**SR-7 Continuing Education Programs and Informal Education Programs**

A. OBJECTIVES

1. To provide opportunities for a comprehensive continuing education program and an informal estuarine education program.

B. BACKGROUND/MAJOR ISSUES

Historically, environmental education courses have been successfully offered at universities. Highly popular workshops have also been held at Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON), Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve and other sites throughout the basin allow teachers to work with and receive curricula and laboratory/field equipment to be used in their classrooms. Moving forward, these program formats can be expanded to reach many other segments of the populace including children and the general public.

People from all age groups and backgrounds must understand that they as individuals make a difference in the health and well-being of the BTES. They must be introduced through educational activities about the importance of their action or lack of action. They must also learn that each individual has responsibilities for the estuarine system and the extrinsic and intrinsic resources it provides.

C. DESCRIPTION

This action supports continuing education programs, classes and events that address environmental issues of the BTES. These programs will provide opportunities that will help the public understand their role in the environment and the value of the environment to them in their health, occupational, and recreational endeavors.

These types of programs provide a means for groups of individuals to gain new knowledge, to interact with others with similar interests and to be introduced to the BTES issues and challenges. Many offer participants a chance to do hands-on activities in natural environments. These are often relaxed, comfortable and engaging events which encourage continuing awareness and involvement.

D. LEAD AGENCY RESPOSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The lead implementer for this action will be the Barataria-Terrebonne Management Conference (BTMC) and the BTNEP Education Action Plan Team. Support implementers will include the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), the Louisiana Science Teachers Association (LSTA), Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, Louisiana University Marine Consortium (LUMCON), National Sea Grant, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, National Wildlife Federation, LSU AgCenter (4-H), Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and/or other informal learning centers.

E. TIMELINES AND/OR MILESTONE

1. Continue, establish and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders who have an
2. interest in BTNEP’s priority issues.
3. Recruit program coordinators, faculty and partners to propose and implement projects.
4. Regularly hold programs in a variety of settings.
5. Regularly review program offerings and the relevance and value to the continuing education needs of the BTES.

F. POSSIBLE RANGE OF COSTS AND SOURCES OF FUNDING

***Range of cost:***

Total Funding Necessary (Annually): $300,000-$800,000

***Sources of funding:***

1. Local, State, Federal, Industry, Institutional, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Private
2. Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation and its partners.

G. 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 will be expensive to implement and that, because all levels of government and much of the private sector currently have severe funding restraints, they may not be affordable without significant modification. The monitoring strategies do not override or replace project monitoring that would be done by an agency related to specific agency-sponsored projects.

***Possible Data Gathered***

1. Quarterly reporting of activities to the BTMC

2. Document meetings and activities of the Education Action Plan Team

3. Regularly report to EPA

***Monitoring***

1. Parties Responsible - The Education Action Plan Team and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) Management Conference are the parties responsible for monitoring.
2. Timetables for gathering data- Education Action Plan Team (annually) and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) Management Conference (quarterly)
3. How data is shared – All program activities are on the BTNEP website, partner websites and/or social media outlets.
4. Possible Data Gaps – Education Action Plan Team and BTNEP MC will determine possible data gaps.
5. Additional Funding is always needed.