

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**OF**  
**WHITE LAKE PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD**

**Friday, June 3, 2005**

Secretary Dwight Landreneau opened the White Lake Property Advisory Board meeting and asked Ms. Lana Guidry to call the roll. All members were present.

Secretary Landreneau thanked all of the board members for attending the meeting at White Lake. He stated the purpose of having the meeting at White Lake was to have the entire Board visit the facility to enhance their knowledge of the property in making decisions regarding the management of White Lake.

**Approval of Minutes of April 14, 2005 Meeting**

Secretary Landreneau called for a motion for approval of the minutes of the April 14, 2005 meeting as previously mailed. A motion for approval was made by Mr. Buddy Leach and seconded by Mr. Don Hale. The motion passed with no opposition.

**Election of Officers**

Secretary Landreneau turned over the election of officers to Mr. Don Puckett, LDWF General Counsel.

Mr. Puckett asked Dr. Beverly Wade and Ms. Cindy Brown, who were absent from the April 14, 2005 board meeting, to introduce themselves and give a brief biographical synopsis to the Board before proceeding to election of officers.

Dr. Beverly Wade apologized for being absent from the previous meeting due to a prior speaking engagement. Dr. Wade is Dean of the Honors College at Southern University. She received degrees in Developmental Biology and Botany from Louisiana State University, and she was the first black person to receive degrees in those areas. She has been with Southern University for 37 years. She previously taught biology for several years. She stated her focus on this Board would be toward the academic perspective.

Ms. Cindy Brown is with the Nature Conservancy in Baton Rouge and has been with them for ten years in a variety of different capacities. She is currently Director of the Coastal and Marine Conservation Program. She received a Masters Degree from Duke University in Environmental Management, with a focus on water research management. She performs a variety of tasks in her current position which includes fund raising, working with the community, as well as government agencies. She stated that she is

very eager to work with this committee and apologized for missing the previous meeting due to a prior commitment.

The remaining board members re-introduced themselves.

Mr. Puckett proceeded with the election of officers by explaining election procedures from Robert's Rules of Order with the board members. He informed the board members that they would be electing a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer and the election should be done in that order. He also stated that a nominee may withdraw his or her name at any time.

Nominations for Chairman were solicited, and Mr. Buddy Leach nominated Dr. Steve Linscombe. There were no other nominations for Chairman, and Dr. Linscombe was elected Chairman by acclamation.

Nominations for Vice-Chairman were solicited, and Mr. Nathan Granger nominated Mr. Richard Hines. There were no other nominations for Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Hines was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

Nominations for Secretary were solicited, and Mr. Eddie Young nominated Mr. Sammy Noel. There were no other nominations for Secretary, and Mr. Noel was elected Secretary by acclamation.

~~Nominations for Treasurer were solicited, and Mr. Nathan Granger nominated Dr. Beverly Wade. Dr. Wade withdrew that nomination.~~

Mr. Richard Hines nominated Mr. Don Hale for Treasurer. There were no other nominations for Treasurer, and Mr. Hale was elected Treasurer by acclamation.

Mr. Leach asked Secretary Landreneau if there would indeed be a monetary transfer from White Lake Preservation, Inc. to the White Lake Property Fund. Ms. Janice Lansing confirmed to Mr. Leach that there will be a monetary transfer of approximately \$200,000 and we will know an exact figure in the near future.

After the election of officers, Chairman Steve Linscombe presided over the meeting.

Chairman Linscombe asked Secretary Landreneau if the board members were all subject to confirmation by the Senate and if so, had it occurred. Secretary Landreneau stated that the board members have not yet been confirmed by the Senate, but they can still act as a Board until that confirmation is complete.

### **Update on Water Bottom Issues**

Chairman Linscombe asked for the presentation on the update of the water bottom issues. Mr. Parke Moore introduced Mr. Charlie St. Romain, Administrator of the Office of State Lands to update the Board on this topic.

