

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

MC Meeting # 34 Minutes

9:00AM-June 2, 2005

Nicholls State University Campus

Guidry Stadium-Century Room

Thibodaux, LA

9:00 AM-9:10 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll-Call

Management Conference Members 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
Len Bahr-Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
Jason Smith-Jefferson Parish
Joey Breaux-LA Dept. of Ag & Forestry
Ann Wilson-LA Dept. of Education
Chuck Villarubia-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Greg Lincsombe-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Jess Curole-Lafourche Parish CZM
John Woodard-LA Association of Conservation Districts
Windell Curole-LA Association of Levee Districts
Randy Robichaux-Louisiana Independent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Tim Allen-Louisiana Landowner's Association
Christina Swaye-LA Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
Paul Johnson-Louisiana Science Teacher's Assoc.
John Conover-LUMCON
David Bourgeois-LSU Ag Center
David Muth-National Park Service
Earl Melancon-Nicholls State University
Andrew McInnes-Plaquemine Parish
Laura Michel-South Central Planning & Development Commission
Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish
Jack Fredine-US Army Corp of Engineers
Doug Jacobson-US EPA
Gabrielle Bodin-US GS
Rick Hartman-US National Marine Fisheries Service
Alton James-USDA/NRCS

MC Organizations not present:

Assumption Parish
Commercial Fisheries
Greater Lafourche Port Commission
Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assoc.
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
LA Dept. of Economic Development
LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals
LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
Louisiana Farm Bureau
Louisiana Forestry Assoc.
Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Louisiana Wildlife Federation

South Louisiana Economic Council
The Nature Conservancy
US Coast Guard
US Fish & Wildlife Service

Guests Present:

Mike Hyman-Dickerson University, Carlisle Pennsylvania
Candy Wilderman-Dickerson University, Carlisle Pennsylvania
Ed Chesney-LUMCON
Terrance Lockely, Senator Mary Landrieu's Office
Don Gary, Nicholls State University
Ed Landgraff-Shell Pipeline
Katina Gaudet-The Daily Comet
Ceci Ripollo-SLU student
Todd Hymel-SLU
Leslie Suazo-Terrebonne Parish Coastal Restoration Dept.
Simone Theriot-Restore or Retreat
Greg Koehler-Shell Pipeline
Doug Daigle-Mississippi River Basin Alliance

BTNEP Staff Present:

Kerry St. Pé
Deborah Schultz
Sandra Helmuth
Joni Blanchard
Andrew Barron
Michael Massimi
Annie Bergelin

B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the March 3, 2005 meeting

Al Levron asked for a motion to dispense of the reading of the minutes. Tim Allen made the motion and David Bourgeois seconded the motion.

9:10 AM-9:25 AM

II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES-Kerry St. Pé

A. Personnel

Resignations:Leslie McVeigh Suazo-Community Relations Coordinator and Aimey Tregre-Student Worker

B. Presentations/Exhibits/Field Trips

Louisiana Wildlife Federation (Monroe)
Lafourche Port Commission (Shell Grant)
Tulane Environmental Law
Lafayette Middle School Teacher Workshop
Earth Fest @ Audubon Zoo
Lockfest- City of Plaquemines
CH2M Hill Bayou Blue Field Trip
Seminar for Port Fourchon Industry

Crab Trap Removal
NSU Folklife Day
LA Conference on Water Supply, Sewage & Ind.
Waste
Migratory Bird Celebration Day-Grand Isle
Plover Survey
Keep Terrebonne Beautiful Litter Workshop
Caldwell Middle School Family Night

Studio in the Woods Symposium
NOAA Retreat/Tour
Bayou Segnette Field Trip
Grand Caillou Middle School

LaBranche Celebration
Gulf of Mexico Foundation/Forest Ridge Site Tour
Terrebonne Parish Fun Run

C. Media Interviews

KLRZ & KTIB-Migratory Bird Celebration
For additional interviews see press clippings

