

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes from the 16 March 05 CWPPRA Technical Committee Meeting

1. Mr. Tom Podany opened the meeting at 9:40 a.m. and all Technical Committee members introduced themselves. The following Technical Committee members were in attendance:

Mr. Tom Podany, Chairman, Corps of Engineers (COE)
 Mr. Britt Paul, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 Mr. Darryl Clark, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
 Mr. Gerry Duszynski, Louisiana Department of Natural Resource (LDNR)
 Mr. Rick Hartman, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
 Mr. Wes McQuiddy, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), (substituting for Ms. Sharon Parrish)

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. Decision: Selection of Six Candidate Projects to Evaluate for PPL 15 (Podany). Mr. Chris Monnerjahn, CWPPRA Engineering Workgroup Chairman, presented the 11 nominees for PPL 15. The matrix listing the nominees is shown below.

CWPPRA PPL15 Nominees						Potential Issues				
Region	Basin	Type	Project	Preliminary Fully Funded Cost Range	Preliminary Benefits (Net Acres Range)	Oysters	Land Rights	Pipelines /Utilities	O&M	Other Issues
1	Pontchartrain	SP	East Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Protection	\$10M - \$15M	150-200			X	X	X
2	Breton	FD	Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion	\$0M - \$5M	500-550	X	X	X	X	
2	Barataria	MC	Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation	\$15M - \$20M	350-400		X	X		
2	Barataria	MC	Buras to Triumph Levee Fringe Marsh Restoration	\$40M - \$50M	450-500	X	X	X		
2	MRDelta	MC/FD	Venice Ponds Marsh Creation and Crevasses	\$10M - \$15M	450-500		X	X		
3	Terrebonne	TE	South Terrebonne Parish Marsh Terracing	\$15M - \$20M	150-200	X	X	X	X	
3	Terrebonne	MC	North Lost Lake Marsh Creation	\$10M - \$15M	250-300			X		
3	Atchafakya	SP	Point Chevreuil Shoreline Protection	\$10M - \$15M	100-150				X	
3	Teche/Vermilion	MC/SP	Bird Island/Southwest Pass Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection	\$15M - \$20M	150-200	X	X		X	
4	Mermentau	HR	South Pecan Island Freshwater Introduction	\$0M - \$5M	50-100		X	X	X	
4	Calcasieu/Sabine	SP	Holly Beach Breakwaters West Extension	\$10M - \$15M	50-100		X	X	X	X

A. Region 1 – Pontchartrain Basin

i. East Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Protection (Pontchartrain Basin). Project proposes 25,000 linear feet of shoreline protection benefiting 150 to 200 acres at the end of the 20-year project life. The fully funded cost range is \$10 to \$15 million.

B. Region 2 – Barataria, Breton, and Mississippi River Delta Basins

i. Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion (Breton Sound Basin). Project involves removal of gates from existing diversion structures to allow free flow diversion and an outfall management plan to benefit 500 to 550 acres at the end of the 20-year project life. The fully funded cost estimate is \$0 to \$5 million.

ii. Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation Project (Barataria Basin). Project involves hydraulically dredging material from the Mississippi River. Material will be pumped via pipeline to create 550 acres of wetlands. Approximately 30,000 linear feet of terraces and a plug will also be constructed. Project benefits range from 350 to 400 net acres at the end of the 20-year project life at a cost of \$15 to \$20 million.

iii. Buras to Triumph Back Levee Marsh Creation (Barataria Basin). Project involves hydraulically dredging material from the Mississippi River. Material will be pumped into a 640 acre confined marsh creation cell and benefit 450 to 550 net acres at the end of the 20-year project life. The fully funded cost is \$40 to \$50 million.

iv. Venice Ponds Marsh Creation and Crevasses (Mississippi River Delta Basin). Project involves hydraulically dredging material from Grand and Tiger Passes and placing material in 3 sites, construction of two crevasses (100 cfs each), hydrologic connection between sites, and construction of 8,200 linear feet of terraces benefiting 450 to 500 net acres at the end of the 20-year project life. The fully funded cost estimate is \$10 to \$15 million.

