

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
 Management Conference Meeting #65 Minutes
 Ellender Memorial Library – Multipurpose Room
 9:30 a.m. – Tuesday, November 5, 2013

BTNEP Staff			
Andrew Barron	Richard DeMay	Alma Robichaux	
Matt Benoit	Delaina LeBlanc	Kerry St. Pé	
Dean Blanchard	Michael Massimi	Jenny Schexnayder	
Joe Dantin	Kristy Monier		
Management Conference Member		Member	Alternate
American Sugarcane League		Flattery McCollum	Herman Waguespack John Constant
Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District		Hugh Caffery	X Benjamin Malbrough
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana		Steven Peyronnin	
Coastal Conservation Association of LA		John Walther	
Coastal Protection Restoration Authority		Jerome Zeringue	X Kyle Graham Robert Routon Natalie Peyronnin Karim Belhadjali Darin Lee
Commercial Fisheries	X	John Tesvich	Peter Vujnovic Clint Guidry
Greater Lafourche Parish Port Commission		Chett Chaisson	X Davie Breaux
Iberville Parish		John Clark	
Jefferson Parish		Marnie Winter	X Jason Smith Lily Zhou
LA Association of Levee Boards	X	Dwayne Bourgeois	
LA Department of Ag & Forestry		Joey Breaux	Carrie Castille
La Department of Education	X	Ann Wilson	
LA Department of Environmental Quality		Christy Rogers	Gregory Waldron
LA Department of Health and Hospitals		Chasity Cheramie	Kathy LeBlanc
LA Department of Natural Resources	X	Charles Reulet	Don Haydel Sarah Krupa
LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	X	Marty Bourgeois	Brady Carter
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism		Debra Credeur	Karen Leathem
LA Dept. of Economic Development		Paul Sawyer	Anne Perry
LA Forestry Association		Deleted Buck	
LA Independent Oil & Gas Association		Randy Robichaux	
LA Landowners Association	X	Tim Allen	
LA Mid Continent Oil & Gas Association		Mike Lyons	Ed Landgraf
LA Oil Spill Coordinators Office		Brian Wynne	X David Gisclair
LA Science Teachers Association		Shannon Lafont	X Tera LaPrarie Nathan Cotten
LA Wildlife Federation		B.J. Barney Callahan	Rebecca Triche
Lafourche Parish		Archie Chaisson, III	X Charlotte Randolph Amanda Penick
Louisiana Association of Conservation District		Brad Spicer	Jennifer Roberts
LSU Ag Center & LA Sea Grant		Rex Caffey	X Alan Matherne
LUMCON		Nancy Rabalais	X John Conover

				Murt Conover
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	X	Rick Hartman		Rachel Sweeney
Nicholls State University	X	Gary LaFleur		Quenton Fontenot Zack Darnell
Plaquemines Parish		P.J. Hahn		Albertine Kimble Krista Clark
Point Coupee Parish		J.A. Rummler		
Sassafras LA		Alex Naquin		
South Central Planning and Development Commission	X	Kevin Belanger Jo-Anna Jones		Martha Cazaubon Cullen Curole
South Louisiana Economic Council		Vic Lafont		Simone Maloz
St. Charles Parish		Earl Matherne		Kim Marousek
Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government	X	Al Levron		Nic Matherne James Miller
The Nature Conservancy		Jean Landry	X	Nicole Love Karen Gautreaux
U.S. National Park Service		Angela Rathle		Allyn Rodriguez
US Coast Guard		Charles Reed		
US Corps of Engineers		Susan Hennington		Cheri Price
US Environmental Protection Agency		Doug Jacobson		John Ettinger John Bowie
US Fish & Wildlife Service		Ronnie Paille		Bill Vermillion
USDA/NRCS		Quin Kinler	X	John Boatman Ryan Johnson Alton James Andrea Moore Russell Richard
USGS		Scott Wilson	X X X	Kate Spear Susan Testroet-Bergeron Melissa Collin
Guest Organization				
Bayou Grace Community Services	X	Thaddeus Pellegrin		
Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation		Earl Melancon	X	Michele Beary
Grand Isle Port Commission	X	Wayne Keller		
South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center	X	Jonathan Foret		

Management Conference members and guests were asked to introduce themselves by stating their name and affiliation. Those who had not checked in with Jenny at the door were asked to do so.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS DATE MEETING

A motion was made by Ann Wilson and second by John Tesvich to dispense with the reading of the August 22, 2013 minutes and to accept them as submitted.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Kerry summarized the list of program activities from the agenda. He noted that we had inquiries as to how the government shutdown affected the program. The shutdown did affect participation of federal agencies being able to present at La Fete. The shutdown ceased a few days before the festival but only the National Park Service was able to participate.

