Appendix B

Public Scoping Meeting Transcripts

PUBLIC SCOPING PRESENTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

For the proposed

MID-BARATARIA SEDIMENT DIVERSION

DATE: Thursday, July 20, 2017

LOCATION:

Leo Kerner City Park Multipurpose Complex
235 City Park Drive
Lafitte, Louisiana

TIME: 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

MR. RICKY BOYETTE:

Good evening, everyone. Thank you very much for coming out on behalf of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as well as our federal family, NOAA, EPA, Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture. We want to say we appreciate you coming out for this important step in going into the permitting process, the regulatory process for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project that's proposed by the State of Louisiana.

We're going to go through a couple of presentations as we go through it. But I first want to open with, we're in the very early stages of what's going to be a very comprehensive look at this area. Not only are we going to need to look at the scope of the project but what the project is intended to do. We also have to look at the

scope of the area. And we have to look -- it is an extremely comprehensive look, and we have to look at it, you know, from all different sides. And we have learned and we know that no one knows their area better than the people who live there.

And so your comments tonight and going out and talking to you and getting your feedback is a critical part of our process. And that's why it's at the beginning. We need to know that we're going to be looking at the right things. We are going to be understanding as much as we can about this area. So I can't stress enough how important it is to get your feedback and your comments and your thoughts on the area as well as the diversion itself.

So tonight, if I can -- I'll also be remiss -- I would like to thank Mr. Mike Ebee from Senator

Cassidy's office for coming. I think that really illustrates how important this proposed project and permitting process is.

If I can, I will go ahead and turn it over to Brad Laborde. He's our regulatory manager for this EIS process.

MR. BRAD LABORDE:

Thank you for that opening, Ricky.

Can everyone hear me okay?

Thanks, Ricky, for that opening. Before we get kicked off here tonight, I want to switch the slide.

This is the Meeting 1 by the way so we're working out some kinks.

Presentation Agenda: Just so you know what to expect, we're going to start with project introduction, then talk a little bit about the Corps of Engineers' role with this project, the proposed

project. Then we'll talk about the NEPA process. It's a bit of a deep dive but we do feel it's important to convey to you -- to you all tonight.

By that point, you will probably have enough of hearing me speak, so I'm going to turn it over to the applicant, CPRA, who is going to give a little bit more information about their proposed project.

And then, turn it over to Mel Landry, who is one of the Deepwater Horizon trustees who will discuss the relationship of the environmental impact statement that we're undertaking at the Corp and how it fits in with the restoration planning that they are doing under the natural resource damage assessment process or NRDA process.

So we have a common acronym that we use at Corps when we're briefing a higher-up. It's

called the BLUF, Bottom Line UpFront. The bottom line upfront for our meeting today is, I guess, two purposes. The first purpose is to provide you with information on the NEPA process, the National Environment Policy Act process; CPRA's proposed project; and to offer you an easy platform to make your comments so that we receive them and can address them properly.

The comments you provide tonight -- Ricky kind of pointed this out, but it will help determine the scope of issues that we consider and analyze as we move forward with the environmental impact statement or EIS. You decided to take some time out of your schedule to attend tonight. Myself, I have two little ones so I know what it's like to kind of make a commitment to be here tonight, so we're appreciative of that.

I know it could be a

little, I guess, intimidating to provide some of the information but believe me, no issue that you have is too large or too small. I'm probably more intimidated being up here in front of you guys than you should be the other way around.

So, once we move on from this slide here, the information is going to kind of roll. We're going to go through a lot of things that may be new to you, so we are stationed around the room here tonight to take questions from you, should you have them after the presentation is complete.

So talk a little bit about the project introduction and who is proposing the project.

I said "CPRA" a couple of times already. They're the Coastal Protection Restoration Authority of Louisiana. They've submitted a permit application to the Corps of Engineers. A 10/404 permit

application as well as a Section 408 permission request for the proposed Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion project.

It is important to point out that CPRA is the applicant. They are going to be the State agency that's in charge for the land acquisition, the design, the construction, and then the maintenance, should they get the proper permits that they need to move forward.

CPRA is here tonight. They are in the back of the room. They do have some valuable information. It is important to know that they are a proponent of the project, clearly, because they are -- they have come to us with a permit application. They feel like this is a tool that they can use that would help the coastal restoration and the coastal issues that we do have here in Louisiana.

The Corps is, again, in a regulatory role here. The Corps won't be funding, designing or constructing this project in any way.

Where is the project located? River mile 60.7, which falls between Alliance and the town of Ironton in Plaquemines Parish. What is the project? The project is being designed and will be referred to as a sediment diversion. One of the main components of that sediment diversion will be a conveyance channel that will extend from the Mississippi River into the Barataria Basin. With that channel, the conveyance will be constructed to move up to 75,000 cubic feet per second of water; and with that will be sediment and nutrients that will be reintroduced into the Barataria Basin. And the purpose of this is -- that CPRA has provided to us is to help reduce land loss and sustain

injured wetlands during the oil spill.

I know 75,000 cubic feet per second probably doesn't mean a lot to you. Because I don't know how to conceptualize that either so I went around looking for some comparables. And the Mobile River, which I'm sure a lot of us have been stuck on the I-10 on Mobile Bay, either going to the beach or going to see Mickey Mouse, or coming home from, but the discharge of that river, the average discharge is 67,000 CFS. So this is a little bit larger. But when you apply that to the Mississippi River that has an average discharge of over 550,000 CFS, it kind of puts it in a little bit better perspective.

This is just a zoomed-out map of our meeting locations. This is Meeting Number One. If you noticed some of our lectures so far, we're getting -- this is one of

three. So in Lafitte tonight, as you can see the project here in yellow connecting Mississippi River to the basin, as you can see, Lafitte, as the crow flies, is probably closest in proximity with the outfall area.

So here is a wetland map that we have at the Corps, just to highlight some of the impact, starting with the Mississippi River. As you can see there, there will be -- the structure will start right here, which will be the opening of the conveyance channel or the diversion structure. So you can see there's the potential for impacts and navigation. As you move inland, there's the potential for forest wetland or pasture wetland impacts before you get to the Mississippi River levee. So the project does propose to cut through the Mississippi River levee.

And as you move west on

the protected side, you have some additional wetlands there shaded in green. Those are forested wetlands. And then you will get to Highway 23, where there will be some sort of culverted crossing, and then a few more waters of the U.S. as you continue to move west and then some wet pasture wetlands on the back side of the project.

And then the last impact would be our future New Orleans to Venice levee that is also being proposed to be impacted by the project.

All and all, this equates to about 18 acres of impacts of jurisdictional waters and about 50 acres of wetlands, direct impacts to jurisdictional wetlands here.

The direct impacts are probably -- or as the project is being proposed, we have those pretty well nailed down at this point. Some of the questions that we're

going to be addressing are going to be, I guess, in this black area here, which would be the outfall area. So that would be the water that's moving through this channel into the basin in trying to figure out the extent, whether it be water, sediment or nutrients and what those impacts will be.

CPRA is undergoing some modeling, and the Corps is working with them to verify some of those models to move forward with this process. But I think the large portion of the EIS will be trying to nail down what is going to happen in this outfall area.

So if you refer to the last slide where I was kind of pointing out the impacts, these are our three major statutes that, I guess, highlight the Corps of Engineers' role. The first one would be Section 408, which is essentially an engineering review. The Corps

will be reviewing the project to make sure that the civil works projects that are being impacted, they will have the same functionality before and after construction if the authorization is approved.

Some of the examples, as you saw in the previous slide, are the Mississippi River levee, the New Orleans to Venice levee and the Mississippi River channel. Beyond that is Section 10(404), which is more along the lines of what I do on a regular basis, which Section 10 would cover navigation in the river. So kind of taking a look at how river navigation would be impacted by the project.

And then the navigable waters in the outfall area as well. Section 404 covers impacts to wetlands. So as you saw, those forested impacts, the forested hardwoods, the wet pasture on the

back portion of the project. And then some of the positive and negative impacts to the title marsh in that outfall area that we've discussed.

I guess to move back to the top of the slide, "The Corps reviews an applicant's request for permits and permissions." So in this case permits would be Section 10/404 and 408. Section 408 would be the permission to make decisions based off the best available science, engineering standards and professional judgment. That considers the impacts to Corp projects, Section 408; Waters of the U.S., Section 10, and then jurisdictional wetlands that are covered under Section 404.

One of the added requirements that we have in regulatory that falls under Section 404 is determination of a LEDPA, which is the Least Environmentally

Damaging Practicable Alternative. And basically that is an investigation into the proposed project to try to determine if it is, in fact, the least damaging alternative that's available to the applicant.

In addition to that, we'll be doing a public interest review which is basically weighing the positives and negatives of the project and trying to figure out where it falls in as far as how it would benefit or negatively impact the public.

So this will be the weights that we're trying to determine when we're trying to make our decisions.

So what is NEPA? NEPA is, I guess, the three statutes that we just discussed. At the Corps, we're required, once those statutes are triggered, I guess, we have to do an environmental review. So this is

where NEPA comes in; the National Environmental Policy Act. And it's a law that requires federal agencies to evaluate environmental impacts before making decisions on major federal actions. And in this case, those permits and permissions that the Corps is working on are those federal actions.

What are the key goals of NEPA? Assist federal agency officials in making well-informed decisions and then to ensure public and other agency involvement in decision-making.

What are some major federal actions? As we discussed, Corps Section 10/404 permits and Section 408 permission decisions. And then there's the potential for a few other major federal actions. And in this case, it would be the Deepwater Horizon trustees with their restoration planning and funding efforts under NRDA.

And then, there's potential for a Marine Mammals Protection Act authorization as well. And members from each agency are here tonight and will be dispersed around the room after the presentation if you have any questions for them.

In regulatory, how we comply with NEPA, a lot of times we go through our process and we end up writing an environmental assessment, which is basically stating that there's no significant impacts with the project that we're reviewing. In this case, we got an application from CPRA and determined pretty early on that there was the potential for some type of significant impact. So we decided to move forward with the EIS, which is a more robust environmental review with a few more requirements.

What is an EIS? An EIS is a detailed study of the potential

impacts, both positive and negative or beneficial and adverse of a proposed project on the environment and local community. It also evaluates reasonable alternatives that are based off the project purpose and need.

Why an EIS? I talked about it a little bit on the previous slide with the potential for significant impacts. Due to the amount of potential for impacts for the Corps, we were designated as the lead federal agency. And part of being the lead federal agency is managing and overseeing the EIS as well as reaching out to cooperating agencies that either have a particular expertise in the project that we're reviewing or agencies that have jurisdiction by law.

There are a few posters around the room that have a list of some of the other actions that will be kind of wrapped up into this EIS.

There's also another poster that has a list of the cooperating agencies that are kind of partnering with us on this document.

How will the EIS be used? The Corps will have two record of decisions, which is essentially a permit decision or announcement to explain our decision regarding CPRA's project. But there will be a record of decision for Section 10/404 with a permit decision, and then a 408 permission decision there as well.

What is in an EIS? If you look at enough of these things, you will notice that they follow the same -- there's a method to these documents that is rather similar. You start with a purpose and need where you lay out what the purpose of the project is, what's the goal that's trying to be achieved and then why is the project needed.

