Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

Management Conference Meeting #93 Roll Call

Virtual Meeting

9:30 a.m. – Thursday, November 5, 2020

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| ***BTNEP Staff*** | | | | | | | | |
| X  X  X  X  X  X | Alma Robichaux  Andrew Barron  Dean Blanchard  Delaina LeBlanc  Matt Benoit  Natalie Waters | X  X  X | Nicole Babin  Seth Moncrief  Siva Nunna | | | X | Steve Mathies, Director Emeritus  Kerry St. Pé, Director Emeritus  Susan Testroet-Bergeron Director Emerita | |
| ***Management Conference Member*** | | | | ***Member*** | | | ***Alternate*** | |
| American Sugarcane League | | | | X | Herman Waguespack | |  | John Constant |
| Atchafalaya National Heritage Area/CRT | | | | X | 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 Reyher  Emily Vuxton | |  | Deb Abibou |
| Coastal Conservation Association of LA | | | |  | John Walther | |  |  |
| Coastal Protection Restoration Authority (CPRA) | | | | X  X | Bren Hasse  Greg Grandy  Brad Miller | | X  X | Darin Lee  Robert Routon  Honora Buras  Michael Ellis |
| Commercial Fisheries | | | |  | John Tesvich | |  | Peter Vujnovicch  Clint Guidry |
| Greater Lafourche Parish Port Commission | | | |  | Chett Chaisson | |  | Davie Breaux |
| Iberville Parish Government | | | |  | John Clark | |  |  |
| Jefferson Parish Government | | | |  | Lauren Averill | |  | Seamus Riley |
| LA Association of Conservation District | | | |  | Ruben Dauzat | |  | Brad Spicer  Jerome Cantrelle |
| LA Association of Levee Boards | | | | X | Dwayne Bourgeois | |  |  |
| LA Department of Agriculture & Forestry | | | | X | Joey Breaux | | X | Faran Dietz  Jeremy Rodriguez |
| LA Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism | | | | X | Debra Credeur  Maida Owens | |  | Karen Leathem  Linda Smith |
| LA Department of Economic Development | | | |  | Paul Sawyer | |  | Anne Perry |
| LA Department of Education | | | | X | Tana Lutcher | |  | Breigh Rhodes |
| LA Department of Environmental Quality | | | | X | Aimee Preau  Crisalda Adams | |  | John Sheehan  Jonathan McFarland  John Jennings |
| LA Department of Health and Hospitals | | | |  | Lauren Comeaux | |  | Chance Wooton |
| LA Department of Natural Resources | | | | X | Charles Reulet | |  | Sara Krupa  Robert Williamson  Mark Hogan |
| LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries | | | | X | Willie Cheramie  Jeff Marx  Gage Lasseigne | |  | Brady Carter  Mark Schexnayder  Chris Schieble |
| LA Forestry Association | | | |  |  | |  |  |
| ***Management Conference Member*** | | | |  | ***Member*** | |  | ***Alternate*** |
| LA Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities | | | |  | Chip Kline | | X | Morgan Crutcher  Charles Suteliff |
| LA Independent Oil & Gas Association | | | |  | Randy Robichaux | |  |  |
| LA Landowners Association | | | | X | Tim Allen | |  | Randy Moertle |
| LA Mid Continent Oil & Gas Association | | | | X | Lori LeBlanc  Tyler Gray | |  | Ed Landgraf  Melissa Cloutet |
| LA Oil Spill Coordinators Office | | | |  | Karolien Debusschere | | X | Jennifer Beall |
