

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

MC Meeting # 46 Minutes

9:00AM-December 10, 2008

Nicholls State University Campus

Century Room, John L. Guidry Stadium

Thibodaux, LA

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll-Call

Management Conference Members Present

Hugh Caffery-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District
Natalie Snider-Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
John Tesvich-Commercial Fisheries
Jason Smith-Jefferson Parish
Jean May-Brett-LA Dept. of Education
Emelise Cormier-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
Anthony Rousell-LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals
Linda Pace-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Vince Guillory-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Nick Matherne-Lafourche Parish
Tim Allen-Louisiana Landowner's Association
Mike Lyons-Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association
Roland Guidry-Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
Shannon Lafont-Louisiana Science Teacher's Association
Nancy Rabalais-LUMCON
Randy Lanctot-Louisiana Wildlife Federation
David Bourgeois-LSU Agricultural Center
David Muth-National Park Service
Gary LaFleur-Nicholls State University
Albertine Kimble-Plaquemines Parish
Joanna Jones-South Central Planning & Development Commission
Simone Maloz-South Louisiana Economic Council
Cherie Price-US Army Corp of Engineers
Dan McQuate-US Coast Guard
Doug Jacobson-US EPA
David Marks-US Geological Survey
Rick Hartman-US National Marine Fisheries

Organizations not represented:

American Sugar Cane League
Costal Conservation Association of LA
Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
Grater Lafourche Port Commission
Iberville Parish
LA Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
LA Association of Conservation Districts
LA Association of Levee Boards
Louisiana Farm Bureau
Louisiana Forestry Association
Pointe Coupee Parish
Terrebonne Parish
The Nature Conservancy
US Fish & Wildlife Service
USDA/NRCS

BTNEP Staff Present:

Kerry St. Pé
Richard DeMay
Dean Blanchard
Susan Testroet-Bergeron
Sandra Helmuth
Mel Landry
Andrew Barron
Michael Massimi
Shelley Sparks
Matt Benoit

Guests:

Cynthia Dubois-NSU Library
Christina Swaye-LOSCO
Mark Ford-GAC
Andre' Williams-CWPPRA
Cynthia Blaschke-Fletcher Community College
Jerome Freedman-LDHH-Office of Public Health
Greg Steyer-USGS
Craig Conzelmann-USGS
John Bowie-EPA, Gulf of Mexico
Ashley Mullins
Nancy Woodstock
Suzanne Martin-Fletcher Community College

B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the September 30, 2008 meeting

David Bourgeois moved to dispense of the reading of the minutes and approve them as submitted.
Randy Lanctot seconded the motion.

II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES-Kerry St. Pé

A. Personnel Changes

Matt Benoit-Plant Materials Coordinator

B. Presentations/Exhibits/Field Trips

Bayou Industrial Group Panel Discussion on Bayou Lafourche	
Terrebonne Parish School Supply Delivery	NSU A+ Scholar Fund Raiser
LA Garden Club Federation	NSU Graduate Environmental Workshop on
Fletcher Community College Class	The Bayou Lafourche Reintroduction Project
New Iberia Rotary Club	Ocean Commotion
La Fete d'Ecologie	Bayou Grace

C. Media Interviews

Advocate (Baton Rouge, LA)

- "Gustav stirs up unsafe water: conditions force dredging project." 9/13/08.
- "Bayou Lafourche dredging to start." 9/16/08.

American Press (Lake Charles, LA)

- "LPB to air wetlands documentary." 9/21/08.

Banner-Tribune (Franklin, LA)

- "Wetland restoration film on LPB." 9/23/08.

Country Roads (St. Francisville, LA – monthly publication)

- "Fairs and Festivals: La Fete d'Ecologie: Barataria-Terrebonne, Thibodaux, LA." 11/08.

Daily Comet (Thibodaux, LA)

- "Professor, teacher join forces to help restock damaged classrooms." 9/26/08.
- "Documentary highlights coast-saving strategy." 9/29/08.
- "Ike stalls fix for putrid drinking water." 9/13/08.

