

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes from the 6 April 2023 CWPPRA Technical Committee Meeting

1. The meeting was initiated at 9:30 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)
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 attendee sheet is included as **Encl 2**.

2. Agenda Item 1. Meeting Initiation (Brad Inman, USACE)

The meeting was conducted in a hybrid fashion, both in person and via WebEx virtual meeting platform. Mr. Inman, serving as Chair in place of Mark Wingate, introduced himself and called upon Technical Committee members in attendance to introduce themselves. Mr. Inman asked for any opening comments from the Technical Committee; none were proffered. He announced that the next CWPPRA meeting in May 2023 will also be hybrid, in person and virtually. Mr. Inman also announced Ralph Liberstat's passing just prior to the coastwide vote offering thoughts and prayers to family and friends. Mr. Inman also wanted to recognize the three-year effort of Alice Kerl as Program Administrator and wished her well in her new role in Engineering. He also acknowledged the contributions of Sarah Bradley, who is now with the Dallas District of the Corps, and those of John Petitbon as Engineering Workgroup chairman who has transitioned to construction with the Corps. In addition, Mr. Inman introduced Audrie Hillis as the new Engineering Workgroup Chair.

Mr. Inman asked for the Technical Committee to present any changes to the agenda for today's proceedings. None were forthcoming.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Lezina made the motion, which Mr. Roy seconded; the motion passed without opposition.

Mr. Inman briefed those in attendance of procedures for public participation for the virtual component of the proceedings.

3. Agenda Item 2. Report: Electronic Votes and Approvals (Kaitlyn Richard, USACE)

Ms. Richard reported on the one electronic vote since the last meeting regarding the New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation (PO-169) project expansion as requested by FWS and CPRA. The Technical Committee voted on 8 February 2023, to recommend Task Force approval to expend Phase II, Increment 1 funding to expand the project footprint. The Task Force approved the request on 15 February 2023.

The request was in accordance with CWPPRA SOP, Section 6 (l)(3): Project Bid Underruns.

4. Agenda Item 3. Report: Status of CWPPRA Program Funds and Projects (Baylissa Walter, USACE)

Ms. Baylissa Walter, USACE, presented an overview of the status of CWPPRA funds as follows: The fully funded total program estimate since its inception through PPL 1 – 32 is \$3.377 billion. Total projected state and federal sources of funding (through FY23) for all authorized projects in addition to projected Department of the Interior (DOI) funds is \$2.725 billion. A potential gap of \$652 million remains if the Program were to construct all projects to date. Current Task Force-approved budgets for projects in Phase I, Phase II and O&M totals \$2.594 billion. Authorized funding obligated to each agency for approved project phases currently totals \$2.338 billion.

A request for approval of the FY24 Planning Program budget is on the agenda. A total of \$254,972 has been carried over cumulatively through FY23. Added to that is the expected allocation of \$5,000,000 for Planning activities. Today’s funding request for FY24 Planning and Outreach totals \$5,000,000. If approved, a surplus of \$254,972 would remain for FY24.

Ms. Walter then presented a pie chart summarizing projects as follows: CWPPRA has authorized 236 projects. There are 131 active projects including 25 in Phase 1 Engineering and Design, 26 in Phase 2 Construction, 74 projects that have been completed and are now in Operations, Maintenance and/ or Monitoring phase, and 6 program support projects. Additionally, CWPPRA has completed 40 projects (i.e. reached the 20-year life mark), deauthorized 49 projects, transferred 10 projects, and placed 6 in the inactive category.

