

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

*MC Meeting # 35 Minutes
9:00AM-December 8, 2005
Nicholls State University Campus
Student Union-Plantation Room
Thibodaux, LA*

9:00 AM-9:10 AM

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll-Call

The following Management Conference Members present were:

Herman Waguespack-American Sugarcane League
Archie Chaisson-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District
Mark Ford-Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
John Walthers-Coastal Conservation Association
Jason Smith-Jefferson Parish
Butch Stegall-LA Dept. of Ag & Forestry
Ann Wilson-LA Dept. of Education
Jeff Parham-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
Anthony Roussel-LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals
Greg Ducote-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Vince Guillory-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Jess Curole-Lafourche Parish
Windell Curole-Louisiana Association of Levee Boards
Buck Van der Steen-Louisiana Forestry Association
Tim Allen-Louisiana Landowner's Association
Paul Johnson-Louisiana Science Teachers Association
Jessica Kastler-LUMCON
Randy Lanctot-Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Rex Caffey-LSU Ag Center
Earl Melancon-NSU
Andrew McInnis-Plaquemines Parish
Pam Roussel-South Central Planning & Development Commission
Simone Theriot Maloz-South Louisiana Economic Council
Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish
Jean Landry-The Nature Conservancy
Sue Hawes-US Army Corps of Engineers
Brian Black-US Coast Guard
Doug Jacobson-US EPA
Gabrielle Bodin- USGS
Rick Hartman-US National Marine Fisheries Service
Mike Trusclair-USDA

Organizations not represented were:

Assumption Parish
Commercial Fisheries
Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
Greater Lafourche Port Commission
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
LA Dept. of Economic Development
Louisiana Assoc. of Conservation Districts
Louisiana Farm Bureau
Louisiana Independent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Assoc.

Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
National Park Service
St. Charles Parish
US Fish & Wildlife Service

BTNEP Staff:

Kerry St. Pé
Sandra Helmuth
Dean Blanchard
Joni Blanchard
Andrew Barron
Susan Testroet-Bergeron
Michael Massimi

Guests:

C.C. Lockwood-nature photographer
Dr. Alysse Ferrara-NSU
Dr. Quentin Fontenot-NSU
Bill Good, LSU
Syeda Quadri, LDEQ
Melanie Goodman, USACE
Jim Chambers, LSU
Lillian Miller, concerned citizen
Andrew Bell-LDNR
Jon Porthouse-LDNR
Tim Axteman-USACE
Alan Stubeck-USACE
Mike Schwartenberg-America's Wetland Campaign
Bruce Thompson-N.O Businessman and Advisor to Mayor Ray Nagin's Infrastructure Committee
Wendi Billiot, concerned citizen
Todd Hymel-Delgado Community College
Dan McQuiddick
Chuck Villarubia-LDNR
Quin Kinler-NRCS
Katina Gaudet-The Daily Comet

B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the June 2, 2005 meeting

Tim Allen motioned dispense of the reading of the minutes and to accept as submitted. Jess Curole seconded that motion.

9:10 AM-9:25 AM

II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES-Kerry St. Pé

A. Personnel

Resignations: Deborah Schultz, Annie Bergelin-BTNEP/Vista Volunteer
New Staff members: Susan Testroet-Bergeron-Formal Education Coordinator

B. Presentations/Exhibits/Field Trips

Mobile Bay Paddle Trip Presentation	United Houma Nation Summer Camp
National Park Service Summer Camps	WETSHOP
NSU Pre-Service Teachers	Shell Intern Ridge Planting

NOAA Special Projects Section
Bayou Lafourche Tour
Storm Drain Marking-Boy Scouts of America
Grand Isle Tarpon Rodeo
Lockport Rotary Club
Thibodaux Women's Club
Morgan City 3rd Grade Presentation
STEPS Workshop
Bayou Lafourche Field Trip for Public Officials
WETSHOP-E.D. White High School
Voice over the Wetlands-Houma

