

**Management Conference
Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program**

**MC Meeting #15
9:30 AM September 13, 2000
Century Room
John L. Guidry Stadium
Nicholls State University Campus
Thibodaux, LA**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

MC Members Present:

Kenneth Hemphill, for Jimmy Antoon-LDHH
Len Bahr-Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
David Bourgeois, for Paul Coriel-LSU Agricultural Center
Jim Rives-LDNR
David Vigh, for Sue Hawes-US Army Corps of Engineers
Grady Galliano-Lafourche Parish
Windell Curole-LA Assoc. of Levee Boards
Jessica Kastler, for Michael Dagg-LUMCON
Rebecca Triche-Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Herman Waguespack, for Wallace Ellender-American Sugar Cane League
Roy Francis, for Loulan Pitre-Greater Lafourche Port Commission
Jenness McBride, for David Fruge-US Fish & Wildlife
Ed Theriot, for Victoria Caridas-Plaquemine Parish
Atly Brasher, for Ronnie Wascom-LDEQ
Quin Kinler, for Donald Gohmert-USDA/NRCS
Ron Harrell-Louisiana Farm Bureau
Ed Kesler-US Coast Guard
Sharon Calcote-LCRT
Ann Perry, for Vic Lafont-South Louisiana Economic Council
Randy Lanctot-Louisiana Wildlife Federation
James Miller, for Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish
Ann Wilson, for Cecil Picard-LDE
Vince Cottone, for Mike Lyons-Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Earl Melancon-Nicholl's State University
Rick Hartman-US National Marine Fisheries Service
Monica Young, for Jerry Clifford, US EPA
Butch Stegall-LDAF
Doug Svendson-Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assoc.
Jean May-Brett-LSTA
Vince Guillory, for Glenn Thomas-LDWF
Vickie Duffourc, for Marnie Winter-Jefferson Parish

MC Members Absent:

Phil Boydston-Louisiana Landowner's Assoc.
Don Briggs-LIOGA
Paul Cancienne-Assumption Parish
Alvin Hebert-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District

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Dennis Demcheck-USGS
Roland Guidry-Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
Peter Vujnovich-Commercial Fisheries
Earl Matherne-St. Charles Parish
Marylee Orr-Louisiana Environmental Action Network
Kevin Belanger-South Central Planning & Development Commission
Brad Spicer-Louisiana Assoc. of Conservation Districts
Charles Caplinger-Coastal Conservation Assoc. of Louisiana

BTNEP Staff:

Kerry St. Pé
Sandra Kendrick
Deborah Schultz
Richard DeMay
Dean Blanchard
Eddie Landrum
Andrew Barron
Rachel Somers
Matt Phillips

Guests:

Marilyn O'Leary- Louisiana Sea Grant
Brian Edwards-AmeriCorps on the Bayou
Katina Gaudet-The Daily Comet
Tika Hasler-Citizen
Linda Pace-LDNR
Lynnette Cortez-BT Foundation
Rod Emmer-FEMA
Sarah Onishi-Japanese Exchange Student
Cullen Curole-BT Foundation
Fred Kopfler-Gulf of Mexico Program
Bryon Griffin-Gulf of Mexico Program
Troy Hill-US EPA Region VI
Jim Giattina-Gulf of Mexico Program
Jimmy Johnston-USGS
Roy Riche-Terrebonne Parish Landowner
Steve Smith-T. Baker Smith & Sons
Wendi French-Integrate
Chad Odom-AmeriCorps on the Bayou
Amy Wold-The Courier
Leslie McVeigh-Senator Mike Robichaux's Office
Dugan Sabins-LDEQ
Dianne Altsman-Gulf of Mexico Program
Jean Westbrook-Gulf of Mexico Program
Beverly Etheridge-US EPA
Irv Mendelssohn-LSU
Diane Austin-University of Arizona
Tim Landreneau-NRCS

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B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the May 25, 2000 meeting

Jim Rives made the motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to accept as submitted, Ken Hemphill seconded. There was no discussion, and no objections. The minutes were accepted by acclamation.

C. Program Activities

- ❖ **Personnel Changes**-Kerry introduced Andrew Barron, who came from Planning and Assessment Section of the NonPoint Source Division of DEQ; and Sarah Onishi, who is an exchange student from Japan and is working with the Americorp on the Bayou and the Estuary Program.
- ❖ **Presentations/Exhibits**-Wal-Mart Grand Opening for Presentation of Environmental Grant awarded to BTEF; Davis Pond Wetlands Workshop, TORCH Workshop, DNR Coastal Programs; Lady of the Sea Hospital Medi Camp; LaSIP; River Camps; UNO; Tarpon Rodeo; 4-H Agents; Environmental Stewardship Retreat; Brady Canal Dedication Ceremony; Delta Service Corp. Graduation; Coastal Society Conference; Houma Girl Scout Troop
- ❖ **Media Interviews-ITV**-Hydrilla video shoot; **Grist Magazine Daily Articles; Daily Comet**-Storm Drain Marking, Bayou Lafourche Initiative, Exotic Species, Dying Marsh, Portrait of An Estuary and DIMS; **The Advocate**-Marsh Upwelling System; **The Courier**-Bayou Lafourche Initiative; **Times Picayune**-Dying Marsh
- ❖ **Meetings**: Coast 2050 Scoping Meeting; GMPO Habitat Focus Team; Davis Pond Technical Group; Barataria Basin Complex Project Meeting; Coastal Society Conference; PhotoShop Conference; Shorebird Educator's Workshop-Devil's Lake, ND; National Wetland Center Dying Marsh meeting; Louisiana Marine Fisheries Museum Opening; NRCS Dying Marsh Meeting; Dying Marsh Workgroup Meeting; Marsh Upwelling Demonstration at Fourchon; Oyster Task Force

D. Set Date for 16th Management Conference Meeting

The date for the 16th Management Conference meeting was set for January 18, 2001.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. BTNEP Migratory Bird Video Script

Richard DeMay explained that right now he is not seeking approval, but just providing the script for the MC's information. The script follows story line of bird poster. It talks about the sense of place, types of habitat, the uniqueness of BTE to the rest of the country and how birds fly through and utilize the habitats. Richard stated that he would be coming back to MC in about 8 months with a semi-final script.

B. Scope of Services for the Continued Development And Implementation Of The Data And Information Management System for the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuarine Complex

Richard DeMay reminded the MC that they should be familiar with this project. BTNEP has been doing this project for 6 years. He stated that the focus of this effort is two-fold: 1) to take info gathered during planning stage and archiving it, and gather other technical information and compile it into the DIMS, so it can be used as the CCMP is implemented; 2) to develop mini webpages that address the 51 action plans that comprise the CCMP. Richard stated that this scope represents an effort to continue the DIMS because the program is continually compiling and adding data. Richard stated the he is seeking the MC approval of the scope of work. A motion made and seconded. There was no discussion and no objections. The Scope was approved by acclamation.

C. Scope of Services for Grand Isle Migratory Bird Day Celebration

Richard DeMay stated that this is another FY 2001 Workplan project. He stated the focus here is to provide \$10,000 to increase the scope of the Grand Isle Migratory Bird Day. He stated this is the 3rd annual bird day and is getting larger every year. This event will be a 2-day event, where in the past it has been a one-day event. Richard stated that he is seeking approval of this scope. Doug Svendsen asked what the date of the event is. Richard stated that it will be April 21 and 22, 2001. Deborah stated that this would also be our Earth Day

Celebration. It was motioned accept the scope and seconded. There was no discussion and no objections. The scope was accepted by acclamation.

D. Web and Graphics Design for the BTNEP Migratory Bird and Shellfish Webpage

Richard DeMay stated that what he wanted to do with Task 1 of this project is to develop animated maps showing the flight paths of neotropical migrants, shorebirds, songbirds, etc. These maps will be developed for the Bird Video. He stated that there was not enough money in the video budget to do this task. There would be other animated elements developed through this scope. Task 2 deals with the layout, design and reformatting of the bird poster into a Characterization Report-like document. Task 3 will allow for the layout, design and formatting of the fishing calendar for 2001 that was approved in the 2000 Workplan. This will be a 12-page calendar that talks about marsh restoration, the importance of marsh to the lifecycle of many different species and other information along those lines. This will be similar to the calendar that the State of Alabama produces. Eddie Landrum stated that Tasks 4 and 5 will be to develop the Shellfish Challenge website and mini web pages on stormwater discharges, marina pumpouts, wastewater systems and the Shellfish relay system. A motion to accept this scope was made by Vince Cottone, seconded by Ken Hemphill. There was no further discussion and no objections. The scope was accepted by acclamation.

E. Scope of Services for an Accelerated Program of Woody Plant Species Selection for Conservation, Restoration, and Neotropical Migratory Habitat Enhancement

Richard DeMay stated the idea of this scope is to look at various woody species, with emphasis to grow genotypes of those species that can tolerate the habitat. This project will implement an accelerated study program of woody plant species technology, applicable to coastal restoration, improved wildlife habitat, and increased productivity of Louisiana's barrier islands and coastal wetlands. When completed, this study will significantly contribute to the knowledge base available to a broad spectrum of coastal wetland users. Jean May-Brett made a motion to accept this scope and was seconded by Randy Lanctot.

F. Scope of Services for Development of the Environmental Indicators for the BTNEP

Dean Blanchard explained to the MC that a workshop will be held to find out what kinds of databases are available and that a workbook and report card will be developed. Kerry stated that the program office would use an existing work agreement between EPA and Battelle. This work agreement was developed to assist estuary programs with developing environmental indicators. Windell explained that BTNEP is required, for its Biennial Review process, to monitor the effectiveness of actions taken in pursuit of the CCMP. This requirement has 3 components: 1) to monitor and document progress in implementing each Action Plan; 2) to monitor and document results of implementation for each Action Plan; 3) to report the progress and results of Action Plan implementation to BTNEP Management Conference, and other stakeholders including the general public, thereby providing essential information for refocusing and redirecting CCMP implementation efforts. The contractor, Battelle, will provide technical expertise to 1) facilitate a workshop to establish appropriate environmental indicators and indices, 2) identify and coordinate with existing monitoring programs to provide required data inputs, 3) develop a technical manual that details BTNEP's Environmental Report Card Program, and 4) prepare BTNEP's first Environmental Report Card report to stakeholders. A motion was made by Vince Cottone to accept the scope and Jim Rives seconded it. The following individuals volunteered to participate on the Action Plan Team: Monica Young, Rick Hartman, Dugan Sabins, and Vince Guillory.

G. Scope of Services for Jefferson Parish Local Permit Information and Training Center

Dean Blanchard explained that this is a scope to develop a permit information center. This is to help Jefferson Parish get a permit center started. He stated that DNR has the information on computer for public access. This provides information about what forms are needed and any other information needed to acquire a permit. This scope will provide Jefferson Parish with training, equipment as well as educational materials to the public. Grady Galliano stated that this process is working well in Lafourche Parish. He stated those people using the facility are those who want to do work on their camps. Dave Vigh stated that Sue Hawes would like to see the Corp involved in the training as well as DNR and Jefferson Parish. He also stated that the Corps website has

information on permitting. Jim Rives stated that DNR would be happy to assist any Parish that is interested in starting a permitting center. A motion was made by Jim Reeves to accept the scope and was seconded by Jean May-Brett. There was no further discussion, and no objections. The scope was approved by acclamation.

H. Scope of Services for Habitat Importance of Vallisneria Beds

Dean Blanchard explained that this project will be in coordination with National Marine Fisheries Service where samples will be taken from the Little Lake area to figure out how important of a habitat this is and what kind of nursery ground Vallisneria is providing. Densities of fishery species will be compared among Vallisneria beds, natural marsh, and shallow non-vegetated bottom. Jim Rives suggested that the scope be expanded to include an analysis of some of the non-favored species so that a distinction can be made. Kerry stated that this project is focused on Vallisneria because that is all the funds that are available at this time. To expand it, Kerry added, the program office would need to come up with more money. However, Kerry stated that the next steps would be to map these areas and what are the values of these other species. A motion was made by Jim Rives to accept the scope and was seconded by Atly Brasher. There was no further discussion and no objections. The scope was accepted by acclamation. The following individuals volunteered to participate on the APT: Jim Rives, Vince Guillory, and Quin Kinler.

I. Scope of Services for Project STEPS (Students and Teachers as Educational Partners)

Deborah Schultz stated this is a project that was developed by individuals from the Louisiana Environmental Educators Assoc. The scope, Deborah added, is for \$6,000 and allows for a number of student/teacher teams to go to LUMCON and learn estuarine ecology and how to present that information in the classroom. Each team will receive water quality monitoring equipment and go back to the classroom, as a team, and teach the other students. A motion was made by Rick Hartman to accept the scope and was seconded by Gary Lafleur. There was no further discussion and no objections. The scope was accepted by acclamation.

J. Scope of Services for Coastal Roots

Deborah Schultz explained that this project will utilize funds from projects that were not initiated and funds leftover from other projects. She stated that this project was conceived by Dr. Pam Blanchard, of Louisiana Sea Grant and Louisiana Extension Service. She added that this project would promote stewardship of natural resources. There will be 6 wetland nurseries, 3 in the lower part of the estuary and 3 in the upper part. The students, from the schools where these nurseries will be located, will go out collecting seeds and cones from black mangroves and wax myrtles in the lower part of the estuary, and bald cypress from the northern part. The seeds and cones will be germinated in wetland nurseries and grown to a size where they can be planted for restoration. This project will fund the first year of the process. Sea Grant will come up with funds for the following year if BTNEP cannot. Deborah stated there would be standards based curriculum, a webpage on the LAMARE website, with a link to the BTNEP website, as well as a planting manual. APT: David Bourgeois, Rex Caffey, Gary Fine, Charles Matherne. Jean May-Brett asked who is writing the booklet? Deborah stated that Marie Tizzard would be putting that booklet together. Rick Hartman asked why were they limiting this to just black mangrove? Kerry answered that again it would take more money to expand the plant list, but also there has been some demonstrated success with black mangrove seeds. A motion to accept this scope was made by Randy Lanctot and seconded by Atly Brasher. There was no further discussion and no objections. This scope was approved by acclamation.

K. EPA Volunteer Citizen Monitoring Workshop

Deborah Schultz informed the MC that the program office has potential funding coming from Non Point Source/DEQ to do a pilot citizen-monitoring project on Bayou Lafourche. This project will have 10 stations. Deborah stated that EPA offers a citizen-monitoring workshop around the country. Deborah has asked them to put one on here and have agreed to do it in February. This workshop will have room for about 25 participants and local people will be taken first but will be offered gulf wide. Deborah stated that she needs assistance with lining up speakers as well as help on setting the agenda. Deborah stated that the action here is to solicit volunteers to give her assistance. Randy Lanctot asked if this would cost BTNEP any money. Deborah

answered no it will not, EPA is providing the funds for this workshop. Len Bahr suggested that the name be changed because citizen-monitoring sounds a little like government looking at citizens instead of citizens looking at environmental problems. The following individuals volunteered to participate on the APT: Jessica Kastler, Jean Westbrook, Gary Lafleur, and Lynnette Cortez.

L. WETMAAP 2001

Deborah Schultz explained that this contract is already in progress where 3 workshops will be held. She added that there has been a greater response than anticipated. Therefore, Deborah is asking to amend the contract by adding \$600-800 to buy supplies. She added that it is easier to amend contract than to start new contract. She is also asking permission to include the development of an additional site to amendment. The WETMAAP 2000 contract will be amended to develop an additional site in Terrebonne Parish. Rick Hartman asked what is advantage to BTNEP to take these teachers out and looking at these maps. He also asked what value does it add to BTNEP and the community. Jean May-Brett answered by saying that it is standard-based. WETMAAP is correlated to the documents in social studies, math and science. Teachers are trained on how to use technology that is available thru NWRC. This prepares materials that can be directly implemented into the classroom for immediate impact and to help teachers and students understand the issues of the estuary program. A motion was made by Rick Hartman to approve the amendment and seconded by Roy Francis. There was no further discussion and no objections. It was approved by acclamation.

M. Scope of Services for the Shellfish Challenge Graphic Panels for the BTNEP Display

Eddie Landrum explained that this scope is for a set of four mural panels for the new BTNEP display unit. The graphics will be taken from various powerpoint presentations, the Shellfish Challenge CD and other graphics that Eddie has been working on over the past year. The funds will come from the contract with the Gulf of Mexico Program. The funds will go towards the layout, printing and lamination of the murals. A motion was made by Ken Hemphill to accept the scope and seconded by Jean May-Brett. There was no further discussion and no objections. The scope was approved by acclamation.

N. Scope of Services for the Shellfish Challenge Webpage and Interactive CD-ROM

Eddie Landrum explained that some of the tasks dealing with the webpage were coupled with Richard's contract with Integrate. The CD is still in the works as far as scoping it out. Eddie is soliciting volunteers to serve on the APT: Earl Melancon, Jean May-Brett

O. BTNEP Clean Marina Guide

Eddie Landrum stated that this is another educational tool for the Shellfish Challenge. Eddie stated that the objectives of this project are 1) to increase the awareness about the effects of pollution discharges on the region's ecology and economy; 2) build upon current efforts to raise awareness about general sewage effects and effect behavioral changes over time; 3) provide an educational tool for illustrating the relationship between a healthy environment and a healthy economy while illustrating the facilitation of oyster restoration projects in the BTE; 4) provide an educational tool for illustrating the importance of proper sewage pumpout and dump station facilities at marinas, oil recycling and fuel related releases and problems, boat cleaning and maintenance, waste disposal and recycling practices, and hurricane preparedness. It was asked what kind of cost are we looking at for a pump out station. Eddie answered by saying that Plaquemine Parish did one for \$27,000. He added that 2/3 of that cost is picked up by the LDWF. That is with no existing infrastructure already in place. Jim Giattina added that information on cost/maintenance can be obtained from the Gulf of Mexico Program. Eddie stated that although the scope is for \$3,000, he had just spoken to the contractor and they came back with another cost of \$4,000. A motion was made by Vince Cottone to accept this scope and seconded by Atly Brasher. There was no further discussion and no objections. The scope was approved by acclamation.

P. Scope of Services for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Impacts of Stormwater Discharge to Coastal Wetlands, Adjacent to the Pointe aux Chene Pumping Station, Terrebonne Parish Louisiana
Eddie Landrum explained that this is one of the prioritized projects of the Shellfish Challenge. He reminded the MC that a workshop about this issue was held in February where a series of monitoring sites were selected. This contract will fund the first year of monitoring assessment that will take place prior to the construction of the pump discharge station. This project includes stages that seek to evaluate the effects of stormwater discharges to wetlands on: 1) submergent and emergent biomass and aerial coverage; 2) marsh elevation, specifically local accretion (relative rise) and true rise; and 3) water quality, specifically nutrient uptake, eutrophication, potential toxins and pathogens. Richard DeMay informed the MC that he and Fred Kopfler have been working together to identify those existing pump stations where it may be applicable for re-routing stormwater drainage. He stated that they have not been able to locate any in Terrebonne Parish that were close to state or parish owned property, where the issue of private landowners would have to be dealt with. A motion to accept this scope was made by Len Bahr and seconded by Ken Hemphill. There was no further discussion and no objections. This scope was accepted by acclamation.

A presentation, by Dr. Irv Mendelssohn, LSU, on the dying marsh issue was given during lunch.

Dr. Mendelssohn first presented a historical perspective to the die-back and then introduced the group to the die-off as it is occurring right now. He then showed photographs depicting how the marsh is looking now. He then discussed the evidence that is being either suggested or negated, the possible hypothesis as to what is causing the die-off. In summary, Dr. Mendelssohn stated that the factors least likely to be involved are chemical spills and herbivory. Those factors possibly involved are pathogens and low genetic diversity. And finally those factors that are looking more strongly to be involved are salinity, water level extremes and natural toxins (sulfides).

