**Atchafalaya Basin Program**

**Research & Promotion Board Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 30, 2013**

**9:30am to 11:00am**

**LA Department of Natural Resources**

**LaBelle Room – 1st Floor**

**617 North 3rd Street**

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

**Meeting Minutes**

BOARD MEMBERS:

Atchafalaya Levee Board Gerald Alexander (chairman)

Department of Environmental Quality Alex Appeaning

Department of Health & Hospitals Lance Broussard

Office of the Governor (Coastal Activities) Charles Sutcliffe

Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Mike Wood

Department of Natural Resources Keith Lovell

Department of Transportation & Development Shawn Wilson

Culture, Recreation & Tourism Stuart Johnson

St. Mary Parish representative Paul Naquin

NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS:

Assumption Parish representative Marty Triche (Absent)

Iberville Parish representative Mitch Ourso (Absent)

St. Martin Parish representative Guy Cormier (Absent)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Department of Natural Resources Staff Don Haydel

Robert Benoit

Charles Reulet

Sara Krupa

Thomas Van Biersel

Dana Naquin

1. **Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gerald Alexander and a roll call determined there was a quorum present.

2. **Approval of agenda by majority vote, or agenda may be amended by 2/3 vote**

The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was made by Alex Appeaning and seconded by Mike Wood to approve the agenda. The Chairman called for the vote and approval of the agenda passed unanimously.

3. **Approval of Minutes from July 10, 2013 Board Meeting**

The Chairman called for any corrections or changes to the prior meeting minutes. The Chairman called for a motion to approve the minutes of July 10, 2013 meeting. Motion was made by Paul Naquin and seconded by Mike Wood to approve the minutes. The Chairman called for the vote and approval of the minutes passed unanimously.

4. **Atchafalaya Basin Program Director**

Robert Benoit presented the topic to acknowledge Don Haydel’s leadership of the program, and recommended to the Board that they consider changing his status from “Acting Director” to “Executive Director” of the Atchafalaya Basin Program.

5. **Public comment on Atchafalaya Basin Program Director**

No public comment.

6. **Research & Promotion Board Consideration of Atchafalaya Basin Program Director**

Keith Lovell made the motion to install Don Haydel as the Executive Director of the Atchafalaya Basin Program. The motion was seconded by Alex Appeaning and the motion passed unanimously.

7. **Overview of FY2015 Draft Annual Basin Plan**

Don Haydel reviewed the projects recommended by the Technical Advisory Group:

1. **Project Number 2015-01** – St Mary Parish - Flat Lake Ecosystem

**Prioritization** – TAG **Approved** this project.

**Type of Problem** – Environmental

**Nominating Party** – St Mary Parish Government

**Statement of Problem** – Sedimentation causing loss of access to the Flat Lake and aquatic habitat loss that impacts the overall health of the ecosystem.

**Proposed Work Area** – Flat Lake Water Management Unit, St Martin Parish.

**Proposed Action Description –** The proposal requests that an environmental evaluation be conducted on the lake and its ecosystem in order to design a restoration project that could rehabilitate habitat to improve biological conditions and also to re-establish access for the benefit of public use.

**TAG Analysis and Recommendation** - The “Overview and Planning Process of the East Grand Lake Water Quality Improvement and Sediment Management Plan” was completed in 2010 as one of the projects funded in the 2009 Atchafalaya Basin Annual Plan. The overview clearly identified the Flat Lake area as an important component of the drainage of the Flat Lake and Upper Belle River WMUs and that its hydrodynamic influence should be quantified as part of the planning process. The overview document suggests that decisions regarding the future management of the waterways in and around Flat Lake will have a significant influence on the hydrology and ecology of the Western and Upper regions. Due to the changing physical landscape that routes water through most of the Upper Belle River WMU, sediment accumulation in Flat Lake continues to exacerbate drainage issues stagnation of interior swamp habitat. The proposed plan is consistent with the stated objectives of the existing planning process and should be considered for funding. In addition, the TAG also approved project number **201108 (**Bathymetry Data in American Pass) in the FY 2013 Annual Plan which would support the development of this assessment.

1. **Project Number 2015-11** – Dan Kroes - Create sediment trap near river in 21 Inch Canal

**Prioritization** – TAG **Approved** this project.

**Type of Problem** – Water/Sediment Management

**Nominating Party** – Dan Kroes - USGS

**Statement of Problem** – Sediment from 21 Inch Canal is filling Bayou Boutee

**Proposed Work Area** – St Martin Parish - Upper Bell River WMU.

**Proposed Action Description –** Create sediment trap at the mouth of 21 inch Canal.

**TAG Analysis and Recommendation** – The proposed concept of reducing sediment in the project area is consistent with sediment reduction projects like the Dog Leg Canal. The TAG recommends forwarding this project for approval and recommends a cost benefit assessment of be included to evaluate the efficiency of sediment traps as sediment reduction features on water management projects.

1. **Project Number 2015-12** – Dan Kroes - Dredge sediment accretion from entrance to Murphy Lake.

**Prioritization** – TAG **Approved** this project to be appended to currently approved Project 2012-08 for evaluation as appropriate.

**Type of Problem** – Water/Sediment Management

**Nominating Party** – Dan Kroes - USGS

**Statement of Problem** – Sediment has closed off Murphy Lake from access in low water causing water circulation and water quality problems.

**Proposed Work Area** – St Martin Parish/ Iberville Parish - Flat Lake WMU.

**Proposed Action Description –** Dredge sediment accretion from entrance to Murphy Lake to improve access and water flow into the lake.

