positive activities to support good works in the Basin.
A notice on dues should go out to members.
The annual Friends meeting is due in April and officers need to be presented to the membership at that time.
A high water trip hearing presentation would be desirable.
Jim Delahoussaye reported that Filming of the previously discussed boat building program starts on March 1 for 10 days.
Jim also reported that an amateur archaeologist in the Basin is finding locations that could become a future project proposal for the Heritage Area.

Next meeting place and time

Date: 3/25/2014

Place: Audubon? and Time 6:30 PM?

Karen Westphal will be out of the country, so we will check on availability and personnel.

The meeting adjourned at 0945.