

Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board

June 29, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am by the temporary Chair, Keith Lovell.

A roll call was conducted and showed the following members in attendance and that a quorum was present: Ray Berthelot, Justin Gremilion (for Lance Broussard), Melissa Kaintz, Keith Lovell, Paul Naquin, Jonathan Robillard, and Bijan Sharafkhani

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Paul Naquin, seconded by Ray Berthelot, and passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.

A motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting was made by Paul Naquin, seconded by Jonathan Robillard and was passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.

Election of New Officers. Keith Lovell requested nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. He suggested that it would be best for someone outside of DNR to do it.

Bijan Sharafkhani nominated Paul Naquin, Chair.

Paul Naquin nominated Brad Spicer as Vice Chair and moved to close nominations.

Keith Lovell, hearing no objections, declared Paul Naquin Chair and Brad Spicer Vice Chair.

Legislative Update. Don Haydel—There are no new projects this year. The plan will include projects from the previous year's plan, and those have gone through the TAG, Research and Promotion Board, public meetings, CPRA, the House and Senate floor, and they passed unanimously all the way through. The 2019 plan is the one we are now working on. House Bill 2 contains carry-over money, and that was continued. The legislature also moved \$3 million from priority 5 to 1. That still has to go through the bond commission, but we are pretty confident that we will receive those additional funds.

Another thing that came out was Senate Resolution 154. Stakeholders brought up problems in the Basin with spoil banks, and the DNR Secretary took a meeting with General Honoré and LCPA West. Norby Chabert and Freddie Mills headed up the idea of looking at spoil banks. SR154 requests DNR to submit a report by February 2018 on spoil banks. You'll notice all of the groups listed: the Corps, CPRA, ABP Research and Promotion Board, Sierra Club, LCPA West, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, Louisiana Landowners Association, LMOGA, LDWF, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, DNR Division of Pipeline Safety, Office of State Lands, Dept. of Justice Natural Resources Division, Louisiana Oil and Gas Association, and a wholesale crawfish buyer on the east side of the Atchafalaya Basin. DNR's Secretary will send out letter asking all these entities to participate and to name

someone to represent them. We are working on getting a neutral outside party to facilitate the meetings to keep us moving and on track. As of now, we have about 6 months to go through this process and submit a report. Mr. Paul, the newly elected Chair can be the representative for this board or appoint someone.

Keith Lovell—I would like to volunteer. I'm going to be involved anyway.

Paul Naquin appointed Keith Lovell to serve on the spoil bank study group, and Keith Lovell accepted.

Paul Naquin – Number 4 in the resolution talks about the East and West Atchafalaya Protection Levees, but Saint Mary also has a levee district that is not mentioned. It's not called "Atchafalaya..."

Don Haydel – At the first meeting, the study group will determine a geographic boundary, so that will be something that's discussed. The concern is mostly the spoil banks probably from Bayou Sorrel south. It will be up to the group to decide.

Keith Lovell—It's safe to say that there was more discussion on spoil banks than any other session.

Don Haydel—I met with the legislative auditors yesterday, and they've been to some of our meetings. They have already started a file search and interviews; they may have talked to some of you. They are about to wrap up. They have concentrated on the Basin Program's water projects: Bayou Postillion, Schwing Chute, Dog Leg Sediment Trap, Henderson Channels, and Bayou Fourche. Two were before Act 606 of 2008, and the last three went through the Annual Plan and nomination process. They seem happy with the Annual Plan process we have now and its transparency and openness. They will recommend updating the State Master Plan. It was completed in 1998, and we've learned a lot since then. So I think it's valid for them to recommend that. But I don't see anything earth-shattering.

Paul Naquin—Who is the representative taking care of the Basin Program?

Don—Chad Brown.

Paul Naquin—Where is he from?

Don—Plaquemine. As far as projects, these are the projects that have been completed by ABP since 2012: Wilson's Landing was just completed, Big Alabama Launch and Pier, Catahoula Pavilion, Veteran's Park phase IV and V, Bayou Amy boat launch, Bayou Sorrel Boat Launch, Primitive Campsites, concession stands at Belle River and Stephenville, which double as places for public meetings. We built three cabins at Lake End Park, and if you ever get a chance to stay in one, I would recommend it.

