

SUBJECT: Minutes from the 3 December 2020 CWPPRA Technical Committee Meeting

1. Mr. Mark Wingate opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. The following Technical Committee members were in attendance:

Ms. Karen McCormick, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Mr. Patrick Williams, National Marine and Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Mr. Mark Wingate, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Chairman
Mr. Brian Lezina, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA)
Mr. Britt Paul, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Mr. Kevin Roy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

A copy of the agenda is included as **Encl 1**. A copy of the attendance sheet is included as **Encl 2**.

2. Agenda Item 1. Meeting Initiation

The meeting was conducted via WebEx virtual meeting platform, due to ongoing COVID 19 public gathering restrictions. Mr. Wingate introduced himself, and asked the Technical Committee members to introduce themselves, which they did. Mr. Wingate began by remarking on the decision allowing the USACE more active participation in the CWPPRA program, the agreement of which is now ready to be executed.

Mr. Wingate then remarked on the recent and sudden death of Jennifer Guidry, CWPPRA Outreach Coordinator. He called upon Scott Wilson for further comment. Mr. Wilson extolled Ms. Guidry's dedication to and passion for the CWPPRA program, and particularly as it relates to Louisiana culture. A memorial service is being planned to recognize her public service and contribution to CWPPRA program efforts. Each of the Technical Committee members also commented on the profound loss to the program in the wake of Ms. Guidry's passing. They variously mentioned her creative energy and her community-oriented public spirit, referring to her as a visionary and champion of coastal Louisiana. A moment of silence was observed.

Mr. Wingate opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee regarding the agenda. Mr. Lezina made a motion for a change in order of Items #8 & #9 citing possible construction funding priorities. Mr. Paul seconded the motion.

DECISION: The motion to invert the order of agenda items #8 & #9 was made, seconded and carried without opposition.

Finally, Mr. Wingate reviewed the process for public comment via the WebEx platform.

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 – 29) is \$3.127 billion. The total funded estimate (received since inception, and anticipated through FY2021) is \$2.120 billion, leaving a potential gap of \$1.007 billion if the Program were to

construct, operate and maintain all projects to date. This gap will be altered 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 \$2.276 billion. The estimate of authorized funding for each agency as requested currently totals \$1.941 billion.

The CWPPRA Program has \$2,228,665 of funding carried forth from the May Task Force meeting. The June 2020 DOI funding projection for FY21 is \$82,702,722, of which \$5 million must be set aside for Planning activities. In October, the Task Force approved FY20 Planning budget and other funding requests resulting in a deduction of \$18,354,783 to the available balance. Thus, the total Program funding to begin today's proceedings is \$61,576,504, which is lower than typical. (This total will be updated as voting results are obtained.)

CWPPRA has authorized 226 projects. The 149 active projects including 32 in Phase 1 Engineering and Design, 16 in Phase II Construction and 5 support projects. There are 96 projects, which have been constructed and are now in O&M and Monitoring 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. Wingate opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee; none were proffered. Mr. Wingate inquired about the typical available amount compared to what is currently available. Ms. Cheavis affirmed that the available balance for today's proceedings is about \$15 million less.

Mr. Wingate opened the floor for public comments; none were proffered.

4. Agenda Item 3. Report: *Electronic Votes and Approvals (Sarah Bradley, USACE)*

Ms. Bradley reported on recent electronic voting results, which occurred as a result of the October 2020 Task Force meeting being cancelled (due to the expected landfall of Hurricane Zeta.) On November 14, 2020 the CWPPRA Task Force approved the following:

- The initiation of deauthorization procedures for TE-47 and BA-193
- Several O&M and Monitoring budget increases,
- Scope Change for the East Leeville Marsh Creation project (competing today for Phase II funding)
- Usual Incremental Funding requests for USACE Admin and USGS Technical Services,
- Standard Incremental Funding requests for O&M and Monitoring

Ms. Bradley asserted that full details were made available to the public through the CWPPRA *Newsflash* e-mails and the website.

Mr. Wingate opened the floor to comments from the Technical Committee and the public; none were proffered.