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

5. Agenda Item 4. Report/Decision: Upcoming 20-Year Life Projects (Kaitlyn Richard, USACE)

Ms. Richard explained that the Planning and Evaluation subcommittee met on 2 March 2023 to evaluate all projects nearing their 20-year life status; as a result one project is hereby being recommended for a specific path forward for a project closeout with no additional cost increase:

- a. Little Lake Shoreline Protection & Marsh Creation Project (BA-37), requesting approval for project closeout with no additional cost increase:

BA-37	Little Lake Shoreline Protection & Marsh Creation	NMFS	30-Mar-27
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- i. BA-37 was part of PPL 11, construction of approximately 920 acres of created and nourished marsh with 26,000 feet of foreshore rock dike was completed in 2007.
- ii. Additional materials will be posted online following today’s meeting

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

Mr. Inman called for a motion to approve the recommended path forward for BA-37. Mr. Williams made the motion, which Ms. McCormick seconded; the motion passed without opposition.

6. Agenda Item 5. Report: Status of BS-32 Mid Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing (Robert Dubois, FWS)

FWS provided an overview of the recent BS-32 bid opening and recommended path forward. Mr. Roy explained funds were returned to the Program through the budget reconciliation, with some of those funds set aside to address recent construction costs increases. Six projects were identified that may be subject to bid overruns, the first one being BS-32. Mr. Dubois presented a brief history and construction update of the landbridge concept project highlighting the January 2021 Phase II approval of 514 acres of intermediate marsh and 22,000 linear feet of terraces. Mr. Dubois then went on to explain that the initial bid package from January 2023 included a slight reduction in marsh creation acreage due to increased costs and landrights issues. This included a base bid and two alternatives. Recent elevation surveys revealed depths had increased to levels too great for dike construction, thus reducing project size by 132 acres throughout the five marsh creation cells. By maintaining a contingency of \$2.1 million, FWS are confident about awarding the contract. However, following pre-construction, Mr. Dubois explained that FWS intends to investigate revising the project footprint to that more like the Phase II approved footprint, to better maintain the landbridge function between marsh creation areas two and three. Later in the year, FWS may need to return to the Technical Committee and Task Force to request additional funding to build the maximum constructable footprint, depending upon pre-construction survey data. Mr. Dubois stated that FWS will prepare a proposal for the Technical Committee to vote on electronically within a week that has no additional funding with adjustments in net acreage.

Mr. Inman called for questions or comments from the Technical Committee and the public; Mr. Richard Hartman asked if leaving that gap in middle of the new footprint, would allow the project to provide the necessary landbridge benefits? Mr. Dubois stated that FWS is pushing to build in the open water and the 2019 survey data indicated some shallower areas near Bayou Gentilly that are eligible for marsh creation. Mr. Lezina stated he appreciated the question, and the group's consideration regarding this project. It does differ from a traditional landbridge, and that will be being looked at for the entirety of the project benefits.

Mr. Hartman posed the question that should there be an analysis of benefits if there is a 125% change. Mr. Roy answered that FWS intends to gather information over the next few weeks looking at net acres and cost effectiveness for a potential scope change. The Technical Committee and Task Force will have the information for consideration. Mr. Roy continued with the explanation that a reduction in project footprint does not necessarily equal proportional reduction in net acres, so more information is needed. If approved for construction, pre-construction surveys will provide a wealth of information supporting the goal of FWS to get as close to the original Phase II approval during construction, which may require additional funds.

Mr. Williams reminded all in attendance that there has been great interest in this area for over a decade beginning with the agencies, local interests and the parishes. This is the first CWPPRA project approved to address the landbridge, and maintaining this function is of the utmost importance, if a scope change is needed.

Mr. Inman then summarized the discussion that FWS will be providing the Technical Committee with additional information to have an electronic vote in the upcoming weeks.

7. Agenda Item 6. *Decision: Request to initiate Transfer of the Long Point Bayou Marsh Creation (CS-85) Project (Karen McCormick, EPA; Bren Haase, CPRA).*

Ms. McCormick expressed with excitement that EPA and CPRA are leveraging CWPPRA dollars with the request of the Technical Committee's approval to initiate transfer of the Long Point Bayou Marsh Creation (CS-85) Project. Since the project was awarded and is being overseen by the USACE, EPA and CPRA recommend the project be officially transferred to the NRDA Trustees. EPA and CPRA will return the remaining Phase I Engineering and Design CWPPRA funds to the program.

