

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

MC Meeting # 33 Minutes

9:00AM-March 3, 2005

Nicholls State University Campus

Guidry Stadium-Century Room

Thibodaux, LA

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll-Call

The following Management Conference Members were present:

Wallace Ellender-American Sugar Cane League
Archie Chaisson-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District
Mark Ford-Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
John Walthers-Coastal Conservation Association of LA
Len Bahr-Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
Bryce Autin-Greater Lafourche Port Commission
Jason Smith-Jefferson Parish
Joey Breaux-LA Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry
Anne Wilson-LA Dept. of Education
Syeda Qadri-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
Anthony Roussel-LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals
Sidney Dobson-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Jess Curole-Lafourche Parish
John Woodard-LA Association of Conservation Districts
Jerome Zeringue-LA Association of Levee Districts
Randy Robichaux-LA Independent Oil & Gas Association
Tim Allen-LA Landowners Association
Mike Lyons-LA Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association
Christina Swaye-LA Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
Paul Johnson-Louisiana Science Teachers Association
Jessie Kastler-LUMCON
David Bourgeois-LSU Ag Center
David Muth-National Park Service
Earl Melancon-Nicholls State University
Andrew McInnes-Plaquemines Parish
Richard Poche-South Central Planning & Development Commission
Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish
Cindy Brown-The Nature Conservancy
Sue Hawes-US Army Corps of Engineers
Brian Black-US Coast Guard
John Ettinger-US EPA
Rick Hartman-US National Marine Fisheries Service
Mike Trusclair-USDA/NRCS

Organizations not represented:

Assumption Parish
Commercial Fisheries
Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
LA Dept. of Economic Development
LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Louisiana Farm Bureau
Louisiana Forestry Association

US Fish & Wildlife Service
US Geological Survey

BTNEP Staff Present:

Kerry St. Pé
Richard DeMay
Sandra Helmuth
Leslie McVeigh
Andrew Barron
Dean Blanchard
Joni Blanchard
Michael Massimi
Annie Bergelin

Guests Present:

Ed Landgraff-Shell Pipeline/Terrebonne Parish CZM
Katina Gaudet-The Daily Comet
Lawrence Rozas-National Marine Fisheries Service
Quin Kinler-NRCS
Jennifer Lasseigne-NSU student
Lori Rodrigue-NSU Student
Simone Theriot-Restore or Retreat
Rose Zeringue-US Army Corp of Engineers
Christopher Brown-US Army Corp of Engineers
Alysia Kravitz-Tulane University
Marilyn Kilgen-NSU
Rod Emmer-public citizen

B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the December 2, 2004 meeting

Al Levron asked for a motion to dispense of the reading of the minutes. The motion was made and seconded.

II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES-Kerry St. Pé

A. Personnel

Annie Bergelin, Vista
Joni Blanchard-Public Involvement Coordinator

B. Presentations/Exhibits

Jason Project Workshop
Jason Project Workshop (New Orleans)
Jason Project Live Broadcast
Environmental Educator's Symposium
Lafayette Middle School
Seminar for Port Fourchon Industry
Houma RV & Boat Show

Jason Project Video-Conference with Ohio
New Orleans Fly Fishing Club
American Fisheries Society
NSU Pre-Service Teachers
S.T.E.P.S.
Cajun Day-Chackbay Elementary School

C. Media Interviews

KLRZ & KTIB-Tidal Graph Calendar

NPR-coastal landloss and its impact on culture

KLRZ & KTIB-derelict crab trap program

For additional interviews see press clippings

D. Meetings

Restore or Retreat Executive Committee
Barataria TMDL's
Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District
South Central Region Advisory Committee
Derelict Crab Trap Advisory Board
Comparison of Mississippi Delta to Chesapeake (LUMCON)
Bayouland RC & D
Atrazine & Pick Up Stream Model (LDEQ)
Gulf of Mexico Program Grant Review
Vista Training
Terrebonne Chamber Monthly Meeting
N. Lafourche Levee District Meeting
Thibodaux Chamber
Migratory Bird Action Plan Team
La Fete d'Ecologie Action Plan Team
LA Wetlands Educators Coalition
Attendance of Oil Spill Clean Up by ES&H-
Lafourche Parish

