

SUBJECT: Minutes from the 5 December 2019 CWPPRA Technical Committee Meeting

1. Mr. Brad Inman opened the meeting at 9:34 a.m. The following Technical Committee members were in attendance:

Ms. Karen McCormick, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Mr. Patrick Williams, NOAA Fisheries

Mr. Brad Inman, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Chairman, sitting for Mr. Mark Wingate

Mr. Brian Lezina, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA)

Mr. Britt Paul, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Mr. Darryl Clark, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

A copy of the agenda is included as **Encl 1**. A copy of the sign-in sheet is included as **Encl 2**.

2. Agenda Item 1. *Meeting Initiation*

Mr. Inman introduced himself, and asked the Technical Committee members to introduce themselves, which they did. Mr. Inman asked for any opening remarks from the Committee; Mr. Clark's were deferred.

Mr. Inman remarked on the change of venue, explaining that Colonel Mark Wingate is meeting elsewhere with various Mississippi River levee district representatives, boards and officials associated with flood protection. He mentioned that for the better part of last year the COE was closely monitoring river flood stages and the integrity of its levees because of record water levels.

Mr. Inman iterated that the main purpose of this meeting is to select PPL-29 projects.

Finally, Mr. Inman announced the retirement of Mr. Clark, and asked the Technical Committee for their remarks. All members commended Mr. Clark variously for his attention to detail, his knowledge of procedural and regulatory protocol, his institutional experience and interagency engagement, and his mentorship. He was presented a plaque and a commemorative coin. The public was invited to comment; Ms. Cheavis expressed her appreciation of Mr. Clark's budgetary/financial assistance. Ralph Libersat, Vermilion Parish, expressed his appreciation of Mr. Clark's long service tenure, and pride in collaboration with Mr. Clark over the years. Mr. Clark expressed his appreciation of several members, mentioning specifically the engineering and biological teams at NRCS, Mr. William's conscientiousness and coordination, Ms. McCormick's cooperative spirit, Mr. Lezina's multi-agency experience, and Mr. Inman's organization/management and upper-level briefing. He also commended Ms. Carriere and Ms. Cheavis for their essential roles in support of the CWPPRA process. Mr. Clark announced that Kevin Roy, USFWS, will be his replacement, and expressed confidence in that decision.

Mr. Inman opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee regarding the agenda; no changes were proffered.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to adopt the agenda as is.

DECISION: Mr. Clark made the motion, which Ms. McCormick seconded; the motion carried without dissent.

Mr. Inman provided an update on the efforts to establish Environmental Banking Guidelines. After approval by state and federal agencies responsible for existing environmental laws, the draft guidelines were published on the USACE regulatory page (website), making them available for public review/ comment. At the end of the public comment period, the (few) comments, which were received, were compiled and sent to the Task Force for final approval.

Finally, Mr. Inman reviewed the process for public comment, and instructed attendees to sign in on the sheet provided as a matter of public record.

3. Agenda Item 2. Report: *Status of CWPPRA Program Funds and Projects*

Ms. Jernice Cheavis, USACE, presented an overview of CWPPRA funds. The fully funded total Program Estimate since its inception to the present (authorized projects from PPLs 1 – 28) is \$3.006 billion. The total funded estimate (received since inception, and anticipated through FY2021) is \$2.122 billion, leaving a potential gap of \$884 million if the Program were to construct all projects to date. This gap will be altered as PPL-29 projects are selected today, and as future federal funding is appropriated for CWPPRA beyond 2021. Current Task Force-approved funding for projects in Phase I, Phase II, and O&M and Monitoring totals \$2.221 billion. The estimate of authorized funding for each agency as requested currently totals \$1.873 billion.

The CWPPRA Program has \$11,328,246 of funding carried forth from the May Task Force meeting. DOI's June 2019 FY20 funding allocation estimate of \$82,181,566 was added to the available balance, of which \$5,000,000 will be set aside for FY20 Planning and Outreach activities. In October, the Task Force approved FY20 Planning funds and other funding requests totaling \$12,863,893. Notice of additional DOI funds in the amount of \$1,291,553 was received in November. Thus, the total Program funding to begin today's proceedings is \$76,937,472. (This total will be updated as voting results are obtained.)

