



## BARATARIA-TERREBONNE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

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### LEVRON RETIRES, FONTENOT AND LANDRY NAMED NEW MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

THIBODAUX, LA – The Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) held its 81<sup>st</sup> Management Conference meeting on November 2, 2017 at Nicholls State University. At the meeting, Al Levron officially announced his retirement as Chairperson after serving 15 years and Dr. Quenton Fontenot and Jean Landry were elected as the new Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Levron has been involved with BTNEP since its inception. In 1986, as an ambitious young man, he recognized that it was possible to get the Barataria-Terrebonne area recognized as an estuary of national significance through Section 320 of the Clean Water Act. Aside from retiring from the management conference, Levron also recently retired from the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government after 35 years of employment.

“I take great pride in my involvement with the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, having playing an early role in the advocacy of the program, and having served as Chairman of the Management Conference for over 15 years,” said Levron.

BTNEP Program Director, Susan Testroet-Bergeron stated, “The program is honored by the service that Levron provided by nominating us to be a national estuary program in the 1990s as well as for his many years of service as our chairperson.”

After Levron’s announcement, the floor was then open to nominations for chair and vice chair by the Management Conference members. As a result, the members selected Dr. Quenton Fontenot, Head and Professor of Biological Sciences at Nicholls State University, as the new chair. Ms. Jean Landry, director The Nature Conservancy, was confirmed by consensus as Vice Chair.

Fontenot, who has been a professor at Nicholls for over 17 years, has been involved with the BTNEP management conference for the past 15 years. Fontenot began his role as chair at the management conference meeting. “I am looking forward to working with many stakeholders in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary to ensure our estuary remains as viable as it can be,” said Fontenot.

Landry has been involved with the BTNEP management conference for over 16 years and has been with The Nature Conservancy for 17 years. “It is an honor to serve as Vice Chair for such a great organization. I believe in the work of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program,” said Landry. “It celebrates the history of our culture and past, works to better the present day environmental issues of our everyday life, and partners with other organizations to protect our future both environmentally and culturally.”

“I know Dr. Fontenot and Ms. Landry will continue to provide strong leadership for our growing organization,” said Testroet-Bergeron.

Upon inclusion in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Estuary Program, a diverse group of local stakeholders assembled to implement action to improve the ecosystem. Representatives from industry and business, fisheries, agriculture, oil and gas, government agencies, individual citizens, landowners, civic organizations, hunters, scientists, engineers, environmentalists, economists, and urban planners decided to work together. This group is known collectively as the BTNEP Management Conference (BTMC) and it ensures a place for the voice of all that live, work, and play in the Barataria-Terrebonne estuarine complex.

The BTMC, which originally convened in 1990 to develop the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), has been the catalyst for producing open and frank discussions about some of the most critical coastal management issues of the nation for over 25 years. The BTMC's primary function is to encourage and oversee the implementation of the CCMP by coordinating and integrating the CCMP actions among agencies and stakeholders. In addition, the BTMC maintains an interchange with other similar federal, state and local planning efforts, and reviews and modifies the implementation of the CCMP as conditions change over time. Finally, the BTMC fosters and expands the use of participatory, voluntary and incentive-based approaches to decision-making in the estuary.

Over the years, the BTMC worked to build consensus in the development and implementation of the CCMP. Members of the BTMC have volunteered tens of thousands of hours determining the directions the journey must take to safeguard the estuary for future generations. Today, the BTMC meets quarterly to provide direction and oversight to the BTNEP program office as they implement the CCMP, a plan equally as vital today as it was when it was created.

**BTNEP is one of the 28 national estuary programs in the United States. All or parts of sixteen Louisiana parishes are located in the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary system. The organization was established under the EPA Clean Water Act to protect coastal resources. BTNEP is a partnership of government, businesses, scientists, conservation organizations, agricultural interests and individuals for the preservation, protection, and restoration for the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary in southeast Louisiana. For more information on BTNEP, visit our website page at [www.btnep.org](http://www.btnep.org) or like us on Facebook.**

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