Resolution & Letter on Coastal Forestry
Terrebonne CZM-Coastal Forestry
Roots in the Real World Summer Camp
One World Youth Project
Cypress Nature Center Teacher Workshop
Shreveport
NSU A+ Scholar Event
Red Ribbon Anti-Drug 5K Run-Raceland
Thibodeauxville
Tallow Tree Removal-Barataria Preserve
Education APT Field Trip to Ridge Project

C. Media Interviews

KLRZ-Talk on the Bayou-Cypress Mulch
CWWPRA/Tulane Filming with Dan Ethridge
Media Tour of Forest Ridge Project
USA Today Interviews-Hurricane Katrina
Washington Post-Hurricane Katrina
NBC Nightly News-Hurricane Katrina
The Daily Comet Interviews-Hurricane Katrina/Rita
NPR Radio Interview for "Living on Earth" Program
For additional interviews see press clippings

Desiree Plaisance-Tulane Ph.D. student
Roots for Real World Camp
WBAI Pacifica Radio-Hurricane Katrina/Rita
LA Times-Hurricane Katrina
BBC-Hurricane Katrina
Houma Courier-Hurricane Katrina
The Advocate-Hurricane Katrina
Wall Street Journal with Ken Wells

D. Meetings

LCA Scoping Outreach Comm. Mtg.
Cajun Music Workshop
Bayou Lafourche Project Meeting
South Central Planning & Development Comm.
Villere & Co.-Resident's Guide Project Meeting
Gulf of Mexico Alliance Workshop Planning Mtg.
Coastal Forestry Public Meeting
Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce
Ezekiel 34 Initiative Project Meeting
Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration
Ecology on the Bayou
LA Dept. of Environmental Quality-Water Quality
Management Plan
Coastal Forestry Advisory Panel Meeting
CWPPRA Outreach Committee
National Marine Educator's Assoc.
GOMA Workgroups (Water Quality, Coastal
Restoration, Education)
South Central Region Advisory Leadership Council
LUMCON Open House Planning Meeting
Bayou Haystackers Meeting
LDNR Public Participation Plan Meeting
Fall ANEP/NEP Meeting-Newport, RI
Mini-Grants Community Advisory Committee
Governor's Commission on Coastal Activities
Migratory Bird Action Plan Team
Breux Act Task Force Meeting

Bayou Lafourche Project Legislative Comm. Mtg.
LCA Scoping Meeting-Larose/Port Sulphur
Bayou Lafourche Fresh Water District
FRRI-Port Fourchon
American Sugar Cane League
US Corp Of Engineers Change of Command
Davis Pond Advisory Council Meeting
CWPPRA PPL 15 Public Meeting
La Fete d'Ecologie Planning meeting
Congressional Energy Committee
Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce
America's Wetlands Reception for Partner's &
Friends
NRCS Quality Assurance Review
Rapid Assessment Planning Mtg.
LA Aquatic Invasive Species Council
LDEQ GIS-NPS Land Use Assessment
SCPDC Planning Comm. Training
LUMCON Executive Board
La Fete Wrap Up Meeting
Nature Conservancy Post Katrina Monitoring
Governor's Commission on Environmental Ed
World Water Monitoring Day
CWPPRA Technical Committee
Legislative Hearing on Hurricanes
Louisiana Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force
Lafourche Parish Council Meeting

Education Action Plan Team
CLEAR Modeling Effort
SeaGrant Early Detection Rapid Response Team