Is there a reasonable

foreseeable need for the proposed project? That purpose and need kind of rolls into and defines how our alternatives will be looked at in the document. So what alternatives will be looked at? You start with "no action," as if we didn't do anything and let, for this project, I guess, natural processes take place. And then, the proposed action to review what some of the direct and indirect accumulative impacts will be as a result of the project, and then a range of alternatives.

And a lot of this project alternatives section is informed by some of the information that we're going to get here tonight. Some of you may be sitting here thinking, why don't they try project X, Y or Z instead of this. And that's the kind of comment that we want to get so we can evaluate it properly.

The project -- the affected environment is basically asking what's there? What are the baseline conditions to the human environment that could be potentially affected today? That's probably something that will be informed by some of your comments tonight because you live in this area, you see the environment, you're probably familiar with the project and so that's going to roll into our environmental consequences.

So we'll determine what's there and then look at how building, operating and maintaining the project affects baseline conditions of the human environment.

And then to tie back into record of decisions, in that list of applicable laws and regulations that we discussed, the cooperating agencies that are partnering with us, at least a lot of them are, are going to use this EIS and draw some

information out of it for their decision-making purposes.

So this is the applicant's purpose and need that was submitted with their application to the Corps of Engineers: The purpose of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is to reconnect and re-establish the natural or deltaic sediment deposition process between the Mississippi River and the Barataria Basin. The project is needed as a long-term, resilient, sustainable strategy to reduce land loss rates and sustain injured wetlands through the delivery of sediment, freshwater and nutrients.

So what is scoping? I think Ricky accurately hit on that well. It's an early process, early and open process in the EIS that's intended to provide interested or affected parties an opportunity to express their concerns, ideas and comments which will inform and

identify the issues and alternatives analyzed in the EIS document.

Your comments are welcomed and encouraged.

And this isn't your last opportunity to comment with us. So if you leave here tonight, whether you make a comment or not, if something comes up between now and September 5th, feel free to send us a comment.

And your feedback will be part of the EIS and the scoping reports, so we'll have the main document. And then one of the appendices will be the scoping report where all of the formal information that you provide tonight will be enclosed.

So, how do you comment? You can submit a comment card today. I think Ricky pointed this out, too, but here are the comment cards. They are located in the front of the room. And then we have some comment

boxes that are placed around the room as well so you can drop these off. If you want to take a stack of these home with you and hand them out to friends and family, you can also do that. All we ask is that you fold them, stamp them and then secure them and send them over to us at the Corps.

In addition to the comment card, you can send us a letter the old-fashioned way to the Corps of Engineers. Make sure that you put it to the attention of CEMVN-OD-SE, and then the project number, MVN-2012-2806E00, so that it doesn't get lost in our mail routing. In addition to that, you can send us an E-mail of your comments to cemvn-midbarataria@usace.army.mil.

And then, tonight we have two court reporters that are also available to you if you don't want to write your comments and you're more comfortable verbalizing them,

we have people here to do that tonight. And there's also Vietnamese translators that are available to you, if needed.

One of the last things to point out on this slide is our project website. We have a Corps website and we also have a permitting dashboard website that kind of lays out our schedule. It's listed here but probably the best way to do it is Google Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion and you will get plenty of information there.

I'm about to hand this over to Brad Barth from CPRA. But before doing so, I just wanted to put a few questions on the board for you to be considering while he's going through his presentation. The first one is: What are the most important issues, resources and impacts that we, the Corps, should consider with the EIS?

Question #2: Are there

any other alternatives or modifications to the existing proposal that we should consider in the EIS?

And the third question is: Where are other problems or opportunities? Are there other problems or opportunities that we should be aware of?

And with that, I'll turn it over to Mr. Barth so he can give a project background on the proposed project.

MR. BRAD BARTH:

Thanks everybody for coming tonight. I appreciate you coming out to provide your input tonight.

I'm going to go ahead and expand upon a little bit of Brad Laborde's introduction here and give a little more specific details about the project itself, some of the components and features of the projects.

Some of you may be asking what is a sediment diversion. Some of you all may be familiar with different types of diversions that we have in Louisiana. You may be familiar with freshwater diversions, Davis Pond or Caernarvon. Those projects are specifically targeted to freshwater, basins or estuaries to help fight back saltwater intrusion.

You may also be familiar with the flood risk reduction diversion such as the Bonnet Carre Spillway, which is strategically placed in a major population. they are there to reduce flood risk if you have a flood coming down the Mississippi River.

Sediment diversion is a little bit different. It's designed specifically and located specifically to target sediment-rich areas in a river system. So here you see it's targeted for an area

that's sediment rich such as the sandbar. We've seen similar applications of the diversion structure. If anybody is familiar with the Old River complex, the auxiliary structure upstream of Baton Rouge, it was specifically put on the bend in the river to help with the sediment management flow from the Mississippi River into the Atchafalaya Basin.

So what's the purpose of the sediment diversion? The number one purpose here is to build land. Some additional benefits from the distribution of the freshwater nutrients and sediment is to maintain and sustain wetlands that are existing. Or they may be created from other projects.

Specifically, in the project location -- I'm going to see if the pointer is going to work for everybody in the back of the room. Just for orientation, this is the

Phillips 66 refinery. Here is the town of Ironton. Here is Myrtle Grove down here and this is the Mississippi River. So I'm going to kind of go through some of the major features that Brad Laborde talked about earlier. We have the Mississippi River levee along here. We also have the NOV levee, back levee along the back side here.

Some of the proposed components of the project here kind of highlighted in orange will be the complex itself. In the complex itself, it will consist of a gated control structure at the river. It will consist of a conveyance channel to send that sediment out to the basin, and then a gated control structure at the back levee.

Some other features that will be associated with the project is a proposed pump station or a drop structure or a siphon. We have to maintain the interior drainage with

this project cutting off this culvert. We have this whole upper culvert here to be concerned about in making sure we control the interior drainage in this culvert.

Some additional features of the project, LA 23 will require a relocation in the form of, most likely, a bridge structure. And then also the New Orleans Gulf Coast Railroad also comes along here, and that will also need to be addressed as well as far as their access.

Just for orientation, as the sediment comes out here into the basin of the bay, we would also have a proposed outfall area that we would go ahead and look at making a transition from the outfall structure itself back up to the bay elevation or the marsh elevation, and then that material from dredging from here would be used as a by-product of the construction or beneficial use to create some marsh

creation cells here or here, potentially. And just for orientation, too, this is the existing Wilkinson pump station the Army Corps of Engineers just put online in 2016.

So Brad Laborde talked about river mile 60.7, right here. So why did we put it here? Why is this the location? As we talked earlier, it's sediment rich. We're looking for areas in the river that are sediment rich, where we could capture the most amount of sediment. Here we have a point bar deposit. So in these types of areas where the point bar deposits naturally occur in the river, we also have a sediment rich area that we can maximize and capture that sediment as it goes out to the basin.

So the location, deciding it, is typically based on the sediment load that our river gives us in the natural process.

So this is kind of a schematic to kind of give you a basic principle of how this thing would work. This project would operate with the natural process, sort of the natural river power of the Mississippi River, so it would be a gravity controlled structure. So we would use the head differential from the river out to the basin to transport that sediment.

So if I'm coming down the river and then, obviously, I would come to that control structure and it would take us out to the basin. Again, we're going to use the natural process. In general, it would be with the flood season that we see in the Mississippi River. So the operations would be associated with high water in the river, which would typically be associated with the winter and the spring months.

Just to give you guys a

little bit more of a schematic, a 3D rendition of what these features may look like. Again, the Mississippi River over here. A major control structure tied into the Mississippi River levee to maintain that level of flood-rich production with the MRT system. It may consist of some type of gates here, radial arm gates. It may be different types of gates at this point, but right now our best guesstimate is radial arm gates. It would lead into a transition structure and then out into the diversion channel itself or conveyance channel that would take it out to the basin.

Here in this photo if we kind of look back in the schematic, we look back in the background, this is the Mississippi River up here. This is the inlet structure we just showed you. These two structures would represent the relocated LA 23 and the railroad alignment. And you

can see here, this would be an open channel with a series of guide levees on either side of the channel.

And then lastly, as we get out to the back levee or the basin, these areas here would be the back levee, back levee. There would be a back structure tying into that future NOV project and then allowing that sediment and freshwater nutrients to come out into the basin.

Initial operation: So Brad talked about the direct impacts. Brad talked about the importance of looking at the impacts out in the basin. So this is one of the key pieces of how this thing is potentially operated.

So right now when would it turn on and off? So if you're familiar with the Belle Chasse station, this is 450,000 CFS. So on a rising river at 450,000 CFS, the

diversion would turn on. On a falling river, at 450,000 CFS, diversion would turn off.

Its maximum discharge is proposed to be 75,000 CFS, but it would not be running at 75,000 CFS all the time when it's on because it is relying on the power of the river; so less flood, less power of the river; more flood, more power in the river. It would have a range of about 30,000 to 75,000 CFS above that trigger when it's operating. And most years, I think it would probably be somewhere in that 30- to 50,000-range.

Extreme events like we had in 2011, it could peak out at that 75,000. Below that trigger of 450,000 CFS would be a base flow of 5,000 CFS.

A lot of folks have heard the term "adaptive management." This is one thing the State is looking into in terms of

implementing on this project; how we can adapt for changes in the basin with time and operate this structure, considering those changes in the basin.

And then lastly, emergency stops. So if there's any issues in terms of water levels that are spills or navigation, the structure would have those types of stops built into the water control plan or the operation and maintenance manual of how it's operated.

And then lastly, I just want to hit a little bit more on our Adaptive Management. So this would be the monitoring that we do realtime on the structure when it would be operating. We look at monitoring the river from water levels to the turbidity in the river.

On the basin side, similarly, we would be looking at water levels, salinities and

different water quality parameters. And our hope is that we can do some forecasting tools with these realtime monitoring plans to increase the efficiency of that maximum, diverted sediment. We increase that efficiency and make it more efficient. So more sediment, less freshwater. And those are some of the things we're looking at in terms of putting into practice with this project in terms of Adaptive Management.

And with that, I'll go ahead and introduce Mel Landry next with Deepwater Horizon Trustee Group, specifically with the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group, otherwise known as LTIG.

MR. MEL LANDRY:

Thanks, Brad.

Good evening, my name is Mel Landry. I'm a member of the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group for the Deepwater Horizon

Natural Resource Damage Assessment, also known as The Louisiana TIG. We're the group that plans and implements restoration for injuries caused by the Deepwater Horizon spill here in Louisiana.

I work for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We're one of four federal agencies that partners with the State on the Louisiana TIG.

I'm going to be using the next two slides to explain why we're here as Louisiana TIG.

We're considering funding the construction of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion through the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damages Restoration funds, so that is the settlement that is managed by Louisiana TIG.

We're supporting the development of the Corps EIS because of the potential for that EIS to serve our restoration planning

purposes. The Louisiana TIG may use the Corp's Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion EIS to inform our future restoration activities.

So I'm going to give you a little background on how the pieces fit together.

The Louisiana TIG recently initiated restoration planning for the Barataria Basin. This restoration planning is designed as a phased approach to restoration planning. The first phase is a strategic plan for restoration of the Barataria Basin that will help to identify projects to restore wetlands, coastal and natural resources that were injured by the Deepwater Horizon spill. These projects will need to be consistent with our programmatic restoration plan which guides our restoration across the Gulf of Mexico.

