**CP-1 GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION**

**OBJECTIVE(S):**

1. To keep federal, state and local government officials informed as to the critical issues of the estuary. This shall include elected and appointed officials.
2. To secure continued awareness of the need for the implementation of the CCMP.
3. To provide sufficient information to Louisiana’s Congressional Delegation on the national significance of the estuary (I would add language here regarding entire LA coast, but have difficulty with the concise language).

**BACKGROUND**

Continued implementation of the CCMP is supported by the enactment of legislation and appropriation of funding which benefits the estuarine system. This requires an ongoing collaboration among partners in both the public and private sectors, as well as NGO and institutional partners. Concise, factual information must be provided to our elected and appointed leadership regarding the true value of the estuarine system as identified by the economic growth portion of the revised CCMP and the benefits it provides to the state and the nation. In turn, our leadership will be able to respond to the questions and concerns of their constituencies with timely and accurate information concerning the actions and activities reflected in the CCMP.

**DESCRIPTION**

Activities herein are designed to support the ongoing efforts to educate federal, state and local leaders regarding the challenges facing the BTES, to foster a sense of stewardship for our natural resources, to encourage support for the policies and actions set forth by the CCMP, and to provide the educational and informational tools required to address the concerns of the diverse constituencies within the BTES. Specifically, this plan proposes:

1. An annual town-meeting style event, participants to include federal, state and local elected and appointed officials, members of the MC and program staff, as well as friends of the Estuary;
2. On-going meetings with government officials with regard to issues of immediate concern to the estuary;
3. Educational events such as boat tours and project site visits designed to provide government officials a first-hand experience with the issues and challenges facing the estuary, as well as possible solutions;
4. The establishment of a BTES Government Affairs Advisory Workgroup made up of MC members and leadership of BTEF who are able to make informational contacts with elected and appointed leadership; and
5. Collaboration with existing Legislative Caucuses, as well as local, regional and national organizations in order to expand the awareness of estuarine issues and value of the implementation of the CCMP.

Actions identified in this plan shall occur in locations throughout the BTES. In addition, meetings and educational events may be expected to occur at other designated locations as necessary to adequately engage and participate in state, regional, and national conferences and meetings addressing issues of concern to the BTES and BTNEP.

**LEAD AGENCY OR ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING ACTION**

All educational and informational materials developed, produced and distributed through this action plan will be the responsibility of the Program Office. Meetings, briefings, project site visits and other events that are educational and informational in nature shall also be coordinated an implemented by the program office with support of the BTMC. Other activities, as may be required to secure adequate funding sources for implementation of the CCMP, may be led by the BTEF with the support of other members of the BTMC.

**TIMELINES AND/OR MILESTONES**

Activities identified within this action plan are mostly ongoing. The town meeting style event may be conducted on an annual basis. Within two years establish a BTES Governmental Affairs Advisory Workgroup.

**POSSIBLE RANGE OF COSTS AND SOURCES OF FUNDING**

Costs associated with this action may include, but are not limited to, staff time, travel, dues for membership in associations and organizations with similar goals and interests, conference fees, the development, production and distribution of educational and informational materials and the implementation of an annual town-hall style event. Costs incurred may range from $25,000 to $75,000 per year.

Funding for development, production and distribution of educational and informational materials may be made available through the Program Office budget or the BTEF budget, as well as members of the BTMC, in addition to direct and indirect support from business, civic and community organizations.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The monitoring strategies are intended to serve as mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of projects implemented under the action plans. These strategies should only be used as a guide, not as a requirement. It must be recognized that the monitoring strategies should not be expensive to implement and that, because all levels of government and much of the private sector currently have severe funding restraints.

**Possible Data Gathered**

* Number of events
* Number of attendees at events
* Number of meetings held by the Governmental Affairs Workgroup

**Monitoring**

**Parties responsible** –BTNEP Program Office will be responsible for all reporting parameters

**Timetable for gathering data** – Annually and/or as requested by EPA, BTMC, BTEF and/or the State

**How data is shared** – Report to EPA

**Possible data gaps-** None identified at this time

**If additional funding is needed –** If available, it may be useful