EPA Administrator
KKAY Radio

E. Projects Initiated:

1. DVD/5 minute Video Production-Joni Blanchard
2. Roots of the Real World Summer Camp-Deborah Schultz
3. Cajun Music Workshop-Deborah Schultz
4. Supplementation of BTNEP Educational Materials-Susan Testroet-Bergeron
5. St. James NPS Project-Andrew Barron
6. Shaping of Marsh Apron on Fourchon-Richard DeMay
7. Development of BTNEP Stakeholders Report-Richard DeMay
8. 2006 Tidal Graph Calendar-Richard DeMay
9. 2006 Birding Calendar-Richard DeMay
10. Improvement to the Birding/Nature Trail on Grand Isle-Richard DeMay
11. No-Cost Time Extension for Woodlands Trail & Park, Plaquemines Parish-Richard DeMay
12. Development of Artwork Products to be Used in Chenier Publication and other BTNEP Products-Richard DeMay
13. Continued Web and Email Support for the BTNEP-Richard DeMay
14. Continuation of the WWW.BTNEP.ORG Website and other BTNEP Web Sites-Richard DeMay
15. Submersed Aquatic Vegetation Propagation and Planting Techniques for Restoration in Coastal Louisiana-Dean Blanchard

9:25 AM – 9:30 AM

III. Schedule Next Meeting Date: Date Suggested is Thursday, March 9, 2006. (was changed to March 16,2006)

9:30 AM – 12:20 PM

IV. Discussion Items

A. Bayou Lafourche Project Update-Andrew Beall, LA Dept. of Natural Resources (20 minutes)

Andrew stated that the purpose of Phase I is to maximize the Mississippi River connection to the Barataria-Terrebonne Basins in order to nourish and protect marshes by the reintroduction of freshwater sediment.

He stated that the Phase I design report has two elements. It looks at an alternative development and alternative evaluations.

The alternative development is based criteria such as dredge template, dredge material reuse, pump station configurations, hydraulic structures, bridge evaluations, and preliminary geotechnical evaluation.

For the alternative evaluations, data modeling and water level analysis are examined.

He stated that there were 144 potential alternatives each based on its route, whether or not it would go through the original bayou or take a bypass; what types of hydraulic structures are needed based on the different routes; water level tangents and different channel depths.

These 144 potential alternatives went through screening criteria and were ultimately reduced to 7 alternatives.

Andrew stated that dredging is the major cost of this project.

He then went over what the water levels would be for each of the 7 alternatives.

The Phase I report took over a year to complete because the modeling effort needed to be completed to flush out the alternatives. Phase II report is being completed now and should be released in March 2006, which would give the recommended alternatives to the public.

Andrew reminded the MC that LDNR has a partnership with BTNEP to provide public outreach for the project.

Rick Hartman stated that he was under the impression that once 30% of the project was completed, LCA was going to pick up the additional costs to take it up to 95% complete. Andrew stated that the Task Force would have to make that decision, as there are other sources of funding available.

It was asked if there are pipelines crossing the bayou and Andrew stated there was a significant amount causing the cost of dredging up.

Joni Blanchard gave the MC an update on her activities as the outreach coordinator for this project.

Kerry then stated that BTNEP would like to see LDNR use the dredged materials beneficially therefore he asked for suggestions from the MC as to where it should be used.

Kerry then reminded everyone that there are no funds to actually construct this project.

B. Marsh Mission Update-C. C. Lockwood

C. C. reminded the MC that he presented the concept of this project in the Spring of 2003 to request funding. He stated that he and his wife spent a year on a houseboat covering the marsh. Since December 2004, they have been putting their book together which came out a week before Katrina hit, and working on the exhibit, which is now showing at the LSU Museum of Art in Baton Rouge. After it leaves Baton Rouge, the exhibit will travel around the country for two years.

He then gave a slide show of the trip and his photos of the aftermath of Katrina in New Orleans.

Dr. Earl Melancon asked C. C. if he had plans to present this in Washington, DC. C. C. said they are still waiting on word as to whether or not the exhibit will go there. If it does, he will go to give lectures as he did in Baton Rouge. He also stated that every US Congressman and Senator was sent a copy of the book.

Doug Jacobson asked if this presentation was on the Marsh Mission website. C. C. said he didn't think it would have the same effect but he does plan to put it on CD and distribute it.

D. Hurricane Katrina Impacts

i. John Barras, USGS

John presented the newest satellite imagery of post-hurricane impacts taken October 9, 2005. The images showed that most of the shears were concentrated east of the Causeway and Pontchartrain Basin. Brackish saline marshes fared better than the freshwater intermediate marshes as far as direct impacts visible in the satellite imagery. He stated there was visible direct shoreline erosion from the Barataria Basin to the Chandeleurs. Debris was identifiable from the surge from the Pearl River to the Texas border.

