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TOLEDO BEND ALERT

December 2015

Toledo Bend Citizens' Advisory Committee

To Educate and Activate

www.tbacac.net

tbacac3@gmail.com

Next TBCAC SOCIAL 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 8, 2016

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year: We wish all members a very happy and healthy holiday season and a safe and prosperous 2016.

Our Next TBCAC Quarterly Membership Meeting and Dinner will be held on March 8, 2016 at the **Sabine Council on Aging – Toledo Town Location (SCOA)** located on Hwy. 191, 3/4 mile north of the Hwy. 6 Toledo Town intersection. The SCOA is located next to the DAV. There will be no outside speaker for the March meeting. The March meeting each year is dedicated to TBCAC business relating to the Board of Director election, a review of 2015 accomplishments and presentation of TBCAC objectives for 2016. Our entree will be announced prior to this meeting. Please come join us for good food, fellowship and updates on TBCAC. For more information, contact Jim Mifflin, President of TBCAC, at (318) 586-7897.

2016 Membership Meetings: As a reminder, the Membership Meetings/Socials are held quarterly. Be sure to place March 8th on your calendar for first TBCAC Social of 2016. Meetings/Socials begin at 7:00 p.m.

Board Meetings: The Board meets at 6:00 p.m., prior to each Social, and again on the 2nd Thursday of even numbered months at 2:00 pm at the SCOA-Toledo Town location. The TBCAC Board welcomes all members to attend the Board meetings. Any member who wishes to address the Board during a Board meeting should notify the President prior to the meeting to ensure that appropriate time is allocated to hear that member.

TBLA Toledo Bend Lunker Program: The Toledo Bend Lake Association's Lunker Bass Program, as of this publication, has recorded 35 largemouth bass lunkers for the May 2015 to May 2016 year. More information and photos of many of the lunkers can be viewed on the Toledo Bend Lunker Bass Program Facebook page, the Toledo Bend Lake Association's website at www.toledobendlakeassociation.com, as well as the Sabine Tourist Commission website at www.toledobendlakecountry.com.

Lake Level as of 12/01/15: The lake level for Toledo Bend is reported to be 171.19 feet above mean sea level, as measured near the dam by the National Weather Service automated gauge. Up-to-date reservoir elevations and releases may be obtained from the Toledo Bend Project offices on a 24 hour per day basis at (337) 286-5253 and (409) 565-2273. For the most current lake levels, go to www.srala-toledo.com and click on the National Weather Service link.

Pending Cleco Power Sale: In the October issue of the TBCAC newsletter, we made TBCAC members aware of a pending leveraged buyout of Cleco by The Macquarie Group, an Australian-based organization, along with other foreign private investment groups and lenders. After a thorough review of the details of this proposed buyout, the TBCAC Board of Directors voted to oppose the transaction. A letter of opposition was sent to all five Louisiana Public Service Commissioners on October 8. On November 4th, a copy of that letter was sent via email to all TBCAC members. Additional efforts to build public awareness include

publication of a “Letter to the Editor”, shown below, that published in The Natchitoches Times on November 7 and The Sabine Index on November 11:

Letter to the Editor

November 6, 2015

All customers of Cleco should know about the pending leveraged buyout of Cleco Corporation by a group of foreign investors called The Macquarie Group. This acquisition is currently being reviewed by the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC). This proposed takeover is not in the best interests of the 280,000 Louisiana households that are currently customers of Cleco. The Toledo Bend Citizens’ Advisory Committee (TBCAC) sent a letter to all five Commissioners of the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) on October 8, 2015 opposing the Cleco takeover.

Details about this proposed takeover can be found on the **Alliance for Affordable Energy** website at www.all4energy.org. This organization has done outstanding investigative work and conducted an in-depth analysis that clearly shows why customers should be very concerned about this proposal. The Alliance for Affordable Energy is a well-respected consumer watchdog agency that was established in 1985. From their website homepage, enter "Cleco takeover" in the search box. There are two in-depth studies available that clearly show the adverse impact this takeover could represent for Cleco customers.

Customers who have concerns about the negative impacts that this takeover could impose, including effects on customer service and rising electric bills, should contact the Louisiana Public Service Commission at www.lpsc.louisiana.gov to make their feelings known. This website lists the names, physical addresses and email addresses of all five LPSC commissioners. The LPSC is expected to make a ruling on this proposed takeover early next year, so make your voice heard soon.

The Toledo Bend Citizens’ Advisory Committee (TBCAC) is a registered non-profit organization formed in 2001. The TBCAC’s mission is to educate and activate citizens on issues affecting the quality of life in the communities surrounding Toledo Bend Reservoir. Many of our organization’s members are customers of Cleco Corporation, relying on them for electrical power.