The second phase, we'll call it the Phase II Plan, will

evaluate the project or suite of projects that the Phase I plan selected for advancement. The Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan identified restoration projects based on the strong scientific foundation and extensive public outreach.

One of the Coastal Master Plan's projects is the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion. Given this, we can see there's a potential for this large scale diversion project to be identified as a project in the Louisiana TIG's Phase I plan for further consideration.

If we were to select the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion for restoration under the Phase I plan, we could use the Corps' EIS for our own evaluations in the Phase II plan. This will allow us to evaluate and implement the project more efficiently, both in terms of time and money.

So we want your comments on the scope of the Corps' EIS related to our restoration planning for the natural resources injuries caused by the spill. The Corps' EIS could serve as the EIS for our Phase II Restoration Plan and that's why we're participating here today.

So I'll bring Brad back up, from the Corps, to give you a little more information before we move into our next phase of the meeting.

MR. BRAD LABORDE:

I'm going to try to move quickly here, because if I was you, I would have phased out to the beautiful backdrop here and be thinking of other things.

So this is just an additional poster that we have here tonight. And now that you have more of a background on the deeper process, the Corps' involvement and then our Deepwater Horizon Trustees

and CPRA, you got a pretty good background on everything that's involved here. But these are some of the issues that we've kicked around early in our review.

I would ask you that since you made the effort to come out tonight, just take a look at some of the boards that we have presented here for you. This one is just meant to kind of help you with your brainstorming when you're trying to put your comments together. This isn't an all-encompassing list, so if you have something that doesn't appear here, we'd certainly like to hear it, because it might be a new potential issue that we need to investigate further.

So this is to reiterate some of the points in what we've discussed here tonight. Again, there are a number of agencies involved with this process and there's a big public component to

this process as well.

Our hope with this whole process is to create one Environmental Impact Statement so that we have a comprehensive document that not only the Corps can use but some of our cooperating agencies can draw from to get information for their decision-making purposes.

So as you can see -- there's a better graphic here tonight that kind of lays out this process. But the blue man group over here, that's all of us, the applicant, the cooperating agencies. And we're all working towards putting together an EIS that will fit the requirements for all the different decision making.

Part of that is the public scoping, which is tonight, and then the applicant's input. So as to review, The Corps and our partnering agencies are going to be asking a

lot of questions of the applicant. And we're going to be getting information from them and we're going to be going through it to make sure, as we discussed earlier, that it fits the best engineering standards and best available science to us in the hopes that we do achieve our goal of one EIS that can, I guess, help everyone with their decision making.

Now, at the bottom we do have some additional opportunities to comment. Once scoping is completed, we will work towards coming up with a draft EIS, which will include a comment period and a public hearing. That's currently scheduled for summer of 2020. I know that feels far off but keep in mind that we are working towards one EIS. And in addition, CPRA is still working on developing this diversion and designing it. So there are a lot of factors that go into that

date.

And once that draft EIS process is completed, we will make our tweaks and come out with a final EIS which will include another comment period.

So in conclusion, the Corps is in a regulatory role here. We're neither an opponent or a proponent of this project. The Corps is reaching out to the public for education and feedback concerning issues that should be covered in the EIS.

Agency representatives, once we've concluded the presentation, will be returning to the surrounding poster areas to interact with you and take some of the questions that you may have. Again, the Corps is here tonight. We have NOAA Fisheries experts to discuss the Marine Mammal Protection Act. We also have NRDA trustees here to discuss the funding and

restoration plan that Mel talked about. And we also have the applicant, CPRA here with Brad Barth's group.

So it's important to know that when we do have that interaction around the poster area that those aren't necessarily your formal comments. And to reiterate, the way to submit those formal comments are the Comment Cards that we discussed, that there are comment boxes available for these comment cards. And then just submit your comments and we'll take it from there. You can send us a letter, an E-mail or provide your verbal comments to the court reporters that we have here tonight.

In addition, we do have some information for you to take home. We do have a project Fact Sheet that kind of lays out all of the factors that are -- what the Corps put together as far as what to

look for with this project.

That's going to conclude my talking to you tonight, and now we'll hand it over to Ricky and he can wrap this up.

MR. RICKY BOYETTE:

So Brad gave the permit number which is important, if you're making comments and it is on the back of the Fact Sheet. So I know that we all did memorize it when he put it on the screen, but just in case, it's on the back. You can also just write: "Brad Laborde," L-A-B-O-R-D-E. It will get there.

If I can, before I go to the formal close of the comments, I would like to invite Mayor Kerner up to the front for some comments.

MAYOR TIMOTHY P. KERNER:

Look, I just have a few comments. First of all, I want to say that CPRA has worked so good with us and with the levee that we're getting ready to put in the

area, and I really appreciate it. So I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings tonight, but as the Mayor of Lafitte, I have to give my opinion.

My opinion is that the fishermen in this area can't take it much more. If this diversion is going to come in and put sediment into the estuary and hurt a little bit, it's going to hurt all fishermen.

What we should have here is not only a plan of how much sediment, how it's going to be for 75 years, but at the same time if you're going to spend over a billion dollars on a sediment diversion, then you should have something in there to compensate the fishermen if they get hurt in this area.

Then again, every time we have a south wind, we have trouble with flooding. I am working with CPRA very close to provide levees,

and Mr. Bradbury and the Governor are all helping. But at the same time, we should have set them up to where we are showing that we are going to do a sediment diversion, at the same time you will be protected with levees and we're going to put money to raise houses. It shouldn't be just a sediment diversion here tonight.

I don't want to hurt anybody's feeling with CPRA, but it shouldn't be. Because let me tell you something, you know, for years, our problem is not nature. Our problem has been really -- the Corps is here tonight, the Corps giving permits. You gave permits to dig for wells. Everybody dug these canals to drill these wells. Well, that made saltwater intrusion come on us faster than ever. You gave a permit for the freshwater diversion. Guess what, we flood every time there's a south wind. You gave a

permit for the levee right north of us; hey, guess what, that floods us faster than ever. You gave a permit for the largest pump station in the world. Now, we're talking about a sediment diversion to say, 50, 75 years from now -- it's going to be very, very good for everybody. But we need to live now.

You've given permits, and the rest of the government is spending billions of dollars time and time again for the betterment of the coast and the betterment of Louisiana but at the negative impact to Lafitte, Louisiana.

So I'm saying that before you do it -- look, we want our grandkids to live here and our great-grandkids. We want them to enjoy this land for another hundred, three hundred years, but not at our expense. So What I'm asking you to do is make sure that we get levee protection with this sediment

diversion and make sure our fishermen are compensated.

Thank you.

MR. RICKY BOYETTE:

Again, thank you very much, Mayor Kerner.

So that is going to conclude the presentation portion of the evening. However, we are not through. We are going to stay around, and if you can make your comments in one of the many ways. We will remain behind for our court reporters, that if you have comments you want to provide verbally, if you will just -- if I can get them to raise their hands, we will be accepting comments. And if you will just make your way there.

You can also fill out the Comment Card, provide it to us, as well as E-mail or mail in later. You have until September the 5th to go through.

I do want to stress that

one of the factors that a lot of people look at is they have an idea or a concern but they assume that somebody else is also going to make that comment or concern. Please don't do that. We would rather have ten of the same comment and not miss one. So everybody is going to have common concerns, common thoughts. Please, if you have a comment and you want us to know, please provide it.

Again, you can give it to our court reporter to the side, as well as you can submit a Comment Card written or mail it in to us later.

I think that concludes our meeting for the formal presentation but, again we're just -- we have subject matter experts for any of the questions you may have all around the room. Please don't hesitate to visit them; as well as we have the opportunity to provide

your comments here tonight.

(WHEREUPON, THE FORMAL PRESENTATION WAS CONCLUDED.)

PUBLIC SCOPING PRESENTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

for the proposed

MID-BARATARIA SEDIMENT DIVERSION

DATE: Tuesday, July 25, 2017

LOCATION:

Belle Chasse Auditorium
8398 Highway 23
Belle Chasse, Louisiana

TIME: 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

- P R O C E E D I N G S -

MR. RICKY BOYETTE:

My name is Ricky Boyette. I am the Chief of Public Affairs for The Corps of Engineers. And tonight we're here to essentially begin the regulatory process for evaluating the Coastal Protection Restoration Authority in Louisiana's proposed Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion.

So we are here, the Corps of Engineers, we're here under our regulatory authority. We have to make a decision on whether this proposed project can be permitted. What I mean by that is we need to use the best science and engineering we have to determine if the benefits of this project would outweigh its detriments as well if this is in the public interest.

Tonight in this portion of the process, it is kind of the kickoff. What I mean by that is this is a large project. It has a

wide scope and it is essentially unprecedented. And to fully evaluate this project, we're going to need a Environmental Impact Statement.

Essentially what an Environmental Impact Statement is is a comprehensive look at not only the project but we're also going to need to look at the area so we can understand what the benefits of this project are. We can understand what the impacts and the adverse impacts are of this project.

And tonight is the opening. And that is, we need to be able to make the right decision. We have to look at it based on science and engineering. And we know that we have to have a full understanding of this area.

Now, as part any of our projects that we do on the civil works side, we've learned -- and this is kind of transferring to our

regulatory, we're not a proponent nor opponent of this project. We'll be looking at it strictly from an unbiased benefits and detriments approach. But we've learned over time that nobody knows their area better than they do. So for us to be able to undertake a very comprehensive document, we know that you can help us in what we need to make sure that we're looking at, what we need to understand about the different aspects of this very dynamic environment that you all live in. So that's why we're here tonight.

Tonight we're going to collect your comments and what that will do is make sure that we're looking at the right things as well as inform the direction we go. Tonight is one of many that ultimately as we go through many meetings that we will have, once we start working on the project and we

come to a draft of this document, this Environmental Impact Statement, we'll then go out to you again and we'll take your comments based on what we have seen, what findings we have to make sure we're not missing anything. And that's a little different a process than tonight. Tonight we're here to get your comments so that when we start off we know that we're going to be looking at what we should be.

I do want to highlight to begin as you entered and registered, we had some information at the table. The one is a Comment Card. We have it in Vietnamese as well as English. Then we also have a Fact Sheet. I urge you to definitely grab one of the Fact Sheets. The front side of the Fact Sheet is the information on the project the State of Louisiana is proposing. The back side of the Fact Sheet has the details you need to know or have if

you want to make comments at later date.

Our comment period for this project is open until September the 5th. And so if you leave here and you're not sure what comments you wanted to make, you can send them later. As well as if you made comments tonight and you find that there's something else you want to add to that, you can send it in. The information to do so is all included on the back of the page.

Tonight we'll be taking written and verbal comments but we do ask that if you make a comment, please grab a comment form. If you're going to make written comments, just complete the form and hand it to one of our people. We also have a collection here, that you can submit.

If you want to make verbal comments, we still ask that you submit or complete the first

half of the project and then when you attend one of our tables with the court reporters, please turn that in. That way it allows us to make sure we're attributing the comments to the right person.