BTNEP did a Toast to the Coast with the 28 National Estuary Programs for National Estuary's Day. This was done in concert with the Spahr's "Gulf" Tournament. Spahr's donated the proceeds from the tournament totaling \$17,000.00 to the foundation.

Kerry asked Michael to address activities revolving around the BTNEP invasive species program. Michael explained that apple snails are large fresh water snails from South America. They have been in the Barataria-Terrebonne region since 2006 and we first started seeing them in the West Bank Metro New Orleans area and around Schriever moving west towards Morgan City along Highway 20. Now clusters are appearing in far flung locations indicating that they are definitely spreading. The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission recently changed the regulations making it illegal to possess them live. He recently noted apple snails were being sold at a local feed store in New Orleans. It was reported and enforcement action was taken by LDWF the very next day. The supplier was identified and it is an ongoing case. He stressed that this is a step in the right direction. It was his understanding that the supplier simply collected them from a ditch behind his house and was selling them for \$5.00 per snail. They are a desirable aquarium species because of their decorative shells and are helpful in keeping tanks clean. Gary LaFleur asked about the verbiage of the regulation. Marty Bourgeois referred everyone to Louisiana Administrative Code 76 Chapter 1. Section 199. Discussion followed regarding other species and aquatic plants being regulated.

Every year the program is required to report habitat improvements/enhancements according to the Government Performance Result Act. Kerry thanked partners like OCPR, NRCS, CWPPRA for their assistance in collecting data. Dean collects and assembles the data and reports to EPA through NEWPORT. Darin Lee announced CPRA is now publishing quarterly status reports. He hopes that this information has helped Dean but also wants everyone to know that this information is available for everyone. In addition to that, Kerry stated that data reported is not only welcomed from the above mentioned agencies but also from any individual that does anything to enhance marshes or wetlands. Dean stated that reporting is done in September.

Kerry informed everyone about the improvements being done at the Nicholls Farm. The program is expanding the shade house, green houses, and boat storage areas through private donations to the Foundation. The program currently rents storage to accommodate our equipment and materials and the goal is to consolidate resources. It is hoped that renovations will be made my midyear. The Foundation recently applied for a grant through Mosiac to purchase a new green house and is awaiting a response.

Both 2014 Bird and Tide Calendars should be available by mid-December. Funds for printing were received from Lafourche Parish, Terrebonne Parish, Lake Charles, St. Bernard, Grand Isle Port Commission, St. Mary CVB, Terrebonne Parish CVB, and Bayou Lafourche CVB, and Friends of Grand Isle. Private donations made production of both calendars possible.

The last item addressed by Kerry was in reference to a listed meeting on the agenda. It was a conference call with Brandon Middleton, Staffer for U.S. Senator David Vitter and Anna-Maria Laura, Staffer for U.S. Senator Whitehouse regarding the NEP reauthorization Bill – S.1313. Kerry was contacted by a lobbyist for NEPs trying to get reauthorization at the 50 million dollar level and Senator Vitter is a key person to make that happened. Brandon agreed to look closely at that but in the end Senator Vitter elected not to support the bill because of verbiage regarding non-point source discharge. Al Levron questioned what happens now. Kerry responded continuing budget resolution.

SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING DATES

February 6, 2014 – Century Room @ NSU Stadium

May 8, 2014 – Century Room @ NSU Stadium

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Documenting and Quantifying Feral Hog Damage in Louisiana's Southern Marshes – Anthony Ballard, University of Louisiana at Monroe

Anthony introduced himself and acknowledged BTNEP for funding, use of equipment, and cooperation; the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries noting Ed Mouton in the New Iberia Office; University of Louisiana at Monroe specifically Dr. Kim Tolson who served as major advisor; Daybrook Company; Continental Land and Fur; and Conoco Phillips.

