

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
Management Conference Meeting #63 Minutes
Century Room
9:30 a.m. – Wednesday, May 8, 2013

BTNEP Staff				
Andrew Barron	Richard DeMay			Alma Robichaux
Matt Benoit	Delaina LeBlanc			Kerry St. Pé
Dean Blanchard	Michael Massimi			Jenny Schexnayder
Joe Dantin	Kristy Monier			
Management Conference Member		Member	Alternate	
American Sugarcane League		Flattery McCollum	X	Herman Waguespack
Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District		Hugh Caffery		Benjamin Malbrough
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana		Steven Peyronnin		
Coastal Conservation Association of LA		John Walther		Jennifer Roberts
Coastal Protection Restoration Authority		Jerome Zeringue		Karim Belhadjali Darin Lee
Commercial Fisheries	X	John Tesvich		Peter Vujnovicch
Greater Lafourche Parish Port Commission		Chett Chaisson		Davie Breaux
Iberville Parish		John Clark		
Jefferson Parish		Marnie Winter	X	Jason Smith Lily Zhou
LA Association of Levee Boards		Dwayne Bourgeois		
LA Department of Ag & Forestry		Joey Breaux		Carrie Castille
La Department of Education	X	Ann Wilson		
LA Department of Environmental Quality		Jan Boydston		Christy Rando
LA Department of Health and Hospitals		Chasity Cheramie		Anthony Roussell
LA Department of Natural Resources	X	Linda Pace		
LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	X	Marty Bourgeois	X	Brady Carter
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism		Debra Credeur		Karen Leathem
LA Dept. of Economic Development	X	Paul Sawyer		Anne Perry
LA Forestry Association		Deleted Buck		
LA Independent Oil & Gas Association		Randy Robichaux		
LA Landowners Association	X	Tim Allen		
LA Mid Continent Oil & Gas Association		Mike Lyons		Ed Landgraf
LA Oil Spill Coordinators Office		Brian Wynne		David Gisclair
LA Science Teachers Association		Shannon Lafont	X	Tera LaPrarie Nathan Cotten
LA Wildlife Federation		B.J. Barney Callahan		Rebecca Triche
Lafourche Parish		Archie Chaisson, III	X	Charlotte Randolph Amanda Penick
Louisiana Association of Conservation District		Brad Spicer		
LSU Ag Center & LA Sea Grant		Rex Caffey	X	Alan Matherne
LUMCON		Nancy Rabalais	X	John Conover Murt Conover
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	X	Rick Hartman		Rachel Sweeney
Nicholls State University	X	Gary LaFleur	X	Quenton Fontenot
Plaquemines Parish		P.J. Hahn		Albertine Kimble

Point Coupee Parish		J.A. Rummler		
Sassafras LA		Alex Naquin		
South Central Planning and Development Commission		Kevin Belanger		Martha Cazaubon
South Louisiana Economic Council		Vic Lafont		Simone Maloz
St. Charles Parish	X	Earl Matherne		Kim Marousek
Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government	X	Al Levron	X	Nic Matherne James Miller
The Nature Conservancy		Jean Landry		
U.S. National Park Service		Angela Rathle		Allyn Rodriguez
US Coast Guard		Mark McManus		Sarah Brennan
US Corps of Engineers	X	Susan Hennington		Cheri Price
US Environmental Protection Agency	X	Doug Jacobson		John Ettinger
US Fish & Wildlife Service		Ronnie Paille		Bill Vermillion
USDA/NRCS		Quin Kinler		Many York Alton James
USGS		Scott Wilson	X	Susan Testroet-Bergeron
Guests				
Bayou Grace Community Services				Diane Huhn Rebecca Templeton
South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center				Jonathan Foret
UNO – CHART (Center for Hazards Assessment, Response & Technology)				Kristina Peterson
Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation				Earl Melancon Michele Beary
CSRS				Taylor Gravois
Spahr's				Brent Rogers

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS DATE MEETING

A motion was made by Nick Matherne and second by Susan Testroet-Bergeron to dispense with the reading of the January 31, 2013 minutes and to accept them as submitted.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Earl Melancon introduced Michele Beary, Office Coordinator for the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation. Helen LaFleur was introduced at the previous meeting but resigned so she could do more with her family.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Kerry welcomed Michele to the program. He noted that she was going to be a great addition as she had already hit the ground running and he looked forward to working with her.

