

**Management Conference
Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program**

***MC Meeting #24
9:30 AM October 22, 2002
Plantation Room
Student Union
Nicholls State University Campus
Thibodaux, LA***

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

Management Conference Members Present were:

Rex Caffey, for Dr. Paul Coriel-LSU Ag Center
Jim Rives-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Archie Chaisson-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District
Jess Curole-Lafourche Parish Coastal Zone Management
Windell Curole-South Lafourche Levee District
Dr. Jessie Kastler-LUMCON
Loulan Pitre-Greater Lafourche Port Commission
Martha Segura, for David Fruge-US Fish & Wildlife Service
Gene Loupe, for Donald Gohmert-NRCS/USDA
David Hughes- LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
Randy Lanctot-LA Wildlife Federation
James Miller, for Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish
Dr. Earl Melancon-Nicholls State University
Anne Perry-LA Dept. of Economic Development
Pam Rousell, for Kevin Belanger-South Central Planning Commission
Rick Hartman-National Marine Fisheries Services
Doug Jacobson- US EPA Region 6
Glenn Thomas, for Vince Guillory-LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Vicki Duffourc, for Marnie Winters- Jefferson Parish
David Muth- National Park Service
Jimmy Johnston, for Dennis Demcheck-USGS

Organizations not represented:

LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals
Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
Louisiana Landowner's Association
Louisiana Independent Oil & Gas Association
Assumption Parish
US Army Corp of Engineers
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
American Sugar Cane League
Plaquemines Parish
Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office
Louisiana Farm Bureau
US Coast Guard

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LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
South Louisiana Economic Council
Commercial Fisheries
LA Dept. of Education
Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association
St. Charles Parish
Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts
LA Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry
Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association
Louisiana Science Teachers Association
Coastal Conservation Association of Louisiana

Guests Present:

Katina Gaudet-The Daily Comet
Guest from Jim Rives
Ed Langraf-Shell Pipeline
Warren King-Shaw Environmental
Wendi French-Wyndston Services
Steve Couvillian
Dean Cooper-Cooper Computer Services
Melanie Boulet-Les Reflections du Bayou/BTE Foundation
Paula Nicholls-LDNR

Staff Members Present:

Kerry St. Pé
Deborah Schultz
Richard DeMay
Dean Blanchard
Leslie McVeigh
Andrew Barron
Windell Lorio

B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the July 31, 2002 meeting

There were no comments or corrections to the July 31st minutes therefore, a motion was made to dispense of the reading of the minutes and accept them as submitted. The motion was seconded, all were in favor, and no opposition. The minutes were accepted.

C. Program Activities (since July 31, 2002)

- ❖ **Personnel-** Wendell Lorio-Invasive Species Program Coordinator; Shannon Callegan-Student Worker
- ❖ **Presentations/Exhibits-**LUMCON Assembly; Environmental Resources for Educators; Terrebonne Parish Teachers at LUMCON; Damon Baldone Fishing Rodeo in Cocodrie; Bird Curriculum Presentation at Tulane; Atchafalaya Day; STEPS Workshop
- ❖ **Media Interviews-KTIB-**Program Update and La Fete d'Ecologie; **KLRZ-**La Fete d'Ecologie

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- ❖ **Meetings-** LA Professional Biologist Conference; Restoration Action Plan Team; When Waters Run Dry Meeting; Des Allemands Elementary School Outdoor Classroom; CWPPRA Outreach Committee; Restore or Retreat Workshop; Non-Indigenous Species Task Force; Frameworks Committee; ANEP/NEP Conference-Marlyand

Kerry informed the MC that BTNEP is requesting additional funding from the state to match the expected \$510,000 match from the federal government. He stated we are currently at \$310,000, so BTNEP is needing \$200,000 to make the match.

Windell informed the MC that the Governor's Advisory Committee on Coastal Restoration and Conservation held its first meeting and he and Loulan Pitre, who are members of the committee, attended that meeting. Windell stated he plans to bring of the MC to the table. He stated that the social issues need to be addressed before the money issues can be resolved.

D. Set Date for 25^h Management Conference Meeting

January 23, 2003 was accepted by the MC for the 25th MC Meeting.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Update on Frameworks Development Committee/Restoration Action Plan Team- Kerry St.Pé

Kerry reminded the MC that at the last meeting this action plan team was formed. Kerry stated that a copy of the minutes from this APT Meeting was included in the MC meeting packet. BTNEP made it known that we expect to have input into the discussions of what is planned for the restoration. Kerry stated that various templates were discussed—a target to shoot for. A lot of tools have been developed that will be necessary to convert the landscape to the template that will eventually be decided upon. The template will be developed following a presentation by Dr. Robert Twilley and his model. Kerry stated that another APT meeting has been held since this one being discussed where policy was discussed.