Mr. St. Romain asked the Board to review the May 11, 2005 letter to Mr. Moore from John P. Evans, Jr. with the Office of State Lands. Mr. St. Romain stated that from a historical standpoint, they saw no historical water bottoms on the confines of the property. He stated they are all land-locked interior ponds or man-made canals, with the only exception down in the southeast corner which is Clear Lake. He stated that Clear Lake has become an integral part of White Lake and feels that because of this, based on their normal criteria, it should be claimed by the State as a navigable water bottom. Mr. Leach asked Mr. St. Romain if this had been litigated. Mr. St. Romain stated it had not, and it is only their assumption based on their normal criteria. Mr. Leach asked who owned the water bottoms before the erosion, and Mr. St. Romain stated Amoco. Mr. Darwin Miller asked if there was any pending or ongoing litigation involving navigable water bodies associated with this property. Mr. St. Romain stated that he was not aware of any pending or ongoing litigation. Mr. St. Romain stated there was a compromise back in the 1930's on White Lake itself, with the landowners at that time regarding mineral production, with the State getting 2/3 and landowners getting 1/3. Mr. Hines asked if this piece of property would also be a part of that settlement arrangement. Mr. St. Romain stated that it had not been decided yet, but he did not feel it would be included. Mr. Leach asked Mr. St. Romain if the State did in fact own the water bottoms of Clear Lake, and Mr. St. Romain stated that at this time the State claims ownership of the water bottoms of Clear Lake. Mr. Leach asked Mr. St. Romain if there was any mineral activity going on in Clear Lake, and Mr. St. Romain stated there was not any to his knowledge, but that the Office of State Lands no longer deals directly with minerals, and they have not associated with the Mineral Board for approximately 8 years, so this is only his assumption. Mr. Leach asked if there was any mineral activity in White Lake, and Mr. St. Romain confirmed there was indeed mineral activity in White Lake. Mr. Leach asked how would that be divided up and Mr. St. Romain responded that it would be 1/3 for private landowners and 2/3 for the State. Mr. Leach asked if that was royalties, and Mr. St. Romain stated it was royalties/mineral rights. Secretary Landreneau reiterated that any funds collected for the White Lake property goes solely to the White Lake Fund. Mr. Puckett stated that on White Lake itself, as he understands it, any income produced in the lake would probably be General Fund monies, as opposed to going into the White Lake Fund. Mr. Leach stated that was his understanding years ago and wanted to know if it had changed. Mr. St. Romain stated that it would go to the State Mineral Board. Mr. Hines clarified that any royalties from any sort of mineral activity is going to go to BP, but any monies from surface activities would go to the White Lake Fund.

Mr. Leach strongly recommended that the Board be heavily involved in granting any seismic permits on White Lake since the Board is held accountable for the management of the property. Mr. Parke Moore assured Mr. Leach and the Board that the Department will work closely with the Board regarding this issue, and that the Board will be apprised before any permits are granted. Mr. Leach requested that the Board approve all permits; Mr. Moore deferred this to Secretary Landreneau. Secretary Landreneau agreed that the Department will bring all applications before the Board prior to approving applications so that the Board be involved in helping make the final decisions.

Mr. Leach requested that the Board be furnished at its next meeting a short memorandum of what outstanding interests are being held by BP or anyone else on any of the property the Board is responsible for development and management.

Mr. Puckett thanked Mr. St. Romain for his assistance with the presentation of the water bottoms issue to the Board and for coming out to such a remote location for a meeting.

### **FY 2005-06 Proposed Budget**

Chairman Linscombe asked for the presentation of the FY 2005-06 proposed budget report and Ms. Janice Lansing, LDWF Undersecretary gave the Board an overview of the proposed expenditures and revenues for the upcoming fiscal year. She explained to the Board that this is only proposed and that we do not know exactly what the operations entail. She stated they used the prior White Lake Preservation, Inc. accounting records for the past couple of years. Because White Lake Preservation, Inc. did not have state budget categories that we are required to use, Ms. Wynette Kees met with the White Lake Preservation, Inc. staff and their accounting firm and they explained to Ms. Kees the different types of revenues and expenditures and Ms. Kees categorized them into their respective state budget categories. Ms. Lansing reiterated that there will be a monetary transfer of approximately \$200,000 from White Lake Preservation, Inc. to the White Lake Fund.

Mr. Hines asked Ms. Lansing for a more detailed breakdown of all expenditures for the next meeting.

Mr. Leach asked how many years the BP grant is set for in the agreement and Ms. Lansing stated it is five and we have two years left, which will be FY 2005-06 and FY 2006-07. Dr. Wade asked Ms. Lansing to explain the grant, and Ms. Lansing informed her that it was part of the donation agreement from BP to the State when it was donated to the State three years ago. Ms. Annie Smith stated the grant was given in part to assist with maintenance costs, as well as the idea that those funds be dedicated towards the establishment of an education center. Mr. Leach asked if it was a total grant of \$1.2 million and if we had received three payments with two payments remaining and Ms. Lansing confirmed this. Mr. Leach asked if there was any balance of the three grant payments previously received in the amount to be transferred, and Ms. Lansing stated she was not sure because White Lake Preservation, Inc. kept all of their revenues in one account and only operated out of that one account. However, if there is any grant monies remaining, it would have be in that account and included in the amount to be transferred.

