Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

Management Conference Meeting #92 Roll Call

Virtual Meeting

9:30 a.m. – Thursday, August 6, 2020

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| ***BTNEP Staff*** |
| XXXXXX | Alma Robichaux-JacksonAndrew BarronDean Blanchard Delaina LeBlancMatt Benoit Natalie Waters | XXX | Nicole BabinSeth Moncrief Siva Nunna | X | Steve Mathies, Director EmeritusKerry St. Pé, Director EmeritusSusan Testroet-Bergeron Director Emerita |
| ***Management Conference Member*** | ***Member*** | ***Alternate*** |
| American Sugarcane League | X | Herman Waguespack |  | John Constant |
| Atchafalaya National Heritage Area/CRT |  | Justin Lemoine |  |  |
| Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District |  | Hugh Caffery | X | Benjamin Malbrough |
| Cajun Music Preservation Society | X | Quenton Fontenot |  |  |
| Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana | X | Kimberly ReyherEmily Vuxton |  | Deb Abibou |
| Coastal Conservation Association of LA |  | John Walther |  |  |
| Coastal Protection Restoration Authority (CPRA) | X | Bren HasseGreg GrandyBrad MillerDarin Lee | XXX | Kellyn LaCour-ConantAlexis RixnerKacie WrightElizabeth ShoenfeltjohnRobert RoutonHonora BurasJoseph “Wes” LeBlancMichael Ellis |
| Commercial Fisheries |  | John Tesvich |  | Peter VujnovicchClint Guidry |
| Greater Lafourche Parish Port Commission |  | Chett Chaisson |  | Davie Breaux |
| Iberville Parish Government |  | John Clark |  |  |
| Jefferson Parish Government |  | Lauren Averill | X | Seamus RileyMichelle Gonzales |
| LA Association of Conservation District |  | Ruben Dauzat |  | Brad SpicerJerome Cantrelle |
| LA Association of Levee Boards | X | Dwayne Bourgeois |  |  |
| LA Department of Agriculture & Forestry | X | Joey Breaux |  | Faran DietzJeremy Rodriguez |
| LA Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism | X | Debra CredeurMaida Owens |  | Karen LeathemLinda Smith |
| LA Department of Economic Development |  | Paul Sawyer |  | Anne Perry |
| LA Department of Education | X | Jill Cowart Lydia Hill | X | Venise OrtegoThomas Gresham |
| LA Department of Environmental Quality |  | Aimee PreauCrisalda Adams |  | John SheehanJonathan McFarlandJohn Jennings |
| LA Department of Health and Hospitals |  | Lauren Comeaux |  | Chance Wooton |
| LA Department of Natural Resources | X | Charles Reulet |  | Sara KrupaRobert WilliamsonMark Hogan |
| ***Management Conference Member*** |  | ***Member*** |  | ***Alternate*** |
| LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries |  | Willie CheramieJeff MarxGage Lasseigne |  | Brady CarterMark SchexnayderChris Schieble |
| LA Forestry Association |  |  |  |  |
| LA Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities |  | Chip Kline |  | Morgan CrutcherCharles Suteliff |
| LA Independent Oil & Gas Association |  | Randy Robichaux |  |  |
| LA Landowners Association | X | Tim Allen |  | Randy Moertle |
| LA Mid Continent Oil & Gas Association |  | Lori LeBlanc |  | Ed LandgrafMelissa Cloutet |
| LA Oil Spill Coordinators Office |  | Marty J. Chabert Jennifer Beall | X | Eva WindhofferKarolien Debusschere |
