

AMENDED MINUTES
FALSE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2017

The False River Watershed Council met in a regular session at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at the Courthouse Annex Building in New Roads, Louisiana.

Thomas Van Biersel called the meeting to order and directed Ms. Jeanne Hendrix to call the roll:

Present: Messrs. Major Thibaut, Arthur Ewing, Cy D'Aquila, Jerry Hix, Kyle Olinde, Rick Ward, L.J. Grezaffi, Stephen Tassin, Bijan Sharafkhani, Thomas Van Biersel

Absent: Brad Spicer, Jimmy Chustz, Jimmy Lyles, Ron Pourciau, Randy Myers

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Ewing requested to add discussion of bulkhead regulations/permitting process to agenda.

Motion by Mr. Ewing and seconded by Mr. Thibaut.

Unanimously carried. Item added as #7 to agenda.

Mr. Grezaffi wanted to add a motion regarding future drawdowns. Mr. Ewing seconded to add motion. After some discussion it was decided to bring the motion up at the next meeting.

Motion by Mr. Thibaut to approve agenda and changes to agenda. Second by Mr. Ewing. No opposition.

Resolved, That the agenda of the meeting of March 8, 2017 be accepted.

Unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Van Biersel noted a clarification to the minutes of the January 11, 2017 meeting.

Motion by Mr. Thibaut Ewing to approve and second by Mr. Hix.

Resolved, That the minutes of the January 11, 2017 as amended are accepted for approval.

Unanimously carried.

UPDATE PROPOSED FALSE RIVER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT - PHASE II

Gerald Babin gave a presentation on Phase II and presented the board with a time line for removing sediment from False River. Mr. Babin presented the pipeline route to the Mississippi River from False River.

Pipes will follow water of False Bayou as much as possible. Revised plans were submitted to property owners. Agreements should be done by March 2017. Permitting process begins after the landowner agreements are completed. Construction should begin around September 2018 to February 2019. Many factors involved could change these dates.

Mr. Thibaut raised concerns over time to get permits from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Babin stated that the company they work with may have ability to move it up but the size of the project could mean that it will take some time to get permitted. Mr. Thibaut asked about permanent placement of the pipeline for future use. Mr. Babin said cost would be a factor. A similar project ran \$400,000 per mile and the False River project is 5 miles. Mr. Thibaut stated that the cost of dredging over the years may make it more cost effective if piping were permanent.

Mr. Ewing asked for an individual workflow. Mr. Babin stated all permits could run concurrent. It will be the USACE permits that will take the longest but it will be 5 years before they would have to be renewed.

The project is currently at \$2.5 million and we have \$1.9 million in funding. An application for additional funding has already been submitted.

Mr. Van Biersel stated that they can't estimate shorter time line because it is an unusual project and that they are depositing sediment into the Mississippi when usually the USACE is trying to take it out. Mr. Babin stated that while it is unusual, it is not impossible.

Mr. Grezaffi asked if funding was available. Mr. Babin explained the funding process and there is time to get more funding before the project is ready to start.

Approximately 250 cubic yards are estimated to be removed from the North end.

UPDATE FALSE RIVER NITROGEN IMPACT MITIGATION PROJECT:

Kevin Gravois reported the M1 project will go out to bid one week from tomorrow. Bids will be opened at the Pointe Coupee Parish Police Jury office. The M1 project consists of 6 weirs on the property of Claude Jumonville and 1 on the Cline property. M2 plans include 3 on NRG property they are ok with placement. There are 2 other private landowners that need to sign the agreements.

The M1 should start a month from awarding of bids and 90 days to complete the project.

Mr. Gravois and Mr. Van Biersel will be meeting with the police jury regarding a maintenance plan together. Now there is \$80,000 for maintenance but could be more depending on how bids come in.

Mr. Thibaut asked Mr. Van Biersel about “hot spots” along the canal, specifically, areas not previously addressed by NCRS. Mr. Van Biersel says there is still option to fix these spots.

Mr. Gravois stated that Jumonville land is returning ½ of M1 areas back to wetlands. Additionally he stated that any remaining funds could be just to address the hot spots.

PRESENTATION BY WLF ON DRAWDOWN:

Brian Heimann with Wildlife and Fisheries presented slide show on impacts of drawdown on False River with regards to overall lake health. Presentation is available on FRWSC website through DNR.

