MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF

WHITE LAKE PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Chairman Steve Linscombe opened the White Lake Property Advisory Board meeting held at the LSU Ag Center Rice Research Station in Crowley, LA and asked Ms. Lana Guidry to call the roll. The following members were present:

Steve Linscombe
Armond Schwing
Brandan Duhon
Charles Toups
Sean Gayle
R. Martin Guidry
Guy Boudreaux
Lloyd Suire
Sherman Wilson
Miriam Davey
Eddie Lyons

The following members were absent:

Karl Connor
Larry Thomas

Chairman Linscombe asked the approval of the Board to move "Election of Officers" to the next agenda item. There was no opposition so the agenda item was moved.

Election of Officers

Chairman Linscombe addressed the Board and asked for nominations for Chairman.

Mr. Sean Gayle nominated Mr. Armond Schwing for Chairman and Mr. Schwing was declared Chairman by acclimation.

Chairman Linscombe asked the Board for nominations for Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Brandan Duhon nominated Mr. Charles Toups for Vice-Chairman and Mr. Toups was declared Vice-Chairman by acclimation.

Chairman Linscombe asked the Board for nominations for Secretary.

Mr. Armond Schwing nominated Mr. Brandan Duhon for Secretary and Mr. Duhon was declared Secretary by acclimation.

Chairman Linscombe asked the Board for nominations for Treasurer.

Mr. Marty Guidry nominated Mr. Sean Gayle for Treasurer and Mr. Gayle was declared Treasurer by acclimation.

Ethics Financial Disclosure

Ms. Courtney Jackson, an attorney with the Louisiana Board of Ethics, addressed the Board regarding the financial disclosure requirements. Ms. Jackson informed the Board that they fall under Tier 2.1 and the reports are due no later than May 15, 2009. Ms. Jackson explained that there is no mechanism for electronic filing at this time, so board members have two options. One is to either mail the completed forms or fax the forms to the Board of Ethics. She stated the address and fax number are located on the forms. She suggests if you fax the form to also mail in a hard copy to be sure that the form is received or to call and make certain it was received. Ms. Jackson said they must be postmarked by May 15, 2009 and they do not require the forms be sent by certify mail. However, she recommends certify mail so you will have a record of it being mailed. Ms. Jackson informed the board members that the information does not have to be disclosed only by the board member, but for their spouse as well. Ms. Jackson stated that if a member serves on a number of boards, they must file a financial disclosure for each board. She said even if the different boards fall under the same Tier and the same information will be provided, a financial disclosure form must be filed for each board they serve. Ms. Jackson went over all of the questions on the different forms that must be submitted for Tier 2.1. Ms. Jackson entertained and answered all questions by the board members.

A board member asked the question as to whether or not a member of the White Lake Property Advisory Board can bid on work with the Department on other property, i.e. Rockefeller Refuge, just as long as it was not on the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area and Ms. Jackson suggested getting a formal ethics advisory opinion from the Louisiana Board of Ethics as to whether this poses a conflict or if it is permitted. Mr. Don Puckett will be submitting a letter for a formal ethics advisory opinion on this matter.

It was requested that Ms. Guidry send out a reminder email on May 1, 2009 to all board members of the May 15, 2009 deadline date for submitting their financial disclosure information.

Approval of Minutes of October 14, 2008 Meeting

Chairman Linscombe called for a motion for approval of the minutes of the October 14, 2008 meeting. A motion for approval was made by Mr. Gayle and seconded by Mr. Guidry. The motion passed with no opposition.

Department Financial Report

Board members were provided a copy of the financial report. Mr. Wayne Sweeney addressed the Board and discussed the remaining budget and the expenditures. Chairman Linscombe requested Mr. Sweeney briefly go through and explain the various income sources to the new board members. Mr. Sweeney stated that the hunt trip fees are fees that are charged for group hunts. He informed them that we have been charging $25,000 for a two day group hunt activity which is a completely outfitted hunt and that 14 group hunts were sold during this past waterfowl season. Mr. Sweeney reported to them that the Board approved to increase that fee to $30,000 which was approved so that is what will be charged next season.

Mr. Sweeney reported there are five agricultural leases on the property that generate roughly $200,000 annually. He explained that we bill half of the lease payment in March and the other half of the lease payment in November. Mr. Sweeney stated that the farmers are waiting to see what happens with the saltwater from the levees that are still broken as to whether or not they will plant rice. He said they have all applied for the insurance. Mr. Sweeney stated that Kenneth and Kim who lease the farm on the south side of the Intracoastal have indicated they are going to plant 500 – 600 acres. Mr. Sweeney said he spoke to Glen Ray this morning regarding whether he was going to plant and he indicated it depends on the water situation. Mr. Sweeney reported that Kersey and Larry said the same thing. Mr. Sweeney reported the lease east of the Florence Canal is currently up for bid and advertisements were placed this past Sunday. He stated that bids will be accepted through the end of this month and the bid opening is April 28. Mr. Sweeney said the minimum bid for this lease is $50,000 and it does include hunting rights. Mr. Sweeney stated this lease contains approximately 2,800 acres, which includes the east side marsh and the lessee will be able to put up blinds in that marsh.

Mr. Sweeney reported that the property contains 23 hunting leases which generate approximately $100,000 in revenue. Mr. Sweeney stated that the alligator egg collection was recently bid out, but no bids were received. He reported there was a minimum bid price of $18 per egg. Mr. Sweeney said he believes the alligator farmers have been asked by the hide buyers/tanners not to collect the eggs this year because there is an oversupply of alligators. Mr. Sweeney stated a decision will have to be made as to whether or not we will lower the minimum bid and re-bid the egg collection, but he feels even if that occurs the State will still probably not receive any bids. Mr. Sweeney reported this will more than likely cause $120,000 - $150,000 of revenues to be lost. Chairman Linscombe stated from what he has been hearing, he doesn't believe any bids will be submitted either.

