

**Minutes of the
Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary
Program Management Conference**

***MC Meeting #25
9:30 AM January 23, 2003
Plantation Room
Student Union
Nicholls State University Campus
Thibodaux, LA***

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

Management Conference Members Present:

Ken Hemphill, for Jimmy Antoon-LA Dept. of Health & Hospitals
Tim Allen-Louisiana Landowners Association
Randy Robichaux, for Don Briggs-Louisiana Independent Oil & Gas Association
David Bourgeois, for Dr. Paul Coreil-LSU Ag Center
Jim Rives-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Paul Cancienne-Assumption Parish
Sue Hawes, for Col. Peter Rowan
Archie Chaisson, for Alvin Hebert-Bayou Lafourche Freshwater District
Jess Curole-Lafourche Parish CZM
Windell Curole-Louisiana Assoc. of Levee Boards
John Conover, for Dr. Jessica Kastler-LUMCON
Jimmy Johnston, for Dennis Demcheck-USGS
Herman Waguespack, for Wallace Ellender-American Sugar Cane League
Rep. Loulan Pitre-Greater Lafourche Port Commission
Gerald Bodin, for David Fruge-US Fish & Wildlife Service
Annalise Westfall, for David Hughes-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
Quin Kinler, for Donald Gohmert-USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Roland Guidry-Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
Lori LeBlanc, for Vic Lafont-South Louisiana Economic Council
Randy Lanctot-Louisiana Wildlife Federation
James Miller, for Al Levron-Terrebonne Parish Government
Ann Wilson, for Cecil Picard-LA Dept. of Education
Mike Lyons-Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Assoc.
Dr. Earl Melancon-Nicholls State University
Anne Perry-LA Dept. of Economic Development
Pam Roussell, for Kevin Belanger-South Central Planning & Development Commission
Doug Jacobsen, for Troy Hill-US EPA
John Woodard, for Brad Spicer-LA Assoc. of Conservation Districts
Joey Breaux, for Butch Stegall-LA Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry
Tim Connolly, for Vince Guillory, LA Dept of Wildlife & Fisheries

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Organizations not represented:

Governor's Office of Coastal Activities
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Plaquemines Parish
Louisiana Farm Bureau
US Coast Guard
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Commercial Fisheries
St. Charles Parish
US National Marine Fisheries Service
Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assoc.
Louisiana Science Teachers Assoc.
Jefferson Parish
National Park Service

Guests:

Ray Savoie-Americorps
Katina Gaudet-The Daily Comet
Ed Landgraff-Shell Pipeline
Chuck Villarubia-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Cullen Curole-Barataria Terrebonne Estuary Foundation
Beverly Etheridge-US EPA
Rod Emmer
Jon Porthouse-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Carrie Schmidt de la Fuente-LA Dept. of Natural Resources
Scott Wilson-USGS
Wendi French-Wyndston Services
David Hughes-LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
Doug Daigle-Mississippi River Basin Alliance
Mark Shirley-LSU Ag Center
Daniel Bollock-CK & Assoc.
Chris Chambers-Shaw Group
Mike Buchart-LA Dept. of Ag & Forestry

B. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the October 22, 2002 meeting

Windell asked for a motion to dispense the reading of the minutes from the October 22nd meeting. A motion was made and seconded. There was no objection.

C. Program Activities (since October 22, 2002)

- ❖ **Personnel-** Kerry reminded the MC that at the last meeting he introduced Dr. Wendell Lorio as BTNEP's new Invasive Species Program Coordinator. However, since then, Dr. Lorio, for personal and professional reasons, returned to his previous job at the University of Mississippi.

Kerry then introduced Justin Meunier as the new Invasive Species Coordinator for BTNEP.

- ❖ **Presentations/Exhibits-** Louisiana Science Teacher's Association annual convention;

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UNO (Dr. Shea Penland's students); La Fete d'Ecologie; Storm Drain Marking; Labadieville Middle School; Monroe Schools; Ducks Unlimited Annual Banquet; Planting on Grand Terre; State Department/International Visit

- ❖ **Media Interviews-KLRZ**-La Fete d'Ecologie; **KTIB**-La Fete d'Ecologie; Media Trip to marsh planting at Fourchon
- ❖ **Meetings-** National Park Service (summer camps), Rotary Club, Coastal Concert Planning Committee, Non-Point Source Pollution, LDNR Hurricane Meeting, National Park Service (Birding Workshop), LDNR Ecosystem Restoration Study for Lake Verret, LCA Framework Development Committee; La Fete d'Ecologie Wrap-Up; Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration Day Committee; State Purchasing Training; Americorps Graduation; Invasive Species Task Force; LCA Outreach Meeting; State Wetlands Conservation & Authority; Migratory Bird APT; BTEF Executive Committee; BTNEP/LUMCON Finance; SCIA Coastal Survival Summit; State Wetlands Task Force, LDNR Bayou Lafourche Outreach

D. Set Date for 26^h Management Conference Meeting

The MC decided the next meeting date would be Wednesday, April 16, 2003

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Land Loss Statistics- Jimmy Johnston, U.S. Geological Survey

Jimmy stated that this presentation will summarize where things stand as far as it relates to numbers and national trends that have and will occur in other parts of the United States from 1950 to 2050.

Jimmy gave a quick history of what has been done since the National Wetland Research Center began. He stated that 90-95% of the land loss has taken place in marshes. Numbers were compared using habitat data and aerial photography from US Fish & Wildlife Service.

He stated that for 1956, 1978 and 1990, habitat data was used; between 1990 and 2000, satellite imagery was used.

Jimmy then stated that two accuracy assessments of the data from 1990 to 2000 were performed. This procedure involved a closer examination of what grids were called land and which were called water. The accuracy was found to be 95%-96%.

Between 1990 and 2000, Jimmy stated that the estimated loss is about 24 sq. miles/year. He also stated that 65% of the total loss in that 10-year period occurred in the Barataria/Terrebonne basins and between 1978 and 1990, that number was 55-57%.

He then showed graphics of different areas and their land loss, as well as accretion over the periods 1978, 2000 and 2050.

Kerry asked Jimmy to explain to the MC how the predictions were made.

Jimmy explained that they took the changes that occurred between 1978 and 2000 and created

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polygons based on hydrologic regimes, landscapes, loss patterns to make the predictions for 2050. Areas being managed were excluded. For a 20-year period, the benefits associated with each of the CWPPRA projects were applied. Loss rates were then applied for 30 years.

These rates were based on landsat imagery and spectral reflectance. The predictions show a 30% land loss rate over that time period.

The total loss in this prediction is 788 sq. miles and the total gain is 288, with a net loss of 500 sq. miles.

In summary, Jimmy stated that the average yearly land loss between 1956 and 2000 is 35 sq. miles. If the projected loss over the next 50 years is inserted, the loss rate increases to over 2,000 sq. miles of land loss between a 100-year period. Between 1987 and 1997, the total loss of estuarine emergent wetlands (outside Louisiana) is 12.4 sq. miles, as compared to 23.9 in Louisiana between 1990 and 2000. Making Louisiana's loss 97% of the total loss.

B. LCA Framework Development Committee Update-Jon Porthouse, LA Dept. of Natural
Leslie McVeigh informed the MC that the presentation they are about to see is a trial run that DNR and the Corps would be giving at their first round of public participation hearings on the LCA Study. She stated that the first meeting would be held in Belle Chasse, on Tuesday, Feb. 4th. The second meeting will be held Thursday, Feb. 6th, at the Larose Civic Center. On Monday, Feb. 10th, another will be held in Morgan City. Each meeting will start at 6:30pm.

Jon Porthouse stated that normally at public meetings, the general public is inundated with information that they are seeing for the first time and so they are not given time to study the information in order to formulate the questions they want to ask.

For this round of meetings, the information has been placed on the Internet for the public to study before they attend the hearings. Jon stated that these meetings will be facilitated by a professional facilitator and will be a 3-part meeting. The first part will be on the public participation process; second, an overview of the study, then details on the plans formulation process, with breaks in between for the public to ask questions.

Carrie de la Fuente went over the first part of the presentation that will be used at the public hearings.

Kerry asked what public participation information will be available to the public on the Internet. Jon stated that this section that Carrie just went over would be available along with some brochures and fact sheets.

Jon then went over the general overview part of the presentation, which included information on what is involved in the study.

Jon then stated that this overview of the study would be uploaded on the Internet for the public to view. It will have the slides and the script.

Earl Melancon asked Jon to clarify that this would be on the web. Jon stated that he will email all of this to Scott Wilson this afternoon and he will finalize all of the presentations and upload these to the web. Scott stated that this would probably not happen until the end of next week so he can make sure everything is consistent between the 3 presentations. He also wants to

feedback from the MC.

Sue Hawes gave the last part of the presentation, which included the plan formulation.

Loulan stated that the people are going to want to know what the exact projects are and where they are going to take place. He stated that this presentation does not address that. Jon and Sue stated they are working on that. Windell stated that those sitting in this room are interested in the process but the general public will not be.

Earl asked if the LCA Framework Development Committee meetings were open to the public. Jon stated that they are, but they are not generally advertised. He stated that if anyone has interest in being notified of the meetings, they can be put on the email distribution. Right now there are certain people in this room that are being notified, Kerry, Lori LeBlanc and Mark Davis.

Earl stated that he would like to see some mechanism where the general public who might have a general interest can be put on that email distribution list also. Jon stated that is one thing they need to do as they finalize the public participation plan, but he stated to be honest with the group, up until now, the committee didn't really understand what they were doing and didn't want a lot of people coming in to see the committee confused. Earl stated that he thinks the committee is at a point now that it would be to the committee's benefit to let people know about these meetings.

Kerry stated that once these public meetings begin, a sense of urgency would be present. He stated that the public does not want to hear the word "study".

Lori suggested that the LCA team should say "that this is a report to implement Coast 2050", which she feels has a positive connotation.

Kerry offered his and Leslie's assistance with the public meetings.

Sue offered her thanks for everyone's comments on how to improve the presentation.

C. Cypress Logging in the BTNEP-Mike Buchart, LA Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry

Mike started his presentation by stating that the reason he was giving this presentation is the growing industry of cypress logging. He gave a history of the industry in Louisiana. The industry was very lucrative from the mid 1800's to early 1900. The trees were all timbered out and loggers moved on to other parts of the country.

The market was worldwide as well as national because cypress has the ability to withstand rot.

After WWII, more man-made products were developed to serve the same purposes that cypress did. Therefore the market for cypress lumber fell. There were only a couple of cypress sawmills left in Louisiana.

After cedar bark became less available for mulch, cypress was used. The consumer liked it so much that the market is very strong today. So much so that grinders are now selling the cypress wood, as well as the bark, as mulch.

now. So the consumer is looking beyond Florida to the rest of the country for cypress mulch.

Mike then described the mulching process. He then informed the MC of the mills in Louisiana. In his opinion, Mike does not think the cypress mulch industry will last for very long. He stated that there are other very good mulches available. For example, pine straw mulch can out-do cypress or any other mulch in its performance in a landscape.

He stated that once the consumer realizes that the cypress tree, the state tree, is being ground up and being sold as mulch, they may not want to use it.

Earl Melancon asked if this were going to be an environmental problem, in other words, if the cypress were going to be continually cut down, would it come be under state regulation for management. Mike stated not from LA Dept. of Ag & Forestry.

Quin Kinler informed the MC that the Governor's Office is going to be working on a coastal forestry policy.

Kerry informed the MC that Paul Kemp, with the Governor's Office, is putting together a group of scientists to look at cypress logging and assess what the environmental damage could be from such an operation.

D. Update on Paddling Trip-Deborah Schultz

David Bourgeois introduced Mark Shirley, the aquaculture specialist for LSU Ag in Lafayette, and director for the Marsh Maneuvers program. Mark reminded the MC that every summer LSU AG puts on a 4-week program on Grand Terre for kids from all over the state.

David informed the MC that a comprehensive planning schedule for Coastal Roots has just been completed. He stated 13 schools planted 4,000 wetland plant seedlings in 8 miles of wetland areas. They picked 10 gallons of mangrove seeds during the Christmas holidays. Deborah added that as part of the contract there will be a planting manual and curriculum guide developed for the schools to use. The manual will go on the BTNEP website for other schools to utilize.

Deborah then updated on the MC on the 5-Day Bayou Lafourche Paddling Trip. She stated that This year camping was added at different sites along the trip so that the out of town participants would have an inexpensive place to stay.

Deborah showed various photos from the trip and gave highlights of the event.

She then stated that in 2003 the paddle trip will be 4 days long and will not extend down to Larose. It will be November 7-10, 2003.

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

Leslie reminded the MC that the festival is usually held in conjunction with National Estuaries Day, which was September 28, 2002. Due to T.S. Isidore, the festival had to be postponed to

November 10th.

She informed the MC that this year a poster contest was held and the winner was Shannon Usee'. The theme of the contest was the habits and uses of the blue crab. The posters were sold at the festival.

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IV. NEW BUSINESS

Deborah reminded the MC that the Gulf of Mexico Program's Gulf Guardian Awards are coming up. She asked the MC that if they have someone they would like to nominate, now is the time to submit that nomination.

Windell informed the MC that Mike Tidwell's book, A Bayou Farewell, would be released in March.

Windell also informed the MC that Tab Benoit has his wetlands CD-rom out. Tab is nominated for a Grammy Award for this album. Windell also stated that Tab wants to do a free concert to promote the problems occurring in south Louisiana. Dr. John and Johnny Percle with Nottoway Plantation will also be involved in this effort.

V. ADJOURN