

MINUTES OF THE BISTINEAU TASK FORCE

July 28, 2011

Webster Parish Police Jury
410 Main Street – 2nd Floor
Minden, Louisiana

ATTENDING: Billy W. Montgomery, Bossier PJ-Chairman; Jim Bonsall, Webster PJ; Steve Ramsey, Webster PJ; Greg Wilson, Bienville PJ; Bill Sims, Bienville PJ; David Lowe, Dorcheat Soil & Water C.; Rick Yager, Dorcheat S.W.C.; George McConathy, Saline Soil & Water C.; William M. Conley, Saline Soil & Water; Elmore Morris, Bodcau Soil & Water C.; Shannon Mendenhall, Bodcau SWCD.

ABSENT: Charles Walker, Webster PJ; Tony Lawson, Bienville PJ; Bill Altimus, Bossier PJ; Glenn Benton, Bossier PJ

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE: Ronda Carnahan, Webster PJ; James Seales, LA WF; Evan Thames, LA WF; Ellzey Simmons, Trailblazer; and Olivia Ward, Trailblazer

INVITED GUEST: Senator Robert Adley

See attached list of guest

Chairman, Billy W. Montgomery called the meeting to order. Elmore Morris opened the meeting with Prayer and Greg Wilson led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secretary, Ronda Carnahan called roll of the Committee Members.

Chairman, Billy Montgomery gave opening comments to begin the Bistineau Task Force Meeting. The agenda was reviewed and adopted with no changes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Steve Ramsey reported on the June 27, 2011 Congressional Hearing in Shreveport called by United State Representative John Fleming of Louisiana and Representative Louie Gohmert of Texas to discuss Giant Salvinia on area lakes. Mr. Ramsey stated that there were 10 witnesses with representation from the Bistineau Task Force. The hearing and the interest could generate assistance on the Federal level.

Mr. Jim Bonsall reported on the legislation that was authored by Louisiana Representative Jean Doerge and Co-Authored by Rep. Jim Fannin, Representative Henry Burns, and many other local legislators to set up a system in which the three parishes of Webster, Bienville, and Bossier could sell the surface waters of Lake Bistineau and all funds generated would be directed back into the implementation of the Management Plan for Lake Bistineau. The State is currently selling the surface waters for \$.04 per gal. Mr. Bonsall thanked Representative Doerge and other legislators for their hard work on the bill, but although the House supported the legislation, the Department of Natural Resources did not. After changes made to accommodate DNR and others, Mrs. Doerge felt that the bill was too “watered” down to be effective or to provide for the purpose that it was drafted to do. Mr. Bonsall stated that he felt that there was a narrow window of opportunity in which to have legislation passed, and the 2011 session was that window.

The next item on the Agenda is Key Informant Interviews—Report from the 2011 Louisiana Legislature. Mrs. Jean Doerge was unable to attend and had given her report to Mr. Bonsall.

Senator Robert Adley gave his Legislative Report. Senator Adley stated that Public involvement is very important to solving the problems on Lake Bistineau. He also stated that there is new equipment and herbicides that are being tested that could be beneficial to the control of aquatic vegetation. Concerning the Doerge legislation, he stated that DNR had opposition and one reason is that there is an AG opinion that the water belongs to the state and is essentially free to the public. Senator Adley stated that he could not support the legislation because there were Administrative fees and he objected to any administrative fees. Mr. Bonsall responded that the original bill contained no administrative fees; the parishes would administer the funds at no cost.

Mr. Evan Thames, Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries, Biologist Manager was the next to address the BTF. Mr. Thames stated that at last measure, Lake Bistineau is 2 ft. below pool stage. He then stated that he had just had a fly over yesterday and he did not detect any large mats, but urged citizens to call or e-mail with locations that they are aware of. The Spray Crews are doing a wonderful job; they are working very hard in very hot conditions. Alligator Weed has become an issue, and there will be contract spray crews on Bistineau in approximately two weeks that will spray for Alligator weed. The highly populated areas (boat houses, etc) will be the first sprayed—lowly populated will come later. In reference to the Private Citizen's Spraying, he is to have a meeting shortly to set a date for training sessions for spraying.

In reference to Tree Removal, there have been two contractors interested in the tree removal.

The final draft of the Management Plan for Bistineau is on the web site. An addendum at the end of the document (page 38) is the part that is modified with the draw down time lines.

Evan introduced the BTF to Mr. Alex Perret who works out of the Baton Rouge Office and is over aquatic weed control. He stated that there is testing for new herbicides and trying different formulas to be most effective, hopes to have results in a few months. He is also working on the training for citizen spraying.

GUEST COMMENTS:

Ms. Kristine Carrier spoke to the BTF and Wildlife and Fisheries. She is still interested in assisting by being an official photographer for Bistineau. She also stated that she is assisting with a news story of a PHD at Stephen F. Austin University in Texas that is working on taking an extract from salvinia to be used to break down cancer cells. A documentary could be shot around Bistineau.

Gerald Krouse expressed his concern about the low water levels in front of his property. Mr. Krouse felt that it is not fair to homeowners that the water is being drawn out of the lake. Mr. James Seales, LA W&F, responded that there is research showing that more goes out of the lake due to evaporation than the amount that is drawn out.

Mr. Jim Bonsall stated that landowners need to contact their legislators concerning the pumping of water out of the lake.

Mr. Greg Wilson stated that he feels the parishes need to implement a more stringent system of permitting for the laying of lines in parish rights of way. Possibly permit fees could be generated and put back into the management plan for Bistineau.

Mr. Billy Montgomery expressed his appreciation to all that attended today's meeting as well as the members and invited guest. He also thanked the assistance of the Webster Parish Police Jury for the meeting place and to Trailblazer for all of their technical assistance and especially Mr. Ellzey Simmons.

The next meeting of the Bistineau Task Force will be September 29, 2011 at 10:05 A.M. in the 2nd Floor meeting room of the Webster Parish Courthouse, Minden, LA.

There being no further business to bring before the Task Force, the Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ronda Carnahan
Secretary