

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

MC Meeting # 47 Agenda

9:00AM-March 11, 2009

Nicholls State University Campus

Plantation Room, Student Union

Thibodaux, LA

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll-Call

Management Conference Members Present:

Herman Waguespack-American Sugar Cane League
Archie Chaisson-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District
Steven Peyronnin-Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
John Tesvich-Commercial Fisheries
Jerome Zeringue-Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
John Clark-Iberville Parish
Anne Perry-LA Dept. of Economic Development
Ann Wilson-LA Dept. of Education
Emelise Cormier-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
Dwayne Bourgeois-Louisiana Assoc. of Levee Boards
Randy Robichaux-Louisiana Independent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Tim Allen-Louisiana Landowner's Assoc.
Mike Lyons-Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Christina Swaye-LA Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
Paul Johnson-Louisiana Science Teacher's Assoc.
John Conover-LUMCON
Randy Lanctot-Louisiana Wildlife Federation
Rex Caffey-LSU Ag Center
David Muth-National Park Service
Gary Lafleur-Nicholls State University
Albertine Kimble-Plaquemines Parish
Jo Anna Jones-South Central Planning & Development Commission
Simone Maloz-South Louisiana Economic Council
Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish
Sue Hawes-US Army Corp of Engineers
Doug Jacobson-US EPA
Ronnie Paille-US Fish & Wildlife Service
David Marks-US Geological Survey
Rick Hartman-US National Marine Fisheries
Quin Kinler-USDA/NRCS

Organizations not represented:

Coastal Conservation Association
Greater Lafourche Port Commission
LA Dept. of Ag & Forestry
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
LA Assoc. of Conservation Districts
Louisiana Farm Bureau
Louisiana Forestry Association
Pointe Coupee Parish
St. Charles Parish
The Nature Conservancy
US Coast Guard

Guests:

Melanie Goodman-US Army Corp of Engineers
NSU Graduate Students
E. J. Rayner-NSU Graduate Student
Dr. Quinton Fontenot-NSU
Chuck Villarubia-OCPR
Maura Wood-National Wildlife Federation
Juanita Constable-National Wildlife Federation
Steve Mathies-CH2M Hill
David Bourgeois-LA Seagrant
John ?-Natural Resource Conservation Service
Natalie Snyder-Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

BTNEP Staff:

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

B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the December 10, 2008 meeting

Jerome Zeringe made a motion dispense of the reading of the minutes and to approve them as written;
Tim Allen seconded the motion. There was no opposition. The minutes were approved.

II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES-Kerry St. Pé

A. Presentations/Exhibits/Field Trips

Volunteer Effort with Union College Students
-Grand Isle
Houma-Terrebonne RV & Boat Show
Ben Franklin High School
World Wetlands Day
Construction Specification Institute-LSU
Eagle Expo
English Turn Garden Club
Rustic Pathways Volunteer Day-Barataria Preserve

American Fisheries Society Conference
-exhibit and plenary session speaker
COSEE Workshop-New Orleans
From H-2-0 Water Quality Workshop
Plover Survey
UNO Planning & Urban Studies Dept.
Volunteer Planting on Fourchon Ridge
Leadership Louisiana

B. Media Interviews

Advocate (Baton Rouge, LA)

- "Dying marsh blamed for orange water." 01/27/09.
- "New calendar for the birds." 01/26/09.

American Press (Lake Charles, LA)

- "Nutria fur, teeth hard to find." 11/24/08.

Banner-Tribune (Franklin, LA)

- "Dying Louisiana marsh may be turning water orange." 01/26/09.

Beauregard Daily News (DeRidder, LA)

- "Dying marsh may be dyeing water orange." 01/27/09.

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

- "Paddle Down Bayou Lafourche." 3/09.