5. Agenda Item 4. Report/Decision: *2021 CWPPRA Report to Congress (Kaitlyn Carriere, USACE)*

Ms. Carriere began with the reminder that a Report to Congress is required by law every 3 years to demonstrate the effectiveness of CWPPRA projects. Development of the 2021 report has commenced, with a target date of October 2021 for Task Force approval of the final draft. The report requires collaboration from EPA, USGS and other agencies. In May 2020 the Task Force approved the line item budget for the Report to Congress. Ms. Carriere requested the discretionary movement of those funds between cooperating agencies for purposes of completing the report as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.

Mr. Wingate called for a motion to accept the request. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Mr. Williams seconded.

DECISION: The motion to move funds within agencies (without a budget increase) to accomplish the Report to Congress carried without dissent.

6. Agenda Item 5. Decision: *Final Deauthorization of Ship Shoal: Whiskey West Flank Restoration (TE-47) Project (Brad Crawford, EPA)*

Brad Crawford, EPA, presented the request to initiate of formal deauthorization procedures for the previously inactive project Ship Shoal: Whiskey West Flank Restoration (TE-47). He explained that there is no longer a need for this project, as The NRDA Caillou Lake Headlands (TE-100) project has been constructed and includes this project's footprint.

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

Mr. Wingate called for a motion to approve the Final Deauthorization of Ship Shoal: Whiskey West Flank Restoration (TE-47) Project.

DECISION: Ms. McCormick made the motion, which Mr. Lezina seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

7. Agenda Item 6. Decision: *Final Deauthorization of Caminada Headland Back Barrier Marsh Creation, Increment 2, Project (BA-193) (Brad Crawford, EPA)*

Brad Crawford, EPA, made the request on behalf of EPA and CPRA. He explained simply that the combining of BA-193 with the Caminada Headland Back Barrier Marsh Creation, Increment 1 (BA-171) project was approved and therefore the BA-193 project number is no longer needed. As an aside, Mr. Crawford asserted that BA-171 project construction is underway.

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

Mr. Wingate called for a motion to approve the final deauthorization of Caminada Headland Back Barrier Marsh Creation, Increment 2, (BA-193).

DECISION: Ms. McCormick made the motion, which Mr. Roy seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

8. Agenda Item 7. Decision: *Request for a Change in Scope for the PPL 25 – Oyster Lake Marsh Creation and Nourishment (CS-79) Project (Dawn Davis, NMFS)*

Dawn Davis, NMFS, presented this scope change request, beginning with a background of its Phase I approval in January 2016. She iterated subsequent dates of the kickoff meeting, sites visits, and 30% and 95% design reviews. She outlined the original project scope, which consisted of one 661-acre marsh creation area. The modification of that area has become necessary for several reasons: a) the expansion of the adjacent Oyster Bayou (CS-59) project; b) the withdrawal of support from Towerland Company; c) avoidance of pipelines; d) the necessity of maintaining hydrological connectivity. She provided corresponding illustration of specific areas to be excluded, and identified possible areas for expansion. The scope change request is due to the change in net cost/benefit percentages. Ms. Davis asserted that the project complements the Oyster Bayou project and enhances the resiliency of the Calcasieu-Sabine basin, so recently impacted by two hurricanes.

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

Mr. Wingate called for a motion to approve the Request for a Change in Scope for the PPL 25 – Oyster Lake Marsh Creation and Nourishment (CS-79).

DECISION: Mr. Williams made the motion, which Mr. Lezina seconded; the motion carried with one dissenting vote from USFWS. Mr. Roy expressed his opposition (as he had at the September 2020 Technical Committee meeting) based on his overall concern that scope changes should be presented earlier in the review process (i.e. between the 30% and 95% design review). He offered his willingness to review the SOP regarding the scope change process, and investigate ways to improve efficiency. Mr. Williams asserted that often the need for scope changes are not realized until the late-design stage; he substantiated this fact by pointing out that (since 2016) six scope changes have been presented at the same time the corresponding projects were considered for Phase II funding. However, he agreed that programmatic reforms should be sought to address the substantial “backlog” of projects.

