

## **Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program**

*MC Meeting # 29 Minutes  
9:30AM-February 19, 2004  
Nicholls State University Campus  
Century Room-John L. Guidry Stadium  
Thibodaux, LA*

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

#### **A. Roll-Call**

##### **The following Management Conference Members were present:**

Mr. Archie Chaisson-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District  
Mr. Donald Lirette- Commercial Fisheries  
Mr. Pat Ford-Governor's Office of Coastal Activities  
Ms. Vickie Duffourc-Jefferson Parish  
Ms. Anne Perry-LA Dept. of Economic Development  
Ms. Anne Wilson-LA Dept. of Education  
Mr. David Hughes-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality  
Mr. Jim Rives-LA Dept. of Natural Resources  
Mr. Vince Guillory-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries  
Mr. Jess Curole-Lafourche Parish  
Mr. John Woodard-LA Association of Conservation Districts  
Mr. Windell Curole-Louisiana Association of Levee Boards  
Mr. Buck Vandersteen-LA Forestry Association  
Mr. Randy Robichaux-Louisiana Independent Oil & Gas Assoc.  
Mr. Tim Allen-Louisiana Landowners Association  
Mr. Mike Lyons-Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association  
Mr. Roland Guidry-Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office  
Dr. Jessica Kastler-LUMCON  
Mr. Randy Lanctot-Louisiana Wildlife Federation  
Dr. Rex Caffey-LSU Ag Center  
Ms. Angela Rathle-National Park Service  
Dr. Earl Melancon-NSU  
Ms. Julie Boudreaux-South Central Planning & Development Commission  
Mr. Roy Francis-South Louisiana Economic Council  
Mr. Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish  
Ms. Jean Landry-The Nature Conservancy  
Mr. Jack Fredine-US Army Corp of Engineers  
Mr. Doug Jacobson-US EPA  
Mr. Scot Wilson-USGS  
Mr. Rick Hartman-US NFMS  
Ms. Lisa Zeringue-USDA/NRCS

##### **MC Organizations Not Represented:**

Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana  
Coastal Conservation Association of Louisiana  
LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals  
Plaquemines Parish  
US Fish & Wildlife Service

**BTNEP Staff Present:**

Kerry St. Pé  
Richard DeMay  
Dean Blanchard  
Deborah Schultz  
Leslie McVeigh  
Andrew Barron  
Sandra Helmuth

**Guests Present:**

Colby Istre-Student from Larose-Cut Off Middle School  
Tisa Hill-Art Teacher from Larose-Cut Off Middle School  
Celeste Regal-Tri-Parish Times  
Fred Kopfler-Gulf of Mexico Program  
Lisa Evans-Sierra Club  
John Conover-LUMCON  
Manuel Ruiz-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries  
Brad Miller-LA Dept. of Natural Resources  
Heather Finley-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries  
Charles Cursio  
Laura Hudson  
Ron Blanchard-Restore or Retreat  
Joni Blanchard  
Marcia Ruble-NOAA  
Amy Wold-The Advocate  
Phil Pittman-LA Dept. of Natural Resources  
James Miller-Terrebonne Parish  
Steve Mathies-CH2M Hill  
David Bourgeois-LSU Ag Center  
Vince Cottone-LA Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Assoc.  
Wendi French-Wyndston Services  
Shan Burkhalter-NOAA  
Bob Roberts-LA Dept. of Natural Resources

**B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the November 5, 2003 Meeting**

Rick Hartman made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and Archie Chaisson seconded. There were no objections.

**II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

**A. Personnel**

Justin Meunier (BTNEP Invasive Species Coordinator) resignation.

