**MINUTES OF April 17, 2018 REGULAR MEETING**

**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 Trotter Hunt called the meeting to order. Commission members present were Bruce Hampton, Steve Cagle, Cary Brown and Guy Fortenberry. Terri Towns and Jake Halley were absent. Also present were Bill Carter, Ron Riley, and Robert Lemoine (Bernice Banner).
2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance – Cary Brown led the invocation, and Guy Fortenberry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Public Comment Registration – One person signed up for the public comment period.

D. Agenda Approval – Motion was made by Steve Cagle and seconded by Bruce Hampton to approve the April 2018 Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Approval of Minutes – Motion was made by Bruce Hampton and seconded by Steve Cagle to approve the minutes of the March 2018 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Treasurer's Report:

1. Approve March 2018 Bank Account Summary – Motion was made by Bruce Hampton and seconded by Guy Fortenberry to approve the March 2018 Bank Account Summary. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Approve March 2018 Bank Statement Reconciliation – Motion was made by Steve Cagle and seconded by Bruce Hampton to approve the March 2018 Bank Statement Reconciliation. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Approve March 2018 Financial Report – Motion was made by Bruce Hampton and seconded by Steve Cagle to approve the March 2018 Bank Statement Reconciliation. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Old and New Business:

1. Channel Markers – (a) FEMA Claims, and (b) Repair Status – Ron Riley stated that he was informed by FEMA that there was a new disaster recovery specialist assigned to this project. Mr. Riley spoke with her about the project and she was supposed to look into it and get back with him. Steve Cagle indicated that one channel marker has been knocked down south of the Highway 2 bridge after the first left is made and is not visible. Mr. Cagle has a buoy made that is sitting on his pier with a cable and has informed the commission members that if they see the channel marker, to take the buoy and place it on the marker. Ron Riley also indicated a number of trees with markers on them were lost in the last flood event, with several out from Forks Ferry to the Highway 2 Bridge as well as from the Highway 33 Bridge going towards the dam.
2. New Lake Maps – Ron Riley stated that at the last meeting it was noted that the names of the ramps shown on the new maps were not official names adopted by the commission. Terri Towns sent Mr. Riley the official 911 names and asked that D’Arbonne Village be changed to Lester’s Store. Mr. Riley noticed that the ramp below the spillway is not included on the map. He said he will just mark it as “north below spillway.” Bruce Hampton inquired about the advertisements and Steve Cagle stated that he was still working on it and still had old maps for sale. Trotter Hunt reiterated that there had been a discussion to omit the advertisers if it was a problem to get filled to which Mr. Cagle said that it is not a problem.
3. Policy for Primary Financial and Business Functions to Include Those for Cash – Bruce Hampton sent out a policy to everyone before the meeting. He said that if anyone had changes they could address those at the next meeting.
4. Repairs at Various Boat Ramp Sites, Including Piers – Steve Cagle said all ramps have been repaired except for the two at the spillway. He stated the contractor is ready to repair those and the price is $2,500 total. A motion was made by Bruce Hampton and seconded by Cary Brown to authorize Steve Cagle to facilitate the repair of the ramps at the spillway with the contractor at a cost of no more than $2,500. The motion passed unanimously. Bill Carter stated that the auditor is asking for copies of contracts and said that a contract for this work may need to be done before the work is complete. Steve Cagle stated that in the past a contract for maintenance was not required. Trotter Hunt said that he will speak with the auditor and find out exactly what is needed.
5. Damage to Dock at Highway 2 West Ramp – Steve Cagle wanted to know if anyone had talked to the insurance adjuster because a quote of $750 had previously been received to repair this dock. Cary Brown stated that he was tasked with talking to the adjuster, but he had not received a copy of the accident report. Bruce Hampton said that he could get the report from the sheriff’s office.
6. Request to Cut Trees at Terral Island Boat Ramp – Trotter Hunt stated that this had been completed.
7. Lake Report – Ryan Daniel of DWF – Ryan Daniels, Inland Fisheries Biology Manager of the District LDWF Office in Monroe, introduced himself and informed the commission members that the responsibilities of the DWF are to manage the state’s fresh water resources, including fishery sampling and aquatic vegetation control. At least once a year he comes and gives commission members an update on the activities taking place on the lake. He said the DWF uses different types of fishery sampling including does electro fishing in the spring and fall to sample the bass population, lead nets to sample the crappie population in the fall, seining at boat ramps to look at reproduction of game fish and also look at foreign species in the lake, as well as forage fish. Gill netting is also used to look at the commercial species and creel surveys are conducted from time to time at boat ramps where fishermen are questioned about what they have been catching and their opinions of fisheries regulations and lake management.

