**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2016**

**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 Bruce Hampton led the meeting to order. Commission members present were Bruce Hampton, David Hopkins, Steve Cagle, Cary Brown, and Trotter Hunt. Absent was Terri Towns. Also present were Bill Carter, Ron Riley, Robert Lemoine, and Tracy Ambrose.
2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Brown led the invocation, and Mr. Hunt led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Public Comment Registration – None.
4. Agenda Approval – Motion was made by Mr. Cagle and seconded by Mr. Hopkins to approve the February 2016 agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Approval of Minutes – Motion was made by Mr. Cagle and seconded by Mr. Hopkins to approve the minutes of the January 2016 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Treasurer's Reports – The January 2016 treasurer’s report was presented. Motion was made to approve the report by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Mr. Cagle. The motion passed unanimously.
7. Old and New Business:

1. Kids Fishing Rodeo/Ramp Road Closure Request – Mr. Carter said Terri Towns sent an email indicating that there will be a kids fishing rodeo in conjunction with the Crappie Masters Tournament in February and that Mr. Lum Farr with the Chamber of Commerce would be here tonight to request the use of Ramp Road. They want to have the kids fishing rodeo on Saturday, February 20, and they want to close Ramp Road to keep traffic off for safety reasons. It will be sponsored by the Tourist Commission, who will provide liability insurance. Bruce Hampton stated that the Chamber is also involved, and the Town of Farmerville and possibly the Police Jury are funding some of it. Steve Cagle said they must close the road at midnight the night before and re-open it as soon as it is over because we are short of boat ramps. He said if the City is involved, they can put a ribbon across it and close it. Mr. Hampton said he will speak with Lum Farr tomorrow about it. Cary Brown made motion to close Ramp Road the morning of February 20, 2016, for the use of the Tourist Commission for the kids fishing rodeo, subject to them providing proof of liability insurance and pursuant to the standard Ramp Road Use Agreement. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. Union-Lincoln Regional Water Supply Initiative Representative – Mr. Carter gave an overview of the Union-Lincoln Regional Water Supply Initiative. He stated that this is a non-profit corporation formed with four members, the Union Parish Police Jury, the Town of Farmerville, the Lincoln Parish Police Jury and the City of Ruston. In the enabling legislation that created the D'Arbonne and the Lake Commission, as well as the mechanism for lake to be created, one of the provisions allows the Town of Farmerville and the City of Ruston to take water from the lake without cost for drinking purposes. Because of the critical situation with the Sparta Aquifer, the Water Initiative was formed and later contracted with Waggoner Engineering to do a study to see if it is feasible to treat the lake for drinking purposes and if that was possible to determine how much water would be taken from the lake and whether it would have any detrimental impact on the lake. The overall project would be very expensive and there is no funding right now. The next steps are for the Water Initiative to acquire land and then build a water treatment plant. If they can find funding, the first goal is to have Farmerville and the chicken processing plant use surface water from the lake.

There is an ex-officio position on the Board of the Water Initiative for a representative of the Lake Commission. Mr. Carter suggested that since there is no current representative of the Lake Commission on the Water Initiative Board that the Board appoint a representative to stay involved. Mr. Hampton said the project is still in the study phase so we have no details or funding for all the studies that we need to do at this point. Mr. Carter said if the Water Initiative gets some money from the federal government, we need to be involved because once they do move forward it will involve taking water from the lake. Since there is some information that may affect the lake, we need someone from the Commission to be involved with the Water Initiative.

Mr. Cagle said the Water Initiative Board usually meets two or three times a year. Mr. Carter suggested we ask the Mayor Baughman to keep us updated as to what is going on. Steve Cagle agreed to serve as the ex-officio representative. A motion was made by Cary Brown and seconded by Trotter Hunt to have Mr. Cagle appointed as ex-officio member of the Union-Lincoln Regional Water Supply Initiative Board. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Hurricane Creek Dredging Request – Bruce Hampton said that Terri Towns dropped off an envelope with a document stating that someone was interested in dredging the lake because it was silting outside his property. The man asked whether the Commission does dredging or whether he would need to pay for it privately. Mr. Hampton stated that he spoke with Ron Riley about this previously who indicated that we do not have funds to dredge in front of everyone’s camp on the lake. It would not be fair to do it for one person and not others. Mr. Cagle said there was a lot of dredging done prior to Maricopia Island, but anyone who has done dredging since then has been fined. Mr. Hampton stated that if anyone wants to dig in the lake, they need to obtain approval from the Corps of Engineers to avoid being fined. Mr. Carter also stated that the Lake Commission should be involved in any dredging activities in the lake.

4. Information Pamphlet – Mr. Carter handed out old pamphlets sent by Terri Towns. Mr. Carter had someone at his office type the pamphlet, and he made minor edits. He wanted to see what the Board thinks about having them reprinted. Steve Cagle said he and David Hopkins discussed a logo or something to enhance the picture. He also stated that the only thing wrong with the pamphlet is that our yoyo law is one the Board passed. However, the State has passed a law prohibiting tying yoyos to anything except a green tree or a personal boat dock, so we need to change the wording to comply with the State law. Mr. Hampton suggested that we form a committee for this and that this be discussed in more detail when Ms. Towns is at the next meeting. Steve Cagle promised to take a copy to her so she can give her thoughts at the next meeting.