**B. Presentations/Exhibits**

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bayou Lafourche Paddle Trip; 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Louisiana Book Festival (Baton Rouge); Thibodeauxville; UNO (Coastal Zone Management Graduate Class Seminar); Clean Gulf

Conference (New Orleans); LSTA (Estuary Live 2003); Healthy Water, Healthy People (LUMCON); Litter/Non-Point Source Workshop for Terrebonne Parish; STEPS (LUMCON)

**C. Media Interviews**

KTIB "Dialogue" Radio Show: Indicator Report (November), Migratory Bird Activities (December) and Sugar Cane Residue Project (January); Tri-Parish Times: Migratory Bird Issues; Delaware Inland Bay NEP Radio Show

**D. Meetings**

CWWPRA Task Force Meeting; Brownsfield Summit; COSI Educator's Workshop; Ghost Crab Trap Removal Program Planning; LSU/Sea Grant South Central Region Advisory Committee; America's Wetland; Brown Marsh Study Results; Third Delta Conveyance Channel; RC&D; N. Lafourche Levee District; Restore or Retreat; B. Lafourche Freshwater District; Migratory Bird Action Plan Team; South Central Industrial Association; Ascension Parish Indian Heritage Planning Meeting; Forest Ridge Tour; Jason Project Site Assessment(Beaumont, TX); GOMP Communications Committee Meeting (Galveston, TX); Gulf Shoreline Advisory Team Meeting

**E. Projects Initiated:**

1. The Planning of Wetlands (POW) Educator Workshop - Deborah Schultz
2. Spirit of the Estuary Arts Curriculum Development - Deborah Schultz
3. Healthy Water, Healthy People - Deborah Schultz
4. Building of Boardwalk on Orleans Audubon Property, Terrebonne Parish -Richard DeMay
5. Permitting for Boardwalk on Orleans Audubon Property, Terrebonne Parish-Richard DeMay
6. 2004 US EPA Implementation Review-Dean Blanchard

**III. Schedule Next Meeting Date:** Date Suggested is May 13, 2004.

This date was approved.

**IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. 2004 Implementation Review-Kerry St. Pé (30 minutes)**

Kerry reminded the MC that each of the 28 National Estuary Programs receives from EPA about 510,000. He also stated that each NEP has to go through an evaluation process that shows EPA how that funding has been spent. A Pass or Fail grade is given for this evaluation. This will be the third Implementation Review that BTNEP will go through. This year's report is due in March 2004. Kerry stated that BTNEP has awarded a contract for assistance in gathering all of the information necessary.

Kerry stated that in order to receive continued funding from EPA, BTNEP must receive a Passing Grade. He stated that the most critical component of this process is to gather information from the MC on what each organization is doing to implement the CCMP. He stated that this report covers the time period between January 2001 to December 2003.

Kerry reminded everyone that a project form was sent with the MC packet and that BTNEP asks everyone to submit those forms to Dean Blanchard by February 27, 2004. Kerry then went over the form step by step.

Kerry then showed the MC a page from the matrix of the last Implementation Review. He stated

that this is how the information they submit will be formatted for the report.

**B. NOAA & USGS New Coastal Imagery Land Change Program**-Marcia Ruble, NOAA

Marcia talked about what NOAA does and who they are, as well as NOAA's coastal change analysis program. She then spoke about NOAA's collaboration with USGS and the Multi Resolution Land Cover Consortium. She then talked about applications and actual mapping in Louisiana.

Marcia stated that all of the data shown in her presentation can be found at [www.csc.noaa.gov/landcover](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/landcover) .

**C. Update on Conveyance Channel Phase I Final Report**-Steve Mathies, CH2M Hill

Steve stated that the reason CH2M Hill was chosen by LDNR to work on this project is that CH2M Hill did not have a stance on whether this project is a good idea or a bad idea. Their mission was to pull together the best team of national experts related to open channel conveyance, sediment transport and delta building.

He then explained that the concept on the table proposed by Dr. Gagliano has to do with building a conveyance channel from the Mississippi River parallel to Bayou Lafourche, with a diversion from the river to the new conveyance channel.