CWPPRA has authorized 222 projects. The 140 active projects including 30 in Phase 1 Engineering and Design, 14 in Phase 2 Construction and 5 support projects. There are 96 projects, which have been constructed and are now in O&M phase, and 17 projects that have been completed and closed financially. Additionally, CWPPRA has deauthorized 46 projects, transferred 8 projects, and placed 6 in the inactive category. There are 5 support projects. The technical support programs include Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS), monitoring contingency, storm recovery, Construction Program technical support, and the wetland conservation plan.

Mr. Inman opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee and the public; none were proffered.

4. Agenda Item 3. Decision: *Deauthorization of Caminada Headland Back Barrier Marsh Creation, Increment 2, Project (BA-193) (Karen McCormick, EPA)*

Ms. McCormick began by asserting that both the BA-193 project and BA-171 projects were approved for funding. After further scrutiny, a determination was made to combine both projects to increase efficiencies in time and monies spent. The EPA and CPRA, as the Lead Agency and Local Sponsor respectively, hereby request the initiation of formal deauthorization procedures for

the CWPPRA Caminada Headland Back Barrier Marsh Creation, Increment 2, (BA-193) Project. The original benefit areas (and the unused funding) associated with the BA-193 will be transferred and combined with the Caminada Headland Back Barrier Marsh Creation, Increment 1, (BA-171) project.

Mr. Inman opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee. Mr. Clark commended the efforts of the agencies involved, which will reduce the overall costs of the project(s) without reducing the anticipated footprint. He also mentioned the possibility of creating another project category (i.e. “retiring” the project number rather than “deauthorizing” the project) to more accurately convey project outcome. Mr. Inman and others concurred.

Mr. Inman opened the floor to public comment; none were proffered.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to initiate the deauthorization process for BA-193. Ms. McCormick made the motion, which Mr. Paul seconded. The motion carried without dissent.

As an aside, Ms. McCormick mentioned Adrian Chavarria, who made pertinent contributions to the development of these projects. She announced that Mr. Chavarria is relinquishing his position within the CWPPRW program for personal reasons, while retaining a position within the EPA.

5. Agenda Item 4. Decision: *Transfer of the Bayou Grand Cheniere Ridge and Marsh Creation Project (BA-173) from CPRA and FWS to the State.*

Darryl Clark, USFWS, began by pointing out that this request had been presented previously at the fall Technical Committee and Task Force meetings; with a public comment period closing on December 13, this is the final request in the transfer process. Mr. Lezina clarified that alternative funding sources will allow the project to be expedited.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to recommend to the Task Force final transfer of the Bayou Grand Cheniere Ridge and Marsh Creation Project (BA-173) to the State. Mr. Lezina made the motion, which Mr. Clark seconded; the motion carried without dissent.

6. Agenda Item 5. Decision: *Request for a Change in Scope for the Baratavia Bay Rim Marsh Creation Project (BA-195)*

Quin Kinler, NRCS, NRCS and CPRA began the request with a summary of the original project design scope and goals. Scope changes are deemed necessary to avoid existing pipelines, which transect the project area in multiple directions. Proposed semi-confined marsh creation cells would be eliminated; confined marsh creation cells would be re-aligned and/or divided. In some of the deeper, more open-water areas, sheet pile enclosures are needed (as opposed to earthen dike construction); an increase in the length of some containment dikes would be necessary as well. Budgetary increases are expected for the construction of such containment dikes, and for the eventual removal of sheet pile material. Cost increases associated with oyster lease acquisition and land rights are also anticipated. In summary, Phase I costs did not change; Phase 2 costs will increase an estimated 25%; acreage created or nourished is reduced by 17%; net acreage gained is reduced by 10%. The current ratio of total cost per net acres and the current ratio of the Average Annual Cost (AAC) per Average Annual Habitat Unit (AAHU) are increased by 36.5% and 33.5%, respectively, necessitating this vote.

Mr. Inman called for comments from the Technical Committee and the public; none were proffered.

Mr. Inman called for a motion that the Technical Committee recommend to the Task Force approval of a change in scope for the Barataria Bay Rim Marsh Creation Project (BA-195). Mr. Paul made the motion, which Ms. McCormick seconded; the motion carried without dissent.

7. Agenda Item 6. Report/Decision: PPL 29 Candidate Vote

Kevin Roy (USFWS), the Environmental Workgroup Chairman, presented an overview of the eleven PPL 29 candidate projects, which have been evaluated, and are being considered for PPL 29 Phase I Engineering and Design. He summarized the location, scope, goals, and anticipated costs of each.

