

Browning, Gay B MVN

From: Miller, Gregory B MVN
Sent: Wednesday, August 21, 2002 3:08 PM
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Cc: Padalewski, Amanda E MVN
Subject: Task Force meeting minutes

Attached are draft minutes from the August 7, 2002, Task Force meeting. Comments, revisions and additions to the minutes will be accepted through the date of the next Task Force meeting.



CWPPRA Task
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CWPPRA Task Force Meeting
August 7, 2002
Minutes

I. INTRODUCTION

Call to order at 9:40 a.m.

Col. Rowan, new Chairman of the Task Force, began his opening remarks with an introduction of himself to the Task Force. Col. Rowan stated the level of interest and involvement the people of Louisiana have in the coastal land loss issue impressed him. Rowan then asked the members of the Task Force to introduce themselves.

Dr. Len Bahr was the first to introduce himself, stating he was from Governor Foster's office. Dr. Bahr also noted the state was very engaged in the CWPPRA process.

Mr. Rollie Schmitt, Director of the Habitat Conservation Center at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), welcomed the new Colonel and also Mr. Miguel Flores, the new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Division Director, to the Task Force.

Mr. Dave Fruge, Field Office Supervisor for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), welcomed Col. Rowan and Mr. Flores.

Mr. Miguel Flores, new Division Director of EPA, introduced himself stating this was his first Task Force meeting. Mr. Flores also noted that he looks forward to working with the Task Force.

Mr. Bruce Lehto, Assistant State Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), stated he would act as the representative for Task Force member Mr. Donald Gohmert.

Col. Rowan then asked that the Task Force move forward with the agenda. He noted that after item three on the agenda was complete, they would move forward to item 12 because of flight arrangements that had been made. After item 12, the meeting would resume to the original agenda item sequence.

II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 2002 MEETING

Col. Rowan brought to the attention of the Task Force the adoption of the minutes from the last Task Force meeting.

Dr. Bahr motioned to adopt the minutes and Mr. Schmitt seconded that motion.

The motion was passed.

III. REPORT STATUS OF BREAUX ACT PROGRAM FUNDS

Col. Rowan asked Mr. Tom Podany to report on the status of planning and construction funds. Mr. Podany stated they're currently in the process of working on the FY03 planning budget for the October Task Force meeting. He also noted \$940,000 was available in uncommitted funds. There was a total of \$503 million in funds, \$246 million being Federal funds and \$257 million being nonfederal funds. Of the \$503 million, only \$150 million had been expended. Mr. Podany followed up with the status of cash flow projects. He stated the requests were up to \$400 million in projects next year with \$32 million available. Mr. Podany noted the demand would be there soon and there might be delays in funding projects or a search for funding alternatives will need to be considered.

Mr. Podany also said before the January 2003 selection of PPL 12, the Corps would provide a summary of project funding schedules.

Mr. Podany opened the floor for questions and there were none.

XII. PRESENTATION: NATIONAL OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Col. Rowan introduced Ms. Sidney Coffee. Ms. Coffee noted that the State had contracted Mr. Val Vermillion of Pacific Visions to develop a national campaign to save the wetlands.

Ms. Coffee stated this was an overreaching public relations campaign, not a lobbying effort. The campaign will be made public at the Southern Governor's Association meeting on August 25.

Mr. Val Vermillion then gave a presentation on the State's campaign, "America's Wetland". The presentation showed two constant themes throughout the campaign, world ecological significance and economic and energy security.

After the presentation, Col. Rowan opened for questions.

Dr. Bahr asked that the campaign be coordinated with the Breaux Act outreach committee and to use the existing infrastructure and contacts of the committee.

Mr. Schmitten stated it was an excellent presentation and requested a hard copy.

IV. REQUEST: PROJECT CONSTRUCTION APPROVALS

Col. Rowan asked Mr. John Saia to address the next item on the agenda.

Mr. Saia introduced the Lake Portage Construction Approval. He stated the project was authorized on PPL 8. The cost for the project over 20 years would be \$1,138,000.

Mr. Saia stated the Technical Committee recommended construction approval.

Col. Rowan opened the floor for any discussion. Mr. Schmitten motioned for approval and Mr. Flores seconded that motion with the stipulation of NRCS providing Plans and Specs to LDNR for their review.

The motion for construction approval of Lake Portage was passed.

V. REQUEST: MS RIVER SEDIMENT TRAP PHASE I APPROVAL

Mr. Saia stated the Technical Committee recommended the approval of Phase I study for the sediment trap, at a cost of \$1.88 million. Mr. Saia also stated alternatives would have to be considered not just at the Head of Passes but also upstream.

Col. Rowan opened the floor for any discussion. Dr. Bahr noted that the Comprehensive Study team is scheduled to conduct a model and these alternatives could be incorporated into that model.

Mr. Hanchey noted concerns about the delays in signing the cost share agreements between the Corps and LDNR and raised the possibility of investigating sites outside of the delta for construction and placement of material from the trap.

Mr. Saia responded that the Corps recently provided the West Bay cost share agreement to the state and expected to provide the Phase I/II model on Friday. He also committed that the Corps would work hand in hand with the state to fully evaluate design alternatives for the sediment trap.

Mr. Schmitten motioned to approve the sediment trap with the alternatives developed and Mr. Fruge' seconded that motion.

The motion to approve Phase I funding for the Sediment Trap was passed.

VI. PHASE II FUNDING APPROVALS

Mr. Saia presented three requests from USFWS for Phase II authorization. The following projects were approved in separate votes, all motions by Fruge' and seconds by Schmitten. All Phase II approval requests were passed. It was noted that the approval of the Grand Lake project was contingent upon completion of several outstanding tasks.

