

## MEETING MINUTES

Atchafalaya Basin Technical Advisory Group  
August 15, 2017

*The meeting was called to order by the Chair Bobby Reed at 9:35 am.*

*Roll was called and the following members were in attendance: Glenn Constant, William Kelso, Dan Kroes, Bobby Reed, Charles Reulet, Brac Salyers, Bijan Sharafkhani, and David Walther*

*Sign-in sheet is attached to document other attendees.*

*Brac Salyers motioned to approve the agenda, Glenn Constant seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.*

*Charles Reulet motioned to approve the minutes, Brac Salyers seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.*

**Legislative update. Don Haydel**—The TAG will be playing bigger role with the legislative auditors recommendations. In this year's capital outlay budget, the legislature carried over \$5.6 mil that we hadn't spent, and they moved an additional \$3 million from priority 5 (which is sort of wait and see) to priority 1, so we now have a cash line of credit for \$8.66 million. We have spent about \$400,000 on Wilson's Landing improvements. Butte La Rose boat launch went out for bid at the end of July, and the low bid was \$600,000, so that's a million we've spent, which leaves \$7.66 million. I will talk more about funds allocation later when we go over the project priorities. The legislative audit came out as good as it could. They did not resolve the Bayou Postilion issues, because they could not prove or disprove the allegations, but they did make some suggestions which we accepted. One is for the TAG to formally approve projects after they are designed. So we will ask the TAG to formally review designs from now on. The next one is Grand Lake, so we will come back with engineered drawings, and the TAG will vote on whether designs meet the original intent of the project.

**Glenn Constant**—So the purpose is to head off questionable projects, and the bar is that the project meets the original needs and objectives. Postilion met the original intent of design, but the allegation was overdevelopment. Will we get more guidance about how to head off those issues?

**Haydel**—It's not 100% clear. The auditor's issue was that the TAG approves projects to go into the annual plan, and that is the job of the TAG. So they're expanding the role of the TAG. Previously, projects with private land were approved with the knowledge of uncertainty of where we are going to do work. Now we need the TAG to say that it is still a good project even though it is not the original design.

**David Walther**—At some point during the design process, we would need get together and review. That could be done informally.

**Haydel**—We have asked facility planning to select an engineer for EGL. On projects over \$150,000 they do an engineer selection process. We have provided them already with a scope of services to design these features. We could have the engineer come over and explain what they are doing before it becomes final, so when it comes time to vote, you're not looking at it for the first time.

In the auditor's report, they suggested a formal second approval "once engineering specifications are developed to provide further assurance that the project's design is capable of achieving its intended goals."

**Bobby Reed**—So meeting minutes would suffice?

**Haydel**—We would put to the TAG that the engineering will provide the intended results, and there would be a vote.

**Bill Kelso**—Glenn, does that strike you as what we did for Postilion?

**Constant**—There were objectives for the physical features and what they tried to achieve and overall assessment of whether those features met the needs. I'm hearing that there are some extra criteria that the auditors are recommending, not just environmental restoration goals and objectives, but to make sure projects are engineered correctly.

**Kelso**—In my mind, that's exactly what we did for Bayou Postilion. It's going to take more than us just approving the engineering plans, because we did that before.

**Constant**—We never had that sort of quantitative assessment of Postilion, and I don't think in this setting, we could come to that kind of assessment. I'm not sure that emails and this meeting are going to meet that.

**Haydel**—It will have to be something that will come to a vote and approval.

**Constant**—Do you see some kind of subcommittee and some kind of assessment coming out of this? That's why we built all those tools....

**Haydel**—The TAG came out of the subcommittees. The primary purpose of the TAG was to approve the projects that we work on, so the auditor would like the TAG to take another look at projects that have been approved, because the projects change from when they are approved to when they are built. For example, dredging Grand Lake, it has changed from dredging it all out to only removing what we can dispose of in the canal, so the auditor would like the TAG to take a look and agree that it's still a viable project.

**Bijan Sharafkhani**—So what if field conditions require a change, then you have to come back and get another approval?

**Haydel**—During construction, if there was something substantive that changed... if it's something major, we would come to you with that.

