



**SPARTA GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
July 12, 2007

The Sparta Groundwater Conservation District met on July 12, 2007 at 3:00 P.M in the Union Parish Courthouse Annex, Police Jury Meeting Room, 303 E. Water Street, Farmerville, LA 71241.

**Commission Members Present:** Herbert Byars, Mack Calhoun, Edward Dayton, Don Essmeier, Samuel P. Little, Dan Morgan, Billy Don Perritt, Jackie Perritt, Bobby E. Price, Alice Stewart, John Van Bennett, and Dennis E. Woodward.

**Commission Members Absent:** Sellers Aycock, Kim Brantley, Gary Carlisle, Gene Coleman, Todd Culpepper, Olevia McDonald, and George W. Rolfe, Jr.

Vice-Chairman Jackie Perritt called the meeting to order. She then recognized legislators in attendance – Jean Doerge, Hollis Downs, Rick Gallot, and Michael Walsworth.

John Van Bennett gave the invocation. Dan Morgan led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

**Agenda Approval**

It was moved by Dennis Woodward seconded by Dan Morgan to approve the agenda (**Attachment I**). The motion was approved unanimously.

**Welcome – Jackie Perritt invited legislators and agency representatives to speak.**

Rep. Downs: 1) La. legislature increased LSU AgCenter funding.

2) LSU AgCenter Allen Nipper (in attendance) outlined ‘Sparta Education Promotion’ and described development of an AgCenter-funded, North Central La. staff position dedicated largely to Sparta issues. Rep. Downs distributed copies of Dr. Nipper’s report (**Attachment-Other**);

2) Strides have been made by water systems in volunteer conservation and leak reduction, with Dubach earning state honors.

3) The legislature voted to help fund a reservoir to take La Tech off the Sparta.

4) Rep. Fannin secured funds for a study of a possible reservoir near Stone Container designed to reduce the industry’s Sparta use.

5) Commissioners are advised to meet in work sessions with small groups of legislators to hash out requests for funding and to provide greater detail than has been provided in the past.

Reps. Gallot and Walsworth: 1) La. Legislature HB 944 (Gallot and Walsworth chief authors)

provides for a state sales and use tax exemption for certain water conservation equipment in the Sparta District; - will impact approx. 55 industrial users; – Sparta Commission to determine equipment that qualifies (must document that equipment reduces water consumption by  $\geq 25\%$ ), then to Sec. of DNR and Rev. Dept.; – aggregate total exemptions: \$1million; – 3 year program.

2) Both regretted failure to secure funds for the Sparta District. They recommended the Commission be more specific in requesting funds, meet with gubernatorial candidates, and offer regional funds (including contributions from each parish, totaling e.g. \$25,000) to match state funds.

Rep. Doerge: reported that continuing Sparta aquifer work is needed. Wells are going dry, at great public expense and inconvenience, even in Webster Parish, which is in the recharge area. Tony Duplechin, DNR Office of Conservation Ground Water Resources Div. (GWRD): 1) GWRD appreciates incentives legislation and is working on implementation; 2) HCR No. 79, Rep. Farrar chief sponsor, requests the commissioner of conservation to request ('require' was rejected as inconsistent with other legislation) public water systems to conduct periodic water loss audits. The La. Water Association will follow up. 3) Answers to questions (e.g. GWRD does not know number of wells metered and non-metered) led to discussion of need for more "teeth" in laws and a possible fee to help reform, e.g., Webster's 35 Sparta-using water systems. Ben Magee: USGS continues to monitor Sparta water level and water quality; will soon issue an update of all data, including of 23 recently sampled wells; resampling is due in Sep.; Louisiana's Sparta continues to decline a fraction of a foot to four feet per year, except near the Ark. line.

### **Minutes**

Sam Little moved, seconded by Bobby Price, that the minutes of the June 14, 2007 meeting be approved.

Alice Stewart moved, seconded by Dennis Woodward, that the resolution approved at the June 14 meeting and referred to in the June 14 minutes be corrected, replacing the word 'CRITICAL' with the technically correct phrase 'areas of groundwater concern.'