Sincerely,
James D. (Jim) Mifflin
President
Toledo Bend Citizens' Advisory Committee
Email: jdm2u@earthlink.net

All Cleco customers, as well as other interested citizens, should know the details of this proposed takeover. If the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) approves this type of leveraged buyout for Cleco, it could also happen in the future to your electrical power provider. Go to the Alliance for Affordable Energy website shown above, read their extensive research and make up your own mind if you think this is a bad deal for electrical power consumers. Let your feelings be known by contacting the five LPSC Commissioners. Their email and snail mail addresses can be obtained from their website shown above. Let your voices be heard.

You can also complete a petition against the proposed takeover by going to www.change.org/p/louisiana-public-service-commission-our-cleco-our-community . Just fill in your name and address information and click on the “Sign’ button.

Update on Broadband Hope for All of Toledo Bend Area: As we mentioned in the October issue of the TBCAC newsletter, AT&T announced last July that a \$27,907,591 grant from the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) "Connect America Fund" for broadband improvements and upgrades in rural areas of Louisiana where broadband coverage is deficient or, in many cases, not available. The funds were allocated by the FCC to cover some 74,978 rural households in Louisiana designated as deficient in broadband coverage and are to be spent at the rate of 40% of the allocated funds by the end of 2017; 60% by the end of 2018; 80% by the end of 2019; and 100% by the end of 2020.

In discussions with Louisiana AT&T officials knowledgeable of this grant, they had indicated that the area around Toledo Bend is recognized as being mostly without broadband capabilities and is definitely an area of potential for this rural broadband expansion effort.

After the TBCAC October newsletter was published, Rick DeMint, the Director of External Affairs for AT&T, stated that they are in the process of prioritizing the parishes in Louisiana and that Sabine Parish is expected to be in the top 5, if not #1. If Sabine Parish is in the top 5, it would bring approximately \$2 million into Sabine Parish for infrastructure to underserved or not presently served areas. The first 40% of the funding would be spent in the first 2 years with the total improvements completed within 5 years. We will keep you advised of the latest developments in this broadband improvement program.

SRA-LA Public Relations Committee Meeting: As a member of this committee, TBCAC President Jim Mifflin attended this meeting on Thursday, Oct. 22 with SRA Executive Director Jim Pratt, SRA Commissioner Ned Goodeaux, SRA IT Director Carl Chance and TBLA President John Toliver. Items discussed:

To Dispel a Rumor: SRA does not currently have plans to draw down Toledo Bend Lake for any purpose.

Power Generation Agreement Discussions Initiated with Entergy and Cleco: The power agreement between SRA and the two power companies will expire in 2018. They have initiated negotiations on the amount paid by the two companies per MWH generated, which at present exceeds present market value due to conversion of many plants from coal to natural gas and a decrease in the cost of natural gas. SRA has contracted with a New Orleans law firm specializing in power agreement negotiations. Expectations are for the power companies to negotiate for a lower price.

The potential acquisition of Cleco by a private group could possibly affect these negotiations if it goes through. Lower contract prices will result in less revenue generated to manage and maintain Toledo Bend Reservoir and SRA facilities. Of the 80,000 dams dotted across the nation's landscape, only 3 percent (roughly 2,400) are equipped to generate power. Toledo Bend is one of them and only has the capacity to generate 80 mgw. /hr. maximum. Even though hydroelectric power is being produced by a small segment of facilities, they still manage to produce 7 percent of the nation's energy.

At the same time, hydropower is helping the nation avoid over 200 million tons of CO2 emissions annually – the equivalent of 42 million cars. Hydropower can effectively and sustainably reduce emissions, fight climate change and keep energy costs affordable for consumers. We will continue to keep you informed on the progress of this agreement.

Shoreline Management: Due to a significant amount of exposed shoreline, SRA asked us to inform property owners, particularly lakeshore owners, of potential violation of State cultural resources and antiquities laws which make it illegal to pick up or remove artifacts from State lands, i.e., on the Louisiana Toledo Bend leaseback lands. In accordance with 2006 Louisiana Laws - R.S. 41:1601-1613: specifically RS 41:1610 — §1610. Prohibited excavations - A. No person, not being the owner thereof, shall without the

consent of the owner enter or attempt to enter upon the lands of another and intentionally injure, disfigure, remove, excavate, damage, take, dig into, or destroy any sites or artifacts addressed by R.S. 41:1604(1). B.(1) No person may excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface or attempt to excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any archaeological resource located on state lands unless such activity is approved by the agency with ownership responsibilities over the lands and is authorized under a permit issued pursuant to R.S. 41:1606.