C. Region 3 – Atchafalaya, Teche-Vermillion, and Terrebonne Basins

i. South Terrebonne Terracing Creation Project (Terrebonne Basin). – Project proposes 175,000 linear feet of terracing in area 1 and 125,000 linear feet of terracing in area 2. Estimated benefits range from 150 to 200 net acres at the end of the 20-year project life. The fully funded cost estimate is \$15 to \$20 million.

ii. North Lost Lake Marsh Creation Project (Terrebonne Basin). Fill from Lost Lake will be used to create marsh at six sites. In addition, smooth cordgrass will be planted along the northern shoreline of Lost Lake. The project will benefit 250 to 300 net acres at the end of the 20-year project life and cost \$10 to \$15 million.

iii. Point Chevreuril Shoreline Protection (Atchafalaya Basin). Project involves 22,000 linear feet of shoreline protection benefiting 100 to 150 acres at the end of the 20-year project life. The fully funded cost estimate is \$10 to \$15 million.

iv. Southwest Pass/Bird Island Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection (Teche-Vermillion Basin). Project involves 8,700 linear feet of shoreline protection along Vermilion Bay and 4,600 linear feet at the mouth of Southwest Pass as well as marsh creation on north part of Tojan Island. Project benefits include 150 to 200 net acres at the end of the 20-year project life at a fully funded cost estimate of \$15 to \$20 million.

D. Region 4 – Calcasieu-Sabine and Mermentau Basins

i. South Pecan Island Freshwater Introduction (Mermentau Basin). Project involves installation of four 48-inch pipes under Hwy 82 to introduce sediment and freshwater from White Lake benefiting approximately 50 to 100 acres at the end of the 20-year project life. The fully funded cost range is \$0 to \$5 million.

ii. Holly Beach Breakwaters West Extension (Calcasieu-Sabine Basin). Project proposes 6,600 linear feet extension of breakwaters with an additional sand component to nourish and replenish the beach. Preliminary benefits are 50 to 100 net acres at the end of the 20-year project life at a fully funded cost of \$10 to \$15 million.

Mr. Podany opened the floor for comments/discussion from the Technical Committee. There were no comments.

Mr. Podany opened the floor for comments from the public.

East Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Protection

Ms. Yarrow Etheredge, Director of Environmental Affairs for New Orleans, said that the area separating Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne is crucial. Loss of the landbridge would affect Hwy 90, which is a critical evacuation route and provides storm surge protection for residents. Daily tidal influences also contribute to erosion in this critical area.

Mr. Leo Richardson, Lake Catherine Sewage and Water District and shareholder in Chef Menteur Land Company, said that New Orleans has been missing from the CWPPRA program. He presented photos illustrating shoreline loss over the years at Hospital Wall. Continued erosion at Chef Pass threatens the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge. The problem is not only land loss, but also preserving the unique rural Louisiana lifestyle. Encroachment on Hwy 90 and other escape routes affects public safety.

Ms. Cynthia Willard-Lewis, New Orleans City Councilmember – District E, spoke on behalf of residents who have been enthusiastic about this project. This project is a win-win situation for the community, shoreline restoration, hurricane evacuation, and preserving a rich and diverse part of New Orleans. This project is critical to wetland protection as well as the safety of the community. She thanked the Corps of Engineers for protecting New Orleans.

Mr. Keith Campo, President of Venetian Isles Civic Association representing approximately 500 residents on the west end of the landbridge project, said that if the landbridge is not repaired, then Lake Pontchartrain would quickly erode and destroy the Bayou Sauvage Wildlife Refuge. His neighborhood supports the landbridge project.

Mr. Roy Holland, President of Lake Catherine Civic Association, submitted 43 letters from concerned residents all affected by the landbridge. He supports the landbridge project. Mr. Leo Richardson asked members of the civic association to stand to show their support for the project.

Ms. Marnie Winter, representing the Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard's office, said that the landbridge project is the parish's number one priority because of hurricane protection.

Mr. George Winningham said that 10 to 20 feet of land a year has been lost at Hospital Wall. The water coming through the Rigolets ends up in Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Tammany Parishes as well as Lake Maurepas.

