

**Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program  
Management Conference Meeting #60 Minutes  
Multi Purpose Room – Ellender Memorial Library  
9:30 a.m. – Wednesday, May 30, 2012**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Roll Call**

Jefferson Parish  
La Dept of Education  
Vince Guillory – LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Lafourche Parish  
Dwayne Bourgeois - LA Association of Levee Boards  
Randy McGimsey - LA Oil Spill Coordinators Office  
Shannon Lafont -LA Science Teachers Association  
John Conover - LUMCON  
Alan Matherne, LSU Ag Center & LA Sea Grant  
Gary LaFleur – Nicholls State University  
Albertine Kimble - Plaquemine Parish  
The Nature Conservancy  
Susan Hennington - US Corps of Engineers  
US Coast Guard  
Doug Jacobson US Environmental Protection Agency  
Rick Hartman - National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)  
Mandy York, John Boatman -USDA  
Allen Levron, Nick Matherne - Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government  
Kenneth Bahlinger, Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities  
LA Mid Continent Oil & Gas Association  
LA Wildlife Federation  
Point Coupee Parish  
South Central Planning and Development Commission  
Susan Testroet-Bergeron - USGS  
Archie Chiasson, Jr. - Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District  
Commercial Fisheries  
Iberville Parish  
Jan Boydston - LA Department of Environmental Quality  
LA Department of Health and Hospitals  
Linda Pace- LA Department of Natural Resources  
Mandy York & John Boatman Louisiana Association of Conservation District  
LA Landowners Association  
American Sugarcane League  
Greater Lafourche Parish Port Commission  
LA Department of Ag & Forestry  
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
LA Dept. of Economic Development  
LA Forestry Association  
U.S. National Park Service

## **Guests**

Kenneth Bahlinger, CPRA  
Alex Naquin SASSAFRASS LA  
Rebecca, Bayou Grace Community Services  
Diane Huhn, Bayou Grace Community Services  
Jonathan Foret, SLWDC  
Christina Peterson, UNO  
Julie Maldonado, American Universities  
Veni and Hansel Harlan, Marsh Dog

## **BTNEP Staff**

Kerry St. Pe'  
Richard DeMay  
Dean Blanchard  
Matt Benoit  
Alma Robichaux  
Andrew Barron  
Joe Dantin  
Kristy Monier

## **READING AND APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS DATE MEETING**

A motion was made to dispense with the reading of the March 7, 2012 minutes and to accept them as submitted. Doug Jacobson submitted changes to the minutes

Kerry questioned if everyone was getting minutes and agenda. He announced that Jenny Schexnayder has been hired as office coordinator.

## **PROJECTS INITIATED**

Richard gave an update on the Migratory Bird Celebration. He worked with worked with Susan Galliano and Jean Landry in Grand Isle April 20-22. As in the past, tours were on Friday and bird banding each day. Friday was the best day of the three day period. Birders and birds stayed away, however. 162 species were counted for the three day period. He noted that the highest for any festival year was 172 species in 2007.

Kerry gave an update on the Paddle Bayou Lafourche Trip and EPA program evaluation site visit. BTNEP has had 5 program evaluations. These evaluations are an immense amount of work. Doug Jacobson, Coordinator of Region 6, Doug Jacobson and Ray Allen, Ex-officio member of the team from Corpus Christi along with Michael Craghan were shown the various projects. We took them to the Ridge on Grand Isle and tree plantings on Grand Isle. Kerry asked Doug if he wanted to add anything. Doug announced that the program had passed again but he had not worked on the letter yet.

A slide show of volunteer events since the last meeting was shown. BTNEP has a very active volunteer program. Terrebonne Aquatic Clinic with Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries includes a very intensive two week time period and Joe participated. Joe explained that they did a planting with the students 400 students.

