

**Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program**

*MC Meeting # 39 Minutes*

*9:00AM-January 18, 2007*

*Nicholls State University Campus*

*Plantation Room-Student Union*

*Thibodaux, LA*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**A. Roll-Call**

**The following MC Members were present:**

Herman Waguespack- American Sugar Cane League  
Archie Chaisson-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District  
Mark Ford-Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana  
John Walthers-Coastal Conservation Association of LA  
John Tessvich-Commercial Fisheries  
Chett Chaisson-Greater Lafourche Port Commission  
Jason Smith-Jefferson Parish  
Matt Benoit-LA Dept. Ag & Forestry  
Anne Wilson-LA Dept. of Education  
Syeda Quadri-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality  
Anthony Roussel- LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals  
Linda Pace-LA Dept. of Natural Resources  
Vince Guillory-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries  
Vince Melvin-Lafourche Parish  
Jerome Zeringue-Louisiana Association of Levee Boards  
Buck Van der Steen-Louisiana Forestry Association  
Tim Allen- Louisiana Landowners Association  
Mike Lyons-Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association  
Christina Sway-Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office  
Paul Johnson-Louisiana Science Teacher's Association  
David Bourgeois-LSU Agricultural Center  
John Conover-LUMCON  
David Muth-National Park Service  
Earl Melancon-Nicholls State University  
Andrew MacInnes- Plaquemines Parish  
Earl Matherne-St. Charles Parish  
Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish: Al Levron  
Jean Landry-The Nature Conservancy  
Sue Hawes-US Army Corps of Engineers  
Dan McQuate-US Coast Guard  
Doug Jacobsen-US EPA  
Heidi Hitter-US Geological Survey

**Organizations not represented were:**

Governor's Office of Coastal Activities  
LA Dept. of Economic Development  
Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts  
Louisiana Farm Bureau  
Louisiana Independent Oil & Gas Association  
Louisiana Wildlife Federation  
South Central Planning & Development Commission  
South Louisiana Economic Council  
US Fish & Wildlife Service  
US National Marine Fisheries Service  
USDA/NRCS

**Guests Present:**

Leslie Suazo-Terrebonne Parish  
John Sheehan-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality  
Melanie-US Army Corp of Engineers  
Sue Ellen Lyons-Holy Cross School  
Meredith Martinez-  
Cindy Blaske-Fletcher Community College

**BTNEP Staff Present:**

Kerry St. Pe'  
Richard DeMay  
Sandra Helmuth  
Susan Testroet-Bergeron  
Dean Blanchard  
Joni Blanchard  
Andrew Barron  
Michael Massimi

**B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the September 14, 2006 meeting**

Al Levron entertained a motion to dispense of the reading and approval of the minutes. Tim Allen made the motion and Earl Melancon seconded and there was no discussion and all were in favor, the motion was passed.

**II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES-Kerry St. Pé**

**A. Personnel**

Kerry announced to the MC that this will be the last meeting Joni Blanchard will be attending because she is resigning to get married and move to Australia in June. He invited her to come back to the next meeting for a more formal send off.

**B. Presentations/Exhibits/Field Trips**

Thibodaux Green Space- Demonstration Garden	Grand Isle Beach Sweep with Girl Scouts
Legislative Assistance Tour of Maritime Forest Ridge Project	Coastal Conservation Assoc. Conference-Ascension
Donaldsonville Primary School	NSU Pre-Service Teachers
Plaquemine Parish Assoc. of Bus. & Ind.	La Fete d'Ecologie
Wild Things Kids Expo	RAE Conference
NSU A+ Scholar Fundraiser	Eagle Expo Recon Trip
Swamp Tour Operator's Eco-tourism Workshop	Morgan City 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade class
Ocean Commotion	LSTA Conference-Shreveport
NOAA/NSU/BTNEP planting on Fifi Island	BTNEP Citizen Monitoring Workshop
Dickenson College Students	NRCS Breakwater CWPPRA Project-Raccoon Island
American Sugar Cane League Congress- ional Delegation	Surveying Shorebirds-Lower Terrebonne Parish
TetraTech Conference-Las Vegas	Archbishop Shaw High School
Raceland Upper Elementary	Fletcher College
	NSU/NOAA/BTNEP planting-Leeville
	Education Day for Marshland Upwelling System (LSU)
	Citizen Monitoring-Lake Verret

**C. Media Interviews**

HTV10-La Fete d'Ecologie	International Dredging Magazine-Pipeline Sediment
Times Picayune-Bob Marshall-coastal Restoration	Delivery
Fox 8 News-John Snell	Snowflake Productions
Courier-Volunteer Program	Shell Pipeline Magazine
	For additional interviews see press clippings