KLRZ Live Remote

D. Meetings

ANEP/EPA Meeting (Washington, DC)
Sustainable Development Workshops
NOAA-CZM evaluation meeting
Migratory Bird Action Plan Team
LDNR Clean Marina Program Meeting
Education Action Plan Team Meeting
GIS Conference-New Orleans
Pointe aux Chenes Hydrologic Restoration
Dedication Ceremony
Terrebonne Coastal Commission
CREST Executive Board Meeting
LaFete Steering Committee Meeting
Bayou Riparian Project Meeting
Building Green Cities Workshop
Gulf Regional Panel on Invasive Species

Sea-Grant Pre-Proposal Review
Houma-Terrebonne Chamber Luncheon
Thibodaux Chamber Technical Committee
N.O. Parks & Parkway Dept
Mini Grants Proposal Review
Bayou Lafourche Fresh Water District
Oil Spill Prevention Action Plan Team
Meeting
Water Quality Action Plan Team Meeting
Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council-
Birmingham, AL
Legislative Budget Hearing
Sustainable Development Training Project Meeting
CH2M Hill Third Delta Alternative Meeting

In this section Kerry elaborated on the ANEP/NEP Director's meeting that was held in Washington, DC in March. Kerry informed the MC that on the tables in front of them are two items: 1) a letter from the US Senate and 2) another letter from the Congress of the US. Kerry reminded the MC that the purpose of these trips to Washington DC is to visit the BTE delegation and ask for support of a letter asking for the full authorized funding of \$35 million for the NEP.

This year, in the President's budget request, there was a request for \$19.5 million. Kerry stated that if that amount is authorized, each NEP budget will be cut \$200,000. Last year, the proposed budget was authorized at \$19 million. However, with the efforts of ANEP and its paid lobbyist, the budget was increased to \$25 million.

Kerry pointed out that Congressman Charlie Melancon and Senator Mary Landreiu signed the letters.

E. Projects Initiated:

1. "Ezekiel 34 Initiative" (Catholic Social Services, Houma, LA)-Deborah Schultz/Annie Bergelin
2. "Barataria Preserve Instructors Guide: Wildflowers of Our Wetlands", (Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, Marrero, LA)-Deborah Schultz/Annie Bergelin
3. "Media-Outreach to the BTNEP Communities", (Lance Arnold and Andrew Simoncelli, New Orleans/West Bank, LA)-Deborah Schultz/Annie Bergelin
4. "Bayou Lafourche: 'The Longest Street in the World'", Mind's Eye Productions (James L. Fields, Thibodaux, LA)-Deborah Schultz/Annie Bergelin
5. "Development of Interpretive Kiosks at Bayouside Park", (Town of Lockport Lockport, LA)-Deborah Schultz/Annie Bergelin
6. "Wetland Presentation at BTES Libraries" Wetland Books (Wendy Wilson Billiot Theriot, LA)-Deborah Schultz/Annie Bergelin
7. Census & Breeding of Biology Study of Beach-nesting Birds in Coastal LA-Richard DeMay

9:25 AM – 9:30 AM

III. Schedule Next Meeting Date: Thursday, September 1, 2005.

9:30 AM – 11:00AM

IV. Action Items

FY 2006 Workplan (1 hr. 30 min)