Daily Iberian (New Iberia, LA)

- "Coastal erosion message locally." 11/13/08.

Donaldsonville Chief (Donaldsonville, LA)

- "Gustav stirs up unsafe water." 9/18/08.
- "Dredging to begin at Bayou Lafourche." 9/18/08.

Houma Courier (Houma, LA)

- "Wetland documentary premieres tonight." 9/23/08.
- "Estuary program meeting Tuesday." 9/26/08.
- "La Fete d'Ecologie postponed till Nov. 15." 9/26/08.
- "Hurricanes deal a beating to barrier islands." 9/22/08.
- "Thibodaux festival celebrates coast, Cajun culture." 11/17/08.
- "It's open season on nutria Nov. 20." 11/13/08.
- "East Houma Elementary." [picture] 10/23/08. (picture of Susan Testroet-Bergeron and NSU donating school supplies made possible through NSU and BTEF.
- "Grand Isle getting a post-storm clean up." 10/10/08. (BTNEP volunteer event).
- "Barrier islands dealt a beating by two storms." 9/22/08.
- "Teachers restock damaged classrooms." 9/25/08.
- "Local fisheries take huge hit." 10.01.08. (from BTNEP Mangement Conference presentation.)
- "Dredging, debris removal will combat smelly water." 9/12/08.
- "Water-project dredging may start by April." 11/22/08.
- "Progress on bayou dredging." 11/24/08. [editorial].

Lafourche Gazette (Larose, LA)

- "Wetlands documentary airing Thursday." 11/5/08.
- "Cut Off native Glen Pitre's new movie to premiere in New Orleans Wednesday." 10/12/08.

Nicholls Worth (NSU, Thibodaux, LA)

- "Hurricane season impacts wetlands." 10/02/08.
- "Faculty, students help affected schools." 10/02/08.

NOLA.com (New Orleans, LA)

- "New documentary examines larger impact of, and advocates for a quick solution to, coastal erosion." 11/08.

Times-Picayune (New Orleans, LA)

- "He's a bayou guy." Ken Wells and BTNEP. 10/07/08.

Tri-Parish Times (Houma, LA)

- "Pumping could be quick solution to eroding south La. coastline." 10/22/08.
- "Shell Oil partners with BTNEP to restore coast." 10/08/08.

WWLTV (New Orleans, LA)

- "Lafourche water project groundbreaking for environment and southeast La." 11/21/08.

D. Meetings

DEQ Envirothon Committee	Conference Call with BP
Donaldsonville to the Gulf	CWPPRA Technical Committee
Bayou Lafourche Corridor Project	Corporate Marketing Trade Show
Chevron/Texaco Funding	ANEP Conference Call
Exhibitors, Etc. (Bayou Lafourche Model)	Wal-Mart/Wally Fauchaux
Conference Call w/Jon Porthouse (Terrebonne Parish Restoration Plan)	LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
NSU Students to discuss BTNEP fact sheets	Environmental Education Commission
Joint Commission on Natural Resources	Dr. Diane Austin (Underserved/Underrepresented Grant)
CPRA	National Park Service(Summer Camp Review)
Coastal Restoration Legislative Committee	Wayne Keller (artificial reefs)
CWPPRA Task Force Meeting	Synergy Representative (new display)
South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center	Meeting/Tour of Verret/Palourde System
Gulf Island Fabricators	Shell Social Audit
Coastal Forestry Advisory Meeting	Atchafalaya Trace Committee
ANEP/NEP Fall Meeting	Legislative Select Committee Meeting on B.Lafourche
Bayou Lafourche Project Roll Out	ORRAP-Washington DC
LUMCON Executive Board Meeting	