Mr. Steve Trice, President of Chef Menteur Land Company, gave his support for the landbridge project. This land is the backdoor to the Slidell and New Orleans area. If a gap in the landbridge occurs, then flooding could be a major problem for the Pontchartrain area.

Mr. Ronald Ricit, Rigolets resident, said that Rigolets is the last fishing community in New Orleans. The island between Fort Pike Canal and Lake Catherine is eroding away fast. He asked that the Fort Pike Canal be dredged and the material placed on the side.

Mr. Harvey Stern, New Orleans Sierra Club, said that the landbridge project is urgently needed. The marsh is in fragile condition. He asked that provisions be made to keep newly created marsh undeveloped.

Mr. Ken Carter, owner of Cedar Bayou LLC, owns 2,200 acres of land in the Lake Catherine area that has suffered tremendous erosion over the past 100 years. Even though his property is not impacted by the project, he gave his support because it is a “people project”.

Mr. Anthony Dudenhefer, a commercial fisherman from Fort Pike, said that the marsh at Rigolets Pass has eroded over the years. If nothing is done, then the waves will take out the Hwy 11 Bridge and interstate.

Mr. Kenny Tucker, Legislative Assistant to State Senator Walter Boasso, said the landbridge is the vital link between Pearl River and Plaquemines Parish, particularly Hwy 90. In a hurricane situation, Hwy 90 provides a vital means of alternate transportation. He believes that this project is the last point of defense for the Pontchartrain Basin to have proper hurricane protection.

Mr. Vince Comberrel, Venetian Isles resident, said that a new, Federally financed bridge is being constructed over the Rigolets Pass. If the landbridge is not maintained, the bridge and Hwy 90 could be affected.

Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion

Mr. Andrew MacInnes, Coastal Zone Administrator (CZM) for Plaquemines Parish, said that the Bayou Lamoque structures are currently in a state of disrepair, but have the possibility of becoming the largest diversion in the state. He has concerns about remote operation of the structures. He believes that the gates should be removed and allowed to flow at full capacity. The project is cost effective and is the third priority for Plaquemines Parish.

Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation Project

Mr. Andrew MacInnes, CZM for Plaquemines Parish, said that this project is that parish’s second priority. Lake Hermitage will double or triple in size if nothing is done. Use of the West Point a la Hache siphons would help nourish and maintain proposed project features. He added that there is no Federal back levee protection in the area.

Ms. Marnie Winter, Jefferson Parish, stated that Jefferson Parish would like to see the projects in Barataria Basin move forward because of the high land loss in the basin. The Parish likes the Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation Project because of the hydraulic dredging technology.

Buras to Triumph Back Levee Marsh Creation

Mr. Andrew MacInnes, CZM for Plaquemines Parish, said that the Buras to Triumph Project is the parish's number one priority. This project will protect Buras and the southern part of the parish. Buras is quickly becoming a bottleneck point for severe damage from hurricanes on the Federally constructed and maintained back levee.

Ms. Marnie Winter, Jefferson Parish, also supports the Buras to Triumph project and would like to see the technology of hydraulically dredging the river incorporated into the project.

Venice Ponds Marsh Creation Project

Mr. Andrew MacInnes, CZM for Plaquemines Parish, said that this project is the parish's fourth priority. The project has been through the PPL 14 process and can be a good public relations campaign for CWPPRA because of the location of the project in proximity to business and industry.

South Terrebonne Terracing Creation Project

Mr. Al Levron, representing Terrebonne Parish, said that this project came from the grassroots organization. Other projects in the area have proven that terraces are a viable technique to provide a more synergistic dampening effect on wave energy against the hurricane protection levee. The Lake Boudreaux area of this project is an opportunity for a CWPPRA project to be more visible. Terrebonne Parish does not have much opportunity to recapture sediments and is losing nine square miles per year. He recognizes that there are difficult opportunities for restoration in the parish, but it is not impossible. He submitted additional letters of support from Representative Damon Baldone and the Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Nolan Bergeron, Chairman of Coastal Zone Management Committee - Coastal Restoration Committee for Terrebonne Parish, supports the South Terrebonne Terracing project. The inner marsh is rapidly deteriorating because of subsidence and sea level rise. A tool is needed to stop the wave action and protect the hurricane levees, roads, and bridges. Levee protection is needed in Madison Bay and reduction of saltwater intrusion is needed in Lake Boudreaux.