Kerry reviewed the program's activities and the presentations listed on the agenda. There were 15 volunteer events since the last meeting. The volunteer program is very busy and much of it is in partnership with Bayou Grace. They bring people in from all over the country. The partnership is appreciated and we are very proud of our Volunteer Program.

He thanked Susan Testroet-Bergeron for the "I Remember..." art show and commented that she should be very proud of her accomplishment. Susan thanked the BTNEP staff, BTNEP Foundation, and the Park Service for their assistance. The

Lt. Governor came and opened the event with approximately 200 guests. The exhibit was being taken down later in the day and moving to locations around the state. The exhibit will be at South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center October through December but they are still working out those details. She noted locations like Minden, Cameron and Baton Rouge. She is meeting with the US Mint in the French Quarter next week. She will keep everyone posted through the CWPPRA News Flash.

Kerry continued reviewing program activities with media interviews and noted 97 interviews and 40 different media venues since the last meeting. He pointed out that one of the articles mentioned that Ms. Rebecca Templeton received a White House Honor in recognition of her work and Bayou Grace's work to help educate the nation about Louisiana's coastal land loss and restoration work. He congratulated her for her efforts. Rick Hartman asked if it were possible to include the links to the website. Kristy explained how articles are received and that many of the newspapers require online subscriptions.

Kerry pointed out one meeting with Kim Tolson regarding the Feral Hogs Project. Feral hogs are causing plenty of damage as discovered during their nutria fly-overs by LDWF. This is an effort to quantify their damage in Terrebonne Parish only and then use that data from the study to broaden the survey. Continental Land and Fur and Conoco Phillips both contributed to the study. Apache felt that they have a good handle on feral hogs on their property. Tim Allen commended BTNEP on the project and commented that it isn't just the impact on alligator nest but the marsh itself. Michael Massimi explained that they wanted to model the program on the coast wide nutria control program. In order to refine their procedure on how they identify damage along the transect and extrapolate that to the coast then they need to do a lot of ground work in addition to flyovers.

Wes Kungle is transferring to D.C. He has been an in-state worker for the Landrieu team to replace Elizabeth. The program has a good working relationship with him and has always been able to call on him to help out. Mary Landrieu did sign the letter of support for continued funding of the national estuary programs. Kerry wanted to let the Management Conference know of Senator Landrieu's support.

Kerry reminded everyone that the meeting would be followed by a crawfish boil and thanked all for being part of the management conference. Kerry thanked the Foundation for covering the expense of the crawfish boil.

Brent Rogers from Spahr's Seafood was introduced. Spahr's is having its 3rd annual "Gulf" Tournament fund raiser to support BTNEP. The company prides themselves on using fresh local seafood and understands how important our wetlands are because of this. He and his business partner, Donald Spahr, wanted to give something back. They are very proud to be working with BTNEP. This year's event is scheduled for Friday, September 13, 2013 at Sugarland Country Club in Raceland. He encouraged everyone to take part by being a sponsor or by having a team. The people who play get a great deal for their money. There is a kick-off event with good food and music the night before at Spahr's in Houma.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE

Al asked everyone to mark their calendars for August 22, and November 5, 2013.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Bayou Corne Sinkhole – John Boudreaux, Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for Assumption Parish

John informed everyone that they were in the 12th month of the sink hole event. He reviewed the timeline of events beginning with reports of bubbling gas on May 30, 2012. By June 8th, tremors were being reported in the community. On June 18th a state of emergency was declared and by August 3rd the sinkhole had developed and a mandatory evacuation ordered. The area went from a cypress swamp to what looked like a bomb site. Pipeline companies were reporting that

their pipelines had shifted 15 feet down and 16 feet to the east. Those lines were being stressed and were evacuated of fluids. Highway 70 was shut down for three days as those lines were being evacuated. In mid-September, Texas Brine was ordered to drill an observation well into the #3 cavern and did find that it had failed. There were 59 identified bubbling locations throughout the area and those locations are plotted on a map when reported.