Speaking first about bass, Mr. Daniels passed out graphs that summarize the recent fishery samples on the lake. The first graph has data for bass beginning with 1993 to date. He said the DWF comes out every one or two years and samples from the same locations on the lake for a specific amount of time and to compare the bass population each year over time. He said this graph shows that the bass population has been fairly stable for the last 25 years with a few exceptions. The sample from the spring and fall of 2017 shows the bass population is normal and fits within the long-term average. Mr. Daniels noted that the chart breaks the bass into different size classes. Overall, the data shows that the bass population has fluctuated only slightly over the years and has been very resilient.

The next chart Mr. Daniels refers to is the length distribution chart from the spring sample in 2017. He indicates that the chart looks ideal and that all size classes are represented with a great deal of medium sized fish and some large fish, with some being over 20 inches in that sample and no evidence of overfishing.

The next graph Mr. Daniels referred to shows the fall sample from 2017. He states that this sample does not look as impressive as the spring sample. He said it shows that more fish were collected in the fall, but some of the size classes were missing due to the timing of the sample. He stated that the 2017 crop was not large enough to be collected yet. He noticed that the catch per hour was 82, which he said was a very good value. He said the reason for not collecting big bass in the fall is because they are not on the banks. He stated that every fish collected is weighed and measured and the condition of the fish in the last sample was great. Mr. Daniels said that they use a figure called relative weight which is a condition factor that gives the DWF an idea of how healthy or how fat the fish are and for every size group that value was over 95 percent meaning those fish had plenty to eat.

Mr. Daniels pointed to the next graph which is a gill net sample from January, 2017. The purpose is to catch the larger bass as well as commercial species such as catfish or buffalo. He provided this graph specifically to show the data on the bass captured. There were several bass collected that were over 18 inches and it shows that currently there is a very large crop of large trophy size bass in the lake. He states that although they are not listed, numerous amounts of catfish were also caught, both channel and flathead, some up to 34 inches long. He said they also caught several hybrid striped bass which he thinks came from Lake Claiborne, including one which weighed 11 pounds, as well as white bass and freshwater drum. They also caught one common carp and several large crappie, some that were up to 15 inches.

Turning to crappie, Mr. Daniels said the next chart shows data from the fall 2015 crappie sample, which had previously been provided to the commission as well as the two samples from 2011 and 2012. He said the 2015 sample was very similar to the previous samples with no significant changes in the size distribution. He states that it is approaching time to re-sample crappie and will talk about what he has planned in the future. However, he would like to go over crappie management first.

Mr. Daniels states that the DWF is very aware that crappie are very important to the fishermen on D’Arbonne Lake and to the local economy. He stated the lake has received some national attention and increased fishing pressure. He states that the DWF want to ensure that the lake continues to be managed optimally. He states that the DWF has committed to beginning another three-year stock assessment on the crappie population next fall, which will be identical to the one from 2010 – 2012. The study will look at growth rates, age, structure and mortality rate of the crappie population. They will also look at fishing pressure. They will sit at the boat ramps for one of those years and do a great deal of surveys of fishermen to see what they are catching in numbers and size. The fishermen will also be asked about their opinions of lake management. After the study is completed, a report will be prepared and then compared to the previous study.

