

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

**Thursday, July 22, 2010**

Chairman Armond Schwing opened the White Lake Property Advisory Board meeting held at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in Baton Rouge, LA and asked Ms. Lana Guidry to call the roll. The following members were present:

Armond Schwing  
Charles Toups  
Brandan Duhon  
Sean Gayle  
Steve Linscombe  
Karl Connor  
Miriam Davey  
Eddie Lyons  
Sara Simmonds

The following members were absent:

R. Martin Guidry  
Larry Thomas  
Lloyd Suire  
Sherman Wilson

**Approval of Minutes of October 15, 2009 Meeting**

Chairman Schwing called for a motion for approval of the minutes of the October 15, 2009 meeting. Mr. Sean Gayle moved to accept the minutes and Ms. Miriam Davey seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

**Department Financial Report**

Ms. Tammy Calix introduced herself and presented the board members with a financial report as of July 21, 2010. Ms. Calix reported that the expenditures are not yet complete for the fiscal year 2009-2010 and they have a deadline of August 14, 2010 to get this completed. Ms. Calix stated they will have the new budget to present for fiscal year 2010-2011 at the next board meeting.

Ms. Lana Guidry introduced Ms. Lois Azzarello, the Department's newly appointed Undersecretary to the Board.

Dr. Steve Linscombe asked if there was any potential for revenue from alligator egg collection and Mr. Buddy Baker reported there will be revenue from alligator egg collection but it is limited to \$5.50 per egg. Mr. Baker stated that egg production this year was much lower than it has been in the past.

### **Report on Marsh Maneuvers Held at White Lake**

Dr. Steve Linscombe reported to the Board that Mr. Mark Shirley was unable to attend the meeting because he was conducting a marsh maneuvers program. Dr. Linscombe informed the board members that this program was instituted to educate high school students on the value and importance of the coastal areas. Dr. Linscombe stated that approximately three years ago, they instituted a program of having a limited advanced marsh maneuvers program at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area and that this has been held between the split of hunting season. Dr. Linscombe said the program brings in 16 students who participated in the summer marsh maneuvers program. Dr. Linscombe thinks this is a very important program and hopes they can continue the program at White Lake. Ms. Davey reported she has received three thank you notes from students who have participated in the program and she shared the notes with the other board members. Mr. Baker addressed the Board and said the Department is very supportive of the program but one of the challenges they are having is with time and budget. Mr. Baker reported that during the hunting season they are paying out an extreme amount of overtime pay to the staff. Mr. Baker stated that they are trying to decrease some of the overtime pay during the split. Mr. Baker said they would like to see if the marsh maneuvers program could be moved into another time slot in order to continue this program at White Lake. Chairman Schwing stated he feels it is important to try to make this work from a financial side for the Department and an educational experience for the participants. Mr. Baker stated that they are going to do everything they can to keep the marsh maneuvers program alive at White Lake. Mr. Baker said they are not getting rid of the marsh maneuvers, but are trying to figure out where to place it so it can be more beneficial to the Department and also the program. Mr. Baker will begin immediately to work out a strategy with Mr. Shirley to continue this program at White Lake and will report back to the Board at its next meeting.

### **Update on Whooping Crane Re-Introduction**

Mr. Bob Love introduced Ms. Carrie Salyers to the Board. Ms. Salyers stated she is a biologist for the Department and worked here at Headquarters for two years, and last September she and her husband had the opportunity to move to the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge. Mr. Salyers presented a Powerpoint presentation to the Board. Ms. Salyers stated they are proposing to receive eight whooping cranes, which is two more than originally planned. Ms. Salyers said the main thing to point out about this population is that whooping cranes are the most endangered cranes, but the population we plan to get in Louisiana will not be deemed as an Endangered Species. Ms. Salyers stated there is a provision that allows them to designate this population as a non-essential experimental population. Ms. Salyers said this allows them to bring the birds in to try this population, but at the same time it relaxes the provision of the Endangered Species Act. Ms. Salyers