Paul Naquin—We have built three more, so there are six cabins now.

Don—They're nice! And we contributed some money to the Cajun Coast Welcome Center. On the water quality side, we did Bayou Fourche in 2015, dredged Henderson channels, and did maintenance dredging at Dog Leg. According to Act 606, 75% of our funding must go toward water quality/water management projects.

On our Grand Lake project, a channel training feature failed and filled up part of the lake. We are potentially partnering with the pipeline company; we are still working on a 50% cost agreement with them, because the pipeline needs cover. We are still working on the permit as well. East Grand Lake project is still in the concept phase. We expect that to take about a year, so there will be no dirt moving until 2018. We are improving a boat launch at Butte La Rose; that project goes to bid on July 27. We expect it to be done during low water season, because they have to build a coffer dam, but it should be completed this year. Another project we have is a Geocache trail. Geocaching is a hobby, and we have hidden containers at locations around the Basin such as Old River and some of the boat launches. When they get all 24 locations, they are awarded this limited-edition Geocoin. It's a good way for folks to visit and learn about the significance of water in the Basin. There's a lot of information going out to folks who participate.

Another project is the Boy Scout Swamp Base at Henderson, where we are contributing to improvements to make it more handicap-accessible and to allow buses to get over levee.

We are also working on an ADA-accessible trail at the Atchafalaya Visitor Center. It was funded through a Federal Highway grant and had to go through the Federal Highway administration, CRT, and DOTD. We have all the permissions now to build a trail, and one of the geocaches is there.

Here are some pictures of Grand Lake, where the channel training blockage blew out and allowed sand to come in from west to east. We are going to dig out the sand and deposit it in the pipeline canal

Paul Naquin—How does water get into the lake?

Don—It's some of the last of the deep-water habitat, and currently a lot of water comes through Coon Trap, but we are working with the Corps to close that off, and that will allow the work on East Grand Lake with The Nature Conservancy to optimize the water coming in for water quality. Grand lake used to be 70 feet deep, and you couldn't see across. Now it's about 1000 feet across, and you can walk across it at low water.

There was an article from 2015 in the Advocate talking about it. It's taken a while, too long, but we are getting around to it.

The blockage at the river was repaired in January 2017, and it held during the recent high water. Once we backfill it to the bank height, it should never happen again. We are working on the cost-sharing and hope to dredge this year. The plan is to dredge from east to west and remove as much as we can. The canal can only hold about 80,000 cubic yards of over 100,000 that was deposited.

On the East Grand Lake project, we had 172 features possible if you look at the entire area. TNC bought these parcels, so we are working on their land and state land, with local stakeholders. We all know that this area hasn't produced crawfish in 10 years, and we're willing to accept a few acres of infilling to improve water quality.

Melissa Kaintz—These boat launches you've built, who maintains them?

Don—Typically the parish takes it over and keeps running it. For Wilson's Landing, the parish provided engineering and land and paid the additional cost of construction above what ABP provided, which was about \$300,000 for Wilson's. So we don't fund them 100%.

Keith Lovell—Next on the agenda is the timeline for next year's annual plan.

Charles Reulet—The deadline for project nominations is over. We received no new nominations. We had a TAG meeting to discuss our water quality projects. The next step is to have public meetings in October, which we will do around the Basin, and then we will come back to this board in November to present the draft. It will then go to CPRA, back to the board, and back to CPRA for approval. The session begins in March of 2018.

Paul Naquin—Were there any members of the public at the TAG meeting?

Charles Reulet—Two crawfishermen were there; one was a wholesale buyer. We had some questions from the TAG about adaptive management. Primarily, "what do we do if we're getting the wrong results?" The idea is if that happens to shut that feature off immediately.

Don Haydel—That will be included in Corps permit, that we will use spoil to block a feature if we aren't getting the desired results.