**D. Meetings**

ANEP/NEP Fall Meeting-San Francisco	Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District
LACPR/WVA	LUMCON Executive Board Mtg.
Migratory Bird Action Plan Team	Lafourche CZM
Jefferson Land Bridge w/USACE	LDWF Wetshop Planning Meeting
CPRA/DNR Workshop	Louisiana Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force
CWPPRA Outreach Committee	Eagle Fest Planning Committee
CWPPRA Task Force	LDEQ Interagency Comm.
Early Detection Rapid Response Meeting	American Fisheries Society
LDNR Plan Formulation Workshop	LSU Ag Extension Advisory Panel
CPRA/DNR Integrated Planning Team	Audubon Aquarium Cichlid Exhibit
LOOP-pipeline alignment	Lower Mississippi Nutrient Symposium
GOMA Underserved Under-represented Populations	Barrier Island Comprehensive Monitoring (UNO)
LACPR	Environmental Education Commission
CPRA State Plan Public Meetings (Houma and New Orleans)	Hypoxia Stakeholders
GOMA Environmental Education Comm.	Bayou Land RC&D Educational Partnership
	New Roads Watershed Initiative

**E. Projects Initiated:**

1. Development of a Video Addressing Coastal Land Loss and the use of Pipeline Slurry as a Restoration Tool-R. DeMay
2. Amendment for "An Accelerated Program of Woody Plant Species Selection for Conservation, Restoration, and Neotropical Habitat Enhancement"- D. Blanchard
3. "A Value Analysis of 2007 bird Calendar *Wings Over the Wetlands...Louisiana's Waders*" R. DeMay
4. "Audubon Invasive Cichlid Exhibit" M. Massimi
5. "Children's Traveling Wetland Museum Exhibit Design and Layout Drawings"-S. Testroet-Bergeron
6. Amendment to "Educational Posters of the Barrier Islands of Barataria-Terrebonne"-S. Testroet-Bergeron
7. "Continued Web and Email Support for the BTNEP"-Richard DeMay
8. No cost time extension for "Go Native: Discovering and Planting Native Trees in Terrebonne Parish"-Susan Testroet-Bergeron
9. "Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration Event"-R. DeMay

**III. Schedule Next Meeting Date:** Date Suggested is Thursday, May 10, 2007.

**IV. Discussion Items**

A. LDEQ Land Use Maps-John Sheehan, LDEQ

Kerry informed the MC that BTNEP hopes to produce this map as an update to its current TM Map.

John stated that this map was developed in conjunction with the TMDL process that DEQ is currently working on. The driving force of this project begins with water quality sampling statewide. If the water

bodies are determined to be impaired. They are put on the 303d list of the Clean Water Act. He informed the MC that the 303d list states that the State should have to report to Congress on impaired water bodies in the State.

Once a water body is determined to be impaired, LDEQ conducts TMDL calculations in the watershed of the impaired water body. Once the TMDL's are completed, it is determined which watersheds are impaired by non-point sources. Once that is determined, then the land use of that watershed is assessed. Sediment transport is then modeled in the watershed to the water body. Once all of that is done, then the non-point staff comes up with a watershed management plan. The plan is then turned over to LA Dept. of Ag & Forestry who works in conjunction with the Extension Service to develop BMPs for the watershed that might be producing the non-point source loading. After all of this is completed, the water quality sampling is run again to see if it can be removed from the 303d list.

John stated that in Louisiana there are 12 major drainage basins, however, today he will focus on the Barataria basin. The land use analysis primarily focuses on forestry and agriculture. John then discussed the process used for the Barataria basin.

Earl Melancon made a motion that the MC support the idea that LDEQ update these maps every 5 yrs, John stated that the problem with that is LDEQ will probably be working on a different section of the state and it may not be possible to fit it into the TMDL schedule. However, LDEQ would be willing to share this method with anyone willing to take on the effort of a 5-yr update. Earl amends his motion to make this a high priority effort and for MC to coordinate to get this done as often as possible. It was seconded, no further discussion and matter approved

**B. Oil Spill Calendar-Dean Blanchard**

Dean announced that the Oil Spill Prevention Calendar was again a success and was distributed at the Clean Gulf Conference by the LA Oil Spill Coordinator's Office. He thanked everyone involved for their help.

**C. "Spirit of the Estuary" Curriculum Guide-Susan Testroet-Bergeron; Mary Banbury, UNO; Anne Rheames, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, and Sue Ellen Lyons, Holy Cross School**

Susan first announced that the Premiere for the "Bayou Lafourche: The Longest Street in the World" would be held on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, and everyone should have a ticket at their seat. She stated that there are only 200 seats available. She requested an RSVP to Sandra in the program office.