His first slide covered damage and he noted that this particular study was more about vegetative damage as it was much easier to see from the air. However many other types of damage affect the ecosystem from the bottom to the top and gave examples of ground nesting birds, invertebrate assemblages, water quality degradation, spread of disease, and alligator nest depredation with explanations of each.

He explained the aims and objectives of his project and noted that this was not a census and they were not looking for a compilation of hard facts on the number of pigs that are in these areas. His aim was to document and quantify feral hog damage, determine drivers of habitat selection and patterns of hog damage. Because this problem will not be solved by one particular person or organization, they want to inform landowners and the public. This project was modeled off the Coastwide Nutria Control Program (CNCPP). One of the reasons that program has been so successful is because it does involve the public and that leads to public education. He talked about the 500 thousand acre project area located in Terrebonne Parish just east of the Atachafalaya River between Houma and Patterson consisting of 17 North-South transects run by helicopter. The area was chosen because it represents a microcosm of what is seen over the entire coast and represents all four marsh types: fresh, intermediate, brackish, and salt and because of an increase in numbers as opposed to a few years ago. They are now seeing an inundation within this area. He displayed a map indicating the types of marshes that also showed major land owners.

Surveys were done in early spring before green up to see damage as well as possible. All transects were flown by helicopter that were 1.77 miles apart covering an area the width of about one half mile and about one quarter of a mile out of each window. Damage sites were splotchy varying in size and intensity. When damaged areas were found, they would keep flying and look for more until they covered the entire area where there was damage and then assess the area in the polygon and get acreage damage estimate. They categorized damage in levels from mild, moderate, severe and to bare ground. When they set the helicopter down, they gathered data on vegetation regarding species of plants and noted whether they were desirable either for cover and/or dietary purposes for feral hogs. They noted the transect number that they were on, the marsh type that it was in, and the acreage of the polygon that they had flown and they then rose in altitude to take an area photo of each damage site.

They found 17 damage sites in the 17 transects and made a few key observations. Damage areas were all concentrated in the northwestern quadrant of the study area, and they were all in freshwater marsh even though they have been documented in all four marsh types. They also noted that they tend to follow water ways and there are a few different theories on that. One theory is a higher number of invertebrates or desirable plant species for dietary purposes. The second being that species such as black willow and bald cypress which are larger woody species also follow those waterways and could be used for thermal cover.

Once they got all of the damage sites, they used calculations to extrapolate how much damage was within those particular areas within the freshwater area. Results of the study indicated that the smallest damage sites range from 2.7 acres to the largest being 227.5 total acres of actual feral hog damage. Assuming equal distribution and occupancy, acres currently damaged within freshwater marsh of the study area totaled 796.4 acres or 613 football fields. This is a testament to how well they use habitat, how quickly they spread, and how much damage they can make in a short period of time.

He showed a slide of CNCPP Herbivory Damage map ranging from 2006-2008. He hopes to produce a similar map with feral hog damage. Because nutria are resident species, you get a nice concise overlapping on the map and you can see that the sites have either shrunk in size drastically or disappeared completely. We are not going to get that overlap with feral hogs and expect to see a progression into the marsh rather than what is seen on the CNCPP map. They also expect the damage sites to possibly rise and increase in average size.

What they want from this project is to use data collected to form a program and/or legislation, to use CNCPP as blueprint to obtain CWPPRA funding, to inform public and companies from data, and to maximize control efforts to reduce marsh degradation. These marsh systems are completely beautiful and unique and we want to protect them and the native species that are there by controlling and/or eradicating feral hog populations.

Kerry asked if he would be seeking funding for next year and Anthony confirmed that he would. Kerry asked about his feeling on wetland loss. Anthony responded that they do know that the rooting damage causes erosion along with water quality degradation as well as wetland terrestrial quality degradation. Kerry asked if he saw any area where hog damage overlapped nutria damage. Anthony responded that there were a few but there is no mistaking the two. Kim Tolson noted that Edmund Mouton found areas four or five years ago (not in Terrebonne Parish) that had recovered from nutria damage that had been lost to hog damage.