Dr. Gomez asked if the category "Hunt trip fees" on the budget report was the fund-raising hunts and Ms. Lansing stated it was. Dr. Gomez asked if it had been determined if the fundraising hunts are going to be continued under the State's stewardship. Ms. Lansing stated that they are moving in that direction, but it could obviously change. Mr. Leach stated that he hoped that the Board would have a very large impact on determining that issue. Ms. Lansing stated what she meant by saying that, is that during this transition there were a lot of logistical steps the State had to take in preparation of a July 1, 2005

takeover. One of those things was meeting with the accountants, employee transition, etc. and another one of those things was to make sure it would be legal for the State to do something like that and that is the only step the Department has taken in this issue, and she is letting you know that it is in fact legal to host these type hunts. Mr. Leach asked if we had received an Attorney General opinion on this issue and Secretary Landreneau stated that it was cleared through the Division of Administration. Mr. Leach suggested we request an Attorney General opinion on this issue. Ms. Lansing was asked whether or not we would be able to allow tax deductions for group hunts and she stated that it had been looked into, and these groups can be given a tax deduction. Ms. Lansing stated that the hunt cost can not be given as a tax deduction, only any amount over the cost of the hunt can be given as the deduction. Secretary Landreneau reiterated that we were trying to come up with a budget with the way things were presently being done at White Lake prior to our takeover of the property and we are still trying to work a budget that would reflect those activities that we know were going on and can still be done by management under the State. Secretary Landreneau said that we are looking for net income and it does not have to come from group hunts, but we must have another method of generating these revenues if we no longer allow the hunts. He stated that group hunts were one way of generating revenues that we were aware of, and that is why they were listed on the proposed budget, and as Ms. Lansing had earlier stated that we know if the hunts are chosen to be done it is legal. However, if the Board chooses not to allow the hunts we will need to find a source of income that would reflect approximately \$250,000 gross. Mr. Hale asked if we had anyone in contact with the groups that had previously attended White Lake hunts, and Ms. Lansing stated that Mr. Wayne Sweeney still has contact with these groups. Mr. Sweeney stated that as long as the facility is kept up and the hunts are still tax deductible, the groups are still interested in coming to hunt at White Lake.

Ms. Brown asked whether the repairs/maintenance categorized under "Operating Services" covered expenses maintaining the levees and Mr. Sweeney stated that these are just routine repairs around the camp, launch, etc. and did not include levee maintenance.

Ms. Lansing explained that the "Acquisitions" category is anticipated needs. She stated that we do not know for sure what items we will purchase, but this is a plan and it is common to budget for contingencies.

Mr. Leach asked for a breakdown for the costs of the insurance and telephones and Ms. Kees explained that she will have to get with the Division of Administration for a breakdown of the insurance costs because they bill the Department as a whole and not individual sections/properties, and she would not know about the telephones until the Office of Telecommunications takes over the phone systems. Mr. Sweeney stated the telephone bill has been approximately \$300 - \$400 per month. Ms. Lansing commented that after we get through one full cycle of the operation under the State, we can provide a complete expenditure history. Ms. Lansing explained that everything is currently being transferred to state operations.

There were several questions raised regarding the amount allocated to salaries. Ms. Lansing stated that the Department had been granted Civil Service authority to offer

employment for three full-time unclassified positions, which are for the three that are currently employed at White Lake. To date, two of the employees have officially accepted the offers, those being Mr. Wayne Sweeney and Mr. Glen Lougon, and we are in a transition with the third position. Secretary Landreneau reminded the Board that part of the legislation and the transition agreement was to bring over those employees. Ms. Lansing also stated that at times there will be departmental employees who have specialized duties and charge their time to different projects and will be charging some of their time to White Lake.