She then went over some of the lessons in the "Spirit of the Estuary" Curriculum. She then introduced Sue Ellen Lyons and Marian Martinez who both assisted on the project. Sue Ellen stated that the ultimate goal of this curriculum is to promote stewardship in the students.

Susan then thanked the Education Action Plan Team for their help on this project. She stated there are teacher workshops scheduled for this curriculum in the spring.

She then thanked Mitch Samaha and the LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries for allowing BTNEP to use their new pontoon boat during the Eagle Expo and RAE Conference.

**D. Swamp Tour Operator's Eco-Tourism Workshop-Wendy Billiot (5 minutes)**

Susan announced that Wendy, who could not be at the meeting today, is a swamp tour boat captain and tour guide, went out and visited several swamp tour operators and took their tours. She then invited them to participate in a one-day training with the BTNEP staff.

The list of these “approved” tours are now listed on the BTNEP website with all of their contact information.

**E. “Vanishing Before Our Eyes” Publication-Richard DeMay**

Richard informed the MC a small the US Fish & Wildlife Service developed educational brochure in the past but that that product was no longer available. As a result, the Migratory Bird APT decided to develop a new extended product that addressed Chenier habitat.

He also stated that the 2007 Bird Calendar is also available. He stated that Conoco-Phillips partnered with BTNEP to have this printed. They donated the funds to print 25,000 copies and bulk mailed 15,000 calendars to the members of the American Birding Association.

The 2007 Tidal Graph Calendar is also available. Freeport-McMoran donated the funds to the Foundation to have 25,000 calendars printed.

Al Levron thanked Apache Corp. for its \$10,000 donation to the Foundation also.

**F. Paddle Trip '06-Joni Blanchard**

Joni gave a slide presentation on the 2006 Paddle Trip held in April 2006. She announced that this year's trip will be April 12-15<sup>th</sup> and registration will open February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**G. 2006 La Fete d'Ecologie-Joni Blanchard**

Joni gave a slide presentation on the 2006 La Fete d'Ecologie held in September 2006. She stated the venue was changed this year because we wanted to be closer to the resource, Bayou Lafourche and also because Peltier Park is basically a bowl, it held too much water after a rain.

**H. Volunteer Program '06-Joni Blanchard**

Joni gave a slide presentation on the events of the Volunteer Program in 2006. She reminded the MC of why the program started. She stated that there was no one clearinghouse of volunteers. So BTNEP set out to create that clearinghouse and it forces BTNEP to work more with our partners. It enables BTNEP to do more hands on work. It also gives the public a chance to see that they can help with the restoration process.

For the upcoming year, Joni stated that the Marine Debris Removal Grants will move forward and a Citizen Monitoring Program will get kicked off with the leadership of Andrew Barron.

**I. Native Plant Demonstration Gardens-Michael Massimi**

Michael gave a slide presentation on the Green Space Project that was put into place in downtown Thibodaux. He stated a Gulf of Mexico Grant made this possible, along with future native plant demonstration gardens

**J. Consideration of Resolution Regarding HNC Channel Deepening-Paul Yakupzack, US Fish & Wildlife**

Paul first wanted to point out to the MC that this resolution does not have anything to do with the deepening of the HNC, but has everything to do with the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection System. Also, he stated that he was attending the BTNEP Management Conference Meeting as a citizen member of the Terrebonne Parish Coastal Zone Management Advisory Committee.

Kerry interjected to give a little background. He stated he put this on the agenda because of the history between the BTNEP and the MC on this project. He stated there are a lot of people out there that do not want levees but the fact is they will be needed. But they need to be put in the right place and be

balanced. BTNEP has always supported a balance between the realities of public needs and sound environmental practices.

Kerry stated that there has been some new activity in the effort to get funding for Morganza to the Gulf and the lock. Terrebonne Parish passed a resolution in support of this project. Kerry decided to put this on the agenda as a discussion item 2 or 3 weeks ago. A lot has happened since then. The resolution put before the MC was drafted by Kerry. The title for Item #10 was written 3 weeks ago because that is what the Terrebonne Parish Resolution pertained to. The resolution drafted by Kerry does not mention the deepening of the HNC.

He stated the resolution would be discussed openly because there are several different views. If the resolution is not agreed upon, or if the MC decides it is too early or it isn't the right time, then there does not have to be a resolution at all.

Paul then called upon Ed Landgraf, Assistant Chairman of the Terrebonne Parish Coastal Management Committee, to give a brief overview of the issue.