| LA Science Teachers’ Association | | | | X | Nicole Cotten | |  | Tera LaPrarie  Nathan Cotten  Jean May-Brett |
| LA Wildlife Federation | | | | X | B.J. Barney Callahan | |  | Rebecca Triche |
| Lafourche Parish Government | | | |  | Archie Chaisson | |  | Amanda Voisin |
| LSU Ag Center & LA Sea Grant | | | |  | Rex Caffey | | X  X | Julie Falgout  Dianne Lindstedt  Thomas Hymel  Nicole Lundberg |
| Lowlander Center | | | |  | Kristina Peterson | | X | Dr. Shirley Laska |
| LUMCON | | | | X | Dr. Craig McClain  John Conover | | X | Heidi Boudreaux  Murt Conover  Amber Bonvillain (IT Dept) |
| US NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) | | | | X | Alexis Rixner  Richard Hartman | | X | Craig Gothreaux  Shannon Martin |
| Nicholls State University | | | | X | Dr. Jay Clune  Monique Crochet  Dr. John Doucet | | X | Chris Bonvillain  Gary LaFleur  Jenny Schexnayder |
| Plaquemines Parish Government | | | |  | Vincent Frelich  Robert Spears | |  | Scott Rousselle  Krista Clark  John Helmers |
| Point Coupee Parish Government | | | |  | J.A. Rummler | |  |  |
| South Central Planning and Development Commission | | | | X | Kevin Belanger  Martha Cazaubon | | X | Pat Gordon  Stephanie Brunning  Lesley Long |
| South Louisiana Economic Council (SLEC) | | | |  | Vic Lafont | |  | Simone Maloz  Victoria Sagrera |
| South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center | | | |  | Jonathan Foret | | X  X | Angelle Percle  Samantha Hicks |
| St. Charles Parish | | | |  | Earl Matherne | |  | Kim Marousek |
| St. John Parish | | | |  | Evelyn Campo | | XX | Ivy Mathieu  Devin Foil |
| Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government | | | | X | Mart Black | |  | Jennifer Gerbasi |
| The Nature Conservancy | | | |  | Jean Landry | |  | Karen Gautreaux |
| U.S. National Park Service | | | | X | Angela Rathle | |  | Allyn Rodriguez  Mark Ford  Julie Whitbeck  Dusty Pate |
| US Coast Guard | | | |  | Capt. Blake Welborn | |  | Brian Black |
| US Army Corps of Engineers | | | | X | Sarah Bradley  Brad Inman | | X | Kaitlyn Carriere  Amy Dixon |
| ***Management Conference Member*** | | | |  | ***Member*** | |  | ***Alternate*** |
| US Environmental Protection Agency | | | | X | Lisa Rickards | | X | Doug Jacobson |
| US Fish & Wildlife Service | | | |  | Ronnie Paille  William Vermillion  Brigette Firmin | |  | John Savell  Jeff Weller  Brad Rieck  Bryan Pember |
| US Department of Agriculture’s – Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS) | | | | X | Quin Kinler  John Boatman  Arnelis Crespo | | X | Alton James  Samuel Terry  Lacy Bellanger  Joshua Anderson |
| US Geological Survey (USGS) | | | | X | Scott Wilson | | X  X  X | Cole Ruckstubl  Kate Spear  Melissa Collin  Phil Turnipseed  Sinead Borchert  Kathy Ladner  Jennifer Guidry  Kacie Wright |
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| ***Guest Organization*** | | | |  | ***Guest*** | |  | ***Guest*** |
| Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation | | | | X | Gary LaFleur  Earl Melancon  Laynie Barrilleaux | | X | Nolan Falgout, III  Matt Sevier |
| Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program | | | | X | Kaitlyn Tabor | |  |  |