Alan Matherne questioned if they were regulated by LDWF and discussion followed regarding hunting, and limits and rules for feral hogs. Al Levron asked if land owners were being aggressive in taking these animals. Anthony felt that they were because of the economic value of the property. Alan noted that both Texas and Oklahoma are having the same program and it has gotten so bad in Australia that they are now using contraceptives and poisoning methods in the form of a preservative that shuts down their respiratory system when consumed in high levels. He also informed everyone that there is an international conference in Alabama in February.

Gary LaFleur asked if he noted any sightings of brown marsh. He responded that he did but that he only had photos of actual hog damage. Richard DeMay stated that there is activity on the immediate coast like West Belle Pass and the entire Caminada Headland you can find areas where they have torn up Spartina and flora right near the beach head. For coastal restoration projects this is a potential impact to barrier island restoration. Marty Bourgeois asked Anthony how he would envision the bounty program in comparison to the nutria program. Anthony responded that initial thoughts are a bounty program. One potential problem with that would be that people do have domesticated swine and there isn't much difference morphologically between the two and this enables a person to kill someone's domesticated swine and presenting as bounty. Details would need to be worked out to prevent that from happening. There is no perfect program but the key is to get the public involved and educated.

Alan stated that the feral hog is one of the most intelligent animals unlike nutria just sitting out there. They go nocturnal when pressure is put on them and other control methods are needed because they are smart, aggressive with high reproductive success. Wayne Keller stated that this is the first year that they are seeing them on Elmer's Isle. Lily Zhou stated that if we have a bounty, then there would be more chance of opportunistic kill. If a hunter is out there for something else, the bounty would give that extra incentive to take a feral hog.

John Tesvich asked if natural disasters force movement. Anthony could not confirm and because there was no documentation but it is believed to do so. Tim Allen stated that they first saw hogs after Hurricane Andrew in 1992, and that they have been quite prolific ever since. They have taken their own eradication measures but it has been in the middle of the southern track Anthony showed where they first showed up. It is his belief that they came in from Plaquemine's Parish. John confirmed sightings on rooftops after Katrina. Kerry asked if he had a feel on what plant they prefer based on his observations. Anthony answered that hogs make use of every food item like small animals, invertebrate and even small deer fawns if they come across them. They are very opportunistic. Kerry thanked Anthony for his time and effort. Michael reminded everyone that this is a BTNEP project and the final report will be made public.

2. Piping Plover Surveys on the Caminada Headland Beach and Dune Restoration Project in Port Fourchon, LA - Delaina LeBlanc, BTNEP Migratory Bird Coordinator

BTNEP has many bird projects going on and Kerry felt that it was time for a presentation. Since 2005, the program has been conducting formal surveys. Delaina explained that the project she would be discussing was at Port Fourchon and that she has had the pleasure of working down there on Wilson's Plover surveys. They are now shifting toward wintering Piping Plovers because there is a restoration project being conducted by CPRA.

The project site is five miles from West Bell Pass to Bayou Meraux at Caminada Headland. When surveys are done, they cover more than the projected area. For every survey, the minimal area they cover would be from the entrance area of Elmer's Island to West Belle Pass and if able, surveyors will include West Belle Pass and Elmer's Island. The total area covered when all sites are done is 13 miles. The project goals are to determine impacts of construction on Piping Plovers, nesting shorebirds, and populations of benthic organisms. At the same time, they are looking at what is happening on the beach and how the active restoration project is influencing the distribution of these birds along the beach.

They conducted benthic surveys pre and post data collection on April 1st and 2nd, they collected 28 samples in four different locations that are going to analyze population density and diversity of invertebrate organisms. The data they collect includes numbered individuals, coordinates, location (Gulf shoreline, back bay area or in between), activity (aggressive, foraging, loafing, flying). They also look at color band combinations and try to get as many photographs as possible to see if they have repeated birds. Aside from that, they are collecting all avian data. They do not record a waypoint for that but they are recording the number and species. The focal species are Piping Plover, Wilson's Plover, Snowy Plover, and Red Knot.