Early reports called the occurrence a slurry hole with floating debris completely covering the area. On August 4th, a four pound weight using an offshore rig with a meter was dropped to 385 feet. Crosstex also did one that went down to 422 feet on the same day. John reviewed a chart reflecting the sinkhole depth changes saying that what they were seeing there should be impossible in that the sand layer and gravel layer of the water aquifer should not do that. The sand should fill it in but it is there. This is an unprecedented event. Salt caverns have failed at the roof but never at the side cavern. This is the first of its kind and only time will tell how it will end. On August 3rd he was called to a site with extreme hydrocarbon odors and referenced the smell of a tank battery site. This was reported to be the Oxy 3 cavern that did not store any hydrocarbons. Samples were pulled that were in the diesel range. Diesel is used when companies start mining caverns. The diesel floats to the top and protects the roof of the cavern and prevents a cave in. The original suspect was that the cavern failed and the diesel came to the surface. Texas Brine reported that all diesel had been removed when the cavern had been abandoned. It is now known that it was a disturbed zone on the outside of the dome itself.

Images of the containment boom were shown and explained that a containment berm was also built around it. That berm is set at what is predicted to be worst-case scenario of 1,500 feet in diameter. John showed images of seismic equipment used to measure surface seismic activity and explained how the equipment works. He explained that experts from all over the world are watching these sites noting calls from Australia, Canada, and Idaho.

Four thousand barrels of crude were collected from the site with same being collected from inside the cavern. Vegetative debris has been collected and has consumed 277 roll-off boxes of debris that needed to be disposed of. He explained that the area was being monitored by RAE Systems air monitoring equipment. They currently have 8 in the community and 46 residents with in-home monitors that report to the command post and respond immediately. Doug Jacobson inquired about the distance. The closest resident to the edge of the sink hole is about 2,300 feet and to the command post about 3,400 feet which is little less than one mile. As results come in from various types of monitoring systems, they are layered up on a Virtual Louisiana Program and provided to the communities. Doug Jacobson asked if they were outside the evacuation zone. John explained that these residents are inside the mandatory evacuation zone. He explained the difference between a forced evacuation and mandatory evacuation. A mandatory evacuation says that you are impelled to leave and any decision made not to leave means that you are taking the risk upon yourself.

He showed a map of all Geoprobes installed in the area. A Geoprobe is a shallow well typically 30-40 feet deep. It is a simple three-quarter-inch PVC pipe that has a screen on the bottom and placed in the first sand layer they come to in the clay. There are a total of 24 and they are continuing to install them. Of the 24, there are six with gas at that shallow level. The gas is tested for two types of gasses. One is biogenic gas which is swamp gas and is found at shallower levels and thermo genic which is developed at a deeper level. Most have shown biogenic gas which can be expected. There is one in the middle of the community indicating thermo genic gas. He showed a map image of vent well locations and explained the map.

An arial map showing the Napoleonville salt dome was shown. It is approximately three miles long and one mile wide. He explained salt domes and how some salt domes make it to the surface and some do not. This particular salt dome is 700 ft below the surface. He continued by explaining the mining process and what the product is used for.

Texas Brine did perform a 3D seismic test to check the geology down to 7,000 feet. He showed an image of drill holes. Typical 3D seismics are done 75 feet apart and then collect that data using Geophones. Those in the area were done 37½ feet apart getting tighter as they got closer to the sink hole. They were trying to determine where the gas was coming from and where the hydrocarbon was coming from. They did provide an interpretation but that data has been collected by the state. The state turned it over to CBNI (formerly Shaw) for Dr. Don Marlin to interpret the data as well. His interpretation will not be available until mid-June.

An electromagnetic survey was done by a Canadian company to try to identify the top of the aquifer and the highpoints for putting in vent wells.

He showed a conceptual model that was done early on before the 3D seismic. It is an interpretation of the Oxy 3 cavern that failed. This model showed that there is approximately 105 feet left to fill for 95% of the way. He identified other Oxy caverns to show how it looks from a cross section. You have cap rock, the sand and gravel area which is the Mississippi River alluvial aquifer and then the clay layer on top. The model indicates that there would be a disturbed zone all the way down the side of the cavern where it was breached and then formation crude and gas that butts up against the salt is being produced in the sinkhole through this disturbed rock zone. The 3D seismic did not show this disturbed zone; however the reinterpretation has not been completed. Not shown in this interpretation is one other suspect. The 3D does show an overhang The salt comes out at the top, goes down, and then goes in several hundred feet. They didn't know that this overhang existed and this cavern was mined to the outer wall.

For more information the public can go to the following:

Web Site - www.assumptionla.com

Blog Site - <http://assumptionla.wordpress.com/>

YouTube - <http://www.youtube.com/user/assumptionla>

Flicker - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/assumptionoep/>

All residents have been encouraged to visit the command post.

Rick Hartman asked what percent of the community has been evacuated and was told approximately 40%. He also asked about the possibility of brine rising to the top and killing trees. John responded that a levee system containment was being built and the company should be responsible for the expense.

John explained that they were having difficulty being reimbursed. Payments were being received up until January. The company is not self-insured and does have a true insurance company. Kerry asked if Texas Brine had been cooperating. John said that Texas Brine was very cooperative in the beginning when they did not believe that the incident was related to them. There was a two to three-month time period when consultants were hired and that is when they saw the vent wells. It now seems that the urgency is not there. There is a push by the governor to buy out residents. The parish cannot get involved in that process. There have been promises that it will take 30-45 days to start that process and day 45 is Saturday, May 11th.

Kerry asked what State agencies have been most helpful. DNR is the regulatory agency and they have consulted with CPNI. DEQ has a command post on site. State Police was involved up until December and also Wildlife and Fisheries. On a federal level USGS and Fish & Wildlife Service. They have meetings with all of the agencies and the responsible party twice a week. In addition to those meetings, they have daily meetings at 3:00 p.m. to get updates on activities.

Discussion followed regarding how this may be affecting the cypress trees in the area and regarding subsidence due to the salt mines and industrial water wells. Kerry felt that it would be interesting to get samples around the trees. John confirmed that there were Cypress trees browning up on the south side of the sink hole but they are in 22ft of water. Those on the north and south sides of the sinkhole are not. John informed everyone that there is legislation that has made it through the House. The legislation is starting to develop a distance level of 300 feet from the outer wall and will require that any cavern owner notify any property owner located ½ mile from the well head that they are on a salt dome. Many residents didn't know they were on a salt dome.

Michael Massimi asked John to confirm that cavern 3 was roughly 15 million barrels and that they were not storing anything other than brine. He then questioned caverns 1 and 2. Cavern 1 is 1/3 the size with about 5,000 barrels. Cavern 2 is close to 15 million barrels and is the only one still being mined. Michael asked if there is concern that caverns 1 and 2 could also fail. John explained that before the 3D seismic was completed, a vertical seismic profile was done and explained the process. This determines with some degree of accuracy how far the salt goes out. There is an error factor of about 150 feet when you do a VSP. They were within 150 from the outer wall when they did cavern 1. The 3D seismic

has an accuracy of 75 feet. The 3D seismic showed that it is 150 feet salt to the outer wall but it does have a 75 feet error factor. There is some salt on the outside of Oxy 1.

John discussed Highway 70 and how the area around the highway is being monitored.

Michael questioned if containment dikes were around all three caverns. John confirmed that they were.

Gary Lafleur asked if cavern 3 was stabilized. John replied that there was 105 feet left to be filled and attempts were made to depressurize but the attempts were not successful. There are micro-earthquakes happening and being monitored.

Susan Testroet-Bergeron asked where the seismic data could be found. John replied the USGS site – temporary monitors – Bayou Corne.

Dean thanked John for his time and presentation. John thanked the program for what they do as well.

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/107062585/Bayou%20Corne%20Sinkhole%20%2363%20May%208%2C%202013.ptx>

B. FY2014 Workplan – BTNEP Staff

This year’s FY 2014 Work Plan was done based on a five percent cut from the previous year. The plan is to cut printing if additional cuts are needed. If forced to cut 15%, then cuts will be made to projects. Kerry stressed how hard it is to come up with a work plan when you don’t know what the budget will be.

This draft workplan for fiscal year 2014 (October 1, 2013- September 30, 2014), will be submitted to EPA in June. The workplan describes a budget request to EPA for executing approximately 24 projects/CCMP action plans as listed below with previous year cost.

TOTAL FUNDS	\$567,466.00	
Project Name	Cost	Previous Year Cost
LUMCON Indirect (10%)	\$51,588.00	\$54,303.00
Rental - Building (Operating Services)	\$28,795.00	\$28,795.0
BTNEP Personnel Salary	\$108,000.00	\$88,000.00
BTNEP Personnel Fringe (40%)	\$35,200.00	\$26,400
BTNEP Part Time Worker Funding	\$44,000.00	\$44,000
Distribution of BTNEP Info. Materials (Operating Services)	\$47,199.00	\$100,000
Administrative (Supplies)	\$12,000.00	\$21,335.00
Administrative (Operating Services)	\$37,500.00	\$37,500.00
La Fete	\$38,000.00	\$38,000.00
La Fete Supplies	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Layout and Content of the 2015 Tidal Graph Calendar	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Layout of Saltwater Fisheries ID booklet	\$15,000.00	0.00
Water Quality Citizen Monitoring Program (Supplies)	\$6,000.00	0.00
Seeds and Culture	\$8,184.00	0.00
BTNEP Land Use Map	\$7,500.00	0.00
Statistical analysis and support for several ongoing bird survey projects	\$14,500.00	0.00
Content Development of 2015 Bird Calendar	\$6,000.00	0.00
Bird Monitoring and Education at Woodland Conservancy	\$23,000.00	0.00
Bayou Lafourche Cleanup (supplies)	\$3,000.00	0.00
Break the Plastic Habit (supplies)	\$2,000.00	0.00
Bayou French Tent-Educational Component of NSU’s Louisiana Swamp Stomp	\$2,800.00	\$3,000.00

South Louisiana Discovery Center Wetlands Youth Summit	\$5,500.00	\$6,500.00
2014 From H-2-O: A Water Quality Workshop For Teachers	\$7,700.00	\$7,500.00
Junior Master Naturalists Program	\$2,500.00	0.00
2014 Louisiana Wetland Teacher Workshop (WETSHOP)	\$8,500.00	\$9,000.00
2014 Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve Wetlands Camps	\$5,500.00	\$7,000.00
Eagle Expo Student Educational Program	\$2,500.00	0.00
NSU Jubilee	\$2,000.00	0.00
Apple Snail Project	\$15,000.00	0.00
Preserve Invasive Species Specimens (Supplies)	\$1,000.00	0.00
Paddle Brochure	\$10,000.00	0.00
TOTAL	\$567,466.00	

Herman Waguespack moved to accept the work plan as discussed and Nic Matherne seconded. There were no objections and the work plan was approved.

C. Bayou Lafourche Cleanup

Alma discussed the tally sheets results from the 2013 Bayou Lafourche Cleanup. Approximately 1/3 of the tally sheets distributed were returned. There were 5,656 plastic bottles collected indicating a real need for a “Break the Plastic Habit Campaign.” There were 3,297 aluminum cans collected and it takes approximately 23 cans to make a pound. There were a large number of toy balls collected. Alma reviewed categories of trash collected in comparison to last year. Rick Hartman made suggestions to normalize data. There were fewer volunteers this year; however, there were more volunteers in boats on the water. There were less school age kids and more 30-40 year olds. More larger items were collected this year. Some of the unusual items collected were toilets, jet skis, shopping carts, mattresses and a kitchen sink. Images of the Labadieville, Napoleonville, NSU, Raceland, North Thibodaux, and Valentine sites were shown. At the NSU site, all recyclable items were removed and sorted. Alma talked about difficulties with tire collection and tires being removed for collection sites.

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/107062585/BLCU%202013%20MC%2363%20May%208%2C%202013.pptx>

D. Paddle Bayou Lafourche

Kristy reviewed the 2013 Paddle Bayou Lafourche Event held on April 4-7th from Donaldsonville to Lockport. There were 202 paddlers registered with 186 paddlers on the water. She talked briefly about each day and showed images of paddlers on the water. She noted that on the last day of the trip, a memorial plaque was presented to former mayor Champagne’s family. Kristy shared a few comments about what paddlers had to say about the event. She listed all who helped to make paddle possible including those who provided hospitality, sponsorship, and/or in-kind sponsorship. Some things being considered for next year are an Estuary Trivia night with Host Kerry St. Pé, meeting with food vendors to avoid duplicated food items, and reusable water bottles instead of plastic bottles. The tentative dates for next year’s event are April 24-27, 2014.

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/107062585/2013%20Paddle%20trip%20MC%20%2363%20May%208%2C%202013.pptx>

E. Other

Susan Hennington announced the next CWPPRA Task Force scheduled for June 4, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. in Lafayette for Susan Testroet-Bergeron.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45.