stated that on the reverse side, these are migratory birds and they will be covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, so if someone intentionally shoots a whooping crane, they will certainly be held responsible under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Ms. Salyers reported that they are proposing to do their first release out at White Lake; more particularly they are looking at the refuge area. Mr. Salyers stated she just recently applied for a Wildlife Conservation Society Grant in the amount of \$156,000. Ms. Salyers said there were 200 applicants and that she made the cut down to 50 and by September they will let her know if she is one of the chosen 18. Ms. Salyers reported the final green flag they are waiting on is the Federal Register and they plan for that to be published by the end of August. Ms. Salyers stated they hope to have the Final Rule published in October or November because they do plan to release the birds in February 2011.

Mr. Bob Love addressed the Board and said they have had some delays in getting the federal permits and he hopes by sometime next month he will have the draft Federal Rule, and that will trigger two public hearings, the first of which will be in Gueydan and the second of which will be in the Louisiana Room at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Mr. Love stated they have begun private fundraising in order to undertake this new initiative, which is large and complicated. Mr. Love said Mr. Paul Dickson of Shreveport has agreed to be our private fundraiser and Ms. Sara Simmonds has agreed to assist him with that. Mr. Love stated that Mr. Dickson made a substantial donation in the amount of \$50,000 and that Ms. Simmonds has stepped up and made a second very large personal contribution. Mr. Love asked the Board to recognize them. Ms. Simmonds addressed the Board and said she is so excited about this project. Ms. Simmonds commended Mr. Love and his staff for their dedication, hard work, and loyalty to this project and that they deserve a lot of thanks and appreciation. Ms. Simmonds stated that she and Mr. Dickson feel that they can raise the money and they will raise the money. Ms. Simmonds reported they plan to do this on a three year basis. Ms. Simmonds stated that approximately \$450,000 is needed for three years; she said that approximately \$155,000 is needed for the first year and they now have approximately \$75,000 in private funds to begin with and they need approximately \$80,000 more. Ms. Simmonds said she would love to talk about fundraising with anyone who may be interested after the meeting. Mr. Love introduced Mr. Kell McInnis, Director of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation to the Board and Mr. McInnis stated he has agreed to help house the private donations for this project. Mr. McInnis addressed the Board and stated the Foundation was created in 1995. Mr. McInnis stated the Foundation has agreed to waive their administrative fee for this project. Mr. McInnis said the administrative fee is ten percent of the amount they will work with to do this project. Mr. McInnis stated the Foundation will hold funds, whatever interest the funds may earn, and he said every dollar that comes in for this project will be spent only for that purpose.

Dr. Gay Gomez, former White Lake Property Advisory Board member, addressed the Board and commended the Department and Board for their hard work on the whooping crane project. Dr. Gomez also commented that she feels it is very important for the people involved in this project to attend the North American Crane Workshop to be held

in March 2011 and to be prepared to make presentations because it is a real important event.

Mr. Randy Lanctot of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation addressed the Board and wanted to say how proud they are about getting the management of this area under the State and of the Advisory Board. Mr. Lanctot asked when this will become official and Mr. Love stated that this will become official when the Final Rule in the Federal Register comes out, which we anticipate to be this fall.