Kerry briefly discussed the list of proposed projects with included the following:

a. Indirect Charges to LUMCON	33,097.57
b. NEP Travel Funds	10,000.00
c. Continuation of the BTNEP Website www.btnep.org	20,000.00
d. 2006 Tidal Graph Calendar	6,200.00
e. Invasive Species Coordinator Position	40,000.00
f. Citizen Education Programs	5,000.00
g. Development of Submersed Aquatic Vegetation Propogation and Techniques for Restoration in Coastal Louisiana	25,000.00
h. Outreach Coordinator Position	40,000.00
i. Adminstrative Funds	10,000.00
j. 10 th Annual La Fete d'Ecologie: Baratarie-Terrebonne	40,000.00
k. Paddle Bayou Lafourche	10,000.00
l. BTNEP Mini Grants Program	20,000.00
m. Initiation of BTNEP Volunteer Program	20,000.00
n. BTNEP Citizen Water Quality Monitoring Pilot Program	30,000.00
o. Barataria Terrebonne Resident's Guide Series: Booklet No. 3 and No. 4	10,000.00
p. Grand Isle Bird Day Celebration	7,500.00
q. Development of a Bird Calendar	6,000.00
r. Birding/Nature Trail on Coastal Birding Trail Site	30,000.00
s. Program Information Materials	25,000.00
t. Students and Teacher as Educational Partners in Science	7,500.00
u. Summer Camps	6,000.00
v. Teacher Workshops	10,000.00
w. Graphics for Educator's Guide to the BT Estuary & Field Trip Guide	10,000.00
x. Continued Website Development Development of a Puppet-Based Educational Product For Elementary-Age Children	3,000.00 5,000.00
y. Development of Additional Lessons	7,400.00
z. Oil & Produced Water Spill Prevention Measures Tidal Graph Calendar	12,000.00
aa. Rapid Assessment of Invasive Species	50,000.00
bb. BTNEP Mail Hosting/Web Hosting/GIS Hosting Service	11,000.00

11:00AM-1:10PM

V. Discussion Items

A. Shell Pipeline LNG Plant- Greg Koehler, Shell Pipeline

Ed Landgraf stated that he agreed with Kerry that the facts needed to be presented to the MC on this issue. Ed stated that Greg has been working for Shell for 24 years; he is the project manager for Gulf Landing. He is a graduate from the University of Texas in Chemical Engineering and married for 21 years and presently resides in Houston, TX.

Greg stated that this project is a response to a need for more natural gas. Greg discussed the process of a natural gas plant. Greg stated that he knows the key question of the MC is how will LNG facilities impact wetlands and estuaries. He said there are 3 key elements of the plant that can impact wetlands. The first being the actual physical site of the facility; second, the pipeline routing and third, shipping traffic.

He stated that the Gulf Landing Project is an offshore facility, attaching to existing offshore pipelines. He states the Shell feels it will have a near zero impact on wetlands. He states this is a gravity based structure. A large concrete box which sits on the seafloor. He informed the MC that the structure is 38 miles due south of the Calcasieu River.

Greg stated that a 16 month EIS review was done to determine if the open loop or closed loop system represented the best technology for Gulf Landing. Windell Curole asked how did the closed loop harm the environment more. Greg stated that because of air emissions, closed loop is more harmful.

Greg also stated that the review looked at the safety considerations, both for the employees at the facility and those outside of it. He stated that a full environmental review was done, with an assessment of water quality and a biological resource evaluation. The issue that is of most importance to Louisiana is the impact on vibrio (?????) plankton. Sea water is used to warm the LNG; 136 million gallons a day. With that water comes fish eggs and fish larvae. Greg stated that there is a screening system on the front end of the intake that screens out juvenile and adult fish. However, fish eggs and larvae are small enough to pass through the screen, so there will be an impact there.

Greg stated that this is what the controversy of the LNG plant is all about. He stated that there was a lot of modeling done on this impact. The final conclusion of the environmental impact statement is that it would be a minor adverse long-term effect on fisheries but no impact on redfish recreational fishing. He stated redfish was one of many species studied.

Greg then discussed the impacts of the open loop system. He stated that chlorine is used to help control algae in the facility. Most of the chlorine is either vaporized or absorbed in the system. The chlorine that actually is discharged is absorbed back into the seawater once it is outside the facility at 100 meters.