Region	Basin	PPL 29 Candidates	Agency
1	Pontchartrain	St. Catherine’s Pass Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection	EPA
2	Breton Sound	North Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing	NMFS
2	Breton Sound	Phoenix Marsh Creation – East Increment	FWS
2	Barataria	Northeast Turtle Bay Marsh Creation Extension	NRCS
2	Barataria	Fifi Island Marsh Creation	FWS
3	Terrebonne	Bay Raccourci Marsh Creation and Ridge Restoration	FWS
3	Terrebonne	West Louisiana Hwy 1 Marsh Creation	NMFS
3	Terrebonne	East Catfish Lake Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection	FWS
4	Mermentau	Mermentau Basin Wetland Inundation Relief	NRCS
4	Mermentau	Southeast Pecan Island Restoration	NRCS
4	Calcasieu-Sabine	Mud Lake South Marsh Creation	EPA

Mr. Inman commended the work groups and experts who have worked extensively and gathered information necessary to develop these projects. He also expressed his appreciation for the numerous public commentaries he has received.

Mr. Inman asked for questions or comments from the Technical Committee; none were proffered.

Mr. Inman called for public comments.

Carol Giordina, representing the Lake Catherine Civic Association, spoke in support of the St. Catherine’s Pass Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection project, citing its provision for tidal surge and storm protection, the restoration of vital natural resources and wildlife habitat, and its ultimate contribution to a sustainable Louisiana coast.

Alice Glenn, representing State Representative Walt Leger (District 91), read a missive of comments requesting the inclusion of the St. Catherine’s Pass project into the CWPPRA program.

Deborah Abibou, Restoration Programs Director with the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, also expressed support of the St. Catherine's Pass project as a crucial component of the New Orleans East Landbridge.

Kara Bonsall, on behalf of the Cameron Parish Police Jury, spoke requesting full support of the two projects located within the Mermentau Basin, and the one project within the Calcasieu-Sabine Basin.

Ralph Libersat, representing the Vermilion Parish Police Jury and the Chenier Plain Authority, reiterated Ms. Bonsall's request, citing essential flood relief, freshwater release/ introduction and marsh creation potential of the projects.

Guy McInnis, St. Bernard Parish President, entreated the committee to support the North Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing project, describing protection of the levee as the "lifeline" for cultural and economic sustainability for the parish. He also asserted that this project will complement others in the area (for which tax monies have been invested), and that this is supported by the area's Congressional delegation.

John Helmers, representing Plaquemines Parish, requested support of the Phoenix Marsh Creation – East Increment project and the NE Turtle Bay Marsh Creation Extension projects, asserting that the former will restore a vital portion of the East Bank Landbridge (heavily damaged during Hurricane Katrina), and that the latter would further extend the Turtle Bay Landbridge east. He pointed out that both projects are "multi-regional" in their impacts.

John Lane, Coastal Director of the St. Bernard Parish Government, spoke to garner support for the North Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing project. He described the near loss of the entire Delacroix community during Hurricane Barry (and thus the importance of this project). He also noted that the parish has invested and cooperated with CPRA in the design of a pipeline corridor from the Mississippi River – an effort that will ultimately benefit many CWPPRA projects.

Lauren Averill, Coastal Director for Jefferson Parish requested support for two projects – Fifi Island Marsh Creation and NE Turtle Bay Marsh Creation Extension. She cited crucial protection of Grand Isle and augmentation of existing project/investments as reasons to support the Fifi Island project. She emphasized that the NE Turtle Bay project would provide marsh creation as an extension of the landbridge previously mentioned, as well as potential marsh preservation for thousands of acres adjacent to the project site.

Amanda Voisin, representing Lafourche Parish government, spoke to ask support of the East Catfish Lake Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection project, which she asserted would complete the rim of Catfish Lake, augmenting (and thus preserving) other projects and parish/ state investments thereupon. She also requested support of the West LA Hwy 1 Marsh Creation project, as it would protect the unelevated portion of the LA Hwy 1 corridor from flooding during high-water events. She reminded attendees that the LA 1 corridor is the sole land route access from Port Fourchon, which services 90% of the nation's deep-water oil production from the Gulf of Mexico.