Woody Species Quality Assurance Plan
CWPPRA Technical Committee
United Houma Nation Tribal Council
Coastal Forest Advisory Committee
Gulf Coast Monitoring (Dauphin Island)
President's Forum on Coastal Challenges;
Donaldsonville to Gulf Levee Alignment in Barataria Basin
Thank You Dinner with Bob Ballard
Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council Meeting
CWPPRA Outreach Committee
EPA Modeling Meeting
State Task Force on Invasive Species
Invasive Species Action Plan Team
Community Advisory Committee for Mini-Grant Program

Kerry thanked Ed Landgraff for his assistance in acquiring a \$100,000 donation by the Shell Pipeline Foundation to the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation to be used in the Fourchon Ridge Project currently taking place in Fourchon. Kerry stated that this donation will be used immediately in the shaping of the actual ridge. Richard DeMay stated that the Plant Materials Center in Golden Meadow would be hired as part of a demonstration project to plant several species of grasses at appropriate elevations.

Kerry also announced to the MC that BTNEP will be the recipient of this year's Conservation Organization of the Year 2004, given by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation. He said that the Ascension Sportsman League nominated BTNEP. He stated that the presentation of the award will take place while he, Dean and Leslie will be in Washington, DC for an ANEP/NEP conference; therefore, Richard and Sandra will be there to receive the award.

E. Projects Initiated:

- a. Development & Production of Folklife Day and Wetlands Cultural Day in Conjunction with other Jubilee Festivities-Leslie McVeigh
- b. Production of Various Products for BTNEP Migratory Bird Program-Richard DeMay
- c. A Travel Cost Analysis of a Bird-Watching Festival, The Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration-Richard Demay
- d. Maritime Forest Habitat Restoration and Enhancement-Richard DeMay
- e. Maritime Forest Ridge and Marsh Restoration at Port Fourchon, LA-Richard DeMay
- f. Spirit of the Estuary, Phases III & IV-Deborah Schultz

III. Schedule Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be held on June 2, 2005.

IV. Discussion Items

- A. South Central Planning & Development Commission's Permeable Parking Lot-Richard Poche', GIS Administrator, SCP&DC**

Richard Poche first explained to the MC exactly what the SCP&DC does for parishes in the area. He stated that through LDEQ, SCP was awarded a grant to fund the construction of a permeous concrete parking lot. He stated that although this type of concrete has been in existence for about 20 years, it really is not all that well known. He state that this parking lot is the first application that he knows of that exists in Louisiana.

Richard showed a 10 minute video of the process. A large limestone base of 10-12 inches thick was used along with a 4-5 inch permeous concrete top layer on the base. All of the equipment had to be constantly lubricated so that the sticky concrete would not pull up the rocks.

Richard stated that this cost about \$4 per square foot. One advantage of this process is that a retention pond would not be needed. He stated that the funds were made available by a Non-Point Source grant from LDEQ with a 60/40 match.

Kerry asked if this has been presented to any parish governments yet. Richard stated that several officials have come by to see the product but this is his first presentation about the parking lot.

B. Vallisneria Project Update-Lawrence Rozas, NMFS

Kerry explained to the MC that BTNEP decided to fund this project because Vallisneria is a high-quality habitat for fisheries and their nursery value. He explained however that there was no data to back this up.

Lawrence thanked BTNEP for their support of this important project. He explained that there have been several other studies done on the habitat value of seagrasses but very few have been done on submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). He stated Vallisneria is fairly widespread in the low salinity parts of estuaries across the Gulf Coast.

He stated the overall objective of the project was to evaluate the role of Vallisneria beds in providing nursery habitat for fisheries species, which include decapods crustaceans and fishes. There were three goals to achieve: 1) to measure compared densities among Vallisneria beds, marsh and non-vegetative bottom; 2) to examine the spatial distribution of animals within the vallinseria bed itself; 3) to examine the effect that the presence of one habitat type has on the distribution of animals within another.

He stated that the study was conducted in Little Lake along the northwest shore. The study area was 850 meters long parallel to the shoreline and about 130 meters in width. A stratified random sampling designed was used where 6 different habitat types were sampled. Then there were 3 sites within the Vallisneria bed itself that were sampled. Ten samples were collected from each of the 6 habitat types. These samples were taken during the fall of 2003 and spring of 2004, with 120 samples collected in total.

Lawrence then discussed the overall results of the study. He stated that in the fall sampling the decopod crustaceans were more numerous than fishes, with the Harris mud crab being the most abundant crustacean. Blue crab were more abundant in the Vallisneria than in the marsh. In the spring sampling, the saltmarsh top minnow was only found in the marsh. And naked goby were found more in the Vallisneria than in the marsh.