Mr. Inman called for questions or comments from the Technical Committee and the public: Mr. Roy asked if the amount of Phase I funds being returned to CWPPRA were known at this time. Ms. McCormick stated that she did not know, but noted the project had gone to 95% design, thus limiting the funds that were able to be returned to the Program.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to adopt the agenda. Ms. McCormick made the motion, which Mr. Paul seconded; the motion passed without opposition.

8. Agenda Item 7. *Decision: Request to initiate Transfer of the Bayou La Loutre Ridge and Marsh Restoration Project (PO-178) (Kent Bollfrass, CPRA).*

Mr. Lezina echoed Ms. McCormick's enthusiasm with the request of CPRA and NRCS to the CWPPRA Technical Committee recommend approval to the CWPPRA Task Force to initiate Transfer of the project to NRDA LA TIG. Mr. Lezina presented a brief history of PO-178 up to 95% design and Phase II request in December of 2020 highlighting the synergy with other projects in the area. The project has been included in and approved for construction funding within NRDA LA TIG Restoration Plan/ Environmental Assessment Plan 8. Mr. Lezina also highlighted that the project is effectively the largest marsh creation project in the state and was also incredibly cost effective.

Mr. Inman called for questions or comments from the Technical Committee and the public: Mr. Roy posed the same question, if the amount of Phase I funds being returned to CWPPRA were known at this time. Mr. Paul stated that exact numbers were unknown.

One on-line public comment was offered from Mr. Richard Hartman stating great job leveraging CWPPRA dollars.

One public comment from meeting attendee, Mr. John Lane of St. Bernard Parish Government, was offered. Mr. Lane commented on the project's importance to St. Bernard Parish and inquired if the project and ridge component would need to be re-bid, or go to a contractor currently working in Lake Borgne. Mr. Lezina responded that it was included and allowed by the EA.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Mr. Lezina seconded; the motion passed without opposition.

9. Agenda Item 8. *Decision: FY24 Planning Budget Approval, including the PPL 34 Process, and Presentation of FY24 Outreach Budget (Process, Size, Funding, etc.) (Kaitlyn Richard, USACE)*

Kaitlyn Richard, USACE, presented the recommended PPL 34 Process as follows:

- a. After meeting on 2 March 2023, the P&E Committee is recommending minor changes to the PPL process. These changes include updating to the 2023 State Master Plan and adding clarifying language for Phase Zero selection of 'up to 10' candidate projects, which is consistent with Phase I language. A recommendation to the Task Force to approve that the PPL 34 Process includes selecting four nominees each in the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins; three projects each in the Breton Sound and Pontchartrain Basins; two nominees each in the Mermentau, Calcasieu/Sabine, and Tech/Vermilion Basins; one nominee in the Atchafalaya Basin; and one nominee in the Coastwide category. The nominees per basin remains unchanged, however, CWPPRA remains flexible and if changes are required prior to the RPT meetings, those changes will be brought forth through a public meeting later this year.

Mr. Inman called for questions or comments from the Technical Committee and the public. Mr. Williams emphasized that if any additional process changes are needed, they will be brought to the public, ideally no later than September's Technical Committee meeting and the October's Task Force meeting, in advance of PPL 34.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to recommend Task Force approval of the PPL-34 process as iterated. Mr. Roy made the motion, which Mr. Paul seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

Lauren Leonpacher, on behalf of the CWPPRA Outreach Committee, presented the request thus:

- b. A recommendation to the Task Force to approve the unchanged FY24 Outreach Committee Budget, in the amount of \$452,113.

Mr. Inman called for questions or comments from the Technical Committee and the public. None were proffered.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to recommend Task Force approval of the FY24 Outreach Committee Budget as iterated. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Ms. McCormick seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

Ms. Walter was called to present the request of the FY24 Planning Budget, which is itemized in the binders and totals \$5,000,000.