**Sharafkhani**—Before this, how did you approve changes in the field?

**Haydel**—We haven't done that many water quality projects. For Henderson channels, there was nothing much... I can't recall any specifications that were changed. Then there was Dog Leg where we dredged the sediment trap; there weren't any changes to what we originally approved. So it's not that we have made changes that you didn't approve of, but that we could. I didn't agree with that, but the auditor overruled.

**Charles Caillouet**—We had a technical advisory group back in those days. There were two main allegations on Postilion. One was whether or not someone had some intent to defraud and the second was that specifications were changed after everyone agreed on it, and that some of those changes benefited landowners. I think what Don is doing is to bring transparency to the process, so if someone comes back and makes claims, you have it all laid out there. We did not have good documentation back then, and that's what caused trouble, so I think this is good. Do you need some legislation or can you do it all in house?

**Haydel**—In-house. Right now we are looking into some slight changes for the legislation – for instance, we have four research and promotion board meetings each year, but they don't always fall on a quarterly schedule, so we'd like to change that from quarterly meetings to four meetings per year. Also, the statute calls for the annual plan to be approved by April 15 of every year, and the legislature never does that, so another thing we may do is to add this to the legislation, so it will be clear.

**Constant**—Can we request some more specific guidance on what's new and how's it different, in the kinds of things we are supposed to be doing? So we don't end up with this situation next year where we're not sure what we're supposed to do, when and what exactly, for clarity.

**Haydel**—We will provide some draft language for what the auditors are requiring.

**Reed**—When would we need to approve, when the engineering is 50-60% complete?

**Haydel**—It's not clear. The report just says when they are complete, so I'm thinking that the group would look at it twice, once at the midpoint and once at the final.

**Constant**—What happens if the review fails?

**Haydel**—If we take a project that was originally approved and put in the plan, and we change it to what we can do, but it doesn't meet the original intent, then we can stop or modify.

**Constant**—So this doesn't kill it necessarily; we can go back and forth?

**Haydel**—Yes, I can see it going to a modification instead of that.

**Walther**—I would think there would be documentation as to why.

**Constant**—Interim review would be helpful.

**Kelso**—How much is engineering and design for Grand Lake?

**Haydel**—Facility planning has a set percentage. In the past we have asked a number of engineers to submit their proposals for engineering services to the TAG. Folks were overbidding, so Facility Planning said come and use our engineering selection process, so that standardizes it and takes the burden of selecting an engineer off of the ABP.

**Kelso**—Do you have a ballpark price?

**Charles Reulet**—Typically it's 10%. It's \$ 1.8 million, so \$100,000?

**Kelso**—I'm just concerned that an engineer could get 50-60 percent done, and then we say nah...

**Haydel**—We in the Basin program do not choose them anymore.

**Caillouet**—It's not unusual, it's just a different piece of the process that stops it if the TAG decides that the design is wrong. Nothing changes in a big way, just how they interact with the Research & Promotion Board.

**Haydel**—The other suggestion from the auditors is that we formalize a process to do project monitoring, "ABP should consistently conduct project monitoring so that it can determine the impact and success of its water management projects in the future and include these results in its annual plans." So we'll have project monitoring in a paper plan. For Fourche, we have 2 years of pre-project monitoring and 2 years of post-project monitoring, and the results are good, but for example when we dredge Grand Lake, do we need to do monitoring? Same thing for Dog Leg. The auditor is asking that we determine if and what type of monitoring should be done. Today were going to ask about dredging Grand Lake, should we do monitoring before? After? At all? The auditor wants the TAG to make those decisions.

**Walther**—It doesn't make sense to monitor water quality if we're taking out a shoal. Ensuring that it's done qualifies as monitoring, so as far as follow up monitoring, it may be a minor cost/task. When you get into East Grand Lake, when it's modifying flows, obviously there needs to be more monitoring. But in my mind it needs to be flexible.

**Haydel**—Generally, we've monitored projects appropriately, but they were internal decisions, and what the auditor is looking for is a more formal decision by the TAG.

**Kelso**—If you are going to dredge, monitoring should be based on what the objective is of doing that (how long does the sediment trap work?). Objectives need to be very clearly stated, and that should tell us what kind of monitoring needs to be done.

**Haydel**—It will be project specific.

**Constant**—Do you see that taking place in these meetings?

**Haydel**—Yes.

**Constant**—I can see the need to be a little more thorough depending on the project, if we're going to be doing that in these meetings, I assume the design and details of that monitoring would be done outside of these meetings.