Daily Advertiser (Lafayette, LA)

- "A New Vision: Part Five: Where Do We Go From Here." 11/27/08. [Special report series on losing Louisiana].
- Nutria could be source of meat, fur." 11/26/08. Michael Massimi

Daily Comet (Thibodaux, LA)

- "Protection Remains Elusive." 12/01/08.
- "Orange water has Montegut puzzled." 01/08/09.
- "Marsh may be to blame for orange water in canal." 01/24/09. Andrew Barron.
- "Locals comment on corps freshwater diversion plans." 02/04/09.
- "Once-popular outdoor attraction reopens" 11/16/08. Elmer's Island.
- "Good news for Elmer's Island." 12/18/08. [editorial].

Houma Courier (Houma, LA)

- "Students to take part in event." World Wetlands Day. 01/21/09.
- "Want to paddle Bayou Lafourche?" 01/13/09.
- "Protection remains elusive." 11/30/08.
- "Oil and gas money to help forest new ridge." 11/17/08.
- "In the market for nutria? You'll have to hunt your own." 11/18/08.
- "Once-popular outdoor attraction reopens" 11/16/08. Elmer's Island.
- "Good news for Elmer's Island." 12/18/08. [editorial].
- "Dying marsh may be to blame for orange water in Terrebonne canal." -1/24/09. Andrew Barron

Lafourche Gazette (Larose, LA)

- "Wetlands bibliographic instruction available at local library branches." 01/18/09.

Louisiana Environmental Education Association's Bayou Bulletin

- "Aliens in the Estuary." 02/09. Rapid assessment symposium.

Louisiana Science Teacher's Association's LASER

- "Aliens in the Estuary." 02/09. Rapid assessment symposium.

Marsh and Bayou (Slidell, LA)

- "Kayak Corner: Paddling into 2009." 01/09. "put in" kayaking site in Grand Isle.

St. Bernard Voice (Arabi, LA)

- "Saving our Wetlands." 12/05/08.

The Times (Shreveport, LA)

- "Nutria fur, teeth hard to find." 11/24/08.

Times-Picayune (New Orleans, LA)

- "Study looks for source sediment." 01/22/09.
- "Dying wetlands dyeing canal, DEQ official says." 01/27/09.

Tri-Parish Times (Houma, LA)

- "Houma site to celebrate World Wetlands Day." 01/28/09.
- "Work on levee system's reaches under way." 01/28/09.

The Weekly Press (Baton Rouge, LA)

- "Cajun Coast Announces 4th Annual Louisiana Eagle Expo." 01/15/09

Kerry-Andy Elliot-Vision Communications, for shrimp industry documentary
Michael-Delta Farm Press on apple snails
Kerry-KLRZ Radio, pipeline sediment delivery

C. Meetings

Governor Jindal News Conference-Elmer's Island	Wading/Seabird Atlas Meeting
2010 Calendar Meeting	Aquatic Nuisance Task Force Meeting
Pre-Bid Meeting for Barataria Preserve Debris Removal Project	Governor's Coastal Advisory Committee
BTNEP Website Overview Meeting	Groundwater Protection Committee
Planning Mtg. For Youth Wetlands Week 2009	Bayou Lafourche Animation Overview Mtg.
Bayou Industrial Group Luncheon	Nature Conservancy Planning Mtg. For Education Outreach
Joint Natural Resource Comm. Mtg.	Subsidence Symposium
Vic A. Pitre Elementary, Westwego, LA	Planning Meeting for Invasive Species Symposium
-Wetlands Educational Outreach Theater	GOMA Diversity Grant Meeting
Lafourche Coastal Zone Management	CWPPRA Task Force Meeting-New Orleans
Oil Spill Prevention Action Plan Team	State Representative Reed Henderson-St. Bernard Parish
Donaldsonville to the Gulf Project Development Team	Louisiana Sea Grant Annual Outreach Meeting
CPRA-Parish CZMs	Audubon Aquatic Center-cichlid research
Environmental Education Commission Meeting	Education Action Plan Team Meeting
Planning Mtg for Women and the Environment	CRPA Stakeholder's Meeting-Houma
Fletcher Community College	ANEP/EPA Meeting-Washington DC
Migratory Bird Action Plan Team	Envirothon Training
NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee	SeaGrant Statement of Interest Review Panel
Interagency Diversion Summit	
Wetshop Planning Meeting	