| LA Science Teachers’ Association | X | Nicole Cotten |  | Tera LaPrarieNathan CottenJean May-Brett |
| LA Wildlife Federation | X | B.J. Barney Callahan |  | Rebecca Triche |
| Lafourche Parish Government |  | Archie Chaisson | X | Amanda Voisin |
| LSU Ag Center & LA Sea Grant |  | Rex Caffey |  | Julie FalgoutDianne LindstedtEmily Maung-DouglassThomas HymelNicole Lundberg |
| Lowlander Center | X | Kristina Peterson | X | Dr. Shirley Laska  |
| LUMCON | X | Dr. Craig McClain John Conover |  | Heidi BoudreauxMurt Conover |
| US NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) | X | Craig GothreauxRichard Hartman |  | Mel LandryAlexis RixnerShannon Martin |
| Nicholls State University | X | Dr. Jay Clune Monique CrochetDr. John Doucet |  | Chris BonvillainGary LaFleurDr. Mary “Mitz” Jackson |
| Plaquemines Parish Government |  | Vincent Frelich Robert Spears |  | Scott RousselleKrista ClarkJohn Helmers |
| Point Coupee Parish Government |  | J.A. Rummler |  |  |
| South Central Planning and Development Commission |  | Kevin BelangerMartha Cazaubon |  | Pat GordonStephanie BrunningLesley Long |
| South Louisiana Economic Council (SLEC) |  | Vic Lafont |  | Simone MalozVictoria Sagrera |
| South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center | XX | Jonathan ForetSamantha Hicks | XX | Angelle PercleSarah Fontana |
| St. Charles Parish |  | Earl Matherne |  | Kim Marousek |
| St. John Parish | X | Evelyn CampoDevin Foil | X | Ivy MathieuEric Wolverton |
| Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government | X | Mart Black |  | Jennifer Gerbasi |
| The Nature Conservancy | X | Jean Landry |  | Karen Gautreaux |
| ***Management Conference Member*** |  | ***Member*** |  | ***Alternate*** |
| U.S. National Park Service |  | Angela Rathle | X | Allyn RodriguezMark FordJulie WhitbeckDusty Pate |
| US Coast Guard |  | Capt. Blake Welborn |  | Brian Black |
| US Army Corps of Engineers | X | Sarah Bradley |  | Kaitlyn CarriereDanielle KellerAmy DixonBrad Inman |
| US Environmental Protection Agency | X | Lisa Rickards | X | Doug Jacobson |
| US Fish & Wildlife Service |  | Ronnie PailleWilliam VermillionBrigette Firmin |  | John SavellJeff WellerBrad RieckBryan Pember |
| US Department of Agriculture’s – Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS) | XX | Quin KinlerJohn BoatmanArnelis Crespo | XX | Alton JamesSamuel TerryLacy BellangerJoshua Anderson |
| US Geological Survey (USGS) | X | Scott Wilson | X | Cole RuckstublKate SpearMelissa CollinPhil TurnipseedSinead BorchertKathy LadnerJennifer Guidry |
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| ***Guest Organization*** |  | ***Guest*** |  | ***Guest*** |
| Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation | X | Gary LaFleurEarl Melancon Laynie Barrilleaux | X | Nolan Falgout, IIIMatt Sevier |
| Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program | X | Kaitlyn Tabor |  |  |
| Bayou Country Children’s Museum |  | Christopher Gergeni |  | Christy Naquin |
| Bayou Grace |  | Mary Gueniot Biegler |  | Jenny DupreAnne Parr |
| Bayou Land RC & D |  | Dr. Colleen Butler |  | Jennifer Roberts |
| Bayou Some Fun |  | Dottie Hartman |  |  |
