**MINUTES OF MARCH 17, 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, Terri Towns, Bruce Hampton and Cary Brown. Also present were Bill Carter, Ron Riley, Robert Lemoine and Tracy Ambrose.
2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Hampton led the invocation, and Mr. Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Public Comment Registration – Steve Cagle welcomed the two new Board members, Cary Brown and Bruce Hampton, and thanked them for volunteering to serve.
4. Agenda Approval – Motion was made by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Ms. Towns to approve the March 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 February 16, 2015, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Treasurer's Reports – The February 2015 treasurer’s report was presented. Motion was made to approve the report by Ms. Towns and seconded by Mr. Hopkins. The motion passed unanimously.
7. Old and New Business:

Consider Revisions to D'Arbonne Tainter Gate Opening Plan – Bill Carter stated that new information is gained every time the gates are opened or closed and the Gate Opening and Closing Plan is a work in progress. The DOTD ultimately decides when to open and close the gates, and the DOTD District Engineer, Marshall Hill, is involved, as well as Engineers Ron Riley and James Henry, with the Riley Company.

After a recent conference call with Marshall Hill and Jeff Shapiro, proposed revisions to the Plan were prepared which were handed out. Regarding gate opening, the gate is opened when the lake reaches 82.25 or accumulated data predicts it will reach that level. The bigger discussion is about closing the gates as referred to on page 2 of the Plan. The changes shown are from the last version of the Plan. It is difficult to put in writing when to close the gates because it is based on variable factors. Some things override when to close – one is to not let the lake drop more than four inches per day to keep fish from getting trapped or pressure differential behind sea wall which would cause it to collapse. Other factors include looking at the charts, the elevations up the lake, as well as behind the spillway. Otherwise, the word “generally” was added and the four inches a day was made part of the criteria. The last sentence was reinserted, requiring closing the gate when the lake reaches 81.5 inches. The proposed revisions have been sent to Marshall Hill, but he has not commented yet. Mr. Carter suggested that the Commission accept the proposed changes, subject to comments by Mr. Hill, Mr. Riley and Mr. Carter. A motion was made by Mr. Hopkins to approve the revisions to the Plan, with the revisions subject to any additional revisions suggested by Marshall Hill which are agreed to by Mr. Riley, Mr. Cagle and Mr. Carter. The motion was seconded by Ms. Towns. The motion passed unanimously.

Mega Ramp on Hwy 33 – Update – Ron Riley stated that the right of way on the West side of Highway 33 is 120 feet from the center line, and to the lake edge is 70 feet. He recommended asking the DOTD to declare that part of the right of way under water as surplus. There is a formal procedure to do that and, hopefully, the DOTD will favorably consider it, but it must go through Baton Rouge. Mr. Riley presented such a request for signature by Steve Cagle, and he will transmit it to Baton Rouge tomorrow. Also, the Corps of Engineers has not yet said what are wetlands and what are not. The part of the lake under water is not wetlands, but the wetlands are the fringe around the edge of the shore which must be mitigated by purchasing mitigation credits. Mr. Riley has found two mitigation banks. One is Bayou Bank between Sicily Island and Clayton with a price of $10,320 to handle the mitigation. The other is Lonesome Dove Bank with a price of $11,130. Bruce Hampton asked if there is any danger in losing the opportunity to buy. Steve Cagle thinks it is a good idea to purchase the mitigation credits because he is worried the State will come in and sweep the Commission checking account because the State is broke. He feels if we already have Corps part done, it will go faster. Ron Riley said the Corps gives a permit for two years. Bill Carter said there are strict requirements to get approved for mitigation. He asked if there was any way to speak with someone else about determination as to whether property that is submerged is considered wetlands. Ron Riley said we are not mitigating the whole part. It is less than an acre. Mr. Riley said we need 4.3 credits. Bayou price is $2400 per credit, which is how they got the figure $10,320. Mr. Carter questioned how long we have to mitigate. Mr. Riley did not know but said the Corps permit has a limit, but they have had no problem getting the Court to extend it in the past. Cary Brown was of the opinion that there needs to be more discussion on purchasing the credits. Bill Carter agreed and suggested that we postpone this and discuss it at next month’s meeting.

Board members were also asked to thank the Mayor of Farmerville because he wrote a letter to DEQ for help getting a water quality permit.

Spillway Repairs - Update – Ron Riley has sent plans to DOTD in Baton Rouge and in Monroe for revision and comment but has not heard anything yet. He is working his way through the Corps and the Wildlife & Fisheries Scenic River Program to get permission to build. The project will probably qualify for a general permit. He felt they should be getting permission to advertise for bids shortly. Mr. Riley also stated that we must get the money obligated in this fiscal year offering bids no later than mid to late May. He said we need to get under contract before July 1, 2015. With that in mind, he requested that the Board consider authorizing the President to advertise for bids pending approval of DOTD and permit agencies. Mr. Hampton made a motion to advertise for bids pending approval of DOTD and permit agencies. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hopkins. The motion passed unanimously.

1. State Park Lake Level Gauge: The State has given permission to install a lake level gauge at the State Park at the end of a pier with electrical power. Mr. Riley got a quote from Integralert for equipment, installation and two years of free air time free for $3,422. One can install and dial in on a cell or computer to check the levels. It will help us because we have a gauge on the Corney levee but not the D’Arbonne side. Mr. Riley asked for permission to install the gauge. It takes 10 days to two weeks to get it installed. Mr. Riley has to take a GPS and go there and spend 1-3 hours to calibrate the gauge. Bruce Hampton asked if this included a cell phone contract. Mr. Riley replied that it does but, after two years, the cost will be $28 per month. Right now the present gauge costs $200-$300 a month, but Steve Cagle said the DOTD is paying it. Mr. Riley is of the opinion that this is a good deal. Terri Towns made a motion that Riley Engineering be allowed to complete this project to install a gauge at the State Park. Bruce Hampton seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed. Ron Riley agreed to email everyone the proposal tomorrow.
2. Public Comment: Steve said the Chamber tournament is this weekend, and he hoped the lake was good for the tournament.
3. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Towns, seconded by Mr. Hopkins. The motion passed unanimously.