Invasive plants in Bayou Lafourche got a lot of press. Plants are spreading because of decreased funding from COE for spraying program. Archie noted that Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries came in and sprayed from Thibodaux to South of the Intracoastal Canal. Phone calls were made and this helped move the state to spray the bayou. Kerry noted that this was a case where media helped.

Al - Bayou black is covered in salvinia.

Gary - Questioned whether there were reports of apple snails in Bayou Lafourche

Archie -Some near Lafourche Crossing

Gary – Apple snails are at NSU farm

Kerry -Only a matter of time before they are in the bayou

Greg L- Any more information on how they will act in salinity

Kerry - They appear to only occur in fresh water. They eat wild taro. Voracious plant eater predators.

Rick - No issues in Texas with agricultural areas and they are not taking actions to manage. One of the concerns is them going into the rice fields. They devastate rice fields in southern Asia and eggs are pretty resistant to predation.

Greg - Concentrations of eggs along the edge of the marsh

Kerry - Farthest south that we've seen them is Bayou Black

### **SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE**

Meeting date of Wednesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 was scheduled.

### **DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF ANNUAL WORK PLAN**

Kerry - This is the meeting everyone loves to come to. Discussed applications for grants, results of the action plan and which ones can be funded.

- a. First is the 10 percent that goes to LUMCON
- b. Then rent 28, 000 to NSU
- c. Travel funds 30,000 annual travel

Al – same amount as last year

Dean – yes

- d. Personnel and Fringe - Some positions are funded through state others through federal
- e. Required to match federal funds with 50 percent non-federal match
- f. State budget has declined over time
- g. During these terrible economic times the National Estuary Program's Federal budget has increased.
- h. Each National Estuary Program pays \$4500 in dues

Gary - How do you make up the match

Dean - This year LUMCON only charges 10 percent but can charge 40 or 44 so we use the unrecovered indirect cost as match.

- i. BTNEP part-time funding – student workers. Have switched our procedure – used to use contract with IT people – we now hire them part time. That's why that funding went up since last year
- j. Material – that is all printing of materials that we give away for free. This year we will not be able to fund the birding calendar.

Al - If any accounts are greater than last year – please let me know

Dean - Part time worker was the last one that had increased because of change in procedure

Kerry - Administrative funds = supplies – that increased from last year from 20 to 25 K because this year we had a mid-year budget cut from the state so we had to use more federal funds. Operating services increased this year for same reason

- k. 17<sup>th</sup> La Fete d'Ecologie – \$38,000 in contractual and \$2,000 in supplies

Al – where is it going to be – Morgan City – October 13<sup>th</sup> (has since changed to November 10, 2012)  
Would like everyone from the Management Conference to exhibit at the festival.

Alan - Ink me in for the festival –Ag Center

Bayou Lafourche Paddle Trip 2013 \$15,000 - Fantastic trip – not a money raising event.  
We try to break even but it costs us money. Paddle trip is one of our signature events that brings in people from around the world.

Gary - Do you have a date?

Kristy – April 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> - This date coincides with NSU spring break.

- l. Layout and content of tidal graph calendar - People call me in June want the calendar for next year. Total of \$15,000 - \$9,000 for the layout and \$6,000 for the content this does not include printing

Dean – sometimes we contract for content. Content for next year is traditional fishing techniques with historic photos of traditional fishing techniques.

Alan- LSU has an online library archive. Talk to Don Davis of Sea Grant

- m. BTNEP invasive species mini- grants \$20,000 allocated and this worked well in the past
- n. BTNEP volunteer program – very active volunteer program \$15,000 allocated
- o. Development of bluebird trail in upper Barataria

Richard – would like to do some work in upper reaches of the BTNEP areas. Typically we work near the coast for birding trails. Reach out to communities in New Rhodes area 4H groups, a scout group to build bluebird nest boxes. We will work with someone in new roads and build bluebird boxes with a partner in that area and collect data on the use of the bluebirds.

Alex Naquin – talk to the FFA. They build some but they don't use them and stockpile them.