Rick Hartman stated that, in this follow up meeting, there was much frustration.

Kerry stated that there has been no forward movement, but much turf guarding. He stated there needs to be leadership that will steer the group into reaching consensus. Not someone that is there to promote their own views necessarily but will promote the gathering of consensus and moving forward. He stated that he felt that leadership is lacking. The agencies involved are not accustomed to the consensus process and have a difficult time allowing input. He stated that there is no clear vision of where we are going. There is no defined mechanism for inclusion of the public.

Rick Hartman informed the MC that there will be an outreach coordinator hired soon, but there is a big difference in bringing a plan to the public for approval, and having the public involved in the planning process.

Rex Caffey asked if anyone had seen Mark Davis' outline for the public participation coordinator position. Kerry stated that Scott Wilson circulated it. Rex asked what the status was on that. Kerry stated that at the last meeting comments were requested but he doesn't know what the status is now.

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Kerry then reminded everyone that there were two hurricanes have underscored the urgency for projects. Kerry stated that even if funding was received in 2004, it would be 2 to 3 years (or longer) after that that projects would be engineered and built.

Windell stated that for major changes to take place, it would almost take a major disaster to hit before public will to take action.

Kerry then introduced Shannon Callegan, one of BTNEP's student workers.

B. Update on Elmer's Island Purchase-Randy Lanctot

Randy stated that a field trip to Elmer's Island was conducted since the last MC meeting, which was well attended. He stated that the State of Louisiana has been interested in making this island a state park for some time. There are several agencies interested in purchasing the island. The Division of Administration has put in its capital outlay funds to purchase the land. The governor is interested in refurbishing the landing strip. Randy stated that we should be on the lookout for funding from other sources, mainly because the partnerships would be a good thing for the state. Randy stated also that when the state announces that it will purchase this property, it needs to have some idea of how the use of the beach will be regulated.

David Muth stated that he went down to the island on Columbus Day and noticed that since the fencing off on Caillouett property the dunes have made some recovery. In areas that are still accessible to the public, such as Belle Passe, the dune has been destroyed. The difference is vehicular traffic. David stated that although people have a right to use these areas, the dunes could be protected more if the public was not allowed to drive all over them.

Rex Caffey and colleague have funding from Sea Grant to do an economic study of Elmers Island.

Kerry reminded everyone that at the last meeting the MC passed a resolution that Elmers Island be purchased, but not stipulating any group or source of funding. He stated that there have been several positive responses from area legislators and congress people, as well as comments from the public.

C. Update on La Fete d'Ecologie-Leslie McVeigh

Leslie stated that the festival was postponed due to Hurricane Isidore, which was a very difficult decision to make. Though the day turned out to be a lovely day, the site was still very swampy, making logistics very difficult. The festival has been rescheduled for Sunday, November 10th, and will be incorporated into Thibodeauxville festival. She stated that most of the participants (exhibitors and food vendors) are able to attend on that date. Leslie informed the MC that the Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce would be including advertisement of the festival in the Thibodeauxville publicity, which is great because BTNEP and BTEF had already spent its publicity budget on the September date. Leslie thanked Angela Rathle and the Park Service for the suggestion to consider joining the Thibodeauxville activities.

D. Update on Estuary Live/Paddling Trip

Deborah reminded the MC that Estuary Live was to be a live Internet broadcast from the BTNE. BTNEP was to be one of eight featured estuaries around the country as part of a 2-day estuarine odyssey that was available on www.estuarylive.org She informed the MC that primarily NOAA sponsored this with support from EPA. She stated that the site BTNEP selected

was Elmer's Island. She stated that this was an excellent choice because there is beach, back lagoon, plenty of space to pull a seine net, no mosquitoes, mud flats with lots of birds, ghost crabs, oil rigs off shore...she stated that the Elmer's went out of their way to repair the culvert so that the satellite truck could get on the island. David Muth was to be there to talk about birding; Dr. Melancon and Dr. Lafleur were also to be there to talk about oysters, along with several other speakers.

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Deborah gave a special thanks to Jean Landry, who is a resident of Grand Isle and works for the Nature Conservancy. Jean went out of her way to get Grand Isle children to participate and a shrimper to pass by in his trawler when needed. She also arranged accommodations for the film crew and BTNEP staff at her home and bed & breakfast.