Paul Naquin—You are working on a Corps permit? We have a two-mile levee that ended up costing \$500,000 in mitigation. It was in Terrebonne. We were protecting the people. We are trying to get a bill passed in DC that if you are protecting people, you shouldn't have to mitigate. We're going to be out of St. Mary parish in 10 years if they don't change the flood insurance. The Corp of Engineers has something to do with that too. The Corps shouldn't have anything to do with that.

Don Haydel—This is something each one of the agencies deal with every day. When we go to the legislature, they say it's the Corps, but the legislature tells the Corps what to do.

Keith Lovell asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

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Keith Lovell—Just to recap, I have been nominated to represent the Research and Promotion Board in the spoil banks study, so be aware.

Paul Naquin motioned to adjourn.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 154

BY SENATOR MILLS

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Natural Resources to study potential solutions that may mitigate spoil banks.

WHEREAS, Louisiana's lower Atchafalaya Basin has been adversely impacted by spoil banks that block natural water flows; and

WHEREAS, historically, when constructing pipelines, operators have been allowed to discard their spoil as permitted or required by landowners, or required by the state of Louisiana, thus creating spoil banks; and

WHEREAS, spoil banks shut off the natural flow of water that restricts the carrying capacity of the flood way and damages water quality; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources, office of conservation, division of pipeline safety regulates the maintenance of intrastate pipelines.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Natural Resources to study potential solutions that may mitigate spoil banks created on the lower Atchafalaya Basin affecting the natural water flows and fishing activities, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) Whether any spoil banks are adversely affecting fishing activities.
- (2) Whether the spoil should be placed into the water bottom or removed off site to an approved location such that there be no remaining spoil bank.
- (3) Whether the pipeline should be removed at the end of its useful life.
- (4) Whether any construction, maintenance, or any other work should be permitted between the East Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee and West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee.
- (5) Whether permits for new pipelines should be granted to companies that are out-of-compliance with prior issued permits, until such time as those previously-issued permits are brought back into compliance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Natural Resources to request the following entities to participate in this study:

- (1) The United States Army Corps of Engineers.
- (2) The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.
- (3) The Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board.
- (4) The Sierra Club Delta Chapter.
- (5) The Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association West.
- (6) The Atchafalaya Basinkeeper.
- (7) The Louisiana Landowners Association.
- (8) The Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association.
- (9) The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.
- (10) The Louisiana Association of Business and Industry.
- (11) The Department of Natural Resources, office of conservation, division of pipeline safety.
- (12) The office of state lands.
- (13) The Department of Justice, natural resources division.
- (14) The Louisiana Oil and Gas Association.
- (15) A crawfish wholesale buyer located on the east side of the Atchafalaya Basin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall make recommendations to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources no later than February 1, 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall provide a report to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources no later than February 1, 2018, that includes the number and location of spoil banks between the East Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee and West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee, the name of the pipeline company associated with the spoil bank, and the approximate date the pipeline was constructed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Natural Resources.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

FY2019 Atchafalaya Basin Program (ABP)
Annual Basin Plan Timeline

June 1, 2017: Project nomination deadline

June 22, 2017: TAG meeting to review recommendations for approved water management projects: Grand Lake Depth Restoration and East Grand Lake Project

June 29, 2017: R&P Board meeting to discuss FY 2019 Annual Plan and ongoing projects

Sept 2017: R&P board meeting to review first draft of annual plan prior to public meetings

Oct 2017: Public meetings

Nov 2017: R&P Board meeting to review second draft of FY 2019 Plan prior to review by CPRA

Nov/Dec 2017: Present annual plan to CPRA

Jan 2018: Request approval by CPRA

Late Jan/early Feb 2018: R&P board meeting to review any changes to the plan made by CPRA and to request final approval prior to submittal to legislature

February 2018: Submit final draft annual plan to legislature

March 2018: Legislative Session Begins



Achafalaya BASIN

PLEASE PRINT

PLEASE PRINT

EVENT/LOCATION: Research & Promotion Board meeting / Baton Rouge DATE: 6-29-2017

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