He stated that there were four steps to the reconnaissance level of evaluation. The only phase Steve presented on was Phase I because that is the only one that has been evaluated thus far.

He stated the upcoming phases will look at that foot print and determine the gross environmental impact, economic impacts and evaluation of alternatives.

Steve then explained that Phase I was broken down into four components:

- 1) looking at all existing information that exists-sources were LDNR, USGS, Corp of Engineers, Water Ways Experiment Stations
- 2) answering the question can a channel be constructed-right of way requirements, other diversion structures and the geology were looked at to determine that a channel can be built
- 3) can the sediments be conveyed the distance it needs to be conveyed-studying the hydro-dynamics and when and where erosion will take place showed that this can take place and depends on the flow of the river, how frequently will there be major floods
- 4) will it build a delta-tidal regime, wind driven currents, wave action were all looked at; under the sceniario of 300,000 cfs, there would be 5.68 million tons a year delivered to those deltas

The overall conclusion of Phase I is that more sand would be received, more sand would be retained and land would be built faster in BT Basin than in the Atchafalaya Basin by allowing for a 300,000 cfs conveyance channel. Initially, a pilot channel of 40,000 cfs capacity would be dredged and through time widened into a 300,000 cfs channel.

There was then extensive discussion of using pipeline slurry to build deltas. The MC agreed that

pipeline slurry shouldn't only be a part of this project but should be a study now on its own.

Jack Fredine then gave an update on the Davis Pond Project. He stated that on November 30, 2003, testing began on large flow and limitations were discovered under the existing conditions. For one month, 2500 cfs was diverted and that was sustained out into the lake system with success.

He stated there are contracts in the works to raise levees that have settled naturally and extra cuts will be made in the degraded weir along the shoreline of Lake Cataouatche to facilitate more flow.

**D. Update on Elmer's Island Survey-Dr. Rex Caffey, LSU Ag Center**

Rex explained that this survey, which was conducted in 2003, looked at preferences for the future of Elmer's Island. This survey was the basis for the following recommendations:

- 1) The State of Louisiana should pursue the purchase of the island.
- 2) The State should consider the recent history of coastal land loss and commercial development in the Louisiana coastal zone.
- 3) The State should continue attempts to reconcile existing appraisals with the business history of Elmer's Island.
- 4) The appraisal should be based on commercial properties located in the coastal Louisiana
- 5) New purchase offers from the State should include an additional premium based on public benefits.
- 6) An advisory panel of public and private representatives should be convened to evaluate the options for public management.
- 7) Semi-primitive to sparse development alternatives should receive priority.
- 8) Opportunities for fee collection should be explored.
- 9) Elmer's Island should be reopened as soon as possible to minimize regional economic losses.
- 10) The purchase of Elmer's Island should be viewed as the first phase of a larger procurement effort designed to provide beachfront recreation lands to the general public.

**E. Update on Elmers Island Purchase-Dr. Rex Caffey, LSU Ag Center**

Rex, speaking for Randy Lanctot, of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, stated that the status of funding the purchase of this property is unclear. Adequate funding was approved in the capital outlay budget and a resolution was adopted urging the purchase. However, because there will be a new administration, the process likely will have to begin all over again.

**F. Ghost Crab Trap Removal Program-Vince Guillory, LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries**

Vince stated that without the help of numerous agencies, organizations, clubs and companies, as well and many individuals, this program would not have been as successful as it was.

Vince stated that in the last 2 years, crab trap sweeps have taken place in Texas, Mississippi and Alabama. He informed the MC that over 17,000 crab traps were picked up. He stated that the Louisiana effort is being funded though the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

He stated that the issue is the total abandoned or derelict crab traps in the BTE. The solution is to pick these traps up and transport them back to land and dispose of them properly. However,

in Louisiana, new was required to initiate the program. State law says it is illegal for any person to possess a crab trap unless he is the owner and can only be removed by the owner. In 2003, Louisiana Legislature passed a bill that gave LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries permission to establish a derelict crab trap program. However, there were several stipulations. The Commission determined the area of the trap closure, who will pick the traps up, the disposal sites and the dates when this will take place. The Legislation gave Wildlife & Fisheries two windows of dates to work with, February 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> and the other to be in conjunction with spring in shore shrimp season.