Now, just to clarify, we're going to have a presentation session where our project manager for this permit application will present and talk about the EIS process, where we are, what we need to look at from a Corps regulatory standpoint.

We're also going to bring up the applicant, the State of Louisiana, and they can present their proposed project to you. And then we'll follow with our Louisiana Trustee Group and their presentation.

What I do want to highlight is today, unlike many of our civil works projects, we are not having what a lot of people would

consider public presentation of their comments. Our focus is to make sure we collect everybody's comments. We don't want to influence in any way. We're not answering questions tonight because we have to remain unbiased throughout the entire process. So it's a little different for us and it's definitely a little different for you all.

With that, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Brad Laborde. He's our Operations Manager for the Corps presentation on the process.

MR. BRAD LABORDE:

Thanks, Ricky.

Thank you everyone for taking time out tonight.

Before we kick off tonight, I want to go through our presentation agenda just so you are aware of what to expect moving forward with the presentation

portion of our talk tonight.

First, we're going to lead with the brief project introduction followed by discussion concerning the Corps. of Engineers' role. After that we're going to talk a little bit about the NEPA process. NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act. Once we wrap that up, I'm going to allow Brad Barth from the Coastal Restoration Authority to share information with you concerning their proposed project.

Once CPRA has wrapped up, Mel Landry is going to come up and present a few slides to discuss the relationship of the Environmental Impact Statement and in relation to the Trustee Restoration Planning under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and NRDA process.

So, why are we here today? We have a comment acronym at the Corps, it's BLUF, bottom line upfront. We use this when we're

going to brief higher-ups. And basically why we're here today or tonight this evening is for two reasons: The first is to provide you with some information about the NEPA process, our permitting process, and then CPRA's proposed project.

The second purpose tonight is to offer you an easy platform to collect and record your comments. The comments that you provide tonight will help determine the scope of issues to be considered in analyzing the Environmental Impact Statement.

You decided to attend today's meeting because you have an interest in the project. I do understand the time sacrifice you made to cut out a couple of hours out of your schedule to be here tonight. We are appreciative of that.

The one thing we do ask,

though, is being that you have taken the time to come out here that you do verbalize your comments or drop a Comment Card to us so that we can get an idea of what the public is thinking concerning this project.

No question or comment that you have is too large or too small. Believe me, I'm more nervous being up here in front of you all instead of the other way around, you coming to talk to us. So we do appreciate that interaction.

Once we move on from this slide, we're going to throw a lot of information at you in a short amount of time. And that's why when the presentations are concluded, we're going to disperse back to the poster sections and be available to you to take comments and have some more dialogue.

So Project Introduction: Who is proposing the project? I've said CPRA a few times now. CPRA is

the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana. They've submitted a permit application to The Corps of Engineers. It's an application and a permission for the proposed Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project.

Settlement Diversions have been a coastal restoration tool I think that has been tossed around for a while now. Clearly, you all are aware of it because you have taken the time to attend tonight.

The important thing to know is CPRA is the applicant. As the applicant, they are for the project. They are a proponent. They think that this is a valuable tool for coastal restoration in south Louisiana.

As the applicant, they would be in charge of the design, the land acquisition, construction and maintenance if the proper

permits can be issued for the project.

CPRA is present here tonight and they have a lot of valuable information that is worth checking out in being here tonight.

It's worth pointing out that this isn't a Corps civil works project. It's not being funded, designed or constructed by The Corps of Engineers in any way.

Where is the project located? It's located at mile 60.7 above Head of Passes on the Mississippi River. That falls between the Alliance facilities and the town of Ironton in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana.

What is this project? CPRA is designing this project as a sediment diversion and that's how it will often be referred. One of the main components of the diversion channels is the conveyance canal or channel that will connect the

Mississippi River to the Barataria Basin.

The canal at this point is being proposed to deliver 75,000 cubic feet per second of water and with that water along with it sediment and nutrients will travel through the system. And the point in doing that is to deliver sediment fresh water nutrients and to reduce land loss and sustain Deepwater Horizon injured wetlands.

75,000 cubic feet per second for me doesn't mean a whole lot so I went through and tried to find some comparables. The closest one is probably the Mobile River. If you have been stuck near the tunnel on the I-10 from Mobile Bay, that's the outfall for Mobile River. It has an average discharge of 67,000 CFS so that gives you some comparison, I guess, on the scale of the project. But when you compare it to the Mississippi River, this

morning I checked out the Mississippi River Belle Chasse gauge and it was about 500,000 CFS so in relation it is a smaller scale when you're talking about the Mississippi River.

Project Location: The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is highlighted here in yellow. This is just a zoomed-out look of the project in relation to the three meetings that we're having, the scoping meetings that we're having. This is in Belle Chasse. This is meeting number two of three. On Thursday we met with some folks in Lafitte. I see some familiar faces so some of you have made the trek twice to meet with us.

So we were in the mid basin for Lafitte and now we're a little higher north in Belle Chase, a little higher up in the basin with hopes of getting your comments as well. On Thursday we'll be in the

bottom portion of the basin in Port Sulphur to collect comments as well.

So this is the project location where the direct impacts for the project will be. So we have the direct impact pretty well nailed down with reference to impacts to the Mississippi River channel and some of the jurisdictional waters and then the wetlands within the project footprint.

This is a small portion of the project. As you see, we have the Mississippi River levee here and then on the back portion of the project would be the future New Orleans to Venice levee. Beyond that is the outfall area. And that's a lot of what we're trying to nail down right now when it comes to impacts, both positive and negative.

And CPRA is working on different environmental models to try and get a better idea as to what those impacts may be and that's for

both water and sediment.

So, just to tie that slide into the Corps of Engineer's role, the Corps reviews an applicant's request for permits and permissions to make decisions based on best available science, engineering standards and professional judgment and considers impacts to Corps projects which is Section 408, waters of the U.S. which is Section 10 and jurisdictional wetlands which falls under Section 404 in most cases.

so Section 408 is basically an engineering review and that's going to cover some of the impacts that we talked about with the Corps civil works projects mainly being the Mississippi River levee, the New Orleans to Venice levee and then Mississippi River channel. What we're looking for there is to determine whether or not construction of this project will

impact those civil works projects.

Basically what the review here would be is to figure out if the projects that the Corps maintains will function the same way with this project.

Section 10 and 404 is the navigation and environmental review. In regulatory, that's what I do on a regular basis. That's covering navigation in the Mississippi River and some of the navigation areas in the outfall area and then some of the wetland impacts for Section 404. That would be the direct impacts, whether it be the forested wetlands along the Mississippi River batture or some of the wet pasture on the back portion of the project, and then the outfall area and the positive and negative impacts to the tidal marsh that could be experienced by this project.

With Section 404, we have a few extra requirements. One being

LEDPA. LEDPA is the Least Environmental Damaging Practicable Alternative. Basically, what that is is a review to determine whether or not the applicants proposed project is the least damaging alternative. If it's determined that it isn't than Corps regulatory can issue a permit for that project.

In addition to that, there's an additional 404 component that has public interest review which is basically a balance of a number of public interest factors in determining whether or not the project should be approved or denied.

So these are the three statutes that require us to do an environmental review and that environmental review is NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, which is a law that requires federal agencies to evaluate environmental impacts before making decisions on

any major federal actions. In this case, it's our permit review for Section 10, 404 and then the Section 408 permissions.

What are the key goals of the NEPA: It's to assist federal agency officials with making well-informed decisions and to ensure public and other agency involvement in decision making.

What are some of the major federal actions: Again, 10, 404 and 408 for regulatory and then there's some potential for other laws or federal actions to be impacted as well. One being the NRDA process, the Deep Water Horizon Trustees Restoration Planning and Funding, and then NOAA Fisheries, their review process for Marine Mammal Protection Act and their authorization process.

How do we comply with NEPA? Most of the time we go through the permitting process and

regulatory and come to a Finding of No Significant Impacts or a FONSI, and we are able to do an environmental assessment on that. In this case we got an application from CPRA to determine that there was the potential for some significant impact which requires a more robust review which is the Environmental Impact Statement.

What is an EIS? It's a detailed study of the potential impacts, both positive and negative, of a proposed project on the environment and local community. It evaluates reasonable alternatives based off the identified purpose and need.

Why an EIS? We talked a little bit about it on the previous slide. Significant impacts and the impacts to the human environment.

What is the Corps' role? As you saw in that previous slide there, there is a lot at stake for

the Corps here with this project. And with that, we're the lead federal agency responsible for managing and overseeing the EIS process.

We're also responsible for identifying cooperating agencies. So the Corps has to reach out to other agencies that either have jurisdiction by law or an expertise that we're looking for to bring them in to help us work through the EIS process.

How will the EIS be used? For the Corps, it would be to inform two decisions: a permit decision for 10/404 and then a 408 permission.

And then the record decision is basically The Corps' way to announce and explain our permit and permission decision regarding CPRA's proposed project.

What is in an EIS? If you look at enough of these documents,

they follow the same formula. The three main topics that we're looking for input on or the two, really, is project alternatives and the affected environment. But in order to get there, we need to have an established purpose and need basically saying what is the project and why is it needed. That will shape our alternatives review where we're looking at the no action so what would be the impacts if we did nothing versus the impact of the proposed action, and then a range of alternatives.

A lot of that information is formed from what we get as far as comments go tonight. So if you're sitting there asking yourself why isn't another project being considered, those are the type of comments that we're looking for in order to move forward with our process.

The same goes for the

affected environment with what's out there currently. What are the conditions within the direct impact area and then the outfall area of the basin. And then that will inform our environmental consequences in trying to determine how building, operating and maintaining the project will impact those current conditions.

And then, again, compliance with other laws and regulations. We have a number of agencies that are trying to utilize our Environmental Impact Statement for their own decision-making process.

So this is the applicant's purpose and need that we received in their joint permit application submitted about a year ago: The purpose of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is to reconnect and reestablish the natural or deltaic sediment deposition process

between the Mississippi River and the Barataria Basin; the project is needed as a long-term resilient, sustainable strategy to reduce land loss rates and sustain injured wetland through the delivery of sediment, fresh water and nutrients.

What is scoping? It's why we're here tonight. The public scoping process is an early and open phase in the EIS process intended to provide interested or affected parties an opportunity to express concerns, ideas and comments which will inform and/or identify the issues and alternatives analyzed in the EIS document.

Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. Whether or not you fill out a Comment Card tonight or provide a comment to one of our court reporters, we do ask that if something comes up within this process and you want to provide additional information, that you do

so. And then that impact will be made part of the EIS and the scoping report which will be an appendix to our document.

So that means each comment that we receive will be factored and reviewed and then be made part of the EIS. That's why the scoping process is really important for us.

How do you comment? Again, we have a comment station over here. So this is the comment form. All we ask is that you fill this out and provide your comment to us. If you fill out the Comment Card and submit it tonight, we have some comment boxes for you to drop it in. If you want to take a stack of these home and fill them out or give them to friends and family, that's fine as well. We just ask that you fold it up, either staple or put a piece of tape on here with a stamp and send it in the mail to us.

We also have the

opportunity for you to provide comments via E-mail. You can send us a letter or that Comment Card the old fashioned way, through the mail.

We also have the opportunity for you to speak with a court reporter. There is also the option for those who need it to speak with a Vietnamese translator if needed.