To sum up, Lawrence stated that the study found that these beds do provide important nursery habitat for blue crab and white shrimp. The species that would benefit most from the presence of these Vallisneria beds in estuaries are species that can tolerate these low salinity conditions and species that are dependent on vegetation structure.

Dean informed the MC that this is Phase 1 of a 3-phase project. Phase 2 will look at how to establish or re-establish Vallisneria beds, while Phase 3 will be the implementation of selected trials.

C. State Management Plan on Invasive Species-Alysia Kravitz-Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research

Kerry stated that 4 of the 51 BTNEP CCMP Action Plans address the invasive species issue. One of them states that BTNEP will participate in the State Management Plan on Invasive Species. Therefore, BTNEP funded half of the effort by Tulane University and the LA Dept of Wildlife & Fisheries to develop this plan. Also, BTNEP has hired a full time Invasive Species Coordinator, Michael Massimi.

Alysia informed the MC that this has been a 2 year effort with the first year of funding coming from the Gulf of Mexico Program and the second year of funding coming mainly from BTNEP and NOAA, with a small portion from LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries.

Alysia gave an overview of the process of the development of the plan. She then briefly went over the contents of the document and gave the website where the document can be found.

Michael then informed the MC of an invasive species workshop that he is planning to hold at Brechtel Park on the westbank of New Orleans where catclaw vine has taken over the park in an aggressive manner.

He also stated that he hopes to use EPA funds in FY2006 to develop a rapid assessment program in the BTE.

D. Migratory Bird Celebration Day-Richard DeMay

Richard reminded the MC that BTNEP is sponsoring the 8th Annual Grand Isle Migratory Celebration to be held on April 15th, 16th and 17th. He stated there are several walking and boating tours scheduled, with a social on Friday night. A dinner will be held at the 3rd Annual Juried Fine Arts Exhibit on Saturday evening.

E. Jason Project-Annie Bergelin

Annie reminded the MC that BTNEP was heavily involved in the Jason Expedition that took place in Louisiana. BTNEP gave several workshops to train teachers to use the Jason Project products. Shell Pipeline donated \$200,000 to the project to train all 7th and 8th grade teachers in the State of Louisiana.

BTNEP also funded a moderator for the Jason Project Louisiana message board on the Jason website. Through this message board 44 pen pal relationships were formed between Louisiana teachers and students with other teachers and students from around the country as well as around the world.

F. Closed Captioning of BTNEP Videos-Sandra Helmuth

Sandra informed the MC that the idea to close caption the BTNEP videos was a suggestion from Deborah's Education Action Plan Team.

She stated that the National Captioning Institute was contracted to convert the existing masters to be encoded with closed captioning capabilities.

Sandra informed the MC that the staff will start with a small order of these videos produced and then may decide later to have all the videos produced from the master that was developed with the closed captioning encoded.

Sandra also informed the MC that the "Estuary Live" video is now available and there are copies in the back of the room.

Jessie Kastler stated that this is a direct result of her giving the videos to a group from the Louisiana School for the Deaf, so she thanks BTNEP for making the closed captioned videos available.

G. Oil Spill Calendar-Dean Blanchard

Dean had the final calendar available for distribution. He thanked ES & H for the content used in the calendar and also the Oil Spill Coordinator's Office for paying for half the printing of the calendar.

H. LaFete d'Ecologie-Leslie Robichaux Suazo

Leslie informed the MC that the next festival will be held on September 24th at Peltier Park in Thibodaux. There will be a few changes, such as how promotions will be handled. More newspaper and radio ads will be incorporated.

Also, the New Orleans Fly Fisherman's Association will be there to do some fly fishing demonstrations.

VI. New Business

Kerry reminded the MC of the upcoming Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program that would be held at LUMCON. Volunteers are being sought.

Gary LaFleur introduced one of his new masters students, Lori Rodrigue. She will be doing her masters on monitoring water quality in Bayou Terrebonne, as well as the history along the bayou and the hydrologic modification that has taken place.

Christina Swaye informed the MC that LOSCO is hosting an Oil Brine Remediation Conference.

Andrew Barron informed the MC that the Coastal Forestry Advisory Committee has completed it's final report. The committee is accepting comments at this time.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.