- c. A recommendation to the Task Force to approve the FY24 Planning Budget (including the Outreach Committee Budget), in the amount of \$5,000,000.

Mr. Inman called for questions or comments from the Technical Committee and the public. None were proffered.

Mr. Inman called for a motion to recommend Task Force approval of the FY24 Planning Budget as iterated. Mr. Williams made the motion, which Mr. Roy seconded; the motion carried without opposition

10. Agenda Item 9. Report/Decision: Selection of Ten Candidate Projects to Evaluate for PPL 33 (Kristen Ramsey, FWS)

Kristen Ramsey, FWS, provided an overview (including location, features, goals, net acreage and fully-funded cost estimates) of each the PPL 33 Project Nominees which were selected in Coastwide Electronic voting. The project nominees are listed and presented geographically from east to west in the following table:

Region	Basin	PPL 33 Nominees	Agency
1	Pontchartrain	Bayou Ducros Marsh Creation	NRCS
1	Pontchartrain	Biloxi Marsh Shoreline Protection	FWS
1	Pontchartrain	Bayou Sauvage Marsh Creation	FWS
2	Breton Sound	South Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing	NMFS
2	Breton Sound	Bayou Terre aux Boeufs Ridge Restoration and Marsh Creation	NRCS
2	Breton Sound	Davant Marsh Creation (Increment 1)	EPA
2	Barataria	West Dupre Cut Marsh Creation	NRCS
2	Barataria	Northwest Little Lake Marsh Creation Extension	FWS
2	Barataria	Southeast Golden Meadow Marsh Creation	FWS
2	Barataria	Bayou Chevreuil Hydrologic Restoration and Vegetative Planting	EPA
3	Terrebonne	Eastern Terrebonne Landbridge Marsh Creation Increment 1	FWS
3	Terrebonne	Bayou Jean Lacroix Marsh Creation	NRCS
3	Terrebonne	Carenicro Bayou Diversion	NRCS
3	Terrebonne	Bayou Barre Marsh Creation (E. Terrebonne Landbridge Incr.1)	FWS
3	Teche-Vermilion	Freshwater Bayou East Marsh Restoration	NRCS
3	Teche-Vermilion	South Avery Island Marsh Creation and Shoreline Enhancement	NRCS
4	Mermentau	Gulf Shoreline Protection West	FWS
4	Mermentau	South Pecan Island Restoration	FWS
4	Calcasieu-Sabine	Sweet Lake Marsh Creation	NMFS
4	Calcasieu-Sabine	Sabine Lake Hydrologic Restoration and Marsh Creation	USACE
	Demonstration	Reefbud	USACE
	Coastwide	Small-Micro Dredging for Hydrologic Improvements	NMFS

Mr. Inman called for questions or comments from the Technical Committee: none were proffered.

Mr. Inman called for public comments or questions. Mr. John Lane with St. Bernard Parish Government expressed support for Bayou Ducros Marsh Creation and Biloxi Marsh Shoreline Protection. In the Breton Basin, the South Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing, and the Bayou Terre aux Boeufs projects have great synergy and are supported by the St. Bernard Parish Government.

Ms. Dixie Moertle, Clovelly Property, Lafourche Parish expressed support for the Northwest Little Lake Marsh Creation Extension and the Coastal Small Dredging due to the extreme damages caused by Hurricane Ida.

Mr. Williams thanked all those that travelled to attend the meeting and those attending on-line, as well as to those who submitted written comments representing State, Federal, landowner and NGOs. The participation, interest, and support of CWPPRA are appreciated.

Mr. Inman called for a recess to allow time for the Technical Committee to consider the preliminary costs and benefits of the 33rd Priority Project List (PPL) projects and select 10 projects as PPL 33 candidates.