- p. LA winter and summer bird atlas – 1996 worked with Nature Conservancy and LDWF to develop breeding bird atlas printed by the USGS data compiled by volunteers. Since then LSU has done similar work where volunteers go out in different quads across the state. The idea is to compile this info and begin process of analyzing this data. Will work with LSU and develop this atlas. Begin analyzing data with this project

Rick – I don't see a nexus between BTNEP and use of those funds

Richard – look at the action plan – EM-15 The protection of Habitat for Louisiana Migratory birds of has all of these components in that action plan: components of monitoring, habitat restoration, working with nature owners.

Al - Would this work help to alleviate the problem NEP headquarters had with publications in refereed journals and science publications?

Richard – this is gray literature not refereed science journals

Gary - NSU is using the term BTNE systems in all of the journal publications to describe the area.

Kerry - He wants to see BTNEP people listed as authors. Publishing is just one category in research. I disagree with this person about high level research. Last evaluation we did we were urged to increase what we put in the excellent category. This year we did that. We don't do refereed journals.

- q. 2013 WETSHOP - 40,000 students from this workshop education action team meeting . WETSHOP came out on top after ranking. July 8-13<sup>th</sup>
- r. From H20 – HELD THIS year in June 13-17. 20-25 students Developing bayou side classroom database 2013
- s. Jean Lafitte National Park Service summer camps – education action plan team voted to increase funding to fund field trips
- t. SWLDC youth summit- new addition to education Action plan had 2 this year that were successful
- u. SLWDC Summer Camps – South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center

- v. Tresors du bayou – French tent for the swamp stomp. Cajun cultural education
- w. Environmental summit in Baton Rouge conference 2013
- x. That's' the list of projects for next year's work plan

AI - Motion to accept

Dwayne - motioned

Jan - Motioned

AI- Motion accepted

### **LAKE FIELDS CLEANUP RESULTS**

Joe - On March 10<sup>th</sup> we did a cleanup on lake fields with 22 vessels, over 50 volunteers and one stage vessel in addition to the cleanup vessels. The group collected 10.7 tons of trash, 14 derelict vessels, 155 tires and all sorts of debris including freezers, plastic containers, drums, and washing machines. We removed most of debris 12 linear miles adjacent to lake. We didn't get everything but got most at a cost \$1,240.00

### **UPDATE ON LONG DISTANCE TRI-PARISH SEDIMENT PIPELINE PROJECT - Kenneth Bahlinger**

Kerry – this is a project that the NEP has been very interested in from the beginning. BTNEP brokered the deal between 3 parishes.

Kenneth Bahlinger, CPRA - gave an update on activity. He discussed projects on the barrier islands with slides. The goal is to get river sediment into Barataria basin. First three years looked at feasibility. Focused on three different potential crossings. Settled on Northern crossing was the shortest and most feasible. In order to start the project land rights, permits, and budget were needed.

- Contracted with Moffit Nichols to begin the survey of the area
- May and June used to move the permit through
- Borrow areas on riverside
  - Wills point
  - Alliance
- Sediment Budget
  - we need 4.4 MCY for PSD
  - we have enough sediment to do two projects
  - we have to consider other projects
  - Sediment isn't everywhere in the river. Many considerations for where you can take sand
- Point bar on the slide showing that after the flood, has not been in filled as much as we thought. So we get an idea of infilling rate in the river – not a lot of work that has been done
- After 3 years we are only at 77 to 80 percent of infilling

- Had to do a slope slumping analysis on the borrow area
- Kerry – is 90 feet max depth that the dredge can go to
- Kenneth – no jus the depth that most dredgers can reach in this area
- Bathymetric measurements on reaches near the borrow site

Gary – are you talking about filling in a levee to put in a pipeline.

Kenneth – no it's not a levee it's at marsh elevation

- We are going to maintain a 60 foot corridor and settle to native natural marsh and we will plant it with

Rick – you say maintain?