| Bayou Country Children’s Museum | | | |  | Christopher Gergeni | |  | Christy Naquin |
| Bayou Grace | | | |  | Mary Gueniot Biegler | |  | Jenny Dupre  Anne 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 | |  |  |
| Coastal and Marine Operators | | | | X | Capt. Jake Stahl | |  |  |
| 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 | | | | X | Adrienne Wheeler | | X | Gerren Sias |
| LSU | | | |  | Dr. Benjamin Springgate  Loren Hull  Nancy Rabalais | | X | Jennifer Sato  R Eugene Turner  Ashley Everette |
| Moffatt & Nichol | | | |  | Jonathan Hird | |  |  |
| Nicholls State University | | | |  | Alex Arceneaux | |  | Allyse Ferrara  Keri Turner |
| Office of Congressman Garret Graves | | | | X | Cong. Garrett Graves  David Cavell | | X | 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 | |  |  |
| Shell Oil Company | | | | X | Joni Tuck | |  | Donnie Garrison |
| Southern University | | | |  | Veronica Manrique | |  |  |
| ***Guest Organization*** | | | |  | ***Guest*** | |  | ***Guest*** |
| Spahr’s Seafood Restaurant | | | |  | Donald Spahr | |  | Brent Roger |
| TLCD | | | |  | Angela Rains | |  | Darin Guidry |
| The Water Institute of the Gulf | | | |  | Scott Hemmerling  Jessi Parfait  Erin White  Huy Ju | |  | Monica Barra  Bruce Yuill  Christine DeMeyers |
| UNO – CHART (Center for Hazards Assessment, Response & Technology) | | | |  | Melanie Sand | |  | Katherine Norwood  Bennett 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 | | X | Emily Knobloch |
| WYES TV | | | |  | Marcia Kavanaugh | |  |  |
|  | | | |  | Vincent Guillory | |  |  |
|  | | | |  | Marty Bourgeois | |  |  |
|  | | | |  | Darryl Hambrinck | |  |  |
| Louisiana Hypoxia Working Group | | | | X | Doug Daigle | |  |  |
|  | | | | X | David Gisclair | |  |  |
| US Fish & Wildlife Service | | | | X | Hannah Sprinkle | |  |  |
|  | | | | X | Alexandria Medine | |  |  |
| US Fish & Wildlife Service | | | | X | Joe Hodges | |  |  |
|  | | | | X | Pat Fitzpatrick | |  |  |
| LA Sea Grant, Speaker | | | | X | Robert Twilley | |  |  |
| LA Department of Wildlife & Fisheries | | | | X | Julia Lightner | |  |  |
| Citizen | | | | X | Martin Bourgeois | |  |  |
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**Final Minutes from Management Conference Meeting #93 Final Minutes – November 5, 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 register and sign in virtually with their name and affiliation.
3. The floor was opened for comments on the reading and approval of the minutes from two previous meeting. Minutes for MC#90 and MC#92.
   1. Quenton Fontenot asked if there was a motion to accept the minutes as written and dispense with the reading of the minutes for MC#90. Gary LaFleur motioned to accept as written and Barney Callahan seconded the motion.
   2. Quenton Fontenot asked if there was a motion to accept the minutes as written and dispense with the reading of the minutes for MC#92 Barney Callahan motioned to accept as written. Kerry St. Pé seconded the motion.
   3. Motion was approved by consensus.
4. **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

Dean Blanchard mentioned that the work plan that was approved last spring has been approved by EPA and the grant was issued October 1st. The grant will need to be used up over a 3-year period. Dean also updated that the construction over the office is done and everything is almost back to normal. Staff members are starting to come into the office more often and are alternating times. All big events are still at a standstill.

Andrew Barron provided updates on the water quality program. Throughout the pandemic, except for March and April, Andrew and Siva were working on their homeowner’s sewage treatment program where they help homeowners by paying part of the expenses to fix their sewage systems. South Central Planning and Development Commission is doing all of the work for this program in the Bayou Folse Watershed. He mentioned that they were finding that they were having low participation from the homeowners. South Central Planning asked that Andrew help change the way they were doing the reimbursements. Several options came up but they chose to have a direct payment option instead of having a straight cost share. Andrew also spoke about an agreement made in August with the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District for the work being done that’s under the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. This project allows Andrew and Siva to do work in the Bayou Folse Watershed doing mostly water quality sampling since 2016. They’ve been working towards this contract and the money will go directly to inspections. He also mentioned a new project for a wetlands area at the Nicholls Farm.

Siva Nunna spoke about the work being done in the Bayou Lafourche Watershed. They’ve been collecting pre-implementation data for about a year. The implementation phase which is paying the homeowners to fix their home sewage systems has been pushed back due to the pandemic and have decided to postpone the pre-implementation phase. Once the contract pays the first homeowner, they’ll start collecting the water quality data. She also mentions and reiterates what Andrew mentioned about the payment methods for the home sewage system program.

Alma Robichaux mentioned that a cooperative agreement was signed with LDWF to do a marine debris removal project on Elmer’s Island. They’ll be going out once a month in the winter months and once a week during the summer and will be recording everything picked up from the island. It’ll be a good opportunity to get good data. She mentioned that they’re going through the BTNEP Foundation and will start December 1st.

Matt Benoit restated what Seth had mentioned about the Queen Bess Island planting. He has been collecting and potting seeds for the Spanish Pass project. He also mentioned that they’ll soon be assembling their propagation tables out at the farm. Due to the multiple incoming storms, Matt was in a haste to collect as many seeds as he could.

Delaina LeBlanc has been working on several projects and has been wrapping up data taken from Piping Plover surveys done that were associated with the Caminada Headlands Restoration Project between 2013 and 2019. She mentioned that she’s also working on getting contracts together to look at a more detailed benthic analysis component that’s related to the project mentioned previously. Delaina will be working with LUMCON and Gulf Benthic Taxonomy Assessment. She also spoke about several projects that have received funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. One is trapping Red Knots on Chandeleur Islands to put satellite tags on the birds. There was a Red Knot census that was supposed to take place but was disrupted by the pandemic and moved to 2021 and will mainly take place in Grand Isle. Also, she mentioned a Red Knot prey study that’s in the making and being prepared for. Most recently she’s been working on getting together volunteers for the Christmas Bird Count in Thibodaux and the dates are still in the process of being confirmed. She then spoke about the Action Team project for the Limpkin census that has been approved and funded.

Seth Moncrief mentioned that there’s not many updates regarding the volunteer program due to Covid-19 except that there will be a volunteer planting event on November 13th on Queen Bess Island. He talked about how he’s almost finished with the 2021 Tidal Graph Calendar and it’ll be sent off to print within the next week. The calendar is going to be about the sport fish in the estuary.

Natalie Waters introduced the new Audubon’s Louisiana publication that’ll be printed within the next month or two. She mentioned that Richard DeMay was also working on this publication and she’s helping to get it all wrapped up and finished. It follows the life of John James Audubon who was an ornithologist, naturalist, and artist. He spent a lot of time in Louisiana and most of his painting were based off of nature found here.

1. **UPCOMING DATES**
   1. BTNEP Management Conference – February 4th, 2021
   2. BTNEP Management Conference – May 6th, 2021
   3. BTNEP Management Conference – August 5, 2021
   4. BTNEP Management Conference – November 4, 2021
2. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
   1. “Louisiana National Estuary Research Reserve: What is the National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) System and What are benefits of a NERR in Louisiana”, Robert Twilley, Louisiana Sea Grant

Robert Twilley with Louisiana Sea Grant introduced himself and thanked Dean for the invitation. Robert started off my stating that he’ll be answering three questions; what is a National Estuary Research Reserve, what are the benefits, and what is the predesignation process and how is it structured. Robert showed a map and mentioned how Louisiana is the only the ocean coastal state without a National Estuary Research Reserve (NERR). A NERR is a system of protected areas represented by various biogeographic regions and is a program run by NOAA. An important component of this program is that the focus is on missions that are vital to the research education and stewardship to promote the management of the nation’s estuaries and coastal habitats. A theme throughout will be how to start the process of finding a site. Robert mentioned that an accommodation of public land connected by state waters to define an estuary that would be a candidate that NOAA would accept as a part of their system within the National Estuary Research Reserve. The benefits are that it is a way to promote efforts at a national level, provides federal and state support, and it’s a good way to enhance education and public outreach. Robert then further explained his details using images. The plan is to use already existing and owned land and that’s how they started drawing boundary lines for the site. He stated that this process takes a long time, specifically about a 4 to 6 year average. One question they have to ask is whether or not the site reaches expectations of a National Estuary Research Reserve. Robert then proceeded to thank CPRA and the Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities for their help in getting a letter from John Bel Edwards to send to NOAA.

Robert stated that they are currently in the second step to creating a NERR which is site selection and nomination. What will be done is, a site will be nominated and sent to NOAA and they will determine whether or not the site reaches all of the expectations. Next, they go through an EIS management plan before a definitive decision is made by NOAA. Robert then showed a slide to visualize how much effort it takes to move forward through this process. First the find 6 potential candidates for a NERR site; these locations are referred to as zones and are in the Calcasieu, Atchafalaya, Terrebonne, Barataria, Ponchartrain, and Mississippi River Estuarine Zones. Each location is matched to the NOAA standards and compared. Robert then showed a few maps explaining these zones. The 3 committees these sites go through are the site designation coordination team, site development committee, and the site evaluation committee in that order. Robert then showed slides with the meeting dates with the site development committee and the LaNERR Executive Committee Members. He also took the management members through the criteria and the 6 zones using map images of each zone. He went on to explain how some of the zones followed the criteria from NOAA. This criterion is environmental representatives, value of the site for research, monitoring, and resource protection, suitability of the site for education and interpretation, and acquisition and management considerations. Robert then took questions.

* 1. “2020 Hurricane Season:  Preliminary Impacts Assessments”, Darin Lee, CPRA

Darin Lee introduced himself and his topic. He mentioned that it would be considered a preliminary assessment since they were still in hurricane season. It has been an extremely active hurricane season with the names going into the Greek alphabet. Darin named the storms that hit Louisiana such as Cristobal, Laura, and Sally. He showed an image of the Grand Isle tide gauge starting in June and going until September and explaining how each storm caused the tide to rise above usual levels. He showed another chart of the water levels from October to November indicating an increased water level from Hurricane Zeta. A couple of things that CPRA does is run ADCIRC models with LSU contracts and provides information to levee districts, the US Army Corps, weather services, and others to evaluate when to shut gates, plan evacuations, etc. Darin revealed that they’ve had to pre-stage pumps, for example, they sent and pre-staged 10 pumps in Plaquemines Parish, 6 to St. Bernard Parish, and 4 to St. Mary parish for Tropical Storm Marco as well as sending sandbags to St. Bernard Parish. They had generators ready and had to keep up with shoreline damage in Grand Isle by adding sand to the shoreline. Images of Delacroix Island after Hurricane Sally was showed and Darin stated the levee district there was flooded. CPRA worked with the community and the parish in order to monitor and provide technical support to Delacroix Island. Grand Isle went through a similar disaster from Hurricane Sally and CPRA had a similar response to that from Delacroix Island.

Darin mentioned that what he was going to focus on was the BTNEP region and how it was affected by Hurricane Zeta, Sally, and Laura. Zeta was shown to have the most impact due to it being the strongest storm to pass. He went on to explain the impacts of these storms on several locations in the BTNEP area such as Chandeleur Islands, North Breton Island, Elmer’s Island, etc. like the levee breach in the North Breton Island. He went into further details of the damages done to the levees as well as the coast from the countless storms that affected South Louisiana. Several projects are being done to strategically pump sediment in certain locations to try to offset the damage done by the storms. Darin then took questions.

1. **NEW BUSINESS** 
   1. No new business.
2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
   1. Jennifer Ritter-Guidry from CWPPRA announced the 30th anniversary of their program. They’ll be celebrating all month with a social media campaign. They’re also releasing videos and launching a K-12 wetlands writing contest.
3. **ADJOURNED**
   1. Dr. Quenton Fontenot, MC Chairman, asked if there was a motion to adjourn.
   2. A motion was made by Gary LaFleur. Seconded by Dean Blanchard.
   3. Motion was approved by consensus. The meeting was adjourned.