

## **Minutes – Atchafalaya Basin Program (ABP)**

### **Technical Advisory Group Meeting**

**September 2, 2015**

**Meeting was called to order at 9:31 am by the Chair, Bobby Reed.**

**A Roll Call was conducted and showed the following members present and that a quorum was present: Bobby Reed, Glenn Constant, Tom Killeen, Dan Kroes, Charles Reulet, Brac Salyers, David Walther**

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

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

**A motion to approve the minutes from the July 30, 2014 meeting was made by Brac Salyers, seconded by Glenn Constant and was unanimously passed by voice vote of the members.**

**Don Haydel gave a cost-benefit analysis of sediment trap maintenance. He presented a simple method to estimate trap efficiency where the percent efficiency equals the average annual sediment trap capture divided by the sediment load entering prior to trap construction. He concluded that if a sediment trap is capturing less than 25% of the incoming sediment load (extending the life of the swamp by 25%), then the trap is probably not cost effective.**

**Mr. Haydel then applied this method to the sediment trap at Dog Leg Canal. Given an annual sediment load of 46,000 cubic yards entering the canal prior to trap construction, and assuming a 3-year maintenance cycle, the trap is capturing 10,000 of 138,000 cubic yards (7.3 %) per year. This means the life of the swamp is extended by about 7% at a cost of \$200,000 every three years; the life of the swamp would be extended from 50 years to 54 years at a total cost of \$3.3 million.**

**Bobby Reed asked if our only nomination for 2017 was in jeopardy. Mr. Haydel**

replied that for Dog Leg there are basically three options: re-dredge the sediment trap, close off the canal to the river, or do nothing. Per discussions with Brac Salyers concerning the management objectives of the Attakapas WMA, maintaining access is a priority.

Glenn Constant commented that this is symptomatic of where we are. Initially, the program was entertaining nominations from lots of folks for lots of different reasons. He suggested that we need to talk about whether we should take a different strategy and referred to a recent string of emails among TAG members. Mr. Constant stated that the initial goal of sediment traps was to prevent sediment from getting into Grand Lake. How do we achieve that objective? What is the appropriate scale of a project that would do that? He suggested that we should take some time to discuss and have on the record some discussion of how we move forward on project development.

Dan Kroes asked how we can make the project attractive to CPRA? He stated that there's no harm in making a sediment trap 250,000 - 1 million cubic yards.

David Walther commented that we can try for that magnitude. The Corps has much larger traps. USGS has taken some sediment samples so that we can get an idea of what the cost effectiveness of those types of traps. Should we consider larger traps or continue with smaller traps in combination with gaps in spoil banks? He noted that gapping requires having an area to sacrifice.

Glenn Constant made a motion to not move forward with the project with its current objective. He suggested tabling this project in favor of more discussion. Then motion was seconded by David Walther.

Brac Salyers asked if the Dog Leg Canal is providing new good access or is it doing more harm than good? He stated that the Attakapas managers would be open to recommendations by the TAG.

Tom Killeen asked Don Haydel what size and acreage he was referring to when he referred to extending the life of the swamp.

Mr. Haydel replied that it was a very general analysis and that there was no

scientific analysis of the specific size of the area he was talking about. He said that in general, if a sediment trap is installed to preserve a certain area, it should extend the amount of time it takes that area to fill in.

Bobby Reed asked what will happen to the area if we do nothing.

Dan Kroes stated that the sediment stays within the Thibodaux chute area, and that area has filled fairly rapidly over the last few years. How many years until that fills up? 46,000 cubic yards per year goes through the dog leg which equates to several inches per year. Once that fills up, we will start to see sediment going into the lake. Dog Leg is a minor player as far as sediment inputs. Dog Leg, now that Orange Barrel goes into the same area, does not serve its original purpose as far as water quality.

Raynie Harlan (audience member representing LSU) stated that LSU data supports that assertion.

Brac Salyers stated that when the water is high as it was this year, we see sediment in places where we wouldn't normally, and now that it's down it's not such a problem.

The motion made by Glenn Constant to table the Dog Leg Canal project nomination was passed unanimously by voice vote of the members.

Don Haydel moved on to a review of the prioritized project list from the FY2016 Annual Plan. The number one priority is Grand Lake Dredging. The Atchafalaya Basin Program will proceed with this project after the Corps restores the failed blockage. He stated that once the first two projects (Grand Lake Delta and Little Bayou Pigeon) are complete, the program will be out of money, and the rest of the projects will be on hold until additional funding is available.

