

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program  
 Management Conference Meeting #67 Minutes  
 Ellender Memorial Library – Multipurpose Room  
 9:30 a.m. – Thursday, May 8, 2014

<b>BTNEP Staff</b>				
X Andrew Barron	X Richard DeMay	X Alma Robichaux		
X Matt Benoit	Delaina LeBlanc	X Kerry St. Pé		
X Dean Blanchard	X Michael Massimi	X Jenny Schexnayder		
Joe Dantin	X Kristy Monier	Natalie Waters		
<b>Management Conference Member</b>		<b>Member</b>		<b>Alternate</b>
American Sugarcane League		Flattery McCollum	X	Herman Waguespack John Constant
Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District		Hugh Caffery	X	Benjamin Malbrough
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana	X	Carey L. Perry		Hilary Collis
Coastal Conservation Association of LA		John Walther		
Coastal Protection Restoration Authority		Jerome Zeringue	X	Kyle Graham Bren Haase Darin Lee X Kenneth Bahlinger
Commercial Fisheries		John Tesvich		Peter Vujnovicch Clint Guidry
Greater Lafourche Parish Port Commission		Chett Chaisson	X	Joni Tuck Davie Breaux
Iberville Parish		John Clark		
Jefferson Parish		Marnie Winter	X	Jason Smith Lily Zhou
LA Association of Conservation District		Brad Spicer	X	Brad Lanute
LA Association of Levee Boards		Dwayne Bourgeois		
LA Department of Ag & Forestry		Joey Breaux		Carrie Castille
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism		Debra Credeur		Karen Leathem Linda Smith
LA Dept. of Economic Development		Paul Sawyer		Anne Perry
LA Department of Education		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	X	Don Haydel Sarah Krupa Robert Williamson
LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries		Marty Bourgeois		Brady Carter
LA Forestry Association				
LA Independent Oil & Gas Association		Randy Robichaux		
LA Landowners Association	X	Tim Allen		
LA Mid Continent Oil & Gas Association		Mike Lyons	X	Ed Landgraf
LA Oil Spill Coordinators Office		Brian Wynne	X	David Gisclair Karolien Debusschere
LA Science Teachers Association		Shannon Lafont	X	Tera LaPrarie Nathan Cotten
LA Wildlife Federation		B.J. Barney Callahan	X X	Rebecca Triche Michelle Maloney Eden Davis

				Maura Wood
Lafourche Parish		Archie Chaisson, III	X	Charlotte Randolph Amanda Penick
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	X	P.J. Hahn		Albertine Kimble Krista Clark
Point Coupee Parish		J.A. Rummler		
Sassafras LA		Alex Naquin		
South Central Planning and Development Commission		Kevin Belanger Jo-Anna Jones		Martha Cazaubon Cullen Curole Simone Caesar
South Louisiana Economic Council		Vic Lafont	X	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		Nicole Love Karen Gautreaux
U.S. National Park Service	X	Angela Rathle		Allyn Rodriguez
US Coast Guard	X	Charles Reed		
US Corps of Engineers	X	Susan Hennington		Barbara Kleiss Mark Wingate Cheri Price
US Environmental Protection Agency		Doug Jacobson	X	John Ettinger Ben Scaggs John Bowie
US Fish & Wildlife Service		Ronnie Paille		Bill Vermillion
USDA/NRCS		Quin Kinler	X X	John Boatman Ryan Johnson Alton James Andrea Moore Russell Richard Scott Edwards
USGS	X	Scott Wilson	X	Phil Turnipseed Kate Spear Susan Testroet-Bergeron Melissa Collin
Guest Organization		Guest		
Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation	X	Earl Melancon	X	Michele Beary
Daily Comet	X	Lex Wilson		
Gulf of Mexico Program	X	John Bowie		
Mississippi State University	X	Pat Fitzpatrick		
Presbytery of South Louisiana	X	Colleen Earp		
Restore or Retreat	X	John Lombardo		
Royal Engineering	X	Shelley Sparks		
South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center	X	Jonathan Foret		
UNO – CHART (Center for Hazards Assessment, Response & Technology)	X	Kristina Peterson		

1. 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 Tim Allen and second by Herman Waguespack to dispense with the reading of the February 6, 2014 minutes and to accept them as submitted. Motion carried.

## **2. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

A. Personnel Changes - There were no changes in personnel.

B. Presentations/Exhibits/Field Trips/Volunteer Events

There were 14 education events, 10 bird events and five volunteer events. Kerry talked about the status of NSU Farm improvement projects. Matt Benoit gave an update on the greenhouse and enlarged shade house - all made possible by a donation from Mosaic Corporation.

Kristy Monier met with Nicholls State University Mass Communication students regarding a project to increase the Volunteers Program's visibility on campus. The students did a great job with the presentation and suggested great ideas to promote the program in popular media like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Kerry commented that most volunteer events are with people from outside of Louisiana. After Katrina, there was a steady influx of people through the Bayou Grace non-profit group. This has carried over through the years and BTNEP provides them with a restoration experience.

C. Media Interviews

Delaina LeBlanc and Natalie Waters were featured in an article and on the cover of "What Now Magazine" and copies of the magazine were available at the registration table. The Program's bird monitoring initiative is increasing and seems to be the focus of various agencies. Richard talked about a bird blog being added to the program website. As part of EM-15 of the CCMP, BTNEP is trying to get the word out about its surveys and field work.

Many members are familiar with the annual bird calendar. Twenty-five thousand were printed and distributed around the country. The program receives feedback from this distribution and the intent is to create a distribution list for the bird blog to keep people informed and engaged both locally and nationally.

Kerry highlighted a grant from Delta Waterfowl Foundation. Dean explained that Joe Dantin applied for and was awarded the grant to do two things. The first was to enhance habitat by planting 500 Cypress trees in the Mandalay Wildlife Refuge. The second was to plant terraces in Lake Fields as part of a bigger restoration project. Kerry added that the organization normally sends money to the national headquarters but this year it was spent locally on a restoration project.

D. Meetings

All program meetings were listed in the agenda.

E. Projects Initiated

Richard talked about the Caminada Headland Beach Benthic Organism Surveys. Currently, BTNEP is working with CPRA to conduct numerous Piping Plover surveys and breeding bird surveys in conjunction with an active ongoing restoration project along the Caminada Headland. In addition to these surveys, they are conducting benthic surveys of invertebrates that live in the sediment. They are currently collecting baseline information that

will later be compared to samples collected during various stages of the restoration project from start to finish seeing how restoration affects the benthic community. Jerry McLelland of the University of Southern Mississippi and Aaron Pierce of Nicholls State University and graduate students are conducting the surveys.

Kerry informed everyone that the 2015 Bird Calendar theme would be Ducks.

### 3. SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING DATE

Al asked everyone to mark their calendars for August 7, 2014 and November 6, 2014 for the next meeting dates.

Al announced that Kerry's retirement celebration was scheduled for Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Dean explained that there would be a retirement party in the ballroom at Nicholls State. Invitations were being worked on. The event would be a fundraiser for a BTNEP scholarship in Kerry's name at Nicholls State University. Dean asked members for assistance in meeting the goal of an endowment.

#### DIRECTOR SEARCH UPDATE

Al Levron, Committee Chairman, gave an update on the progress of the recruitment of Kerry's successor. Over the last several months, they have worked on enhancing the job description and are coordinating with Human Resources at LUMCON. He explained that LUMCON is the program's host agency. All funding is routed through them so the actual hire is going to go through LUMCON. The vacancy was posted on the LUMCON, CWPPRA, and NEP websites along with a few others on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Resumes are being accepted through June 2<sup>nd</sup>. They are envisioning an interview process on the NSU campus sometime in June with a successor in place by Kerry's last day, July 11, 2014.

### 4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### A. BTNEP Work Plan

This draft work plan for fiscal year 2015 (October 1, 2014- September 30, 2015), will be submitted to EPA in June. The work plan describes a budget request to EPA for executing projects/CCMP action plans as listed below. There is a funding match from the State of Louisiana. Kerry explained the funding process and budget cuts experienced throughout the years and the negative effects on the program. It was asked that non-federal and non-state agencies in attendance be given the information on who to contact to voice support for the program. He noted that BTNEP solicits support of US Congressional Representatives annually and additional support would be appreciated. He suggested correspondence to them. For the State match, he recommended local representatives of both the house and senate. Kerry stressed the importance of partnerships with other state, federal, private, and non-profit agencies. Each budget item was explained and discussed.

Project Name	Cost
LUMCON Indirect (10%)	\$48,909.00
Rental - Building (Operating Services)	\$28,795.00
Travel Funds	\$20,000.00
BTNEP Personnel Salary	\$130,000.00
BTNEP Personnel Fringe (45%)	\$58,500.00
BTNEP Part Time Worker Funding	\$46,230.00
Administrative (Supplies)	\$20,000.00
Administrative (Operating Services)	\$67,866.00

Native Plant Production Program	\$10,000.00
Layout of the 2016 Tidal Graph Calendar	\$9,000.00
Bayou Lafourche Cleanup (supplies)	\$3,000.00
Volunteer Program (supplies)	\$18,000.00
2015 From H-2-O: A Water Quality Workshop For Teachers	\$8,000.00
Census Survey of the BTNEP Region for Wilson Plover, Snowy Plover, Least Tern and American Oystercatcher	\$15,000.00
Layout and Content Development of 2016 Bird Calendar	\$15,000.00
2015 Louisiana Wetland Teacher Workshop (WETSHOP)	\$8,000.00
South Louisiana Discovery Center Wetlands Youth Summit	\$6,000.00
LA. Jr. Master Naturalist and Summer Camps/National Park Service	\$6,000.00
Terrebonne Aquatic Clinic (TAC)	\$4,000.00
Environmental Education State Symposium	\$1,000.00
Eagle Expo	\$3,200.00
Support for Wetlands/Cultural Day at NSU Jubilee	\$2,500.00
Post- Control Surveys of Feral Hogs In Terrebonne	\$9,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$538,000.00</b>

Al called for a motion to accept the 2015 Work Plan as submitted. A motion was made by Angela Rathle and second by Ed Landgraf. Rick Hartman questioned where the state match was being spent. Dean replied that mandatory insurance, some salaries, etc. Al questioned if Management Conference had a role in approving the state budget. Kerry replied that they have not. Kerry explained that most of state budget is earmarked for salaries. In the past it included equipment and supplies but due to budget cuts that is no longer the case.

B. Mississippi River Long Distance Sediment Pipeline (BA-43) and Bayou Dupont Marsh and Ridge Creation (BA-48 and Other Marsh Creation Projects in the BTNEP – Kenneth Bahlinger of CPRA

Kenneth opened his presentation by reminding everyone that he had last presented to the Management Conference in January of 2013. Kerry had asked him to give an update on BA-43 and he combined it with a NOAA project - Bayou Dupont Marsh and Ridge Creation (BA-48) and other marsh creation projects. He provided a list of coastal restoration and structural protection and infrastructure projects dating from January 2008 through fiscal year 2015 noting that many of these projects involved many from the Management Conference. The ideas for these projects came from the very people in the room and were created with their input on planning to become very sound projects.

He talked about recent and future barrier island projects in the basin and what had been covered in the last ten years. Kenneth's presentation covered past construction projects and projects under construction. Each slide included total project budget, marsh creation/created, construction completion date and or status, and the funding program.

Kenneth then described the Mississippi River Long Distance Sediment Pipeline Long Distance Sediment Pipeline (BA-43 EB) and Bayou Dupont Marsh and Ridge Creation (BA-48) projects. They were two projects

combined into one. Bayou Dupont was the first project where CPRA constructed a ridge feature or natural levee on the edge of the project. The plan is to eventually plant the ridge with woody vegetation, shrubs, and trees for more habitat restoration. On BA-43 there are three parish partners using their parish CIAP funding (Lafourche, Plaquemines, and Jefferson) the State's CIAP funding, and State surplus funding combined to make this a larger/greater project. He then talked about the early concept of long distance sediment project (LDSP). The initial concept was to build an infrastructure corridor where dredge pipe could be placed to do future marsh creation projects and/or install more pipe. Since then, people have become in-tuned with the dredging of the river to restore the coast. Dredging for BA-43 should begin in September of 2014 and the anticipated completion date is December 2014.

Kenneth reviewed future construction projects and he included information on the status of each and the funding sources.

Kerry asked if the same pipeline was used for Scofield Bay (BA-40) and Shell Island East (BA-110) projects. Kenneth said that they did for (BA-40 and BA-110) but not for Pelican (BA-38) because they already had a contract for the borrow area but the same corridor was used. Kerry asked if there was any study on the changes in the tidal prism. Kenneth responded that some modeling had been done because they know that they impact the prism one way or another. Kerry asked how the islands were holding up. Kenneth stated that Hurricane Isaac sat over Pelican for hours and there were some impacts but overall doing very well.

Rick Hartman commented on the complexity of building those islands and much credit goes to the people involved. He went on to say that funding for the CWPPRA program is extended until 2019. He wanted to ensure that everyone understood the importance of the program and the support need for reauthorization. Susan Testroet-Bergeron explained that she could provide information for those interested in reaching out to their legislative delegation and would be available to talk with anyone interested after the meeting. They wanted the public to understand how close they are to deadline for reauthorization.

There was more discussion about the tidal prism with Rick Hartman explaining the concept for those who were not familiar with the process. He noted that he thought that CPRA was doing an analysis on the tidal prism with new marsh creation projects. He wasn't sure how in-depth the study would be but felt that it was an important thing to do. Discussion followed. It was later noted that CPRA was working with the Corps on developing a comprehensive hydrologic model. Kerry stated that he felt it was important to increase the amount of sand in the basins from outside sources like the Mississippi and the Atchafalaya Rivers. Michael Massimi stated that according to the master plan only out-of-basin sources could be used for marsh creation projects but that did not apply to ridge projects, and he questioned what source was used for the Grand Liard Project. Kenneth replied that it was coming from the Gulf of Mexico and confirmed that it was a ridge project and a marsh creation project. Richard DeMay asked to what extent would CPRA restore East Timbalier. Kenneth replied that it was more of a feasibility, engineering and design study as to what extent it could be restored.