Mr. James Miller, Terrebonne Parish Coastal Zone Management, said that project features would increase fishery production and waterfowl habitat. Shallow areas will create a beneficial aquatic habitat, provide intermediate protection to levees, and compliment the New Orleans Audubon Society's bird watching program. He added that the project could be scaled back.

Mr. Paul Yakupzack, Terrebonne Parish Coastal Management Committee, supports both parts of the South Terrebonne Terracing project, especially the Madison Bay component. This project will protect people and infrastructure, as well as maintain a salinity regime.

North Lost Lake Marsh Creation Project

Mr. Al Levron, Terrebonne Parish, gave his support for the North Lost Lake project.

Mr. Nolan Bergeron, Terrebonne Parish, said that the Lost Lake project will save freshwater in the northern section and thanked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for proposing the project.

Mr. James Miller, Terrebonne Parish CZM, gave his support for the North Lost Lake project.

Point Chevreuil Shoreline Protection

There were no public comments.

Southwest Pass/Bird Island Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection

Mr. Judge Edwards, Vermilion Parish Coastal Restoration Advisory Committee, said that the South West Pass is eroding rapidly. If the surface of Southwest Pass doubles, then the tidal amplitude will probably double also. CWPPRA has a flaw; the committee looks for what has been lost, not what will be lost. This is Vermilion Parish's number one project because it will impact a lot should these critical land features be lost.

Mr. Sherrill Sagrera, Vermilion Parish Coastal Advisory Committee, said that the land near Southwest Point has been moved back considerably. Something must be done to protect Bird Island, a historical colonial bird habitat that has almost disappeared.

South Pecan Island Freshwater Introduction

Mr. Randy Moertle, representing M.O. Miller Estates, said that this project benefits one of the largest areas (6,834 acres) and is one of the fewer projects estimated to cost \$0 to \$5 million.

Mr. M.O. Miller, owner of M.O. Miller Estate, is in favor of this project.

Mr. Sherrill Sagrera, Vermilion Parish Coastal Advisory Committee, said that this is a multi-purpose project that will relieve excessive water in the White Lake area and alleviate some of the flooding on Pecan Island.

Mr. Judge Edwards, President of Vermilion Corporation, fully supports this project. The project will enhance an existing marsh management plan and help to buffer salinities to the south.

Holly Beach Breakwaters West Extension

Mr. Paul Cox, on behalf of 18 beach homeowners and landowners, said that the area is losing 25 to 30 feet of beach per year. This project would protect coastal woodlands and marshland behind the breakwaters as well as protect an exposed pipeline. Mr. Cox said that Ms. Tina Horn, Cameron Parish Police Jury, fully supports this project. Mr. Cox added that Mr. Lonnie Harper, landman for the Crane Brothers, has no objection to the project.

Ms. Victoria Bayless, representing the Baton Rouge Audubon Society, said that the cheniers are the barrier for the marsh area behind the society's bird sanctuary as well as a major habitat for tropical migrants. She asked for the Technical Committee's support for this project.

Ms. Latora LaGrone, on behalf of her grandfather Mr. Wendell Lindsay – landowner, said that Hwy 82 is major avenue of commerce. Loss of the property means loss of the highway and state income. On behalf of her family, she asked for the Technical Committee’s support.

Mr. Judge Edwards, member of the Governor’s Coastal Restoration Advisory Committee, said that this project is worthwhile. There is no time to wait for LCA; the next big step should be to get the Congressional Delegation to increase the CWPPRA budget. Every project is worthwhile and needs to be completed within the next five years.

Mr. Podany opened the floor for discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Britt Paul said that selection should proceed as it has in the past, each agency votes for six projects. Votes are counted based on consensus among agencies first; the weighted votes will be used to break ties. The top project will receive six points, and the lowest project one point. Mr. Darryl Clark and Mr. Rick Hartman agreed. The Technical Committee decided to vote using this process.