Mr. Haydel presented disposal options for spoil generated by the Grand Lake dredging project: The first option is to dispose on the Attakapas WMA and the second is to transport the spoil via pipeline to the Atchafalaya River where it would either be disposed of or possibly transferred to a barge to be transported by CPRA for coastal restoration if they choose to use the material.

Mr. Haydel reiterated that once we get these projects done, the program will have a balance of zero.

David Walther asked if Dog Leg was to be funded by reallocation of funding.

Don Haydel replied that it is not. There's no money for Dog Leg. We would have to ask for funding in the legislative session.

Glenn Constant suggested that the TAG could add to prioritized list another project in slot #3 that would cost little to nothing, such as one that would be primarily funded by coastal restoration funds.

Don Stated that the ABP is already actively pursuing a partnership with CPRA where they would provide funding to move basin sediments to the coast and that this is already in the Annual Plan, so there's no need to add an additional project.

Tom Killeen asked if the projects qualify for RESTORE Act funding.

Don Haydel replied that they do not, but that the program is offering alternatives such as Flat Lake and Grand Lake as alternatives to dredging Ship Shoal. ABP staff is identifying areas with large volumes of sediment and are willing and able to point them to other such locations.

Tom Killeen asked how long Grand Lake would be closed North-South for disposal option #2?

Don Haydel replied that it would be about 30-45 days.

Tom Killeen asked what time of year that would occur.

Don Haydel said that we will work with engineer to determine whether it's better to do it at high or low water, whether a dredge needs to be floated in, etc. He added that the more we condition it, the higher the cost will be.

David Walther commented that the Corps uses a variety of methods for getting dredges into the swamp.

Glenn Constant asked if would be better to have this as a recommended project for this year's plan.

Don Haydel replied that it is in the plan for FY2017. He added that the CPRA board has been urging us to get together for the past few years. The ABP is now working with the right people, and they are aware that we are trying to get rid of sediment, so we are trying to find that link.

Glenn Constant asked, given that there's no need to put this in the plan as a project, if there is anything else the TAG can do to promote this partnership.

Mr. Haydel suggested that they spread the word that we are looking for ways to get our sediment to the coast.

David Walther suggested that CWPPRA might be appropriate.

Charles Reulet made a motion that the TAG support the ABP's efforts to identify locations of sediment that could be dredged and transported to the coast. The motion was seconded by Glenn Constant.

Dan Kroes commented that for Orange Barrel Canal, although it is not cost effective to build a sediment trap, it may work to gap spoil banks.

The motion made by Mr. Reulet was passed unanimously by a voice vote of the members.

Don Haydel suggested that discussion on Orange Barrel be tabled until there is funding available to do more projects.

Dan Kroes asked if a discussion of gaps in the spoil banks at Orange Barrel is appropriate at this time.

Charles Reulet said that the ABP is still in the early stages of planning for Orange Barrel, and that we can wait until the next annual plan cycle to reconsider the order of prioritized projects.

Glenn Constant suggested that at this time, we should convey to the Research and Promotion Board tomorrow that we are going to stop at priority #2 due to

**funding constraints and table the discussion of sediment traps until more information is available.**

**Don Haydel added that the projects that are funded need more funding. He stated that Dean Wilson had put us into contact with a group that utilized dredge spoil from Bayou Boutte and allowed dredge spoil to be transported out of the Basin. He added that we currently have a blockage that is being restored on a voluntary basis. These are some examples of how the program has been able to make some progress on getting sediment out of the Basin without spending any money.**

**Glenn Constant made a motion that the 5 projects remain in the priority list. The motion was seconded by Dan Kroes and passed unanimously by a voice vote of the members.**

**Brian Piazza, Director of Freshwater Marine Science for The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Louisiana presented their long-term vision for restoring the basin. TNC has long history of working with partners and generating solutions for conservation. They have conserved approximately 300,000 acres in Louisiana alone. The Atchafalaya Basin Initiative was built by science. They began by compiling research by others and have now completed some original research.**