D. Projects Initiated

1. "2009 Web Site Support"-S. Testroet-Bergeron
2. "Development of and Production of the Folklife and Wetlands Cultural Day in Conjunction with other Jubilee Festivities-2009"-S. Helmuth
3. "Curriculum Development for Invasive Species Early Detection and Rapid Response Training"-M. Massimi
4. "2010 Calendar Depicting Oil & Produced Water Spill Prevention Measures Applicable to the Oil & Gas Industry within the BTNE"-D. Blanchard
5. "Design and Layout of the 2010 Calendar Depicting Oil & Produced Water Spill Prevention Measures Applicable to the Oil & Gas Industry within the BTNE" & "Design and Layout of the 2010 Bird Calendar" & "Design and Layout of the 2010 Tidal Gran Calendar"-D. Blanchard
6. Amendment to "2007 Environmental Indicators Report & BTNEP FY2004-FY2006 Program Evaluation"-D. Blanchard

F. Donor Recognition

1. Deepwater Port Services, Inc.-calendars
2. Houma Filter & Supply Co.-calendars
3. Cornell Tramontana-calendars
4. Theodore Mackenroth-calendars

III. Schedule Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2009

IV. Presentations Prior to Discussion

A. Life History, History, Hysteresis and Habitat Changes in Louisiana's Coastal Ecosystem- Dr. Jim Cowan, LSU

Mr. Cowan's presentation today will help us to understand what generates fisheries productivity and with this understanding we may collect some insights as to what we need to do to manage fisheries of the future.

One questions asked is why landings aren't decreasing as landmass is decreasing. One suggestion is that factors such as wetland loss, hypoxia, habitat, fishing impacts, climate change, eutrophication come into play. Wetland loss actually creates more marsh edge, but then eventually declines, and turns into more open water.

A study of habitat use by spotted sea trout, using the community structure approach, paid a lot of attention to global habitat characteristics by sampling the habitats in a habitat specific manner.

Results showed that there was a relationship with temperature and salinity. Also, areas with higher carbon-based food chains, such as Grand Terre and Queen Bess, fish size tended to be bigger. Habitat types were influential also. The important thing learned is that fish use all estuarine habitats.

Mr. Cowan then discussed a study done by Craig Layman, from Texas A&M. The study showed that the more variability there is in carbon and in nitrogen, the more variability there are in sources of primary productivity.

He then talked briefly about the work being done in Breton Sound. This study looks at on-going work of studies already talked about, data monitoring and models talked about at the Diversion Summit. Abundance of several fish species was calculated before and after the diversion. Abundance in these species seems to have gone up with the introduction of freshwater. This is probably because of the increase of freshwater plants that make their way into the food web.

Mr. Cowan then talked about modeling used in these studies.

Mr. Cowan stated that he thinks mankind has created about a 100-year interruption in the delta cycle and if we can reintroduce the river back into the eco-system, we may restart the delta cycle with minimal impacts with respect to the long term productivity of the eco-system. But since the system has been mechanically hydrologically altered, that doing that may not give the results that are needed. But Mr. Cowan feels that it will be because of some of the work that has been done so far.

B.Economics of Diversions and Rapid Landbuilding Projects-Dr. Rex Caffey, LSU Ag Center

Rex stated that he was asked today to talk about economic considerations of diversions and rapid land building projects. He talked about 3 things: 1) economics and restoration;2) challenges; and 3) cost efficacy.

For cost efficacy, 3 areas were looked at: how is it calculated, how is it affected by project attributes and how has it been a factor in project selection.

He stated that for freshwater diversions and rapid landbuilding projects, it was found that on an annual basis, these projects are cost effective in delivering ecological benefits. They are less expensive than marsh creation projects and barrier island building. Unfortunately the least efficient projects were the most recent ones.

