

LAKE DRAWDOWN RESOLUTION

from
Minutes of Watershed Commission Meeting Held June 20, 2002

The following proposed resolution was read:

PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR ROUTINE DRAWDOWNS OF LAKE CLAIBORNE DAM

WHEREAS, the Commission is charged by state statute with the care, management, and control of Lake Claiborne with the purpose, among others, to prevent destruction of property; and is also charged by state statute to cooperate with state agencies in the maintenance and operation of Lake Claiborne dam; and WHEREAS, over the years the Commission has received citizen complaints that drawdowns for routine lakeshore property maintenance are arbitrarily scheduled and often conducted without sufficient notice to arrange for repairs, and

WHEREAS, a seven foot drawdown, at a rate of 3" to 4" per 24 hours, initiated the week after Labor Day and ending by January 15, has been successfully accomplished in the past and is considered reasonable, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation & Development controls the gates of Lake Claiborne spillway and the department, before initiating a drawdown, seeks the assurance of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries that aquatic life will not be seriously harmed, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has advised drawdowns no more frequently than every eight years, except for urgent reasons, and

WHEREAS, Department of Transportation and Development engineers have stated that Lake Claiborne dam was designed to allow for drawdowns for shoreline repair and have written, in June 2002, that the gates of Lake Claiborne dam are "in excellent condition and could be utilized without mishap for a drawdown," and

WHEREAS, the last regular drawdown was six years ago with a short drawdown three years ago,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission issue a written request to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries with the following recommendations:

- 1) that a drawdown of Lake Claiborne be scheduled every eight years for the purpose, among others, of routine maintenance of property along the lake shoreline,
- 2) that for such regularly scheduled drawdowns, the lake be lowered a maximum seven feet below pool stage at a rate of 3" to 4" per 24 hours,
- 3) that such drawdowns be initiated during the week after Labor Day and ended before January 15,
- 4) that in the event of an interval drawdown conducted for urgent reasons, such as aquatic life stress or widespread property damage after a major storm, the every eight year schedule should be resumed eight years after that urgent drawdown,
- 5) that any commission request for an urgent drawdown have the consent of six of the seven commissioners, and
- 6) that scheduled drawdowns begin in the fall of the year 2003, assuming agreement of Dept. Of Wildlife and Fisheries with respect to the impact on aquatic life, and of the Department of Transportation and Development with respect to the condition and operability of the gates for a drawdown at the time.

Discussion followed. There was concern, based upon one Lake Claiborne drawdown experience, that with every drawdown there is risk, however small, of operation failure with devastating sequelae. Mr. Seales stated that the effect of Lake Claiborne drawdowns on the fish population has been difficult to determine, possibly, in part, because drawdowns have been relatively frequent. Mr. Seales stated that a drawdown of 5 or 6 feet generally would not be expected to seriously compromise aquatic life but that a 7 foot drawdown would begin to expose important lake bottom.

Upon motion of Ms. Stewart, duly seconded by Mr. Pemberton and carried unanimously, the commission adopted the proposed resolution with the following two changes: 1) a schedule of every eight year drawdowns beginning in the year 2004, which is eight years after the last full drawdown in 1996, and 2) emphasis on the word 'maximum' in limiting a routine drawdown to 7 feet.