E. Projects Initiated

1. No-Cost Time Extension for "Organization and Development of Symposia and Mini-Grant Program for Strengthening the Gulf of Mexico Program"-S. Sparks
2. "Down the Bayou" (Vision Communications)-S. Sparks
3. "Coastal Habitats-Mississippi's Natural Treasures"(J.L. Scott Marine Education Center, USM)-S. Sparks
4. "Learning Coastal Habitats in the City and on the Beach"(LA State Parks)-S. Sparks
5. "Understanding Coastal Communities and Wetland Resources through Mapping Technology"(UNO Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences)-S. Sparks
6. "Layout and Design of both the Raptor Publication and Woody Plant Pamphlets"-R. Demay
7. "Continued Web and Email Support for the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program"-R. DeMay
8. "Wetlands Educational Theater Outreach" (Mindy Mayer)-S. Testroet-Bergeron
9. "Bayou Lafourche Scale Model and Related Artwork" (Exhibits, Etc.)-S. Testroet-Bergeron

F. Donor Recognition

1. Conoco Phillips-Bird Calendar
2. Shell Pipeline Co.-La Fete d'Ecologie
3. Chevron-La Fete d'Ecologie
4. L&M BoTruc Rentals-La Fete d'Ecologie
5. McDonald Sanitation-La Fete d'Ecologie
6. Bayou Greens-La Fete d'Ecologie
7. Buquet Ice Company Inc-La Fete d'Ecologie
8. BP-educational activities

At the last meeting, there was a discussion about the "Harvest to Restore" documentary. To bring the MC up-to-date on that discussion, Richard DeMay first reminded everyone what the documentary said about large scale diversions. The MC wanted to see a copy of the script from the video about what the interviewers said about large scale diversions. Richard did that and distributed a copy to the MC. At the last meeting the discussion was whether or not the video suggested that large scale diversions were not good or that BTNEP did not want to do them and the MC wanted some clarification specifically on what the video said.

Randy Lanctot asked if the video could be edited. He stated it was clear from the script that there is a bias being expressed against looking at large scale diversions as any solution. He states that doesn't need to be in the video. He suggested that you could say that diversions are important to sustain wetlands that are created through pipeline sediment distribution without going into the size of the diversion. He states the viewer should know that diversions are an important component of sustaining pipeline sediment delivery projects.

Randy stated he supports pipeline sediment delivery but he doesn't think it's necessary to imply one thing is better than another.

David Muth stated he doesn't feel it represents the sense of the Management Conference thinking and that the MC hasn't taken position and the video implies that it has.

Kerry states he thinks it does represent the MC's position. He thinks there is something to be said about delivering sediment through pipes as opposed to large water diversions. He stated large diversions do not create land at the same rate delivering sediment would.

David stated Kerry was creating an either/or that doesn't exist and again stated that this takes a position against large diversions that the MC or CCMP agreed upon. Kerry stated this isn't a position against large scale diversions but consensus shows that the position leans towards small to medium diversions.

Richard then reminded the MC that the next meeting will solely be devoted to this topic and suggested we continue the discussion of what to do with the video. He told the MC that if they want to make changes to the video, which is currently out on bid to be reproduced, it would take more time and more money to make these changes.

Vince Guillory stated that he thinks the video should stay as it is because the purpose of the video is to educate the public. The general public thinks the only solution to restoring the coastline is large scale diversion so they need to hear this information.

Suzanne Martin, from Fletcher Community College, stated she felt it was beneficial because it showed all aspects of the process, the equipment used and places it could be used.

Randy suggested that just deleting the words "small to medium", in reference to diversions, throughout the script would remove any subliminal messages that any bias against large diversions is present. Richard said you'd have to just delete the whole interview. And with the reproduction process already in place, we'd have to stop all of that and start from scratch.

We can do it, but is it that important to the MC to go through the changes, which could take another year, or can the MC live with it the way it is?

David Muth said that the intention was not to stop production of the video. He wasn't really concerned with what the video said, it was about going forward with discussion of the issue.

Nancy Rabalais feels that these concerns as to what these sentences add to the video are minor and there is no either/or stated in these statements and if were to be a vote, she recommends that we move ahead with the video as it is now.