The featured bird is the Piping Plover because of its threatened/endangered status. She included photos of the Piping Plovers in alternate and basic plumage. She talked about the differences in the Plovers that aid in identifying the correct bird. Delaina showed a map of the Piping Plover Breeding and Winter Range indicating the Great Lakes area as the one that is endangered. All others are categorized as threatened. In the last few years, a large population of wintering birds was found in the Bahamas. In 1978 the bird was designated threatened, upgraded to endangered in 1985 and critical habitat was designated in 2007. Problems for the bird include human impacts like use of beach, loss of habitat, and predation. Efforts to increase populations include enclosed nesting sites and beach monitoring so that birds have higher success rates.

She showed a map of the critical habitat designated along the lower Louisiana Coastline. She showed images of birds from different locations and noted the colored tagging. They can look at a tag and figure out where a bird came from. They see very few orange flags indicating a Great Lakes bird but do see many green flags indicating Missouri River and Atlantic Coast birds and lots of yellow flags indicating North Dakota. Light blue and yellow are generally from the same area and they occasionally see a bird from the Bahamas. They have completed 17 surveys and have identified 85 absolutely noted combinations possibly more banded birds. They have seen 54 of them more than once. The percentage of banded birds ranges from about 15 to 25% of the total number of birds observed during a survey. There are more birds that are not banded.

At the end of the summer they received an email from North Dakota stating that they started a yellow flag alphanumeric band. They were able to tell us that the older birds had more bands on the bottom and the younger birds would have no bands on the lower legs. With that information, they started doing some foraging observations. Trying to find birds that they know the age of and so they can get a range of differences in how they feed, the area they hunt, and their success, etc. She showed a video of a foraging bird. She also showed images taken at last survey in October with the dredge pump running with birds in the foreground actually feeding in that area and are really hopeful that the project will help both plovers and the coast.

Gary LaFleur asked what made the piping plover more vulnerable than the other plovers. Delaina responded loss of breeding grounds and loss of habitat. Darin Lee stated the CPRA is building projects and critical habitat and USFWS questioned whether they were taking Plovers through disturbance activities. He felt the US Fish didn't know how many plovers were out there and has a lot of east coast experience with beach restoration, and condominiums and access. They are going through this process and contracted with BTNEP to do these surveys because of their history and expertise. He thinks that what we are finding is that there are many more plovers out there. He thinks they realize this and we will find that these types of restoration activities don't have the impacts to Plovers that they are used to from other beach nourishment type projects on the east coast. They are going to start addressing that issue from a critical habitat standpoint and ultimately these projects create plover habitat for a long period of time and that the construction activities really do not cause an issue. They have documented a couple of times where Plovers were feeding in the outfall as the pumps were running. He believes that this issue will go away for them from a restoration standpoint and construction activity standpoint.

Susan Bergeron questioned how long the study would last after the site was constructed if we were truly trying to show that we are making new habitat. Darin responded that they contracted this as a permit requirement and the permit requirement states "take" of plovers due to construction at max. So, they are monitoring these through construction. They are talking about construction ending in May and will probably fund this through May. Then they are required to look at the benthic organisms one year post construction. If they haven't recovered to pre levels they go to two years. If they still haven't recovered, they go to three years. They will be doing Plover Surveys when they do those benthic samples one year post but will not be doing surveys every two weeks like they are doing now. They are doing biweekly surveys to document the disturbances of actual construction activity.

Delaina added that BTNEP is looking for funding to continue outside of CPRA to continue to get a better picture. Rick Hartman asked if there were any documented takes. Darin responded that there were none. He explained that when they talked with Fish during the permitting phase, the highest plovers numbers recorded during annual surveys were 40. Surveys were done one time a year in the winter, and they wanted CPRA to survey three times a month. CPRA negotiated to twice a month.

During recent surveys, up to 106 plovers were documented and Delaina confirmed this amount. Darin stated that CS33 a Cameron Parish Shoreline Project where they were bringing in sand again from federal waters offshore. CPRA started doing surveys in July every two weeks and finally saw a plover this last survey. CPRA is not seeing any plovers over there but with this project there are many more using the area than Fish & Wildlife realized so at this point they are unable to document that they are running any plover out of the area. Delaina added that there is traffic at the site. The birds get flushed away but they come back.