Mr. Daniels asked if anyone had any questions. Bruce Hampton wanted to clarify that the next study starts in 2019 to which Mr. Daniels said yes. Mr. Hampton asked what would happen if during the study an issue was discovered after one year of sampling would the DWF take action to address it then before the study was complete. Mr. Daniels indicated that it would have to be a very dramatic change for the DWF to take action. He said this is because the DWF does not like to jump to conclusions or make assumptions based on one year’s sampling especially since the crappie population typically fluctuates from year to year based on environmental conditions. Mr. Hampton said he was glad the DWF was doing the new study.

Mr. Daniels then moved to vegetation. He indicates that there is giant Salvinia floating in the lake which was initially confined to two areas on the lake – near Masonic Road on Corney Bayou and near the mixing hole. However, he stated last year it exploded and the DWF actually treated a total of 430 acres of giant Salvinia in 2017 compared to only 67 acres in 2016 which shows how quickly the Salvinia can rapidly reproduce in the lake. He said the good news is that the extreme cold weather this past winter killed many of the plants but the DWF will continue to spray wherever it is found. He suggested that the homeowners and fishermen call the DWF as soon as the Salvinia is seen so that action can be taken immediately prior to reproduction. Steve Cagle asked if there was anything that could be sprayed on the Salvinia and Mr. Daniels suggested using glyphosate (brand name - Rodeo) and diquat (Brand name - Reward) which can be purchased at a local feed and seed store. Mr. Daniels also showed the Commissioners a sign that the DWF has placed at some boat ramps on other lakes. This sign has a picture of Salvinia and educates the fishermen what to look for. He stated that the way the Salvinia gets into the lake is usually by boat trailers used in another lake. He stated there are currently no other issues with vegetation. He stated that in the past, there were issues with Hydrilla, but it is now in only minimal amounts. He said the American Lotus, which are the big lily pads, are not an issue at this time. Overall, the lake is in good shape with respect to aquatic vegetation.

1. Public Survey(s) Relating to Lake Topics – Trotter Hunt stated that there are no current updates.

1. Union Lincoln Regional Water Supply Initiative Report – Cary Brown stated that he had attended a few meetings recently and that the project had stalled for lack of funding.
2. Annual Mowing Contract – Bill Carter stated that two proposals were received. One was Mark Bryan who did the mowing last year and the other was Larry Kenley. Mark Bryan’s quote for mowing services of $1,000.00 per month was lower. A motion was made by Bruce Hampton and seconded by Cary Brown to approve the contract with Mark Bryan and to authorize the President to sign the contract. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Audit Representation Letter – Trotter Hunt stated that this form must be completed as part of the audit by the state. Each box must be checked and there is only one that is out of compliance which is the requirement for the primary financial and business functions which he indicated was based on the funding from last year. A motion was made by Bruce Hampton and seconded by Guy Fortenberry to authorize the President to execute the document.
4. Reminder Regarding Filing Financial Disclosure Statements by Commissioners – Trotter Hunt stated that the deadline to file is April 18.
5. Reminder Regarding Board Member Ethics Training by Commissioners – Bruce Hampton stated that this must be done by the end of the calendar year – December 31.
6. Public Comment – Mr. Gary Preston of Walnut Tree Community stated that he was interested in getting the commission to consider setting elevation markers at Corney Creek. He indicated that the when the level is 82.25 feet at the spillway it is closer to 87 feet at Walnut Tree. He has had an engineer come to his property and give him a benchmark on his pier which is 87.68 feet. He said he would like the commission to set a marker and recognize the levels when the lake is elevated. He also asked that if the lake could be dropped some during elevated levels to give the homeowners in his area some relief. Mr. Preston indicated that he had plenty of volunteers to take care of doing the work and it would not cost the commission anything. Steve Cagle offered to Mr. Preston a gauge that he could use until the commission could come address his request.

I. Adjourn – A motion to adjourn was made by Steve Cagle and seconded by Bruce Hampton. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned.