

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

***MC Meeting #26
9:30 AM April 16, 2003
Multipurpose Room
Ellender Memorial Library
Nicholls State University Campus
Thibodaux, LA***

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

Management Conference Members Present were:

Mr. David Bourgeois-LSU Ag Center
Mr. Chuck Villarubia-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Mr. Bob Martinson-US Army Corp of Engineers
Mr. Archie Chaisson-Bayou Lafourche Fresh Water District
Mr. Windell Curole-LA Assoc. of Levee Board
Dr. Jessica Kastler-LUMCON
Mr. Doug Daigle-Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Mr. Wallace Ellender-American Sugar Cane League
Ms. Martha Segura-US Fish & Wildlife Service
Ms. Annalise Westphall-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
Ms. Christina Swaye-LA Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
Mr. Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Gov't
Mr. Vince Cottone-Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Dr. Gary LaFleur-Nicholls State University
Ms. Pam Roussell-South Central Planning & Development Commission
Ms. Kelly Shotts-US National Marine Fisheries Service
Mr. Doug Jacobson-US EPA
Mr. Joey Breaux-LA Dept. of Ag & Forestry
Ms. Jean May-Brett-Louisiana Science Teachers Assoc.
Mr. Manuel Ruiz-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Ms. Vicki Duffourc-Jefferson Parish Environmental Dept.
Ms. Angela Rathle-National Park Service
Mr. Richard Martin-The Nature Conservancy
Mr. Buck Vandersteen-Louisiana Forestry Association

Organizations not represented:

LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals
Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
Louisiana Landowners Association
Louisiana Independent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Assumption Parish
Lafourche Parish
USDA/NRCS

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US Geological Survey
Greater Lafourche Port Commission
Plaquemines Parish
Louisiana Farm Bureau
US Coast Guard
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
South Louisiana Economic Council
Commercial Fisheries
LA Dept. of Education
St. Charles Parish
Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts
Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association
Coastal Conservation Assoc. of Louisiana

Staff Members Present:

Kerry St. Pe'
Richard DeMay
Deborah Schultz
Leslie McVeigh
Dean Blanchard
Andrew Barron
Justin Meunier
Sandra Helmuth

Guests:

Katina Gaudet-The Daily Comet
Beverly Etheridge-US EPA
Mike Saia-US Army Corp of Engineers
John Conover-LUMCON
Quentin Fontenot-NSU
Jonah ?-Houma Jr. High Student
Daniel Bollock-C. K. & Associates

B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the January 23, 2003 meeting

There were no corrections or discussion of the minutes, therefore a motion was made and seconded to dispense of the reading of the minutes.

C. Program Activities (since January 23, 2003)

- ❖ **Presentations/Exhibits-** STEPS Workshop; Central Lafourche High School Career Day; Environmental Educator's Symposium; Lafourche Coastal Zone Management; American Geographers Association; NSU Jubilee; LA Environmental Educators Symposium; Career Connection; NSU Biology Society; Plaquemines Lockfest; Grand Isle Migratory Bird Day Festival; Baton Rouge Earth Day; LUMCON Open House; Bayou Lafourche Eco-business Symposium; Gulf of Mexico Program Project Selection Meeting; Jefferson Parish NonPoint Source Awards Banquet; Audubon Zoo Earthfest; Maritime Forest Ridge Field Trip

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- ❖ **Media Interviews-KLRZ-LCA** Public Meetings; **LSU** Journalism Graduate Students-Bayou Lafourche Tour; **KTIB**-Program Update and LCA Public Meetings; **Denver Times**-Mike Tidwell Book Review; **Tri-Parish Times**-water quality and non-point source pollution, BTNEP overview;
- ❖ **Meetings-** Christine Todd Whitman visit; Governor's Coastal Advisory Committee; EPA Tech Transfer; State Wetlands Task Force; Houma South Central Industrial Association Coastal Summit Planning Committee; LCA Outreach; LCA Public Hearings; America's Wetland Campaign; Restore or Retreat; Louisiana Resource Center for Educator's Coastal Curriculum; BT Foundation Board; Waterbird Research; Gulf of Mexico Program Project Selection Meeting; Association of National Estuary Program Spring Meeting; AmeriCorps Graduation; Invasive Species Task Force; Terrebonne Parish Save Our Soil; Louisiana Native Plant Society; Lafourche Parish Wisner Restoration Project; Elmer's Island Acquisition meeting; LCA Applied Science Committee; Seagrass; Orleans Audubon Society Boardwalk; Preparation for a Hazard Mitigation Plan-Terrebonne Parish

D. Set Date for 27^h Management Conference Meeting

The 27th Management Conference meeting was set for Wednesday, July 30, 2003.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. BTMC Chairman and Co-Chair Election

Windell informed the MC that he is stepping down as chair. Because there is not a quorum, only an acting chairman can be chosen. Loulan Pitre, who was not present, had expressed interest in remaining co-chair.

Kerry stated that we should ratify the action of choosing an acting chairman, and either approve this person as chairman at the next management conference meeting or do an email/mail out approval.

Archie Chaisson nominated Al Levron, Vince Cottone seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Al Levron was selected as Acting Chairperson.

Kerry reminded the MC that the Operational Procedures state that officers were to be elected every 2 years. Therefore it is time to elect new officer.

He thanked Windell for doing a great job since 1997. Windell reminded the MC that when he took over as Chairperson, the turnover in the BTNEP office was at its highest and Karen Gautreaux was Interim Director of the program.

Windell stated that a major accomplishment that he was a part of was when he and Loulan Pitre met with Dale Givens concerning contract problems. From that, they were able to negotiate a transfer of BTNEP from DEQ to the Board of Regents and LUMCON. He stated that he would like to see some other things get done but he does not have time to dedicate to the program.

Windell stated he felt that Al would do a great job because he was the first person who pushed to get an estuary program in this area.

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Al then took over the seat as acting Chairperson. He stated he was looking forward to getting closer to the program and feels he has a lot to offer the program as he has insight to local government and how the program can intergrate itself closer and have a working relationship with local government.

Al then asked for nominations for Co-Chairperson. Jean May-Brett moved to nominate Loulan Pitre and David Bourgeois seconded. There were no other nominations or opposition, therefore Loulan Pitre will be acting Co-Chairperson until a quorum is present to approve his permanent position.

B. FY2004 Workplan

Kerry reminded the MC that it is the time of year where the program must seek the MC's approval to stipulate how the program will spend it's federal funding. The workplan must be submitted to EPA by June 30, 2003.

Kerry stated that there are different ways the program staff comes up with project ideas. Action plan teams, either formally or informally, are utilized for ideas.

INDIRECT CHARGES: Kerry stated that because BTNEP is an off-site entity of LUMCON, BTNEP is charged a 7% indirect charge. The reason being is that they fund an additional staff position specifically for handling BTNEP contracts and purchasing.

TRAVEL FUNDS: Kerry stated that each year EPA gives each NEP \$10,000 for travel. This allows BTNEP staff to go to other NEPs, groups, to present our issues. BTNEP has to show EPA how those funds are used in order to receive the same funding the following year.

Kerry stated that BTNEP definitely uses these funds, plus some of its state travel funds each year.

Kerry stated that each NEP will be receiving \$510,000 from EPA and must match it with state funds. He reminded the MC that BTNEP does not get \$510,000 from the state general fund, that we only get \$310,000. So, BTNEP will be working with its legislative delegation again this year to ask for an additional \$250,000 from the state general fund so that the program can match the EPA funds.

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING: Kerry stated that we can no longer support the administrative activities just from the state funding. Therefore the program takes what it needs from the federal funding before any projects are funded.

Richard DeMay reminded the MC that when BTNEP was still under DEQ, its state funding was \$430,000. Two years ago, BTNEP's state budget was cut \$130,000.

Doug Jacobson state that unfortunately the federal funds increased at the same time the state funds decreased, and the match went from 25/75 to 50/50.

7th ANNUAL "LA FETE D'ECOLOGIE": BARATARIA-TERREBONNE"

Leslie stated that the funding for this project will remain the same as last year, \$40,000.

She reminded the MC of last year's event which had to be postponed due to the effects of T.S. Isidore and Hurricane Lillie. However, it allowed the program to develop a partnership with the Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce by conducting the festival as the third day of Thibodauxville that was held in November.

She also stated that there were several new components such as an art contest and an estuarine bubble. She stated that each year the program and the contractor would try to incorporate a new attraction or feature every year.

Jessie Kastler asked if La Fete will be tied into Thibodauxville again next year. Leslie stated no, EPA has made National Estuaries Day a permanent day of the last Saturday in September so the Program will keep with that schedule.

CONTINUATION OF THE BARATARIA-TERREBONNE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM'S WEB SITE WWW.BTNEP.ORG

Richard stated that this is a continuing effort to revamp the website as well as developing mini-websites that address the issues that the program is working on.

Doug complimented the program on its new website.

MARSH MANEUVERS-YOUTH CAMPS

Deborah Schultz reminded the MC that BTNEP has been funding these camps for about 8 years. She stated that BTNEP is reducing the funding this year, not because of any problems with this project, but because BTNEP is looking to moving money into new projects.

ACTIVITY BOOK

Deborah stated that the Saltmarsh Activity Book that Rachel Somers developed for BTNEP was intended to be a first in a series of books designed to fill in an educational gap that was identified for elementary school.

Jean-May Brett suggested that the term "lower elementary" should be taken out of the description since the previous book addressed this group already and this one needs to address middle school. Deborah stated that from her polling educators is the area, the teachers were concerned that there were no teaching tools for lower elementary. Jean stated that two different products need to be produced because you cannot address lower elementary in the same way you would address middle school.

Deborah said she would decide which to address at a later date with the Action Plan Team.

EDUCATOR WORKSHOPS

Deborah stated that BTNEP has put in a fair amount of money already into development of curriculum materials, which are still in progress. This project will fund workshops for teachers using this curriculum material.

SUPPORT FOR ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Deborah stated that as part of the Bayou Lafourche Initiative, an oral history collection was implemented. This funding will allow this project to continue next year targeting all of the schools along Bayou Lafourche and a suggestion was made by Jean May-Brett that a symposium be held for those who participate in the project.

This project would have students interviewing elders in their family and community, which would benefit the students not only in collecting data and transcribing the interviews but also the communication between generations

RESTORATION OF SUBMERGED AQUATIC BED USING VALLISNERIA AMERICANA (EEL GRASS) IN THE BARATARIA TERREBONNE REGION

Dean Blanchard reminded the MC that currently a contract is in place with NMFS to look at the habitat value of these vallisneria beds. This project will continue this effort by looking at different environmental factors that effect the survival and growth of these vallisneria beds and also looking at different restoration techniques. This is going to be a 2-year project, so the MC will be asked again next year to fund this project.

Martha Segura asked if the program had any idea of who would be contracted for this project. Dean stated there were two different entities being considered.

Martha stated that she would be interested in being on that Action Plan Team.

A VEGETATIVE MODEL FOR RESTORATION, CONSERVATION AND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT ON BENEFICIAL-USE DREDGE SEDIMENTS

Dean stated that this project involves a site located on the Greater Lafourche Port Commission property where there is over 100 acres of dredge material. The mitigation responsibility has been fulfilled but there is still a lot of unvegetated area. He stated that NRCS and the Gulf of Mexico Program, as well as BTNE P will be funding this project to look at plants that would be beneficial to this area.

RE-SURVEY OF WADING BIRD AND SEABIRD NESTING COLONIES IN THE BARATARIA-TERREBONNE BASINS

Richard stated this effort is to work with other organizations to leverage funding to update the surveys of wading birds and seabird nesting colonies in Louisiana, not just in the coastal areas, since it has not been done since 1990.

GRAND ISLE BIRD DAY CELEBRATION

Richard stated that BTNEP has supported this event for several years but this year the monetary support has been decreased to wean the program off of this project, not totally, but so that other organizations can take up some of the slack.

He stated that this year's event was held last weekend and it was a great success. The weather was cooperative, there were lots of birders and about 150 species were observed.

He stated also that Governor Mike Foster was there and that he got a chance to talk to him about Elmer's Island. Richard stated that the governor's administration is currently looking into appraising the island. He stated that if a deal can be cut with the owners of the island for the appraised value, the state would purchase the island.

EVALUATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF WADING BIRD COLONIES IN COASTAL LOUISIANA

Richard stated this project is slated to work with other organizations and leverage other funding to begin to address population dynamics/species dynamics/clutch survival and the health of wading bird colonies.

Jean May-Brett asked if the action plan team has a plan of what can be done with these monies if the potential partners do not have the funding. In other words, is this project broken down to where it can at least be started? Richard answered that it was set up that way.

WINGS OVER THE WETLANDS BIRD FESTIVAL

Leslie stated that there is a need for the Program to participate in events that take place outside Thibodaux to reach people that are not ordinarily reached. The National Park Service has stepped forward and wants to spearhead an effort for this festival. This money will be leveraged with NPS and other partners. The event will be held at the Jean Lafitte Historical Park and Preserve-Barataria Unit in Lafitte in October of 2003.

Jessie Kastler asked if this would be a recurring event. Leslie stated most probably but this is its first year so it will be determined after the event.

Richard stated that this would be the only birding event/festival in the state to be held in the fall. All others are held in the spring.

Jessie stated she was concerned that there are so many events in the fall that there needs to be some coordination amongst the organizations that put on these events because they are all competing for people to attend their events that are all being held at the same time.

DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT OF 2 KIOSKS FEATURING THE "EXPLORING COASTAL LOUISIANA WITH BOUDREAUX" CD-ROM AND THE "KNEE DEEP IN LOUISIANA WETLANDS" CD-ROM

Leslie reminded the MC that there is a kiosk in place currently at the Lafourche Tourist Commission in Raceland. According to the staff there, this kiosk is a huge attraction with adults as well as children. Therefore, BTNEP would like to purchase two additional kiosks and place them at other locations.

Doug Jacobson asked if an airport would be a possible consideration and Leslie stated yes it would.

REVISION OF "PORTRAIT OF AN ESTUARY" AND PRODUCTION OF ESTUARY BROCHURE

Leslie stated that this publication was a great tool to get the functions and values of the estuary across to the public. These funds will be used to review the facts and figures and to update the graphics. Also, information will be extracted from this document to produce a brochure that will be rack ready for display at tourist commissions, park services, hotels and cultural centers throughout the BTE system.

RECIPE CARDS FEATURING ESTUARINE RESOURCES, INCLUDING FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY AND THE RESOURCE FEATURED IN THE RECIPE

Leslie stated that this project stems from the recipe cards that the ANEP developed which has been a huge success. Each card will present a recipe and facts about the resource prominent in the recipe. It has been suggested that a cooking contest be held at the festival and use the winning recipes for the cards. Or even to ask local restaurants to allow the Program to use one of their signature dish recipes.

Richard asked how many different cards would be produced. Leslie stated that at the moment seven is the number being considered.

Jean May-Brett suggested a post card size that way travelers could send them to friends and family.

Al Levron informed the MC that there is now a quorum; therefore he is asking the MC to approve the FY2004 Workplan as suggested with revisions by MC members. There were no comments or suggestions. There was no opposition therefore the workplan was approved.

Also, with a quorum, Item II. A. of the agenda, the election of Chair and Co-Chair, was revisited. Previously the action was taken to accept Al Levron as Chair and Loulan Pitre as Co-Chair. Al asked for ratification of that action. There was no objection. Therefore the election of Al and Loulan was approved.

Kerry stated he had a letter from Dr. Earl Melancon, who is President of the Barataria Terrebonne Estuary Foundation, as well as a member of the Management Conference. The letter explains the reasoning of consolidating the Foundation's efforts more closely with the BTNEP office and staff.

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Update on Cypress Logging

Kerry reminded the MC that this was an issue discussed at the last Management Conference meeting based on requests of the MC. Paul Kemp was invited and agreed to give a presentation but since had another commitment come up. He asked Andrew Barron to give this presentation. He sent Andrew a copy of a proposal to the governor's office, yet to be funded.

The proposal is titled "Interim Guidelines for Coastal Wetland Forest Harvesting, Regeneration, Establishment and Protection"

Andrew gave a little background on the issue. He stated that there was a Mississippi entrepreneur who purchased timber leases from landowners in Maurepas to harvest cypress trees. EPA stated that if those second growth forests were harvested, that would lead to open water. As a result of EPA's ruling logging did begin in Maurepas but the Corps of Engineers issued a cease and desist order but was only temporary and can be challenged.

The Governor's Office was called in for the formation of a task force and an advisory panel to look into this issue and to develop some guidelines. The task force is mainly composed of researchers who have done work in coastal wetland swamps and the panel is mainly state agencies, industry and environmental groups.

The task force is tasked with investigation of guidelines for delineating areas with a potential for regeneration. Two workshops are planned, one to be held this summer and the second in the fall. The Task Force's goal is to develop coastal forest best management practices (CFBMPs) for long-term conservation and utilization of wetland forests.

The proposal was intended to start in January of this year but it hasn't yet been funded. Andrew then went over the time line of the proposal.

Andrew then read the list of the Task Force and Advisory Panel members.

A MC member stated there should already enough information out there on this issue so why was this all necessary. Jessie Kastler stated that the people on the Task Force and Advisory Panel would be the ones to answer that question. She also gets the impression that with the time frame given, a whole lot of new research would not be taking place. It would be more data collection but not more than 2 or 3 months.

Buck Vandersteen stated that research would be done on the cypress tree tolerance of salt water.

Kerry asked if the number of people on the Advisory Committee was limited in anyway, Andrew stated he did not know. Kerry stated he noticed that BTNEP was not listed on the committee.

Andrew stated that this is a proposed list, so he would suspect that it is not limited. Doug Daigle stated the Coalition has not been formally asked to sit on this committee.

Al Levron asked the MC if it would approve of Kerry pursuing the effort to get BTNEP on that Advisory Panel.

Jean May-Brett made a motion and Jessica Kastler seconded the motion.

Buck passed out some guidelines of reforestation of non-coastal wetland forestry. He suggested that the guidelines that come from this proposal need to be non-regulatory so that landowners can use it and still enjoy the benefits from their coastal forest resources. His concern is that unless this effort is steered correctly, a problem may be developed. In other words, more landowner involvement needs to be incorporated.

Andrew stated that BTNEP received a resolution from the Louisiana Wildlife Federation to the State to adopt a policy, which includes incentives to discourage the harvest of coastal forests. Andrew asked the MC if they would be interested in passing a similar resolution.

Doug Jacobsen suggested that an Action Plan Team come make recommendations on how to approach this issue. Jean May-Brett made the motion to do this and Doug Daigle seconded the motion.

B. LCA Update

Leslie McVeigh stated that Jon Porthouse was not able to attend to give this update because of a conflict with the CWWPRA Task Force meeting. Leslie informed the MC that the outreach components of the LCA studies are on going. There were a series of public meetings held in February, two in the BTE system, one in Belle Chasse, one in Larose, one in Morgan City and one in Lake Charles. They were all considered successful, with the Larose Meeting having the most attendance.

The second round of meetings was initially set for the week of May 12-15, however, they have been pushed back a week, but could be pushed back another week. The locations for this round will be New Orleans, Houma, Lafayette and Lake Charles.

C. Discussion of Additions to the Management Conference-Kerry St. Pe'

Kerry informed the MC that when moving from the Planning to the Implementation stage, the Management Conference members were chosen amongst those in attendance at the last Management Committee meeting. Meaning that if a certain organization was not represented at that meeting, they were not chosen. The National Park Service was one organization that was not chosen, but that has recently been corrected.

Kerry stated that after the last Management Conference meeting where this logging issue was discussed, it was mentioned that the representation of the Louisiana Forestry Association needed to be reestablished on the MC. Buck just so happened to call Kerry soon after that meeting and it was

suggested by Buck that the LA Forestry Association be represented again. Kerry told him that would be a very good thing but that the MC would have to approve it. Kerry then offered to the MC to allow this to take place.

Kerry also stated that the Louisiana Environmental Action Network was put on the MC back in 1996. They have not been able to attend meetings due to lack of staff and that resulting in LEAN being taken off the MC, according to the operational procedures. Therefore he is asking the MC to approve that The Nature Conservancy take its place..

Jean May Brett moved to approve these two groups as new members of the MC, Jessie Kastler seconded. They were accepted by acclamation.

E. Discussion of FY2004 State Funding-Kerry St. Pé

Kerry reminded the MC that BTNEP is going to the State Legislature to augment its current level of state funding to equal its federal funding. It was submitted in the LUMCON budget but was not considered. So, the next step is go get Legislative support to introduce it at session.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Doug Daigle announced that the Mississippi River Basin Alliance will be hosting a Climate Change Workshop at NSU. MRBA received a grant from Entergy to hold this Workshop.

Vince Cottone announced that Chevron/Texaco was asked to supply funding for the Wisner Foundation project in Port Fourchon. Chevron/Texaco will be supplying monetary funds and some 31 volunteers.

He also announced that the next meeting of the Gulf Safety Committee will be held on April 24th, from 6pm to 9pm at the Youth Center in Cut Off, LA. It will focus on Gulf of Mexico Off Shore Security.

He next announced that the Marine Transportation Security Act of 2002 is moving forward. The Coast Guard is writing regulations that will affect everyone in one way or another. These are not changes in regulations; they are new regulations. The Coast Guard has to implement he provisions of the International Ship and Port Security Treaty.

Vince lastly announced that Chevron/Texaco has accepted applications for a deep-water port off the coast of Louisiana called Port Pelican. It is a gas liquification port, not an oil port. There will be a public meeting at the Lafayette Hilton on April 29th.

Jessie Kastler asked if there was a list of Action Plan Teams and what Action Plans they work on. Richard DeMay stated that the mini-websites would contain that information.

Angela Rathle informed the MC that NPS is building a boat for tours along Bayou Lafourche giving presentations on the cultural and natural history of the area. Hopefully that will be started in May. Angela asked the MC if anyone has a place that this boat can be stored, please let her know.

V. ADJOURN