MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF

WHITE LAKE PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Chairman Steve Linscombe opened the White Lake Property Advisory Board meeting and asked Ms. Lana Guidry to call the roll. The following members, and a quorum, were present:

Richard Hines
Sammy Noel
Donald Hale
Dr. Gay Gomez
Cindy Brown
Nathan Granger
Karl Connor (joined meeting already in progress)
Buddy Leach (joined meeting already in progress)

The following members were absent:

Darwin Miller
Annie Smith
Dr. Beverly Wade
Eddie Young

Approval of Minutes of June 3, 2005 Meeting

Chairman Linscombe called for a motion for approval of the minutes of the June 3, 2005 meeting as previously mailed. A motion for approval was made by Mr. Donald Hale and seconded by Mr. Richard Hines. The motion passed with no opposition.

Establishment of Committees and Appointment of Members

Chairman Linscombe reported to the board members that he received a pretty good consensus amongst the members who provided input on the committees for the Board. He stated that based upon the information received, he put together a proposed list of committees and assigned board members to these committees. He said he thinks smaller groups can accomplish more, and in a more orderly fashion. Secretary Landreneau offered the assistance of departmental staff to serve as ex-officio members on each

committee. Mr. Sammy Noel moved to accept committee structure and assignments as proposed by Chairman Linscombe, subject to Secretary Landreneau's offer to assign an ex-officio member from his staff to each committee formed and the motion was seconded by Dr. Gay Gomez.

Mr. Don Puckett recommended to the Board that they include within the motion that these committees be standing committees, which will be a permanent committee that will exist as long as the body exists, or until such time the Board votes to disband that committee. Mr. Puckett also recommended that Chairman Linscombe's handout be included as part of the record. (Attached hereto as Appendix A.)

Mr. Noel accepted the amendment and it was seconded by Dr. Gomez. The motion to establish the committees (set out on Appendix A) with the listed membership passed with no opposition.

Mr. Puckett informed the Board that these committees are public bodies which are subject to the open meetings law, and public notices must be given 24 hours prior to any meetings to the public. Mr. Puckett stated the Committee Chairperson should notify Ms. Guidry once a meeting date has been set to insure that public notices are sent.

Report on Transition from White Lake Preservation, Inc. to LDWF

Secretary Landreneau informed the Board that the transition was complete. He stated that the money that was in the White Lake Preservation, Inc. treasury has been turned over to the state account.

Dr. Gomez asked if the third staff member for the White Lake Property had been hired, and she was informed the position was filled.

Mr. Hale asked if the Advisory Board was ever confirmed by the Senate and Secretary Landreneau informed him that he is awaiting an answer and should know soon. Secretary Landreneau stated that they are an official body and can function as a Board.

Budget Report

Chairman Linscombe asked Ms. Janice Lansing to present the budget report to the Board. Ms. Lansing reported that the budget remained the same with the exception of removal of the seismic income. She provided the Board with a breakdown from the last three years accounting from White Lake Preservation, Inc. accounting records so the Board could compare to the State's budget report. She offered the Board's Finance Committee assistance in providing them with budget reports and other information as often as needed.

Mr. Richard Hines asked why rent for the Lake Charles office was only included on the budget report through October. Ms. Lansing explained that the lease for that office

expires in October and that Mr. Wayne Sweeney will be moving to the LDWF district office located in Lake Charles, LA.

Ms. Cindy Brown inquired why levee repairs were listed more than once on the budget report, and it was explained that some costs are for routine upkeep and the other costs are for major repairs to the levees.

Secretary Landreneau informed the Board that Mr. Sweeney and Mr. Moore have submitted information to Congressman Boustany's office requesting assistance with levee repairs. Mr. Hines recommended that the Department send the same information to Mr. T. Bradley Keith with Senator Landrieu's office also. Mr. Hines stated he has spoken to Mr. Keith who is very interested in seeing that the Board receives help from the Corps of Engineers and possibly from Congress.

Ms. Brown asked if we had a dollar amount for the Intracoastal Canal levee repairs and was informed that approximately $400,000 is needed for immediate repairs.

Secretary Scott Angelle, Department of Natural Resources, informed the Board of the Coastal Wetlands Trust Fund. He stated his Department receives money on an annual basis to run this program which usually matches federal opportunities. He stated there are some situations that can't wait to go through the federal process and he feels that the $400,000 situation is in that category. Secretary Angelle recommended that DWF contact the State Wetlands Conservation Authority for assistance on funding for levee repairs. Secretary Angelle stated he inquired of his staff if it would be permissible for DWF to put forth an application for funds from the Wetlands Fund that would allow levee work along the Intracoastal Canal and he was informed, without going into details, that they felt it would be acceptable as long as the funds are used to benefit wetlands. Mr. Parke Moore stated he would institute these communications between the two Departments.

