

Minutes – Atchafalaya Basin Program (ABP) Research and Promotion Board Meeting September 8, 2016

Meeting was called to order at 9:32 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:

Brad Spicer, Melissa Kaintz, Ray Berthelot, Charles Sutcliffe, Keith Lovell, Bijan Sharafkhani, and Chris Lemaire (for Lance Broussard).

Sign-in sheet is attached to document all attendees.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Brad Spicer, seconded by Charles Sutcliffe, and passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.

A motion to approve the minutes from the June 2016 meeting was made Ray Berthelot, seconded by Charles Sutcliffe and was passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.

Don Haydel presented the DRAFT FY 2018 Annual Plan to the board. He noted that the printed version is smaller this year than in previous years, because only active projects are included. Descriptions of other projects will be on the website. The six active projects included in the plan are:

East Grand Lake Project: DNR has entered into a partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to complete this project. The map included in the plan shows TNC and state land tracts. Staff from DNR recently met with TNC and the Corps to get started on permits.

Grand Lake depth restoration: This is where the Corps channel training blockage blew out and has built a peninsula in Grand Lake. ABP has started the engineering and design through Facility Planning and Control.

Wilson's Landing Boat Launch: Improvements to the boat launch in St. Mary parish are expected to begin in calendar year 2017.

Butte La Rose Boat Launch: Improvements to the boat launch in St. Martin parish are waiting for the parish to move forward, and that should happen this year.

All of these construction projects will go through Facility Planning and Control for engineering and bidding.

The other two projects are a walking trail at the Atchafalaya Welcome Center and a Geocache trail that will consist of established stops along the basin.

Mr. Haydel also said that in the last legislative session, ABP worked with NGOs and other partners to make sure funding for the program was in House Bill 2. Both that effort and approval in the bond commission were successful. He said that we expect funding to run out but hope to commence with design so that we can have the projects in line for funding.

Mr. Haydel said that there is \$5.6 million available in funding and that the ABP is asking for additional funding for FY18 (p. 11) dredging, East Grand Lake, and boat launches.

Bijan Sharafkhani asked: is current funding sufficient to cover current projects? Mr. Haydel said that there is enough to cover the two trails and the two boat launches. For the Grand Lake depth restoration, sediment keeps building. Two years ago, we were confident that 1.5 million would do it, but now we are probably going to need more.

Dean Wilson asked to comment on behalf of the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper and Sierra Club. He stated that they strongly oppose new freshwater moving into parts of the Basin, because the Basin is a spillway and has a huge sediment problem. He said that some projects are not approved by the TAG, for example those on Bayou Cannon. He said that things happen behind the scenes and that the job of ABP is to protect the resources for the public. He said that the Atchafalaya Basin is the most productive swamp and one of the most beautiful places on earth.

Dan Collins asked to provide comment. He introduced himself as an independent consultant. He questioned the East Grand Lake project and asked the board what has been done to identify mineral activity on TNC property. He stated that he had brought forth information twice, on Bayou Postillion and on Bayou Fourche, that the areas had been leased for oil and gas. He said "we don't want to wake up and find that this was just another oil and gas project." He appealed to the board that they shouldn't use public funds to benefit the oil and gas industry. He asked if the board had addressed issues of Bayou Fourche dredging. He also asked if there is anything that can be done to address changes in the projects. He said that projects are presented to the public, but then they change.

A motion to approve the DRAFT FY 2018 Annual Plan was made by Brad Spicer, seconded by Bijan Sharafkhani, and passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.

Mr. Lovell asked if there was any old or new business. April Newman said that Dean Wilson had invited everyone on a field trip to the Atchafalaya Basin. It is scheduled for Sept. 23, and board members should contact April to sign up.

A motion to adjourn was made by Melissa Kaintz. The meeting adjourned at 9:52 am.



Atchafalaya
BASIN

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EVENT/LOCATION Research and Promotion Board Meeting DATE: 8 Sept 2016

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