| Bio Info Experts |  | Susanna Lamer |  |  |
| Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) |  | Bruce Baird |  | Victoria Phaneuf |
| City of Thibodaux |  | Archie Chaisson |  |  |
| Conoco Phillips |  | Ashley Golmon |  |  |
| CRIA |  | Chris Adams |  |  |
| Daily Comet / Houma Courier |  | Bridgete Mire |  | Abby Tabor |
| Ducks Unlimited | X | Leslie Suazo |  | Joe Fifer |
| Farm Bureau Insurance |  | Robert Adams |  |  |
| Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities |  | Morgan Crutcher |  |  |
| Grand Isle Port Commission |  | Wayne Keller |  |  |
| Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council |  | John Ettinger |  | LaKeshia Robertson |
| Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw |  | Chief Albert P. Naquin |  |  |
| Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation |  | Adam Songy |  |  |
| Lori LeBlanc LLC |  | Tyler Gray |  | Katie DeRoche |
| Louisiana Appleseed |  | Stephanie Beaugh |  | Christy Kane |
| LSU | X | Dr. Benjamin SpringgateLoren HullNancy Rabalais | X | Jennifer SatoR Eugene TurnerAshley Everette |
| Moffatt & Nichol |  | Jonathan Hird |  |  |
| Nicholls State University | X | Alex ArceneauxJenny SchexnayderTimothy ClayAlexandra AltermanTaylor Beck |  | Allyse FerraraKeri TurnerGarland LundyThomas PhillipsBen Bates |
| Office of Congressman Garret Graves |  | Cong. Garrett GravesDavid Cavell |  | Alexandra Erwin |
| Pan Am Communication |  | Lenny Delbert |  | Lenny Delbert Jr. |
| Pointe Au Chien |  | Donald Daedar |  |  |
| Port of Morgan City |  | Cindy Cutrera |  |  |
| Public Schools |  | Tina Galler |  |  |
| RES |  | Frank Cuccio |  |  |
| Restore or Retreat | X | Simone Maloz |  | Victoria Segrera |
| Royal Engineering |  | Shelley Sparks |  | Kirk Rhinehart |
| Ryan Productions |  | Andre’ Lyons |  |  |
| Senator John Kennedy’s Office |  | Mary Elise Schlesinger |  |  |
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| ***Guest Organization*** |  | ***Guest*** |  | ***Guest*** |
| Shell Oil Company |  | Ian Voparil |  | Shelley PiehetLeonard Garrison |
| Southern University | X | Veronica Manrique |  |  |
| Spahr’s Seafood Restaurant |  | Donald Spahr |  | Brent Roger |
| TLCD |  | Angela Rains |  | Darin Guidry |
| The Water Institute of the Gulf |  | Scott HemmerlingJessi ParfaitErin WhiteHuy Ju |  | Monica BarraBruce YuillChristine DeMeyers |
| UNO – CHART (Center for Hazards Assessment, Response & Technology) |  | Melanie Sand |  | Katherine NorwoodBennett Alldredge |
| UNO – Nekton Research Laboratory |  | Martin O’Connell |  |  |
| US Geological Survey (USGS) |  | Jacoby Carter |  |  |
| University of Arizona |  | Ben McMahan |  |  |
| VISTA |  | Katie DeHart |  |  |
| White Car Marketing |  | Cody Blanchard |  | Emily Knobloch |
| WYES TV |  | Marcia Kavanaugh |  |  |
|  |  | Vincent Guillory |  |  |
|  |  | Marty Bourgeois |  |  |
|  |  | Darryl Hambrinck |  |  |
|  |  | Doug Daigle |  |  |
|  |  | David Gisclair |  |  |
|  |  | Ian Tivet |  |  |
|  | X | Tiffani Vincent |  |  |
|  | X | John Smith |  |  |
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**Final Minutes from Management Conference Zoom Meeting #92 Final Minutes – August 6, 2020**