However, Isidore hit the Louisiana coast and washed out the road to Elmer's Island. The Elmer's were not willing to repair the road since there was a huge chance that Hurricane Lili would be hitting in the next week. Deborah stated that there was a back up plan to broadcast from Fourchon Beach. However, Hurricane Lili kept the crew away from Fourchon Beach, so a second back up plan was to broadcast from LUMCON. However, LUMCON was to be evacuated also. A third plan was considered where broadcasting would take place at the Golden Meadow floodgate, where the angle would now be a hurricane story. However, the film crew was not willing to drive the satellite truck from Baton Rouge to Golden Meadow. So, the final decision was to show the video "Vanishing Wetlands, Vanishing Future" and Kerry had called in on his cell phone and was interviewed live.

Deborah stated that the plan is to participate in this event again next year. Kerry acknowledged Deborah's hard work to try and put this event together.

Melanie Boulet gave an update on the paddling trip for 2002. She reminded the MC that the paddling trip will take place November 1st thru 5th. She stated that this years trip will start on a Friday morning so that some school activities can be incorporated. The Donaldsonville High School Band will at the launch site to give the group a big send off. This year there are land events that will consist of a photography workshop at Madewood Plantation by C.C. Lockwood, camping, outdoor Cajun concert, story telling, and Cajun French lessons.

Melanie stated that 3 radio stations have committed to paddle and air while on the trip.

Melanie reminded the MC that this project is part of the Bayou Lafourche Initiative that has supported several efforts along the bayou. One of the goals of this Initiative was to build up the organizational capacity of ecological and cultural non-profits along Bayou Lafourche so that down the road they can work in collaboration to address some of the more serious environmental problems facing the bayou.

One project funded was an event called "Chenier Caminada: Interpreting a Lost Community and a Vanishing Purchase". This event was to place the hurricane of 1893 within the contemporary land loss context and within the context of the Louisiana Purchase. Melanie stated that it was an incredible event that was well attended.

Another project is the a play written and directed by an oil field man, Bobby Gisclair, whose family , including his children, are fluent in Cajun French.

Melanie also stated that Americorps on the Bayou received support thru the Bayou Lafourche Initiative.

Bayou Lafourche Bank Stabilization and Wildlife Enhancement project was something Americorp on the Bayou was deeply involved with. It involved planting over 35,000 marsh

grasses along Bayou Lafourche and along South Lafourche flood levee. It was a partnership with Greater Lafourche Port Commission.

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A very unique cultural coalition was formed along Bayou Lafourche and a project they are working on is a cultural center on the grounds of the Larose regional park. The cultural coalition consists of 12 regional entities who have received support thru the Bayou Lafourche Initiative to come together to form a cultural home with in the BTE.

Melanie commented that as the Bayou Lafourche Initiative comes to an end, so does the BTE Foundation, in a sense, that this is the Foundations biggest projects. She aksed that those MC members that are on the Action Plan Team that established the Foundation, to meet again to get more funding to support the Foundation. She urged the MC to talk to the other non-profits to ask how effect the Bayou Lafourche Initiative has helped their organization.

Earl Melancon praised Melanie for all her hard work for the Foundation. Her presentation is indicative how effective the project has been. He stated to the MC that the Foundation is in existence and will remain in existence. The Foundation is not based on any one person or fixed structure. The Foundation exists to support the concept of a Barataria Terrebonne NEP. He stated that there are some significant discussions that will be taking place over the next few months concerning the Foundation. Not in terms of whether or not it will exist, but HOW it will exist.

Earl informed the MC that there is an Executive Committee Meeting for the Foundation later this week. He stated that some guidelines will be developed to present to the Board who will in turn present them to the MC and program.

Kerry congratulated Melanie for winning a spot on the Lafourche Parish School Board.

E. DNR Scope of Services for Bayou Lafourche Outreach Coordinator-Leslie McVeigh

Leslie reminded the MC that last year EPA increased NEP funding from \$310,000 to \$510,000. BTNEP found out about that increase after BTNEP submitted its FY 2003 Budget Request to the state. BTNEP received these additional funds to meet the match from the Engineering and Design Phase of the Bayou Lafourche Reintroduction Project. These funds will be used for outreach activities for DNR, specifically related to that project. A meeting will meet next week to fine tune the proposal. The Foundation also has funding from EPA to do outreach on the bayou. The Program will work with the Foundation in developing joint projects.

F. Update on BTNEP Website-Richard DeMay and Wendi French

Richard reminded the MC that a scope of services was approved to enter a contract with Wendi and Wyndston Services to refurbish the BTNEP website and to continue the development of the mini webpage concept.

Wendi stated that the first step was to relocate the web and email server to Cooper Computer Services in Baton Rouge. She has developed a new framework which would have quicker and hotter links to the information.

She stated that six modules were developed. They are 1) Program Content- Habitat, Living Resources, Water Quality, Economic Development and Cultural Heritage; 2) Resources Management- this will list educational, technical and geographic materials that are available; 3) Management- this will link to the CCMP, MC members, minutes of the meetings, action plan teams, bulletin board and credits for information and/or pictures donated for program use; 4)

Current Topics-links to issues of the day; 5) Upcoming Events-this will be BTNEP events as well as any other event the MC would like to include; 6) Related Links-links to any contributing agency

Wendi stated that she is taking a two pronged approach to the website. She stated there is now a public site and an editing site whereby staff can edit the content.

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She stated that currently staff members are reviewing the text, content and dollar amounts on the different projects.

Kerry stated that this whole effort is in response to the Management Conferences request to be able to keep up with what the program office is doing.

G. Migratory Bird Celebration Day 2003/BTNEP 2003-2004 Tidal Graph Calendar-Richard DeMay

Richard informed the MC that the Migratory Bird Action Plan Team recently approved a scope of services to contract with the BTE Foundation to help coordinate the Migratory Bird Celebration in April.

Richard then stated that another calendar will be developed in the same manner as the first one. He stated he is looking for people to help develop story lines for the different months of the year. Rex Caffey, and Dr. Gary LaFleur volunteered. Glenn Thomas suggested that Mark Schexnayder be contacted also.

H. Oil Spill Prevention Action Plan Team/ Vallesneria Bed Project/FY 2003 Workplan Update-Dean Blanchard

Dean informed the MC that the Oil Spill Prevention Action Plan Team will be meeting to gather information on the most common causes of oil spills within the BTE, as well as the common sense techniques to prevent them.

Dean stated that the contract for the Vallesneria bed project has been issued, however, the beds died off during the drought two years ago. Therefore, the assessment of their value has not taken place due to this. There is a possibility that will take place in the fall when the beds are in better shape.

Dean also stated that the FY 2003 Workplan that the MC approved at the last meeting was accepted by EPA and went into affect October 1, 2002.

J. Shellfish Challenge Project Update-Andrew Barron

Andrew stated that he has taken over the Shellfish Challenge grant and the projects associated with it; the website, the Clean Marina Guide, and Redirection of Storm water pumps in Point aux Chiens. He stated that the marina guide is almost finished and the website is in progress.

Break

I. Hurricane Lili Coastal Damage Presentations

1. Hurricane Protection-Windell Curole

Windell stated that although hurricanes are hard to predict, Hurricane Lili was predictable. It is difficult to predict both path and intensity. There are four hazards from hurricanes—storm surge, rainfall, tornados, and wind.

Windell stated that Lili went from Category 2 to 3, then 4 and back to 2. Cypremore Point had an unofficial storm surge of 14 feet. In Lafourche and Terrebonne there was 7 feet of storm surge against the levees.

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Years ago the storm surge would have been around 2 feet with this kind of storm. The message is that with the loss of our wetlands, we have a big increase in the threat of flooding. It is obvious that we need not only the levees but we need the wetlands and barrier islands back to protect us. The Gulf is 20 miles closer to us than it was. Although the Lafourche levees are 14 feet high, and although this storm didn't even hit us, and the water came halfway up the levees. If a category 3, 4 or 5 storm, and now even a category 2 storm, hits just right will overtop every levee in Louisiana, including New Orleans.

2. Effects of Hurricane Lili on coastal Louisiana-Shea Penland, UNO

Kerry stated that Shea has a contract to fly both before and after every major hurricane.

Shea stated that each storm he has experienced, since 1979, has had its own personality. In a Category 1 or 2 storm, the trees fold over. When you get into the eastern eyewall of a Category 3 or 4 storm, the trees explode.

Shea then showed data and photographs comparing the effects of Lili with those of other storms such as Georges.

In the Chandelier Islands, the cumulative effect was similar to that of Hurricane Georges.

David Muth asked how much of the barrier islands came back between George and Isidore? Shea stated that they will never get back what was once there because they are remnants from ancient deltas, unlike other parts of the country which have a more stable beach system.

The back barrier marshes are the backbone of the barrier islands, they bind the soils, and hold the islands together. It doesn't matter if you put rocks or sand on the beach; it is still going to erode.

He stated that during Isidore, the Plaquemines shoreline showed a repeated pattern of holes opening up. Grand Terre Island had moderate damage on the gulf shoreline, and the planting projects on the backside were undamaged. The hurricane protection levee at Grand Isle breached. East Timbalier is severely eroded, even with a rock shoreline. Isle Dernieres had 290 feet of beach erosion. Queen Bess Island was undamaged and East Island is severely eroded. On Trinity Island, New Cut, which was opened in 1992, was over washed.

Shea stated that we need to take a closer look at the effectiveness of plantings versus placement of sand and rock. The areas where the plantings are held up much better than the projects where rock and sand were placed.

He stated that rocks do not stop hurricane over wash. Rocks have a place in interior areas, but not on the coast. He feels that we need to build wider marshes, and vegetate them, and let Mother Nature build the dunes.

In summary, Shea stated that in Tropical Storm Isidore, storm surge was greater than in Hurricane Georges, and beach erosion was less in T.S. Isidore than in Hurricane Georges.

Hurricane Lili had a greater shoreline impact than Hurricane Andrew, but less interior marsh damage than hurricane Andrew.

David Muth informed the MC that highest tide reported in Jean Lafitte Park was in 1985 when Juan occurred was 5 feet. These two storms pushed the tide over 4.5 feet. The flotant marsh rose up and dropped back down.

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Shea informed the MC that there is a website <http://www.coastal.uno.edu/> where there are maps of hurricanes for downloading.

3. Impacts on Lower Terrebonne Parish-Jerome Zeringue, South Terrebonne Levee District

Gerome stated that the levee district was the first to have a vehicle on Isle de Jean Charles after the storm. He stated they were walking in 6 inches of mud and muck.

During T.S. Isidore, Terrebonne Parish had most of the rain. There was 14"-16" of rainfall.

The effects were very widespread. Boudreaux Canal And Bayou Terrebonne had 3-foot storm surge. Hurricane Lili was much more compact. Boudreaux Canal Floodgate the storm surge was close to 7 foot on Little Caillou.

He stated that the Bayou Terrebonne Floodgate measured an 8-foot storm surge. The levee goes from 5-7 feet. Two hundred Chauvin residents came on 4 wheelers and saved the levee. The Montegut floodgate measured an 8-foot storm surge. Bayou Terrebonne had the Gulf of Mexico in it, and flooded many camps and homes. The Montegut forced drainage levee was overtopped. Lake Boudreaux overtopped the Ward 7 levee.

4. Impacts on Fisheries-Glenn Thomas, LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries

Glenn stated that we are still having fish kills partially because of perturbation from the storm, but partly because this time of year we have them anyway. Immediately after Lili we started seeing fish kills as far north as Tensas Parish. A lot of lakes reporting fish kills the week after the storms, also reports of fish piping. Often reports of piping fish did not turn out to be actual fish kills, as the hypoxic water moved on and things returned to normal. We are fortunate that the storm moved through quickly, which prevented the kinds of problems we saw during Andrew. It makes a big difference how much things are stirred up. Terrebonne basin—Lake Verrett, Lake Palourde, Bay Natches, down through Belle River had extensive kills, but in almost no situation were they complete kills, but just partial kills as black, oily marsh sediment laden water moved through.

Lake Fausse Pointe had a total kill in that area. It is such a narrow system, that there was no way for fish to move out of the way. Enforcement officials called Glenn to say that people were scooping up gasping fish with nets, and asked whether they should be allowed to do so. Glenn stated that the call was "No" because the fish would recover as the condition was transitory. It turned out to be a good call.

There was only one significant kill in the interior of the basin, unlike Hurricane Andrew when fish kills were widespread. The kill in the western sub basin was a real good sample of

those waters, like a huge rotenone sampling. Those waters were thought to have a huge population of Asian Carp, but there were few found in the study that followed the fish kill.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Beverly Etheridge announced that EPA has signed a contract with CH2M Hill to do a sediment survey of Bayou Lafourche. She stated that sediment sampling will start up in early November. She also stated that EPA is meeting with town officials and sugar mill operators to let them know what is happening. The contract will begin scoping meetings in January or February.

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Windell stated that he has been speaking with Johnny Percle, who is good friends with Dr. John. Dr. John is interested in promoting the need to save LA's wetlands. He stated that there is an effort to have a large "farm aid" type concert to raise awareness of the issue.

Jimmy Johnson mentioned that currently closer to 80% of the state's land loss takes place in Barataria-Terrebonne; Terrebonne is the worst with 47%, and Barataria- 27%.

Kerry said he was frustrated during the last two storms because there was no mention by the media of the loss of wetlands causing the increased size of storm surge.

V. ADJOURN