Jason Hughes, newly elected state representative for House District 100, spoke in support of the St. Catherine's Pass Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection project. He cited its consistency

with the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan, and its urgently needed storm protection for the inhabitants of New Orleans East and surrounding areas, and adjacent key evacuation routes.

Anne Coglianese, spoke as a representative of New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, asking for approval of the St. Catherine’s Pass Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection project for Phase I funding. She pointed out that the project is proposed on the last natural barrier between Lake Pontchartrain and the Gulf of Mexico, thus its integrity directly correlates with the long-term safety and security of New Orleans, especially for residents along the north shore of the lake who do not have the benefit of the levee system. She asserted that without the project, an increase in wave action, especially during storm events would increase (already chronic) flooding of key evacuation routes, residential areas, and would exacerbate wear and tear on the levee system. Finally she drew attention to a packet of correspondence that has been submitted for the Committee’s consideration; the correspondence is from residents, city government and civic leaders advocating the project.

Mr. Inman ensured that no other public comments were forthcoming, and then called a recess (at 10:41 a.m.) as the Technical Committee voted.

Mr. Inman reconvened the meeting at 11:00 a.m., and had the following results announced:

Region	Project	COE	State	EPA	FWS	NMFS	NRCS	No. of votes	Sum of Point Score
2	North Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing	1	5		4	6	4	5	20
2	Phoenix Marsh Creation - East Increment		6	5	3	3		4	17
3	East Catfish Lake Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection	2			6	5	3	4	16
3	Bay Raccourci Marsh Creation and Ridge Restoration	4	3		5	1		4	13
2	Northeast Turtle Bay Marsh Creation Extension		4	1	1		5	4	11
1	St Catherine's Pass Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection	5		6			1	3	12
3	West Louisiana Hwy 1 Marsh Creation	6	2			4		3	12
2	Fifi Island Marsh Creation	3			2	2		3	7
4	Southeast Pecan Island Restoration			3			6	2	9
4	Mud Lake South Marsh Creation		1	4				2	5
4	Mermentau Basin Wetland Inundation Relief			2			2	2	4
		21	21	21	21	21	21	36	126
		check	21	21	21	21	21	36	126

Mr. Inman called for a motion to recommend to the Task Force approval of PPL 29 Phase I Engineering and Design funding for the four top-ranked projects. Mr. Clark made the motion, which Mr. Williams seconded; the motion carried without dissent.

Mr. Inman called on Ms. Cheavis to update funding available for Phase II requests; Ms. Cheavis declared that \$63 million is available.

8. Agenda Item 7. Report/Decision: Request for Authorization and Approval of Phase II Increment I Funding

Mike Nichols, NRCS, began with an anecdotal reference to commend Mr. Clark for his service. He then presented a summary of PO-75 and rationale for project funding.

Quin Kinler, NRCS, submitted the Phase II funding request for BA-195, previously outlined, and approved in a scope change request. He described the project as the first in a potential series to re-build the rim of Barataria Bay.

Donna Rogers, NOAA, gave a summary of TE-134, pointing out the area's potential for success because of shallow conditions therein. She also offered words of appreciation for Mr. Clark.

The Technical Committee will consider the funding requests as specified below:

Agency	Project No.	PPL	Project Name	Phase II, Increment 1 Request	Fully-Funded Phase 1 Cost	Fully-Funded Phase II Cost incl O&M	Total Fully Funded Cost Est.	Net Benefit Acres	Total Cost per Acre
NRCS	PO-75	19	Labranche East Marsh Creation	\$31,440,221	\$2,571,273	\$32,385,939	\$34,957,212	644	\$54,281
NRCS	BA-195	25	Barataria Bay Rim Marsh Creation	\$25,527,081	\$2,693,708	\$26,603,176	\$29,296,884	226	\$129,632
NMFS	TE-134	24	West Fourchon Marsh Creation & Nourishment	\$26,319,998	\$3,201,929	\$27,292,219	\$30,494,148	290	\$105,152

Mr. Inman called for comments from the Technical Committee; none were proffered.

Mr. Inman opened the floor for public comment.

John Helmers, Plaquemines Parish Coastal Director, iterated support for the Barataria Bay Rim Marsh Creation project as a vital component that will support sediment diversion efforts to re-establish marshes within.