In addition to that, we do have our Fact Sheet. I know Ricky talked little bit about it. It is something we ask you to pick up on the way out. It just provides some information from the Corps' point of view. And on the back side there are also those ways to comment. So if you take this home, you will always have a guide as to how to comment for us.

So I'm about to hand it over to CPRA and Brad Barth. But before doing so, we just have a couple of questions that we would

like you to consider when you're listening to the presentation and things to talk about when you're listening to the proposed project.

Question #1 is, What are the most important issues, resources and impacts that we, the Corps, should consider in the EIS?

Question #2, Are there any other alternatives or modifications to the existing proposal that we should consider in the EIS?

And, Question #3, Are there other problems or opportunities that we should be aware of?

And with that, I'll turn it over to Mr. Barth so he can present their project.

MR. BRAD BARTH:

Thanks, everybody. Hopefully, everybody can hear me. I'm a little bit louder type of a person. Hopefully, you-all can hear me. We will go ahead and get

started.

As Brad said, we're going to go ahead and give you more project details in terms of components and the features to the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion.

Again, I'm Brad Barth with CPRA. I'm in the Operations Division and also the Director of Mid-Basin Diversion Program.

With that, some of you all may have the question, what is a sediment diversion here tonight? We all may be familiar with different types of diversions. We have fresh water diversion such as Davis Pond and Caernarvon which we know are specifically designed to fight back salt water intrusion in the Barataria and the Breton Sounds basins. We also know that there are flood risk reduction diversions as well that are designed to relieve a flood event above a major population at risk such as the Bonnet Carre

spillway. And that will reduce the flood risk to the population below such as New Orleans and then down the line to Belle Chasse and so forth.

Sediment diversion is a little bit different. It's specifically located and designed in the area of the river that's sediment rich so there we have lots of sands, silts and clays to use to our advantage to rebuild our coast. And with that, it's got the primary goal to build land. And with that, we also know we can maintain and sustain the existing wetlands by the addition of the nutrients and sediments and the fresh water as well, so maximize that sediment diversion out of the river, use those natural processes that are automatically there in the river.

With that, I want to go ahead and give you a little more project features and components from

what Brad showed you earlier. I'm going to go ahead and try to use the pointer a little bit as well just for orientation.

This is the Alliance Refinery. Ironton here, Mississippi River. This is the Mississippi River levee and as we go out towards the Barataria Basin to the west this would be the NOV levee.

And then specifically if we get into components of the projects, we're going to have the New Orleans Gulf Coast Railroad, a proposed railroad re-alignment, the proposed LA 23, so potential relocation for Highway 23. And then with that, this is the diversion complex structure here in the orange. And I'll have some slides in a little bit to talk more about the specific features and components of that structure.

With that, this is going

across the fast lands here. If you all know, we just built -- or The Corps of Engineers built this pump station down here, the Wilkinson pump station. So we have all this interior drainage to maintain. So with that, we will have to make combinations to the interior drainage in terms of a pump station or another type of structure to bring this water down here to this existing pump station that we just put a lot of money to to good use for.

With that, as we transition out into the basin, there will also be a transition from the outfall of the structure here into the basin where there will be a dredged outfall area. And that dredged material would then go as beneficial use material which then we make cells of marsh creation here or potentially here as well.

I want to go onto the next

slide for you-all.

So why this location in the Mississippi River? Some of you-all may have some of the history of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion but it's been looked at, it's been looked at a bunch of different locations up and down the lower Mississippi River. But this location is special. This location has good access to the sediment, that sediment rich area in the river, and that comes from a point bar.

So you got the Alliance point bar right here. If some of you also are too from this area, you have been out in this area, you have been out in the water, you will know over the last few years CPRA has been embarking on lots of dredging projects in this area. We've been using the materials in the river, long distance sediment pipeline projects. So that's why this

location specifically is sediment rich and we're going to use the power, use the resources of the river to help re-establish our coast.

So when we talk about operations of the structure, we will talk a lot about natural processes of the Mississippi River. The Ole Man River has a lot of power in the lower Mississippi valley. When we look at that on a general flood cycle, we can harness that power. We can look at that differential water level, that water level from the river out to the basin to move that sediment load. And with that, the operations would then use that natural process in the operations during the late winter months or the spring months when we're in our flood season to transfer that sediment out into the basin to re-establish these wetlands and marshes.

So this schematic is just as simple as this, as we come down the Mississippi River from New Orleans, heading towards Venice, the structure would be in this area, one, two, three. When it was a flood season, it would be open and operated, it would take us out to the basin, the Barataria Basin.

I want to get into a little bit more of the project specific features and components of the diversion structure itself. So with this project, we will be going through the Mississippi River levee which provides flood protection for our citizens. With that, we will have to maintain that level of protection. So components are inlet channel and then a gated diversion structure. This gated structure would maintain and keep that level of flood risk reduction there on the Mississippi River.

From this point through

the gated structure would transition to the diversion channel Brad spoke of earlier.

When we look at the conveyance channel, so now we've transitioned from the inlet structure now to the channel as we go out to the basin, we can kind of look back and in the distance this would be the Mississippi River here, this would be the inlet structure we just talked about and the previous map I showed you, kind of the relocation of LA 23 and the railroad. That's what those would represent right there.

So it would be an open channel, two guide levees either side to help transport that sediment and nutrient load out to the basin.

And then lastly, the outfall structure. If we look at the outfall structure back into Barataria Basin, this would be the NOV levee system in this area, a

back structure gate here tying in and then taking that sediment load out into the basin.

So Brad talked a little bit about direct impacts and indirect impacts. So the big question is what's this going to do to the basin? What's it going to do to our resources?

This is a key part of getting to that answer is the operational strategies. So some of you may be familiar with this, some may not. So the initial operational strategy is a water base trigger so it considers the flood stage or the level of the river at Belle Chasse or the queue or the flow of the river.

So at 450,000 CFS on a rising river, the structure would be operated or turned on. On a falling river when the river would hit 450,000 CFS, it would turn off again. So, again, using that

natural process of the Mississippi River, similar to what we see historically in geologic time if we have geologists out there.

When we talk about operational flow, Brad mentioned a maximum 75,000 CFS. That's what the structure would be designed for or maximum operational level. But when we look at that trigger, when it would trigger on at the 450,000, it would be more on the order of 30,000 CFS because that's the power the river can give us. So that water level in the river at 450,000 CFS to what the basin is, it's about 30,000 CFS.

Most years it would probably be in the order of 30-50,000 CFS in terms of that flood season. And then we get into the higher river loads when we get into the million CFS and some of the events maybe we had back in 2011 that's when it would hit that

75,000. So it wouldn't be a consistent 75,000 all the time.

Also, too, when we get below that 450,000, there would be an up to 5,000 CFS base flow. And then a lot of folks -- Adaptive Management, you may have heard that term. So this is a way that we can manage change. We all know our basin is changing. And this would allows us the opportunity to manage that change within our permit and that's what the State would be looking to do in terms of operations of this structure.

And then lastly, emergency stops. So I see familiar faces. I know there's folks out there that have troubles with south winds. So when we have a strong south wind, we have waters pushing up, we're looking to have emergency stops for water levels; we're looking to have stops for spills in the river; stops for any kind of navigational issues.

And then lastly, I kind of talked about this a little bit, Adaptive Management. So how are we going to monitor this? How are we going to hold ourselves accountable? We're going to look at the realtime monitoring on the river side. We'll look at the water levels. We'll look at that sediment load in the river.

On the basin side, we will look at the receiving areas. We'll look at the salinities, the water levels, certain water quality parameters. And then ultimately, what CPRA would like to do is have a realtime forecasting tool to where we can run this thing more efficiently than what's permitted.

And I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Mel Landry here in a second with the Deep Water Horizon Trustee, the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group, but before I do that CPRA is -- I'm

taking an event called Coastal Connections. And we come down to different locations in Plaquemines and Jefferson and St. Bernard to specifically to talk about these projects so the Barataria project, we've been coming down since December and we will continue to come down on at least a monthly basis.

So I encourage you to get our schedule, contact us, get with Plaquemines Parish officials. They are very well aware of our schedule. It's a one-on-one setting. You guys can come talk to us and we can get some information feedback from you guys. And as well, if all CPRA people can raise their hands over here by our board, just raise your hand. So if you have any questions afterwards, please come by and see us. We definitely encourage it.

Mel?

MR. MEL LANDRY:

Thanks, Brad.

As Brad mentioned, I'm Mel Landry with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also known as NOAA. I'm a member of the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group, that is the group of trustees that manage the Natural Resource Damage Assessment from the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill. This group of folks works together to identify projects that will help to restore for injuries caused by this spill and focuses the funding from the settlement under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment to those projects.

So the Louisiana TIG is considering funding the construction of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion through the Deep Water Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Restoration funds.

We are supporting the development of the Corp's EIS

because of that potential for it to serve as the EIS for our restoration planning. So the TIG may use The Corps' Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion EIS to inform our activities.

I'll give you a little background on how those pieces fit together. We have initiated a phased restoration planning approach to the Barataria Basin. In this first phase, we'll call it a Strategic Restoration Plan for the Barataria Basin that will highlight projects that restore wetland, coastal and near shore resources that were injured by the Deepwater Horizon spill.

The projects will need to be consistent with our programmatic restoration plan that guides restoration for the spill across the gulf of Mexico.

The second plan, we're going to call it the Phase 2 plan,

it will further evaluate projects or a suite of projects that are selected for advancement in the Phase 1 Strategic Restoration Plan. Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan identified restoration projects based on a strong scientific background and extensive public outreach. Because the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion was selected for inclusion in the State's Master Plan, we acknowledge the potential for this project to be selected for advancement in the Trustee Implementation Group's Phase 1 Strategic Restoration Plan.

If the TIG were to select the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion for restoration funding under NRDA restoration, we could use the Corps' EIS for our own evaluation. This would allow us to evaluate and implement the project more efficiently in terms of both time and dollars and that is why we're

involved here today.

We're now going to bring Brad back up with the Corps and provide some final thoughts on this portion of our meeting.

MR. BRAD LABORDE:

Thanks, Mel.

And just to wrap-up here, so now that we have got a little bit of background on the Corp's role and then the NRDA process and then the proposed project, here is an example of one of the posters that we have here tonight. They are surrounding the room.

This is just an example of one of the posters that we have here tonight. It is some of the potential issues that we've started to look at early in our review process. We do ask that you kind of go around the room and take a look at some of the posters that we have tonight.

The review process of

potential issues is here. We also have a poster that points out the NEPA team which is The Corps of Engineers and the cooperating agencies. We have some additional information about NEPA, the different laws and regulations that the EIS is trying to both inform and some of the decision making that's trying to be made as a result of the EIS.

We have a process timeline and I guess this would be another example here. We have our -- I guess our process as it pertains to CPRA having an application that they want to go through. They submitted to the Corps, the Corps determines that it needs to go through this Environmental Impact Statement. And from there, we gather our cooperating agencies that are in the trick bag here.

And then we have public input of information from the

cooperating agencies and then the Corps' back and forth with CPRA in trying to get information from them, trying to validate it and then make it part of the EIS.

With that EIS, there will be outputs. It will be the Corps' permit and permission decisions as well as some of the decisions that are being tried to be achieved by this document.