9. Agenda Item 9. (Item re-ordered) Report/Decision: *Request for Phase II Authorization and Approval of Phase II Increment 1 Funding (Mark Wingate, USACE)*

Representatives from the sponsoring agencies provided an overview of detailed features, benefits and costs for each project listed in the following table:

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-133	21	Labranche Central Marsh Creation	\$27,087,711	\$3,885,298	\$28,120,843	\$32,006,141	668	\$47,913
NRCS	PO-178	26	Bayou La Loutre Ridge Restoration and Marsh Creation	\$21,354,359	\$3,236,953	\$23,307,269	\$26,544,222	203	\$130,760

FWS	BS-32	27	Mid Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing	\$32,394,218	\$3,715,462	\$33,643,497	\$37,358,959	411	\$90,898
NRCS	BA-195	25	Barataria Bay Rim Marsh Creation and Nourishment	\$25,707,824	\$2,693,708	\$26,810,030	\$29,503,738	226	\$130,548
NMFS	BA-194	25	East Leeville Marsh Creation and Nourishment	\$33,500,717	\$4,026,090	\$36,193,712	\$40,219,802	205	\$196,194
NRCS	ME-31	19	Freshwater Bayou Marsh Creation	\$27,037,408	\$2,425,997	\$28,355,171	\$30,781,168	283	\$108,767
NFMS	CS-78	24	No Name Bayou Marsh Creation and Nourishment	\$26,442,734	\$2,724,524	\$27,868,443	\$30,592,967	468	\$65,370
NMFS	CS-79	25	Oyster Lake Marsh Creation and Nourishment	\$33,678,210	\$3,608,939	\$34,908,793	\$38,517,732	250	\$154,071

Mr. Wingate asked for questions or comments from the Technical Committee following each presentation; none were proffered. Mr. Wingate called for a ten-minute recess, and reconvened for public comment.

Mr. Wingate called for public comments.

Laurie Cormier, Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, commented initially on the devastation of recent hurricanes (Laura and Delta), which made landfall in southwest Louisiana within a six-week time period and within sixteen miles of one another. She spoke in support of ME-31 and CS-78 citing their relative cost-effectiveness and essential function as the first line of defense against strong storms. She also spoke in favor of CS-79, which would provide synergy with and protection for CPRA's Rabbit Island project. All three projects would provide natural fortification of the area's critical energy infrastructure.

Dr. John Foret, on behalf of the Rainey Conservation Alliance, spoke in favor of ME-31, citing its synergy with existing projects and its logical strategy to prevent to coalescence of the Vermilion Bay Complex into the interior marsh. On behalf of Stream Properties, he spoke in favor of CS-78, asserting its low cost-to-acre benefits and high probability of success in prevention of the coalescence of Calcasieu Lake toward Hwy 82 and the Gulf of Mexico. Finally he spoke in favor of CS-79, iterating its synergy with other projects to finalize the stabilization of the marsh complex from the Gulf of Mexico towards Oyster Lake.

Ralph Libersat spoke in favor of three projects as iterated above by Ms. Cormier and Dr. Foret - namely ME-31, CS-78 and CS-79.

Amanda Phillips, on behalf of the Edward Wisner Donation spoke to urge support of BA-194. In an area vulnerable to frequent flooding, the agricultural economy has been lost, and its fishing industry (with cultural significance) and oil and gas infrastructure (of local and national import) are in peril. With no other projects yet funded in the area, this one would be a foundation for future projects.

Dr. Bob Stewart also spoke in support of BA-194, asserting his experience and observation of the conversion of marsh to open water in the project area. Because the area is a prime example of wetland loss, he believes this project could be a prime example of wetland restoration for CWPPRA.

Amanda Voisin spoke on behalf of Lafourche Parish in support of BA-194. She emphasized what was previously stated: a) the vulnerability of the area, especially as a result of Hurricane Zeta, which recently had a direct impact. b) the incessant land loss rates even without direct storm impacts and 3) the essential cultural and economic benefits of building protection and restoration projects in the area.

Kara Bonsall, representing the Cameron Parish Police Jury, spoke in favor of ME-31, CS-78 and CS-79, highlighting the need and benefits projected for CS-78.

Mr. Wingate called for Technical Committee comments based on the public comments proffered; none were stated.

