

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

TASK FORCE MEETING

April 14, 1994

MINUTES

I INTRODUCTION

Colonel Kenneth Clow, representing the Secretary of the Army, convened the thirteenth meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force at 9:35 a.m. on April 14, 1994, in the District Assembly Room of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Enclosure 1 is the meeting agenda. 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 George Bush on November 29, 1990.

II ATTENDEES

Enclosure 2 is the Attendance Record for the Task Force meeting. Listed below are the six Task Force members. With the exceptions of Mr. Pulliam and Dr. Fox, who were represented by Mr. David Frugé and Mr. Tim Osborn, respectively, all were in attendance.

Dr. Len Bahr, State of Louisiana
Mr. Russell Rhoades, Environmental Protection Agency
Mr. James Pulliam, U.S. Department of the Interior
Mr. Donald Gohmert, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Dr. William Fox, U.S. Department of Commerce
Colonel Kenneth Clow, U.S. Department of the Army, Chairman

III APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Task Force meeting held on February 4, 1994, were approved unanimously. Mr. Osborn made the motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Gohmert seconded it. [1/139-148]

IV. TASK FORCE DECISIONS

- A. Mr. Tim Axtman, USACE, explained the USACE feasibility study process, including Division and Washington level reviews and submission to the Congress for authorization and funding. Dr. Bahr expressed his concern as to the length of time required by the process. Also, he had reservations about the directions that the USACE was taking on the Task Force approved Barrier Island and Mississippi River studies. The initial plan formulation meetings for the studies did not address the right issues as far as he was concerned. Mr. Dave

Soileau, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), presented to the Task Force a proposal that the State of Louisiana would perform the two studies. He observed that the State had demonstrated the capability to design and construct coastal projects over the past several years and could complete both studies in eighteen months to two years. A general discussion of the matter among the Task Force members and members of the public followed. All agreed that an expedited process should be sought. [2/311end, 3/0-637, 4/1-240]

Motion by Dr. Bahr: That the Technical Committee review the State proposal (Enclosure 3) and other proposals for expediting the two feasibility studies, returning with a recommendation or a range of alternatives, including schedules and budgets, within sixty days.

Second: Mr. Rhoades.

Approved unanimously.

- B. Mr. Quinn Kinler, DNR, asked the Task Force to approve an increase from \$38,000 to \$45,960 in the budget for the WLAE video production.

Motion by Mr. Frugé: That the Task Force agree to increase the budget for the WLAE production to \$45,960.

Second: Col. Clow.

Approved unanimously.

- C. Ms. Beth Cottone, USACE, asked the Task Force to approve the Vermilion River Cutoff Bank Protection project for construction. [2/676-end, 3/0-533]

Motion by Mr. Gohmert: That the Task Force approve the Vermilion River Cutoff Bank Protection project for construction.

Second: Mr. Osborn.

Approved unanimously.

V. INFORMATIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Mr. Jim Addison, USACE-NOD Public Affairs Officer, reported on the status of the CWPPRA public outreach program. He is establishing a newsletter and a speakers bureau. He informed the Task Force of the media coverage and the public ceremony for the LaBranche Wetlands Restoration project. The Task Force was shown a video of local television news coverage of the project. Mr. Rhoades asked about dissemination of information to the local schools. Mr. Addison replied that school boards will be included on the mailing list for the newsletter. Dr. Bahr expressed his concern about getting a sign on the LaBranche site as well as the need to identify future projects with signs. A discussion followed during which a consensus was arrived at urging Dr. Bahr to take the lead in such endeavors. [1/152-498]

- B. Ms. Sue Hawes, USACE, reported on the status of the Citizen Participation Group (CPG) and the Scientific Advisors Group. The candidate projects for the 4th priority list were presented to the CPG at their last meeting. A plan of work has been agreed to by the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON). Scientific advisors will be available for the 4th Priority List candidate project field trip of April 19-20, 1994. Dr. Woody Gagliano, a private coastal engineering consultant, expressed his concern that the private sector was being left out of the CWPPRA process. Mr. Frugé pointed out that the LUMCON agreement strictly addressed the Task Force's intention of bringing the academic community into the process. Dr. Bahr and Mr. Norm Thomas, EPA, both reiterated the need to bring the private sector on board where advantageous. Col. Clow agreed. [1/499-649, 2/1-27]
- C. Mr. Stan Green, Chairman of the Planning and Evaluation Subcommittee, presented a draft standard operating procedure for engineering and design of priority list projects, which had been developed by Mr. Dom Elguezabal, USACE Project Manager. Mr. Osborn questioned the need for the USACE to approve the real estate agreements on every project. Mr. Bob Schroeder, Chairman of the Technical Committee, explained that the CWPPRA made the Secretary of the Army responsible for the long-term conservation of the projects. Consequently the USACE must approve the language and extent of easements required by each project. Other Task Force members shared the view that the agencies would be given wide latitude to pursue real estate agreements according to their own methods. Mr. Shroeder assured the Task Force that all of the problems with the real estate portion of the SOP would be resolved by the next Task Force meeting. [2/29-260]
- D. Mr. Green reported on the status of the Record of Decision (ROD) on the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Restoration Plan. The ROD has been forwarded to USACE Headquarters in Washington. Mr. Rhoades asked where the Record of Decision goes in Congress. Mr. Green reported later in the meeting that the Record of Decision goes to the Senate Committee for the Environment and Public Works. [2/261-310]
- E. Mr. Jim St. Germain, USACE, briefed the Task Force on the status of the investigation of Louisiana's barrier islands. USACE coastal engineering experts from the Waterways Experiment Station (WES) and the Coastal Engineering Research Center (CERC) have been consulted to define a scope of work and determine a starting point for the study. Dr. Joe Suhayda, Louisiana State University (LSU), informed the Task Force of the modeling effort that he was undertaking for the Barataria-Terrebonne estuary program. [4/241-298]
- F. Mr. Norm Thomas briefed the Task Force on the status of the State Conservation Plan. Governor Edwards has signed an executive order establishing a State Wetlands Advisory Task Force. A proposal to develop the

plan has not yet been signed by the Secretary of DNR, the state agency designated to develop the plan.

- G. The Task Force members reviewed the status of priority list projects enclosed in their briefing books. Member agencies were asked to comment if desired. Mr. Stan Green reported that the USACE had completed the LaBranche Wetlands Restoration project. Colonel Clow requested that the status of projects be provided to the Task Force prior to future meetings. Allen Ensminger, wetlands consultant, advised the Task Force of problems with real estate easements. Landowners want to be indemnified from lawsuits by users of CWPPRA projects. Colonel Clow repeated his request to be apprised of the status of projects with potential problems highlighted prior to meetings.

VI. TASKS REQUIRING FURTHER ACTION

- A. Mr. Shroeder will investigate and resolve problems related to USACE approval of real estate agreements prior to the next Task Force meeting.
- B. The Technical Committee will review the State proposal to do the Mississippi River and Barrier Island feasibility studies. They will also explore other options of expediting authorization of large-scale projects through existing Federal channels. They will report their findings to the Task Force within sixty days.
- C. The status of priority list projects, including potential problems, will be furnished to the Task Force prior to all subsequent meetings.

VII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Mr. Frugé informed the Task Force that according to Interior Department officials the funding for CWPPRA projects expires in 1997. Mr. Mark Davis, Executive Director of the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, stated that members of Senator John Breaux's staff advised him last year that they understood funding to extend through 1999.
- B. Mr. Green reported the status of the 4th Priority Project List. There are twenty four candidate projects and ten demonstration projects presently under consideration. The Wetland Value Assessment team and the engineering work group will visit each candidate project site. [4/360-381]

VIII. DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING

Colonel Clow recommended the dates of July 6-13, 1994, for consideration for the next Task Force meeting. No one voiced any objections. Task Force members will be contacted to confirm one of those dates.

IX. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No written questions or comments were received from the public.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Bahr moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:55 p.m. Mr. Rhoades seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING
April 14, 1994

ENCLOSURE 1

AGENDA

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING

14 April 1994

9:30 a.m.

AGENDA

Tab

- I. **Introductions**
 - A. Task Force members or alternates
 - B. Opening remarks by Task Force members
- II. **Adoption of Minutes from the 4 February 1994 Meeting.....D**
- III. **Status of Tasks from the February 1994 Meeting Requiring Further Action**
 - A. Public outreach program--Mr. Addison.....E
 - B. Scientific advisors program and Citizen Participation Group--Ms. HawesF
 - C. Development of a standard operating procedure for evaluating projects at various stages during the engineering and design phase--Mr. Green.....G
 - D. Status of the Record of Decision for the Restoration Plan EIS--Mr. Green.....H
 - E. Mississippi River Diversion study--Mr. Axtman.....I
 - F. Barrier Island study--Mr. St. Germain.....J
- IV. **FY 94 Budget Amendment**
 - DNR Contract for Preparation of CWPPRA Video--Dr. Good.....K
- V. **Status of Development of the State Conservation Plan--Mr. Thomas.....L**
- VI. **Status of Priority List Projects--Lead Agencies.....M**
- VII. **Request for Approval of the Vermilion River Cutoff Project--Ms. Cottone.....N**
- VIII. **Additional Agenda Items.....O**
- IX. **Date and Location of the Next Task Force Meeting.....P**
- X. **Request for Written Questions from the Public.....Q**

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING
April 14, 1994

ENCLOSURE 2
ATTENDANCE RECORDS



ATTENDANCE RECORD



DATE(S) 14 April 1994	SPONSORING ORGANIZATION Planning Division	LOCATION District Assembly Room
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PURPOSE Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force Meeting

PARTICIPANT REGISTER *

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Don Johnson	USDA-SCS	318-473-7751
Jenny Landrean	USDA-SCS	318-473-7768
David Muzé	USDI-FWS	318/262-6630
Michael J. Johnson	U.S. Senator John Breaux	504/382-2050
Bill Berry	LDE	504-526-6415
Denise Reed	LUMCON	504 851 2800
John Woodward	FINA LATERAL	504-879-3528
Ronny Paille	USFWS	318-262-6630
Tim Osborn	NMFS	301-713-0174
Ric Ruebsamen	DOC/NMFS	504-389-0508
P Jones	"	"
BARRY KOHL	LA. AUDUBON COUNCIL	(504) 861-8465
Will Hayes	DNR/CRD	504-342-7363
Stephenc. Smith	Bar/Terr. Natl Estuary Prog.	800-254-0869
Stan Green	USACE, Miss Div	(504) 862-1486
Roy Francis	Louisiana State CEM	(504) 632-4666
BARBARA COARK	L DNR - CAD	504 342 9418
DENISE ARCEMENT	PLAQ. PARISH GOVT.	(504) 682-0081
Dr. Barry L Clark	La. Dept. of Nat. Resources - CAD	504-342-6690
Norm Thomas	US EPA	214 655 2260
Russell Rhoades	US EPA	214 655 2210
CARL B. HAKENTOS	GULF INTRACOASTAL CANAL ASSOC.	504-523-5281
Tereso Metigue	NMFS Lafayette Office	318-231-5915

* If you wish to be furnished a copy of the attendance record, please indicate so next to your name.

PARTICIPANT REGISTER (CONTINUED)

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Jim St. Jean	USACE	504 862-2499
S.M. Gagliano	CEI	504 383-7455
Tim Axman	USACE	504 862-1921
Gary Rauber	USACE	504 862-2543
Janice Puckham	EPA	214-655-8330
Pete Jones	Plaquemine Parish	682-0081
WALLY BURAS	" "	392-6690
Jim Stone	Govt Office	922-3244 (504)
Paul Bahr	" "	" "
Jim Wilson	ACOE	862-2201
Mike Holland	CELMN-PD-EW	862-2517
Bill Gourd	DNR	342-7308
Quin Kinko	DNR	342-7548
Sue Hawes	COE	862-2518
LTC GREG KUIHA	COE	862-2204
R.W. Schroeder	COE	862-2482
P. Kemp	Coalition	766-0195
Paul W. Huggins	USFWS - Refugees	318-598-2216
Joseph N. Sullivan	LSU	504-388-8620
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Chris Andry	St. Bernard Parish C2M	(504) 278-4303
Lois Schoonen	T. BAKER STATION & S.W. 1st	(504) 868-1050
Burton Kemp	KATP	(601) 467-9891
MARK DAVIS	CRCL	504 766 0195
Castly Signac	LSU	(504) 388-6505
Allan Eusinger	La Assoc. Cons Dist.	318 462-0762
Nick Constant	COE - PD-E	504 862-1906
Deann Roove	DNR	504 342 9492
Jim Emy	S. Terrebonne T. District	504-504-4104

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING
April 14, 1994

ENCLOSURE 3

STATE PROPOSAL FOR FEASIBILITY STUDIES/EIS'S

STATE PROPOSAL FOR FEASIBILITY STUDIES/EIS'S

4/13/94

INTRODUCTION

The State of Louisiana hereby requests that the Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Restoration Division, conduct the following feasibility studies referred to in Governor Edward's letter of December 2, 1993:

1) "A Mississippi River diversion plan including : upper basin diversions, Bayou LaFourche corridor diversion, lower Mississippi diversions below New Orleans, and lower Atchafalaya diversion; in order to maximize the wetland and conservation potential of the water and sediment resources of the lower Mississippi River system."

and,

2) "The re-establishment of the barrier island systems in the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins, to an extent sufficient to ameliorate the trend of increasing tidal amplitudes."

The DNR is in an advantageous position to provide these services due to available staff dedicated exclusively to coastal restoration; its ability to interact well with the concerned federal agencies through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) process; its interaction with concerned state agencies through the state's Wetlands Authority; and its close ties to parish and local governments, and the public.

These abilities and resources will provide final feasibility recommendations to Congress that have built-in acceptance at the state and local levels. In an arena as complex as large-scale coastal restoration, and one with such profound socio-economic consequences, grass-roots support is essential to success.

PROPOSAL

The state proposes that the CWPPRA Technical Committee act as the official steering committee, with LUMCON's Scientific Advisory Group and the Citizen's Participation Group serving as ex officio members. The state then, acting under the CWPPRA leadership, would serve as a liaison to state and local interests (see attached organizational chart). Poised in this pivotal role, the state would be able to rapidly assimilate the information and concerns

from the aforementioned groups, and focus the feasibility studies into areas where practicality, from a technical point of view, and consensus regarding acceptable socio-economic impacts, overlap.

Attached are straw-man proposals which are presented to stimulate discussion and creative thinking that will chart an optimal course towards the desired feasibility reports and environmental impact statements (EIS's). The overall time-frame for each study is 24 months (see attached study matrix).

Barrier Island "Straw-man" Proposal

- I. **General Objectives**
 - A) Prefeasibility Report (year one)
 - B) Feasibility Report and EIS (year two)
 - C) Provide a draft local cooperation agreement
- II. **Prefeasibility Report**
 - A) Identification of problems associated with Barataria and Terrebonne barrier island loss. This would include: direct effects on habitat availability, tidal prism amplification, increased salt-water intrusion, increased interior wetland erosion, increased exposure of industrial and mineral development infrastructure, increased exposure of transportation infrastructure, and reduced protection from hurricane surges. Note: headlands such as the Cheniere Coastline and Caminada-Moreau Headland could be included in this study provided that the Technical Committee approves, and sufficient additional funds are made available.
 - B) Determination of the extent to which barrier islands must be restored to benefit interior wetlands. This could be based on:
 - a) correlations of historical size of barrier island systems versus bayside edge-erosion rates and tidal amplitudes; correlations of the size of extant barrier island systems versus bayside edge-erosion rates and tidal amplitudes;
 - b) computer simulation modeling; and
 - c) review of scientific literature, agency documents, and Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program findings.
 - C) Analyze benefits associated with barrier island restoration. This would include: conservation of barrier island and bay habitat, reduced tidal prism, reduced salt-water intrusion, reduced interior wetland erosion, protection of industrial and mineral development infrastructure, protection of transportation infrastructure, and increased hurricane and flood protection.
 - D) Preparation of Pre-feasibility Report.

III. Feasibility Report and EIS (year two)

- A) Review of scientific literature, agency documents, and Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program findings.
- B) Identify significant resources, review predictions of topographic loss, identify adverse environmental impacts that barrier island restoration may have, review existing and future "without" conditions.
- C) Development of solutions: evaluation of alternative solutions, including costs and benefits, and projected implementation schedule.
- D) Develop a project that best addresses identified needs-- environmental and socio-economic. This could consist of a number of site-specific components at historic barrier island locations and/or alternative locations.
- E) Complete EIS and feasibility report.

IV. Provide a draft local cooperation agreement to establish state/federal co-participation in recommended project implementation. This would identify federal and state sponsoring agencies, agency roles, project purpose, project location, and expected costs.

Mississippi River Diversion "Straw-man" Proposal

I. General Objectives

- A) Prefeasibility Report (year one)
- B) Feasibility Report and EIS (year two)
- C) Provide a draft local cooperation agreement

II. Prefeasibility Report

- A) Quantification of freshwater and sediments available in the lower Mississippi River for wetlands enhancement, maintenance, and creation. This would involve the determination of the seasonal demands for river water for navigation; industrial and municipal water requirements; and existing diversions. Determination of seasonal sediment concentrations would also be necessary. Seasonal water and sediment budgets would be needed for the following river reaches: Old River-Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge-New Orleans, and New Orleans-Head of Passes. Note: a lower Atchafalaya diversion could be included in this study provided that the Technical Committee approved, and sufficient additional funds were made available.
- B) Determination of sub-basin needs of freshwater and sediment to provide for maintenance of existing wetlands and (where applicable) creation of new wetlands. This would be based on subsidence, water depths (in the case of wetland creation), annual sediment requirements, projected wetland loss and future geography. Potential locations, diversion type, and seasonal discharge rates would be developed.
- C) Analyze benefits associated with diversions of freshwater and sediments, including habitat creation and enhancement, increases to fisheries and wildlife productivity, increased recreational opportunities, and infrastructure protection.
- D) Preparation of Pre-feasibility Report. Establish a realistic goal for the Mississippi River Deltaic Plain based on projected future topography, sub-basin level physical processes, total water/sediment availability, the relationship of wetlands to developed areas, and proposed estuarine functions. Provide matrix of diversion opportunities with a comparative overview of relative merits of each in light of proposed project goals. Identify diversion alternatives for detailed feasibility analysis. Formulate institutional approach for dealing with key issues. Identify critical information needs.

III. Feasibility Report and EIS (year two)

- A) Review of scientific literature and agency documents.
- B) Identify significant resources, project topographic loss, identify significant resources, identify adverse environmental impacts that Mississippi River diversions may have, review existing and future "without" conditions. In particular, social, economic, navigational, and infra-structure impacts would be identified and evaluated; proposed solutions and their implementation costs would also be defined.
- C) Development and optimization of "final" proposed project that best addresses identified environmental and socio-economic needs. This may consist of a number of diversions of various types, operated under different management strategies. This would include evaluation of alternative solutions, including costs and benefits, and projected implementation schedules.
- D) Complete EIS and feasibility report.

IV. Provide a draft local cooperation agreement to establish state/federal co-participation in recommended project implementation. This would identify federal and state sponsoring agencies, agency roles, project purpose, project location, and expected costs.

STATE PROPOSAL FOR FEASIBILITY STUDIES/EIS'S

4/13/94

	Barrier Island Restoration	Mississippi River Diversions
year one	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Problem identification 2) Determination of extent of barrier island system sufficient to benefit interior wetlands 3) Benefit analysis 4) Prepare prefeasibility report 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Determine freshwater and sediment availability for wetlands 2) Determine sub-basin freshwater and sediment needs 3) Identify major social, economic, navigation and infra-structure constraints and opportunities 4) Prepare prefeasibility report
year two	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Evaluation of alternative solutions 2) Complete EIS 3) Prepare feasibility report 4) Provide draft LCA 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Evaluation of alternative solutions 2) Complete EIS 3) Prepare feasibility report 4) Provide draft LCA