

## Minutes of the Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Commission meeting on January 26, 2012

The Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Commission met on January 26, 2012 at 2:00 PM in the Bienville Parish Police Jury Building, 100 Courthouse Dr., Arcadia, LA 71292.

**Commission Members Present:** Billy Don Perritt, Ben Lowery, Todd Culpepper, Rick Hohlt, Mack Calhoun, Willie Doherty, Joe Stevens, Ted W. McKinney, Jackie Perritt, Alice Stewart, George W. Rolfe, Jr., Terry Emory. Also Present: Dr. Gary Kennedy [ex-officio member]; Lindsay Gouedy [educator]. **Commission Members Absent:** The Hon. Samuel Little, Dan Morgan, Steve Lemmons, Chris Smith, and John Van Bennett.

### **Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Agenda Approval, Welcome, Public Comments**

The meeting was officially called to order by Chairman Todd Culpepper. Billy Perritt led the invocation and Ted McKinney the pledge of allegiance. Hohlt moved to accept the agenda with one change: to move up Lindsay Gouedy's report because Mrs. Gouedy had to leave early. The motion was seconded, and all approved. (*Attachment 1*)

Culpepper welcomed everyone and acknowledged elected officials. District 11 Representative Patrick Jefferson welcomed all to Bienville Parish and pledged his support for Sparta Commission efforts. Homer Mayor Alecia Smith pledged her continuing interest and support.

**Public Comments.** Sherrel Johnson of Union County Water Conservation Board introduced the Ouachita River Alternative Supply Project and appreciated bi-state alliance actions, including successfully seeking Louisiana's support for sharing Sparta monitoring costs this year. She presented a display showing Arkansas Sparta critical areas and Louisiana Sparta areas that are similarly stressed, water level rise as much as 20 feet since 2004 in wells in the Sparta Recovery monitoring network, including wells in Claiborne, Union, and Morehouse parishes. She said that the West Monroe-Graphics Packaging project should produce similar results. There were no other public comments.

### **Minutes of last meeting**

Culpepper called for approval of the July 21, 2011 meeting minutes, which had been distributed to members prior to the meeting. Hohlt moved to accept the minutes as distributed; Billy Perritt seconded; all approved. (*Attachment 3*)

**Conservation Education Report.** Lindsay Gouedy reported that a USDA grant had been submitted. She is preparing for a two days/week Ouachita Parish program—presenting conservation education to each 5<sup>th</sup> grade class over two months. Webster Parish Waterfest is still being discussed, no date has yet been set. A Sparta 5K Run is planned for spring preferably or fall, depending on the competition circuit.

**Treasurer Report.** Billy Perritt presented a Summary Balance sheet as of Dec. 31, 2011 and a Jan.–Sept. 2012 Profit and Loss sheet. Hohlt and Perritt added that at least \$40,000 will be required this year to continue our current program next year; Lincoln Parish Police Jury has voted to decrease donation to \$1000 this year; approximately \$10,000 has been donated or pledged to date this year. There being need to start now to raise funds for next year, members were encouraged to explain to nominating bodies that the Sparta Commission is making a difference, including thousands of youth, 100% of our future, receiving water conservation education. Hohlt moved to approve the treasurer report, Calhoun seconded, and all approved. (*Attachment 4*)

### **Groundwater Resources Commission (GWRC) Report by Sparta Commission Representative on that Commission.**

Today's Sparta Commission meeting was scheduled the fourth, rather than third, Thursday of the month to allow consideration of last week's proceedings of the Groundwater Resources Commission (GWRC) relative to its recommendations for a state water management plan. Ted McKinney gave an overview. There were nine topics and 60 questions total. The meeting lasted ten hours. One hour 40 minutes on first question and similarly long time on the next left little time for the last topic, 'Collaborations', for which McKinney was volunteer facilitator. Gene Coleman said that, as previous GWRC representative, he had preferred more time spent on what seemed more relevant matters for GWRC such as management structure, leaving technical details, for example on monitoring and reporting, for the agency; he praised McKinney for representing the Sparta Commission extremely well. McKinney reported that he would lead discussion later in today's meeting. (see 'Discussion' near the end of these minutes).