The least efficient, most expensive projects were most likely to be selected and they were usually large scale, shoreline protection or rapid land building projects. Before Katrina, this probably meant there were no budget constraints and project selection was driven by ecological considerations. Since 2005, there was a policy change and now hurricane protection and human focus interests have been integrated. CPRA was formed. With CIAP, \$540 million was authorized just before Katrina, in August 2005, but the projects were selected a year and a half later. Most of the state funded projects involved mechanical retrieval of sediment and distribution of that sediment through pipeline and dredges; rapid landbuilding type projects.

This technology has been around for a long time. The first CWPPRA project was built using this technology, LaBranche Wetlands. Pumping sediment can build wetlands very quickly; however, it is very expensive.

Now that more that coastal restoration is costing more, but less money is being allocated for restoration, the cost/benefit ratio is so much more important.

The benefits are becoming more qualitative and less quantitative. Diversions are the most cost effective technology, but if you believe one acre of wetlands today is worth more than one 20 years from today, then it changes the benefit/cost relationship. Projects are scale dependent, site dependent. Projects are also socio-dependent.

Rex stated that all these factors need to be considered when the MC starts to discuss how to address these large projects. Time and risk should be discussed.

C.Development of the CCMP and Why It Says What It Says-Dr. Steve Mathies, CH2M Hill

Steve reminded the MC that he was the first director of BTNEP, during the planning year of the program. He stated that Kerry asked him to talk about how the CCMP was developed and why it says what it says.

He stated the CCMP was completed 12 years ago, but the planning of it was started 17 years ago.

He described to the MC the four committees that developed the CCMP and their roles. He explained what it took to get the CCMP developed and the commitment given by all stakeholders involved.

Steve reminded the MC that Al Levron was instrumental in writing the nomination document that got BTNEP started.

He informed the MC that BTNEP intended the CCMP to be a living document. BTNEP knew that, as time passed, it would have more information, priorities would change, and also things would happen; for instance, we assumed the barrier islands would be completely rebuilt. Times changed.

The way decisions were made was that they were started with the Advisory Committee, and then voted up to the Management Committee, and then eventually went to the Policy Committee.

Steve then discussed what is said in the CCMP about diversions, Action Plan EM-2. It says that “ this action will encourage the appropriate reintroduction of freshwater and sediment into Barataria and Terrebonne as a mechanism to preserve and/or restore wetland habitat and to combat saltwater intrusion.....In general, BTNEP supports the introduction of freshwater and sediment into our deteriorating coastal wetlands.....It is felt that the benefits of the eco-system as a whole greatly outweigh the adverse impacts that would occur...important adverse impacts must be considered throughout the planning and evaluation process.”

BTNEP supports diversions in general but there are factors that have to be considered.

V. Discussion

Does the BTNEP have the responsibility to oppose the implementation of large scale diversions in the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary to preserve the environmental, cultural, and economic well-being of the people living and working in the Estuary, and to maintain a balanced ecosystem?

Kerry introduced this discussion by reminding the MC that at a previous meeting concerns were raised about BTNEP's stand on diversions. He reminded the MC that they approved comments that were submitted, in 2004, on the LCA Near-term restoration project. In this document, he listed all of the LCA projects that were on the table at that time. In this document he stated whether or not those documents were consistent with the CCMP.

He then read sections of that document to the MC that explains BTNEP's position on large scale restoration projects. BTNEP certainly is an advocate for freshwater diversions but the CCMP calls for the maintenance of a gradient of a fresh to brackish to saline system within our region. There must be a human component to any restoration project. Any project that has any chance of being implemented is not going to be if merely driven by science. The success of that plan depends on when the communities and culture are considered.

