

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION, AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING

June 17, 1991

MINUTES

I. INTRODUCTION

Colonel Richard V. Gorski, representing the Secretary of the Army, convened the second meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force at 10:00 a.m., June 17, 1991, in the District Assembly Room of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Agenda is attached as Enclosure 1. The Task Force was created by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) which was signed into law (PL 101-646, Title III) by President Bush on November 29, 1990.

II. ATTENDEES

The Attendance Records for the Task Force meeting are attached as Enclosure 2. Listed below are the six Task Force members, all of whom were in attendance, with the exception of Mr. Chambers, who was represented by Mr. William Savant.

Colonel Gorski introduced Colonel Michael Diffley who will assume command of the New Orleans District on June 19, 1991. Col. Diffley will assume the chairmanship of the Task Force on the same date and will preside over future Task Force meetings.

Mr. David Chambers, State of Louisiana
Mr. Russell Rhoades, Environmental Protection Agency
Mr. S. Scott Sewell, U.S. Department of the Interior
Mr. Horace Austin, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Dr. Clement Lewsey, U.S. Department of Commerce
Col. Richard Gorski, U.S. Department of the Army, Chairman

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the first Task Force meeting, held on January 11, 1991, were unanimously approved by the Task Force members. [1/260] *

IV. TASK FORCE DECISIONS

The Task Force voted and passed the following motions:

- A. Approve the Technical Committee interim administrative procedures (Enclosure 3). The Technical Committee will operate under these procedures until additional procedures are developed and adopted by the Technical Committee and approved by the Task Force. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [1/410]
- B. Direct the Technical Committee to establish a Planning and Evaluation Work Group which will be staffed by a representative from each Task Force member. The Work Group will develop draft operating procedures for the approval of the Task Force at the next Task Force meeting. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [1/490]
- C. Remand the definition of "Major Federal Action" to the Technical Committee for reconsideration and revision. The Task Force will address this revised definition at the next Task Force meeting. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [1/670]
- D. Approve the lead Task Force member selection criteria listed below. A Task Force member who meets one or more of these criteria would be eligible for selection by the Task Force. The State of Louisiana is not eligible to serve as a lead Task Force member. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [2/80]
 - 1. Task Force member has jurisdiction by Federal law.
 - 2. Task Force member has existing real estate interest in the project lands.
 - 3. Task Force member has previous experience implementing such a project.
 - 4. Task Force member has an interest in and a capability to implement such a project.
- E. Any project whose estimated project cost increases by more than 25 percent will be referred back to the Technical Committee for reassessment of its priority status. The estimated project cost is defined as the cost of the project at the time of submittal of the project to Congress as part of the annual list. The 25 percent limit will not include price-level increases. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [2/250]

- F. Direct the Technical Committee to prepare a draft FY 1992 budget for implementation of Section 303 of the CWPPRA. The draft budget will be presented to the Task Force for approval at its September, 1991 meeting. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [2/385]
- G. The detailed engineering and design of coastal wetlands restoration projects will be completed using construction funds and, therefore, will be subject to non-Federal cost sharing. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [2/530]
- H. The State of Louisiana will be a full voting member of the Task Force except for implementation of Section 303(a)(2), as described in President Bush's November 29, 1990 signing statement (Enclosure 4). The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [2/560]
- I. Approve the establishment of work groups by the Technical Committee, as the Technical Committee deems necessary, to aid in the implementation of Section 303(a) and 303(b). The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [3/30]
- J. Remand to the Technical Committee the task of developing a draft scope of work for a contract to support the development of the Priority Project List (Section 303a) and the Restoration Plan (Section 303b). The Technical Committee should prepare an outline of the Restoration Plan development effort and describe how the contract will be incorporated into that outline. The Technical Committee will identify the existing technical support services contracts that are available to the Task Force members to implement the contract proposed by the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee will present the draft scope of work and outline to the Task Force at the next Task Force meeting. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [3/280]

- K. Defer action on the Technical Committee recommendation for reimbursable funding of the Task Force members until the next Task Force meeting. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. The Task Force emphasized that no unbudgeted expenditures would be reimbursed without Task Force approval, however, a contingencies clause should be included in the budget to provide for small unanticipated expenditures. The Task Force Chairman agreed to provide each Task Force member with the proposed reimbursement procedures and supporting documents (Enclosure 5) in advance of the next Task Force meeting. The State of Louisiana asked that they be informed of any exceptions to the procedures that may apply to them. [3/430]
- L. Approve the use of the "Wetland Value Assessment Methodology" (Enclosure 6) as the primary wetland quality criteria, subject to successful testing and refinement. The Task Force members unanimously approved this motion. [4/110]
- M. Approve the use of the "Priority List Criteria" (Enclosure 7) developed by the Technical Committee. The Task Force members from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of the Army voted in favor of the motion. The Task Force members from the Department of the Interior and the State of Louisiana voted against the motion. The Task Force member from the Department of Agriculture stated that he was "comfortable either way". The additions to page 2 of Enclosure 7, that were approved by the Task Force, are underlined and the deletions are enclosed by parentheses. [4/500]

V. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

The Task Force requested that Mr. Walke, representing Senator Breaux, determine if the November 28, 1991 deadline for submittal of the Priority Project List to Congress is still in effect, given the absence of FY 1991 implementation funds for the CWPPRA [1/430]. Mr. Walke indicated that he would respond to the request. [5/110]

VI. DATE/LOCATION OF THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING

The Technical Committee will schedule the next two Task Force meetings and notify the Task Force members. Several Task Force members expressed a desire to hold future Task Force meetings on Mondays, if possible. The first meeting will be scheduled in early August, 1991 and the second meeting will be scheduled on or about September 23, 1991. Both meetings will be held in the Assembly Room of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. [4/660]

VII. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A letter (Enclosure 8) was submitted to the Task Force by Ms. Lillian J. Bayer, and was answered in full by the Chairman.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Task Force meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

* The Task Force meeting was recorded on audio tape. These bracketed figures represent the Tape#/Counter# for the discussion of this item.