

MINUTES OF THE BISTINEAU TASK FORCE

March 31, 2011

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

ATTENDING: Billy W. Montgomery, Bossier PJ-Chairman; Charles Walker, Webster PJ; Steve Ramsey, Webster PJ; Jim Bonsall, Webster PJ; David Lowe, Dorcheat Soil & Water C.; Glen Benton, Bossier PJ; George McConathy, Saline Soil & Water C.; William M. Conley, Saline Soil & Water C.; Rick Yager, Dorcheat SWCD; Elmore Morris, Bodcau Soil & Water C.; Greg Wilson, Bienville P.J.; Bill Sims, Bienville P.J.; and Tony Lawson, Bienville P.J.

ABSENT: Bill Altimus, Bossier P.J. and Shannon Mendenhall, Bodcau SWCD.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE: Ronda Carnahan, Webster PJ; James Seales, LA WF; Mark McElroy, LA WF;

Evan Thames, LA WF; Ellzey Simmons, Trailblazer; and Olivia Ward, Trailblazer

INVITED GUEST: Mary Ann Van Osdel, LSU Extension Service; Dotie Horton, Assistant to Representative Henry Burns.

See attached list of guest

Mr. Billy Montgomery called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Charles Walker to open the meeting with Prayer followed by Mr. George McConathy leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Montgomery welcomed all in attendance. He then asked for additions to the agenda. There were no additions to the agenda.

Mr. Glenn Benton moved, seconded by Mr. Jim Bonsall to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2011 meeting of the Bistineau Task Force. Motion carried unanimously.

The Roll was then called by Secretary, Ronda Carnahan. There are 13 members present and 2 absent.

Mr. Montgomery then turned the meeting over to Mr. Ellzey Simmons, Trailblazer for a report on the work to date of the Bistineau Task Force.

The Press Release issued on March 15, 2011 was evaluated.

The BTF was formed one year ago, but the Task Force had begun work long before this date. Mr. Simmons then summarized the BTF Work Session that was held on February 25, 2011. The purpose of the session was to evaluate the progress and the future priorities:

Grassroots plan

Info retrieval from the public

Role of public in the BTF project

Data collection

Selling lake water—Jim Bonsall

Improve Meetings

What progress would members like to see in the next 12 months?

Development of a Watershed Management Plan 84/100

Tree Removal 80/100

Data Collection 80/100

Public Information Campaign 80/100

Fund Raising 80/100

***Lack of progress is a high concern for the Task Force

Mr. Simmons then reported on the Lake Bistineau Data Collection. The types of data collection are as follows:

Ownership—Residential, Camps, Commercial, Other

Soil Type – Soil Surveys

Maps – Data layers and Watershed Boundaries

Waste Disposal—Septic and Sewer information
Surrounding Land Use and Cover – topographic Maps, Aerial Photographs
Water Quality – Water Q. monitoring, Designated uses, Impaired uses, Discharge permits
Human Population Statistics—Census data, and demographics
Livestock – Ag Statistics and Ag Census data
Aquatic Life – Fish population studies
Endangered and Threatened species – Protected species

The next item on the agenda is Discussion of Selling Water, Mr. Jim Bonsall reported on this. He stated that Mrs. Jean Doerge, Representative District 10(Webster Parish) is currently working on a bill to present to the legislature that would allow the three parishes of Webster, Bienville, and Bossier to sell for a profit surface water from Lake Bistineau and revenue derived from the sale would be directed back to implementing the management plan for Lake Bistineau. Other legislators have stated that they will help support this legislation and Mr. Bonsall urged members and guests to please contact the legislators and urge their support.

Ms. Mary Ann Van Osdell with the LSU Extension service then addressed the Task Force. Billy Montgomery had asked Ms. Osdell to attend the meeting. The Task Force would like to enlist the assistance of LSU to implement research on Giant Salvinia. Ms. Osdell stated that she would be glad to assist in any way possible. Mr. Charles Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Steve Ramsey to draft a Resolution from the Bistineau Task Force requesting LSU to begin a Research on Giant Salvinia. Motion carried unanimously.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mr. Mark McElroy addressed the Task Force. He began by stating that he would be retiring within the next week, but is leaving the Bistineau project in the capable hands of Evan Thames and James Seales. Mark then addressed the following points:
Darrell Sanders is working on Salvinia Research and Wildlife and Fisheries is partially funding his research. There is a new chemical, Clipper, that is showing promise and seems to be effective on the Giant Salvinia. It is a wet-able powder and seems to penetrate further than the top layer of the weed. Mr. Sanders is working on formulating a combination of chemicals that will be most effective.
Water Use—the pumping of water out of Bistineau. Mark stated that he was aware that the Director had met with DNR on the pumping.
Legislative update—Mark met with local legislators to bring them up to speed on Bistineau issues.
Permits—Tree Cutting permit draft is being worked on. Dept. of Forestry needs to be in on this permitting issue and a hold harmless clause must be drafted.
Individual Spraying—the resolution is fine to be sent to the Department of Agriculture and to the Secretary of Wildlife and Fisheries.
Port O’Bistineau Project is moving along, no problems.
Stumps- Mark stated that if someone wanted to dig out the stumps, they would have to be permitted from the Corp of Engineers.

Mark McElroy then introduced Evan Thames to the members and audience that have not met him previously. Evan thanked Mark McElroy for his assistance. He also expressed his appreciation to Mr. Pete Camp for his assistance with landowners. He stated that residents could e-mail Evan directly to ethames@wlf.la.gov. Evan would appreciate anyone that knows of locations of Salvinia growth, especially those off of private lands in need of spraying. Communication is an important tool.

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Guest Comments were next on the agenda:

John Wayne – question on topographic map. Mark stated that there was not one.

Richey Jackson – presented some pictures and made comments about the water being drawn out of Bistineau without the parish authority. He also stated that Bossier and Caddo Parishes get ½ of 1% of revenue from sand drawn out of Red River.

Lavelle Pinder- question on whether there would be continued spraying of alligator weed. Evan responded yes.

Pete Camp – Questions on water removal from Bistineau. He said that his questions were addressed earlier during Mr. Bonsall's presentation.

Billy Montgomery then asked for comments from the Task Force Members and Advisors. Mr. Montgomery took the opportunity to thank Mark McElroy for his hard work but feels that he is leaving the project in capable hands.

James Seales stated that he is currently working on a health hazard complaint of sewer discharge into Bistineau, but does not have test results at this time. Mr. Seales stated that if the public is aware of illegal discharge issues to please report to the Wildlife and Fisheries Office.

Evan Thames addressed questions concerning draw down and stated that there is not a draw down planned for this year. He stated that with the dry spring and summer, there is a good chance that the levels will not go up.

On the tree removal, he stated that LA WLF has not contracted with anyone to do remove the trees, prices are low and there is little interest. He also stated that standing trees cannot be cut, pending permit.

Dotie Horton, Assistant to Representative Henry Burns, expressed her appreciation to Mark McElroy for his service and is looking forward to working with Evan and James.

Task Force Members expressed appreciation to Mark and wished him the best in his future endeavors and on his retirement.

Other Business: Ellzey Simmons

Dates of future Task Force Meeting is posted on the Web Site, but is essentially every two months.

Ellzey encouraged guest to sign in and to please leave their e-mail addresses so that they can be added to the official notification data base.

Members expressed appreciation to Trailblazer and especially to Ellzey Simmons for the assistance in organizing the Task Force.

There being no further business to bring before the Task Force, the meeting adjourned.