Voting Results

Mr. Podany announced the results from agency voting. The top six projects were:

1. Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion – 6 votes (29 points)
2. Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation – 6 votes (23 points)
3. Venice Ponds Marsh Creation and Crevasses – 4 votes (12 points)
4. South Terrebonne Parish Marsh Terracing – 4 votes (11 points)
5. Bird Island/Southwest Pass Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection– 4 votes (11 points)
6. South Pecan Island Freshwater Introduction – 4 votes (8 points)

An audience member asked that if any of the top six projects were to fall out, would the project next in line be considered. Mr. Podany replied that this is not likely to happen because the top six will be evaluated as candidates and compete for final selection on PPL 15. Mr. Rick Hartman added that just because a project gets on list does not mean it will be funded. Projects compete for annual funding of \$50 to \$60 million. Some projects are nominated two or three times before making the list. He encouraged supporters of projects that were not in the top six to work with supporting agencies to improve the project and re-nominate for next year.

Mr. Leo Richardson asked why EPA, a sponsor on the East Orleans Landbridge project, did not vote for the project. Mr. Wes McQuiddy stated that they voted for their top priority projects.

DECISION: Mr. Rick Hartman made a motion to select the top six projects that had the most consensus among agencies as the candidate projects for PPL15. Mr. Darryl Clark seconded. All Technical Committee members voted in favor and the motion passed.

3. Agenda Item 2. Discussion/Decision: Programmatic Assessment of the CWPPRA Program (Podany). The Task Force has directed the Technical Committee to develop a proposal detailing the work and cost required to complete the Programmatic Assessment.

Mr. Podany opened the floor for comments/discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Darryl Clark suggested that the Technical Committee meet with the Planning & Evaluation Subcommittee, Academic Advisory Group, and Parishes Against Coastal Erosion (PACE) to work on an outline for the level of time and effort. A budget sheet could be developed to show the tasks from the outline, agency responsible for completing the task, and the cost involved.

Mr. Rick Hartman suggested that the assessment need not be a lengthy document and also said that, in light of the recent data request from CEQ, that the Environmental and Monitoring Workgroups develop a standardized methodology to track performance and effectiveness of the program. This does not have to be part of the Programmatic Assessment effort. Mr. Darryl Clark agreed and stated that he envisioned Sections 1 and 2 to be 15-20 pages in length.

Mr. Gerry Duszynski asked whether this is an assessment where changes or revisions are recommended on the procedures of CWPPRA (selection of projects, use of planning dollars, etc.) or more of a “position paper” or “guiding document”. He feels it is more of a “guidance document” than an “assessment”.

Mr. Rick Hartman said that the purpose of the assessment is to address the relevancy of CWPPRA in light of LCA and the additional years of authority and should be a stand-alone document that addresses the relevancy of the CWPPRA program, separate from the Report to Congress. The assessment should look at how CWPPRA can fill gaps not covered in LCA. Mr. Britt Paul agreed that the assessment should stand-alone from the Report to Congress. Mr. Tom Podany stated that he didn't think this would be a problem.

Mr. Gerry Duszynski said that the reason we backed off from a detailed Report to Congress is because it should be a concise document for Congress to read. Mr. Rick Hartman added that DNR summarized the State program in a December 2004 document, which could be used as a starting point for the Report to Congress.

Mr. Rick Hartman views the assessment as a short document that justifies CWPPRA. He didn't want to see CWPPRA funding being controlled by LCA priorities and spent on LCA activities. The document has to justify why CWPPRA is a stand-alone program.

Mr. Darryl Clark said that the task is to document what CWPPRA has accomplished since program authorization and provide a vision for the future of CWPPRA. Guidance is needed from the Task Force concerning the length of the assessment. Mr. Rick Hartman added that the Technical Committee needs clarification from the Task Force on the intent of the assessment. Mr. Darryl Clark added that the assessment should consist of Section 1 and 2 with the Report to Congress as a separate document.

The Technical Committee agreed to provide a level of effort summary to the Task Force in May, with the recommendation that the Report to Congress be a standalone document. Mr. Tom Podany added that it was important to include a scientific discussion on the effectiveness of CWPPRA projects (which is what the intent of the Report to Congress is).