Rick Hartman moved that the video stay as is and address this as a policy issue at the next meeting. Jean May-Brett seconded the motion; all were in favor with no opposition.

III. Schedule Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2009

IV. Discussion Items

A. Louisiana's Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS): Integration and Visualization of Data for Assessing Restoration Effectiveness-Greg Steyer and Craig Conzelmann,US Geological Survey

Greg explained that CRMS is a CWPPRA project that is sponsored by the State Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration and USGS. He stated today's presentation is to get everyone familiar with the data and how to access that data.

He stated the program has evolved from the basic CWPPRA monitoring program that was initiated back in 1990 into a program that allows you to broaden the capabilities to evaluate restoration projects at multiple scales.

In the old program, you were unable to find adequate reference areas or control sites to evaluate the effects of a project versus the natural variability that you would find. There was also difficulty evaluating one freshwater diversion to another based on goals and objectives being different and different monitoring variables being collected. With projects being in close proximity to one another, that did not allow for looking at secondary and cumulative effects of all these projects.

In 1996, it was realized a more status and trends approach needed to be looked at, while at the same time not eliminating the ability to evaluate at a project scale. The data collection needed to support the ability to feed models, to be able to access at larger scales, as well as support the ability to start providing data at a planning level that will allow the planning at scales of 10's of thousand and 100's of thousands of acres.

He stated that there are now 391 stations across coastal Louisiana that are in swamp, forest, fresh, and immediate brackish and saline marsh.

He stated CRMS is a one square kilometer sampling location where there is a lot of spatial analysis of land water and within that there are 200 meter x 200 meter plots where a lot of different variables are measured.

Greg informed the MC this program got funded by USGS re-engineering the budget under CWPPRA. It was implemented prior to Katrina. Three hundred and eighty-one of the 391 platforms have been constructed. He stated that they hope to have all 391 platforms up and collecting data by Summer 2009.

He stated in the past all data collected would go into a monitoring report on a particular project. Now the data is digitized and delivered on the web in different applications.

Craig Conzelmann then went over several of those applications.

B. West Bay Sediment Diversion Project Update-Cherie Price, USACE

Cherie stated that she just recently became project manager for the West Bay project. In the past she served as the program manager for the New Orleans District Regional Sediment Management Program and the Regional Sediment Management of the Corps wide initiative that was started about 2 yrs ago.

This program is a systems approach to management sediment. The two initiatives in this program are 1) a data management effort where dredged data is pulled into the district GIS and 2) an interagency data management effort where through a data viewer provides links to web mapping servers throughout the state that have links to sediment data.

Cherie stated that the West Bay project was approved on the first priority project list for CWPPRA in 1992 and went into construction and completed in 2003. It is located just above Head of Passes in the Lower Mississippi River. She showed the MC a map showing the location that was projected to receive most of the benefits from the project.

She stated the Pilot Town Anchorage Area has been designated by the Coast Guard as a safe harbor outside the federally maintained navigation channel. She said the West Bay project currently has a pre-construction agreement with navigation industry to maintain certain depths within the anchorage area to allow ship access and anchoring and those elevations that the Corp is required to maintain are the elevations that existed at the time of construction to help industry.

She stated river surveys are taken and discharge measurements are collected in the conveyance channel are collected also. So far the maximum discharge identified occurred in July 2008 with the flood that occurred in the spring and summer, which equated to 51,270 cfs. The State is also responsible for the biological monitoring component of the project.

To date, the project has not created any new wetlands due to the diversion itself, but 364 acres of material has been created from the beneficial use of sediment.

She stated there a several opportunities with this project. One of which is the original project intent of creation up to 10,000 acres of wetlands in the receiving area over the 20-year project life. Another opportunity is lessons learned through this diversion. The Corp hopes West Bay will teach them what to do and what not to do for future planned diversions.

