**MINUTES OF JULY 19, 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 called the meeting to order. Commission members present were Bruce Hampton, David Hopkins, Trotter Hunt, Steve Cagle, Cary Brown and Terri Towns. Also present were Bill Carter, Ron Riley, Robert Lemoine and Scott LeDoux.
2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance – Cary Brown led the invocation, and Steve Cagle led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Public Comment Registration – Later in the meeting, Scott LeDoux signed up to make a public comment.
4. Agenda Approval – Motion was made by Steve Cagle and seconded by Trotter Hunt to approve the July 2016 Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Approval of Minutes – Motion was made by David Hopkins and seconded by Trotter Hunt to approve the minutes of the May 2016 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Treasurer's Reports – The May 2016 treasurer’s report was presented. Motion was made by David Hopkins and seconded by Cary Brown to approve the report. The motion passed unanimously.
7. Old and New Business:

1. Channel Markers – (a) FEMA Claims – Ron Riley stated that the Board agreed at the last meeting to pursue obtaining support from FEMA. He and Steve Cagle spent six hours on the lake with one of the FEMA members determining damage. The Commission will qualify for assistance. They also found that the staff gauges at the spillway and about 40 feet of fence were lost, which also qualified. Last Wednesday, Mr. Riley met with another FEMA individual, and they returned to the lake. FEMA requested some additional information which he forwarded to them, and now we are just waiting for him to return.

(b) Repair Status – When Mr. Riley and Mr. Cagle rode around the lake, they guesstimated that 30 poles and 500 signs were lost. Some of the signs were lost, but some were submerged, so they can no longer be seen at dark and need to be replaced. Mr. Cagle has replaced approximately 200 signs already. FEMA asked that we GPS every missing pole in the lake, so Mr. Cagle has donated a lot of time doing this. Mr. Riley stated this is a big project which will go two different ways: One will be a mitigation project and the other will be a small project and they will just pay the Board. The staff gauges are not that big of a deal dollar-wise but we do not have an answer on this yet. Mr. Hampton asked about additional damage which may be seen during the drawdown. Mr. Riley believes we can report it to FEMA within four to five months but he does not believe there will be any damage. Mr. Cagle said once the water goes down, we will probably see some poles that he has missed but they cannot be seen right now with the water higher. He also stated that we apparently will not qualify for the labor. Mr. Riley, however, believes we will qualify for Mr. Cagle’s time and that of his helpers, but we cannot count the time of prisoners who are helping. FEMA also will reimburse for hourly rates of boats used. Mr. Hampton thanked Steve Cagle and Ron Riley for the time they have both spent on this project.

2. 2016 Drawdown – Mr. Carter distributed a revised Drawdown Policy. This is similar to the rough draft that he handed out at the last meeting. The DOTD will make the decision regarding drawdown since it is their tainter gate, and this reflects what traditionally has happened every four years, as well as some parameters on how far the lake will be drawn down, when the drawdown will begin and when it will end. There is no way to bring it down to a certain level and hold it there because the lake will either be rising or falling. However, he stated that Ron Riley suggested four feet, which can be changed with a request to the DOTD as circumstances warrant. This year’s drawdown is already in place. Mr. Carter asked Mr. Hampton if a formal request has been made to DOTD to do that this year. Mr. Hampton stated that we have not, and Mr. Carter stated that we need to do that. Mr. Hampton stated that he will also need to send a letter to Wildlife & Fisheries, the Police Jury, and all the entities outlined in the policy. Mr. Carter stated that a copy should also be sent to Ryan Daniel of LDWF in Monroe. Mr. Cagle stated that LDWF can then send it to Marshall Hill, and Ryan Daniel will probably come back with a letter requesting that we leave it down longer for grass purposes. Mr. Cagle stated that they previously requested additional wardens to protect our fisheries, and LDWF brought up wardens from Lafayette. He asked that we do the same this year. Mr. Hampton asked Mr. Cagle to get him copies of that and he will get with Mr. Carter and notify everyone, including the Police Jury, the Sheriff, the City of Farmerville, and the media. Mr. Hampton asked whether it should be four feet below pool stage, and Mr. Cagle stated that they should not go to five feet because only two boat ramps are left in water. Therefore, approximately four feet is the depth that we need to go to. Steve Cagle made a motion that the 2016 Periodic Lake Drawdown Policy be adopted as prepared on July 19, 2016, and Trotter Hunter seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