Lauren Averill, Coastal Director for Jefferson Parish, spoke in favor of the Barataria Bay Rim Marsh Creation project, citing its consistency with the Jefferson Parish Master Plan, and its potential to contain sediment, thereby protecting/ sustaining adjacent marshlands. She also endorsed the Labranche East Marsh Creation project, citing the rapid marsh deterioration therein, and the importance of it for protection of Jefferson Parish.

Amanda Phillips, with the Edward Wisner Donation, spoke as an advocate of the West Fourchon Marsh Creation & Nourishment project, which (along with other CWPPRA projects) would provide vital protection of the Port of Fourchon.

Ashley Golmon, representing Conoco-Phillips and Louisiana Land & Exploration, spoke in favor of BA-195 and TE-134, asserting that as landowner, there will be no land rights issues with either project.

Amanda Voisin, Lafourche Parish government, iterated support for the TE-134, citing its synergy with other projects, and its further protection for the Port of Fourchon.

With no further public comment forthcoming, Mr. Inman called for a recess (at 11:38 a.m.) for the Technical Committee vote to ensue.

Mr. Inman reconvened proceedings at 11:45 a.m. and had the following results announced:

CWPPRA Technical Committee Ranking for Phase II Approval, Dec 2019

5-Dec-19

PPL	Project No.	Project	COE	EPA	FWS	NMFS	NRCS	STATE	No. of Agency Votes	Sum of Weighted Score
19	PO75	Labranche East Marsh Creation	2	2	1	1	2		5	8
24	TE-134	West Fourchon Marsh Creation & Nourishment	1	1	2	2		2	5	8
25	BA-195	Barataria Bay Rim Marsh Creaton					1	1	2	2
			No. of votes:	2	2	2	2	2	2	
			Sum of Votes:	3	3	3	3	3	3	

Mr. Inman called for a balance of remaining funds; Ms. Cheavis confirmed the amount of \$5.2 million to carry into 2020.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to recommend to the Task Force approval of the Labranche East Marsh Creation (PO-75) and the West Fourchon Marsh Creation & Nourishment (TE-134) projects for Phase II Increment I funding. Mr. Clark made the motion, which Mr. Williams seconded; the motion carried without dissent.

9. Agenda Item 8. Additional Agenda Items

Mr. Inman called for any additional agenda items.

Mr. Lezina announced the imminent departure of Kent Bolfrass from the CPRA, expressing appreciation for his contributions to the program. Mr. Inman concurred and will present Mr. Bolfrass with a certificate on behalf of CWPPRA.

Mr. Inman announced that Scott Wandell (USACE) would also be leaving the CWPPRA program; certificates of appreciation will also be presented to him and Mr. Chavarria imminently.

10. Agenda Item 9. Request for Public Comments

Mr. Inman called for final public comment: none were proffered.

11. Agenda Item 10. Announcement: Priority Project List 30 Regional Planning Team Meetings

Mr. Inman presented the following RPT meeting schedule:

February 4, 2020	10:00 a.m.	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	Lake Charles
February 5, 2020	9:30 a.m.	Region III Planning Team Meeting	Morgan City
February 6, 2020	10:00 a.m.	Region I & II Planning Team Meeting	Lacombe
February 20, 2020	10:30 a.m.	Coastwide Electronic Voting	(via email, no meeting)

12. Agenda Item 11. Announcement: Date of Upcoming CWPPRA Program Meeting

Mr. Inman announced that the next Task Force meeting would be held January 29, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. at the LDWF office in Baton Rouge.

13. Agenda Item 12. Announcement: Scheduled Dates of Future Program Meetings*

Mr. Inman imparted the following CWPPRA meeting schedule:

January 29, 2020	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	Baton Rouge
February 4, 2020	10:00 a.m.	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	Lake Charles
February 5, 2020	9:30 a.m.	Region III Planning Team Meeting	Morgan City
February 6, 2020	10:00 a.m.	Region I & II Planning Team Meeting	Lacombe
April 2, 2020	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	Baton Rouge
May 7, 2020	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	Lafayette
September 3, 2020	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	Baton Rouge
October 29, 2020	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	New Orleans
December 3, 2020	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	Baton Rouge

*subject to change

14. Agenda Item 13. Decision: Adjourn

Mr. Inman called upon Mr. Clark to adjourn the proceedings, which he did at 11:53 a.m.