Ed stated that he was also on the Board of Directors of the Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce and that at their December meeting it was mentioned that the Morganza project was brought up as a stand alone Bill. It was taken out of the WRDA Bill and was put on hold by Sen. Colburn-OK. Ed called this senator to find out the reason. One issue was that there was \$200 million for levees, \$200 million for the lock and \$100 million for deepening the HNC. Sen. Colburn stated to Ed that he did not see how deepening the HNC would protect lives. Ed stated he was shocked because he did not know that was in the bill.

This was then discussed at the CZM meeting and the Board passed a resolution to ask the local delegation to stay focused on the Morganza project and not the other issues.

Paul then stated that after the resolution was passed, it was brought to the Parish Council. The Council deferred action on it and is in the process of developing language that will satisfy all the parties concerned.

Paul summarized saying that hurricane protection is the number one priority in Terrebonne Parish and made a motion to support and pass the resolution as written. Seconded by Jerome Zeringue.

Jerome Zeringue stated he supports the resolution and he felt it gets to the heart of what we are all trying to achieve. He then had a comment about last paragraph starting with "Now, Therefore be it resolved" on the resolution. He stated that the "authorization of the stand alone Morganza bill", refers to an effort by Senator Landrieu to authorize this project, but, he stated, in recent meetings she indicated that even the committee members had indicated to her that more than likely the stand-alone legislation would not make it out of committee. She is going to hold it in advance in the event there is no WRDA and use it as an opportunity to hold up the action in the Senate until some action is taken. Knowing that fact, Jerome recommended changing "the stand-alone Morganza bill" to "the authorization within WRDA or any legislation proposed for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress".

Al Levron suggested removing the language "stand-alone". Jerome said that would be fine.

Buck Vandersteen voiced concern that if the Terrebonne Parish Council is still reviewing the CZM resolution, should the BTNEP wait to submit it's resolution and be a resolution to support that resolution. Kerry stated BTNEP is a separate entity and has a broader constituency so we can do independent resolutions.

Barry Blackwell stated that the Council is in support of the project, but was concerned with the deepening of the HNC. But since that is now no longer a part of the resolution, the council is in full support.

Jerome stated that the citizens of Terrebonne Parish assessed upon themselves a quarter cent sales tax to start construction.

Don Lirette asked if this resolution would be in support of the entire WRDA bill. Al Levron stated it would be specific to the Morganza project. Don stated that Morganza is not a bill, as stated in the resolution. Tim Allen suggested that the resolution be changed to "authorization and construction of the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection System".

Jerome stated that "authorization and funding" is critical because WRDA is only an authorization bill, not an appropriations bill.

Buck stated that he is being asked to vote on a resolution that sounds great but he has no idea what this is all about. He realizes this may be an issue discussed at a previous meeting that he may have missed, but he feels at a disadvantage looking at this resolution for the first time.

Doug Jacobson stated he feels the language is very vague. He feels a specific project should be mentioned. Kerry stated the point of the resolution is to show support of the project as it stands now.

Al Levron stated that the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection System is a specific project and should be sufficient. Jerome stated that the alignments have changed many times during the course of getting this project started; so being specific in the resolution would be pointless because things will keep changing.

Susan Testroet-Bergeron asked if Jerome could give a brief over view of the project. Jerome stated the original proposed project was a 72-mile levee alignment, which is now reduced to 64 miles. There are 12 flood gates, 12 environmental structures and a lock complex on the Houma Navigational Canal, which had been identified in LCA and all the other plans as the best way to enhance, restore and protect this area by manipulating the water along the Houma Navigational Canal, with the lock that is being proposed. He stated that all of the levees proposed are being built or expanded along levees and other hydrologic barriers that currently exist.

Don Lirette called a question. Kerry asked that those who had their hand up to be allowed to make a comment before closing the discussion.

Dave Muth stated that there are federal agencies here at the conference and that this is the first resolution that he has seen that is lobbying congress. He stated that this is not allowed by federal agencies and therefore anyone present that works for a federal agency would have to abstain from voting. He feels it would have to be officially noted in the minutes that these agencies abstain.

Martha Cazaubon stated she does not read the resolution as a lobbying effort. But if it were, then all the state and local agencies would need to abstain. She said she reads it as a statement of support for hurricane protection in coastal Louisiana. Doug stated that this is showing support for the passing of a piece of legislation, that is not education.

The following agencies/organizations abstain from voting:

US EPA

Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District

The Nature Conservancy

US Coast Guard

US Army Corp of Engineers

National Park Service

Don Lirette motioned to pass the resolution with changes discussed. Earl Matherne seconded the motion. It was passed by consensus.

**K. Resolution for Hypoxia-Doug Daigle, Mississippi River Basin Alliance**

Doug asked the MC to again support this resolution. It was decided that the previous resolution would be sent again with a new cover letter.

**V. New Business**

**VI. Adjourn**