Mr. Rick Hartman had concerns about money spent on monitoring under CWPPRA and our ability to analyze data for the program. Mr. Gerry Duszynski added that implementation of the Coast-wide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) will move away from project specific monitoring. Mr. Hartman said that CRMS is intended to help show what the whole program is doing, not just individual projects. He noted that CRMS is more, or just as, beneficial to LCA as it is to CWPPRA. He suggested seeing if LCA could help support CRMS. Mr. Tom Podany added that if CRMS cannot give CWPPRA information on the performance of individual projects, it is hard to justify under the program. Mr. Darryl Clark added that CRMS stations would have to be supplemented with project specific stations to give results from individual project performance.

Mr. Podany opened the floor for comments from the public. There were no public comments. The Committee agreed to schedule separate meetings to refine the outline and apply time and cost to complete.

DECISION: Mr. Podany said that the Technical Committee would set a date for the next meeting with the workgroups to develop more details in the scope, time, and cost of each task, and the Report to Congress would be a separate activity.

4. Agenda Item 3. Decision: Proposed Changes to the CWPPRA Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) (LeBlanc). Ms. Julie LeBlanc presented the P&E Subcommittee-proposed changes to the SOP. The first change was to incorporate Task Force previous decisions to limit projects to a 100 percent cap, limit the request for O&M funding increases for non-cash flow projects, and revise the annual funding cycle approval dates. Additional SOP revisions included minor clarifications to the demonstration project appendix. Other non-policy clarifications and minor changes were made. Future potential SOP changes include modifications resulting from changes in project monitoring; there is currently no mention of CRMS in the SOP. The Engineering and Environmental Workgroups were tasked with drafting SOP language outlining implementation guidelines for demos selected for funding for later review and approval by the P&E Subcommittee and Technical Committee.

Ms. Julie LeBlanc recommended acceptance of the P&E Subcommittee-recommended SOP changes and advised that there was one item that the P&E Subcommittee believed could be policy-related, thus requiring subsequent Task Force approval. Ms. LeBlanc asked the Technical Committee to discuss whether Task Force approval was needed to require an updated Wetland Value Assessment (WVA) for all projects at 95 percent design review. Mr. Rick Hartman said that the revised WVA does not necessitate a policy change; rather the change was a clarification. He recommended the Technical Committee approve all P&E Subcommittee changes.

Mr. Britt Paul asked for clarification on the requirement of a revised WVA at 95% design review. If a project does not change, is it really necessary to revise the WVA? Mr. Kevin Roy said the requirement for a revised WVA was intended for projects where changes are significant enough to warrant a new assessment. A WVA would have to be submitted for every project at 95% design review. If no changes are made to the project then the original WVA may be submitted. The Committee agreed to remove the word “revised” from the requirement in question.

DECISION: Mr. Rick Hartman moved to approve all changes made by the P&E Subcommittee and to remove the word “revised” from the term “revised WVA” in the SOP. Mr. Darryl Clark seconded. All Technical Committee members voted in favor and the motion passed. No changes were deemed policy-related; therefore, accepted changes are immediately in effect with no additional Task Force approval required.

Mr. Gerry Duszynski asked to discuss another issue related to the RPT meetings and the nominee selection process. Projects are presented for the first time at RPT meetings, and agencies/parishes vote on them immediately. He suggested taking more time to look at the projects before a decision is made on project selection. Ms. Rachel Sweeney said that the P&E Subcommittee discussed this issue and was reluctant to recommend submission of projects beforehand because they wanted to keep the grassroots nomination process. Ms. Julie LeBlanc suggested that in addition to the regional RPT meetings, there could be one separate coastwide meeting for voting. Mr. Rick Hartman said that having another meeting becomes problematic when tracking who gets to vote; only parishes in that basin can vote. He understands that a more educated vote may be made, if there were more time to consider the projects. Mr. Gerry Duszynski suggested the State send out letters to parishes prior to the RPT meetings so that everyone can get a handle on the projects beforehand but realizes it is not fair if some people are left out of the process by not being allowed to nominate projects at the meetings.

Mr. Darryl Clark said that the technical representatives from each agency attending the RPT meetings have experience to discuss the nominees and process information fairly quickly.