5. 2016 Drawdown – Mr. Carter stated that Board policy is to have a drawdown of the lake every four years beginning the day after Labor Day. He thought we should officially announce the drawdown dates this year. Steve Cagle said in years past we generally drew the lake down five feet, but we almost lose the use of every boat ramp on the lake at five feet. If we stop the drawdown at four feet, we will keep our ramps. Mr. Riley said there are two places in the boat rows where you can’t drive a boat through at five feet. Mr. Riley said this is the first time we will draw down the water with the tainter gates. This gives us more control because they can be closed quickly. Mr. Cagle suggested we should start by notifying Wildlife & Fisheries that this is the year for a drawdown starting the day after Labor Day and we should send it to the biologist, Ryan Daniels, and let him forward it somewhere. Mr. Riley said we are limited on the drawdown to four inches per day. Mr. Carter suggested that another ordinance be adopted outlining the drawdown procedure because it is important. We do have more control, but we need to agree on the process. We can discuss a proposed procedure so we will have in place for future years. Mr. Riley said we do not control the tainter gate. DOTD opens and closes it, so we have to ask them to do that. Mr. Hampton said we need to announce the drawdown this year on a four-year cycle and start at Labor Day. He further said we can iron out details and establish an ordinance later. Mr. Hopkins asked what determines when we take it back up. Mr. Carter said we have a procedure and he will look for it. If he can't find it, we need to adopt a new one. Mr. Riley said Wildlife & Fisheries wants the gate to stay open until after a couple of freezes. Mr. Cagle said it is written we have our drawdown from day after Labor Day until Thanksgiving. After that, Wildlife & Fisheries will come in and give us a letter and ask us to extend it from Thanksgiving to mid-January for aquatic weed control. Mr. Hampton asked Mr. Cagle to email it to all of us and we will address this at the next meeting.

6. Boat Ramp Rules/New Signs – Update – Mr. Hunt emailed some quotes on our signs and said we may want to get other quotes. He expressed concern about the wind and the size of the signs. The companies will make a recommendation as to what material they think is best for wind problems. Mr. Carter said we have to deal with vandalism, as well. Mr. Hopkins thought it was a good price installed. Mr. Cagle said last time it was $1000 per sign, which is about double the price we have been recently quoted. Mr. Hunt said the quote was for a two-sided sign but it was same design on the other side. Mr. Hunt thought it would be six or seven days to have them done, but it might be longer for this many signs and the installation. Mr. Carter suggested they get a quote for extra signs in case of loss from wind damage or vandalism. There was some discussion about the material used on the signs and whether the signs could be designed with some type of gaps to allow for wind. Steve Cagle suggested using Acubond as the material for the sign. Mr. Hunt is going to ask if there is a sample sign that can be viewed.

7. Mega Ramp Update – Ron Riley said capital outlay for next year is starting now and hopefully we will come out in the bill. Capital outlay requires a 75% - 25% match which is tough. At one time, we were hoping Wallop-Breaux would come through but it appears it will not. We are now going through the Office of State Forestry (federal money). We can ask for as much as $250,000. It will be matched through capital outlay if the funds come through. If not, we still have enough match in the value of the land. We are in the application stage. They require a preliminary application to be in by April 1 and they look at it to see if it is eligible for funding. If so, then they will let us know by April 15 and by June 1, we have to have the full application in. At that time, you have to sign it. But right now, no one has to sign anything. We are just gathering information and sending it in. The reason we haven’t sent it yet is because we have not gotten the Shipo (State History Preservation Office) letter yet. It takes a while to get the letter but he is hoping we will get it soon.

8. Maricopa Island Project – Update – Bill Carter said he spoke with Ron Riley and kept in touch with Christy Hall with Corps of Engineers. He thought the Commission had submitted comments but apparently we have not. Ms. Hall has requested that we comment, and he believes it is a good idea to make a comment. Wildlife & Fisheries wrote a report in 2012 that was in-depth about several things, including the potential effect on fisheries, navigation issue and a proposal to build a berm, or road, or a dump from the main one over to one island. The original proposal was to develop a residential subdivision on the island but it would probably never get approval so the developer changed his application to build a road from the mainland to the island for land management. The way the road is drawn up, it would act as a dam from an area on the island to the mainland, and Wildlife & Fisheries made the point that it could have a significant degradation of fisheries because that is right up from the Mixing Hole and it's also a passage used by a lot of boaters, fishermen, kayakers, and residents. Mr. Riley put together a general response and, if the Board agrees, we can put the response together and send it to the Board to address those points from standpoint of the Commission. There are some issues, such as the Mixing Hole, that could have an adverse effect because they are talking about culverts underneath the water, which is basically a dam that would block access. Mr. Hampton asked Mr. Carter to send it to everyone for review.

H. Public Comment – None.

I. Adjourn – A motion to adjourn was made by Cary Brown and seconded by David Hopkins. The motion passed unanimously.