**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2015**

**Board of Commissioners of**

**Bayou D’Arbonne Lake Watershed District Regular Meeting**

Union Parish Courthouse Annex

303 East Water Street

Farmerville, LA 71241

1. Roll Call – President Steve Cagle called the meeting to order. Commission members present were Steve Cagle, David Hopkins, Edward Lee and Terri Towns. Also present were Ron Riley, Ryan Daniels with Wildlife & Fisheries, Chase McPherson (biologist with W&F)
2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance – Mrs. Towns led the invocation, and Mr. Lee led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Public Comment Registration – Steve Cagle asked if anyone wanted to make a public comment to complete the form.
4. Agenda Approval – Motion was made by Ms. Towns and seconded by Mr. Lee to approve the February agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Approval of Minutes – Motion was made by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Ms. Towns to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2014, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Treasurer's Reports – The January 2015 treasurer’s report was presented. Motion was made to approve the report by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Mr. Lee to approve the reports. The motion passed unanimously.
7. Old and New Business:

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries – Ryan Daniels, Fisheries Manager, distributed a summary of a crappie study that was completed several years ago. This was a three-year stock assessment. The purpose was to get as much information about crappie population as possible in order to effectively manage the population. The first year (2009) was a lot of medium crappie, but the next year was a tremendous number of small crappie indicating a great spawn. Normal in 2011 and great spawn in 2012. Most important thing to take from this is that the population changes from year to year (reputation for "boom and bust" more so than other fish). Very few fish were aged three or older. The fish are almost two years old before they are eight inches and harvestable. Last year was tremendous season but it varies each year. If things go as predicated, next year will be great starting next winter. Population looks completely different year in and year out.

Page 2 - One of the more significant findings of this study was that there appeared to be stable recruitment in D'Arbonne Lake, again some years better than others.

Page 3 – Mortality was an important component of this study. They found the mortality rate of the crappie is moderately high (77%). This includes natural and fishing mortality (bass, gar, disease, and fishing). At this rate, if you started with 100 one-year old crappie, only 23 would remain after the first year, and only five after the second year, and only one by age four. About equal mortality between fishing and other mortality. They spent some time also at the boat ramp speaking with fisherman and measuring the fish to get an estimate of what the anglers were removing from the lake. They found 60% of the anglers caught between one and 10 crappie per trip. One 6.5% caught between 11-20. About 33% of the anglers had no crappie.

Page 4 – Once all this data was entered into the computer, they found if implemented a ten-inch minimum length limit, anglers would have to release 82% of the fish they catch. If they implement a 12-inch minimum length limit, anglers would be required to release 92% of their catch. In the summary at the end, if they lower the creel limit to two fish per day, that will not fly with many of the fisherman in the area. According to this study, there is a stable and healthy crappie population in Lake D'Arbonne, and they do not feel any change is angler harvest regulation is recommended. They will revisit D'Arbonne Lake in a few years to do another study to see if anything has changed. Mr. Daniels distributed copies of a plan for the lake and asked everyone to read through them and make sure it is accurate.

Steve Cagle asked what can be done to help the mortality rate of 77%. Mr. Daniels said that sounds like a big number but it is average, as is the growth rate. He felt no one should be alarmed by that number.

Mr. Daniels also discussed vegetation on the lake. The lake still has the hydrilla? It was not horrible last year, but it got pretty abundant in the lake before the last draw down. So far the draw down appears to be controlling it and keeping it from being a huge nuisance. They discovered a plant two weeks ago and it was the bad stuff (common salvinia). This is not good. They have sprayed it a few times and it seems to be confined to one area. Their aquatic plant biologist in North Louisiana (could not understand his name). He has made some nice maps where the concentration is above the Highway 2 bridge. It is protected there because they are spraying it repeatedly to keep it from getting out of hand. They also found some in the ski cove across from Jake's. Their spray boat will be seen a good bit in the area. He introduced the new biologist, Chase McPherson.

Mega Ramp on Hwy 33 – Update – Ron Riley stated that he now knows regarding the planned capital outlay request is that an applicant for capital outlay funding must have the matching funds in hand at the time of the application which is $180,000 on this project. He said we are also requesting that DOTD donate the DOTD right of way within the project area. He said there is some confusion as to whether or not DOTD has fee title to the land or a servitude. He also stated that a survey was needed of the lake shore area adjacent to Highway 33 in connection with the project, and permission to perform the survey was granted.

Consider Revisions to D'Arbonne Tainter Gate Opening Plan – Ron Riley passed out a copy of the current Gate Opening Plan showing proposed revisions prepared by Bill Carter who could not be at the meeting. Ron said if the members agreed with the proposed changes then Bill would send them to Marshall Hill at the Monroe DOTD office for review and, if accepted, the Plan could be amended to reflect the changes. Ron reminded the members that the Commission could request opening or closing the gates, but the final decision to open or close the gates rested with DOTD with input from LDWF. David Hopkins made a motion to have Bill Carter forward the proposed changes to the Plan to Marshall Hill for review, and the motion was seconded by Terri Towns. The motion passed unanimously.

(Tape ended so some information is missing)

Spillway Repairs - Update – Ron Riley passed out the proposed list of nine items of repairs and additions to the spillway and spillway area. He said they will be finished with the plans in about ten days. He recommends the Commission approve the list with the additional recommendation of adding three warning signs to item three to be installed at a location approaching the spillway and at the end of the spillway. Ron stated the DOTD designed the signs. Ms. Towns made a motion to approve the list including the additional three signs and Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Change Date of 2015 Regular Meetings: The Commission attorney, Bill Carter, now has a conflict with the third Monday of each month and requested that the regular meeting date be moved to the third Tuesday of the month. David Hopkins made the motion to change the meetings to the third Tuesday of the month, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Towns. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Public Comment: Steve Downs spoke to the Board a while back about FEMA. A lot of people are calling him and asking about it. He spent some time with someone from State Farm, and she contacted FEMA, got the information back. The gate is not a 50-year flood gate. It's a 100-year flood. He was told that there are over 200 homes in the 85-foot flood stage. The gate is not going to reduce the flood insurance for homeowners, but it can make it a better grade. He feels we need to submit all the information and data that they have on the gate to FEMA. If not, we will never know. There are people on the lake paying $7,000 a year for flood insurance. People who come in and try to buy a home and are not grandfathered in, and they tried to buy his home, it would cost $8,000 a year. He is in a 87- to 88-foot flood zone. If FEMA says no, fine, but we'll never know until we try. There has been a 25% increase and a lot of people don't know when that new claim is submitted, if they don't sign a piece of paper, their insurance will be increased 25% and could be for the next two to three years. Please do something about this.
3. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Towns, seconded by Mr. Lee. The motion passed unanimously.