

FRIENDS of the MANCHAC GREENWAY (FMG) MEETING MINUTES, 2:00, Thursday, April 1, 2021 @ Bec's On The Lake, downtown Frenier

ATTENDANCE: Tom Dumas, Greg "Za" Maurin, Dwight Williams (Pontchartrain Conservancy), Ben Taylor, Galen Schum, George Becnel and Frank Neelis, via a spotty cell phone connection.

APPROVAL of 2/25/21 MEETING MINUTES

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- On hand: \$2,841.31, Entergy Grant: \$10,000.00

MEMBERSHIP/OUTREACH/EVENTS:

- **FMG Requests for Proposals (RFP) from Marketing Agencies** - It was decided that Za would send a RFP to an agency in St. John Parish and Ben would forward one to Flipcause of Oakland, CA. Depending on the responses we receive, and we have a long list of prospective agencies, would be to continue this search.

- The **first quarterly FMG Adopt-A-Road** litter pick-up was successful and helped result in District 62 of the Louisiana Dept. of Transportation and Development agreeing to place eight new "No Dumping" signs of the Greenway at sites we suggest.

- The **second quarterly FMG litter pickup** will be scheduled on a weekday for a change - Friday, May 7, 9:30, from the Joyce WMA Swampwalk parking lot. Tom Dumas will make a request for volunteers from the New Orleans Chapter of the **Louisiana Master Naturalists** to help out.

- The annual **Keep America Beautiful litter cleanup** will be held in St. John Parish on April 10. For information contact Greg Maurin - (985) 703-0917 or zamaurin1@gmail.com.

- In order to try to conform to the **Litterati** litter tracking and inventory app. and to expedite the recording of what we pick up, it was decided to designate a volunteer to go ahead of the group to only photograph litter to create a record that can be reported to the app.

- **The First Annual Friends of the Manchac Greenway "SMOOTH RIDE ON THE LOW ROAD"** cycling fundraiser is scheduled on 4/18, 8:30 - 11:30 from Bec's on the Lake in Frenier to Ruddock and back (about a ten mile round trip). Organizers Za and George have secured all necessary permits and the services of the St. John Sheriff's Dept. for roadway security. Za and Ben will collaborate on preparing posters to

advertise the bike tour and George will post information about it on the web. As Bec's on the Lake Restaurant and Catering has provided full sponsorship of the event, all proceeds from the bike ride are for the benefit of the Friends of the Manchac Greenway and plans are for a FMG table at the event to help promote our cause. Look for details on Facebook.

- The **homemade road signs** marking the Greenway with our organization's name and pelican logo were put up a few years ago by Frank and Ben and are now looking pretty weathered. Mr. Williams offered his organization's assistance in getting fresh photocopies laminated for outdoor posting.

MASTER PLAN:

- The StJtBP Planning and Zoning Office is having a virtual public meeting Wednesday, April 7 at 5:30 about their **Master Plan for the Manchac Greenway** in St. John Parish. Please see the attached notice for the meeting's call-in and meeting ID numbers and a link to further information.

LA NERR:

- A search is being conducted to establish a Louisiana National Estuarine Research Reserve (LA NERR) either near Barataria Bay, the Atchafalaya River or in the Pontchartrain Basin. A website describing this program is attached.

We think the Manchac area should be considered, in particular, Port Manchac, whose commission is considering ecotourism and educational uses for their facility. It would be an ideal wetland location right in the middle of southeast Louisiana's most populous region, with plenty of educational and transportation resources and three Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Wildlife Management Areas next door.

The FMG, the Pontchartrain Conservancy (formally the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation) and Parish President Hotard of St. John the Baptist Parish (please see attachment) have already formally endorsed this project and more endorsements are surely to follow, including yours if you follow links in the above referenced LA NERR website.

Frank reported that the Pontchartrain Conservancy has asked FMG to co-host public "Town Hall" meeting(s) this spring to bring this opportunity before public officials and the general public.

The Weeks Bay Reserve on the southeastern shore of Mobile Bay is a great example of this program and of the many ways it can be a benefit to our community - dial up: <https://www.outdooralabama.com/lands/weeks-bay-reserve>

SWAMP COUNTRY:

St. John Parish is “all in” on the Manchac Greenway, including the folks with the River Parishes Tourist Commission who recently published a map of New Orleans Swamp Country that includes details about the Manchac Greenway.

NEXT MEETING:

Tentatively scheduled for May 20, 2:00 on the Turtle Cove Dock on the beautiful Galva Canal.