Michael asked if there were other species of concern and how they fit into this project. Delaina replied that the Red Knot is on the verge of being listed, Wilson's Plover, and Snowy Plover. She noted that a Snowy Plover was documented on a restoration site that was never seen before.

Richard DeMay added that both Snowy and Oystercatchers are listed in the State's Wildlife Action Plan because of the low numbers of birds here. If you look at their continental population, you are looking at 6,000 breeding pairs. It may sound like a lot but in fact it is not. When these numbers continue to decline, Fish and Wildlife gets involved and would look at it from an endangered species perspective. There are other breeding populations outside the US but these birds are not as ubiquitous and widely distributed as some other shorebirds or songbirds or have means within a specific species population.

There are a number of bird species but they are focusing on four in this study. The main objective is to document Piping Plover and that distribution of that species. In addition to that, they are counting the other three but are documenting other birds that are a concern to USFWS from a national perspective.

Anne Wilson asked how climate change is taken into account. Delaina said that they are learning a lot through banding. They may get questions from the bird banding lab because it is out of the ordinary and documentation is checked and confirmed. This could indicate change or that we are still learning. Richard responded that they have not documented any impacts and discussion followed. Darin reiterated that from CPRAs perspective, they are particularly interested in how the plovers on site utilize the site as construction takes place not an overall change in plover population. They are doing this at this site, in Cameron, and at a possible site at Whiskey so that they can go back to USFWS and be able to say that we are not having an effect on these plovers from construction activity.

3. La Fete d'Ecologie – Kristy Monier

Before getting started with La Fete, Kristy talked about the 3rd Annual Spahr's "Gulf" Tournament on Friday, September 13th. There were 28 paid teams raising over \$16,679.56 for the program. In addition to that, we celebrated BTNEP's birthday and our campaign for Toast to the Coast. She showed a few images of the event. The program kicked off the Toast to the Coast in conjunction with National Estuaries Day at the tournament and continued by posting pictures of friends, businesses, and other organizations to Facebook.

On October 19th, the program hosted the 17th Annual La Fete d'Ecologie at Lake End Park in Morgan City. This was the 3rd consecutive year at Lake End Park. The day began with heavy rain that cleared up around 11 a.m. She thanked Morgan City ROTC, for presentation of colors; Sam Eroche, who sang the National Anthem; Gary Lafleur, Emcee and Mayor Frank Grizzaffi, III. There were thirteen exhibitors and 15 folk life artists with some cancelling at the last minute due to weather. She reviewed each of those lists. Festival attendees were treated to great entertainment throughout the day with Geno DeLafose & French Rockin' Boogie, Chubby Carrier & The Bayou Swamp Band, Don Rich, King Pa-Ka-Yea' Band and Magician Glen Ghiardi. Kristy mentioned that she had recently received an email from Chubby stating that he had a great time and asked if he could be in the lineup next year. She reviewed the list of vendors and food that was available throughout the day. Competitions for all ages included duck calling and cast net throwing. Sponsors for the festival totaled \$6,000 and included Mosaic, Spahr's Seafood, NSU Foundation, Cannata's, Capital One Bank, Regions Bank, GIS, ES&H, Bourgeois & Associates, Morris Hebert, Inc.

CH2M Hill, T. Baker Smith, City of Morgan City, BTEF, Chubby Carrie and The Bayou Swamp Band, Geno Delafosse & French Rockin' Boogie. She announced that there has been discussion regarding new festival locations. The program is currently entertaining a location in Luling and another on the West Bank but encouraged suggestions from everyone. Many of the participants were from Morgan City and Thibodaux with some from Plaquemines and New Orleans but it is time to start reaching others within the estuary. If we can't get them to the festival, then we need to look at bringing the festival to them. Any with suggestions were asked to call, email or talk with Kristy after the meeting.

4. Update on BTNEP Education Activities – Alma Robichaux

Alma had a few announcements regarding the Education Program. They just started the Tools for Teachers Workshops where they partner with the main Terrebonne Parish Library. They are responsible for advertising and bringing people in. They have a child's program so that the teachers can bring their children in while they work on curriculum with the teachers. The teachers have a great time. They supply food for the children and teachers so that they can come in directly after school. She would like to see additional partnerships around the estuary. They also offer two hours of CEUs for the teachers of the needed 150 hours every three years. The teachers learn a lot from each other and we learn from them.