Now, there are other opportunities for you to comment after scoping. The draft EIS. so once we get all our scoping input, we will work through it, put together a draft EIS. That will include a comment period and then a public hearing. That's scheduled for summer 2020. I know that feels like it's a long way off but we talked about a lot of those different laws that we're trying to wrap into this document. In addition to that, CPRA is still

working on the design for the project. So there's a number of things that roll into that number.

I do want to point out the draft EIS public hearing. If you feel like you will be at that public hearing telling us that we didn't address certain things, whatever those things may be, please comment. Make those comments because that's the only way we're going to know what you're feeling on the project.

So, again, we have our Comment Cards here at the comment station. Fill one of those out. If you would like to make a verbal comment, we ask that you fill out the top part just so we can record that somebody did make a verbal comment and we can make those part of the scoping document.

Once we complete the draft EIS, we will make our final tweaks and publish the final EIS which will include a comment period which is

currently scheduled for 2021, sometime in the summertime.

So in conclusion, the Corps is neither an opponent or a proponent of this project. We're strictly in a regulatory role. The Corps is reaching out to the public for a bit of an education and some feedback concerning issues. It should be covered in the EIS.

The agency afterwards, after I'm finished here, agency representatives are going to return to their surrounding posted stations to answer questions.

When Brad Barth was up here, he had a pretty good idea in identifying CPRA. I would like them to do that again just so everyone is aware who the applicant is back in this corner here.

We also have NOAA Fisheries experts to discuss the Marine Mammal Protection Act, if you could right over here in this

section here.

And the NRDA trustees that are present here tonight are in this region over here. And then, The Corps of Engineers, we will be over in this section as well.

So those are the people that we would like you to come and talk to us. And if you have any questions, to address them now here tonight. Please keep in mind that the dialogue that we have around the poster sections are not formal comments. In order to record your formal comments, you will have to do so through the multiple ways we previously discussed, whether that be through the Comment Cards or a letter, E-mail or providing your verbal comments.

We do ask that you spend a maximum time of three minutes with the court reporters. However, if you have some additional issues that go beyond those three minutes, please

just allow some other people to come through the line, get in the back and then you can continue with your comment.

With that, I'm going to hand it back over to Ricky so he can wrap up the presentation portion of the talk tonight.

MR. RICKY BOYETTE:

I'm going to skip to a couple of slides.

Just real quick, just to give you an idea where we are. So officially what we have to do is we have to print a giant comprehensive document, multiple volumes.

We've hired a team of specialists. They are not federal employees. They are a team of specialists and their job is to compile this for us.

Once we have collected all your comments from tonight and during this comment period, they will go to work organizing and start

working on evaluating those comments with the Corps.

Once we have what we consider a draft version, we'll then provide that draft version to you for your consideration and your review.

What I want to highlight is that in the summer of 2020, that's what we're looking at now, there's a public hearing. That public hearing is a little bit different than a scoping meeting in that during that public hearing we will talk very little but everybody will have an opportunity to present their questions.

Public hearings are a little different than public meetings. If you're in attendance at that, once you review the draft document then you have a specific timeline to present it and we will stay as long as it takes so everybody in attendance has a chance

to present.

So we'll be back out. Today is round one of three. We'll be back out here for the draft to get your comments so that we know as we're headed to the final EIS we're in good shape. And then when we finalize the EIS in '21, we'll come back right to you so we can get your final comments as well.

That does conclude the presentation portion of it but it does not conclude the meeting. Again, we have stations around the room.

Please talk to our subject matter experts if you have any questions. And then please comment while you're here or at least take the comment cards or the information to comment later.

Quite often we have somebody who believes that their comment is going to be shared by many others so they don't comment.

Don't do that. We would rather get 10 to a 100 of the same exact comment than to miss out on what may be a unique comment.

So, please, if you have any questions or want to discuss the process, the project, please join our team around the room. And again we'll be here till 8:00 collecting comments.

Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, THE PRESENTATION WAS CONCLUDED.)

PUBLIC SCOPING PRESENTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

for the proposed

MID-BARATARIA SEDIMENT DIVERSION

DATE: Thursday, July 27, 2017

LOCATION:

Port Sulphur Community Center
276 Civic Drive
Port Sulphur, Louisiana

TIME: 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

- P R O C E E D I N G S -

MR. RICKY BOYETTE:

My name is Ricky Boyette. I am the chief of Public Affairs for the Corps of Engineers in New Orleans.

We're here today to really kick off the environmental process for regulatory permits that are required for The Corps of Engineers.

So, we're looking at the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion. That is a project that is being proposed by the State of Louisiana and the Corps comes into play because we have to determine whether it can be permitted under Section 10/404 or 408. And Brad will get into that much later.

But what I want to say is that as part of that process, this is a very large project, it has a large scope and it's really unprecedented for this area. And to be able to make a good permitting

decision, we have to fully understand, not only the project but the area that could be affected, whether it's beneficial or not. We will look at it in terms of will the benefits of this project outweigh the negative impacts? Is it in the public interest to have this project? And those are some of the things that we are tasked with as the Corps of Engineers under our regulatory authority.

That process to understand fully and have a comprehensive view of this area in that project is undertaken in what we consider an EIS, an Environmental Impact Statement. And we're really at the first part of that. It's almost the kickoff and that's where we come to you and we get your feedback, what do you think are the concerns that you have with this project and this area.

It's a little different

for us. And, generally, when you see us at public meetings, more often than not, it's a Corps project and we come to you to get your feedback but we know a lot about that project as we come to it.

In this case, it's under our regulatory. It's not our project. So we're looking for you to provide insight to us on the area because we know that no one knows your area better than those who live there. And we will pool your information and that will help guide us and what we need to make sure to look at when we are conducting the Environmental Impact Statement.

Brad will get a little bit more further into it. This is kind of the kickoff. We're here to get your input and there are multiple ways to do so.

First, when you checked in, signed in, we have Comment Cards as well as fact sheets. And the

Comment Card we'll ask that if you're going to make a written comment tonight, you can fill that card out and give it us to, as well as if you wanted to make a verbal comment to one of our court reporters here to at least fill out the top part of it and that way we know who to attribute the comments to so you can talk to the court reporter and they will take down verbatim what you say but we want to have at least your name and all that information so that we can appropriately attribute the comments that we're receiving.

I also want to point out that tonight is an opportunity to comment but it's not the only opportunity to comment. The comment period will be open until September the 5th so if you make comments tonight that goes into the public record but if you're not ready to make a comment or as I said earlier

you get home and something else, you know, if you're thinking about it, another concerns pops up, you can submit comments to us at a later date as well.

And on the Fact Sheet, the front side is kind of the summary of what we're looking at in terms of the project as well as the process. But the back side of the fact sheet is how to submit comments and it will give you -- you can submit it through E-mail, you can submit it through regular mail and all of that information is on the back side of this fact sheet. So I would urge you that this is the one to definitely take home with you and hang onto. That way you're able to keep all of the information as well.

We also have translation services here tonight as well tonight. If I can, I will take a couple of minutes to -- if I can turn the mike over.

Thank you very much, ma'am.

(WHEREUPON, A VIETNAMESE TRANSLATOR MADE A STATEMENT TO AUDIENCE.)

MR. RICKY BOYETTE:

Just to reiterate tonight we're going to have a formal presentation. Brad Laborde is with the Corps of Engineers. He will lead off that presentation, kind of go over the process for the EIS as well as the regulatory process.

I do want to point out something different than many of our meetings is we're not having a question-and-answer session as part of the presentation as well as what I'm calling public presentation of the comments. That is not to say we're not taking comments; we're just not bringing everyone up to the mike tonight.

This is really one round of three rounds of public meetings that we'll have. Tonight we're here

to get your input so we know what we're looking for. And then when we come back with what we consider our draft EIS, we'll have a hearing in which all the comments will be made verbally to us, anybody that wants to speak will be able to.

I do want to say that while we're not having a Q&A session as part of the presentation, it's not that we can't answer questions. We have Corps of Engineers members throughout the room, especially in the back. They are here to answer questions.

We also have representatives of the State of Louisiana and they are here to answer questions as well as Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group. So we can answer questions. We're just not going to have a formal portion of the presentation.

With that, I'm going to turn it to Brad for The Corps of

Engineers presentation.

MR. BRAD LABORDE:

Thanks, Ricky, for the intro. I'm going to try to hang this up here and see if everybody can still hear me.

Again, my name is I'm Brad Laborde. I'm the regulatory project manager for The Corps of Engineers for this proposed project.

Before we get started here tonight, I'm just going to run through the presentation agenda. So, again, I'm going to go through the presentation agenda just so you know what to expect in our presentation portion of our meeting tonight.

The first thing is project introduction, just a quick rundown of the Corps' perspective and then we'll talk a little bit about the Corps of Engineer's role followed by the National Environmental Policy Act Process or NEPA process. At that

point, I'll turn the mike over to Brad Barth of CPRA so that he can give you a little bit more information on their proposed project.

After Mr. Barth completes, Mel Landry one of the Deepwater Horizon Trustees will give a couple of slides to discuss the Environmental Impact Statement and how that relates to that restoration planning under NRDA or the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process.

Once Mr. Landry is done, I'll come up and do a few more slides just to reiterate opportunities to comment and then we'll wrap-up with the conclusion.

So at the Corps when we are going to brief higher-ups, we have an acronym called BLUF, bottom line upfront. I guess the bottom line upfront as to why we're here today is two reasons: The first is to provide you information about the

permitting process with the Corps, and then the NEPA process which is somewhat involved with our decision making. And then some information on CPRA's proposed project.

With that, we'll again talk a little bit about the NRDA component as well. The second reason is to offer you all here tonight an easy platform to collect and record your comments. The comments that you provide will help us determine the scope of issues to be considered and analyzed with the Environmental Impact statement or EIS.

You decided to attend tonight's meeting so you do have an interest in the project and in our process. We know it's difficult to carve out some time to come on a Thursday evening so we're appreciative of that. We do ask though since you did take the time to come here that you do provide

your comments because they are important to us and they help us as we move forward.

So once we move on from this slide, I'm going to put a good bit of information out there to you in a short amount of time. And it can be a little daunting so that's why we do have that question-and-answer period at the end just to help you with some of the things that may have been confusing throughout the talk here tonight.

So project introduction, who is proposing the project? I've said CPRA a few times now. CPRA is the Coastal Protection Restoration Authority of Louisiana. They submitted a Department of Army permit application and permission to the Corps for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion.

Some of you may have heard of this project before under a

different title or a different name. Sediment diversions have been a coastal restoration tool that has been discussed for some time now. But for this case, it's important to know that CPRA is the applicant. And as the applicant that is going to undergo the land acquisition, the design construction and maintenance, they are a proponent of the project. And clearly so, they feel like this project is a valuable tool with coastal restoration moving forward in southern Louisiana.

CPRA is here tonight. I do recommend that you visit with them. Pick up some of the information that they have or just talk to them about their project.

Where is the project located? I actually passed it today, a lot of us did actually. It's on the right descending bank of the Mississippi River at mile marker 60.7. That falls between the

Alliance facility and the town of Ironton in Plaquemines Parish.

What is the project? The project will be referred to and designed as a sediment diversion. One of the main components of the sediment diversion is the conveyance channel which will connect the Mississippi River to the Barataria Basin.