- 1) It is recommended continued draw downs for fish and silt.
- 2) Benefits of water level management
 - a) increase in sport fish production and elimination of rough fish
 - b) improved aquatic vegetation growth and firm lake bottom for spawning
 - c) allows sediment to dry out and organic matter can decompose and increase lake depth.
 - d) reduced turbidity
 - e) establishment of terrestrial vegetation

From 2013 to 2014 there were 13 lakes in Louisiana drawn down.

Overall False River is showing signs of improvement from the reduction in water level. Additionally, improvements were made to the boat launch during the drawdown.

Future draw downs will be recommended. The next draw down will be dependant upon when the dredging is set to start.

Mr. Heimann also stated people could sign up for email or text updates for WLF projects throughout the state.

Mr. Grezaffi asked how comparison of lakes were made. Mr. Heimann state that is was not a direct comparison which he stated before his presentation.

Mr. Grezaffi stated that the presentation seemed to be focused on only water and fish and not the damages to property around the lake. He questioned if WLF would take bulk heads into consideration. Mr. Heimann stated that his presentation was focused on lake health and not just a fish presentation. Mr. Heimann stated that the lake was in noticeable decline and it is the job of the department to protect the health of the lake.

Mr. Grezaffi again addressed damage to seawalls and how is WLF going to stop it. Mr. Thibaut stated that WLF are here as biologist not construction engineers. He additionally asked that Mr. Grezaffi please stop bringing up the drawdown and how WLF is going to address the issue.

Mr. Grezaffi denied putting WLF on the spot for property damage but wants answers to his questions about bulk head failure. Mr. Thibaut stated that in the past 2 draw downs, there has been no proof that any damage was due to the draw down. There will be no fund put together to fix bulk heads. No engineer to date has attributed the draw downs to bulk head failure.

Mr. Sharafkhani stated that water quality has improved and oxygen level has improved.

Mr. Ewing asked about vegetation and if they all survive once water levels go back up. Mr. Heimann stated not all survive but the root systems and compaction of soil helps in the long term.

Mr. Ewing asked multiple questions regarding long term impact of the drawdown and schedule of drawdown. Mr. Heimann stated that while you would not want to wait 10 years you don't want to be on a set schedule either. A good plan is a random plan which allows for a better mimic of natural conditions. Some lakes are scheduled as far as 6 years out.

Mr. Thibaut asked Mr. Heimann about schedule and dredging. Mr. Thibaut asked for a set schedule to have enough notice to property owners because this lake has more development around it than other lakes. Mr. Heimann will work with Mr. Babin regarding next drawdown and dredging project. Mr. Hix stated that dredging would have to be in fall/winter because of use and safety issues.

OLD BUSINESS:

BULKHEAD PERMITTING

Mr. Ewing stated many issues with False River show the need to have a plan with regards to bulkheads and seawalls. They have been meeting with other areas on how they approach construction and lake health. In discussions with contractors and engineers looking for best practices. Change in lake from past 10 years has created a need for regulations.

He asked how far does the council want to look into options. Looked at Bayou Lafouche for guidance. They are going to recommend a permitting process for new builds and repairs to the jury.

Mr. Thibaut stated that at next meeting they will present a plan to vote on based on the research. Engineered plans would raise costs \$1,500 to \$6,500 plus extra material costs but the plan would have engineer's stamp of approval and give the property owners insurance that it was built to standards and protects property owners from design failure. Measures can be put in to protect seawall from wave action. Any work on shoreline would also need a permit.

Mr. Thibaut remarked about how liability would then change from landowner to engineer because they sign off on the design.

Questions about environmental impact of certain designs including use of concrete were discussed. Mr. D'Aquila asked about permits from State Lands. It was stated that landowners are supposed to pull permits but are not.

Mr. Ray Peavy asked about recourse now regarding bulkhead failure. Mr. D'Aquila stated now there is none. Mr. D'Aquila offered to discuss the matter further with Mr. Peavy at a later time.

Mr. Thibaut reiterated that the legislature would not create a fund to financially compensate property owners.

Two or three set plans would not work because of variations in property along the river. In looking into the matter, it has been determined that each property is unique and needs its own plan. The new ordinance would require a permit from the parish. To get the permit the property owner would need a plan stamped by an engineer.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL PRIVILEGE:

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Richard Manship
Kenneth St. Romain
Paul Gremillion
Ray Peavy
Diane Deville
Jude Grezaffi
Lonny Rogers
Bill Ruiz
Stephen Smith

Motion to Adjourn by Mr. D'Aquila. and second by Mr. Hix.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.