**LTP End 2011 Report** by PowerPoint presentation by Stewart. 2010 US Census showed Lincoln Parish has only 1% of the surface water of primary Sparta using parishes but the largest 10 year population growth (almost 10%, followed by Jackson and Ouachita parishes; Hohlt commented that Lincoln has statutory authority to use D'Arbonne Lake water). The most recent USGS water use report (2005) shows industrial use is primarily in the Bienville-Jonesboro area (Stone Container reduced its use by 50% by recycling in the late 1990s; Arcadia Gas Storage reduced 2011 use by 19%, and, barring another severe drought, expects its 2012 surface water use will be approximately 50% of total freshwater use) and Ouachita Parish (its Graphics Packaging Sparta use expected to decrease by seven million gallons per day). Public supply is proportional to population. The

State Water Plan 2011 report stated that the Sparta is one of two Louisiana aquifers more severely stressed and one of two aquifers needing most urgent attention. Alternate water sources and conservation programs are needed, as well as Groundwater Availability Modeling as a step toward defining sustainability. Collaboration topics included a Georgia Water Management model (state management; regional planning) and a recommendation that the Sparta Commission might seek Capital Groundwater Conservation Commission-type regional empowering legislation. A third management model was proposed by a 2002 study for the state—state-regional co-management. The same study recommended five regions (La. Legislative statutes provide that the Commissioner of Conservation may establish boards). A north Central region would include the Sparta area.

**West Monroe-Graph Packaging Project.** John Stamberg, project engineer presented. The \$20 million facility is one of the first globally to treat waste water to (above) drinking water quality for industrial use. Capabilities are up to 10 mgd. Operating and maintenance costs are approximately 75 cents per 1000 gallons produced. The cooperative project has received (or continues to receive) stimulus funds, state funds, Graphic Packaging in-kind contributions, West Monroe Sanitary district and city funds. Discussion followed. Culpepper summarized that various conservation approaches are needed tailored to unique features of different areas, and the West Monroe-Graphics Packaging project is an excellent example.

**Sparta Foundation Report.** Rick Hohlt reported that a USDA grant was submitted after much work, mostly by Gouedy. Many letters of support were successfully solicited, including from Louisiana and Arkansas legislators and agency officials.

**Presentation.** Capital Area Groundwater Conservation Commission. Director Tony Duplechin, formerly of Dept. of Nat. Resources, used a PowerPoint presentation, to give history and description of the 5 parish commission, which was created in 1974 for the efficient administration, conservation, and orderly development of groundwater and protection of its quality. Water well levels were dropping and salt water was encroaching because of heavy pumping. The 16 member commission of parish, industry, farm bureau, and state agency representatives gathers information of well plans and pumpage data, monitors salt water encroach, educates stakeholders, facilitates solutions, and, unlike the state (DNR requires new well prior and post-completion notification), issues permits. Location in a problem area; whether a replacement well, proposed use and pumpage rate, and interference with nearby wells are considered. Exemptions leave essentially industry and public supply wells subject to permits and fees. So far only 69 permits have been issued. The Commission reserves certain sands for public supply. A water use fee of \$4/million gallons on 61 billion gallons pumped a year provides \$243,000 annually to meet costs and expense of a two member staff, supporting studies, facilitating solutions, and other operations. Current issues: About half of use is for public supply [esp. BR Water Co. (single largest user) & its subsidiary parish Water Co 9]; Ga. Pacific is next largest user. There is projected movement of a salt water wedge toward a major pumping station. The Baton Rouge police jury has requested declaration as an Area of Groundwater Concern, and meetings about this are ongoing. Discussion followed, including the question: 'Why not use surface water?' Mr. Duplechin's answer: Conversion to what, for many uses, is a more costly source is not a simple matter. Baton Rouge has very good quality groundwater, and current use has existed since WWII.

**Discussion.** Leading into discussion of his 'Groundwater Resources Commission report' (see above), Ted McKinney reported that, in his opinion, only one of the 60 GWRC's State Water Plan recommendations topics addressed the Sparta Commission and a management structure, a topic he had suggested: 'Should the state consider aquifer based regions similar to Sparta aquifer and five parish Southern Hills aquifer Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District?' McKinney noted that currently the Commissioner of Conservation has statutory authority to appoint boards for up to five groundwater regions, from which boards he may seek advice. McKinney reported that a representative of the consulting firm told him that she and Gary Snellgrove of DNR wrote the recommendations to be filled in according to subsequent input and that the final report will be placed on the DNR website. After discussion, McKinney moved that the Commission write Secretary Angelle making the following state water management plan recommendations: there should be NO legislation that would diminish the Sparta Commission's current status and authority, for example to a regional advisory body within a state office; the Sparta Commission should continue as a political subdivision of the state; and legislation should be enacted that would give the Sparta Commission the authority and reliable funding to enable the Sparta Commission to act to fulfill its statutory Sparta conservation purposes. The motion was seconded by Calhoun and all approved.

Culpepper announced that the next meeting of the Sparta Commission will be in Farmerville on April 19, 2012 at 2:00 p.m., with the usual pre-meeting informal gathering beginning at 1:00.

With no further business, Culpepper adjourned the meeting, after McKinney's motion, Lowery's second, and approval of all.

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William 'Todd' Culpepper, Chairman

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Alice Stewart, Secretary

Note: Attachments are filed with the minutes in the Sparta Commission office.