The main controversy with this project surrounds the fact that dredging costs have gone up tremendously since the project conception. In the original project estimates, the costs were \$1.50/cubic yard; now the cost is \$6.10/cubic yard.

Cherie then discussed other projections, problems and aspects of the project.

She then announced that there would be an interagency diversion summit March 3-5, 2009.

C.Louisiana Wetland Library Collection Enhancement-Suzanne Martin, Fletcher Technical Community College

Suzanne Martin introduced herself as the head librarian at Fletcher Technical Community College, in Houma, LA. Cynthia Blaschke, the Technical Services Librarian from Fletcher, introduced herself as well.

Suzanne stated that this project was made possible by a BTNEP Mini-Grant and is entitled "Wetland Library Collection Enhancement". The goals of the project were to improve student community awareness about

wetlands, coastal restoration techniques, and the mission of BTNEP and to publicize to the students and community at Fletcher that BTNEP is a resource.

Another goal was to enhance the libraries wetland collection with materials relevant to the geographic location. Some of the funds from the grant were used for a field trip to Last Island led by Mr. James Southern in conjunction with LUMCON. Fletcher also participated in La Fete d'Ecologie last year and this year. Kerry is a guest speaker at Fletcher every semester also.

Some of the benefits Fletcher received from this grant were 65 reference books, BTNEP posters laminated and displayed in the library and the easels to display those posters.

Suzanne then announced that she will be presenting this project at the ACRL International Conference in Seattle, WA.

D. Speaker's Bureau Project-Susan Testroet-Bergeron, BTNEP

Susan reminded the MC that this project is in the CCMP. She stated that through Sandra, everyone will be emailed a form asking each member to designate or suggest someone in their agency to be listed on the BTNEP website, who could be a possible contact to speak on a specific topic/issue.

Susan stated she and Sandra would be emailing this out and she asked that everyone have it back within two weeks of the mailout.

E. Lake Fields Restoration-Vince Guillory, LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries

Vince stated that he would be presenting the management plan to restore habitat and water quality in Lake Fields. He stated that this plan was proposed by the Lafourche Game and Fish Commission, but supported by other organizations like BTNEP, N. Lafourche Levee District, USDA/NRCS, LDWF and Ducks Unlimited.

He stated Lake Fields is a very popular recreational site for fishing and hunting. Prior to 1970's, Lake Fields was known for clear water, abundant submergent vegetation and excellent sportfish and waterfowl populations. However, today, he stated, the lake is characterized as turbid, with very little or no submergent aquatic vegetation. Consequently, sportfishing, waterfowl hunting and other recreational activities has declined since the 70's.

Vince then discussed the basic historic hydrology of Lake Fields and the changes in the hydrology that led to the problems now found in the lake.

He stated the goals of the plan were to improve water quality, increase aquatic vegetation, increase habitat diversity and reduce wave action and shoreline erosion.

There are 2 components to the plan:

- restoration of the historic hydrology
- placement of earthen terraces

The object of first component of this plan is to have the bulk of the water to continue to come down Bayou Folse and Company Canal into the lake. The benefits expected are a reduction in turbidity and nutrients coming into the lake.

The purpose of the terraces would be to reflect the winds from the southeast in the spring, summer and fall, and from the north in the winter. Benefits of the terraces would be a reduction in wave action and shoreline erosion, as well as an increase in water clarity and habitat diversity.

Vince stated that he'd like to get an endorsement of the plan from the MC. David Muth made a motion to endorse this Management Plan, the motion was seconded. The motion was passed with no opposition.

F. Contrasting System-Wide Approaches to Integration: Netherlands and The Louisiana Coast-Natalie Snider, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

Natalie started her presentation with a brief geographical background about the Netherlands

- 15,500 square miles
- 16 million residents
- has 2 delta rivers, Rhine and Maas
- 50% of the land is below sea level and 60% of the population is below sea level
- 2/3 of the land would be inundated if there were no dikes

The Netherlands and Louisiana have similar deltas and similar threats, with long histories of flooding from rivers and seas.

