

## Atchafalaya Basin Program (ABP) Research and Promotion Board Minutes

Meeting Date: February 1, 2017

- I. Keith Lovell, DNR served as the temporary chair for the Board and called the meeting to order
- II. Roll call:
  - Bijan Sharafkhani, LDEQ = present
  - Keith Lovell, LDNR = present
  - Melissa Kaintz, LDWF = present
  - Myles Brumfield, LDOTD = present
  - Ray Berthelot, CRT = present
  - Jonathan Robillard, OSL = present

**Quorum established**

Introductions made around the room for other public in attendance at the meeting

Keith Lovell mentioned that the board may want to consider folks to serve as chair and co-chair in the next meeting due to vacated spots

- III. Pledge of allegiance
- IV. Approve agenda
  - Keith Lovell introduced the proposed agenda for the meeting, requested motions
  - Bijan Sharafkhani moved to approve agenda
  - Ray Berthelot seconded the motion
  - Keith Lovell requested that objections and public comments on the agenda be voiced at this time, hearing none, motion carries to approve agenda
- V. Approve Minutes from November 2016 meeting
  - Keith Lovell introduced the minutes from the research and promotion board meeting in November 2016, requested motions
  - Bijan Sharafkhani moved to approve the minutes
  - Jonathon Robillard seconded the motion
  - Keith Lovell requested that objections and public comments on the minutes be voiced at this time, hearing none, motion carries to approve minutes from November 2016 meeting
- VI. Approve final annual plan to be presented to Legislature
  - Keith Lovell requested updates from Don Haydel, ABP Director, regarding the process
  - Don Haydel provided the following comments regarding the draft Annual Plan
    - The ABP presented the annual plan to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) board
    - The CPRA board approved the plan as consistent with the State Master Plan in January 2017
    - ABP recommends approval of the unchanged plan by the board in order to bring the plan to the legislature

- ABP does recommend one change regarding adding a memorial to Mr. Gerald Alexander, long time board member, to the text of the document. Don Haydel read the proposed language to the board
  - Keith Lovell asked if action was needed from the board
  - Don Haydel replied that action is needed
  - Ray Berthelot moved to approve the draft annual plan
  - Myles Brumfield seconded the motion
- VII. Public comments on Approving Annual Plan to be presented to the Legislature
- Keith Lovell requested that objections and public comments on the draft annual plan be voiced at this time, hearing none
  - Motion carries to approve the draft annual plan
  - Don Haydel said he will keep the board informed of updates
- VIII. Project updates
- Don Haydel informed the board that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) will provide an update on the East Grand Lake Project
    - Jim Bergan, TNC
      - spoke regarding the project being on the verge of starting work for the restoration project
      - TNC came to the board 15 months ago to present the plan and since that time has conducted a lot of outreach to local communities and engaged local crawfishermen
      - TNC has 4 graduate students working on research and monitoring
      - TNC has not yet defined the priority, location, and/or types of features at this time
      - Introduced Joe Baustian with TNC
    - Joe Baustian, TNC
      - The Atchafalaya Basin is a significant area globally, it is also significant for culture and livelihood aspects to Southern Louisiana
      - There are issues with the hydrology in the Basin, so research started
      - Bryan Piazza with TNC published a book regarding historical information in the Basin and TNC published other science foundation documents to support this initiative
      - We need trees and wildlife, but we also need people
      - Key factors in TNC project
        - Restoration
        - Science
        - Community
      - The land that TNC purchased was identified strategically where we can make the biggest improvements, couple with nearby state land to fix the broken plumbing
      - Causes of broken plumbing: flood control, dredging canals

- Without action, the system will continue to degrade
- We want to improve the system to maintain for future generations, restore the north to south flow patterns
- In researching how to restore, TNC found the ABP East Grand Lake Plan. The plan will not be fully implemented. TNC is mindful that this restoration has not been done previously, so research is critical. There have been four students conducting monitoring activities and studying the following
  - crawfish (1 year into the study)
  - nutrient cycle in the area
  - geomorphology
  - forest health
- Project locations have not been selected yet, but TNC wants to work
  - Near Cannon Bayou area
  - Near the East Guide Levee – an area that crawfishermen have expressed concern about the health of the area
- To date, TNC has
  - Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. This was one of the reasons that TNC became a landowner, because there is a history of having issues with landowner cooperation to implement restoration projects
  - Met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to start working on the permit.
  - Tried to identify what is needed to obtain the permit
  - Community engagement in Bayous Sorrel and Pigeon, local and state offices
  - Started monitoring the area
- Hunting and fishing will remain in place in the project area
- TNC also wants to develop a center in the Basin for stakeholders to be able to meet
- Joe asked if there are any questions
  - Keith Lovell asked - how will the geomorphology will be monitored?
  - Joe's response is that it will be measured with feldspar markers, which can measure new sediment deposition, and TNC is currently talking with project designers on how to best design features for long term maintenance
  - Keith Lovell asked - how are the community engagements with crawfishermen progressing
  - Joe answered at times OK, especially on the east side, they provided input about the area near the East Guide Levee. TNC is not planning new channels, but for intermittent streams and taking banks down to mimic the historic flooding process

- Bryan Piazza added- it is necessary to put inputs at the top to reestablish historic sheet flow, because many areas are currently receiving water from the south
  - No other questions or comments received from the board
- IX. General Public Comments
  - Keith Lovell asked if there were any public comments
  - No public comments or questions provided
- X. Old Business
  - Don Haydel informed the board that construction at Wilson's landing has begun
  - Don Haydel informed the board that regarding the island in East Grand Lake, the blockage in the river has been restored by an earthen plug
  - Don Haydel informed the board that the ABP is working to have a geocache trail in place by July
  - Don Haydel informed the board that the ABP is waiting on a federal permit before going out to bid on a trail permit near the Welcome Center in Butte Larose
- XI. New Business
  - Keith Lovell asked if there is any new business
  - Keith Lovell informed the board that committee assignments may need to be restructured at the next meeting due to vacancies
- XII. Adjourn
  - Keith Lovell asked if there is a motion to adjourn
  - Melissa Kaintz moved to adjourn
  - Keith Lovell requested that objections to adjourning the meeting be voiced at this time, hearing none, motion carries to adjourn



*Atchafalaya*  
BASIN

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EVENT/LOCATION RAPPB, Baton Rouge

DATE: 02-01-2017

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