After Dr. Mendelssohn finished his presentation Kerry informed the MC that there has been a lot of discussion among several agencies, including the Governor's Office, about BTNEP leading the coordination of this response since it is predominantly impacting the BT Estuary. He added that the liaison between BTNEP and the nation and other groups is the Governor's Office. Kerry stated that this would be a good thing for the program office; however, the staff is overwhelmed. He added that if the program office were to do this, we would need funding and additional staff. Len Bahr added that the Governor's Office thought of BTNEP as the most well positioned entity to coordinate and manage this response. He stated that the BTNEP Scientific Technical Committee that was used in the past would most probably need to be reconstituted and any new positions needed would most probably be doable. Kerry asked the MC what their thoughts were about the program office taking on this responsibility. Windell Curole asked for a motion that would say that the MC is in agreement with BTNEP to be involved with this issue in whichever form that would be appropriate and would allow Kerry to make the decision on whether or not to coordinate this effort. Len Bahr made that motion and seconded by Earl Melancon. Doug Svendsen suggested that the program look for a way to free up existing funds and staff to address this issue. It was stated that if Dale Givens is not willing to give the program more funding, then Kerry as a manager has to make the decision as to what is most important. Quin Kinler stated that if the state thinks this issue is important enough, then the state should provide the funding for the program office to take on this responsibility. There was no further discussion and no objections. By acclamation this motion was passed.

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Non-Indigenous Species Presentation

Marilyn Barret-O'Leary, LSU Sea Grant Office, summarized the status of non-indigenous species in Louisiana.

She stated there are a lot of groups controlling and monitoring these species individually, they are not interconnected at this time. She added that the target species in Louisiana are the nutria, zebra mussels, salvinia minima and molesta, hydrilla and water hyacinth. She stated that these species are being controlled chemically and/or mechanically. Regulations have been set for some of these species. For example, salvinia molesta cannot be transported. She added that some of these non-indigenous species get into our environment very naturally, by wind, water and land. The nation is focusing on ballast waters to control the number of new species from entering our country. She added that the solution comes from a federal law that told the Coast Guard that they needed to do something about this. The Coast Guard has made the recommendation that vessels bringing cargo from outside US waters must exchange the ballast within their tanks out in open ocean before coming into US waters and US ports.

Dr O'Leary informed the MC that in conjunction with the Gulf of Mexico Program, Louisiana Sea Grant held 3 workshops to help the shipping industry and anyone else to understand the process. She stated the results showed the shipping community really does understand that they have some responsibility for controlling non-indigenous species in the Gulf region and for Louisiana. However, this is not the answer to Louisiana's situation because there are a lot of bulk vessels that travel up the Mississippi River. The vessels come into port fully ballasted, and empty of cargo. As cargo is loaded on, ballast waters are released. She stated that our worst problem is the vessels coming from the Caribbean. These vessels do not cross the portions of the Gulf of Mexico where open ocean ballast water exchange is possible. Dr. O'Leary stated that our responsibility is to know our waters, our plants and try to prevent the introduction of new species. She added that the state of Louisiana has begun to implement a state management plan. This plan will be in a similar format as BTNEP. A task force is being formed under the leadership of Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries.

B. Environmental Stewardship Retreat

Brother Dominic Pujia, Director of Youth Ministries, Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, decided to get the church and its youth involved in land loss issues after seeing Kerry give presentation at Leadership Terrebonne. He stated that he found grant monies from 3 different organizations to put together 3 retreats at LUMCON to bring 50 young people together to look at these issues. Topics that were covered were land loss, Grand Bois site and restoration and its cost. A beach sweep took place on Trinity Island.

C. La Fete d'Ecologie Update

Sandra Kendrick asked for volunteers for the festival. She stated that volunteers are needed for the activities under the children's tent that are being sponsored by the program office and the Foundation. She also asked those agencies that have not returned their application to exhibit, to please do so. She added that there were several new activities under the Children's Tent. One is the Earth Ball that Brother Dominic mentioned in his presentation. Also, Ducks Unlimited will have their Green Wings Day, which is their youth organization, with hunter safety education and duck calling contest. Sandra added that promotional spots have begun this week.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

V. ADJOURN

Vince Cottone motioned to adjourn at 2:06pm. Randy Lanctot seconded.