3. Lake Information Pamphlet – Update – Ms. Towns stated that she has not received any new information from anyone about additions to the pamphlet. She is waiting until the website is finished so we can make a correlation between the pamphlet and the website, and she believes they need to go out together. Everyone was in agreement. Trotter Hunt suggested a trifold paper rather than a pamphlet, and he stated that we could get some quotes from firms to have them printed. Mr. Hampton agreed that we will wait on the pamphlet until the website is designed.

4. Boat Ramp Rules/New Signs – Update – Mr. Riley stated that as of last Friday the signs were almost painted and they look good. His goal is to begin installing them by Thursday or Friday of this week. Mr. Riley was of the opinion that it would take at least three days to get them installed. The only problem they had with location was the one at Gills Ferry because there is nowhere to put it because it is flat and will flood there. Steve Cagle said Hog Pen is also a problem because the location is near someone’s driveway. Mr. Riley stated that there is a green stake in the ground on every boat ramp, including at Hog Pen, so if they need to be moved, let him know quickly. Mr. Cagle stated that he had a lot of concern about the one on Ramp Road. If they put the sign up at the ramp, it’s going to flood, but if you put it by the highway, they will pass it and will not pull over to read it. He feels concerned that the signs are being placed too far away, especially on Ramp Road. Mr. Hampton stated that we have to weigh how close they are to the boat ramps, as opposed to how long they would be there. The rising water would be a problem, so it would be a hard call. There was a long discussion as to where the signs on some of the ramps should be located. Mr. Riley suggested that we resolve the location issue that week so the signs can be installed. Mr. Cagle reiterated that there are three ramps where he believes the signs are too far away – Stow Creek, Ramp Road and Highway 2. Steve Cagle made a motion to amend the sign locations at Hog Pen, Stow Creek and the two ramp roads. Mr. Riley asked Mr. Cagle to show him where to put them before this was amended. Mr. Carter asked whether David Hopkins was in agreement with Steve Cagle. There was additional discussion about where the stakes were actually placed. Steve Cagle amended his motion that he and David Hopkins will meet Friday to agree on the locations where the signs are to be placed at Stow Creek, Hog Pen and the two ramp roads. Mr. Riley agreed to contact the man who will install the signs to ask him to wait until next week. Trotter Hunt seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Mega Ramp – Update – Mr. Riley stated that this project did not make the Capital Outlay Bill. Mr. Hampton stated that we will try again next year. Mr. Riley stated that he does not know what they will do if the applications to Wallop Breaux and State Parks are not accepted because we do not have the matching money. We will have to play it by ear.

6. Maricopa Island Project – Update – Mr. Riley received a copy of what he thought was a permit from the property owner. He stated the Corps of Engineers was not having a public hearing. Mr. Cagle stated that our responsibility is to landowners around the lake, fisherman and our lake. He stated that this project is detrimental to our lake, and our responsibility is to fight this project. We cannot sit back and let the Corps do whatever it wants to do. Mr. Hampton said the Lake Commission has already taken a position with the Corps of Engineers opposing this. He stated that his position is to ask the Corps to have a public hearing so everyone who is a constituent and has a relevant connection with the lake can meet and express to the Corps their concerns or positions for or against the project and that it is the Lake Commission’s responsibility to make sure the constituents are heard by the Corps. He stated that we are representing all constituents by asking for a public hearing. Mr. Riley stated that the letter was clear that a public hearing would not be held. Mr. Carter stated that there was an email that there was an original application for a development of a subdivision that was withdrawn and a revised application for agricultural use filed. Mr. Carter stated that Wildlife & Fisheries issued a two-page letter criticizing the project, and the developer responded. Mr. Carter stated that he spoke with Christy Hall at the Corps three or four months ago, and the Corps wanted to see where the Lake Commission stood, and the Commission did so, going on record to oppose the project. When Mr. Carter requested a public hearing, Ms. Hall stated that the Corps very rarely had public hearings. He has not contacted her again since that time. Mr. Cagle stated that we only keep stating that we want a public hearing, but he requested that the Commission take a vote as to whether we are in favor of or against the project because we are going to hurt our lake if we allow this. Mr. Trotter suggested writing a letter to the Corps taking the position that we cannot support the project without a public hearing. Mr. Hopkins agreed with Mr. Hunt. Mr. Riley stated that he would like to see a copy of the delineation report and who wrote it because he does not believe everyone understands the project.