BTNEP did get the Keep Louisiana Beautiful Grant again for our 3rd Annual Bayou Lafourche Cleanup scheduled for the Ides of March, March 15, 2014 from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Once again, stations will be set along the 106 miles of the Bayou Lafourche. We received \$5,000.00 from KLB. Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District usually contributes \$5,000.00 and intends to be more involved this year. BTNEP contributes \$3,000.00 in supplies and expenses. The expenses are mostly the dumpsters. Last year the BLFWD board members were able to get many of the dumpsters donated and hope to see that again. The t-shirts are a big expense and we do not do sponsorships on those along with signage and banners. More involvement from the management conference is needed because it is such a large project with over 1300 volunteers on the bayou. We need participation to help clean the bayou. Also, in-kind support is needed (boats, access to the bayou, give-a-ways, trash bags, and/or gloves). We are open to any donations. All were encouraged to advertise on their web sites. Alma stressed that conference members mark calendars and get involved because BTNEP would really love to see participation from Management Conference.

BTNEP started a recycling program at ED White and are starting one at NSU. ED White has an Ecology Club and BTNEP was able to get in there and help them get the program started with private funding. It has been a huge success. It is hoped that they will eventually replace a dumpster with a recycling dumpster.

BTNEP hosted a Rain Barrel Workshop in an effort to get the word out about water conservation and water quality. Coca Cola donated the barrels. The workshops are intended to be a fund raiser for the Foundation. The workshop was held at the NSU Farm. Because it was held at the farm, it gave the public a chance to see what we do at the farm. They were able to get a feel for our restoration projects, plantings, and our volunteer program.

There will be a storm drain marking project at 5:30 today on the NSU campus with the Biology Club marking the storm drains. This project too deals with water quality. BTNEP is working with the City of Thibodaux as well because cities get points for water quality, so they are very eager to partner with us to mark the storm drains. The markers do have our logo and states NO DUMPING – DRAINS TO THE ESTUARY.

Next weekend BTNEP is taking nine high school students to the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit in Sarasota, Florida. Jonathan Foret from South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center, Jen Hamilton from the Terrebonne Parish Library, and Michele Beary from the Barataria-Terrebonne Foundation will be going. The BTEF is sponsoring this trip. The students from Future Leaders of America's Gulf, The Youth Advisory Council, and the ED White Ecology Club. The conference will teach students about ocean conservation and we are going to represent Louisiana and bring some of our issues up to the forefront. They will also learn about grant writing and doing grass root efforts. Students are from H.L. Bourgeois, Terrebonne High, Evergreen, Vanderbilt, and ED White so it a good diverse group.

Grand Isle Cleanup was scheduled in conjunction with the international coastal cleanup in October but was rained out. It has been moved to November 23rd on Grand Isle. The Nature Conservancy and Town of Grand Isle with others will work together and turn in the data to the Ocean Conservancy.

Alma congratulated Johnathan Foret on a successful Rougarou Fest that helped to bring wetland loss to the forefront.

5. New Business

There will be an NEP conference in Mobile. Many program directors requested a side trip to see our estuary. BTEF rented a 32 passenger bus for a driving tour from Raceland to Grand Isle. Kerry invited those interested to attend.

NSU Biology Department wanted him to announce an Educational Event on November 7th from 6-7:30 that highlights the effects of climate change on glaciers in Peltier Auditorium on the Nicholls campus.

Susan Bergeron announced that the "I Remember" art show is being moved to the Terrebonne Waterlife Museum and Jonathan Foret is assisting in setup that afternoon. It is scheduled to be there throughout the end of the year. Also, on Thursday, November 14th, there will be an open house and all were encourage to do an interview for an oral history that will be housed at LSU. Questions will be asked about wetlands, and Jennifer Abraham from the LSU Oral History Center will be there to guide them. Photographs will be taken and posted on Facebook with the oral history. She stated that everyone has some interesting stories to tell about Louisiana Wetlands. Stories will be in 15 minute increments and appointments can be made if anyone is interested. Susan asked that AI make information available to the people of Terrebonne Parish.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.