

Minutes

**The Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas
628 Hwy 277 East
Dumas, Arkansas
October 18, 2010**

Commissioners Present

Garland Hayes
Bobby Kennedy
Taralou Dunklin
Molly Houseworth Jackson
Phyllis Stinson
Carole Bulloch
Joe St. Columbia
Terri Austin McCullough
Lois Boyd

Commissioners Absent

Eva Hollowell

Technical Advisors/ Department Staff/Guests Present

Nancy Clark, Great River Road Division Director
Jan Farmer, Dumas MainStreet Director
Peggy Chatman, Desha County Museum

Call to Order

Chairman Garland Hayes called the meeting to order, and thanked everyone for taking time from their busy schedules to participate in the meeting of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission with a special thanks to Taralou Dunklin for hosting the meeting in her home.

Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Terri McCullough moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Phyllis Stinson seconded and the motion carried.

MRPC Foundation Endowment Task Force Recommendations

Chairman Garland Hayes reported that the Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) created the MRPC Endowment Fund to help sustain the mission of the MRPC for generations to come. Chairman Hayes presented a paper outlining the MRPC Endowment Task Force roles. A long discussion ensued among the members of the Arkansas MRPC in which they did not think the priority project recommendations would be considered charitable among other concerns.

Carole Bulloch moved that the Arkansas MRPC decline approving the MRPC Task Force Roles as outlined. Terri McCullough seconded and the motion carried.

Planning for 2011 National Meeting in Arkansas

Nancy Clark reported the dates for the meeting are September 29—October 2, 2011, and the location is Little Rock with lodging at the DoubleTree Hotel. Ms. Clark presented several ideas she had which included renting motor coaches to take delegates to Stuttgart to see rice being harvested, visiting the Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center, the Harry K. Dupree Stuttgart National Aquaculture Research Center, lunch and visit at the Museum of the Grand Prairie, a visit to Scott Plantation Agricultural Museum and dinner at Marlsgate Plantation. Clark asked the Commissioner to think of activities of interest—a trip to Stuttgart would provide a good idea of what a traveler would see as they travel the Great River Road in Arkansas.

SE Arkansas Economic Development Project Report

Nancy Clark reminded the Commission about the copies of the executive summary from the Economic Research Associates/Longwoods Report which was commissioned by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism to provide strategic recommendations on how to strengthen and expand the successful state tourism program. One of the findings of the report suggested that a couple of pilot projects be implemented to initiate more tourism in the SE part of the state. One of those pilot projects would be the development of a marina on the Arkansas River, perhaps in the Pendleton area near Dumas. The other pilot project is a SE Arkansas tourism project within the two counties of Desha and Chicot. A coalition of state and federal agencies and private institutions organized by Governor Beebe has developed a long-term strategy for sustained. Much has been done including the inventorying of all tourism related assets in Desha and Chicot counties, and along the Arkansas River from Fort Smith to Pendleton. A brochure is being developed to use as a sales piece.

Arkansas Great River Road Geocaching Project

The Arkansas portion of the Great River Road geocaching project now includes 25 caches which have been found over a thousand times. Cachers log each of their finds daily, and many make comments about the cache spot being a nice place to visit and they plan to return in the future. Ms. Clark also reported that a Geocaching “meet and greet” was scheduled for Desha and Chicot counties for the first weekend in April. Over 100 caches will be placed before the event. Kim Williams, travel writer, for the Tourism Division is working on the project along with others.

2010 Annual National Mississippi River Parkway Commission Meeting Report

Chairman Hayes reported that he took the framed resolution passed by the Commission to James Banks in Marianna. He said Mr. Banks was most appreciative of this recognition of his service to the Commission.

Chairman Garland Hayes reminded Commissioners to return their TR1s to Nancy Clark for processing.

The meeting adjourned. Commissioner Taralou Dunklin hosted a luncheon in her dining room. Following the meeting several Commissioners visited the Desha County Museum where the Pickens Baptist Church now resides awaiting restoration. The church has been stabilized with a new roof. An application was submitted for a National Scenic Byways grant for work on the church so it could be used in conjunction with a gospel music institute in Arkansas.

Respectfully submitted:

Garland Hayes, Chairman
Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Nancy Clark, Director
Great River Road Division