**The Atchafalaya Basin Initiative includes three strategies: Restoration, Science, and Community.**

- 1. Restoration: The Atchafalaya Basin Preserve is an acquisition by TNC of 5,359 acres in the area of Bayou Sorrel. The goal is to protect biodiversity and improve habitat quality. TNC worked with Yvonne Allen to determine areas in the basin that are critical to restoration and biodiversity conservation, where the impact of efforts could be magnified, and are nestled in large areas of state lands. Mr. Piazza referred to research paper he published in the journal "Restoration Ecology" that details this selection process.**

**Land was purchased from A. Wilberts Sons LLC.**

The first step for the restoration goal is to get some restoration going in the basin. TN is currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding with the ABP for access to state land in the E. Grand Lake project area. Working together cooperatively will bring more money to the program. TNC brings many people into the Basin and can match dollar for dollar ABP funds with private money to construct projects. This will magnify the effect of ABP.

2. **Science - Science is the foundation for guiding Basin restoration. TNC is committed to a comprehensive, project-based monitoring program. They are interested in linking with other monitoring programs to export our lessons and bring ideas in. They also have a conservation fellows program to invest in future conservation leaders. This allows them to work in partnerships with universities to identify graduate students who can answer questions rapidly. TNC currently has a post-doctoral scholar who will be working on issues in the Basin. This program allows students to make real-life management recommendations based on science.**
  
3. **Community- Strengthen and elevate our ability to work with stakeholders. Need to generate excitement and cooperation for the basin. Develop a research and education center in the basin as a meeting place; "platform preserves" for shared learning. What is working and what isn't? Researcher could come and stay. Provide a place in the basin to hold meetings.**

In summary, TNC is committed to the Atchafalaya Basin. They will actively manage the Atchafalaya Basin Preserve, including having land stewards on the ground as an ongoing presence. They also have a full respect for the culture and heritage of the Basin and are committed to helping with all partners. Mr. Piazza concluded by saying that TNC is here to help. Please contact us.

Dan Kroes commented that he has had problems in the past with people vandalizing his research projects. He asked what is TNC's position on hunting.

Brian Piazza replied that hunting clubs on all of TNC's Basin properties. He said

that in talking to them, TNC has learned that the hunting clubs are primarily concerned with fixing the water. TNC is committed to supporting research.

Public comments were made by Dean Wilson, who stated that he represents the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper organization, which has about 1000 members. The organization is concerned about sediment and wants to improve conditions for crawfish. Mr. Wilson reminded the group that we are borrowing the Atchafalaya Basin from our children. He stated that we don't have "marginal" wetlands. We have more productive and less productive wetlands. The Atchafalaya Basin is the last place that we can sustain for hundreds of years. There is a need to control sediment at the source. The Corps of engineers has a stated goal of diverting 65% of sediment from the Mississippi River into the Basin. In 1992-1993, Cross Bayou in the Shell field had water flowing through at 4 ft on the Bayou Sorrell gage; now there is only a trickle at 6 ft since the bayou was realigned by the Corps. Any project to bring sediment into the swamp is going to cause it to silt in. He suggested that the ABP should construct large sediment traps at major junctions so that sediment can be pumped into river. He asked the TAG to please close Dog Leg Canal. He asked the TAG to close Coon Trap as well. He added that the amount of sediment moving through Coon Trap is astounding.

No Old Business was discussed.

New business: Dan Collins introduced himself as a petroleum land man based in Baton Rouge. He stated that he was previously a member of the Research and Promotion Board. He has his own research firm, which does oil and gas consulting, forensics related to oil and gas, and works for corporate and private landowners. He stated that he is the former president and VP of the Baton Rouge chapter of the Petroleum Land Man Association. He said that the state is a steward of public land and is the state's largest landowner.

Mr. Collins said that Bayou Fourche, which has been on the books since 2009, was just dredged in May of this year. He visited the site in June. This project was the subject of a letter from Mr. Collins to Steven Chustz (copies distributed). The letter cited that the project area was an oil and gas project with two prospects:



Blackbird and Falcon. The company associated with these projects is Tortuga. He submitted a Freedom of Information Act request for the Bayou Fourche project to see if the project was tied to oil and gas. The letter that he had sent to Mr. Chustz was not included in the documents. He found that there had been no cooperation with landowners and that the project had doubled in cost. There was a nomination in April for the very project. In an adjacent WQ project, Postillion, the bayous were incorrectly labeled on the plats. Documents (distributed to TAG members) from April 2014 show Bayou Fourche, which is not labeled, and an incorrectly labeled bayou (Bayou Latanier). Mr. Collins asked why the Office of Conservation would mislabel bayous.