Mr. Hines asked if the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant had been received, because it was not listed in the projected revenue. Mr. Sweeney stated that money was received last year and spent on 11 miles of levee repairs.

Mr. Hale inquired if the revenues from alligator egg collection will increase or decrease dramatically from year to year and he was informed that egg production may decrease a little due to weather, but Mr. Sweeney thinks we should receive $60,000 to $80,000 this year.

Chairman Linscombe asked the Board how closely they felt they should monitor the budget. Mr. Hines stated that he felt they should definitely make sure the revenues are there. Mr. Hines also stated that he thinks the personnel on the ground should be allowed to do the work and make decisions on a day to day basis, but he believes there will be situations that the Board will need to vote on, for example emergency situations, very larges purchases/expenditures, etc. Mr. Noel stated that the ultimate say-so does not come from the Board; it comes from the Department. He said the Board is only here to

advise, and that the Board should not try to micromanage. Mr. Granger stated he concurs with Mr. Noel. Dr. Gomez stated she felt their purpose is primarily to uphold the conservation purposes and that should be the Board's priority. Dr. Gomez said the property is not their property; it is the State's property and the DWF is responsible for management. She stated that the Board should receive periodic budget statements, but should not micromanage and should let the DWF do their job. Ms. Brown stated she concurs with Dr. Gomez, but said they should look at projected budgets for the next year and realize that soon $450,000 of revenues will not be there.

Formal Naming of Property

Mr. Puckett addressed the Board and asked if it was their pleasure to recommend a name or select the name "White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area" which was recommended by department staff for the White Lake property.

Mr. Hale asked if it would take away the rights or privileges of hunting on the property by having the word "Conservation" in the property's name. Mr. Puckett stated that using the word "Conservation" would not preclude hunting or fishing on the property.

At this time, the Chairman opened the meeting for public comments.

Dr. Jay Huner commented to the Board that he has been involved in environmental tourism for approximately 15 years and people who do not hunt or fish look at something called wildlife refuge or wildlife management area in a different light than they will a conservation area, and by using this unique name it has a very beneficial attribute.

Mr. Noel moved to accept "White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area" as the formal name of the property and the motion was seconded by Mr. Hale. The motion passed with no opposition.

Mr. Puckett informed the Board that the naming of the property will be added to the agenda of the next meeting of the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission for ratification and will ultimately be sent to the Governor's Office for proclamation.

There was a brief discussion among the board members and Secretary Landreneau regarding signage and their locations.

Report on Outstanding Interests Held by BP for White Lake Property

Mr. Moore asked Mr. Sweeney to report the outstanding interests to the Board. Mr. Sweeney stated that BP reserves all mineral rights, subsurface minerals, all pumping units, pipelines, storage tanks, valves, meters, docks, boat facilities, roads, bridges, canals, and all other above or below ground structures that are presently used for their oil and gas operations and for future use. There will be no surface mining on the property. BP, as the owner of all mineral interests, has the right of access to the property to explore and produce minerals on a year round basis, including full and unrestricted access to the

Florence Canal landing area. BP has the right to all navigable waterways, the right to dredge, maintain and use new and existing canals.

Chairman Linscombe asked Mr. Sweeney if there was active exploration on the property and Mr. Sweeney reported that there are three fields BP sold to Hilcorp that have active exploration, but BP does not have any active exploration. Mr. Sweeney stated Hilcorp is presently drilling an exploratory well north of the Intracoastal in the Kaplan field.

Discussion of Study on Public Fishing in Florence Canal

Mr. Bobby Reed presented the Board with a map outlining proposed public fishing areas, as well as a handout containing fisheries recommendations. Mr. Reed stated he and the Inland Fisheries Division staff feel the one immediate need is boating access. He said the small, floating wooden ramp is quite restrictive, and there is considerable distance both east and west before you find a suitable ramp for the public to use to get access to the area. He said this is a need not only for fishermen, but for the entire agency and any other visitors that may like to go to White Lake.

Mr. Reed stated that a study performed in 2002 indicated a very healthy largemouth bass population, which is comparable to what they see on the area federal refuges in southwest Louisiana where cooperative studies are performed. He said they are going to incorporate White Lake into their standardized sampling program within the division, which will enable biologists to measure the effects of sport fishing activities and insure stocks are being properly managed. He said one of the primary recommendations is public fishing in the Florence Canal and adjacent canals (except HQ canal and posted areas around oil production facilities). He said state regulations and state limits shall apply to public fishermen.