Both motions were approved unanimously. Remarks were made to the effect that 'CRITICAL' is the more important word.

### **Treasurer Report**

A Treasurer report was given by Dennis Woodward. A copy of the financial statement presented to the commission is attached. (**Attachment II**).

It was moved by Dan Morgan and seconded by John Van Bennett to accept the Treasurer report. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Committee Reports** The following committees made reports:

#### Public Relations/Education (Attachment III)

Jackie Perritt stated that the committee, which met with the Long Term Planning Committee on June 22, discussed the need for each Commissioner to promote Sparta awareness in his area; received from Dennis Woodward information on model water saving programs; and was in agreement with the Long Term Planning Committee's proposed goal. At Jackie Perritt's request, Dennis Woodward reported that Trailblazer was awarded a NRCS RC&D grant of \$18,500 to augment a \$7000 Entergy grant to be used for Sparta Aquifer education and conservation. He invited a volunteer from each parish to work with Trailblazers to develop a program.

#### Long Term Planning. (Attachment IV)

Alice Stewart moved that the Sparta Commission adopt the goal for the coming year: to establish dependable, consistent funding for a program similar to that of specific other aquifer conservation programs, a goal developed by the Long Term Planning Committee at a joint meeting with the PR/Education Committee on June 22. Herb Byars seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### Legislative

John Van Bennett stated that he would report under 'Other Business,' next on the agenda.

### **Other Business**

Alice Stewart related that Mr. Coleman, as chairman of the Sparta Commission, had received notification from Mr. Laborde of Continental Drilling that the drilling company, working with Martin Gas, proposes to drill wells to use several million gallons a day of Sparta water for approximately 11 months to prepare Arcadia area salt domes for storage of natural gas. Ben Magee and Tony Duplechin reported that they were in consultation with each other and Mr. Laborde on this matter. They are gathering information. They stated that the company will need to work with Mr. Magee to demonstrate that the proposed new water use will not have a detrimental effect on current use. At this point in their knowledge, they believe that at least some part of the proposed project might be allowable, if there is assurance it can be conducted properly. The GWRD implements orders of the Commissioner of Conservation, who controls permitting. Rick Hohlt, Ruston Leader, expressed concern that a precedent would be established that might be hard to stop. Legislators Hollis Downs and Michael Walsworth urged moving slowly in this matter, making no decisions until the matter is given more thought and study.

John Van Bennett presented a proposed resolution (**Attachment V**) requesting the Governor to sign HB944, discussed earlier in these minutes. He moved that the Commission adopt this resolution and that the resolution be sent as soon as possible to the governor. Dennis Woodward seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

### **Presentation**

Dennis Woodward introduced Barry Royals, with Waggoner Engineers. Mr. Royals reported on the Lake D'Arbonne study, which is designed to evaluate the potential quality and quantity of water available for treatment to potable water standards. La Tech's Dr. Dixie Griffin is participating in the study. Preliminary observations: no herbicides and pesticides have been detected on a long list of chemicals; phosphorous and nitrogen compounds, excessive levels of which can seriously lower oxygen levels in a lake, impairing important forms aquatic life, are in Lake D'Arbonne at acceptable, even desirable, levels.

### **Commissioner Comments**

Dennis Woodward moved, and Mack Calhoun seconded the motion, to invite gubernatorial candidate Bobby Jindal to speak at the next meeting, which will be held in Jonesboro. Mack Calhoun will invite Mr. Jindal and arrange a date and time -- Aug. 9 at 3 pm, if possible.

### **Public Comments**

A citizen objected to an earlier decision to avoid the word 'critical,' noting that use of this word spurred Arkansas to action. Dennis Woodward explained that this was a legislative decision.

There being no further comments or business, Bobby Price moved that the meeting be adjourned, Dennis Woodward seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

  
**Jackie Perritt, Vice-Chairman**

Alice Stewart

---

Alice Stewart, Assistant Secretary