Following the recess, Ms. Richard explained the ranking and scoring procedures and formally summarized the results; the selected projects are illustrated in the following table. Ms. Richard then announced the selected projects:

- Northwest Little Lake Marsh Creation Extension,
- Eastern Terrebonne Landbridge Marsh Creation Increment 1,
- Bayou Terre aux Boeufs Ridge Restoration and Marsh Creation,
- South Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing,
- Southeast Golden Meadow Marsh Creation, Gulf Shoreline Protection West,
- West Dupre Cut Marsh Creation,
- Biloxi Marsh Shoreline Protection,
- Carencro Bayou Diversion,
- Bayou Ducros Marsh Creation.
- The Technical Committee voted to not move the demo forward.

CWPPRA PPL 33 Candidate Vote - Technical Committee											6-Apr-23
Region	Basin	Type	Project	COE	EPA	FWS	NMFS	NRCS	State	No. of votes	Sum of Point Score
2	BA	MC	Northwest Little Lake Marsh Creation Extension	3	6	11	9	6		5	35
3	TE	MC	Eastern Terrebonne Landbridge Marsh Creation Increment 1	7	4	8	8		7	5	34
2	BS	MC/RR	Bayou Terre aux Boeufs Ridge Restoration & Marsh Creation	8	8	9		5	2	5	32
2	BS	MC	South Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing	4	5	7	11		1	5	28
2	BA	MC	Southeast Golden Meadow Marsh Creation	11	1	5			11	4	28
4	ME	MC	Gulf Shoreline Protection West	6		6		4	6	4	22
2	BA	MC	West Dupre Cut Marsh Creation		2	3	2	11		4	18
1	PO	SP	Biloxi Marsh Shoreline Protection	5		1	1		9	4	16
3	TE	MC	Carencro Bayou Diversion		10			9	10	3	29
1	PO	MC	Bayou Ducros Marsh Creation			2	10	10		3	22
2	BA	HR/VP	Bayou Chevreuil Hydrologic Restoration and Vegetative Planting		11			3	5	3	19
1	PO	MC	Bayou Sauvage Marsh Creation			10	6	2		3	18
CW			Small-Micro Dredging for Hydrologic Improvements	1			3		4	3	8
2	BS	MC	Davant Marsh Creation - Increment 1		9				8	2	17
3	TV	MC/SP	South Avery Island Marsh Creation and Shoreline Enhancement	9				8		2	17
4	CS	HR/MC	Sabine Lake Hydrologic Restoration and Marsh Creation	10					3	2	13
3	TV	MC	Freshwater Bayou East Marsh Restoration				5	7		2	12
3	TE	MC	Bayou Barre Marsh Creation (Eastern Terrebonne Landbridge Increment 1)			4	7			2	11
3	TE	MC	Bayou Jean Lacroix Marsh Creation		7			1		2	8
4	CS	MC	Sweet Lake Marsh Creation	2			4			2	6
4	ME	MC	South Pecan Island Restoration		3					1	3
				66	66	66	66	66	66	66	396
			check	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	396
DEMO				Reefbud (Vote: Y=Yes, N=No)	NO						

Mr. Inman called for a motion to recommend Task Force approval of the ten candidate projects to advance to compete for Phase I funding. Mr. Williams made the motion, which Mr. Roy seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

11. Agenda Item 10. Additional Agenda Items (Kaitlyn Richard, USACE) None were proffered.

12. Agenda Item 11. Request for Public Comments (Kaitlyn Richard, USACE)

Mr. Inman called for final public comments. None were proffered.

13. Agenda Items 12 and 13. Announcement: Dates of Upcoming CWPPRA Program Meetings (Brad Inman, USACE)

The Task Force meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 4, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. (USGS Wetlands and Aquatic Research Center at 700 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette, LA), and will include a virtual component. Dates for future meetings were provided as follows:

May 4, 2023	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	Lafayette
September 7, 2023	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	New Orleans
October 5, 2023	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	New Orleans
December 7, 2023	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	New Orleans

*subject to change

12. Agenda Item 12. Decision: Adjourn

Mr. Inman called for a motion to adjourn this meeting. Ms. McCormick made the motion, which Mr. Paul seconded. The motion carried without opposition and the meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.