**Haydel**—Yes, for example at the last meeting, TNC described the monitoring they are doing. The only two projects we need the TAG input on are dredging Grand Lake and East Grand Lake/TNC. Today what I ask the TAG to consider, that aside from pre- and post-dredge surveys to determine the volume, no monitoring is required, because our objective is to restore as much deep water habitat as we can. We have land building now, and we're going to restore that to a negative six.

**Kroes**—We just need to make sure that Schwing Chute is not going to be blocked.

**Haydel**—Yes, we're going to keep Schwing chute open. The designs include a blockage to ensure that. I request a vote.

*Bill Kelso moved that no monitoring is required for Grand Lake. The motion was seconded by Charles Reulet and passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.*

**Haydel**—The next project is East Grand Lake, and we're pretty far away from design. We'll ask for a formal approval of TNC's monitoring plan at the next meeting. The next item is the Spoil Bank Study. Senate resolution 154 requests and urges that DNR do a spoil bank study. The Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion board is named in the resolution, and Keith Lovell will represent that group. Everyone here will be invited to attend if not to serve on the committee. DNR is still trying to get a facilitator to make sure we can get something done. The end result of that study is due to the Senate Natural Resources committee by February 1, 2018, so we need to get moving.

**Project Prioritization. Don Haydel**— In the FY 16 plan, the TAG prioritized approved water projects:

1. Channel Training Breach Restoration / Grand Lake Delta Dredging
2. Little Bayou Pigeon Dredging
3. 21" Canal and Orange Barrel Canal Sediment Trap Design and Construction
4. Murphy Lake Dredging
5. Big Bayou Pigeon Dredging
6. East Grand Lake Upper Region
7. Pigeon Bay

We have learned a few things since then, and in order for the Research and Promotion Board to allocate the additional funding that we got, they're going to ask that the TAG revisit those priorities.

Number one, Grand Lake, is about to be checked off. Little Pigeon ran into landowner issues. We surveyed the ordinary low water mark, but the landowner disputed that, so we are still at an impasse. This project will require more survey work and litigation. Same with Big Pigeon. For 21" and Orange Barrel, the TAG had tabled sediment traps because of the uncertainty, and the engineer stated when he came and gave a presentation that because of the velocities in those channels, the sediment traps would have to be of immense proportion to function properly, so those were put on the back burner. On

Pigeon Bay, we still haven't made any progress in getting landowners to allow us to do things. On East Grand Lake, we signed an MOU and CEA with The Nature Conservancy, the Research and Promotion Board reallocated funding from projects that could not move, so there is currently \$ 1.6 million allocated to that project. It's the only place where we can do work at this time. We'd like to do a minor study of Flat Lake in order to partner with CPRA to provide them with information. Murphy Lake and Pigeon Bay are problem projects that are going to need a lot of work.

We're going to recommend setting aside \$ 0.5 million for Buffalo Cove Element 10. The Corps does not currently have money, but we'd like to have ours ready.

On East Grand Lake, we recommend moving additional \$ 1.7 million, because it's the only viable project we have.

Other projects including boat launches and a potential partnerships with Iberville Parish and St. Mary Parish would receive \$ 2.2 million.

So the recommended FY 2019 priority list is:

1. Grand Lake Depth Restoration
2. East Grand Lake Upper Region
3. Flat Lake Study
4. Little Bayou Pigeon Dredging
5. Big Bayou Pigeon Dredging
6. Murphy Lake Dredging
7. Pigeon Bay (pending landowner approval)

**Constant**—That's a good transition from the 2016 to 2019 priority list, so how do we get the message across of why we re-prioritized?

**Haydel**—It would go into the FY 2019 plan as the revised priority list.

**Reed**—Didn't we have some language in the last one on why we prioritized projects?

**Haydel**—Yes. We will put that in the plan.

**Constant**—If we approve the priority list, are we also approving the dollar amounts?

**Haydel**—That's under the authority of the Research and Promotion Board, but I wanted you to know what the dollars would be attached to that.

**Kelso**—Four through seven are spoil disposal problems, are we exploring options?

**Haydel**—For Little Pigeon, it's also an issue of who owns what. We're saying that at ordinary low water, the state owns the water bottom. Frank Willis did the survey, and the landowner disputed it, so it would have to go to court.

