

## Minutes of the Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Commission meeting on Oct. 21, 2010

The Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Commission met on October 21, 2010 at 3:00 PM in the Claiborne Parish Police Jury Building, 507 W. Main, Homer LA 71040.

**Commission Members Present:** Calhoun, Lowery, Doherty, Emory, McDonald, Billy Perritt, Stewart, Hohlt, Smith, Braddock (left before adjournment). Among Attendees: Gary Hanson and Ben McGee [ex-officio members]; Lindsay Gouedy [conservation educator], Rep. Rick Gallot, Michael Jackson [Sen. Landrieu's office], John Adams and Jeffrey Jones [DNR Office of Conservation, 'Conservation'], Olivia Ward [Trailblazers], Rick Bryan [Audubon Society], Joe Stevens and Phillip Lane [former Sparta Commissioners-LaSalle and Caddo respectively]. **Commission Members Absent:** Culpepper, Van Bennett, McKinney, Jackie Perritt, Morgan, Rep. Little, Lemmons. (*Attachment 2*)

### Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Agenda Approval

The meeting was officially called to order by Vice Chairman Calhoun. McDonald gave the invocation; Billy Perritt led in the pledge of allegiance. Hohlt moved to approve the agenda (*Attachment 1*); McDonald seconded; all approved.

### Wecomes:

- Rep. Rick Gallot praised attendees for their concern about Louisiana's future and its water supply. He presented Gene Coleman a certificate awarded by Governor Jindal for contributions to the conservation and management of the Sparta Aquifer. He encouraged a vote for Amendment 2, returning more natural resource severance tax revenue to parishes;
- Homer Councilwoman Patricia Jenkins presented a check for \$1500, on behalf of Mayor Smith and the Town Council;
- Michael Jackson introduced himself representing Senator Landrieu's office;
- Claiborne Parish Police Juror Roy Mardis welcomed attendees to Claiborne Parish;
- DNR Office of Conserv. Envir. Div. ('Conservation') attorney John Adams & Asst. Dir. Jeffrey Jones introduced themselves;
- Olivia Ward, representing Trailblazers, said that she had appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Lincoln Waterfest;
- Claiborne Parish Police Jury Sec.-Treas. Dwayne Woodard presented a check for \$3000 on behalf of the Police Jury; Calhoun urged commissioners to ask their nominating bodies to budget a contribution, as West Monroe and a few others have;

Lowery moved that the Commission follow Claiborne Parish Police Jury in adopting a resolution supporting Constitutional Amendment 2 in the Nov. 2 election. McDonald seconded; all agreed. (*Attachment 3*)

### Public Comments

Calhoun invited public comments. None were made at this time.

### Minutes and Treasurer Report

Perritt moved to approved minutes of the Commission's July 15 meeting as distributed before the meeting. Lowery seconded; the motion carried by unanimous vote. Perritt distributed and discussed the financial report-Summary Balance and Profit and Loss as of October, 2010. (*Attachment 4*) Hohlt moved to accept the report; McDonald seconded; all agreed.

### Committee Reports

Administrative Committee. McDonald reported no current issues.

Long term Planning Committee (LTP) (Stewart). (*Attachment 5*) LTP met Sept. 16 in LA Tech's Reese Hall. Three documents were developed, all distributed by email prior to this meeting, with copies provided at this meeting:

- *Commission's End Year Report.* Stewart read excerpts. Lowery moved to accept the report; Hohlt seconded; all agreed.
- *Resolution to Ground Water Resources Commission (GWRC), Lt. Gov. Angelle, Acting DNR Sec. Harper, and Commissioner of Conservation Welsh, requesting specific measures to support Sparta Commission's conservation efforts.* Discussion ensued. Perritt & Stewart expressed frustration that pertinent state information is not shared with the Commission in a timely manner. Perritt, joined by others, emphasized need for more effort into seeing that surface water is used in place of groundwater when feasible. McDonald recommended state measures that will help assure that all large volume Sparta users undertake conservation measures similar to those of Smurfit Stone Container, Graphic Packaging-West Monroe, and others. Calhoun reported concerns about poor response by the Governor to a committee's plea for support of a surface water supply alternative. Doherty expressed alarm at AGS' withdrawal of 1½ million gallons *a day* of Sparta water; customers of his water system use 1 million gallons *a month* and must pay double to treat water the quality of which has declined, largely because of large volume Sparta use elsewhere. He said his customers were accustomed to drawing good quality water but now must share the cost of carbon filtering, "a financial drain on people who can least afford it." *'Conservation's' Adams and Jones provided information in response to questions and comments:*
- Agency has no authority to turn down a well request but, with justification, may recommend voluntary measures, may decide spacing, and, in areas of ground-water concern, requires monthly volume reporting and may place volume restrictions;
- Since May 2008, upon application for a new well, change in status of a well, or observation of an unexpected consequence of pumping, agency conducts a four page check list of each issue related to aquifer sustainability and impact on nearby wells (what Jones said, in response to a question, may be called 'an environmental assessment').
- Re AGS well #3 (Jones distributed a map of well's 8 mile radius-*Attachment 6*): a) in 2008, agency conducted the checklist and found that the well complies with guidelines that are within the agency's authority to enforce; b) AGS was asked to update notification forms-AGS reported reduction in requirements for water of ½ mgd for 2 yrs. If AGS requires additional volume, agency needs to know; c) agency with USGS will be investigating a drop of 8 feet in 18 months in the water level in Bi-144 (100 ft. from Alabama

System supply well)- water levels are stable in Li-113 to the east and, it appears, Bi-166 to the southeast; Bi-144, Bi-166, and five producing of 8 Arcadia wells are being further evaluated; d) agency must charge for assessment documents- to answer questions, LTP, will request agency documents related to assessment of the AGS program.