Vince informed the MC of the requirements and locations of the crab trap sweeps. He stated that February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup> will be an organized effort to collect abandoned traps, although, volunteers can pick up traps on their own during the closure period.

He stated that because this is a federally aided project, Wildlife & Fisheries is required to document volunteer hours and efforts, as well as the number of traps collected at each site.

He told the MC that the program still needs volunteers, although there has been an excellent response so far. He stated that larger boats are still needed to transport the traps. Donald Lirette stated that he would be cooking for the volunteers at Falgout Canal.

Donald asked what kind of measures is being taken in regards to liability. Vince stated that Wildlife & Fisheries had to sign a release saying that the agency is not responsible for any accidents might happen.

Vince stated that the maps, regulations, volunteer instructions are on the BTNEP website.

**G. Update on 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bayou Lafourche Paddle Trip-Deborah Schultz**

Deborah reminded the MC that this was the third year for the Paddle Trip. She stated that the original idea of this project was to re-engage the residents of Bayou Lafourche with their bayou as a means of promoting environmental stewardship. However, this concept has expanded to envelop eco-tourism, to talk about the use of Bayou Lafourche for putting more water down the bayou for restoration.

She stated that some of the new aspects to the project included funding from LA Dept. of Natural Resources, evening activities, and an enhanced website information.

She also stated that participation has escalated to the point that some serious thinking needs to be done for next year. There were 90 people on the water on the weekend days of the trip.

Deborah then presented a photo presentation from the Paddle Trip.

**H. Jason Project Update-Deborah Schultz**

Deborah informed the MC that Bob Ballard, the man who located the wreckage of the Titanic, started the Jason Foundation. Every year Mr. Ballard hosts an exposition to a different eco-system around the world. During this exposition, scientists are interviewed and student Argonauts interact with the scientists and audience. This expedition is broadcast live via the Internet so that it can be watched from the classroom.

Next year, Deborah, informed the MC, this expedition will focus on Louisiana's disappearing wetlands. BTNEP has been working intimately with the Jason Foundation every step of the way, from who the scientists are to what the issues are. The curriculum is in its draft stage and Dr. Earl Melancon is one of the featured scientists, along with Dr. Denise Reed, of UNO, and Rachel Sweeney, with NOAA will also be heavily involved.

Anne Wilson stated that she is so delighted that Jason has chosen to focus on the Louisiana Coastal Area. She stated that this is the Cadillac of educational programs.

Deborah then informed the MC that the expedition would take place in January 2005.

**I. LCA Project Update-Troy Constance, US Army Corps of Engineers**

Troy started his presentation by saying that within the Corps there is tremendous support for coastal restoration. The matter of how it should be done is what is being discussed. New discussions have concluded that there needs to be a sustainable system and to support and protect the environment, the economy and the culture on a national and local level.

The plan formulation was derived from the strategies of the eco-system restoration that came out of the Coast 2050 plan. The strategies used were those that were large scale and long term. The hardest part of the plan formulation was the evaluation, meaning what is the hydrology, how do these things change the hydrology and what is the ecological response.

Troy stated that the financial evaluation of the final array of plans is where things stand today. He stated that there are 166 different measures that could be used in combinations. All of those combinations were not evaluated but these measures were tools used to address the priorities that were listed in the Coast 2050.

Thirty-two different alternatives were developed for all of the sub-provinces across the state. It is these alternatives that will be evaluated further. A series of public meetings will be held where the alternatives will be presented. The idea is to finish and have something to be presented for consideration as part of Water Resources Development Action (WRDA) 2004.

**V. ADJOURN**