- a. Grand - White Lake Land Bridge -- \$5,234,411
- b. Delta Management at Fort St. Phillip -- \$1, 689,940
- c. North Lake Mechant Landbridge - Vegetative Plantings -- \$502,382

VII. REQUEST: PROJECT DEAUTHORIZATION

Mr. Saia presented a Technical Committee recommendation to approve a request to initiate deauthorization procedures for the Upper Oak River Freshwater Introduction Siphon (BS-09) project.

Col. Rowan asked for an explanation of the procedures and Mr. Podany provided a brief overview of the process.

Col. Rowan asked why the project sponsor was seeking deauthorization and Mr. Lehto (representing NRCS) responded that land rights and technical issues were problematic and rendered the project un-buildable.

Mr. Flores asked if funds would be returned to the program and Mr. Podany responded that money would be returned to the general CWPPRA accounts.

Dr. Bahr motions to begin the deauthorization process and Mr. Paul seconded that motion.

The motion to deauthorize the Upper Oak River Freshwater Introduction Siphon was passed.

VIII. REQUEST: CHANGE IN STATUS OF OUTREACH COORDINATOR POSITION

Mr. Fruge' offers the motion to change Ms. Gabrielle Bodin's title from Acting Outreach Coordinator to Outreach Coordinator.

Mr. Schmitten states he strongly concurs.

Mr. Flores also stated he strongly concurs after Ms. Bodin's efforts.

Mr. Fruge motions and Mr. Schmitten seconded that motion.

The motion is passed.

IX. REPORT: OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Mrs. Bodin stated the annual report would be coming in October. Mrs. Bodin also stated that National Public Radio (NPR) has been working to put together a series on coastal wetland loss. The series will be a two-part series, with the first part airing on Friday, September 6.

Mrs. Bodin announced the Outreach Committee gave a presentation at the Water Resources Conference in May of this year.

She also said that she will be attending a training workshop on media training. The first media training workshop will be held August 24 at LUMCOM.

X. REPORT: ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Dr. Visser announced a workshop will be held Monday, August 12 and Tuesday, August 13 on the results of the adaptive management review.

Dr. Bahr commended Dr. Visser and the others involved in the effort. He noted that neither he nor his staff had enough time to participate in the evaluation process and that he is concerned

about certain types of projects being approved by the Task Force, especially terracing projects. Dr. Bahr stated he is not convinced that terracing works and that it may simply be building spoil banks in the marsh.

Mr. Flores asked what the end product of the workshop will be. Dr. Visser replied that she will give a presentation at the next Task Force meeting on the results of the summary.

XI. PRESENTATION: DUCKS UNLIMITED

Mr. Fruge' introduced Mr. Ross Melincuk from Ducks Unlimited. Mr. Melincuk gave a presentation on the wetlands conservation efforts of Ducks Unlimited. The mission of Ducks Unlimited is to fulfill the needs of North American waterfowl by protecting, restoring, and enhancing important wetlands and associated habitats.

Mr. Melincuk stated their Southern Regional Office is now placing increased emphasis on coastal Louisiana as a key part of the Gulf Coast region, and they are looking for ways to partner with CWPPRA and other programs. He distributed copies of their latest magazine featuring an article on coastal Louisiana and a large-scale wetlands terracing project cosponsored by Ducks Unlimited.

Dr. Bahr noted that he's not against terracing, just about the wetland value assessment of it. He also offered the suggestion of having a workshop on terracing.

Mr. Flores stated he was impressed by the organization and supported it.

Mr. Lehto noted NRCS has been a long-time partner with Ducks Unlimited and encouraged other agencies to join in their partnership.

Mr. Fruge' stated that Ducks Unlimited is a powerful organization and that CWPPRA and Coast 2050 could use their help and support.

Mr. Hanchey commented that Ducks Unlimited is in a unique position to support Val Vermillion and the "America's Wetland" outreach campaign.

Mr. Schmitten stated he supported Ducks Unlimited and noted that CWPPRA alone cannot save coastal Louisiana and that we need proactive partnership development. He also stated he would like to see similar support from sport and commercial fishermen.

XIII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

Col. Rowan asked the Task Force members if they had any additional items. No additional items were raised.

XIV. REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Col. Rowan opened the floor for public comments.

Mr. Doug Daigle, Hypoxia Director for the Mississippi River Basin Alliance, stated that Ducks Unlimited has been helpful with the issues of hypoxia and climate change. He also stated that he was glad to see that these issues are being taken into consideration for the Coast 2050 plan. Mr. Daigle also raised a concern about reconciling permitting with restoration and that we must encourage that (reconciling) to happen.

Mr. Martin Cancienne, Chief of Operations for Representative Billy Tauzin, welcomed the new Colonel and offered his assistance to the New Orleans District and also asked for the opportunity for the New Orleans District to be called on any time if help is needed.

Mr. Mark Schleifstein, reporter from the Times-Picayune, stated the Society of Professional Journalists is having a conference in New Orleans next fall and that he will call on CWPPRA to help explain restoration and coastal wetlands issues.

Ms. Karen Gautreaux, Governor's Special Assistant for Environmental Affairs, announced that King Milling is the official Chair of the Governor's Commission on the Future of Coastal Louisiana. Ms. Gautreaux also announced the first meeting of the committee will be sometime in early September. She stated Dr. Bahr has been appointed the first applied coastal restoration Research and Development Director and Ms. Sidney Coffee will move from her current position to the Governor's Office.

XV. DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING

Col. Rowan announced the date and location of the next Task Force meeting. The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for 9:30 a.m., October 9, 2002, at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Headquarters in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

XV. MEETING ADJOURNED

Col. Rowan called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Schmitten moved to adjourn and Dr. Bahr seconded that motion. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.