Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas
East Arkansas Community College Fine Arts Center
Forrest City, Arkansas
August 23, 2012

Commissioners Present

Joe St. Columbia, Chairman
Melanie Baden
Carole Bulloch
Ron Killingsworth
Terri Austin McCullough
Phyllis Stinson
Bob Ware

Commissioners Absent

Lois Boyd
Bobby Kennedy
Molly Houseworth Jackson

Technical Advisors/Department Staff/Guests Present

Marla Crider, Great River Road Division Director
Dr. Ruth Hawkins, Executive Director, Delta Byways Regional Tourism Association
Dottie Boyles, Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism

Call to Order

Chairman Joe St. Columbia called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. on Thursday, August 23, 2012.

Introduction of New Commissioner – Melanie Baden

Chairman Joe St. Columbia introduced and welcomed Melanie Baden from Stuttgart, recently appointed by Governor Mike Beebe to represent Arkansas County on the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. Ms. Baden is the Executive Director of the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie in Stuttgart. She replaces Commissioner Garland Hayes of Stuttgart, who requested not to be reappointed to the Commission.

Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Carole Bulloch moved to accept the Minutes from the May 2012 meeting. Bob Ware seconded and the motion carried.

Annual Election of Officers

The current slate of officers: Chairman Joe St. Columbia, Vice-Chairman Carole Bulloch, and Secretary/Treasurer Bobby Kennedy, have agreed to serve for another year.

Terri Austin McCullough moved to accept the slate officers for the Mississippi River Parkway Commission for 2013. Phyllis Stinson seconded and the motion carried.

MRPC Standing Committees

The sign-up sheet for the MRPC Standing Committees was circulated. Members have agreed to serve on the following committees.

Culture and Heritage
Joe St. Columbia
Ruth Hawkins
Terri Austin McCullough
Phyllis Stinson

Marketing
Carol Bullock

Agriculture
Bob Ware
Melanie Baden

Transportation
Julia Hart

MRPC Arkansas Annual Report

Marla Crider distributed the 2011-2012 Annual Report. The report included a Year in Summary, MRPC-Arkansas roster, MRPC-Arkansas minutes, and MRPC-Arkansas legislation. Photo support documents included the Fort Curtis dedication in Helena, the Japanese American Relocation Center Interpretive Program in Rohwer, the Delta Conference Center and Resort in Tillar, the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home Project in Dyess, the John Tushek Building in Lake Village, and Jones Bar-B-Q in Marianna, winner of the 2012 James Beard American Classic Award.

Annual MRPC Conference

The 2012 MRPC Annual Meeting will take place September 27-29, 2012 in Louisville, Kentucky. Marla Crider requested the members let her know who would be attending. A warrant for the registration fee will be issued through the Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism the first week of September.

Commissioner Terri McCullough announced she has been nominated as the Pilot Pro Tem for the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission. She expressed some concerns about accepting and serving the 2-year term until she had a chance to read the Pilot's handbook. Marla Crider stated she would try to locate the handbook at the ADPT office.

MRPC Arkansas – Budget

Marla Crider stated the annual budget for the Mississippi River Parkway Commission was $168,004.00.

Delta Byways Regional Updates

Dr. Ruth Hawkins announced the Cemetery Trail brochure has been completed and will be distributed soon.

Dr. Hawkins wanted to thank everyone for completing their assignments to update attractions, historic landmarks, and tourism related businesses along the scenic byway for the Corridor Management Plan.

Lakeport Plantation, an Arkansas State University Heritage Site, will be celebrating its 5th anniversary. The plantation will be closed September 6-28 while new exhibits are being installed.

The Historic John Tushek Building in Lake Village underwent renovation and was dedicated in June as the Lake Village City Hall. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, it will be an asset to the downtown area.

Arkansas State University has received two grants from the National Park Service to install interpretive exhibits at Rohwer War Relocation Center. The exhibits have been installed. Each kiosk contains an audio component. George Takei, who played the character Lieutenant Hikaru Sulu on *Star Trek*, was interned there as a boy, and narrates the audio portion of the display. The grand opening is planned for spring 2013.

The second annual Johnny Cash Music Festival is scheduled for October 5, 2012 at the Arkansas State University Convocational Center in Jonesboro. This year's lineup includes Rosanne Cash, Willie Nelson, Dierks Bentley, and The Civil Wars.

