

## **Attachment V**

### **Sparta Commission's Long Term Planning Committee Report – November 8, 2007**

#### **Two important take-away points from the Union County meeting:**

1) Broad-based local participation was necessary for the success of Union County's program, which was 90% locally funded. Local authority and paid staff were necessary to coordinate efforts to bring about that participation. The same is true, we heard earlier, of the multi-parish Capital (Baton Rouge) Area Groundwater Conservation program.

2) Whereas Louisiana decided not to label declining groundwater areas 'critical' for fear of scaring off potential industry, Arkansas and Union County called their immediate water shortage what it is and did something about it. As a result, our Union County hosts boasted of a competitive economic advantage over us that they intend to advertise. Union County now has surplus aquifer and surface water to offer potential industrial employers who need quality water. North Louisiana, as yet, does not.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. To work with our legislators to develop legislation to introduce next spring that will enable us to participate more fully in decisions that affect our groundwater. The Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District is the most obvious model; another is Arkansas legislation that led to the successful Union County, Arkansas program. [This goal was approved by the Sparta Commission in March]

2. To work out with the LSU AgCenter details of a potential cooperative endeavor agreement to jointly fund a Sparta-dedicated position.

3. To ask our nominating bodies to help fund the new Sparta-dedicated position by increasing contributions 2007 and 2008. Assumptions are that we will approve a cooperative endeavor agreement and that legislation will provide for other funding sources after 2008.

### **Some Louisiana Sparta Conservation Measures As of November 8, 2007:**

- Incentives that will reduce the cost of certain equipment that decreases Sparta water withdrawals;
- Some water system upgrades that reduce leakage;
- Several education programs (LSU AgCenter's Sparta trailer, Trailblazer's 'Save Our Sparta,' *Ruston Daily Leader's* 'Be Smart Sparta');
- Declaration of three 'areas of groundwater concern' and reporting requirements (without penalties for noncompliance) in those areas;
- Voluntary reduction of Sparta consumption by Smurfit-Stone Container Corp.;
- \$200,000 of state funds to study a Jonesboro-Hodge area conservation approach;
- \$600,000 of state funds for a pilot for the City of West Monroe-Graphic Packaging project, which, when fully funded and operational, could save 10 million gallons a day of Sparta water;
- \$2.8 million of federal funds to study the feasibility of using D'Arbonne Lake water in Union and Lincoln parishes, for another potential 6 or more million gallons a day of Sparta water saving.

### **Some Challenges that remain**

- To progress from pilot programs and studies to full operations, including costly ground-to-surface water conversion projects;
- To provide for longterm programs to monitor and prevent degradation of Sparta area water resources;
- To educate to build the public and industry resolve needed to finance and otherwise support water conservation programs;
- To provide for effective local authority and staff to implement and coordinate these tasks. [Unlike the successful Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District, which has funding and administrative authority, the Sparta Commission has statutory authority only to advise.]