With that connection, with it will bring up to 75,000 cubic feet per second of water. Notice it says up to so it won't always run that way but it will be determined, -- the flow of the river will determine the amount of water that travels through the channel itself. And with that water, carrying with it will be sediment and nutrients that will be reintroduced into the basin. And the thought there is that it would be a method to reduce land loss and sustain injured wetlands that were impacted during

the oil spill.

I know 75,000 cubic feet per second didn't mean a lot to me when I read it so I went through and tried to find some comparables or some examples. If you have ever been stuck around the Mobile tunnel on the I-10, that's Mobile Bay which is the outflow for the Mobile River which has an average flow of about 67,000 CFS. So that's a pretty good comparable but this morning looking at the gauge of Belle Chasse for the Mississippi River it was at about 450,000 CFS. So with respect to that, it's a bit smaller.

So this is a project location, just a zoomed out view of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion. It's highlighted in yellow here.

And the three meetings we've had; this is meeting three of three. Last Thursday we met with folks in Lafitte to get their

perspective, kind of mid basin perspective. Then on Tuesday we went a little further north in Belle Chasse and had a productive meeting there. And now we're in the lower portion of the basin with you folks tonight.

So here is the project location with the direct impacts of the project as its proposed. As you can see, it starts at the Mississippi River. It cuts through the Mississippi River being project one that The Corps maintains, then the Mississippi River levee and then the proposed New Orleans to Venice levee on the back side of the project.

In addition to that, we have impacts to jurisdictional waters, about 18 acres, and then an additional 50 acres of direct wetland impacts. These are the impacts that we have a pretty good handle on. If this is indeed the

site that turns out where the project would be located if the proper permits could be permitted.

The big question that we have is the outfall area. So where the impacts would be in the Barataria Basin as it pertains to water and sediment and nutrients.

CPRA is doing some environmental modeling right now to try and get a handle on where those impacts would be, both positive and negative and then I guess it would be the Corps' job to review that information for accuracy with some of the other agencies that we're partnering with and then decide if we agree.

So this is an outline of The Corps of Engineers' role. I talked a little bit about impacts of the federal projects. Those fall under Section 408 which is the Corp's obligation to review projects that impact civil works projects.

So in this case, we're talking about the Mississippi River channel and then the two levees that I pointed out on the previous slide.

The main goal of Section 408 is essentially an engineering review. And that review will be to determine that whether or not the project, if it's constructed -- so if it's constructed, if they would be basically trying to figure out if the projects that The Corps maintains would function the same with this third party being CPRA coming through to construct the project through a Corps' project.

And then Section 10 and Section 404 is more of what I do on a regular basis. That's going to cover the navigation review, navigation of the Mississippi River as well as what the impacts would be to navigable waters and the project outfall area. And then Section 404 would cover any of the wetland

impacts so that would be the direct impacts that are in the project footprint and then the positive and negative impacts to the outfall area.

Section 404 does have some additional regulatory components. One being the LEDPA determination. LEDPA is the Least Environmental Damaging Practicable Alternative. Basically, what that is is the review of the project to determine if it's the least damaging practicable alternative.

If it's not the least damaging option that CPRA has than technically the Corps cannot issue a permit for that project.

In addition to the LEDPA, we have a public interest review which is basically a balance of the positives and negatives impacts and how that would impact the public overall.

So the 408, Section 10 and

Section 404, that's really the Corps' federal trigger that requires us to do an environmental review. That environmental review is the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA. And it's a law that requires federal agencies to evaluate environmental impacts before making decisions on any major federal actions. And in this case, it's for the Corps, the Section 10, 404 review and the Section 408 permission.

The goals are to assist federal agency officials in making well-informed decisions and to allow the public and other agencies to be involved with our decision-making process.

Some of the major federal actions are the Corps triggers that we talked about on the previous slide but in addition to that there's the potential for other agencies to try and use this

document for their decision-making needs. The first is the Deepwater Horizon trustees with relation to their restoration planning and funding under NRDA which is oil impact funding. And then the potential to inform Marine Mammal Protection Authorization which is covered under NOAA or National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration's NOAA Fisheries, their review of impacts on marine mammals. And then how we will comply with NEPA most of the time. In regulatory, we go through our common process and come to a finding of no significant impact or a FONSI. We can do an environmental assessment on that.

For this project, we got an application early on to determine potential for significant impacts which led us to having to do a more robust review in an Environmental Impact Statement.

So an EIS is the detailed study of the potential impact, both positive and negative, of a proposed project to the environment and local community. It evaluates reasonable alternatives based off the identified purpose and need.

Why an EIS? Significant impacts. We talked a little about that. And then due to the level of impacts to Corps projects and Corps jurisdiction, we're designated as the lead federal agency which makes us responsible for managing and overseeing the EIS.

We're also responsible for reaching out to other agencies and making them a part of this process, either because they have an expertise that we're looking to gain so that we can use that expertise into our document and our decision making purposes or because they have jurisdiction by law and they also have some decisions that they make

that they have to make on the project.

So for the Corps -- the EIS will be informing two permit decisions, that 10, 404 permit decision and then the Section 408 permission. And the ROD, or the record of decision, would be the announcement or permit decisions regarding the CPRA's proposed project.

What is in an EIS? The main things for I guess the scoping purposes is project alternatives in the affected environment. But in order to get there, we need to have a purpose and need and understand what the purpose of the proposed project is and why is the project needed.

Once we have that information, we'll be able to look at project alternatives, whether it is starting with no action so doing nothing and then the proposed action

and then a reasonable range of different projects that could be considered that meet this original purpose and need.

So if you're sitting here tonight thinking of different projects that could be used to maybe do the same thing as what's being proposed here, than those are the type of comments that we want to get a better understanding from the public on.

And then the affected environment. We want to have a good grasp of what's out there now and what the current environment is in the project area and the outfall area.

And that will lead us to the environmental consequences in determining how the project building, operating and maintaining would affect those baseline conditions established in the affected environment.

So we talked about purpose and need. This is the CPRA purpose and need as it was provided to us and their permit application about a year ago: The purpose of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is to reconnect and re-establish the natural or deltaic sediment deposition process between the Mississippi River and the Barataria Basin. The project is needed as a long-term resilient, sustainable strategy to reduce land loss rates and sustain injured wetlands through the delivery of sediment, freshwater and nutrients.

What is scoping? It's why we are here tonight. It's an early and open process in the EIS process intended to operate or provide interested or affected parties an opportunity to express concerns, ideas and comments which will inform and/or identify the issues and alternatives analyzed in the EIS

document.

Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. I think Ricky hit on it perfectly but whether you comment tonight or not, we have till September 5th to accept comments so if something comes up later on that you think of, either passing the site or over dinner or discussions than you still have time to get that to us in writing or you can provide a comment tonight.

And the feedback that you do provide and in the formal comments that we receive will be in the EIS scoping report which will be an appendix of the document.

So here, we have a poster here tonight on how to comment. It's right there but this is just a representation of that and, again, it's kind of what Ricky and I have hit on already but we have Comment Cards. There's a Comment Card station over here. Are there

Comment Cards at the front desk? Yes, at the front desk there are Comment Cards. So pick up one or a stack of those. Fill them out, drop them in the comment box.

If you have a stack of comment cards, you can take them home with you, fill a few out or give them out to friends and family.

Do I still have Comment Card example up here? So with that, fold up it, slap a stamp on it and send it to us. It's already marked for us to receive it. You can send us a letter, the old fashioned way and our mailing information is on the poster. You can send us an E-mail. We have a mailbox dedicated to this project. So it would be hard to miss it that way.

And then we also have court reporters too, two court reporters here tonight that if you want to verbalize your comments that that's open to you. We have one

comment station here and then once I shut up this will come down and we will have a comment station here as well.

We do ask that you do fill out at least the top part of this form, this comment form, so that when we're reviewing comments we have a one-to-one representation of who stood in line to make a verbal comment versus what's in the record.

I'm about to turn it over to CPRA and Brad Barth to discuss their project in depth. Here are a few questions that we would like you consider when you're listening to the presentation.

Question #1 is, What are the most important issues, resources and impacts that we, the Corps, should be considering in the EIS?

Question #2, Are there any other alternatives or modifications to the existing proposal that we should consider in

the EIS?

And, Question #3, Are there other problems or opportunities we should be aware of?

So if you have some feedback on that or this spurs other comments for you, these are some of the things that you can be thinking about during the presentation and then provide to us in a comment form.

So with that, I'll turn it over to Brad Barth with CPRA so they can discuss their proposed project.

MR. BRAD BARTH:

Thanks, Brad.

I'll go ahead and make sure everybody can hear me back there all right. If so, I'll go ahead and get started.

As Brad said, my name is Brad Barth as well, just to make it confusing. I'm with CPRA, Coastal Restoration Authority out of Baton Rouge. I'm in the Operations

Division and also the Director of the Mid-Basin Sediment Diversion Program.

Tonight I'm here to give you a little bit more information about the Mid-Barataria Basin Sediment Diversion. And we're going to go ahead and talk a little bit about the different features of the project and then also as well some of the components of the specific project.

With that, sediment diversions. Some of you all may be familiar with freshwater diversions such as Davis pond or Caernarvon. Those types of diversions are specifically targeted for fighting back salt water. We're working on that salt water that's intruding from further north.

When we talk about other types of diversions, we also know there's flood risk reduction diversion such as the Bonnet Carre

Spillway. So we have a population at risk. We have a flood coming down the river. We can open up that diversion, relieve that pressure from the river and reduce that risk to that population.

Sediment diversions are a little bit different. They are designed different. They are designed with the intent of maximizing that sediment load, maximizing that capture of sediment in the sediment rich area of the river. They will use that natural process to build land. And also with that land building also comes the ability to maintain and sustain existing wetlands through nutrients, sediments and freshwater.

We do have a little bit of an example of diversion upstream of Baton Rouge. Those of you who are familiar with Old River control structure. That structure, auxiliary control structure, was

specifically to help relieve some of the load on the Mississippi River and manage the water and sediment load balance between the Mississippi River and the Atchafalaya rivers.

We'll go ahead and talk in a little more detail about project location. When we look at project location just for orientation, the Mississippi River here, Philips 66 Refinery, town of Ironton right here. Then when we look at some of the specific components, the Mississippi River levee, westbank levee right here and then this back here would be the NOV levee.

When we talk about some of the specific features of the project, in the orange here, this would represent the diversion complex itself. So coming from the river out to the Barataria Basin.

And then in addition to that some of the proposed detailed

features are the New Orleans to Gulf Coast proposed railroad realignment, LA 23 relocation and then also as we will be affecting this here, looking at a pump station or potential site structure to continue that waterline down to the Wilkinson pump station.

In addition to that, as we transition from this area here in the fastlands out into the basin, we would also have proposed dredge area to make the transition from the channel out to the elevation of the basin here and then that material could be used as beneficial dredge material up into the two areas in red that you see to the north and south of the project.

So why this location? Why this area here along the Mississippi River. As Brad talked about, there's been a lot of effort in previous studies and looks at this project. And this area here is determined to be a really good

location in terms of the sediment-to-water ratio, the amount of sediment, that sediment rich area. Right here we have the Alliance Refinery point bar or Alliance point bar. And here this is a good access to that sediment, it provides us sands, silts and clays in order to help us rebuild some of that lost land that we've seen in the basin.