Mr. Reed stated that the 100 acre pond is currently infested with aquatic weeds, with the primary noxious weed being hydrilla. He said at this time they recommend no fishing in the area because of the potential spread of hydrilla into the other areas of the property. He stated they have to do something to control hydrilla in the area before recommending fishing, and treatment of hydrilla is estimated at $11,000. Ms. Brown urged the Department to be cautious regarding public access deeper into the marsh due to the potential of exotic growth; she feels the area is as beautiful as it is now because there hasn't been a tremendous amount of access in the area and she believes this is a critical issue. Ms. Brown also asked if the Department felt confident whether they would be able to post certain areas of White Lake and the canals to avoid confusion and the possibility of people getting lost since there is a large amount of access into the marsh. Mr. Moore stated they are not going to encourage any intrusion into those areas. He said there will be some mechanism, whether it is friendly or unfriendly, in place to insure that the public knows not to go into those areas. Dr. Gomez asked the Department to attempt to control the hydrilla by trying to use as little poison as they can since it is a conservation area. Mr. Hale asked if we allowed fishing in and around other rookeries and he was informed that it is permitted. Mr. Hale stated since this area contains a rookery and serves as a nesting facility for the migratory birds coming in and out of White Lake, we should be

concerned opening this area up to a lot of traffic. Mr. Hale also expressed his concerns of implementing a full, open system for public fishing and later determining the system is not as good as we intended. He stated if we allow too much access it will be much harder to reverse that access at a later date. Chairman Linscombe recommended that public fishing be restricted during the migratory bird season. Mr. Reed stated one recommendation was to propose a fishing season from February 15 to October 15 with a fishing closure during the regular duck season. Another option would be to propose a fishing season from February 15 to August 31 which allows a fishing closure during alligator, teal, and the regular duck season.

Mr. Reed informed the Board that it is recommended that the Florence Canal be opened to duly-licensed anglers of all ages on a permit or pass basis, and they are not recommending any commercial fishing on the area at anytime. Mr. Reed stated that at times of outbreaks of rough fishes, the agency, as well as certain public water bodies, do contract with commercial fishermen to remove rough fishes that are in excess, for example alligator gar, buffalo carp, etc.

Mr. Reed stated that other options to consider are outboard motor size, and the need for additional wake zones should be determined. Mr. Hale asked if we would be able to set no-wake zones or is there a restriction in the Donation. Mr. Sweeney stated that there are no-wake zones already set in place that the lottery fishermen have to adhere to and the oil and gas industry have to adhere to also. There have not been any problems regarding the no-wake zones already in effect. Mr. Hines recommended that fishing remain under the lottery/permit system until a boat ramp is built. Chairman Linscombe recommended the Natural Resources Committee study these concerns and discuss with the appropriate departmental staff and return their findings to the Board.

Mr. Hines asked where the funds would come from to construct a boat ramp and parking facility for the public. Secretary Landreneau stated that possible options are the capital outlay process, donations, or Wallop Breaux funds. He stated that it would not happen immediately and the costs would be approximately $85,000 to $375,000.

At this time, the Chairman opened the meeting for public comments.

Mr. Randy Lanctot, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, suggested there be a check-in/out similar to the refuges and WMAs; if feasible limit speed rather than horsepower on boats; and waive lottery permit situation because it would send a good message to the public.

Dr. Jay Huner mentioned the coastal birding trail (not official name of trail) and suggested that the Natural Resources Committee look into what can be done to make the White Lake area a component of the coastal bird trail. Chairman Linscombe agreed and asked the Natural Resource Committee to look into this matter.

Individual/Group Hunt Procedures Update

Mr. Moore informed the Board that the Department is getting close to formalizing documents that will be used for the teal season lottery application process this year. He stated the teal season dates have been set for September 17 – September 25. Mr. Moore also presented the Board with a set of rules and regulations for this lottery hunt. Mr. Moore asked Mr. Brandt Savoie to address the Board regarding the rules and regulations. Mr. Savoie stated that advertisement for the teal lottery hunt will begin on July 25 and applications are due to the Department no later than August 17. He stated the names will be drawn for the lottery by the computer section and the winning applicant's names will be sent to Mr. Sweeney by August 19, and he will notify all winning applicants. Chairman Linscombe asked what the advertising consisted of and he was informed it consists of press releases, newspaper advertisement, and the information will also be on the department's website. Mr. Leach asked if the press releases are sent to all 64 parishes and Mr. Adam Einck, Public Information Section, informed the Board they are sent by email to all 64 parishes and that there are over 220 media recipients. It was stated that it is up to the individual recipients as to whether or not they publish the releases.