The loss estimates are based on the identification of new water areas. There is 86 sq. miles of new water area, with 39 sq. miles in Breton Sound, 37 sq. miles of that occurred in the freshwater intermediate marshes. There are approximately 30 sq. miles of new open water in Barataria-Terrebonne Basins and 17 sq. miles in the Ponchartrain and Pearl River Basins. This does not include the Chandeleur and Biloxi marshes. All totaled 100 sq. miles of new open water have been discovered. However, this does not mean permanent loss.

ii. Herman Waguespack-American Sugarcane League

Herman gave a presentation on the damage to the agricultural industry, mainly sugarcane fields. He stated that his presentation is on flood damage from Rita on the western side of the state.

He stated that 15 ft. storm surges covered these fields. He stated that there was not much salt found in the soil samples taken after the storm because the soils were already saturated from the rain and that the salt water from the storm surge was diluted.

Herman stated that a lot of marsh rack was left on the cane fields. Kerry asked what was going to be done with it. Herman stated that an attempt would be made to move it out of the way with field loaders and grapples. It was then asked if the sugarcane could be recovered. Herman said yes by harvesting it. However, the quality of the cane would not be equivalent to what it normally is.

Herman informed the MC that Rita affected about 30,000 acres of sugarcane.

iii. Dr. Rex Caffey-LSU Ag Center

Rex presented information on the impacts of the hurricanes on fisheries and the market conditions. He stated the storm has not only caused a lot of vessel damage, but prevented many undamaged vessels from going on catches. The reason for this is the market being limited by the storms.

In the shrimping industry, about 65%-85% of the vessels southeast of the Mississippi River, are out of commission. He stated that the fisheries are not completely out of commission; however, they are not operating at normal capacity. Currently, shrimp prices are a pre-Katrina level, but fuel costs are so high that vessels cannot afford to leave port.

Rex stated that there have been 2 economic assessments on fisheries; one done by LSU Ag Center and the other by the Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries. The data he presented is Katrina specific. He stated that the LSU data are a bit more conservative than the LDWF data.

In the crab industry, the dockside losses are about 12.3 to 15.1 million dollars over the coming year.

For oysters, mortality is high. Rex stated that most of the oyster beds have been reopened. There has been a small increase in prices and that should be sustained. The Louisiana Oyster Task Force is saying that about 400 million pounds of in-shell oysters have been killed. The task force has developed the Louisiana Oyster Recovery Plan that includes 45 recommendations. Dockside losses are 25.2 to 44 million dollars over the next year.

Market losses have been high because a lot of this seafood goes to New Orleans. With the population not there, consumption is down also.

Rex stated that 18,000 to 35,000 commercial vessels have been found to be in need of some sort of salvage. As far as recreational vessels, there are 30,000 to 40,000 vessels needing to be salvaged. This data was collected from east Mississippi to the Texas border.

The Louisiana Restaurant Association estimates that there are 3500 restaurants in the New Orleans

area. As of November 30th, only 26% are presently back open and operating.

Rex stated that the full extent of economic losses would not be known for a few years.

iv. Jim Chambers- Impacts on Forestry

Jim gave an update on the data collected on coastal forest damage due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Jim stated that Gary Schaeffer from SLU reported that data from his research sites around Lake Maurepas area showed cypress tupelo damage was minimal. Jim stated that this same finding is true for most areas except in certain zones very close to the waters edge. The worst damage was found to be on the shoreline of south Lake Maurepas. The primary species receiving the most damage were oaks, maples, willows and cottonwoods.

In the Pearl River area, there was 900 million board feet of timber that was damaged, most of being bottom hardwood, with oaks being the primary species affected.

In the Lake Palourde area, salinity levels on the north end of the lake were measured at 17 parts per thousand, which is extremely high. Two weeks later, levels were down to 6 to 7 parts per thousand in that same area.