Greg stated because there are some concerns, Shell has proposed a monitoring mitigation program to address these issues. It has employed additional prevention measures, in addition to the screens, that include reducing water (?????) Can't understand this word); adjusting screen heights and a monitoring plan.

Ed Chesney asked if the hypoxic zone has been considered in this project. Greg said that this location is on the very fringe of the zone. He stated that this is not a cure for it but it will discharge fully

oxygenated water that is cooler but when looking at the volumes being dealt with relative to the hypoxic area, it is insignificant.

Jack Fredine asked if solar energy was feasible. Greg stated that it ended up on the first brainstorming list but it never made it past any feasibility study.

Doug Jacobson asked if Shell owned the existing pipelines that this facility will be hooking up to. Greg said that Shell owned two of them a year ago but sold them. Doug asked how Hurricane Ivan affected those pipelines. Greg stated that he did not think these pipelines suffered any outages. He stated that most of those that did were further to the east.

Kerry asked Greg how are the air emissions let out from a closed loop system any different than the emissions let out of a normal household gas stove. He stated there are more efficient ways and less efficient ways to burn natural gas and if the less efficient way is used there will be more incremental CO2 emissions.

Rick Hartman stated that NOAA commented on the proposed LNG plants. He stated that the data NOAA has seen is not very good in terms of identifying where in the water column these species are most concentrated. He stated that NMFS's job was to let the US Coast Guard know that there were some environmental concerns in terms of the fisheries resource. Therefore, NMFS recommended that the Coast Guard not authorize open loop systems. NMFS asked for an assessment methodology to try and figure out what the impact was, so a ranking system was developed.

Windell Curole suggested that when a new project such as this is on the horizon, bringing it to a group such as the BTMC might get better feedback, on both sides. Rick Hartman stated that a lot of proposals are confidential.

Kerry asked how the sodium hydroxide that will be produced would be handled. Greg stated that he wasn't aware of this process so cannot answer this question. He stated he is sure it was covered in the EIS report.

Kerry then asked if an NPDS permit would be required and has been applied for. Greg stated yes it has been applied for.

Kerry then stated that Randy Lanctot, who could not make today's meeting, sent him his comments on the issue. Randy pointed out in his comments that there was not a lot of time to consider what the impacts are going to be with this particular facility. The Louisiana Wildlife Federation would like to recommend that the evaluation of the permitting process for LNG's be sufficiently expanded in time to allow for accurate deliberation.

Greg stated that the Deep Water Port Act calls for about a 12-month window from the time the applicant puts in a fully approved license until a decision is required by MERAD????? (WHO????). In the case of Gulf Landing, the application was submitted October 2003. He stated that there were several times during the process that a legal time out was taken because of conflicting issues. Therefore, that 12-month time clock was stopped to collect more data to resolve those issues.

B. Update on Sugar Cane Residue Project-Ed Richard, USDA Experimental Station

Dr. Viatar, plant physiologist with USDA, stated that there are a lot of benefits to post-harvest residue. Post-harvest residue is everything that comes out of the combine and not sent to the factory, which can be any where from 2 to 7 tons of wet material per acre.

It improves soil erosion, improves soil health, helps preserve moisture, improves weed control and improves water quality. However, he added, these benefits have only been seen in very dry climates.

He states the purpose of this study was to determine why residue is decreasing yields and to figure out if there is something that can be done management wise to help mitigate this yield loss.

Dr. Viatar explained that several experiments were performed to help with this determination. Residue was removed from the top of the row, burned or left alone. Soil moisture and temperature were monitored in all three cases.

The second test consisted of looking at allopathic and auto-toxic properties. This is when a plant produces a chemical that either harms another species or itself.

The core of the BTNEP funded study consisted of looking at 1st, 2nd and 3rd stubble in heavy and light soils. There were 3 removal methods, no removal, mechanically removed and burning. Locations studied were south of Thibodaux and Laurel Valley. These tests were done on 50-foot plots with 3 rows. The study showed that if the residue is removed the month the crop was harvested, or when it goes dormant, usually in January, it produces the highest yield compared to the control. However, if you wait and let that crop reemerge after it is harvested, there is a reduction in the yield.