Kenneth- we will keep at a plus 3

Nick – will that require mitigation?

Kenneth - No

Kerry – how much is on a natural ridge?

Kenneth - Most of it is near a natural bayou ridge

- It is more stable near the natural ridges
- This is a self mitigating project

Nick – had marsh creation not been part of the first phase then mitigation would have been required

Kenneth – goal was to build marsh creation out as far as we could. Filling in various polygons off of the main route of the corridor

- Combining projects
- Bayou Dupont
- We will save money using one pipeline to do various projects along the way

Kerry – that is how you get the costs way down

Al – what does it cost?

Kenneth – total budget is 66 million

Nick – how many acres of marsh?

Kenneth – roughly around 300 acres of marsh

Dean – once the project corridor is built – are you going to pick up after?

Kenneth – about 2 years to put stuff out there

Rick – pipe doesn't last forever

Kerry – pipe lasts for about 90 million cubic yards

Kerry – state talking about pulling the pipe up after the first project. We want to see it used for various projects. We think the costs are high because it's priced on project by project basis. Prices will come down if used for multiple projects. What is the distance from the borrow down to the head of passes. It's about 63 miles from head of passes. How far out do the hopper barges go?

Kerry – I want to see a better use of the borrow

Nick – who is going to pay for that

Kerry – they use fuel to send the hopper barges. That could be savings right there. That should be investigated

Nick – do you specify size of pipe

Ken – up to contractor

Gary – do you have plantings in budget?

Kenneth – yes. Mostly spartina

### **MARSH DOG PRESENTATION – Veni and Hansel Harlan**

Veni and Hansel Harlan handed out brochures and gave a brief background themselves and the company. Both are avid dog lovers and both wanted to make nutritional treats for their own dogs. Dogs don't have preconceptions about what they eat. They ran across an article about Cree McCree. Saw that she got a grant for nutria. After the grant award – the question became how do we get the animals and the meat from them. That was going to be a challenge for the project. They couldn't get the nutria until the season in November. Were ready to start the launch of the company. Only problem was licensing from the state – couldn't get over the concept of wild meat. They received approval after two months. They weren't sure how much nutria meat to buy; bought about 1 ton of meat. They finally launched in May of this year in Baton Rouge. They were able to have a higher quality product than other treats and while providing an opportunity for people to do something for the coast. They brought samples of the product. The product is an all-natural treat consisting of all Louisiana products including rice from Falcon Mill in Crowley. Nothing artificial. No wheat corn or soy – common allergens for dogs. They use dehydration and no preservatives with a shelf life of three months. They credit the success from the branding. They can produce about 12,000 bags of treats and are trying to sell about 2000 bags per month but don't want to run out. The product is in Baton Rouge pet stores and vet clinics. They were able to sell 800 bags this month with very little effort. There was a large response in Baton Rouge and going into New Orleans area this month from the demand. It can be ordered on line also.

Al – what percent of the product is nutria?



Hansel - Most of the product is nutria.

Rick – are you now planning to purchase 5 tons of meat?

Harlan – yes

Rick – do you have enough processors to get 5 tons of meat?

Harlan – many dog lovers want to feed raw meat to their animals. They usually use ground chicken but they will eventually look at the nutria for this too.

Greg – in the past, LDWF looked at dog food in industry. The downfall was obtaining consistent supply. They wanted it year round. The problem was year round supply for humans too and you had to compete with everything on the shelf. When you jump up to the next level you are going to have to give thought to giving incentive trappers to bring the whole animal out of the marsh and the processors. If you get big enough to supply Pet Smart then you will have to have a large supply of meat.

Harlan – raising good points and some of the logistical problems that we are facing. One goal is to put out a quality product. We have to resist the urge to grow too quickly. We want to make arrangement with people bringing out the nutria properly. We have to maintain the quality of the supply chain.

Greg – what is price per dog biscuit?