A third grant has been received from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council for the continued restoration of the city offices in Dyess. The interior offices on the first floor have been completed. Restoration of the Johnny Cash boyhood home continues. Members of the Cash family have offered to donate several pieces of furniture that were original to the home.

Resolution

Chairman Joe St. Columbia recommended adopting a resolution to honor former Commissioner Garland Hayes for his leadership and many years of service to the MRPC.

Phyllis Stinson moved to adopt a resolution for former MRPC Commissioner Garland Hayes for his many years of service to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. Terri Austin McCullough seconded and the motion carried.

Future Meeting Dates

The November meeting will be held in Little Rock, date to be determined later. Recommendations for 2013 meetings included Hot Springs in March and Lakeport Plantation, in Lake Village in late April.

Miscellaneous

Geocaching Report

The Geocaching Project continues to produce positive tourism results for the Arkansas Great River Road National Scenic Byway. From May 8 to June 30, 2012, caches have been visited by cachers from the following states: AK, AL, CA, DE, FL, GA, IL, KS, KY, LA, MI, MO, MN, MS, NJ, NY, TN, TX, and WS. During the same time period, cachers have found the Arkansas Great River Road Power Trail caches 439 times.

Delta FAM Tour

Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism has partnered with Geiger and Associates, a public relations firm based out of Florida that specializes in bringing media to a state. The Delta FAM tour is scheduled for October 3-7, 2012. Journalists, photographers, editors, and radio host

will be traveling the Delta area from one end of the state to the other. The writers represent publications such as *Midwest Living*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Group Tour Magazine*, *BASSMaster* magazine, and *RoadBike*, to name a few. Radio programs include, "Audiolog-the Travel Show" and "Outdoor Trails Network."

Outdoor Writer FAM Tour

The Outdoor Writer FAM Tour is scheduled for January 7-11, 2013. Big Creek Ducks-N-Bucks Lodge, in Moro, will be the host lodge. Owner Brian Herndon has donated his lodge for the professional outdoor writers to stay in. The lodge is located 24 miles west of the Mississippi River, and 43 miles northeast of Stuttgart.

Delta Regional Authority – Delta Leadership Institute

Created by the Delta Regional Authority to foster regional collaboration, the Delta Leadership Institute (DLI) Executive Academy engages leaders to improve the economic and social viability of the Delta. The 252 counties and parishes served by the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) make up one of the most distressed areas of the country, each facing profound challenges in health, education, and infrastructure. Each year, the DRA seeks a diverse group consisting of government professionals, non-profit leaders, business leaders, education professionals, community leaders, economic and business development professionals, and faith-based community leaders.

Participants of DLI's Executive Academy are given the opportunity to: Continue learning and increase understanding and knowledge of the issues that affect the Delta region; Improve leadership skills and to come together—community leaders from all different places, all walks of life—to share experiences and learn from each other; Develop new ways of thinking that foster regional innovative approaches, collaborations, and partnerships; and take the knowledge and experience gained through DLI and return to our towns and counties ready to better serve the Delta community in their regions and at large. The application period will close on August 31, 2012.

Executive Academy Dates
October 9-12, 2012, St. Louis, MO
December 3-6, 2012, New Orleans, LA
February 23-27, 2013, Washington, DC
April 16-18, 2013, Memphis, TN
June 4-6, 2013, TBA
July 9-11, 2013, Little Rock, AR

Marla Crider stated she would forward information about the Delta Leadership Institute Executive Academy Institute to the Commission.

2013 Governor's Conference on Tourism Update

The 2013 Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held March 3-5, in Hot Springs. The MRPC will meet after the conference.

TR-1s

TR-1s were distributed to commissioners for their signatures and use to claim reimbursement for travel expenses to the meeting.

Honorary Membership

Commissioner Terri McCullough recommended former Commissioner Garland Hayes and former Great River Road Director Nancy Clark be made Honorary Members of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. Commissioner McCullough thanked Ms. Crider for taking care of this. Nomination forms have been completed and sent to the MRPC home office. Commissioner Bulloch suggested the Honorary Memberships be presented at the November meeting in Little Rock.

Adjournment

Phyllis Stinson moved to adjourn. Carol Bulloch seconded and the motion carried.

Without any further business the Mississippi River Parkway Commission meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m. on August 23, 2012 at the East Arkansas Community College Fine Arts Center in Forrest City, Arkansas.

Respectfully submitted:

_____	_____
Joe St. Columbia, Chairman	Marla Crider, Director
Mississippi River Parkway Commission	Great River Road Division