

BISTINEAU TASK FORCE
July 18, 2013 – 10:15 A.M.
Webster Parish Courthouse, Minden, Louisiana

MEMBERS PRESENT: Billy Montgomery, Bossier PJ, Chairman; Elmore Morris, Bodcau SWCD; Shannon Mendenhall, Bodcau SWCD; Glenn Benton, Bossier PJ; Rick Yager, Dorcheat SWCD; Bill Conly, Saline SWCD; Steve Ramsey, Webster PJ; Charles Walker, Webster PJ; Jim Bonsall, Webster PJ; and Pete Camp, At large.
MEMBERS ABSENT: Greg Wilson, Bienville PJ; Tony Lawson, Bienville PJ; Don Moore, Bienville PJ; Bob Brotherton, Bossier PJ; and David Lowe, Dorcheat SWCD.
SPECIAL ASSISTANTS: Ronda Carnahan, Webster PJ; Evan Thames, LDWF; and Ellzey Simmons, Trailblazer.

Chairman, Billy Montgomery called the meeting to order and asked Elmore Morris to open with prayer and Glenn Benton to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Montgomery recognized LA State Representative Gene Reynolds and asked him to speak to the Task Force. Representative Reynolds talked about the recent legislative session and the bill that he had authored on behalf of BTF. All regional legislators are working together with Secretary Barham to develop an “A Plan” for Lake Bistineau. Representative Reynolds said that we cannot continue to put so much money into herbicide treatment, and there needs to be a plan of action taken. Items to discuss is to go forward with the use of weevils, possibility of dropping the lake to a level that can be controlled, and to cut trees. It seems that at this time a harvesting machine cannot keep up with the rapid growth and not cost effective.

Dotie Horton, Representative Henry Burns Assistant, spoke to the BTF. Representative Burns supports the position that Representative Reynolds stated, and knows that the Legislative delegation has the clout to get something done for Bistineau with the assistance of Wildlife and Fisheries. Ms. Horton as a lake resident stated that she is encouraged by the Mission Statement of the Bistineau Task Force, and is able to enjoy lake activities such as fishing, water sports, and residing on the lake thanks to the Wildlife and Fisheries continued efforts.

Mr. Montgomery then asked for the members to review the agenda, and the minutes from the May 16, 2013 BTF meeting. Mr. Rick Yager moved, seconded by Mr. Charles Walker to approve the minutes as presented.

Ellzey Simmons with Trailblazer RC&D presented information on the “need” for a watershed management plan”. He gave a video presentation on the history and biology of Giant Salvenia. Mr. Simmons also discussed the new grant proposal for the control of Giant Salvinia that included the need for a Weevil (Rearing) Facility on Lake Bistineau.

Leslie Quinn representing Senator David Vitter’s Office told the Bistineau Task Force that Senator Vitter is aware of the issues on Lake Bistineau, and supportive of the efforts to secure funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Michael Jackson representing Senator Mary Landrieu’s Office told the BTF that the Senator will be glad to write a letter to assist in obtaining grant funding for control of Giant Salvenia.

Jack Cansun, CLI spoke to the BTF as a Key Informant. Mr. Cansun as a member of the CLI has seen many efforts in the battle to control Giant Salvenia. On Caddo Lake they found that the mechanical harvester was not effective at all. Other methods utilized were: Education, A fence across the Lake, Herbicides, and Biological- Weevils. Among these methods, he felt that the Biological or weevils were most effective.

Mr. Stephen Micinski, LSU, Red River Research Station, spoke to the BTF about research at his facility.

Mr. Evan Thames, Wildlife and Fisheries, then spoke to the BTF. He stated that the lake is at 5 feet below pool stage and will go to 7 feet + any evaporation. The proposed gate closure is November 30, 2013. Mr. Thames spoke about the issues of increased drawdown and timber removal; he also stated that his office supports increased growing areas for weevils on Lake Bistineau. There followed questions and answers.

Mr. Robert Berry, President of the Cypress Black Bayou Commission in Bossier Parish, addressed the BTF. Mr. Berry spoke about his experience on Cypress Black Bayou.

Mr. Billy Montgomery thanked all informants for the presentations. There being no further business to bring before the BTF, Mr. Rick Yager moved, to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Shannon Mendenhall, motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronda Carnahan