Mr. Sweeney explained that the lottery hunt fees are the fees charged for the rice field and marsh hunts. He stated it is just a minimum fee to recoup our costs and is roughly $40,000 annually. He reported that there were 23 rice field hunts and 8 marsh lottery hunts this past hunting season. Mr. Sweeney informed them the fees for these hunts will be increased by $25 per hunt beginning next hunting season.

Mr. Sweeney explained that there was no income received from crawfish last year but he believes some will be received this year, but feels it will be a minimal amount.

Mr. Sweeney stated that the surface leases are oil and gas leases.

Mr. Sweeney reported that White Lake receives income from the fishing lottery, which is currently accepting applications. He reported that last year 100 permits were issued at a fee of $30 each.

Ms. Davey moved to recommend to the Department that White Lake be exempt from the five percent (5%) mandatory state budget cuts. Mr. Gayle seconded the motion and the motion passed with no opposition.

Introduction of New Board Members

Dr. Eddie Lyons introduced himself and stated he is originally from San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Lyons works at McNeese State University as a Professor of wildlife management in the Department of Agriculture. Dr. Lyons said he has been married for five years and has two boys ages 4 and 2. Dr. Lyons stated he currently lives in Lake Charles. Dr. Lyons represents the University of Louisiana Board of Supervisors System and is honored to be selected to serve on this Board.

Mr. Sherman Wilson introduced himself and stated he is a resident of Crowley. Mr. Wilson served as a high school principal and currently works for the Acadia Parish School Board and has for some 30+ years. Mr. Wilson said he now works as the Federal Programs Supervisor. Mr. Wilson stated he served on the Crowley City Council. Mr. Wilson said he represents the Southern University Board of Supervisors System and looks forward to working with this Board.

Mr. Guy Boudreaux introduced himself and said he was born and raised in Abbeville and currently lives in Lafayette. Mr. Boudreaux stated he is married and has three children. Mr. Boudreaux is the President of Broussard Brothers, Inc. Mr. Boudreaux stated they did a lot of work at White Lake when it was owned by BP Amoco so he is very familiar with the property. Mr. Boudreaux said he is honored to serve on this Board.

Mr. Lloyd Suire introduced himself and stated he was born and raised in Gueydan and he is the owner/operator of B & S Fliers, which is a crop dusting service. Mr. Suire said he represents the Vermilion Parish School Board. Mr. Suire stated he worked at the White Lake Club for five years as a guide and has flown over the area and sprayed trails at White Lake for BP Amoco. Mr. Suire said he also works for some of the farmers who lease property at White Lake. Mr. Suire said he is familiar with the property and is happy to be serving on the Board.

At this time, Chairman Linscombe had to leave the meeting and Chairman-Elect Schwing presided.

<u>Committee Reports</u>

Finance Committee

There was no report from the finance committee.

Education and Outreach Committee

Mr. Gayle reported that the Education and Outreach Committee met after the Ethics Training. Mr. Gayle said the Committee discussed a birding trail. Mr. Gayle moved to request a birding trail be put in place on the property where Mr. Sweeney suggested, which is around 20 acres at the northwest corner, along with a parking facility. Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and the motion passed with no opposition.

Mr. Gayle also reported discussing education and stated that they had been successful in the past with the previous Board in having representatives from various schools in Acadia and Vermilion Parishes come down and visit the property. Mr. Gayle stated the Committee would like to see that plan expanded for the relative area.

Natural Resources Committee

There was no report from the Natural Resources Committee.

Agriculture Committee

There was no report from the Agriculture Committee.

Recommendation of Land Purchase from the Vermilion Parish School Board

Mr. Love addressed the Board and reported that the Legislature approved a statute last year which specific legislation authorized a land swap between the Vermilion Parish School Board and the Department for two parcels both being in the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area. This would likely result in the Vermilion Parish School Board owing the State money to make up the difference in value. The next step in that process is to obtain an appraisal. Mr. Love recommended pursuing the appraisal and the purchase of additional property, also within the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area as well. He said this would also require approval of the Vermilion Parish School Board, as well as legislative approval in that order. This may result in owing the Vermilion Parish School Board some money, but it would be better than continuing to lease the property which we are currently doing. Mr. Guidry moved to request the Department pursue obtaining appraisals, Vermilion Parish School Board approval and legislative authority for this land acquisition and bring the findings back to the Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toups and it passed with no opposition.

Site Visit by Governor's Office

Ms. Guidry reported to the Board that she has been in contact with Enger Kinchen of the Governor's Office and was informed that the Governor would not be able to attend this visit; however, Mr. Garrett Graves who is with the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities would represent the Governor's Office at this visit. Ms. Guidry informed the Board that she notified

Dr. Linscombe of this to see if the Board wished to invite him to the property when we had our next board meeting there, but Dr. Linscombe stated he would rather have them come to the property on a separate visit. Ms. Guidry stated that Mr. Sweeney has been working with J.W. Wiley of the Senate trying to arrange for the Senate Natural Resource Committee to hold a meeting at White Lake. Ms. Guidry informed the Board that it was suggested to try and schedule the site visit and committee meeting in conjunction with one another.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The next regular Advisory Board meeting will be held at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area and will be scheduled at a later date.

Adjournment

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

Robert J. Barham

RJB:lg

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