Some property owners have reported seeing individuals who appear to be looking for or removing artifacts on their property or the shoreline, which for the most part is leaseback property. Anyone doing so should have a permit and display it upon request. SRA has issued a permit to Cultural Resources Associates for archeological surveys on some sites along the lake and you may have observed them. However, they should provide a permit and identification upon request.

Shoreline/Leaseback Project Permitting Process: SRA has received clearance by the Army Corps of Engineers to permit most projects on leaseback areas within certain dredge and fill limits. Packets providing the permit form and instructions explaining the process can be obtained at the SRA-LA at the Pendleton Bridge office.

Keep Toledo Bend Country Clean: On October 3rd volunteers from the Toledo Bend Citizens' Advisory Committee (TBCAC) and Toledo Bend Lake Association (TBLA), armed with trash bags and gloves, completed a trash pick-up around the Toledo Town area. The trash pick-up route extended approximately 2 miles in each direction, along the El Camino Real (Highway 6) and the Toledo Bend Forest Scenic Byway (Highway 191). Volunteers came from both Louisiana and Texas to help Keep Sabine Clean! A special thanks to Sheriff Ronny Richardson, Toledo Town and Tackle and Progressive Waste Solutions for their generous contributions.



As a reminder:

- Simple littering can be trash flying out the back of a pickup truck and carries up to \$175 fines and court costs.
- Intentional littering can be someone deliberately throwing trash out of a window onto the roadway and brings up to a \$250 fine.
- Gross littering can be someone depositing large amounts of trash into a ditch or having an illegal dumpsite and carries \$500 to \$1,000 in fines.
- Each offense also carries up to eight hours in a litter abatement work program.

Help Keep Toledo Bend Lake Country Clean!

Did You Know? Giant Salvinia Part III - Chemical Controls: LDWF provides training to residents on the lake to allow the application of herbicides to areas adjacent to their individual properties. This training does not have an expiration date, and does not require any re-certification training. However, anyone who applies herbicide under this program is required to get an annual permit from the SRA and provide the SRA records of the herbicide applied. The individual sprayers are also required to retain a copy of these records for themselves.

LDWF sprayers are currently using a chemical mix containing Diquot and Glyphosate herbicides, with a spreading/sticking agent called Air Cover. This mix is applied May 1st – Oct 31st. From Nov 1st – Apr 31st, the glyphosate will be removed from the mix and Diquot will be the only herbicide applied. The Diquot-only mix can be modified if nuisance plant make up (known as a “salad” mix of plants) requires additional chemical treatment.¹

Certain limitation affect an effective application of chemical controls, as follows:²

- At 181,600 acres, whole water body treatments on Toledo Bend are impractical.
- Wind can limit both herbicide application, as well as boat access.
- Muddy water, routinely encountered in upper reaches of the main lake and individual coves, limits the use of Diquat.
- The upper lake area is shallow, as are the upper reaches of coves. This factor limits boat access.

Additional information on the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Aquatic Vegetation Control Plans can be found at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/aquatic-vegetation-control-plans>. Note that the lakes are listed in alphabetical order, so you will find Toledo Bend down toward the lower part of the page.

Time to Renew Your Membership: Time to renew your membership for the 2016 calendar year. Membership dues reminder notices are being sent out now. Remember to help us save money. If you are receiving this newsletter via USPS mail, and have an e-mail address, please send us an e-mail at tbcac3@gmail.com. Every newsletter that we can send out via e-mail helps to save on the cost of paper, postage, etc.

Help Us Grow Our TBCAC Membership: If you know someone who is not a member, give them a membership form and ask them to join. The TBCAC is a Civic & Educational Organization, dedicated to making the lake and surrounding community a true “Sportsman’s Paradise” and the retirement destination of choice for people from all walks of life. JOIN US TODAY! *We need your support!* View our website at www.tbcac.net Questions? E-mail us at: tbcac3@gmail.com.



¹ Jason J. Brancamp, Biologist Manager, Inland Fisheries District 10

² Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Aquatic Vegetation Control Plan.

TBCAC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For new members, or RENEWAL form for existing members.

Annual membership is \$20.00 per single, \$30.00 per couple. *Not tax deductible under IRS rules.*

Name:	_____	Spouse:	_____
Address:	_____	City, State:	_____
Zip:	_____	Home Phone:	_____
		Work Phone:	_____
Occupation:	_____	E-mail Address:	_____
Dues amount:	_____	Donation enclosed:	_____

* Providing an e-mail address allows us to quickly send you the Toledo Bend Alert electronically, keep you informed and save printing and postage costs.

With your paid membership, you'll receive our periodic newsletter, the "Toledo Bend Alert."

Make check payable to: TBCAC and Mail to: TBCAC, P.O. Box 983, Many, LA 71449.