Mr. Parke Moore stated to the Board that the Office of Wildlife will ultimately be responsible for the overall management of White Lake and incorporate White Lake as another property of the 1.5 million acres of land that we currently manage. He stated we have species specialists, habitat specialists, game specialists, etc. who will be incorporating White Lake in what they do in their daily capacity, therefore White Lake will benefit without a charge from these employees. There is also the Natural Heritage Program employees who will come over and perform work at White Lake with no charge to White Lake for those activities performed, and White Lake will benefit from that as well. Mr. Moore stated that Mr. Sweeney will not be in a position to question whether or not it is appropriate for them to be there. It will be Mr. Moore's responsibility to respond directly to the board members if they have those questions. Mr. Moore stated that he will be involved on a daily basis with Mr. Sweeney and his staff to ensure that we capitalize on this great opportunity.

Chairman Linscombe asked the Board if they would like to discuss their perspectives on group hunts. Mr. Leach suggested subdividing the Board and giving them some responsibilities and should they need to email each other with what they find out they can and then come back at a later date to discuss the issue. Mr. Leach stated that he is not personally prepared to say whether he is for or against group hunts. Mr. Leach said he understands the need for revenue, but he also understands that one of this administration's goals is that White Lake be made public and he does not know how the group hunt really translates into that image, although he understands the income from them. Mr. Leach stated that White Lake charges the same as his company charges, but he feels at this point that they need to find out what's going on here and what other types of availability can be worked in. It was noted in the conversation that the group hunts are not exclusively purchased by corporations but include hunts assembled and purchased by Louisiana residents.

Secretary Landreneau informed the Board that if they chose to develop sub-committees within the Advisory Board, he would assign staff members to work with the study groups so that we keep the dialogue between the staff and the Board. Secretary Landreneau also stated we will facilitate any meeting that the Board wants. Mr. Hines suggested letting the board members decide over the next month which sub-committees should be formed and which sub-committees they might want to serve. Chairman Linscombe asked the board members to submit this information no later than Friday, June 17, 2005.

Dr. Wade moved for the acceptance of Ms. Lansing's report of proposed budget with the option to come back and revisit after we look at the Management Plan and form sub-committees and participate in sub-committee meetings. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **Update on Management Plan Being Developed by LDWF**

Chairman Linscombe asked for the presentation on the Management Plan update. Mr. Moore presented the management objectives to the Board. He stated the primary goal was to utilize the property to the maximum extent for benefit of the public. Mr. Moore strategically discussed the objectives to the Board. He stated that six major objectives have been defined; the objectives are not exclusive of one another as follows:

1. Public use includes everything from consumptive to non-consumptive, fishing and educational opportunities.
2. Habitat Management Objectives includes management practices, maintenance/repair priorities, near term projects/research.
3. Wild Alligator Harvest includes habitat assessment, harvest assessment, 2005 alligator harvest quotas, hunter selection, sale of alligators, and other management options.
4. Alligator farming/ranching includes alligator egg harvest, selection of alligator egg harvester/contractor, and other management options.
5. Waterfowl management objectives include continuing waterfowl surveys throughout the entire area.
6. Facilities and physical plant objectives includes developing educational program center near boat launch, immediate projects (1 year), short term projects (1-2 years), long term projects (3-4 years) and delayed projections.

Mr. Moore stated to the Board that Mr. Sweeney informed him that during the hunting season, White Lake Preservation, Inc. hunted about half of the days, which was 30 days out of 60. Mr. Moore stated that this area of White Lake has been described as one of the most important regional waterfowl refuging areas during the winter months and we are going to want to keep that intact; therefore, waterfowl will be a major objective of our management.

Mr. Moore stated that a couple of weeks ago, he brought 20 key Office of Wildlife staff members to White Lake for their professional observation and subsequent input on developing these objectives. He stated we are looking at this from an ecological standpoint and it is a very healthy ecosystem here. Mr. Connor asked from the waterfowl perspective if it would be beneficial to grow a population of non-migratory birds to know that there will always be birds here. Mr. Moore stated that we are constrained by nature

and we will have certain mandates that Mother Nature has dictated to us. Mr. Moore said in terms of residence birds, the best bet would be mottled ducks and wood ducks and thought it was a good suggestion. Mr. Moore stated that he intends to follow the current management practices now because it was operated for a specific objective goal in the past and we plan to continue that and also improve by having specialists in the different fields evaluating the resources and making recommendations up through the staff to the Board.

Mr. Moore indicated that the management plan is a fluid and living process and not complete, and any suggestions the Board may have to please indicate.