### **Status of Agricultural and Hunting Leases**

Mr. Baker addressed the Board and informed them that almost all of the agricultural leases will be expiring in a year and a half and the hunting leases will expire in one year. Mr. Baker reported there is one exception and that was the agricultural lease that was bid out this past year. Mr. Baker reported that his staff has determined that it is in White Lake's best interest to try to combine the hunting and agricultural leases, but both of the leases are dependent on watering or de-watering and we have to try to negotiate between the two leaseholders and what we want to do is turn this over to one leaseholder and they can decide how it is hunted, what road they drive on, etc. Mr. Baker said they are moving forward to try and combine those leases. Mr. Baker said what they have done at this point is they sent a letter out in the last few weeks to just notify all of the hunting and agricultural leaseholders to remind them their leases are coming due in the next year or 18 months, whichever the case, so they can decide if they would like to continue to hunt or farm, and therefore prepare a bid along with the rest of the public, and to remind them it is not an automatic guarantee of continuation. Mr. Baker stated they indicated in the letter that all of them have been good stewards of the property and that we certainly hope they will participate in the bid process. Mr. Baker said that the current hunting and agricultural leaseholders are starting to work together to develop some partnerships to keep their leases. Mr. Baker stated that the Department is also receiving calls from the public who would like to bid on the leases. Mr. Baker said that the Department needs to be cautious because they do not want to maximize revenue at the expense of getting poor stewards of the land. Mr. Baker said that they are in the process right now to try to identify all of the variables the Department would like to see on the lease to ensure that we keep good stewardship on the property. Mr. Gayle inquired if what type lease did the new leaseholder have and Mr. Baker reported the new leaseholder has both agricultural and hunting leases. Mr. Toups asked how long will the leases be and Mr. Baker reported they are working with the State Land Office to determine what legally can be done and what is practical and Mr. Baker said they will probably be five year or ten year leases. Mr. Baker stated it is real important to get the leases right and to have clauses put in the leases to terminate the lease if we do not have good stewards on the property.

### **Ongoing and Potential Research Discussion**

Dr. Eddie Lyons asked the Board what they feel like should be the Board's role in any upcoming or new potential research opportunities. Dr. Lyons stated that research costs money and funding and inquired if the White Lake budget could somewhat play a role in

and on top of that, how would it be disseminated. Mr. Gayle said that when this committee was organized, he thought this was going to be research projects that were going to be performed by outside funding and the property would be used as a resource. Chairman Schwing stated he had the minutes from that meeting and it appears what the intent was to form a research committee in terms of research that might be able to be performed on the property relative to wildlife, fisheries, agricultural, etc. because it is such a large area and good area for study. Chairman Schwing said he thinks as he understood it at that time, we were going to form a research committee to entertain proposals for research to be done by outside entities. Chairman Schwing stated he did not believe that the Board would be getting into any research themselves or funding any research to be done. Chairman Schwing said it was more of a way to generate more use of the property and possibly generate some revenue as well from that use. Dr. Lyons said he is going to try to get a committee meeting set up to identify and prioritize research that the Board feels best suits the property and is needed on the property. Chairman Schwing suggested Dr. Lyons get a committee together for a meeting. Chairman Schwing reported that Mr. Marty Guidry is on the committee and the only other person who was on that committee was Mr. Guy Boudreaux who is no longer a member of the Board. Chairman Schwing stated that he would be happy to appoint anyone on the Board who is interested in serving on that committee. Chairman Schwing appointed Ms. Simmonds to the research committee.

#### **Consider a Proposal by Armond Schwing to Amend the White Lake Property Advisory Board Bylaws to Deal with Absentee Board Members**

Chairman Schwing informed the Board that he feels it is the responsibility of the Chairman to gather the Board together, with a quorum, to actually take action on certain items. Chairman Schwing stated it is difficult and if you look back the Board has not met since last October and we also had some challenges with the spending freeze for the Department with staff being able to travel. Chairman Schwing said that one thing the Board has dealt with over time is being able to get a quorum and having good participation from its members. Chairman Schwing said he thought maybe they could come up with a solution to deal with this problem. Chairman Schwing said he talked to Mr. Don Puckett and asked him his opinion on an amendment to the Bylaws, which would spell out attendance requirements, and if those requirements were not met it would make it incumbent upon the Chairman to notify the Governor's Office that we have an absentee board member and ask for that board member to be replaced. Chairman Schwing said this would apply to him, as well as everyone else here today and all those that are not here today. Chairman Schwing said he did not want this to seem personal for anyone so that is why he wants to put it in this manner, but he would like to see the Board get to the point where the Board consists of members who want to be here. Chairman Schwing understands that everyone cannot attend each meeting, but this is relative to the habitual absentee members. Mr. Puckett addressed the Board and stated the Bylaws can be amended to make attendance a requisite for membership on the Board and put a trigger in the Bylaws to essentially allow the Chairman to contact the Governor's Office of Board and Commissions to recommend removing and replacing a board member for absenteeism. Mr. Puckett said the Board must come up with a consensus of how many