The 3rd stubble was always affected the most because it is exposed to the residue the longest.

Burning the residue showed more benefits than mechanically removing or full retention of the residue.

Deborah Schultz asked where the state was as far regulation of sugar cane residue burning. Dr. Viatar stated that the state is pretty much self-regulated. Cane growers are supposed to go to burn Training/management School to be in compliance. He stated that since the on-set of the program, the number of complaints has decreased dramatically. He feels because 1) farmers are a lot more responsible now about burning; and 2) industries are moving to green cane harvesting which creates a lot less ash and allows for a much more controlled burn.

C. Update on Mini-Grants Project-Annie Bergelin

Annie first gave an overview of the project selection process then a brief project description of each of the mini-grants awarded which were:

1. "Ezekiel 34 Initiative" (Catholic Social Services, Houma, LA): a state-wide effort to promote stewardship in the community and form environmental commissions for moral responsibility
2. "Barataria Preserve Instructors Guide: Wildflowers of Our Wetlands", (Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, Marrero, LA): a guide for students grades 1-4 that will bring studies of the adaptations and life cycles of plants of the BTE into the classroom
3. "Media-Outreach to the BTNEP Communities", (Lance Arnold and Andrew Simoncelli, New Orleans/West Bank, LA): will create 3 TV and 3 radio PSA's that will be distributed throughout the estuary system addressing exotic vegetation, reduction of sewage pollution and habitats of migratory birds.
4. "Bayou Lafourche: 'The Longest Street in the World'", Mind's Eye Productions (James L. Fields, Thibodaux, LA): production of a 20-minutes documentary and a 30 second PSA on the history of Bayou Lafourche and it's significance and use, its problems and the efforts BTNEP is making to help offer solutions of those problems
5. "Development of Interpretive Kiosks at Bayouside Park", (Town of Lockport Lockport, LA): the kiosks will address cultural history, environmental issues, wildlife/vegetation, boating and recreation, and points of interest in Lockport as well as throughout the estuary system

6. "Wetland Presentations at BTES Libraries" Wetland Books (Wendy Wilson Billiot, Theriot, LA): reading of Ms. Billiot's book "Before the Saltwater Came" at 19 different libraries as well as giving a wetlands presentation

Annie stated that this program will be funded again next year. A workshop will be held for potential applicants also to assist applicants to focus more on what BTNEP is looking for. She stated that next year an abstract would be required.

She stated that this program helped BTNEP develop some new partnerships. One of those is with the African-American Museum in Donaldsonville whose application came in after the deadline in so therefore was not funded. However, she will be assisting them with their summer camp.

D. Fourchon Ridge Planting & Volunteer Day-Joni Blanchard

Joni stated that this planting/volunteer day was held out on the Maritime Forest Ridge Marsh Restoration Site that BTNEP has been working on with partners such as Port Fourchon, Shell Oil, Orleans Audubon, Terrebonne Bird Club and others.

She showed a slide presentation of the first big deployment of the BTNEP Volunteer Program. She stated this program came about because there has not been an organization that acted as a clearing house for volunteers or a place a person can sign up to be a volunteer.

She stated that BTNEP hopes to have a volunteer website (volunteer.btnep.org) where activities are outlined and follow the Louisiana Grade Level Expectations so teachers can plug the activity into their curriculum. Boy and Girl Scout troops have badges to earn; these same activities can help those kids earn those badges.

She stated that the vegetative planting which took place last week was sponsored by BTNEP and BTEF, USDA/NRCS Plant Materials Center (who provided the plants and the transporting of the plants to the ridge), Port Fourchon, ES&H, along with several other groups. She stated there were over 100 volunteers over the 2-day period that put 10,000 plants in the ground.

