Drainage culvert work approved for Ascension

By TIM TALLEY
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GONZALES — Ascension Parish drainage officials Monday night turned their attention to a swamp that some residents believe is dying because of poor drainage.

The East Ascension Drainage District’s Board of Commissioners agreed to clean out drainage culverts that serve the McElroy Swamp, which is located southeast of Sorrento near the St. John the Baptist Parish line.

Members of the board’s wildlife committee, a group of area residents who oversee wildlife management efforts for the board, suggested that the culverts be cleaned to improve drainage between the swamp and New River.

Members of the committee maintain that the swamp is being damaged due to poor drainage, drainage board Chairman Marvin Braud said.

The culverts, located on the southside of New River, will be cleaned out to restore water flow between the river and swamp, Braud said.

Parish Administrator Moran Watson said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has issued a permit to the parish for improvements to Henderson Bayou. Work will begin “in the very near future,” Watson said.

That part of the project will involve construction of a new channel from near Henderson Road to Lake Villar and from Lake Villar all the way to the Amite River, Braud said.

The project is part of the parish’s major drainage plan east of the Mississippi River and will be funded with revenues from a one-half cent sales and use tax dedicated to drainage improvements.

On another matter, members of the board agreed to install a bridge on George Lambert Road over the Babin Canal. The road currently crosses the canal over three large culverts, according to Watson.

The roadway is starting to erode around the canal and a bridge is needed. Materials for a single-span bridge will cost $8,100, Watson said.