Mr. Savoie stated that advertisement for the group hunts will begin August 10 and there is no deadline for applications, as applications will be accepted until all spots are filled. He said the number of hunts will be determined once the season dates are set. Chairman Linscombe asked if the group hunts are all weekend hunts, and he was informed the hunts are also held during the week. Mr. Leach asked if the applicants who receive the hunts are assigned hunting dates, or do they choose the dates. He was informed that the applicants request particular dates and it is a first-come, first-serve basis. Mr. Savoie added that if the date selected is already filled, the applicant can select another date that is available. Mr. Leach asked if the applications are date and time stamped when received by the Department and he was informed that they are stamped with a date and time. Chairman Linscombe inquired about the deposit required for the group hunts and he was informed that they would like to require that the deposit be submitted with the application so the application may be accepted, and all other deposits will be returned to the applicants who are not accepted. Mr. Leach asked what the cost of the group hunts will be and it was stated that the cost is $25,000 for up to twelve hunters, and they receive two morning hunts, lodging, transportation, food and guides.

Mr. Savoie informed the Board that the youth lottery hunts will begin advertising on September 7 and applications will be due September 28 and names selected will be sent to Mr. Sweeney on September 30. Mr. Savoie stated that there will be marsh lottery hunts, as well as lottery hunts in the rice fields that will both begin advertising on September 21 and have an application due date of October 14. Mr. Leach inquired what qualifications were required for the youth hunts. Mr. Savoie stated they must be accompanied by a chaperone, have a license if the hunter is over age 16, a hunter education certification card if over 10 years old. Mr. Savoie stated there was no age limit for last year's hunts. Mr. Sweeney stated that the youngster has to be familiar with a gun and be able to handle a gun. Mr. Leach asked if there were more applications submitted than can be accepted on the hunt, and Mr. Sweeney stated yes. Mr. Sweeney stated that

they accept one child from each regional area of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries seven regions, and one additional child is picked at random. Mr. Leach suggested that a minimal age guideline be set for the youth hunts. Mr. Leach requested a printed set of procedures for the youth hunt be provided at the next meeting. Chairman Linscombe stated that it would be one of the charges of the Natural Resources Committee to work with departmental staff to come up with a good plan for the facility.

At this time, the Chairman opened the meeting for public comments.

Mr. Carl Gremillion asked when the Fish and Wildlife Service would be announcing season dates, and Secretary Landreneau stated that it will be the last part of July or early part of August.

Other Business

Chairman Linscombe asked the Board if it was their preference for the entire Board, or a few individuals, to review and approve press releases related to the Board before they are sent out. Dr. Gomez moved that the Board let the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be responsible for review and approval of press releases. Mr. Connor offered an amendment to the motion that all members still receive the press releases, and they can relate any concerns to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Chairman Linscombe added that Board members should submit their concerns within a 24 hour period of receiving the press release. Dr. Gomez agreed to the amendments. Mr. Granger seconded the motion and the motion passed without opposition.

Chairman Linscombe informed the Board that an additional member will be added to the Advisory Board as per Act No. 106 of the 2005 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. He stated the individual will be appointed by the Governor and a stipulation of the Act is that this member be a resident of Ward 8 of Vermilion Parish (Gueydan area).

Ms. Brown asked the Department if the Management Plan being developed is complete. Mr. Moore stated that it is not yet complete and that staff will be working with the Natural Resources Committee to finish it. Ms. Brown asked if the plan could be ready for the September board meeting and Mr. Moore stated that he was confident it would be complete by then.

The Advisory Board agreed to hold its next meeting on Friday, September 23, 2005 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the LSU Ag Center Rice Research Station in Crowley.

Public Comment

Mr. Randy Lanctot, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, acknowledged how important this Advisory Board is and is excited about the prospect for the White Lake property under management of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Linscombe asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Noel moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Granger.

Dwight Landreneau
Secretary

DL:lg

(The preceding constitute minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting and are not a verbatim transcript of the proceedings.)

APPENDIX A

Proposed Committee Structure for the White Lake Conservation Area Advisory Board

Finance-

Donald Hale- Chair
Karl Conner
Richard Hines
Buddy Leach
Steve Linscombe

Education & Outreach-

Beverly Wade- Chair
Gay Gomez
Nathan Granger
Annie Smith

Natural Resources-

Richard Hines- Chair
Cindy Brown
Donald Hale
Buddy Leach
Darwin Miller

Agriculture-

Sammy Noel- Chair
Steve Linscombe
Eddie Young