Dr. Gomez asked Mr. Moore his thoughts on developing an educational program center by the boat launch. Mr. Moore said his thoughts are a facility that blends architecturally with the area; something with components of educating the public on what this State and this agency does; what this site is all about; why it is here; its history; what it provides in terms of the ecosystem; what it provides to the public if they decide to go, and what opportunities they are allowed to participate. Dr. Gomez asked where at the boat launch this facility would be placed because there does not appear to have a lot of room at the boat launch and he stated he isn't sure and we need their input. Mr. Moore was asked if the building would go through Capital Outlay and he stated it would indeed have to go through that process. Mr. Leach suggested that if we were able to obtain donors prior to going to the legislature, it will help with presenting our project at Capital Outlay because the legislature likes to see that.

---

It was asked if the fishing in the Florence Canal was a change from what has been done in the past. Mr. Sweeney stated that they currently pay \$30 per permit to fish in the Florence Canal. Mr. Hines asked would we be doing away with the \$30 permit and Mr. Moore asked Mr. Bennie Fontenot, Inland Fish Administrator to address the Board. Mr. Fontenot stated to the Board that we would like to let the fishermen come in and out and fish without permits, but it would ultimately be the Board's decision whether the fishermen would require permits. Mr. Moore stated Enforcement staff will be assigned to the canals. Mr. Fontenot stated the fishermen will be restricted to the Florence Canal and connected canals and this is really a water body that is not located near duck hunting and he doesn't feel it will be a disruption to the area. Mr. Hines asked if any additional infrastructure would be needed to restrict the fishermen, and Mr. Moore said that we would need signage. Mr. Fontenot stated that until we get another boat ramp with ample parking it will be tough for fishermen. It was asked how public fishing will be coordinated during waterfowl season. Mr. Moore commented that he and Mr. Fontenot felt that fishing should probably be excluded during organized hunts. Mr. Fontenot said that we are proposing public fishing in the Florence Canal from February 15 through August 31 and if later on we find that fishing does not disturb the hunting then we can recommend to you that it be opened year round.

Mr. Karl Connor moved that the Board authorize individual and group hunts for the next hunting season with no set number of hunts, but as many as practical, and the number to be determined by the Board once season dates are set for waterfowl hunting. Mr. Don

Hale seconded the motion. Chairman Linscombe asked the Board for a vote on the motion and the motion passed with only Mr. Leach in opposition.

Secretary Landreneau thanked the Board for voting and authorizing LDWF to conduct individual and group hunts, and he recommended to the Board that they determine the number of hunts as early as possible in order to put public notices in the newspapers and advertise that these hunts are available on a first come, first serve basis. Mr. Leach asked Secretary Landreneau if the Department has procedures for these hunts and Secretary Landreneau assured Mr. Leach we will have these procedures, as we already have similar procedures for lottery hunts. Ms. Smith suggested to Secretary Landreneau that in addition to the procedures, we should define individual hunts and group hunts in these public notices for the public's understanding.

Chairman Linscombe asked whether the Board wanted to discuss the study of the public fishing in the Florence Canal. Chairman Linscombe asked when the study would be performed due to the timeline of February 15 date. The board agreed to a proposal from the Inland Fisheries Division to study the feasibility of opening the Florence Canal for fishing without the need for lottery permit selection. The department must also determine which specific canals branching out from the Florence Canal could possibly be opened to fishing without disturbing the ponds in designated duck hunting areas, and report back to the Board.

Chairman Linscombe requested that Mr. Bo Boehringer, LDWF Press Secretary provide the Advisory Board members the post-meeting release for their review prior to sending it out to the media.

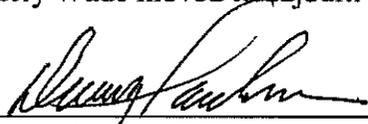
#### **Update on Status of Transition from White Lake Preservation, Inc. to LDWF**

Secretary Landreneau informed the Board that everything is moving along as well as expected. He stated that there is another meeting scheduled the week of June 20; there will be staff from the Department and from White Lake Preservation, Inc. They will videotape and confirm all of the movables at the property and the Department is now in the process of changing addresses, telephone systems, contacts, and other things we have to do under the Division of Administration. He stated the transition should be ready for July 1, 2005 without any problems.

The Advisory Board agreed to hold its next meeting on Tuesday, July 12, 2005 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the LSU Ag Center Rice Research Station in Crowley.

## Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Linscombe asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Beverly Wade moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Richard Hines.



---

Dwight Landreneau  
Secretary

DL:lg