One common issue is subsidence, both man-made and natural; causing parts of the country to be 22 ft. below sea level inside the dikes.

Natalie then went over the history of Dutch levee protection. They have a continuous investment in a levee that is now 43 ft. high.

Natalie then discussed The Netherlands model of single vs. multiple lines of defense. She then compared that to Louisiana's model.

She then discussed what we can learn from the Dutch:

- Setting Priorities: Protection of the country ranks as the top priority over all other issues
- System-wide Integration and Management
- Sustainable Ecosystem and Economy
- Dealing with Stakeholder Conflicts
- Research and Development
- Develop Stakeholder Commitment and Pride

She also noted that there were things Louisiana should do different than the Dutch.

G. Beach Monitoring Program-Jerome Freedman, LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals

Jerome informed the MC that this program was started through the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH) Act-Oct. 2000, which was funded by EPA. This Act gave DHH the authority to regulate the water quality of coastal beaches for recreational purposes.

In 2005, there were 26 beaches being monitored. However, the hurricanes of 2005 suspended the program. In 2006, the program resumed but was suspended again with the hurricanes of 2008.

Most of the beaches monitored are concentrated in the Cameron area.

The criteria for the chosen sites are:

- the proximity to existing mollusk shellfish program sites
- brackish water (salinity)

Studies show that waterborne pathogens and related illnesses can be contracted in waters that contain fecal

contamination, such as bacterial infections like cholera, salmonellosis, shigellosis and gastroenteritis, and viral infections like infectious hepatitis, gastroenteritis and intestinal diseases caused by enteroviruses. And also can cause protozoan infections such as amoebic dysentery and giardiasis.

Conclusions of these studies found that 1) swimmers who bathe in water contaminated with sewage are at greater risk than non-swimmers of contracting gastroenteritis 2) swimming-associated illness rate increases as the quality of the bathing water degrades 3) the illness rate in marine swimmers is greater when indicator densities are equivalent in marine and fresh water, and 4) most swimming-related illnesses are of undetermined etiology.

Jerome stated that the main indicator organism is fecal coliform because it is difficult to directly detect many other waterborne pathogens and parasites. He stated that Enterococci is another indicator used.

He then discussed the sampling procedure and tiered monitoring plan.

He stated that there is a public notification service, which is a website: www.ophbeachmonitoring.com

There is also a website that provides information on how to keep our water resources clean and safe: www.earth911.com

He stated press releases are issued and advisory signs are posted on beaches.

H. 2008 La Fete d'Ecologie-Shelley Sparks, BTNEP

Shelley informed the MC that the La Fete that was originally scheduled for September 27th was held November 15th. Attendance was lower than normal probably because of the date change and the temperature was low.

She stated that there was a gas card raffle that was popular, which drew people to the BTNEP tent. There were some new folklife artists this year that were contacted through the Louisiana Folklife Artist Guild.

She stated that again the Castnet King was present and in good spirits. She thanked the sponsors that Kerry mentioned at the beginning of the meeting, as well as LUMCON and the Jean Lafitte Park. She stated that Bayou Green provided plastic recycling.

VI. New Business

Kerry introduced Cynthia Dubois, NSU Library, who produced a Webliography, funded through the 2008 BTNEP Mini-Grants Program. This publication lists websites that offer information on wetlands. She stated that she is going to all the public libraries within the BTES teaching either the librarians, or patrons, how to get this information out.

Kerry also announced that the Tidal Graph Calendars should be in by the 2nd week of January. He stated that SeaGrant is contributing \$10,000 to the printing of the calendar. Mel stated that next year's theme is going to be specific wetland restoration techniques. Michael stated that this year's theme is invasive species.

Kerry then informed the MC that the 2009 Mini-Grants theme will also be invasive species. Michael stated that he will send out an announcement when the request for proposal packet is ready. He stated there is \$10,000 available.

Kerry announced that the emergency dredging of Bayou Lafourche is moving forward and will probably start in April.