

20160426 - FOA Annual meeting - 6:55 PM - Bluebonnet Library - BR, LA**Attendees:**

Board: Charles Fryling, Charles Caillouet, Jim Delahoussaye, Carolyn Delahoussaye, Ray Brassieur, Willie Fontenot

Advisors: Woody Martin, Sierra; Pam Caillouet, FOA; Lu Cutrera, FOA; Donovan Garcia, Need to Paddle; Ray Berthelot, OSP; Flo Ulmer, Rodman Production Shoppe; Jennifer Guidry, ANHA

President Fryling opened the meeting.

Charles Caillouet presented a short review of the Atchafalaya Basin physical and political history, including development of the Atchafalaya Basin Program, the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, and the Friends of the Atchafalaya. He pointed out that the Heritage Area is in need of an official Friends group and suggested that, along with an ongoing review of the future directions of the FOA, the group might reconsider the option of forming an agreement with the Heritage Area, but that it would require additional leadership manpower in the FOA.

President Fryling presented a review of 2016 activities.

Secretary Caillouet reported that there are no changes from the 2015 Board.

The Secretary reported that the officers for 2015 are still acting until elections are held.

Treasurer Caillouet presented the 2014 Financial Report and the current 2015 YTD Report

The Treasurer Filed the Annual Report with the Secretary of State

The Treasurer filed IRS form 990-N (e-postcard) with the US Treasury

The Treasurer reported total balances of \$2,479.57 as of 12/31/2015.

As of April 28, 2015, FOA has a Regions Balance of \$1,300.42 + PayPal Balance of \$1,167.48 = \$2,467.90 YTD.

Charlie Fryling led introductions of all attendees and opened a discussion of the possible future activities and directions of the Friends of the Atchafalaya.

The discussion covered the usual list of problems with the aging membership and the lack of officers who can develop new members and raise funds.

Donovan Garcia, of the Friends of Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge reported that he is having the same problems with his organization.

Jennifer Guidry suggested that we might work with youth organizations like the Evangeline Council of the Boy Scouts; Charles Caillouet reported that he had been in contact with Ben Pierce of the Boy Scouts but no partnerships had been defined to date.

Ray Berthelot of State Parks suggested that we should focus on specific projects to attract members; Charles Caillouet noted that the group had been working on the concept of a Cypress Preserve for the past year, but apparently hadn't reached out effectively for volunteers. He suggested that someone new should try to attract younger members.

Flo Ulmer suggested that the Friends had a well respected brand and a wealth of institutional knowledge about the Basin and that a rebuild of the web site and a push into social media might provide a short term boost to participation and might surface new leadership. Flo indicated that she might be willing to help in that effort.

No firm decisions were made but the group agreed to continue working on an approach between this meeting and the May Board meeting.

The Annual meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM