

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

TASK FORCE MEETING

April 18, 1996

MINUTES

I INTRODUCTION

Colonel Kenneth Clow, representing the Secretary of the Army, convened the twenty second meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force at 9:30 a.m. on April 18, 1996, in the conference room of the Southern Science Center of the National Biological Service in Lafayette. 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 Record for the Task Force meeting is attached as enclosure 2. Listed below are the six Task Force members. All members were in attendance, with the exception of Mr. Bigford, who was represented by Mr. Tim Osborn.

Dr. Len Bahr, State of Louisiana
Mr. William Hathaway, Environmental Protection Agency
Mr. David Frugé, U.S. Department of the Interior
Mr. Donald Gohmert, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mr. Thomas Bigford, 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 28, 1996 (enclosure 3), were approved unanimously with no discussion. Dr. Bahr made the motion to approve the minutes, and Mr. Hathaway seconded it.¹

IV. TASK FORCE DECISIONS

Approval of Houma Navigation Canal Lock Resolution.

Dr. Bahr presented a draft resolution supporting construction of a lock on the Houma Navigation Canal. He noted that such a lock had been included in the

¹ The Task Force meeting was recorded on audio tape. The bracketed figures represent the tape no./counter no. for the discussion of this item. Multiple tape/counter numbers are used when an item is discussed more than once during the meeting.

Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Restoration Plan. After some discussion, the draft resolution was modified; enclosure 4 is the modified version as considered by the Task Force. [6/396-450]

Motion by Dr. Bahr: That the Task Force approve the revised resolution supporting construction of a lock in the Houma Navigation Canal.
Second: Mr. Gohmert.
Passed unanimously. [6/514]

V. INFORMATIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

A. Scope of Study for Determining Study Needs in the Chenier Plain.

Mr. Tom Podany, chairman of the Feasibility Study Steering Committee, reported on options for investigating data gaps in the Chenier Plain in light of completed and ongoing studies (by various agencies) in that area. The report was provided for the Task Force's information and is to be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting. Mr. Frugé suggested that the Steering Committee consider Chenier Plain study needs in the context of available CWPPRA planning funds and in relation to discussions of the scope of work for phase II of the Louisiana Barrier Shoreline study.

B. Budget for the Planning Program

Mr. Schroeder presented a preliminary budget for fiscal years 1997 and 1998. He noted that providing completion funds for the two ongoing feasibility studies will require a significant cutback in funding of priority project list planning activities. Mr. Frugé suggested that the agencies' planning budgets should be capped at \$350,000, with a 50 percent increase for the Corps of Engineers (for program administration costs) and an additional \$100,000 for the State of Louisiana (for monitoring plan development costs). He further recommended that the second and third phases of the Louisiana Barrier Shoreline study (which would address shorelines in the Chenier Plain and the Chandeleur Islands) should be scaled down or eliminated.

C. Cost Sharing Under the Conservation Plan

Ms. Beth Cottone, project manager with the Corps of Engineers, briefed the Task Force on the legal opinions obtained thus far from the Task Force agencies concerning implementation of the cost-sharing reduction provided for by section 303(f)(2) of the CWPPRA. The three Federal agencies which had provided opinions (the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Department of the Interior, and the New Orleans District of the Corps) were in close agreement that the reduction should apply to all funds expended following approval of the Conservation Plan. The Task Force members representing the EPA and the Department of Agriculture reported that their agencies had not yet finalized their opinions, but that they would probably be closely aligned with those expressed thus far. Mr. Jack Caldwell,

Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, advised the Task Force that the State was preparing a revised opinion which he anticipated would be similar to those of the Federal agencies.

D. Status of Development of the State Conservation Plan.

Ms. Beverly Ethridge of the EPA briefed the Task Force on the status of the Conservation Plan's development. She pointed out that a major issue has been the discrepancy between the State's coastal zone management (CZM) boundary and the boundary as defined by the Task Force, which includes all of those parishes containing coastal wetlands. She said the agencies have agreed to use the CZM boundary but to identify coastal wetlands falling outside that area. She noted that the plan is scheduled to be presented to the approving agencies in January 1997. Col. Clow suggested that the agencies should be reviewing the plan during the development process, rather than at its conclusion. [2/88-260]

E. Feasibility Study Steering Committee Overview.

Mr. Podany gave a brief overview of the activities of the Feasibility Study Steering Committee concerning the coordination between the two CWPPRA studies and the mechanisms adopted to ensure that agency comments are considered. [2/263-285]

F. Louisiana Barrier Shoreline Study

Dr. Karl DeRouen of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, study manager for the Barrier Shoreline study, gave a short status report, noting that the study is on schedule. [2/286-380] Mr. Steve Gilbreath of T. Baker Smith provided details on which work items had been accomplished and announced an upcoming meeting for development of alternatives. Ms. Hawes suggested that agency representatives should be at the meeting; Col. Clow directed that the agencies be invited. [2/381-439]

G. Mississippi River Sediment, Nutrient, and Freshwater Redistribution Study.

Mr. Tim Axtman of the Corps of Engineers, study manager for the Mississippi River diversion study, gave a detailed presentation on the study's objectives and status. [2/440-end]

H. Status of Approved Priority List Projects

Ms. Cottone provided an update on the status of approved priority list projects. She noted that 7 projects have been completed, while 12 are presently under construction. As many as 20 projects are scheduled for construction during 1996. Mr. Frugé gave details on a number of CWPPRA projects for which the Department of the Interior is the lead agency, and Mr. Gohmert reported on Department of Agriculture projects. Mr. Norm Thomas (EPA) briefed the Task Force on the engineering and design effort for the Bayou Lafourche Siphons project, and Mr. Tim Osborn (NMFS) reported on discussions being conducted with a view toward acquiring a portion of the Oak Harbor East tract for a wetlands restoration project.

I. Report on the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Project.

Col. Terrence "Rock" Salt, executive director of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration project, briefed the Task Force on activities associated with that project. He noted that there are great similarities between his program and the CWPPRA. Col. Salt noted that the primary water resources problem in south Florida is actually a land use issue. To address this issue, the State appropriates \$30 million annually, which is bonded to \$300 million, most of which is for land acquisition. He referred to the State funding as the engine which drives the program.

Col. Salt told the Task Force that his program emphasizes physical science rather than biological science, with the assumption that improving hydrologic conditions will improve the habitat and benefit fish and wildlife. He noted that his group is continuing the effort to determine an appropriate measure of the program's success.

Col. Salt suggested that a presentation to his task force on the CWPPRA program would be useful. [4/200-end]

J. Report on the Monitoring Program.

Mr. Greg Steyer of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, cochairman of the Monitoring Work Group, gave a presentation on the CWPPRA monitoring program. Citing the recently completed Boston Canal project as an example, he demonstrated the geographic information system being used in a joint effort by LDNR and the National Biological Service to assemble and make available monitoring data on CWPPRA projects. [6/0-299]

K. Report on Agency Feasibility Studies.

Mr. Podany briefed the Task Force on the feasibility studies being conducted in the coastal zone by the various Task Force agencies. EPA, NRCS, and the Corps have ongoing studies in the area.

VI. TASKS REQUIRING FURTHER ACTION

A. Revision of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Restoration Plan.

Mr. Schroeder reported on the Technical Committee's investigation of a proposal to revise the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Restoration Plan (produced in November 1993). He suggested that the timing is probably not appropriate for revision of the plan, and he proposed that the Task Force prepare instead a report presenting what has been accomplished under the CWPPRA, what is going on now, and what the Task Force plans to do in the future. The Task Force directed the Technical Committee to proceed along those lines.

VII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

Briefing Concerning Public Outreach.

Secretary Caldwell pointed out that coastal Louisiana's problems lack the national level of public awareness seen with the Everglades. He told the Task Force that the State has retained a consultant to develop a national outreach program. A preliminary proposal will be ready for Task Force consideration in 30 days. [6/312-299]

VIII. DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING

The next Task Force meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 26, 1996, at the Corps headquarters building in New Orleans. Task Force members will be contacted to confirm the date.

IX. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Kirk Cheramie of the Bayou Lafourche Fresh Water District requested a copy of the minutes and audio tapes of the February 28, 1996, Task Force meeting. Mr. Podany agreed to provide these items.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Bahr moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Hathaway seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING

April 18, 1996

Enclosure 1

Agenda

Enclosure 1

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING
National Biological Service
Southern Science Center
Lafayette
18 April 1996
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 28 February 1996 Meeting**.....D
- III. **Status of Tasks from the February 1996 Meeting Requiring Further Action [30 min]**
 - A. Scope of Study for Determining Study Needs in the Chenier Plain--Mr. Podany.....E
 - B. Budget for the Planning Program--Mr. Schroeder.....F
 - C. Scope of Study for Revision of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Restoration Plan--Mr. Schroeder.....G
 - D. Cost Sharing under the Conservation Plan--Ms. Cottone.....H
- IV. **Status of Development of the State Conservation Plan [5 min]--Ms. Ethridge**.....I
- V. **Status of Feasibility Studies**
 - A. Steering Committee Overview [5 min]--Mr. Podany.....J
 - B. Louisiana Barrier Shoreline Study [5 min]--Dr. DeRouen.....K
 - C. Mississippi River Sediment, Nutrient, and Freshwater Redistribution Study [30 min]--Mr. Axtman.....L
- VI. **Status of Approved Priority List Projects [5 min]--Ms. Cottone**.....M
- VII. **Report on South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Project [60 min]--Col. Salt**.....N
- VIII. **Report on Agency Feasibility Studies [30 min]--Mr. Podany**.....O
- IX. **Report on the Monitoring Program [20 min]--Mr. Steyer**.....P
- X. **Additional Agenda Items [5 min]**.....Q
- XI. **Request for Public Comments**.....R
- XII. **Date and Location of the Next Task Force Meeting**.....S

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING

April 18, 1996

Enclosure 2

Attendance Record

Enclosure 2



ATTENDANCE RECORD



DATE(S) 18 Apr 96	SPONSORING ORGANIZATION Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force	LOCATION Southern Science Center Lafayette
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PURPOSE Meeting of the Task Force

PARTICIPANT REGISTER *

NAME	JOB TITLE AND ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Star Green	USACE	(504) 862-1486
Dave Hartley	USACE	(504) 862-1990
Yelmar Behrhardt		318/235-6456
Alvin Jones	MMS	(504) 736-1713
Brian Paul	NRCS	318 473 7814
Quin Kinter	NRCS	504-382-2047
James Puckham	EPA	504-389-0736
Barbara Ehrlich	EPA	389-0735
Jim Ellison	DCOE	504 862-2201
Rick Hartman	NMFS	389-0508
Ric Ruchsamen	"	"
Tom Macintosh	NRCS	318 436-1483
ANE LEWIN	USFWS	318/212-6030
Dave Seiler	Coastal Engineering + Env. Concepts	504/868-3434
Greg Steyer	LDNR (CRD)	504-342-9435
Doreen Clark	CRD/DNR	504-342-5159
Philip Bowman	LDWF	504-765-2956
Sud Jones	LDWF	862-2518
Hans Van Buren	CEL	504-383-7455
Karl DeRouen	DNR	504 342-1375
Mike Cherman	BLEWD	504 447-7155
Alan Eslinger	Assoc. Cons. Dist.	318 462-0762
Bill Gores	DNR	504-342-7308

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

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

TASK FORCE MEETING
18 April 1996

**REPORT ON THE BUDGET
FOR THE PLANNING PROGRAM**

For Task Force decision.

At the 28 February 1996 Task Force meeting, the Task Force directed the Technical Committee to prepare an updated planning budget for the years for which funding is anticipated. Mr. Schroeder will present the committee's findings. A preliminary budget is enclosed.

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act Planning Program Budget Summary

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29 Mar 96

	FY96 Amount (\$)	FY97 Amount (\$)	FY98 Amount (\$)
State of Louisiana			
DNR	495,500	495,500	495,500
Gov's Ofc	84,900	84,900	84,900
LDWF	20,000	20,000	20,000
Total State	600,400	600,400	600,400
EPA			
	310,700	310,700	310,700
Dept of the Interior			
USFWS	183,600	183,600	183,600
NBS	67,800	67,800	67,800
NBS Mntng	62,000	62,000	62,000
USGS Reston	8,800	8,800	8,800
USGS Baton Rouge	10,600	10,600	10,600
Total Interior	332,800	332,800	332,800
Dept of Agriculture	595,900	595,900	595,900
Dept of Commerce	304,800	304,800	304,800
Dept of the Army	861,400	861,400	861,400
Agency Total	3,006,000	3,006,000	3,006,000
Feasibility Studies			
Barrier Shoreline Study	704,000	1,314,000	724,000
Miss R Diversion Study	1,056,000	1,901,000	206,000
Total Feasibility Studies	1,760,000	3,215,000	930,000
Projected Budgets			
Academic Advisory Group	75,000	75,000	75,000
Public Outreach	129,000	129,000	129,000
Total Projected	204,000	204,000	204,000
Total Allocated	4,970,000	6,425,000	4,140,000
Unallocated Balance	30,000	-1,425,000	860,000

*Wetlands
Projects*

*Step 6
Jeff Williams
not meeting
26th of April
Agency report*

*Prairie
T. Baker Smith*

*500,000
600,000
\$860,000
\$860,000
\$700,000
\$700,000
2nd of April*

1 amended 28 Feb 96

*1
there for
year*