**Kelso**—If they aren't viable, maybe we should take them off the list.

**Haydel**—If the TAG thinks it's important enough to go through that, we could.

**Constant**—Whether or not Pigeons are important enough depends on the overall restoration design like projects that are ready to benefit from the work that TNC is doing. Is some of the TNC money flexible so that we could put resources toward advancing projects outside of TNC's current footprint of work (but outside of Pigeon)?

**Haydel**—TNC features are on their land and state land; my thought is that as we see the results of that, we will get more people to come on board.

**Constant**—But as far as the TNC foot print...

**Haydel**—It's going to be a matter of moving as the water moves north to south. Murphy lake is a question in my mind as to as we move south how do we keep that from filling in faster.

**Kroes**—What's the issue with Murphy lake, disposal?

**Haydel**—We would remove the shoaling at southwest end.

**Kroes**—One thing with that shoal is that it could result in reduced drainage to the lake, which could have a backwater effect on projects north of there. So I would suggest moving it higher up in the priority list. If it shoals up much more than it is now, it will increase ponding and sediment deposition south of the Florida Gas pipeline.

**Haydel**—The problem is just what to do with the spoil, so it doesn't have the problems of Little and Big Pigeon.

**Kelso**—It's one of the last deep water lakes in the Basin. From a fisheries perspective, it's very important. I thought it was becoming more of a side channel.

**Kroes**—People coming in and out are keeping it open, but it's shoaling up.

**Ryan Mabile**—I believe it is impassable at the current water level.

**Kroes**—I will be out there Thursday to service that gage.

**Haydel**—It sounds like keep 1 and 2, move Murphy Lake up to 4, and remove the Pigeons. So the proposed new priority list is:

1. Grand Lake Depth Restoration
2. East Grand Lake Upper Region
3. Flat Lake Study
4. Murphy Lake Dredging

*Glenn Constant made a motion to accept the priority list as amended, Bobby Reed seconded and opened the floor for public comments.*

*Katherine Barney with the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper read a prepared statement in opposition to the East Grand Lake project. Her comments are attached to the minutes as submitted.*

**Walther**—Who are the scientists?

**Katherine Barney**—That question would be best directed to Dean Wilson. I can provide you with his phone number.

**Reed**—Are there any other comments? *(none)*

*The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote of the members.*

**Marti Lucore**—There are two things I came to talk about; one is Buffalo Cove, which we don't currently have funding for. The Corps is severely underfunded, with just a fraction of what we had 5 or 10 years ago. The projects that we can complete with less funding, the small projects, are now getting more attention, so Buffalo Cove Element 10 is a good project now, and we are optimistic that it might move forward. If the Basin program can set aside funding, that will help.

The second thing is related to the Atchafalaya Basin Channel Training Works program. We got permission to start working on Coon Trap. We had looked at building a closure, but Texaco came along and built their own, it failed, so we're going to build another one. We are looking to award in mid-February. We should be finished with design in November. It should take about 6 months to build, so that's a done deal. On Element 10 for Buffalo Cove, we'll keep our fingers crossed.

**Haydel**—How is Buffalo Cove operating?

**Kroes**—Tyler Cut is effective at pulling water in, and that whole area that was blocked by Sibon is getting a lot of water down to Bayou Gravenburg. 9-1 and 9-2 have closed off with willow and are no longer practically functional. Phillips Canal continues to bring in a lot of water and sediment. Amerada Hess is still blocked but there's a cut there about five and a half feet wide and about the depth of a prop. Element 15 continues to be major contributor of water. At Sibon, high water this year overtopped the blockage, but it's still there. The blockage on the end of Poncho Chute is still there; not enough boat traffic went over to cut it.

**Constant**—Do we need a re-assessment of the effectiveness of doing element 10?

**Kroes**—The benefit of element 10 is that it will pull a lot of water and not a lot of sediment. For 9-1 and 9-2, the pool level of Buffalo Cove is at the river level, so water coming in hits the pool and drops sediment and willow seeds. The willows contribute to the closure in a couple of years. Element 10, because it is drainage component, should not carry a lot of sediment and should not fill in. At that area, there is a perch where the wetland is higher than the area around it.

**Constant**—The lake there has filled up a lot. Is there still a conduit there to allow element 10 to do what it's supposed to do?



