**MINUTES**

**LOUISIANA CRAWFISH PROMOTION & RESEARCH BOARD**

**MARCH 4th, 2015**

**USGS NATIONAL WETLANDS RESEARCH CENTER**

**700 CAJUNDOME BLVD.**

**LAFAYETTE, LA**

**Call to Order:**

Jody Meche, Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

**Roll Call:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT** **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Ralph Babin Chandra Scarber

Jody Meche

David Savoy

Wylie Jewell

Greg Faulk

Robert Buller

Greg Benhard

Wayne Romig

Kip Lastraps

Mike Bienvenu

Bill Pizzolato

**Declaration of a Quorum:**

Jody Meche declared the presence of a quorum with 11 members present and 1 member absent.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION BY**: David Savoy and seconded by Mike Bienvenu to approve the minutes as presented for the meeting that took place on December 10th, 2014. Motion Carried.

**Collections & Financial Report:**

Jody Meche called on Ron Harrell to present the collections and financial reports. He reported to the Board the current condition of accounts.

**MOTION BY:** Robert Buller seconded by Wylie Jewell to accept the financial report as presented. Motion Carried.

**Promotion & Research:**

Mr. Stephen Dufreche, University of Lafayette on behalf of Dr. Mark Zappi, gave the Board an update on the automated crawfish peeling machine. He discussed the results of Phase I and Phase II of this project. He discussed the issues with tail curling.

Results from Phase II: Heat is the main result of tail curling. Multiple sizes of crawfish were tried. Same amount of curling regardless of size.

Phase III: Testing crawfish at a low temperature and also testing mechanically bounded crawfish to produce a straighter tail.

The end goal is to produce a fully automated machine that pops the head off, deveins, and peels the tail.

UL has been contacted by Teche Valley. UL will have a meeting with them to discuss the possibility of using an older crawfish peeling machine prototype that would be donated by Teche Valley for UL’s use.

Dr. Mark Zappi and/or Mr. Stephen Dufreche will attend the Board’s next meeting to discuss further results of this project.

Next Mr. Sam Irwin gave the Board a presentation regarding his book titled “Louisiana Crawfish: A Succulent History of the Cajun Crustacean”. He requested that the Board fund the purchase of 700 copies of the book for Louisiana’s 340 public libraries and 64 parish public school junior high library systems. The books will be purchased directly from the publisher History Press at the author’s discount. Mr. Irwin will distribute the books to the state library (which will distribute the books to the public libraries). He will package and ship 5 books each to the 64 parish school board junior high library offices. A few extra will be allocated to the larger parishes. The total request from Mr. Irwin for this project is $8,495.79. Mr. Irwin will also write a press release approved by the Board and distributed to his 400 media contacts on the subject of the Board’s donation of the books.

**MOTION BY:** Mike Bienvenu seconded by Bill Pizzaloto to fund the purchase of Mr. Irwin’s book titled “Louisiana Crawfish: A Succulent History of the Cajun Crustacean”. Motion Carried.

Next Mr. Avery Davidson of Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation gave a report regarding a request for sponsorship of “Holly Clegg’s Trim & Terrific Kitchen” segment featured on This Week in Louisiana Agriculture (TWILA). The sponsorship request for the 2015 broadcast year is $5,000.00. This sponsorship will provide pre and post segment audio bumpers featuring the Board’s logo, a year round web ad on the TWILA website, and the use of crawfish in segments as often as possible (4 use minimum).

**MOTION BY:** Greg Faulk seconded by David Savoy to fund the sponsorship of “Holly Clegg’s Trim & Terrific Kitchen” segment in the amount of $5,000.00. Motion Carried.

Mr. Kevin Boone, USDA, spoke to the Board about a grant program regarding energy conservation. The program will fund 25% of the cost if you improve your energy consumption on any equipment process that farmers currently have. April 30th and June 30th are the deadlines for this program. They are also offering a value added producer grant program primarily used for crawfish peeling plants. This is a marketing grant that will pay 50% of your marketing needs for the year if you are a producer that has at least 51% of your product going into the plant. Marketing needs that would be covered include web presence, signage, logos, packaging, lighting equipment, and even some labor costs. It will be available in May of 2015. Go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) if you are interested in these grant programs.

**Director’s Position Discussion:**

Ms. Terri Bearb attended the Board meeting and expressed her interest in being considered for the Director’s position. She discussed with the Board her past experience in marketing and her interest in working in the crawfish industry.

The Board discussed the possibilities of the Director’s position.

**MOTION BY:** Ralph Babin and seconded by David Savoy to table the Director’s position discussion. Motion Carried.

Mr. John Walther of the Louisiana Department of Ag and Forestry discussed with the Board the importance of letting our legislators know the need for funding and supporting agriculture. Agriculture needs help on the legislative side and needs to fight for the budget. In 2016 there will be a reappointment of the Board by the Commissioner.

Next, the Louisiana Farm Bureau fishing rodeo sponsorship was discussed. A $500.00 sponsorship donation from the Board was requested.

**MOTION BY:** Mike Bienvenu and seconded by Wylie Jewell to approve the sponsorship donation of the Louisiana Farm Bureau fishing rodeo in the amount of $500.00. Motion Carried.

Mike Bienvenu requested the Board to fund LCPA-West.

**MOTION BY:** Greg Faulk and seconded by David Savoy to table the funding request LCPA-West. Motion Carried.

**No public comment**

**Next Board Meeting Date:**

The date for the next Board meeting will be Wednesday, June 3rd, 2015 at 1:00 P.M. at the USGS National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette.

**MOTION BY:** Ralph Babin and seconded by Wylie Jewell to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried.