Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

Management Conference Meeting #70 Minutes

Plantation Suite – NSU Student Union

9:30 a.m. – Thursday, February 5, 2015

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| **BTNEP Staff** | | | | | | | | | |
| X  X  X  X | Andrew Barron  Matt Benoit  Dean Blanchard  Joe Dantin | X  X  X  X | Richard DeMay  Delaina LeBlanc  Michael Massimi  Kristy Monier | | | | X  X  X  X | | Alma Robichaux  Jenny Schexnayder  Susan Testroet-Bergeron  Natalie Waters |
| **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 | | | |  | Morgan Crutcher | X | | Hilary Collis | |
| Coastal Conservation Association of LA | | | |  | John Walther |  | |  | |
| Coastal Protection Restoration Authority | | | |  | Jerome Zeringue | X  X  X  X | | Kyle Graham  Robert Routon  Karim Belhadjali  Darin Lee  Kenneth Bahlinger  Bren Haase  Carol Parsons Richard  Joseph “Wes’ LeBlanc  Brad Miller  Honora Buras  Adam Ledet | |
| Commercial Fisheries | | | |  | John Tesvich |  | | Peter Vujnovicch  Clint Guidry | |
| Greater Lafourche Parish Port Commission | | | |  | Chett Chaisson |  | | Davie Breaux  Joni Tuck | |
| Iberville Parish | | | |  | John Clark |  | |  | |
| Jefferson Parish | | | |  | Marnie Winter |  | | Jason Smith  Lily Zhou  Matt Sevier | |
| LA Association of Conservation District | | | |  | Brad Spicer |  | |  | |
| LA Association of Levee Boards | | | | X | Dwayne Bourgeois |  | |  | |
| LA Department of Ag & Forestry | | | | X | Joey Breaux | X  X | | Carrie Castille  Caitlin Lambert  Faran Dietz | |
| 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 | | | | X | Ann Wilson |  | |  | |
| LA Department of Environmental Quality | | | |  | Christy Rogers | X | | Gregory Waldron  Mary Gentry | |
| 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 |  | | Ed Landgraf | |
| LA Oil Spill Coordinators Office | | | |  | Brian Wynne | X | | David Gisclair  Karolien Debusschere | |
| LA Science Teachers Association | | | |  | Shannon Lafont | X | | Tera LaPrarie  Nathan Cotton  Jean May-Brett | |
| LA Wildlife Federation | | | | X | B.J. Barney Callahan |  | | Rebecca Triche | |
| Lafourche Parish | | | |  | Archie Chaisson, III | X | | Charlotte Randolph  Amanda Voisin | |
| LSU Ag Center & LA Sea Grant | | | |  | Rex Caffey | X | | Alan Matherne  Julie Falgout | |
| LUMCON | | | | X | Nancy Rabalais |  | | John Conover  Murt Conover | |
| National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) | | | | X | Rick Hartman |  | | Lisa Abernathy | |
| Nicholls State University | | | | X | Gary LaFleur | X | | Quenton Fontenot  Zack Darnell | |
| Plaquemines Parish | | | |  | P.J. Hahn | X | | Albertine Kimble  Krista Clark | |
| Point Coupee Parish | | | |  | J.A. Rummler |  | |  | |
| Sassafras LA | | | | X | Alex Naquin |  | |  | |
| South Central Planning and Development Commission | | | |  | Kevin Belanger  Jo-Anna Jones | X | | Martha Cazaubon  Cullen Curole  Simmone Caesar  Anna Choudhuri | |
| South Louisiana Economic Council | | | |  | Vic Lafont | X  X | | Simone Maloz  John Lombardi | |
| St. Charles Parish | | | |  | Earl Matherne |  | | Kim Marousek | |
| Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government | | | | X | Al Levron | X | | Nic Matherne  James Miller | |
| The Nature Conservancy | | | | X | Jean Landry |  | | Nicole Love  Karen Gautreaux | |
| U.S. National Park Service | | | |  | Angela Rathle |  | | Allyn Rodriguez | |
| US Coast Guard | | | |  | Charles Reed | X | | Brian Black | |
| US Corps of Engineers | | | | X | Susan Hennington |  | | Barbara Kleiss  Mark Wingate  Cheri Price | |
| US Environmental Protection Agency | | | |  | Doug Jacobson |  | |  | |
| US Fish & Wildlife Service | | | |  | Ronnie Paille |  | | Bill Vermillion | |
| USDA/NRCS | | | |  | Quin Kinler | X | | John Boatman  Ryan Johnson  Alton James  Andrea Moore Harris  Russell Richard  Scott Edwards | |
| USGS | | | |  | Scott Wilson | X  X | | Phil Turnipseed  Kate Spear  Kelia Bigham  Melissa Collin  Cole Ruckstuhl | |
| Guest Organization | | | |  | Guest |  | |  | |
| Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation | | | | X | Earl Melancon | X | | Michele Beary | |
| Bayou Grace | | | | X | Mary Gueniot | X | | Jenny Dupre | |
|  | | | |  |  |  | |  | |
| Bayou Land RC & D | | | | X | Dr. Colleen Butler | X | | Jennifer Roberts  Siva Nunna | |
| CEC | | | | X | Greg Grandy |  | |  | |
| Congressman Garret Graves’ Office | | | | X | David Cavell |  | |  | |
| Cvitanovic Towing | | | | X | George Cvitanovic |  | |  | |
| Lori LeBlanc, LLC | | | | X | Lori LeBlanc |  | |  | |
| Nicholls State University | | | | X | Dr. Bruce Murphy | X | | Jeanne Murphy | |
| Northern Gulf Institute Mississippi State University | | | | X | Pat Fitzpatrick | X | | Lisa Fitzpatrick | |
| South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center | | | | X | Jonathan Foret |  | |  | |
| UNO – CHART (Center for Hazards Assessment, Response & Technology) | | | |  | Kristina Peterson | X  X | | Melanie Sand  Katherine Norwood  Bennett Alldredge | |
| Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program Director Emeritus | | | | X | Kerry St. Pé |  | |  | |
|  | | | |  | Doug Daigle |  | |  | |
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**1.** Al Levron announced special guest, Dr. Bruce Murphy, President of Nicholls State University. Dr. Murphy welcomed everyone to Nicholls State. He talked about the important work that BTNEP and the Biology Department do for this region and the importance of having discussion and discourse.

Al welcomed David Cavell from Congressman Garret Graves’ office.

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 Earl Melancon and second by Nancy Rabalais to dispense with the reading of the November 6, 2014 minutes and to accept them as submitted. Motion carried.

**2. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

1. Personnel Changes – Al Levron formally introduced Susan Testroet-Bergeron, Program Director

Susan reminded everyone that it was the 25th anniversary of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. BTNEP was started in 1990 and Al Levron was one of the founding members of the program. She thanked all for attendance and looked forward to working with everyone as the program moved forward.

1. Presentations/Exhibits/Field Trips/Volunteer Events

BTNEP staff highlighted a few program activities since the last meeting.

Delaina LeBlanc and Natalie Waters participated in a Christmas bird count with a minimum of 130 species. BTNEP will be instituting the Thibodaux bird count which hasn’t happened since 1998. Those interested in participating should email Delaina at [Delaina@BTNEP.org](mailto:Delaina@BTNEP.org).

Andrew Barron talked about participation in the Extreme Environmental Workshop in Grand Isle. He spoke about coastal restoration projects as well as his wild edible native plant walk.

Natalie Waters reminded everyone about the Migratory Bird Celebration on April 17-19, 2015 on Grand Isle. The agenda would be available soon at www.BTNEP.org.

Richard DeMay talked about BTNEP’s ten year sponsorship of the Eagle Expo scheduled on February 26-28th.

Joe Dantin informed everyone that BTNEP hosted three universities since the last meeting with the most recent being the University of Buffalo in association with Bayou Grace. They engaged in four days of restoration work projects. BTNEP hosted a total of ten volunteer events.

Kristy Monier announced that the 14th annual Paddle Bayou Lafourche was being held on April 9-12th. Registration for the four-day, 52 mile trip opened on Monday.

Alma Robichaux talked about the rain barrels that were on display at the meeting. The barrels were recycled 35 gallon single-use syrup barrels donated from Coca Cola. Local artists turned them into beautiful works of art with scenes from the estuary. Rain barrels were to be raffled off at $5.00 a chance or five for $20.00. The artist with the most chances wins a $250.00 prize. Proceeds were going to the Foundation to be used for the Spirit of the Estuary Curriculum in the fall with students. Bayou Lafourche Cleanup was scheduled for March 14th.  New this year was a billboard advertising campaign and a volunteer appreciation party at the Highway 90 Lafourche Parish pavilion. She encouraged all members of the management conference to participate in some way.

A slide of events with dates was shown.

1. Media Interviews

All media events were listed in the agenda.

1. Meetings

All program meetings were listed in the agenda.

1. Projects Status

All projects initiated and completed were listed on the agenda.

**3. SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

Reminders − May 7, 2015 – Plantation Suite @ NSU Student Union

− August 6, 2015 – Plantation Suite @ NSU Student Union

− November 5, 2015 – Plantation Suite @ NSU Student Union

**4. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

1. "Update on Development of the 2017 State Master Plan for Coastal Restoration” - Karim Belhadjali, CPRA Master Plan Delivery Team

Karim Belhadjali began his presentation by providing background information pertaining to the 2012 Master Plan for coastal restoration and protection. The two main drivers were the amount of land built for restoration projects and how much risk they reduced if they were protection projects. He covered decision criteria and ecosystem services. There were over 1,500 projects screened down to approximately 400 projects that were evaluated. Those projects were evaluated though a suite of models that generated significant amounts of data. Part of the comparison was to look at the future with project and compare it to future without. Karim talked about the computer-based decision support tool used to eliminate some of the decision making. It compared and ranked individual projects, developed different combinations of projects, and used interactive visualizations to display tradeoffs and support decision making. The tool also helped to identify funding and funding base. To give insight, he noted that the master plan is a $50 billion plan and there has been much discussion about funding scenarios. The $50 billion was arrived at by looking at all the funding streams coming online to the State in 2010. The idea was to create a fiscally constrained plan that was crafted around that $50 billion. The next step was to decide between restoration and/or protection and the tool was used to help arrive at that answer. The tool also helped to determine long and/or short term benefits. They came to a 50/50 split on wanting to do projects in the near term and addressing the issues facing the State now but also wanting to select projects that had long term benefits to ensure that investments would pay off over time. The tool optimized and selected the projects that could do the most good subject to constraints. Those constraints were funding, availability of sediment, and availability of water. When the tool was run, the output of the model was “max land.” They took the output of max land and looked at projects for desirability in terms of ecosystem health, marsh creation, etc. and made decisions. For example, some projects performed well but were determined to be detrimental to fisheries and or navigation and were screened out. This was done working with the Framework Development Team and other groups to make sure that the proposed projects would past tests in a transparent way and would illustrate the trade-offs between the projects. The end result was a draft plan. The draft plan does not produce as much land built as opposed to going with max land model outlooks as there were some sacrifices made through the Framework Development Team and stakeholders. Public meetings were held and they arrived at the final plan. Through those discussions some land was left on the table but it was a very objective approach and they were able to illustrate the differences of going with computer output vs having discussions with stakeholders. The end result was the 2012 Master Plan.

Karim’s presentation turned to the 2017 Master Plan. The idea was to improve on what was done in the past by implementing the model improvement plan, continue to solicit public input, project list modification, and the development of the flood risk and resilience program. There are going to be changes from the 2012 plan based on new projects submitted for 2017. They have been working on developing the flood resilience program and are working on how money would be distributed. A common theme was the need for detail on the socioeconomics piece of the projects. For those interested in more details about the improved modeling, that information is posted on their website. CPRA is planning on a series of technical meetings in March with the modelers. More details will be provided when available. He provided a slide listing the model improvement plan collaborative team mentioning that The Water Institute of the Gulf was coordinating those activities. Some of the improvements noted were increasing the spatial resolution, model integration to increase efficiency, and additional processes changing how they look at sediment distribution and marsh edge erosion. Technical improvements within the models were also made. There is a lot of integration of the roles of those models as one package. They are still doing the storm surge and risk assessment on a separate domain. Some of the geospatial improvements on the risk side was the expansion of the geographic study area. They also improved the spatial resolution and he showed how they calculated flood decks under the CLARA model and showed the resolution for 2017 with more definition. At a minimum it was a one kilometer square resolution in unpopulated areas and down to the census block level in populated areas. This will provide more information to people in regards to future flooding.

Karim reiterated that for 2012, projects were mined from previous plans with 400 projects modeled. One hundred and nine were selected based on analysis and public input. For the proposed 2017 Master Plan, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) issued a call for new proposals for new projects or concepts from the public. The projects were very similar to what they asked for in 2012; large scale projects, projects that fit the objectives of the Master Plan and projects that might help address the uncertainty with regards to sea level rise and subsidence. They used very similar screening criteria. They were looking at large scale projects of 500 acre minimum. They considered the geographic area excluding projects in the delta. Projects had to be in keeping with Master Plan objectives and principles. They ruled out projects that had already been submitted unless something had radically changed. There were two solicitation periods that were open for 140 days. There were a large number and variety of projects submitted that included bank stabilization, diversions, marsh creation, etc. Projects came from agencies, parish, elected official and land owners. Round 1 received 129 project ideas and Round 2 had 27. CWPPRA projects nominated since 2010 PPL 19 forward were also reviewed using the same criteria and the new project development program. They also receive a list from the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office (LOSCO). Karim showed a map of all the projects that were submitted with a total price tag of over $111 Billion dollars. Those maps were broken into East, West, and Central. He reiterated the screening criteria of size threshold, location, adequate information, consistency with Master Plan and duplication and how they worked with them to figure their intent. In some cases, this could not be determined.

Adjustments were made along the way. Projects were combined where appropriate and examples were given. They made programmatic decisions as there was a lot of interest regarding oyster reefs. Although they believe that these projects make sense from a habitat standpoint, in terms of size of projects, they decided to keep the projects that were large scale and that act as a shoreline projection with ancillary benefits in terms of habitat then address everything else on a programmatic basis. In some cases, new information was available. Some projects are being looked at through a feasibility study. Some projects were redesigned to ensure that they conformed to the Master Plan. Some adjustments were made to the Master Plan projects. One project that they received a lot of grief about that was brought over from 2012 was shoreline protection along the GIWW. However, CPRA believes that this is a federal responsibility. It was decided that it would be included and highlighted in the 2017 plan but not necessarily modeled. The plan is to work with the feds to make sure that these projects receive funding. Existing projects have been modified. He used Caernarvon as an example noting that it would not be modeled. In terms of older projects being considered that are going to be modeled, the total price tag is $23 billion. He stressed that it isn’t just a matter of tacking on $23 billion to the $50 and having a $73 billion dollar plan. They are going to evaluate all projects, and they are going to compete against the 2012 plan projects. They are still deciding whether or not to do a reassessment of the budget. Once again, he showed new project maps of the West, Central, and East portions of the State.

They also revised some of the project footprints and he reviewed each of those. The USACE has authorized the New Orleans LaPlace project. They will model the COE project as well as the project in the 2012 plan and choose that state preferred alternative. They also will model the Morganza to the Gulf revised alignment. Bell Pass to Golden Meadow project footprint was modified to include both sides of the bayou. Terrebonne Marsh Creation was reduced.

There were projects that were moved to the category of “future without action.” They were either built or received construction funding. Two projects being considered undergoing pre-feasibility are the Lake Pontchartrain Barrier and upper Barataria Basin Risk Reduction Project and both were explained. He then showed maps of combined projects from 2012 and 2017 from the East, West, and Central Louisiana totaling $73 billion.

Moving forward, they will be following the same process used for 2012. Projects will be modeled and brought for discussion and public input. A timeline of events was presented with the 2017 plan being submitted to the Legislature by April of 2017. The idea is to have a draft plan in late 2016 for review.

Al Levron called for questions. Rick Hartman noted an observation that there was push back from the FDT in terms of the new methodology. There was an interest in revisiting a very small subset of projects that were screened out in 2012. There will be an opportunity to revisit some projects that were evaluated and screened out in the 2012 plan for consideration against the entire suite of projects in 2017. He mentioned that because of the BTNEP’s “shower head” project idea could be reevaluated. Susan informed the Management Conference (MC) that Michael Massimi was primary representative on FDT and Andrew Barron served as second. As a result, BTNEP’s MC was represented on Framework Development Team. Susan inquired about the western part of the State having the bulk of the projects and questioned why those decisions were made, considering that there was greater loss in the Barataria-Terrebonne system. Karim responded by saying that it was based on projects submitted. He encouraged MC members to submit projects. Susan’s second question was regarding the Technical Committee meeting in March. She asked who was eligible to attend. Karim responded that everyone was eligible. This was done in 2012. Modelers are available to the public or interested parties to ask questions. It will be advertised through CPRA and The Water Institute. Darin Lee noted that the 2012 Master Plan had Tier 1 and Tier 2 options. He asked that Karim mention the next revision and how that would develop. Karin explained that they would probably look at the first 10 years of implementation because of the definition of funding, then a second increment, and a third. He felt that these projects were “no regret projects” that we need to start moving forward based on identified funding. Uncertainty on funding makes things vague for the long term. Barney Callahan asked if there was a consideration about existing features such as pipelines or underwater obstructions that might affect the projects. Karim responded that this was one of the decision criteria that they considered when meeting with the oil and gas industry. The industry’s main focus was protecting the communities that work in their facilities and the second was protecting the infrastructure. Discussion followed.

Tim Allen commented that the focus on out-of-basin borrow was tough for the Terrebonne basin. The Land Owners Association talked about considering in basin borrow, which was taboo five years ago but would make things more feasible now. Nic Matherne said that he proposed exactly that at the call for new projects. He was told that it wasn’t enough of a change to warrant reevaluation. He felt that these in-basin borrow projects should be remodeled and that he would love to have Tim’s support for reconsideration. Karim replied that it wasn’t just a matter of cost but also sustainability. For Terrebonne, they did consider inshore borrow but the challenges were too great. Discussion followed. Susan stressed that what they were hearing from the MC was that they wanted to be brought in on the front end. They want to be able to say this is what they want and this is what we need.

1. Mississippi River Reintroduction into Bayou Lafourche - Benjamin J. Malbrough, P.E.

The focus of Ben’s presentation was on the status of Phase II of the reintroduction of the Mississippi River into Bayou Lafourche. To give that update, he felt that he needed to provide a brief history of the project as it related to the northern section of the bayou near Donaldsonville. This project has been 30 plus years in the making. He showed an animation from the mid-1800s when Bayou Lafourche was open to the Mississippi River. Ten to twenty percent of the flow from the river came down Bayou Lafourche and it was a main corridor for commerce. In 1873, the Texas Pacific and Southern Railroad built a railroad across Bayou Lafourche in Donaldsonville which is still there today. This railroad has become the major linchpin to the reintroduction project. With this railroad crossing, the bayou was no longer as important as a corridor for commerce and there was a lot of pushback from landowners due to flooding during high river stages. In 1904, Congress authorized the levee districts to damn off the head of Bayou Lafourche with a temporary earthen damn with the idea that a permanent lock structure would come later. That never happened. From 1904 to 1934 there was no introduction of water from the river and the bayou was utilized as a rainwater drainage structure. In 1934, the Texas Pacific and Southern Railroad started to have structural integrity issues with their railroad bridge. The original construction was a turnstile bridge which allowed for navigation. Due to structural integrity problems, they decided to fill the bridge in with an earthen embankment with only a 5 X 6 box culvert to allow drainage from the north side to the southern side. From 1934 to 1955 the region underwent huge development with much more emphasis on water quality. In 1950 the State Legislature created the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District to provide potable water sources along the bayou in Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche and now Terrebonne Parishes. In 1955, the Department of Public Works built the current pump station and added two nine foot culverts through the railroad embankment. He showed images of the configuration seen today.

Ben’s presentation continued with the history of the reintroduction of the Mississippi River into Bayou Lafourche Project. The project was started in 1993 as part of CWPPRA PPL-5, noting that they are currently in PPL-25. One of the major milestones was in 2006 when CH2M Hill completed their final Phase II design report. The other was in 2008 with the landfall of Hurricane Gustav. The Final Phase 2 Design Report was prepared by CH2M Hill and 12 years of work was done by numerous agencies and consultants. Many of the people in the room probably had something to do with the culmination of that report. It utilized detailed surveying for the development of a complex hydrodynamic model and scrutinized 144 alternatives on how to reconnect the bayou to the river. The main part of the report identified four major components to be implemented by the Freshwater District to achieve a minimum of 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) flow into Bayou Lafourche. Those major components are dredging the bayou. The Phase 2 Design Reports calls for 29 miles of dredging starting at the head of the bayou down to the weir in Thibodaux. The other major component was the construction of a new pump station. The existing pump station has a capacity range of 450 to 525 cfs. To get to 1,000 to 1,500, the pumps obviously have to be modified or we have to build a new one. Also, we cannot put 1,000 cfs into Bayou Lafourche without modifying the existing railroad embankment. The existing culverts do not have the capacity to pass that kind of water without flooding the whole city of Donaldsonville. This needs to be addressed along with the removal of the weir in Thibodaux.

A major milestone was Hurricane Gustav. Many people remember that the water went septic in Bayou Lafourche and this raised the awareness of the importance of the reintroduction project. Immediately following Gustav, the State of Louisiana with CPRA and $20 million dollars in State surplus funds began working on the Bayou Lafourche Channel Capacity Improvement Project which is referred to as the Phase I dredging. The project started in Donaldsonville where the bayou starts and was to end at the Highway 996 Bridge in Belle Rose. The project started in 2009 and was completed in 2011. Images of the project before, during, and after construction were presented. Besides the railroad, the first six miles were the most conflicting part of the implementation of this project. This area of the bayou had been encroached upon with structures and there was a lot of complaining from the public about removal of these structures. Immediately thereafter in 2012, CPRA decided to enter into an agreement with the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District (BLFD) to reallocate some of the State CIAP funds totaling $20 million to continue the work of Phase I. A contract for engineering and design was executed in April of 2013. The Data Analysis and Recommendation Report were submitted in August of 2013, the preliminary design report in July of 2014 and the final design report in January of 2015. The two areas that CPRA identified to focus attention were the upper dredge scenario and lower dredge. These were based on output files from a model produced by CH2M Hill done after the completion of Phase 1 dredging to determine where the most constrictions to flow were located in the bayou. Two places identified: 1) A four-mile stretch of bayou starting where Phase 1 ended heading south and 2) A one mile stretch that was not dredged to the full template near Highway 998 Bridge in Belle Rose to Highway 70 near Spur 70. The southernmost dredging will take place near the weir in Thibodaux and the northernmost will be at the Labadieville Bridge – nine miles worth of channel dredging. These were the two scenarios evaluated in the study and presented to CPRA with recommendations. He reviewed the output files and explained the water surface elevation profile in cfs. Since then they have been able to increase their pumping capacity and maintain steady flow somewhere in the ballpark of 280 cfs. They ran a baseline rendition, calibrated the model, and then put in the two dredging scenarios to determine the most beneficial result. The output file from the lower dredge scenario was presented. It benefitted the water surface elevation in Thibodaux but was a problem for Donaldsonville. Currently, there operations are restricted by the water surface elevation in Donaldsonville. They can’t exceed certain water elevations south of the railroad because in the event of a quick storm or rainfall event, the city of Donaldsonville would flood. He then referenced the output for the upper dredge scenario noting an increase at Highway 70. They reviewed what would be the most beneficial scenario for their pumping capabilities today. The second scenario was not an option as they would not be able to add additional water in the bayou after spending the $20 million. He explained that the additional dredging for that scenario would reduce the water elevations.

A map was provided of the overall dredge plan for Phase 2 and explained that it was a CIAP project and funding process. They did not want to limit contractors regarding the dredging process so they reached out to notable contractors for ideas on their preferred method of dredging. There are numerous disposal sites located throughout the project area. Landowners had to be convinced of the benefit of taking the dredged material for no pay. If payments had to be made for access to the property, much more effort and multiple appraisals would have been required to go through the Relocations Act. Also, CIAP funding expires December 31, 2016. Money has to be spent and the project closed out by that deadline. The project was submitted to CPRA and was well accepted received by the landowners and everyone involved with the project was excited.

Phase 2 will continue the dredging to Napoleonville and finish in Thibodaux. The permitting process has been started for the remaining section Phase 3 of the bayou in anticipation of funding that includes permitting of the removal of the weir. Next, would be addressing the flow restriction at the railroad. Major strides have been made in the last five to six months with the help of Commissioner Scott Angelle. A meeting with Union Pacific executives was scheduled in September in Omaha, Nebraska to stress this issue and have them make some commitment to a solution. They did not receive the full-blown agreement to fund and start construction immediately but they did confirm that the only feasible replacement structure to appease both needs is a bridge with no other alternatives. They are in possession of the agreement to participate in preliminary design of that bridge. The BLFD plans on bringing the design phase of that bridge to a 20-30% level to comfortably come up with a construction cost estimate. More meetings with Union Pacific are expected regarding funding. The project is expected to be a $12 to $20 million project. Next for the project is the construction of the new pump station, water control structures are also needed and finally the removal of the weir.

Ben noted that CPRA was pulling funding for Lafourche Parish for the saltwater control structure. He talked about the saltwater structure at Company Canal built by the Freshwater District and donated to Lafourche Parish. It will be moved into the bayou south of the Lockport Water Treatment Plant. When this barge structure was designed, they made sure that the engineers that were designing the receiving structure for the barge would take into consideration the backwater conditions. The structure can be used as both a saltwater barrier and a temporary weir in the event of an emergency for some period of time. They are also researching options for deploying temporary weirs in sections of the bayou so that the weir can be removed in Thibodaux. The weir is an operations nightmare and the analysis has shown that it doesn’t serve much hydraulic purpose. However, it does create a reservoir for Thibodaux in the event of a pump station failure.

Ben’s last slides encouraged participation in the Bayou Lafourche Cleanup and Paddle Bayou Lafourche; two BTNEP events that raise awareness of the importance of Bayou Lafourche. He also talked about a recent public outreach campaign to raise public awareness about what is being done by the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District.

Nancy Rabalais asked about the possibility of Union Pacific combating some of that water by building a pump station rather than a bridge to provide flow. Ben felt that it would be more costly. Another alternative that they were leaning toward was boring another culvert; however, they do not know what is beneath that earthen embankment. Historical data indicates that there is a huge turnstile beneath the embankment. Discussion followed regarding the importance of the rail system. The rail system from Shreveport to St. James is the most critical rail to Union Pacific in North America. There hasn’t been much modification to the main super structure since 1934, which poses major questions about the structural integrity of that embankment. Union Pacific moves hazardous material over a waterway that is the sole drinking water source for 300,000 people and Port Fourchon. Kerry St. Pe’ asked if they would consider removing the weir before the new pump stations are built. Ben stated that models indicated they could but they wouldn’t. In the Phase 2 design report, they call for deployable weirs in three areas, in Belle Rose, Napoleonville, and one south of Thibodaux. Deployable weirs remain on the bottom of the bayou without impeding the flow until they are needed. The problem is the cost at $10 million per weir. They are looking at several options for deployable weirs. One being considered is the Aqua Dam, which is rolled out, filled with bayou water and creates a seal on the bottom, creating a reservoir on the back side. The cost savings for that doesn’t come close to the $30 million for the permanent structure and gives flexibility to deploy when and where needed. Kerry also commented on the power of the railroad being able to dictate what happens across a public water body that provides drinking water to 300,000 people. Ben explained that that may be in the State and BLFD’s favor. They have agreed to a bridge, they now need a reasonable construction cost estimate, then return for the funding discussion. David Gisclair commented that he recently attended and presented at the Clean Gulf meeting. There was a projection of this whole notion of the safety issue becoming very large. Somewhere on the order of 30 % more volatile oil is going to be transported by rail. Response to oil spills by rail was a major topic of discussion because that number is going up significantly. Knowing the future projection and future danger was another piece of information to have in their pocket. He referenced the Clean Gulf website and presentations available. Discussion followed. Simone Maloz commended Ben and the Freshwater District for a job well done.

1. “The Cajun Music Preservation Society’s Role in Promoting Our Culture” – Quenton Fontenot

Quenton Fontenot, Fisheries Biologist at Nicholls State University presented on Cajun music and the culture here in Louisiana. On March 31, 2014, the Cajun Music Preservation Society was established by Tysman Charpentier, Allyse Ferrara, Misty McElroy and Quenton Fontenot by creating a Facebook page. On April 24, 2014 they held their first jam session outside the Thibodaux Courthouse. By May 14th, they moved to the Foundry on the Bayou with a huge turnout, lots of musicians, professionals, amateurs, and novices. The jams took place every other Wednesday evening. Quenton provided video to show the progression from the first session. With so much Cajun music in Louisiana, what is the need to preserve it? In the Bayou Region, there isn’t as much Cajun music as one would think. There are few locations where musicians can learn the music. This offers the opportunity for new musicians to learn the trade by sitting with the experts. This is our culture and is large part of what makes us recognizable and unique in this world and should be preserved. He tied in Swamp Stomp and thanked BTNEP’s supporter of Swamp Stomp. Swamp Stomp is scheduled for March 20-22, 2015 on the Nicholls campus. It will now be called the Swamp Stomp Cajun and Zydeco Festival Sponsored by BTNEP. He reviewed the 2014 lineup and broke down that lineup into Cajun, zydeco, hybrid, and swamp pop. Feedback from musicians indicated a lack of Cajun music at festivals making Swamp Stomp unique to the area for making the music recognizable for what it is to the rest of world. He showed images of Cameron Dupuy at 11 years of age at Swamp Stomp in 2009 and at Jazz Fest at 16 in 2013. He has won numerous accordion contests and recognizes Cajun and zydeco music as the two most traditional genres in Louisiana Music. Swamp Stomp is one of the only traditional festivals remaining. He provided results of an informal poll of major festivals around here. There were none listed as a traditional Cajun band. It was decided that we need more of this so Cajun Music Preservation Society was formed with huge success. Their mission is to promote, preserve, and enhance the awareness and appreciation of traditional Cajun music in Southeastern Louisiana. Their goal is to increase the number of public Cajun music performances and they are doing that through jam sessions and using that to raise money to bring in bands. The main objective is to encourage and train new musicians. Their Cajun jams are open to everyone. They want to provide a centralized network of Cajun music enthusiasts so that notification of public performances can efficiently be disseminated. They have over 1,100 likes on Facebook. They aim to provide a mechanism for traditional Cajun musicians to publicly perform throughout the Lafourche-Terrebonne region of Louisiana. Overall, they want to preserve what we have, especially for our youth. Since its inception, the have held 17 open jam sessions with 55 individual musicians and interest is expanding. They are starting the paperwork to establish a 501 (c) (3) status with a goal of raising $10,000 to endow a scholarship in the Bayou Studies Program at NSU. They expect to continue growing and expanding their mission. He finished his presentation be talking about the fees. Those fees cover the cost of having at least three professional musicians present at each event for a quality jam session. They were also happy to assist with booking other Cajun bands.

1. “Caminada Headland Beach and Dune Restoration” - Brad Miller, CPRA

Brad Miller began his presentation with the origins of the project. The project started out as an LCA Barrier Island Feasibility Study in 2004 and the Chief’s report was signed in June of 2012. Like many LCA projects, they didn’t have construction funding, but the State decided that it was important enough by itself and venture on to restore its headland. In 2012, the State dedicated around $70 million dollars combine Sate surplus and CIAP money. The goal of the project was to protect and preserve the structural integrity of the barrier shoreline of the Caminada Headland. This was done by protecting coastal habitat, protecting endangered species, reducing wave energy and salt-water intrusion from the Gulf of Mexico into back-barrier environments, and providing a sediment source to sustain barrier beaches east and west of the Headland.

The Headland is the former site of the mouth of the Mississippi River, 14 miles long, consists of dune, beach berm, barrier marshes and Chenier ridges. It has been experiencing shoreline erosion at the rate of 45 feet per year. It is the only Louisiana headland that is attached to the delta that built it. Another unique element is the borrow area. It was the first project done by the state to restore a barrier island using sand from an offshore shoal. They went out to Ship Shoal 27 miles away to South Pelto area of Ship Shoal for sand for this project. Ship Shoal is a remnant of the Maringouin delta that is approximately 8,000 years old. It is estimated to contain 900 million cubic yards of sand. It was a great source of sand because it used to be a barrier island. He reviewed Ship Shoal prior work that dates back almost 30 years, when Shea Penland advocated for the use of Ship Shoal sand back in the late 80s. New work showed excellent recovery sand 15-19 feet thick. For restoration folks, it was a dream.

Brad showed a restoration template and talked about the first and second increments of the project. The first was the western half of the headlands that was about six miles of beach and dune. He showed the area in relation to Port Fourchon and Highway 90 with the pump out area in West Belle Pass. He explained the typical cross-sections with the low lying headlands of about three to four feet. They built a dune up to seven feet with a one foot tolerance. Beach elevation was around four and a half feet, the dune was seven, and the average dune dimensions were around 290 feet by five feet. On average, the template was around 350 feet wide and 380 acres in total with 3.3 million yards of sand and about six miles long. A pipeline was not permitted so the sand had to be transported. Two methods that could have been used were barges or hopper dredgers. The contractor used a conventional cutter head dredge, and then used a large suction pump to move it to the surface, then transfer it through a spider-barge distribution system into multiple scow barges. These barges would be towed to a pump-out area where a hydraulic dredge connected to a booster pump and sediment pipeline would offload the scows and pump the sand to the headland. He showed images of the project from both the East and the West. Sand fencing was place on all projects and he showed an image taken three months after installation.

Increment II was seven to eight miles and scheduled to start in the next few months. He showed a comparison chart with Increment I vs Increment II. In total when done, they will have put eight and a half million yards of sand on the headlands beach projects.

In conclusion, he reviewed the project timeline and lessons learned. Increment I began in August of 2013. In January of 2014, the contractor voluntarily demobilized for winter because they were having trouble filling barges off shore due to the weather. In November, they were only able to pump for seven days. Pumping resumed in May of 2014 but there were bird eggs on the beach. CPRA contracted with BTNEP to conduct required bird surveys. The contractor returned with Hopper Dredges to complete the project in December. He showed images of bird data and the section of the project highly used by birds. With the help of good data from BTNEP and working with US Fish and Wildlife, they were able to continue moving forward. Data showed that the colony nearest to construction was a very successful colony. Some abatement was done on the western portion and that may have caused a reduction there. The main lesson there was that constant communication with regulatory agencies was essential. Another species they dealt with were turtles. They did not have to do preventative trawling for turtles until the contractor brought in the Hopper dredges. Biannually they could relocate 76 turtles. Trawling began in May and the 76th turtle was relocated on June 7, 2014. There were 157 relocations for this project with some of the highest numbers of mature male turtles ever tagged and released.

He reviewed the project team members and the CAM II schedule and called for questions. Rick Hartman questioned the minimum distance required to stay away from pipelines. Greg Grandy confirmed 1,000 feet. Rick asked the question for everyone to understand that there are abandoned pipelines all over Ship Shoal resulting of tons of sand not being of use due to restrictions. He also noted that NOAA is a big proponent of barrier island restoration, has the amount of sand that becomes eroded, lost or re-deposited been studied. Much has been learned in the last twenty years, one is the back barrier marsh captures some of that sand but knowing how much is unknown. Discussion followed regarding a sediment budget to look at historic and modeling data. When sand is collected and placed on a beach, what is the life expectancy in that location? Michael Massimi inquired about the turtle relocation process and that process was explained.

1. “Bayou Lafourche Fecal Coliform Project” – Mary Gentry, Geologist from DEQ, Alma Robichaux, Andrew Barron

Andrew Barron gave a brief introduction about water quality in the region and the joint agency sewage system assistance project between Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), the BTNEP and BTEF. Mary Gentry thanked BTNEP for the assistance provided. The project was a massive undertaking that had been in the works for several years. The Federal Clean Water Act required that all states identify water bodies not meeting designated water quality standards for primary contact recreation, secondary contact recreation, drinking water supply, oyster propagation, and fish & wildlife propagation. They must also develop total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) – the maximum amount of pollutant that a water body can absorb without exceeding the water quality standard for that pollutant. She explained that it is very tricky in Louisiana because of the environment. Fecal Coliform is bacteria found in the intestines of warm-blooded animal, excreted in feces. They used this indicator organism because it is found everywhere but the problem with it being found everywhere is identifying the source. Bayou Lafourche is a drinking water source for 300,000 people. From Donaldsonville to Larose there are 10 public water supply intakes. Bayou Lafourche is consistently not meeting (PCR) swimming standards of 400 colonies/100ml and spikes in data over SCR (boating/fishing) standard and the drinking water supply standard (both standards are 2000 colonies/100ml). Total maximum daily pollutant load requires 45% reduction in fecal coliform loading to meet standards. This huge number indicates that we would need to cut fecal output to the bayou to almost half (for more information on numerical criteria for fecal coliform bacteria, see page 54 of the Environmental Regulatory Code: http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/Portals/0/planning/regs/title33/33v09-201503.pdf).

The numbers can indicate the presence of sewage. The health effects of fecal coliform include diarrhea and infections from pathogens. Pharmaceuticals are also being found from waste-water streams. Most illnesses are short-term but can be violent and unpleasant. Some long-term illness and deaths are possible and examples were given. To the potable water supply is means additional treatment is required, disinfection by-products, and increased cost.

There are many areas without community waste water treatment systems. Many use onsite wastewater treatment systems. Population growth in these areas means greater pollutant loading. Onsite wastewater treatment systems installation must be permitted by LDHH. They must be inspected, maintained and operated properly to be effective. Failing systems are major contributors to water pollution, often leading to closure of waterways to recreation. She showed a map of DHH permitted on-site sewage systems.

LDEQ entered into a contract with Nicholls State University for a study to determine if onsite wastewater systems are a significant contributing source of fecal coliform to the bayou. They used microbial source tracking - combine fecal coliform sampling with optical brightener (OB) fluorometry to identify “hot spots.” OBs are compounds in laundry detergent that emit light when exposed to UV light, “brightening” the appearance of fabric. If they were seeing high fecal coliform in combination with optical brighteners, then the source was most likely human. The study identified areas that drain to the bayou within two study areas. They monitored conduits of this drainage in addition to sampling directly in the bayou for fecal coliform and optical brighteners on a rotating schedule. Phase I of the study was completed in September of 2009. The study area was from Labadieville to Valentine, LA with 11 sites identified as “hot spots” that contributed sewage to the bayou. Phase 2 was completed in January of 2013 with the study area from Donaldsonville/Mississippi River to Labadieville, LA with 34 sample locations. Twelve “hot spots” were identified with two in areas having community wastewater treatment systems. This also included enhanced microbial tracking. In addition to using optical brighteners, they also used human molecular markers. Absence of any markers meant that there was no human input. They also went back and confirmed Phase I “hot spots” with those markers. She gave examples of “hotspots” and noted that they were working on now in cooperation with BTNEP and DHH to chip away at the problem. The first example was a culvert at 7436 Hwy 1 in Belle Rose, LA. All 16 samples exceeded drinking water fecal coliform standard of 2,000 colonies/100 ml (Sampled values ranged from 5,455 to 950,000 FC/100 ml). All 16 samples were positive for optical brighteners. Ten of 14 samples were positive for at least one human molecular marker with strong sewage odor and toilet paper observed. The drain was from trailers on Hwy 1 draining through a culvert under Hwy 1 to the bayou. DHH inspected five on site treatment systems and found three in working order, one aerator found inoperable and was replaced, and one system needed replacement. They are eligible for BTNEP grant funds. They are working on a cost share program. The second was a culvert at the corner of College Point Lane and Highway 308 in Plattenville, LA. All 13 samples exceeded drinking water fecal coliform standard of 2,000 colonies/100 ml (Sampled values ranged from 2,216 to 970,000 FC/100 ml). Twelve of 13 samples were positive for optical brighteners and six of 13 samples were positive for at least one human molecular marker with a strong sewage odor noted. The drainage from trailers on College Point Ln drains through culvert under Hwy 308 to the bayou. The DHH inspection of 18 properties found one in working order, three properties vacant, 14 systems malfunctioning, and two without a functioning system or raw sewage discharge. This too was another good site for BTNEP grant funds because it is a very low income area and needed serious help. She reminded everyone that these were two of the 23 hotspots identified.

DEQ has done multimedia (water, air) inspections of 780 business facilities with follow up inspections to assure compliance. More than half of those businesses did not have permits to discharge and were doing so illegally. LDEQ is also working with BTNEP on the cost share program to repair/replace malfunctioning systems (2 hot spots). They are working on the creation of new community wastewater treatment plants funded through Community Block Grants (2 hot spots). The Cities of Donaldsonville & Napoleonville are conducting dye and smoke tests to identify leaks (2 hot spots). Future action is needed on projects to repair/replace malfunctioning individual onsite wastewater treatment systems. Local ordinances are needed for inspections/enforcement. Community wastewater treatment systems are also an option. Public education is needed for the proper maintenance of individual onsite wastewater treatment systems. Funding sources are needed with local government acceptance. The benefits are a cleaner environment, cleaner drinking water and increased property values and quality of life. She commended Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District for their efforts. She stressed that this is a human health issue and certainly a drinking water issue.

Alma gave an overview of how BTNEP provides assistance. A Healthy Community Grant was received from Walmart. BTNEP goes through a process where DEQ handles inspection to determine hotspots, they write a formal letter to DHH. DHH is very limited in personnel for inspections so having designated hotspots is a huge help. DHH goes through compliance to get home owners to fix the problem on their own but money is usually a limiting factor. Residents who want to comply but are financially limited can go through an application process to apply for half of the funds needed for repairs.

Earl asked if there were any requirement for new community subdivisions to have community sewage systems. Mary replied that none of the parishes had requirements. Has she seen any momentum to address that issue? Mary stated that Assumption Parish is having a lot of success within the program and Ascension was making progress but there are no State regulations. Earl also asked if those same subdivisions were installing culverts to drain to Bayou Lafourche. She confirmed that some do. Mary also noted that more flow in the bayou would be a great help but that it would not remove the problem of fecal coliform pollution in the ditches.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Resolution - Doug Daigle

Doug Daigle addressed the Resolution Supporting the Land & Water Conservation Fund passed in 1964. It is a national law and provides support for federal projects like wildlife refuges, state parks, historical sites, and recreational areas. A list of Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Totals by Parish was provided. It is up for reauthorization this year. The resolution is aimed at all officials including Congress. It is based on oil revenues not tax dollars. Andrew Barron read the Resolution. Discussion followed regarding Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) money. Susan announced that both Senator Vitter and Senator Cassidy sent to comments to the BTNEP office this week regarding support for GOMESA. Barney Callahan asked if this information could be shared with his organization. Susan encouraged him to do so affirming that sharing of information was one of the powers of the BTNEP Management Conference. David Gisclair suggested the removal of acronym in the first paragraph. A motion was made by Nancy Rabalais and second by Alex Naquin to accept the Resolution with noted changes. Motion carried. The corrected version would be send to both State and Federal delegates.

B. CWPPRA Phase II - Project Allocation #BA-164 Bayou Dupont Sediment Delivery – Marsh

Creation #3– Susan Testroet-Bergeron

The CWPPRA Program had $14 million left at the end of budgeting year. They funded two projects to go over to the west side of the state. Matt Sevier elaborated on the proposed new addition to the Bayou Dupont project in Jefferson Parish. Susan encouraged those interested in sharing their opinion as to where that $14 million will be spent; should attend the next CWPPRA meeting on April 16th. Discussion followed regarding projects going to the west side of the State when Barataria-Terrebonne has the greatest land loss. Susan (Suzie) Hennington clarified that the meeting in April was the Technical Committee not the Task Force meeting. Suzie reminded the group that the CWPPRA Task Force would vote on the Proposed addition to the Bayou Dupont project within 60 days. With that information, Susan would ask Jenny to put that information out to the Management Conference.

1. Other

Alex Naquin spoke about reinstating his organization, Sassafras, LA. They recently obtain there 501(c)3 status. He mentioned that they were active again.

Restore or Retreat provided information regarding flood risk community meetings.

Doug Daigle announced the BTNEP sponsored Gulf Hypoxia Workshop on March 6, 2015 on the NSU campus.

Andrew Barron announced that a few 2015 Tidal Graph calendars were still available.

Alma Robichaux announced that she would be collecting raffle ticket money for the Rain Barrel project.

Barney Callahan announced that Louisiana Wildlife Federation was holding their 51st Governor’s Conservation awards and they would be taking nominations.

**6.** **ADJOURN**

A motion was made by David Gisclair and second by Tim Allen to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.