Mr. Riley also said that the project as designed would represent an obstruction in the lake. Mr. Hampton stated that no one at the Commission was in favor of voting to support the project. He also stated that the only way he would sign a letter is if there is a vote by the Commission that a letter be prepared under those terms authorizing him to sign it. Mr. Hunt made a motion to alter the letter to the Corps stating that the Lake Commission is not in a position to support the project without a public hearing. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Cary Brown suggested that the letter say the previous position of the Lake Commission has not been altered. Mr. Hampton stated that the only revision to his letter would be that we will not support it without a public hearing. Mr. Carter warned them to be careful that the Board does not give the implication that if there is a public hearing the Board will support it. Mr. Riley suggested that we request a copy of the actual permit application. Mr. Carter stated that we have not had any personal contact with Christy Hall in several months but it would be good for someone to call her to find out whether anything has changed. Mr. Hampton stated that he would do so.

7. Commission Website – Update – Mr. Hampton stated that he would like to pass on this tonight because he does not have a bid yet from Buster Craig. Trotter Hunt said his friend also is willing to give a bid for the website. Mr. Hampton also checked with Donny Bell, but the website for the Police Jury cost five times as much, so that is out of the question. The bid from Buster Craig was approximately $1,500 initially for one similar to the Police Jury website, and there is a fee to maintain it.

8. Annual Dam Inspection – Report – Ron Riley stated that back in June, an inspection was made. It was the first time we could get inside the gallery in three years because it has been flooded. This was the first time he has walked into the gallery and saw zero leaks on the lake side. They did, however, find some minor leaks on the downstream side. They liked the signs instructing people to keep back so many feet, and they liked the fact that the high water ramp is now gone. The two old gates worked, and now we have the tainter gate. The inspection went well. He has not yet received the report and, when he gets it, he promised to email it to the Board members.

H. Public Comment – Scott LeDoux stated that he built a large house at 1059 Holder Road, and Toby Trowbridge called him recently and stated that he is planning to build a boathouse when they drop the lake in September. He wanted Mr. LeDoux to sign something and he wants Mr. Dillingham on the other side of his lot to sign something giving permission to build his boathouse. Mr. Trowbridge will have a kitchen and living quarters in the boathouse, and he plans to put it on Mr. LeDoux’s side of his lot. Mr. LeDoux is concerned and objects to this because it will block his view of the lake. Mr. Hampton stated that Mr. LeDoux’s attorney had called him that afternoon about this, but the Lake Commission has nothing before it to approve or disapprove. He said there are already Lake Commission rules regarding what can or cannot be built and how far they can extend it. He is also under the impression that there are regulations that prohibit living quarters in a boathouse. Mr. Carter stated that he believes there are provisions to that effect, and Mr. Cagle agreed. Mr. Hampton stated that he will be glad to review this when it is properly before the Commission but right now all they have is someone saying this is happening. He suggested that Mr. LeDoux see his attorney, Mr. Jefferson, because there are other provisions under Louisiana law that may be applicable, for example, a servitude of view that may apply, and he may be able to get relief through that. Mr. Carter stated that the Lake Commission only has the right to regulate matters within its authority granted by the legislature. Mr. LeDoux stated that Mr. Trowbridge is trying to get riparian rights, and he gave John Crow $2000. Mr. Hampton suggested that Mr. Jefferson contact Bill Carter about this and get this on the agenda. Mr. Carter agreed.

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