Mr. Wingate invited Technical Committee participation in a breakout session for project evaluation and ranking. Once the primary WebEx session resumed, the project ranking results were presented in the following table:

CWPPRA Technical Committee Ranking for Phase II Approval, Dec 2020

3-Dec-20

PPL	Project No.	Project	COE	EPA	FWS	NMFS	NRCS	STATE	No. of Agency Votes	Sum of Weighted Score
21	PO-133	Labranche Central Marsh Creation	4	5	3	4	5	4	6	25
27	BS-32	Mid Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing	5	2	5	3		1	5	16
19	ME-31	Freshwater Bayou Marsh Creation	1	3	2	2	4		5	12
24	CS-78	No Name Bayou Marsh Creation and Nourishment			4	5	1	3	4	13
26	PO-178	Bayou La Loutre Ridge Restoration and Marsh Creation		4	1		2	5	4	12
25	BA-195	Barataria Bay Rim Marsh Creation and Nourishment	2	1			3		3	6
25	CS-79	Oyster Lake Marsh Creation and Nourishment				1		2	2	3
25	BA-194	East Leeville Marsh Creation and Nourishment	3						1	3
			No. of votes:	5	5	5	5	5	5	
			Sum of Votes:	15	15	15	15	15	15	30
			check	15	15	15	15	15	15	30
										90

Sarah Bradley, USACE, reviewed the ranking matrix and results; she called on Ms. Cheavis to update available funding. If these two top-ranked projects are recommended to the task Force for funding, Ms. Cheavis calculated a \$9,620,580* remainder in available funds for Phase I voting (the next agenda item.) Ms. Bradley asked that a motion be considered for recommendation to the Task Force the two top-ranking projects for Phase II Increment I approval.

Correction to this figure presented in next agenda item.

DECISION: The motion was made by Ms. McCormick and seconded by Mr. Williams to move PO-133 and BS-32 forward for Task Force consideration and approval; the motion carried without opposition.

10. Agenda Item 8. *Report/Decision: 30th Priority Project List (Kevin Roy, FWS)*

Kevin Roy (USFWS) presented an overview of the ten PPL 30 candidate projects, which have been evaluated, and are being considered for PPL 30 Phase I Engineering and Design. He summarized the location, scope, goals, and anticipated costs of each.

Region	Basin	PPL 30 Candidates	Agency
2	Breton Sound	Reggio Marsh Creation and Hydrologic Restoration	EPA
2	Breton Sound	Spanish Lake-Grand Lake Marsh Creation	FWS
2	Breton Sound	Phoenix Marsh Creation - West Increment	FWS
2	Barataria	Grand Bayou Ridge and Marsh Restoration - Phase 2	FWS
3	Terrebonne	Bay Raccourci Marsh Creation Increment II	FWS
3	Teche-Vermilion	West Branch Marsh Creation on Marsh Island, LA	NMFS
3	Teche-Vermilion	North Marsh Restoration (North Increment)	NMFS
4	Mermentau	Southeast Pecan Island Marsh Creation	NRCS
4	Mermentau	Flat Lake Gulf Shoreline Protection	NMFS
4	Calcasieu-Sabine	East Prong Marsh Creation and Terracing	FWS

Mr. Wingate commended the work groups and experts at the local, state and federal levels, who have worked extensively and gathered information necessary to develop these projects.

Mr. Wingate called for questions or comments from the Technical Committee; none were proffered.

Mr. Wingate called for comments from the public.

Guy McInnis, St Bernard Parish President, expressed support of the Reggio Marsh Creation and Hydrologic Restoration project, citing its essential protection of economic and cultural resources in St. Bernard parish. The project will augment other CWPPRA projects in the area, and will utilize a sediment pipeline (provided by CPRA and St. Bernard Parish), thus reducing project costs.

Dr. John Foret, representing the Rainey Conservation Alliance, iterated his request for support of the North Marsh Restoration, Increment I project, the Southeast Pecan Island Marsh Creation project, and the Flat Lake Gulf Shoreline Protection project. He applauded the efforts of the Environmental and Engineering workgroups, and asserted that the time is critical for designing and implementing projects in this area of high land loss rates.