Harlan – we are \$8.50 per bag. And it doesn't compare to the low quality stuff with corn meal. The product sells itself.

Veni - We didn't know how we were going to get the nutria. Nutria is not very sexy and we don't want to use the word rat and don't emphasize the image. They used the word Marsh Dog for the title and got the URL marsh dog.com. They have used the recycling effort as part of the business. One of the first things they looked at besides logo was packaging as it was challenging with a complex subject. Packaging is recyclable and resalable and wanted people to see the biscuits in the packaging. It is a perishable item and it is a fresh product. The BTNEP logo is on the packaging. They have response from all over the country, Washington State, Ohio with mass appeal across all industries including oil. They do not have a large marketing budget. The website is most of the marketing with lots of photos – Veni is a photographer. They employ social media and Facebook – cheap way to do marketing. The product has been very successful an

They thanked BTNEP for their assistance and for funding the project.

### **GULF COAST ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION TASK FORCE**

*Kerry introduced* John Hankinson, Executive director of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. He briefed the group on their partnership during the oil spill.

John - Lot going on in the gulf with most of it confusing and inconclusive. Believe in the NEP concept. Development of the ecosystem restoration task force was set up on October, 2010. Had Ray Mabus

come down and assess the situation in the gulf and had to tell him what the gulf needs. What else do the people of the gulf need for maintaining the ecosystem? He did the Mabus report and that was the start of the taskforce consisting of 11 federal agencies and 4 white house offices. 1<sup>st</sup> task was the ecosystem as seen by the people and scientists from down here. Four goals listed below were established.

- Habitat Restoration
- Water quality
- Living Coastal Marine Resources
- Community Resilience

One of the challenges during the deepwater horizon spill was a lack of baseline. So we want to collect data. The Restore Act was created. The President wanted to focus on two things from the oil spill. One being that any money recovered in fines should be redirected back to the gulf for ecosystem restoration with a council overseeing the spending. Two, that fines go into oil spill liability fund. Without the legislative act, the money would go into the general fund in congress. Mary Landrieu put into a bill and all but one delegation in the spill states signed. BP settled with the private plaintiffs and is tentatively scheduled for January of 2013 with the government trial. There is no settlement with the government so far. The Restore Act will have no money in it until the trial is resolved. BP authorized 1 billion of early restoration preliminary damages. They are currently trying to figure out 100 million of those dollars in projects. Anyone can submit a project to the NRDA available on the web. If it is tied to areas that were damaged then it has a better chance of getting approved. This is an area of the country that is ecologically and economically critical to the country. The Gulf Coast would be the 7<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world.

Rick – Noted that he is getting emails regarding the act going through the LA State Legislature. Language has been added that money that comes through the state can be spent on things other than ecosystem restoration. BTNEP should have a vote.

Albertine noted that it is Senate Bill 812. This might affect how the feds vote for restore. We need a resolution. Need to call state legislature.

Al -Senator Ed Murray from New Orleans

John – Florida came up with a bill ahead of the spill. The bill allows most of the monies going to the panhandle counties in Florida.

Rick – NRDA is basically restoration

Kerry – noted that BTNEP picked up money from Shell, Entergy, Apache, National Fish and Wildlife. We have money and the more we get the more we can do.

Al - read language for house bill 812

Nick –How do we approach the task force?

John – we are working on providing a mechanism for that.

### **BAYOU LAFOURCHE CLEANUP**

Alma gave a presentation on Bayou Lafourche Cleanup. A total weight of 17.97 tons of trash collected, with a volume of 300 cubic yards and 106.5 miles. The program received \$10,000 from Keep LA Beautiful and \$5,000 from Bayou Lafourche Freshwater.

### **PADDLE BAYOU LAFOURCHE**

Kristy gave a presentation of Paddle. There were 165 paddlers including some from California, Mexico, and France. She gave a report of daily activities, meals, and entertainment. April 4<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> was noted for the 2013 Paddle event.