*Other Comments:* In response to request for AGS's Economic Impact Report, Smith suggested the Commission ask AGS for it; McDonald agreed. Several people recommended that more effort be made to identify and seek appropriate legislative changes that would lead to better protection of the Sparta Aquifer.

Following this discussion, McDonald moved to adopt the resolution to state officials; Perritt seconded; all agreed

- *GWRC Survey* in developing the statewide water management plan. LTP completed and submitted a survey. Surveys may be found at DNR Office of Conservation website.

- '*Sparta Aquifer in Louisiana and Its Management*'. LTP approved adding a dedication and appendices. Eighty books were printed (plus ten library copies, without appendices). Most have been distributed at meetings, including this (Oct. 21) meeting.

- *Significant Events Report*. Stewart reported on GWRC's drafting of a state water management plan. She read DNR Sec. Angelle's summary, at an August GWRC meeting, of current state surface and ground water law. Her report focused on the limitations, in current law, of the public's priority rights to water resources and on local input into water resource decision-making.

Marketing and PR Committee (Hohlt).

- attended a GWRC workshop, and reported that several others attending this (Oct. 21) meeting participated in the workshops. Hohlt said that one topic generally agreed upon was that people locally needed to have a say about protection of their water supplies.

- moved that Commission spend \$445 for 1245 water bottles with a logo, to be distributed at events such as the 5K Run. The funds would be matched by private donations. Additional orders will be less expensive. Lowery seconded; all approved.

- recommended certain Sparta Foundation administrative matters. Stewart will ask Culpepper to call a meeting. (*Attachment 7*)

- said, in conversation with Lt. Gov. Angelle, the Lt. Gov. suggested pursuing the idea of placing a fee on well applications, the revenue to be dedicated to water conservation education. Commissioners suggested graduating the fee according to water use or user, attaching inflation adjustment, using a model fee structure. Legislators must be consulted. LTP to take up this matter.

#### **Staff Report (Lindsay Gouedy)**

- distributed a report by Dr. Bill Branch. Dr. Branch represented the Commission at meetings, assisted with the Lincoln Parish Waterfest, and drafted letters to nominating bodies seeking renewal of contributions to the Commission; (*Attachment 8*)

- participated in Farm Bureau-supported Ag in the Classroom- bringing water conservation projects into participating schools; collaborating with organizers, teachers and students, bringing statewide attention to the Sparta;

- organized Lincoln Parish Waterfest -600+ fifth graders attended; activities were led by experts from throughout the state; school teachers and volunteers assisted; people in other Sparta parishes have expressed interest in extending Waterfest. (*Attachment 9*)

- demonstrated the Sparta Commission's new Display system;

- detailed a Nov. 13 Sparta Conservation-focused Five K-1 Run at Squire Creek facility, with Ouachita Valley Road Runners;

- La Tech's National Science Foundation grant writing will continue in the coming year.

- detailed donations for educational programs from many sources, including DNR Office of Conservation, businesses, Smurfit-Stone, and the media. Also detailed expenses to date as well as projected activities, donations and expenses.

#### **General Business:**

- 2011 Budget. Perritt presented a draft based on finances of 2010. Hohlt urged commissioners to request nominating bodies to include a contribution in their budgets. Stewart moved to approve the budget, Lowery seconded, all agreed. (*Attachment 10*)

- Sparta Aquifer Well Level Updates, PowerPoint presentation. Ben McGee, USGS, said that he and Gouedy had attended a ceremony at the Natural Resources Museum in Smackover the day before; a mock-up of a Sparta real-time monitoring well was added to exhibits. USGS, Union County Water Conservation Board, industry representatives, and Arkansas Congressmen attended. A Lion Oil official attributed industry's capacity to expand in the El Dorado area to the Ouachita River Alternative Supply project (ORASP). In Louisiana, hydrographs show well water levels rising in the north and leveling off from their decline in the central Sparta region largely because of ORASP and reduced Sparta withdrawal in Morehouse parish. Well water levels continue to decline in more southern parts of the Sparta region. McGee asked: 'Arkansas efforts alone won't bring about recovery. Are we in Louisiana going to pick up the baton and continue Sparta recovery efforts started in Arkansas or wait to see effects of current measures?'

- GWRC Meeting. Stewart suggested that, GWRC workshops having been discussed earlier and considering the late time, Gary Hanson might briefly introduce his role on panel discussions in Louisiana and other states. An important topic is new large volume water use by the natural gas industry and public-industry cooperation to find solutions. Hanson briefly listed his involvements, and commissioners agreed to place his full presentation on the January meeting.

-Election of Officers for 2011. Deferred for lack of a quorum (Commissioner Braddock left after the 2011 budget was approved).

Calhoun announced that the next meeting of the Sparta Commission will be in Webster Parish on January 20 at 3:00 p.m., with the usual pre-meeting informal gathering and committee meetings beginning at 2:00. There being no further business, Hohlt moved to adjourn; Perritt seconded; all approved. Calhoun declared the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

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Mack Calhoun, Vice-Chairman

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Alice Stewart, Secretary

Note: Attachments and CD transcript may be obtained through Sparta Commission office (La Tech AgSciences desk: 318-257-3257).