Storm surge levels in a few of the Wildlife Management Areas showed to be minor.

Jim stated that in his opinion, forest rebuilding should be part of the restoration plan. The more forests there are, the better off Louisiana will be.

Gary Lafleur asked for an update on the cypress mulch industry. Buck Van der Steen could not give one but stated that the industry is not so developed that would affect coastal forestry. Most of costs are related to the inability to get to those trees.

v. Andrew McInnis-Plaquemines Parish

Andrew first thanked everyone for their support; emails, phone calls, etc. He stated that over the last several months he was able to collect over 6,000 photos taken by different groups and individuals. His presentation contained the most compelling of those photos.

He stated that Plaquemines Parish is in its current state because the back levee system was breeched by storm surge from inside of levee protection blowing outward. That means the surge came up the Mississippi River and over the levee and got into the back levee. The holes found were 20 feet deep.

He stated that the center of the eye of Katrina went directly over the Empire high-rise bridge. He stated there were 7 levee breaks just from Katrina. After those breaks were repaired, Rita came through and washed those repairs away again. Rita added 5 new levee breaks.

Andrew showed photos of cemeteries where coffins were uprooted by the flooding waters. He stated that this occurred in just about every single cemetery in the parish. He stated that Fort Jackson was used as the hazardous waste collection site.

Susan Bergeron then informed the MC that she, Joni Blanchard and Sandra Helmuth developed a program called "Operation ABC" to help out schools in the area that were hardest hit by the affects of the hurricanes. Susan stated that approximately \$13,000 was collected to donate to Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes. She stated that the Manhattan Youth Organization donated \$10,000

towards the cause.

vi. AI Levron-Terrebonne Parish

AI stated that Terrebonne Parish was out of harms way basically for Katrina. But for Rita a storm that was approximately 100-200 miles from the coast, Terrebonne Parish experienced severe inundation. He stated that about 6,000 residents were flooded in south Terrebonne.

The levees in Terrebonne parish range from 6 to 10 above sea levels and only 4 ft. storm surge was expected. However, the storm came from the east blowing dead on into the Montegut levee with winds blowing about 50 mph. The water filled in the Lake Boudreaux basin and kept moving towards the north over topping the levee.

AI mentioned that the Terrebonne Parish President appointed a committee to come up with a methodology of coming up with \$50 million of interim flood improvements to get a uniform elevation across the parish of about 9-10 ft. levee to give more protection. He stated that the current levee was intended for protection against tidal flooding, not hurricane protection.

The Parish has proposed to allocate a significant portion of any entitlement it may receive from the Energy Bill towards hurricane protection levees.

vii. Tim Axteman-US Army Corps of Engineers

Tim gave an update on the LCA Study and how the hurricanes have impacted that effort.

Tim reminded the MC that the plan was approved earlier in 2005 and there were hopes that the plan would be acted upon. However, the hurricanes changed that. It will be late spring or early summer of 2006 before Congress acts upon it. However, there are still funds to continue working on the plan itself.

Tim stated that priority is currently being placed on beneficial use of sediment. If authorization is given, then projects that are on the shelf now can be initiated. Kerry asked what needed to be done to get those projects on the ground. Tim stated that the Corp was asked to come up with an assessment and technical report for providing category 5 hurricane protections, to include flood control and environmental restoration and hurricane protection levees.

Kerry asked what was planned for near term recovery from the storms. Tim stated that the near term projects in the plan would be initiated with half the original budget just to get them off the ground. Kerry asked where did those projects come from because they are not consistent with the CCMP.

Rex Caffey asked if the existing LCA report would turn into something that is hurricane response related and what happened to the MRGO evaluation study. He also wanted to know how much of the \$40 million allocated for this study had been used towards public outreach because he feels there has been no effort at all towards consensus building.

Kerry stated that going to an organization that has an established consensus and common ground solutions is how it should be done. There is no time to rebuild something that already exists.

V. New Business

VI. Adjourn