Laurie Cormier, representing Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, proffered her appreciation as well to the CWPPRA technical team in their preliminary development of these projects. She encouraged support for the East Prong Marsh Creation and Terracing project, which would provide a first line of defense for Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes. The enhanced drainage resulting from

anticipated dredging associated with the project is synergistic with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative Priority. She also encourages support of the Flat Lake Gulf Shoreline Protection project, which is similar to the other CWPPRA projects along the Gulf Coast of Rockefeller Refuge – projects that have proved sustainable during recent hurricanes.

Kara Bonsall, on behalf of Cameron Parish, spoke to request full support of the East Prong Marsh Creation project, which would create marsh, restore hydrologic functionality and protect Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes.

With no further public comment, Mr. Wingate called for another breakout session for Technical Committee members to vote on the PPL 30 projects submitted.

Mr. Wingate reconvened the meeting, and the following results were presented:

CWPPRA PPL 30 Technical Committee VOTE 3-Dec-20

Region	Project	COE	State	EPA	FWS	NMFS	NRCS	No. of votes	Sum of Point Score
2	Reggio Marsh Creation and Hydrologic Restoration	6	4	6	1		5	5	22
3	Bay Raccourci Marsh Creation Increment II	4	2		4	3	3	5	16
2	Phoenix Marsh Creation - West Increment	2	6	3	2	1		5	14
4	East Prong Marsh Creation and Terracing		3	1	3	6	1	5	14
4	Southeast Pecan Island Marsh Creation		1	5		4	6	4	16
2	Spanish Lake-Grand Lake Marsh Creation	5			6	2	2	4	15
3	Grand Bayou Ridge and Marsh Restoration - Phase 2	1	5	2	5			4	13
3	West Branch Marsh Creation on Marsh Island, LA			4		5	4	3	13
3	North Marsh Restoration (North Increment)	3						1	3
4	Flat Lake Gulf Shoreline Protection							0	0
		21	21	21	21	21	21	36	126
	check	21	21	21	21	21	21	36	126

Before Ms. Bradley reviewed the results, she asked Ms. Cheavis to provide a corrected calculation of the remaining funding amount available. Ms. Cheavis stated that the available funds prior to this vote are actually \$9,929,891. Ms. Bradley then announced the two top-ranking projects, and recommended a motion that they be approved for Task Force consideration. She pointed out that all voting results would be made available on *Newsflash* for public records.

DECISION: Mr. Roy made the motion to recommend the Reggio Marsh Creation and Hydrologic Restoration project and the Bay Raccourci Marsh Creation Increment II projects to the Task Force for Phase I funding; Mr. Paul seconded the motion, which carried without opposition.

11. Agenda Item 10. *Additional Agenda Items*

Mr. Wingate called for any additional agenda items; none were proffered.

12. Agenda Item 11. *Request for Public Comments*

Mr. Wingate called for final public comment; none were proffered.

13. Agenda Item 12. Announcement: Priority Project List 31 Regional Planning Team Meetings

Ms. Bradley presented the following RPT meeting schedule:

February 2, 2021	10:00 a.m.	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 3, 2021	9:30 a.m.	Region III Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 4, 2021	10:00 a.m.	Region I & II Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 23, 2021	10:30 a.m.	Coastwide Electronic Voting	(via email, no meeting)

14. Agenda Item 13. Announcement: Date of Upcoming CWPPRA Program Meeting

Ms. Bradley announced that the next Task Force meeting would be held Friday, January 22, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

15. Agenda Item 14. Announcement: Scheduled Dates of Future Program Meetings*

Ms. Bradley imparted the following CWPPRA meeting schedule:

January 22, 2021	10:00 a.m.	Task Force	TBD
February 2, 2021	10:00 a.m.	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 3, 2021	9:30 a.m.	Region III Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 4, 2021	10:00 a.m.	Region I & II Planning Team Meeting	TBD
April 1, 2021	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	TBD
May 6, 2021	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	TBD
September 2, 2021	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	TBD
October 7, 2021	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	TBD
December 2, 2021	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	TBD

*subject to change

16. Agenda Item 15. Decision: Adjourn

Mr. Wingate called for a motion to adjourn the proceedings. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Mr. Lezina seconded; the motion carried without dissent. Mr. Wingate expressed appreciation for and compliments to the facilitators of the virtual meeting, and adjourned the meeting at 1:32 p.m.