**Lucore**—We felt that we needed element 10 to make Buffalo Cove work well. It works, but it would work better with element 10.

**Constant**—Since element 10 was designed so long ago, do we need to re-look?

**Lucore**—The ball is rolling. It was determined by executive decision that we really needed it after the fact. The consensus was that we really need it.

**Walther**—What exactly is being done?

**Lucore**—The original specs allowed overflow during high water. It will be a repair.

**Walther**—My only concern is that there won't be enough freshwater inflow.

**Lucore**—We're looking at setting the closure farther back.

**Reulet**--Are we talking about the same site? Where the weir is, there should be no pipelines.

**Walther**—Can you email a snapshot so we can make sure we're talking about the same thing?

**Lucore**—Yes, I will double check and send a Google Earth of the location.

*Bobby Reed asked if there were any public comments (none).*

**Old business. Salyers**—On ducks unlimited funding, there is no update. But hopefully that works out.

*Bobby Reed asked if there was any new business (none).*

*Bill Kelso motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 10:57 am.*

15 Aug. 17

*Atchafalaya Basinkeeper* TAG (technical advisory group) MEETING EAST GRAND LAKE 8-15-2017

1. ABK asked for a site visit with the Atchafalaya Basin Program and Don Haydel responded that he will never allow any of his employees to go to the site with us.
2. ABK asked the Atchafalaya Basin Program to be included in the development of the projects and Don responded denying our request and stating that the projects will be developed with the vision of the landowners in the forefront.
3. ABK requested to be allowed to make a presentation for this TAG meeting but never received a response. In our opinion, it seems like the Atchafalaya Basin Program is Intentionally trying to hide information from the TAG and that is undemocratic and unethical.
4. We have two scientists that went to the site and agree with our findings (A-C)
  - A. Accretion in the project area will make cypress regeneration even less likely because it promotes the growth of water elm, swamp privot and vines (ladies eardrop, Brunnicchia Ovata) will eventually cover everything.
  - B and is destroying one of the most unique ecosystems in the world.
  - C The project will drastically accelerate the accretion in the area.
8. The landowners supporting this project will be the only ones benefited by the project.
9. 100% of the people at the public meetings (in Bayou Sorrell & Henderson last year) were against the project.
10. The concept that we need to move forward to "learn something" is unnecessary. Areas where river water is moving through the swamps, past incidents that allowed river water to move into interior ecosystems (like the Grand Lake breach) and similar ongoing projects as the Buffalo Cove and Beau Bayou Projects in the Basin provide ample opportunity for learning.
11. The use of public funds to fill wetlands away from the coast is unethical. Those sediments are needed at the coast.
12. The use of public funds to destroy the most productive swamps in the world is unethical.
13. You are stealing one of the most important natural heritages from your children and generations to come.
14. The intentional filling of the most important spillway in southern Louisiana is dangerous, putting cities and industry from Baton Rouge to New Orleans and above, from Lafayette all the way to Morgan City at an increased risk for flooding catastrophes.
15. There currently exists ways to greatly improve water quality in the area without the introduction of additional river water.
16. We respectfully ask the TAG members to visit the site with ABK and to allow us to share with you the information that we have before you vote to approve this project.

*Katherine Barney*  
225-685-9439



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*Atchafalaya*  
BASIN

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EVENT/LOCATION

TAG 15 Aug 2017

DATE:

15 Aug 2017

NAME	ASSOCIATION	MAILING ADDRESS	ZIP	PHONE NUMBER	FAX NUMBER	E-MAIL ADDRESS
April Newman	ABP	on file		342-6437		
Charles Reulet	LDNR	on file		342-0864	on file	on file
Sara Krupa	LDNR	on file		342-8917		
Glenn Constant	USFWS	on file		225-241-6413	on file	on file
Dan Krues	USGS	on file		2985481	on file	on file
Don Haydel	ABO	"		342-8953	"	"
Katherine Burgess	ABK			225-685-9439		on file
Ken Tsi		on file		225-776-3259		
Paul Kusso	LSU	"		225-578-4176	"	"
Boyd Reed	LDWF	"		337-491-2575	491-2009	"
Paul SIVAKOFF (HAW)	LDDE	"		225-214-3953	-	-
BRAE SIVAKOFF	LDWF	"		337-373-0032	"	"