**TAG Analysis and Recommendation** – This project proposes a very similar action as Project 2012-08 which was approved by the TAG for funding in the FY 2012 Annual Plan. The TAG recommends that the two projects be funded as a unified effort and that the planning for the Murphy Lake project be closely coordinated with the East Grand Lake Plan.

1. **Project Number 2015-13** – Dan Kroes - Create sediment trap near river in Orange Barrel Canal

**Prioritization** – TAG **Approved** this project.

**Type of Problem** – Water/Sediment Management

**Nominating Party** – Dan Kroes - USGS

**Statement of Problem** – Sediment from 21 Inch Canal is filling Orange Barrel Canal

**Proposed Work Area** – St Martin Parish - Upper Bell River WMU.

**Proposed Action Description –** Create sediment trap at the mouth of Orange Barrel Canal.

**TAG Analysis and Recommendation** – The proposed concept of reducing sediment in the project area is consistent with sediment reduction projects like the Dog Leg Canal. The TAG recommends forwarding this project for approval and recommends a cost benefit assessment of be included to evaluate the efficiency of sediment traps as sediment reduction features on water management projects.

1. **Project Number 2015-14** – Richard Labbe - Dredge Work Canal

**Prioritization** – TAG **Approved** this project to be appended to currently approved Project 2010-01 for evaluation as appropriate.

**Type of Problem** – Water/Sediment Management

**Nominating Party** – Richard Labbe - Conservationist

**Statement of Problem** – Work Canal has filled with sediment and the blockage currently creates fish passage, access, and water quality problems.

**Proposed Work Area** – Iberville Parish - Bayou Des Glaisses.

**Proposed Action Description –** Dredge Work Canal from Atchafalaya River to I-10.

**TAG Analysis and Recommendation** – This project proposes a very similar action as Project 2010-01 which was approved by the TAG for funding in the FY 2010 Annual Plan. The TAG recommends that the two projects be considered as a unified effort to ensure consistency and compatibility among project features.

8. **Public Comment on Draft FY2015 Annual Basin Plan**

Mike Wood pointed out a correction on pages 26 & 27 – duplicate paragraphs. A boat tour of the project areas was requested by Paul Naquin and Gerald Alexander. Don Haydel will select a date and set up boat tour for all that are available to attend – as soon as possible.

9. **Research & Promotion Board Consideration of Draft FY2015 Annual Basin Plan**

Motion was made by Shawn Wilson and seconded by Alex Appeaning to accept the Draft FY2015 Annual Basin Plan with Mike Wood’s correction. The Chairman called for the vote and approval of the agenda passed unanimously.

10.\* **Reallocation of $250,000 from Cocodrie Swamp Project to Bayou Fourche Project**

Don Haydel explained the process of moving these funds due to the project not being able to move forward due to private landowners not allowing access to their property in order to complete project. Don pointed out that several projects in the Basin are not able to move forward due to lack of participation from private landowners, pipelines, etc. There are other projects in the Basin that can move forward but need additional funds.

11. **Public Comment on $250,000 Reallocation from Cocodrie Swamp Project to Bayou Fourche Project**

Paul Naquin requested that before the funds are reallocated, that the Atchafalaya Basin Program request a meeting with this private landowner together with the parish president and state legislators. Gerald Alexander pointed out that numerous attempts have been made to ask for this landowner’s participation in projects and have been rejected for many years. Alex Appeaning suggested that when the nomination process begins that the nominee should be made aware that the nomination requires private landowner participation before the nomination can be submitted and presented to the Technical Advisory Board.

12. **Research and Promotion Board Consideration of $250,000 Reallocation from Cocodrie Swamp Project to Bayou Fourche Project**

A motion was made by Paul Naquin to have the Basin Program contact Guy Cormier and the private landowner to request a meeting to request land access. If land access is not granted as a result of this meeting, or the meeting request is refused, then the Board approves moving forward with the reallocation of the $250,000 for Bayou Fourche Project. Motion was seconded by Stuart Johnson and passed unanimously.

13. **Other Business**

Don Haydel reviewed the following information

1. Remaining Timeline for FY 2015 Annual Plan
   1. Public Meetings November 12, 13, 14
   2. Research and Promotion Board meeting November 21 to consider any changes from public comments
   3. CPRA reviews Plan on December 3
   4. Research and Promotion Board meeting in January 2014 to consider any changes from CPRA
   5. Transmit Final Plan to the Legislature by February 8, 2014
2. Preliminary Status Report on Dog Leg Canal Sediment Trap Cleanout

The sediment trap is 95% empty, and is a good indication of the trap’s effectiveness.

14. **Public Comment on Other Business**

15. **Adjourn**

The chairman asked if there were no other questions or comments, he would call for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Lance Broussard to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Stuart Johnson and passed unanimously.

* **ITEM # 10 NOTES**

Current Cocodrie Swamp Budget = $915,125.00; Current Bayou Fourche Budget = $250,000.00

The Cocodrie Swamp Project cannot proceed at this time because of lack of private land owner cooperation at the critical northern water input sites off of Bayou LaRose. The level of funding for this project will be readjusted as necessary based upon the extent of landowner cooperation that is obtained.

The Bayou Fourche Project can proceed if the dredging stays within the state-owned water bottom and the spoil is hauled out of the basin for placement at a dry location. This necessity has been estimated to require the additional $250,000.00.