Kerry stated that the MC unanimously accepted to submit these comments to Bill Klein in 2004. Then in September 14, 2006, the MC passed a resolution in support of pipeline sediment diversions. Kerry read to the MC the last “Therefore Be It Resolved” which stated “...that the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program Management Conference directs the BTNEP Office to continue its efforts to urge local, state and federal agencies, elected officials and the general public to utilize pipeline sediment delivery in conjunction with appropriately scaled freshwater diversions, as a large scaled restoration strategy to rebuild and maintain ridges, barrier islands, wetlands and other habitats created through the pipeline sediment delivery in the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary.”

He stated that this resolution was also unanimously supported by the MC.

Kerry stated that the question is BTNEP's stand on large diversions and how does it quantify what is a large diversion. He stated that BTNEP considers diversions based on where they are, their impacts on stakeholders, their potential to build land and their benefits.

Rick Hartman stated that there may be some groups that see BTNEP being supportive of greater diversions or more massive diversions, but he doesn't think anyone is interested in disagreeing with the CCMP or the comments that were submitted to LCA. He personally doesn't see that any action needs to be taken at this time since there is no project on the table that the MC is being asked to comment on at the present time.

Doug Jacobsen asked if anyone is asking for action being taken. Kerry stated yes, there were different groups asking for BTNEP to take a stand on a certain project, Myrtle Grove.

David Muth stated that he saw the CCMP as a document that allowed the MC maximum flexibility determining what the future course would be for the estuary. It is a consensus document, meaning the MC will do what is

best when the time comes. He agrees with Rick that there is not consensus in the room presently about either the idea of big diversions or about any one project. He stated that the first serious look that everyone concerned with restoration will have on a big project will be the planning going on at Myrtle Grove. He stated he would like to encourage the program staff to be involved in the planning of Myrtle Grove, to get the CCMP's outlook into the planning process right now.

David stated that he doesn't want the program staff to become the spokesperson for one side of this issue or the other. He would like them to stay open, to get involved in planning of projects. They should bring to the table the concerns of the CCMP and that is how we ought to be moving forward.

Nick Matherne feels where the MC is lacking in consensus is not deciding which is better, pipeline sediment delivery or large scale diversions, but does the MC support the idea of large scale diversions as an overall strategy with idea of supplementing a large scale diversion right now with short term achievable goals with long distance pipeline sediment delivery and small to medium diversions.

Sue Hawes agrees with others when they say that the most important thing BTNEP can do is to take advantage of being involved in the early planning of projects.

Vince Guillory stated that he was advised by LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries not to take vote on this policy because it would involve a policy statement on behalf of the department and right now LDWF does not have an official policy for or against large diversions. However, personally, Vince is in total agreement with the approach BTNEP has been using. He likes the approach of pipeline sediment delivery and BTNEP is the only group promoting it and they need to continue promoting it.

Ronnie Paille stated that our system is deteriorating and there are a number of tools available to fix it and not all of them have been evaluated. And until all of those tools have been evaluated, we can't make decisions without supporting information. Another concern he has is that he thinks to maintain the BTE system, larger diversions will be needed than originally thought.

Steve Mathies stated that since there is not a project on the table, then there really is no reason to take any action today. He feels the decision should be made once a project is on the table, follow the guidelines within the CCMP and then make the decision on whether or not to support that particular project.

Simone Maloz stated that she views the CCMP as a strategic plan for BTNEP. And the mission and vision has not changed, as has the CCMP not changed. She stated the CCMP needs to be revisited, since things have changed since it has been developed. She asked how will BTNEP revisit it's priorities, even if you come up with the same results.

Doug Jacobson stated that Galveston Bay NEP did this two years ago, which was a very expensive process and the results were almost exactly the same with a smaller number of action plans. He said it can be very time consuming and wouldn't be very beneficial. The CCMP is a well written document that allows for a lot of flexibility in the program and changing it would not be in the best interest of the program.

John Tesvich made a motion for the MC to ratify the position that BTNEP has taken in the past as written in the documents submitted to LCA and the resolution and recommends those positions be taken again in the future.

The motion dies due to lack of second.

Randy Lanctot stated it is not contrary to BTNEP's mission or plan, but as an example of the flexibility of the CCMP, he feels it isn't necessary to revisit it. He recommends the MC adopting David Muth's suggestion of the program staff being engaged with the planners of the Myrtle Grove project to make sure that the interests of the

estuary and the program are fully represented in the development of that plan. He moved that the MC do that.

Steven Peyronnin seconded the motion.

Al Levron asked if Randy's motion was specific to Myrtle Grove or all diversion projects. Randy stated that all diversions in the State's Master Plan in the estuary.

Andrew Barron stated that within the scope of the Master Plan, BTNEP has participated in the development of it.

Jerome Zeringue stated the state has the mechanism to engage BTNEP in the prioritization and implementation of all projects listed in the Master Plan and WRDA located in the estuary.

Randy stated he would like to clarify the motion to be to recommend the BTNEP staff to engage fully in interacting those entities that are doing the planning of these diversions projects, whether they be LCA or CWWPRA.

Steven Peyronnin's second is still valid.

Andrew Barron asked at what point does the staff get involved. Randy stated at the beginning of any project that will have an impact on the estuary.

Herman Waguespack stated that he feels the staff has done a great job keeping the MC informed on what has been going on and doesn't feel that any motion is necessary. Rick Hartman stated that Michael Massimi has been involved with the Habitat Evaluation Team and sees this as a continuation of that effort. Herman stated he doesn't think the MC can micromanage everything the program staff does.

Al stated there is a motion on the floor and it has been seconded. Unless a substitute motion is made, he will call for a vote for the present motion. Herman made a substitute motion that no action be taken, David Bourgeois seconded the substitute motion.

Mel Landry stated that the program staff is involved in a lot of projects, so he encouraged the MC to get in touch with the office when they know of something that they think the staff needs to be a part of.

Randy Lanctot objected to the substitute motion.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion: No action be taken because BTNEP staff is already taking part in planning/implementation of projects as stated in the original motion.

Al asked those in favor to raise their hands. Then he asked those opposed to raise their hands.

Al stated that we are a consensus based program. Because the vote showed the group was not all in agreement, no action can be taken at all. Therefore, the motion fails. Kerry stated, that in the history of the program, votes have been purposely avoided, but when it comes down to settling very controversial issues, votes have been needed. A count would need to be taken.

Al then asked again for those in favor to raise their hands: 22 (counted by secretary)

He then asked those opposed to raise their hands: 7 (counted by secretary)

The substitute motion passes.

Vince Guillory made a motion that the BTNEP continue to fully support pipeline sediment delivery and large scale coastal restoration strategies in the BTNE.

Rick Hartman stated that this action is already happening and therefore the MC does not need to do anything additional.

Al Levron directed the MC that there is a motion on the floor and asks if there is a second.

Gary LaFleur seconded the motion.

Doug Jacobson made a substitute motion to table the motion as the action suggested by Vince Guillory is already occurring. In other words, a motion is unnecessary for something BTNEP is already doing.

Tim Allen seconded the motion.

The motion was passed with no objections.

VI. New Business

David Marks invited everyone to CWPPRA's Annual Dedication Ceremony on April 22, 2009. It will be held at US Fish & Wildlife Service's Southeast Refuge Complex in LaCombe.

David Bourgeois reminded the MC of the Christmas Tree Project in Golden Meadow at Regional Park, starting at 9am, this Saturday. It is a joint project between Lafourche CZM, BTNEP, Les Reflections du Bayou, American's Wetlands Conservation Corps, LSU Ag Center and LSU SeaGrant.

Randy Lanctot informed the MC that the state plans to established a Caminada Headlands State Seashore as part of the Elmer's Island acquisition. He stated he would like, at the next MC meeting, the MC to endorse this concept.

Sandra asked Randy to send her an email so this could be put on the next agenda.