So how is this thing going to work? When we think about it, a lot of times you hear natural processes associated with this project. When we think of natural process, we can use the power of Ole Man River. And when we think of the river, we have a flood season. When we have high water in the river, that head differential, that water level in the river is really high and the basin is lower, we can use that water to move that sediment out into the basin.

So if I'm coming down the Mississippi River here and I get here during the flood season then I can open up the gates to the structure and then one, two, three, you're out to the basin. Again, using the natural process, the gravity of the river out to the basin in terms of operations.

Looking at a little bit of detail about the specific structures or the components of the project. So if you remember the area in orange that I showed you on a previous slide, now we can come in here and look at more detail. This would be the Mississippi River here. This would be the inlet structure here which would be a series of gates that can control the water from the river out to the basin. And then you would have a transition into a channel and that channel would lead out to the basin.

If we look back at the

Mississippi River, we can see our channel here, the river is up here in this area. And then here you can see the inlet structure that we just talked about, the gates that would control the river to let the water out into the basin that carries all the sediment. This would be the proposed relocated LA 23. And then you can see the channel here with a series of guide levees.

And then lastly as we get out to the back levee or the NOV levee, you would have a transition here tieing it back into the NOV flood protection and then an outfall area out into the Barataria Basin.

Brad talked a little bit earlier about the EIS process and how it's going to get into the details of looking at the impacts in the basin. What does that look like? What are we going to see with this project?

As we look at this, one of

the key components is how is this project going to operate. And when we talk about the initial operations, we're proposing initial operations that then can be evaluated in the EIS process.

So operations, it's a water based trigger. So we talked about the flood season, the winter months, the spring months. As the river rises, we hit a certain flood stage or a queue or a flow in the river.

As Brad mentioned, the river is about 450,000 CFS today at Belle Chasse. This would be the start and stop for the operation. So on a rising river, we hit 450,000, the gates would open, allow the water to go out through the basin. And then on a falling river at 450,000, the gates would then close.

When we talk about the overall operational flow, as Brad

mentioned, it would be a maximum of 75,000 maximum discharge and then when we look at that operational trigger above the 450,000 CFS, the typical range would be expected to be on the order of 30,000 to 75,000 CFS above that trigger level.

And just to give you some idea of the perspective, at that 450,000 CFS, it would be on the order of 30 to 40,000 CFS would be the flow which would be the natural process, the water difference from the Mississippi River into the Barataria Basin.

And then lastly, below that trigger, would be a base flow of 5,000 CFS. And a lot of people have also, too, may have heard the term, Adaptive Management. In some of the CPRA presentations in terms of master plan, Adaptive Management plan is a key piece to this. We know we have an ever-changing basin in front us with our futures.

So with that, we can adaptively manage this project to manage it within the permit conditions as we see changes in our basin.

And then lastly, emergency stops for such things as water levels. There are some communities here that I know have trouble with south winds so we can have emergency stops in there in terms of water levels, issues with spills or issues with navigational issues in the river as well.

A little more on Adaptive Management. So once a project like this would be in operations, what are the kind of things we can look at in terms of adaptive management. In here, we can look at the realtime monitoring in the river. We can look at the realtime monitoring out in the basin itself where our resources are at.

So on the river side, we

can look at such things such as the water levels and turbidity in the river. And then when we get on the basin side, again, we can look at water levels. We can look at salinities in select water quality parameters.

Ultimately, the goal here is a forecasting tool to improve the efficiency of how we adaptively manage the diversion structure.

With that, I just want to go ahead and, CPRA folks, if you can raise your hand. We're over there so as we end the presentation, if you want to come by and ask us any questions about our projects, get some handouts, please come by and see us.

And then also I would like to mention Coastal Connections. Since December we've been coming down anywhere from Lafitte to Port Sulphur to Violet to set up shop on a monthly basis to visit with the

public. So we're down here, check out our Facebook page, or you can also contact Plaquemines Parish and they are aware of our schedule too so you can come out and visit us at one of our events to ask more questions about this project.

And With that, I'll turn it over to Mel Landry with the Deepwater Horizon Trustee Group, specifically the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group.

MR. MEL LANDRY:

It's a lot of words.

MR. BRAD BARTH:

A lot of words.

MR. MEL LANDRY:

Thanks, Brad and Brad. A long line of Brads. I am a Mel.

I'm Mel Landry with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. I am a representative of the Louisiana Deepwater Horizon and Trustee Implementation Group also called the

Louisiana TIG. We are the group that plans for and expends the funding from the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Settlement on restoration work here in Louisiana.

I'm going to take the next few slides to explain why we're participating in this scoping meeting.

So we are considering funding the construction of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion through the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damages Restoration Funds. We're supporting the development of the Corps' EIS because of the potential for it to serve as our EIS for that decision. So at this time we are making that consideration and are here because the Corps' EIS may support the decisions we're going to make, to provide a little background on how all the pieces fit together with the

Corps and the Louisiana TIG.

We recently initiated restoration planning for the Barataria Basin. We designed this as a phased-approach to restoration. The first phase is going to be a strategic restoration plan that will identify projects that restore wetlands, coastal and nearshore resources that were injured by the Deepwater Horizon spill. Those projects that we identify in this first phase for restoration will have to be consistent with our programmatic plan that guides restoration across the Gulf of Mexico.

The second plan, we'll call it, the Phase 2 Plan, will further evaluate the projects that we select in the Phase 1 strategic restoration plan. Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan identified restoration projects based on a strong scientific foundation and

extensive public input.

Because the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion was selected by the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan, we acknowledge the potential for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion to be selected for our strategic restoration plan and carried forward into our Phase 2 plan.

If the TIG does select that Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion project for restoration under the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Program, we could use The Corps' EIS for our own evaluation. That will allow us to evaluate and implement the project more efficiently in terms of time and dollars. So we would have to conduct an EIS for our program because The Corps is undertaking that EIS. We are participating so that we have the potential to use that EIS if we decide to fund this project for construction.

So now I'll bring Brad from the Corps back up to give some final thoughts on this portion of our program.

MR. BRAD LABORDE:

Thanks, Mel.

I'm going to try and wrap-up rather quickly here, but so this is just an example now that we've gotten a little bit of a background on the NRDA process and the restoration funding. We know about the CPRA's proposed project and a little bit about the Corps' role and the NEPA process. This is one of the posters that we have here tonight over towards the stage here. And it's not an all-encompassing list but it is some examples of some of the things that The Corps as well as some of the cooperating agencies have already started to consider and kind of try to get an idea on.

I do recommend that you take a look at that as well as some

of the other posters that we have available tonight.

In addition to that, we have Fact Sheets that I would like you to pick up and just so you have it, whether or not you're using it to have a conversation or a well-educated conversation or to use that as a reference for your commenting purposes, just to have that.

And, again, on the back of it it does have the different ways to comment. It does point out some of the different NEPA process timelines that we have which is available on a poster, and then some additional facts about the proposed project.

I believe CPRA has some information for you, too.

This is another poster that we have in the room tonight just to point out. It kind of goes through our process in a basic

drawing or a cartoon. So it starts with CPRA providing an application because of the impacts to Corps regulated levees, wetlands and waters. So we take that project or that proposed project application, look at it and determine that it needed an EIS.

With that EIS, we are required to invite cooperating agencies to be a part of this process with us. And then we have the public input so that's also a big factor.

And Mel kind of hit on it with the different agencies that are trying to use our document for their decision-making purposes in order to make decisions so we will have outputs. And the output for The Corps would be the 10, 404 permit decision and then the Section 408 permission decision. And then the compliance with the other applicable laws and regulations or other

agencies decisions.

So at the bottom of this slide we do have two examples of the next opportunities to comment. One being the draft EIS so after we're completed with the scoping process, we'll have the public input. We will kind of start writing the draft EIS. Once we're ready to publish that, we'll have a comment period and a public hearing. It's scheduled for the summer of 2020. I know that feels quite a bit a-ways but, again, if we separated all of the environmental requirements out for each agency it would be cumbersome on CPRA and it would probably take more time. So our goal here is to have one EIS that informs all the decision making that is in front of us.

In addition to that number is CPRA's design for the structure itself. We don't have it yet, therefore, we can't review it. So a

lot of the engineering review depends on that design. So there are a lot of factors, both on our end and the applicant's end, that roll into that number.

We'll have a public hearing at that point. It will be an open mike type of setting. So at that point we'll be here or around here again to take comments.

During that meeting, if you feel like you will be standing in front us and saying why didn't you consider XY and Z; whatever XY and Z is, please write it down or verbalize it as a comment because that's a potential way to avoid that problem.

So once we're completed with that process, we'll make some final tweaks and move toward the final EIS which is scheduled for the summer of 2021.

In conclusion and to wrap things up as far as the presentation

portion of tonight goes, the Corps is neither an opponent or proponent of this project. The Corps is reaching out to the public for an education and feedback concerning issues that could be covered in the EIS. Agency representatives are available tonight to take your comment.

So once we've completed the presentation, we're all going to spread out and disperse back to our respective locations.

As Brad pointed out CPRA is here in the back of the room. Corps of Engineers folks are over -- raise your hand, Corps people.

NOAA Fisheries, do we have anyone from Marine Mammals tonight? No, sorry.

And the NRDA Trustees are also available for questions and answers.

It's worth pointing out that the dialogue that we have at

the posts is not a formal comment. So we can give you some information and we can have some discussions but what we need in addition to that discussion is your formal comments which can be done by the Comment Cards that are either by the door here or over in the corner on this side of the room.

Send us a letter so leaving tonight and then trying to put your thoughts together and then mailing it to us the old fashioned way. We also have an E-mail box set up for your comments.

And then, again, we will have court reporters here to take your verbal comments. One being on this side of the room by the comment station sign. And, again, when I'm finished here, the comment station will take this board down and move the table out so that we can have two people taking comments.

We'll limit it to three

minutes per comment just because there's a good number of people here. We want to move the line along but if you run over it's okay, just get back in line and then up kind of pick up where you left off. Again, all comments are due by September 5th, 2017.

I'm going to turn it over to Ricky here so he can close it out.

MR. RICKY BOYETTE:

Thanks, Brad.

Remember, was it, comment early and comment often? We'll go ahead and pull this screen.

I do want to point out just a couple of things. If you're thinking of something, please comment to us. A lot of times we miss comments because somebody believed that someone else would make that comment. We would rather get 10-20 of the same comments and not miss a comment. Please do not

hesitate to comment. If you think of something late at night and you're up, by all means drop us an E-mail. Send us a post card.

I do want to thank President Cormier and his team for joining us tonight. This is a big project in this area and we need to make sure we have all the information we can to make the right decisions. It starts with you. Please help us get the information we need to start a good thorough process and a comprehensive evaluation of the program of the project.

On that note, I will close the presentation portion but we have men and women in the back that can answer any questions that we can. As well as, please, do not hesitate to go to either of the comment sections to provide your comment verbally.

If you have any questions

about the meeting or anything nonMid-Barataria, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Thank you very much for coming out.

(WHEREUPON, THE PRESENTATION WAS CONCLUDED.)

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