Joni stated that only the shoreline was planted this time so the next effort will concentrate on the ridge itself.

The website will allow the general public to sign up to be a volunteer where you can specify what types of activities you would be interested in helping out with.

Potential projects coming up are an invasive species removal in Brechtel Park; storm drain markings; bird surveys; festival help and more planting projects.

E. Oh My! Map-Deborah Schultz

Deborah informed the MC that there was a copy of the map on an easel in the back of the room. She stated that this poster was a joint effort between CWWPRA, USGS and BTNEP. She stated the red on the map indicated land loss from 1932 to projected 2050.

F. Marsh Mission Update-Deborah Schultz

Deborah reminded the MC of the adventures of C. C. Lockwood and Rhea Gary out in the marsh. She stated the fieldwork is finished; they traveled 3600 miles by vehicle/plane/house boat. The book is

currently at the press and should be on the market in September. She stated there are 60 plus photos and paintings in the book. She stated that BTNEP would receive 5 each as deliverables for the contract. These will be used to illustrate "The Spirit of the Estuary".

G. Invasive Species Workshops-Michael Massimi

Michael informed the MC about the Invasive Species Workshop that was held at Brechtel Park in Algiers where there is a serious problem with Cat Claw Vine. The workshop was funded through a grant from the Gulf of Mexico Program. He stated there would be two more workshops held for nurserymen and landscapers.

The Brechtel Park Workshop had about 30 participants. There were presentations and nutria sausage.

He stated that there will be a cat claw pull in Brechtel Park this coming Monday. It is way too thick in some areas of the park however the group will ring the trees, meaning cutting the vine around tree and pulling it down. If this can be an annual effort, the trees can be saved.

H. Update on Coastal Forestry Advisory Committee-Andrew Barron

Kerry reminded the MC that BTNEP has been heavily involved in the cypress logging issue. He stated that Andrew will give an update on the committee and that BTNEP will propose that the MC will pass a resolution that will be discussed later.

Andrew informed the MC that the Scientific Technical Group developed a report where data was collected from literature search as well as from their own data. Best Management Practices were included in this report to deal with harvesting of cypress in wet conditions and potentially in deeper waters.

Andrew stated that a public meeting will be held on the NSU campus on the cypress logging issue. The meeting will be for stakeholders who may not have been included in the Advisory Panel. He stated there will be 4 meetings throughout the state, with BTNEP hosting one of them.

He then stated that everyone should have a copy of a resolution that was passed by the Louisiana State Senate on cypress logging. Kerry stated that this resolution supports allowing logging in the cypress swamps. Andrew said that the resolution states that the Corps is over-stepping their boundaries in the Section 10 ruling of cypress logging. Kerry then stated that the resolution passed 34-0. It still needs to go to the House.

Doug Daigle stated that basically what the resolution is saying is that the Corps is trying to stop sustainable forestry practices. Therefore, he feels it would be worth the MC's time to submit it's own resolution expressing its concern about this issue.

Kerry stated that in the proposed resolution that has already been drawn up, another comment can be added about MC supporting the allowing of current Section 10 authority of the Corps to continue with its process.

David Muth moved to accept the resolution with the two changes discussed. One being to clarify that the Class III forests on State Lands is what we are talking about and two being that the MC supports the Corp have some regulatory oversight under Section 10. Rick Hartman asked David if he would consider adding the requirement of new trees being replanted on Class II forests. David stated he would accept that amendment.

Kerry also informed the MC that he received a letter from Barry Cole that the Rathbourne Company has begun procedures to do some cypress forestry removal around the Lac Des Allemands area. Also the letter states that there is a rumor that a cypress-logging mill may be built in Houma.

It was decided on consensus that this resolution is passed. Rick Hartman stated that a vote should be noted in the minutes. Doug Jacobsen abstained from voting. The MC voted to pass this resolution and there was no opposition.

VII. Adjourn