Glenn Constant asked Mr. Collins what nomination he was referring to. Mr. Collins stated that he was referring to all state lands offered for oil lease.

Mr. Collins continued that the same thing happened in 2007: Postillion was mislabeled "Bayou Gravenburg." Not once but twice, State water bottoms were leased, mislabeled, and the ABP dredged water bottoms over those state leases. He stated that this throws off the public, oil and gas, and the TAG, and suggested that the TAG has been duped. He asked if anyone on this board was familiar that there was an oil and gas lease at this location. He stated that when he had asked Don Haydel the same question, Mr. Haydel stated that the letter pre-dated him.

Mr. Collins reiterated that there had been no cooperation by landowner on Bayou Fourche and that the landowners did not want spoil on their property. He asked why the APB would go out of their way to help when the landowner was not supportive. Mr. Collins then distributed an article from the Teche News. He stated that he would be filing a complaint. He added that he hopes the new governor will consider this in one of the most corrupt states in the US and that this needs to stop.

[Note: Tag meetings have not been recorded electronically for several years. Minutes have been taken as notes and have summarized the proceedings of the meeting. Mr. Collins made a similar presentation to the Research and Promotion Board on September 3, 2015. A recording of that presentation,

which is essentially identical to the 9/4/15 presentation, is available by request.]

In other new business, Mr. Haydel reported that the USACE recently released a sediment analysis of Old River Control Structure. The structure was originally intended to divert 65% of Mississippi River sediment into the Atchafalaya River, but it has not been successful. When Mr. Haydel recently spoke to the Mississippi River Commission, he made the point that the current amount of sediment, approximately 30% of the total, is already causing problems, and that any additional sediment diverted into basin needs to stay in channel per the Corp's stated intention.

Glenn Constant asked what is the mechanism the Corps plans to use to increase the sediment.

Mr. Haydel stated that his understanding was that they intended to modify the amount of sediment going through power station and divert it instead through one of the other structures that is more efficient at transporting sediment.

Mr. Constant asked if the document was available to the public. Mr. Haydel stated that it is and that Ms. Newman will send it out to the TAG members.

Dan Kroes asked if the update of the Water in the Basin report was being done by Corps?

Mr. Haydel replied that in a recent conversation with the Corps, they pointed out that it is a state document. Therefore, the Atchafalaya Basin Program, not the Corps, will be working on it.

Glenn Constant asked what is CPRA's stance on additional sediment diversion to the Basin?

Don Haydel said different entities have different opinions and reasons. For example, Morgan City does not want additional sediment because of the effect on their dredging operations. Additionally, this year, there was an issue with too much water the forebay [of the Old River Control Structure].

**Bobby Reed asked if the Corps in their document mention the role of the hydroelectric plant.**

**Mr. Haydel stated that yes, the report states that the plant is what's causing the sediment discrepancy. The report recommends a complete study of bedload to estimate the impact of changes. He added that doubling the sediment would have a devastating effect.**

**Dean Wilson asked what is their stated reason?**

**Mr. Haydel replied that the reason was to keep the Mississippi River maintenance down and to prevent scouring in the Atchafalaya River. He added that we need to get involved and make our voices heard as early as possible.**

**Dan Kroes commented that recent studies of the flow distribution show that almost 85% of sediment stays in main channel. Half of the remaining 15% goes through the GA Cut and GIWW. Currently what's filling in the swamp is just 7% of the total.**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Glenn Constant, seconded by David Walther, and passed unanimously by a voice vote of the members.**

**The meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.**

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*Atchafalaya*  
BASIN

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EVENT/LOCATION

*TAG meeting*

DATE:

*2 Sept. 2015*

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<i>Charles Beurt</i>	<i>LDNR</i>	<i>ON FILE</i>		<i>ON FILE</i>		<i>ON FILE</i>
<i>David Walker</i>	<i>USEWS</i>	<i>ON FILE</i>		<i>"</i>		<i>"</i>
<i>Shane Miller</i>	<i>LA DEQ</i>	<i>ON FILE</i>		<i>"</i>		<i>"</i>
<i>Charles Collovert</i>	<i>FOA</i>	<i>"</i>		<i>"</i>		<i>"</i>
<i>BRAC Savers</i>	<i>LDWF</i>	<i>ON FILE</i>		<i>"</i>		<i>"</i>
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