consecutive meetings a member may miss before being recommended for removal, i.e. three consecutive meetings; three out of four meetings, etc. Mr. Puckett stated if the Board can come up with a consensus today, he could draft an amendment to the Bylaws and put that on the next meeting agenda. Mr. Puckett said a second item could also be put on the agenda assuming that the Bylaws are amended to actually authorize the Chairman to contact the Governor's Office that day. Mr. Puckett stated he would recommend two items for the next meeting agenda. Mr. Connor addressed the Board and said he agrees with the spirit of what is trying to be done, but for the BP appointees it is a problem because obviously, the second person is generally someone from the Houston office and who has a lot more responsibility than he does. Mr. Connor said for that appointee to attend is often going to be an issue. Mr. Connor stated he would just simply ask that if they can come up with an amendment, that be considered. Mr. Connor said that biggest benefit to that person being on the Board is they have direct access to someone with the budget. Dr. Linscombe moved to have Mr. Puckett draft an amendment to the Bylaws that any board member who misses three consecutive meetings, excluding the BP representatives, the Chairman has the option to use his best judgment for recommending removal and replacement. Mr. Gayle moved to amend the motion to reduce the number to two consecutive meetings. Ms. Simmonds seconded the amendment. The motion and amendment passed with no opposition.

### **Consider a Resolution Pertaining to the White Lake Fund**

Mr. Gayle provided the Board with a copy of the White Lake Property Fund law and he stated the law specifically talks about special funds for Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation Fund, called the White Lake Property Fund (hereinafter "the Fund"). Mr. Gayle reported that there has been issues and it happens on all different earmarked funds, but members of the Legislature tend to in slim times, will scout around for additional monies that may be available. Mr. Gayle stated that the Department has been wonderful in terms of protecting the Fund that has been set aside for the operations of the White Lake Property. Mr. Gayle moved to propose a Resolution commending the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Louisiana Legislature, that since the inception of the White Lake Property Fund, no monies have been used for any other purposes other than stated by this law, be it further resolved that the Board encourages the Department and the Legislature to continue this practice so the White Lake Property Fund remains totally dedicated to the purposes stated in this law. Mr. Connor seconded the motion and motion passed with no opposition.

### **Other Business**

Ms. Davey inquired about the progress of the birding trail. Mr. Baker reported that since the spending freeze has been lifted, work has started back up on the birding trail. Mr. Baker said the heavy equipment operators will be performing bridge work, observation tower, and reconstruct some levies that were disturbed from some rain and that he and Ms. Salyers are working on a kiosk. Ms. Davey asked if it would be open by the spring migration and Mr. Baker reported that he certainly hopes so. Mr. Gayle asked if there

were any plans on advertising the birding trail when it becomes available and Mr. Baker said it will be posted on the website.

Chairman Schwing reported the next proposed meeting date is Thursday, October 14, 2010 and will take place at the White Lake Property.

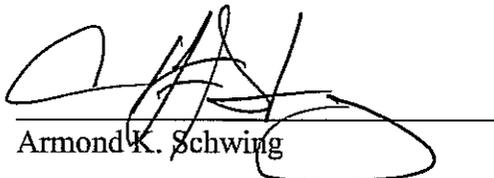
### **Public Comment**

Dr. Gomez asked the Board how things are going with the Education Center and Chairman Schwing reported that the birding trail is part of the education and outreach program. Chairman Schwing stated that everything will have to take place in phases, and as funding permits.

Mr. Lanctot asked about the current legislation regarding the land swap between White Lake and the Vermilion Parish School Board and Mr. Love stated there was already legislation in place to allow for a land swap; however, the most recent legislation added another section of land. Mr. Love reported that this new legislation expanded the land swap to make it better for both parties. Mr. Love said once the election in October is done, he plans to meet with the Vermilion Parish School Board regarding this land swap.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairman Schwing asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Gayle moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Connor.



Armond K. Schwing

AKS:lg

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