### C. Bayou Lafourche Cleanup

Alma Robichaux presented on the 2014 Bayou Lafourche Cleanup. Two weeks before the event a few BTNEP staff toured the bayou with a few of the site captains to survey areas with the National Park Service and the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District providing boats. One out of every three volunteers was provided with a data sheet and 91 completed data sheets were returned for tallying. Plastic continues to be a major problem and BTNEP is starting a Break the Plastic Habit Campaign to get plastics out of the environment and encourage people to use reusable items rather than disposables. Alma presented a list of items that were pulled from the bayou and how these items were tallied. She compared 2013-2014 results including dumpster weights. The number of sites has decreased as they have combined areas with one captain handling a bigger area. The cleanup continues to be a great outreach event. Residents feel like they are doing something good and become connected to the bayou. BTNEP partners and site captains do a great job. Nicholls State University is a huge partner with student involvement. Tires continue to be a problem with 391 collected. BNTEP partners with Lafourche Parish for their Hazardous Waste Day and many of the calls received were regarding tires. For this year's event, by 9:00 a.m. the tire removal trucks were full and could not take additional tires. Alma covered unusual items found and included pictures of the dumpsters.

The most interesting find this year was a 12 year old message in a bottle from St. Philomena School that had only traveled 300 feet and the girl who wrote it is now an NSU student. NSU students took the cleanup to another level by sorting their trash to remove recyclables. Alma stated that the Bayou Lafourche Cleanup would not be successful without the help of the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District, its staff and Keep Louisiana Beautiful.

Shelley Sparks asked if any response was received from residents and Alma replied that there was none. Tim Allen asked if a disposal fee was paid for tires. Alma responded that the fee was waived except for larger tires like aircraft tires. Kerry stated that the large number of volunteers was an indication of the number of concerned citizens in the region but the problem continues to be the number of people who continue to litter.

#### D. Paddle Bayou Lafourche

Kristy Monier talked about the 13th Annual Paddle Bayou Lafourche from April 3-6<sup>th</sup> from Donaldsonville to Lockport. There were 156 paddlers registered with 33 paddlers completing all four days of the 52 miles. Over 100 paddlers were local but BTNEP hosted some from Ruston, Alexandria, and Baton Rouge. Twenty-five were from out-of-state from Texas, Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, Maine, and Wisconsin. Kristy gave a day-by-day breakdown of the paddler's experience. Weather/wind predictions for the trip prevented many from participating and experienced paddlers struggled on the first leg of the trip. Kristy thanked Bayou Lafourche Freshwater district for the excellent meal. A Trivia night was new to the event on Thursday. It was a great educational opportunity for everyone. On day two, Orbits provided breakfast and Roger Bourgeois of Bourgeois and Associates with music from Mr. Patrick Sylvest. Day three, weather forecast was poor, the Foundation provided breakfast, Virginia Plaisance provided lunch, and the Robichaux's provided an ethnic dinner from the Houma Indians. Weather did not allow for the annual Native American performance at the Robichaux's. Because of inclement weather, day 4 festivities were canceled but the weather finally cleared up allowing paddlers on the water. Fifty-seven of the ninety-eight registered paddlers completed the last leg of the trip and sandwich trays and chicken drumettes were purchased at Rouses to feed the hungry participants. Kristy provided comments from the paddlers and noted that we received plenty of positive feedback from our paddlers. Sponsors noted were Bourgeois and Associates, Breaux Petroleum, Valentine Chemical, BobbyLynns Marina, Lafourche Ford/Lincoln, Georgia Farms, Synergy Bank, Community Bank, and Jones Dermatology. In kind sponsors were Mr. J.C. LeBlanc, Orbitz, Dow Chemical, Nicholls State University, Bourgeois & Associates, Town of Lockport, City of Donaldsonville, Jean Lafitte National Park, Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District, and Kleinpeter Dairy. The concern for next year is to find a lunch site for day one. The LeBlanc house is for sale. Kristy noted that she is also looking into doing a lunch spot for day two as it is the only day that paddlers pay for their lunches. She does have a possible connection but a lunch sponsor needs to be secured.

### 5. NEW BUSINESS

P.J. Hahn gave a presentation on the Cat Islands initiative. His presentation included images of birds during the oil spill, images of Cat Island East and West dating from 2012 in comparison to the present, and the latest restoration plans.

### 6. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.