1. Meeting was called to order by Dr. Quenton Fontenot, BTNEP MC Chairman, at 9:30am.
2. Management Conference members and guests were asked to sign in virtually with their name and affiliation.
3. The floor was opened for comments on the reading and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting. Minutes will be approved at the next meeting on November 5, 2020.
	1. Quenton Fontenot asked if there was a motion to accept minutes as written and dispense with the reading of the minutes.
	2. Kristina Peterson motioned to accept as written. Dean Blanchard seconded the motion.
	3. Motion was approved by consensus.
4. **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

Dean Blanchard stars off by thanking those who sent in work plans. He also said that the CCMP mentioned in the last meeting was approved and is ready. The last touches are being put on the Climate Ready Estuaries report and it will be sent to EPA soon. Dean also announced the retirement of Richard DeMay.

Andrew Barron talked about how he and Siva are working in the Bayou Folse watershed and have made substantial progress. They were shut down in April due to the pandemic but have since started going back sampling. Andrew has a contract with Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District who has hired an inspector to go out to people’s homes to inspect their home sewage systems. The inspector will report back to the homeowner to let them know whether its working or not. Andrew receives money for these projects from LDEQ.

Quenton Fontenot, regarding Andrew and Siva, mentioned a wetland assimilation project with Ducks Unlimited. They’re looking at building about a 25-acre wetland at the Nicholls Farm. Ducks Unlimited has people out at the farm surveying the area. The plan is to put in a boardwalk, have spots for people to go canoeing, have birding trips, etc. He then congratulated Andrew.

Siva Nunna gave a quick update on the Bayou Lafourche Watershed Project. They’ve collected a lot of baseline data and receive 3 quality reports from the Gulf of Mexico Program. She then mentioned how they have a contract set in place with the South Central Planning Development Commission to do a home sewage assistance project in the Bayou Lafourche Watershed to help homeowners fix their home sewage systems. For this quarter they’re planning on initiating the contracts with the homeowners. Due do the outbreak, the sampling for April was suspended but they started back up in May.

Alma Robichaux talked about how most of her events were cancelled due to the outreach and in-person aspect of them. Although most of the events were postponed, they received a grant from the Bayou Community Foundation to do a big social media campaign for trash free Bayou Lafourche. Alma will be working with Nicholls State University’s creative public outreach group to raise awareness on what is found in Bayou Lafourche. They were able to finish the grant paperwork for the Gulf of Mexico Program for trash free waters which is for sustainable festivals. Alma will be working with the French Quarter Festival. Hopefully they will have the festival in April. Also, they will be working with the Rougarou Festival who will probably have the festival in October of next year. Alma also mentioned writing a sustainable festival plan for Louisiana which will be able to be used Gulf wide. They’re hoping to reduce the amount of trash and stuff that’s sent to the landfills, and hope to do more composting and recycling at these festivals. The grant is worth $500,000.

Matt Benoit indicated that he released all of the plants he was growing out for the Grand Liard planting. He also collected red mulberry and toothache tree seeds and has been planning on a planting of mangrove and salt matrimony vines on Queen Bess Island with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries as well as other partners. He’s also been up keeping the plants at the Nicholls Farm so that they don’t get weeded over.

Delaina LeBlanc mentioned that her fieldwork was cancelled so she had to reschedule it for next year. She was also informed that the proposal that she sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was funded to the full amount of $150,000 to fund continued research on the threatened Red Knot focusing on relationships between prey availability and diet. She also worked with her partner out of Texas to secure funding for satellite tags to out on birds in the Chandeleur Islands in January. Additionally, things have just been finalized for Delaina to start working under CPRA on the analysis of the Caminada Headlands project with the Piping Plovers.

Seth Moncrief also commented that many of his events were cancelled. He has been working on the 2021 Tidal Graph Calendar. They have a theme picked out and it’s rolling along quickly. He referenced what Matt mentioned before about the planting they’re trying to coordinate on Queen Bess Island with CPRA, Restore Retreat, Shell, and LDWF. They have November 13th and 14th picked out and they’re going to try to have a volunteer event and plant close to 6,000 plants. Seth has been reaching out to their partners and are looking for groups of volunteers. Ideally, each day they’d like to have 40 people with all precautions being taken such as masks and social distancing.

Natalie Waters gave a couple updates on the Chimney Swift Tower Project. She’s worked with the Public Works Department and has installed 4 of the nesting towers in Thibodaux, one at Peltier Park, the St. Francis Community Garden, on Nicholls Campus, and one by the Boy Scout hut in Peltier Park. They will be putting out educational signage as soon as it comes in. Natalie mentioned that she was unable to go out to the Osprey nest platforms in April and May due to the outbreak but Apache employees say two Ospreys nesting on a platform near the Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA but they were gone in June. She received a monarch butterfly and pollinator grant last year and the goal was to encourage citizens to plant native milkweed and nectar plants for the monarch butterflies and other pollinators. The La Terre Master Gardeners helped plant these seeds. They planned to do a plant sell but it was cancelled but they still found a way to give them out. She also created a pollinator resource page on the BTNEP website. Natalie was only able to do nest box maintenance for the Prothonotary Warblers and they have been breeding well. She has also taken up Richard’s project on the Audubon Louisiana publication.

1. **UPCOMING DATES**
	1. BTNEP Management Conference – November 5th, 2020
	2. BTNEP Management Conference – February 4th, 2021
	3. BTNEP Management Conference – May 6th, 2021
	4. BTNEP Management Conference – August 00, 2021
	5. BTNEP Management Conference – November 00, 2021
2. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
3. “Saving Marshes and Ridges Together: A SMART Partnership” – Matt Benoit, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

Matt Benoit introduced himself as the Habitat Restoration Coordinator. In 2016, a multi-year organized partnership was formed by Shell Oil Company and BTNEP to address coastal land loss in the estuary. With shared interest and a generous donation from Shell to BTEF, BTNEP was able to continue and expand their efforts to restore wetland habitat through marsh and ridge plantings. With the SMART project they were able to foster partnerships with almost 40 stakeholders and interested volunteers. Matt then named a few of these stakeholders and volunteers. He showed an image of the Fourchon Maritime Forest Ridge Experimental Planting and explained it further. He also showed a few images of these plantings with the hundreds of volunteers. BTNEP had a bird action team come up with a list of native woody species to use on the ridge and Matt showed the list of these species. These species are beneficial to many of the birds that go through the area on their migration path. Over the course of the 3-year partnership with Shell they’ve had 4 plantings on the ridge to increase the amount of trees and vegetation on it. Matt mentioned how they’ve had 52 volunteers, 1,750 woody plants, and 400 herbaceous plants put into the plantings. Matt then showed images of the groups that helped work on the ridge such as universities and companies. The first group was the University at Buffalo who’s been coming down to help for the past 10-12 years. The next groups were Northern Illinois University and Iowa State University and after this was Shell Oil Company, who has helped BTNEP in the past. The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources attended a grass planting on the northern area of the ridge where there’s a lot of erosion.

Matt then showed a map of the Fourchon marsh plantings and explained how between December 2017 and May 2019 there were 10 plantings, 167 volunteers, and 15,145 herbaceous plants and where the plantings took place. He then showed images of the planting that was done south of the ridge that was done by The University of Missouri Alternative Breaks. The plantings on the north side of the ridge was represented by a map image and explained further by Matt. The first group was the Union College from New York and an aerial image of the marsh was shown. Common Ground Relief is another group from New Orleans that helps out often. Matt then showed more images of some of the previous partners returning to do another planting. A few more groups that came out were Appalachian State University, University of Arkansas – Monticello, National Park Service, Patrick F. Taylor High School, Oneida University, and Association of Corporate Counsel – LA Chapter. Images of the plantings with each of these groups were presented as well as groups that attended previously. Matt commented that of the surviving plants in all the plantings only 0.0014% were found in barren mud flat areas completely devoid of vegetation. The 99.999% of the plants that survived at the end of the growing season were all found in a zone were some other volunteer vegetation existed, such as Salicornia spp., paspalum, distichlis, or other such species. Matt showed some photos of the areas years after plantings and explained the amount of vegetation growth. Matt then went on to talk about the improvement BTNEP was able to do at their Native Plant Production Facility at the Nicholls State University Farm. Through the Shell donation, BTNEP was able to add an additional 1600 sf to their existing shade house bringing up the total area to 6400 sf. Also, BTNEP was able to replace some aging equipment used for our restoration projects. BTNEP purchased a new boat trailer for our Hanko’s boat and a new volunteer trailer to transport plants and equipment.

Matt then highlighted all the work done at the Native Plant Production Facility during the SMART Program through the help of over 500 volunteers over 44 “Farm Days” at our facility.

Matt highlighted two CWPPRA and one US Army Corps of Engineers BUDMAT projects BTNEP was involved with. BTNEP grew out over 7,000 woody trees for planting the ridge component features of Bayou Dupont (BA-48) and Grand Liard (BA-68). Matt also highlighted the experimental planting they conducted in March of 2019 for the Grand Liard project (BA-68) with the help of staff from CPRA and Plaquemines and Jefferson Parishes. Survival data from the experimental planting would help to inform on how the woody plants might perform in the saline soils at the site for the larger planting the following year. BTNEP also provided over 4,300 herbaceous and woody plants for the USACE Spanish Pass Ridge located near Venice, La. BTNEP with Shell Oil Company and the University of Buffalo planted the plants over two days at the end of January 2019. Questions were then taken.

1. “Baseline data on plant demography and performance of Chinese Tallow in Louisiana: Preparing for biological control” – Veronica Manrique, Southern University

Veronica Manrique introduced herself and mentioned she’s with Southern University in Louisiana. She talked about a study they’ve been doing on Chinese tallow in the past 3 years. She gave some background information on Chinese tallow like where it’s found and where it came from. There are many negative impacts such as how it’s displacing native species and the economic effect. Many management tactics are being used and one is biological control. One bio-control agent is the *Bikasha collaris,* which is a beetle that eats Chinese tallow, and another is the *Gadirtha fusca,* which is a moth. Veronica then further explained the two bio-control agents and their impacts on the tree. Before these bio-control agents are used, baseline studies are needed. The objectives were to establish long-term plots of Chinese tallow in Louisiana, measure performance of Chinese tallow prior bio-control, and assess the impact of herbivory on Chinese tallow growth in Louisiana; included in these objectives were three studies. The first study was on demography of two plots in forests in central and south Louisiana. Veronica went on to explain the procedures and details of study 1. The results for the first study was presented as charts and compared over the 3 years. There were more seeds found in Marrero in south Louisiana. A few implications were given in result of the first study. The second study was done in the LSU Burden Botanical Gardens where they planted 80 trees and they did two treatments in order to exclude the insects to see how the plants do without insects versus with them. Veronica then explained the different variables and procedures involved in study 2. They found that the major insect affecting Chinese tallow was the leaf miner that eats the trees. A chart reflecting the results of the treatments over 3 years was shown and explained more by Veronica. The results were significant because it gave more insight on the impacts insects have on the Chinese tallow. A few implications were presented and explained in relation to study 2. The third and last study was done at Southern University where there were 64 Chinese tallow and half of the plot was fertilized and half was not. The second treatment of this study was artificial herbivory due to an absence of insects. Veronica then proceeded to describe the way these treatments were carried out. She mentioned that there was no difference between trees that suffered herbivory and those that didn’t. There was also a small difference in those that received fertilizer compared to those that did not. Veronica then presented the final biomass for the third study which shown a reduction of leaves on plants that were receiving herbivory treatment and overall can reduce the amount of Chinese tallow. Veronica showed images comparing the different treatments and how the trees were affected. The implications of the study were listed and described by Veronica. The final conclusions were that field sites with tallow infestations were identified in central and south Louisiana and will serve as future release sites, the leaf miner is the main herbivore invading tallow plants in Baton Rouge, LA, and the exclusion studies determined that damage by local herbivores are not enough to slow the growth of a Chinese tallow tree. She also concluded that if permits are obtained, bio-control agents may help manage the tallow plant and multiple herbivory events over several years can reduce tallow growth and reproduction at sites where nutrients are not ideal. She then took questions.

1. **NEW BUSINESS**
	1. No new business.
2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
	1. Jennifer Guidry with CWPPRA announced that in partnership with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, that for the Paddle the Gulf project they’re encouraging people to go out and do a cleanup in honor of the International Coastal Cleanup Day on September 19th, 2020. They also have their 30-year anniversary.
	2. Dr. Gary LaFleur mentioned that the White Boot Gala is cancelled for 2020. BTEF also has a new secretary, Bill Eroche. He also commented that Dr. Steve Mathies has announced that he’s stepping down from BTEF.
	3. Quenton Fontenot announced again that BTNEP is looking for a new director.
3. **ADJOURNED**
	1. Dr. Quenton Fontenot, MC Chairman, asked if there was a motion to adjourn.
	2. A motion was made by Gary LaFleur.
	3. Seconded by Dwayne Bourgeois.
	4. Motion was approved by consensus. The meeting was adjourned.