Mr. Rick Hartman recommended having a nomination meeting and then a revised P&E meeting with the parishes a week later to vote and select the projects.

Mr. Podany opened the floor for comments from the public.

Ms. Marnie Winter, Jefferson Parish, said that the idea needs to be looked at and input from other parish representatives is needed. She agrees that there is room for improvement and parishes need a lag time before making these important decisions.

Mr. Britt Paul suggested utilizing the PACE group as a means to get feedback into the process.

Ms. Yarrow Etheredge, Orleans Parish, agreed that having two meetings was a good idea. It would also be helpful if at the second meeting, all projects could be mapped together so that the parishes can place their priorities on a bigger scope.

Mr. Rick Hartman suggested assigning the P&E Subcommittee with suggesting changes to the PPL16 process. Ms. Julie LeBlanc stated that we typically discuss the upcoming PPL process with the Task Force when the upcoming year’s budget is discussed. She noted that the FY06 Planning Budget would be discussed at the May Task Force meeting. The Technical Committee agreed to allow discussion of the PPL16 nominee/candidate process by the P&E Subcommittee, with input from PACE.

5. Agenda Item 4. Discussion: Status Report on the Avoca Island Diversion and Land Building Project (TE-49) and Potential Change of Scope (Podany). Mr. Greg Miller recognized Mr. Ken Duffy and Dr. John Lopez's involvement in the project. The Avoca Island Diversion is a PPL12 project in Phase I design. Initially the project proposed a 1,000 to 3,000 cfs sediment and freshwater diversion, but hydraulic modeling indicated that channel velocities would not be able to move coarse sediment. Also, additional sampling showed lower than expected concentrations of coarse sediment in Bayou Schaffer. The new approach involves the use of a 180 cfs freshwater diversion feature with an added dedicated dredging/marsh creation feature that would create 280 acres of marsh. The fully funded construction cost is \$12 million, down from the original estimate of \$19.2 million. The net benefits gained have gone from 143 to 280 acres. Additional surveys, geotechnical work, and cultural resource investigations are needed to define the outfall route. The project is on schedule to seek construction approval January 2006.

Mr. Podany opened the floor for discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Podany asked if Task Force approval was required for this change in scope. Mr. Greg Miller replied that he wanted everyone to be aware of this significant design change and that their intent is to complete 30% design review before asking for a change in scope approval from the Technical Committee/Task Force. Mr. Rick Hartman recommended that the project move forward to the 30 percent design stage.

Mr. Darryl Clark expressed concern about flow reduction from 1,000 to 180 cfs. Mr. Greg Miller and Dr. Ken Duffy stated this 180 cfs is the rating for a single culvert (replacing what was already there) and not multiple concrete box culverts. Mr. Clark didn't want to lose the freshwater sediment diversion from Bayou Schaffer and just end up with a marsh creation project and suggested possibly adding a second 60-inch culvert. Mr. Clark agreed that Task Force approval is required for a significant redesign as in this case.

6. Agenda Item 5. Discussion: Initial Discussion Regarding FY06 Budget Development (Process, Size, Funding, etc) (Podany). Mr. Podany opened the floor for discussion on the FY06 Planning Budget from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Darryl Clark said that the Technical Committee needs guidance concerning PPL16 from the Task Force before work can begin on the FY06 budget. Mr. Rick Hartman suggested the Technical Committee move forward the same way as in the past. Mr. Podany added that the cost of the Programmatic Assessment may dip into the surplus funds in the Planning Program, necessitating that the FY06 Planning Budget be less than \$5 million.

7. Agenda Item 6. Presentation: Status of the Floating Marsh Demonstration Project (Paul). Dr. Jenneke Visser presented an update on the Floating Marsh Demonstration Project (LA-05). If all goes as planned, construction approval may be requested to allow a June 2005 construction start. The objective is to develop methods to restore open water areas to freshwater vegetative marshes. Phase I consists of Artificial Floating Systems (AFS) to provide a structure to keep the substrate and vegetation in place and provide buoyancy to allow the native plant *Panicum hemitomom* to establish. The AFSs consist of varying types of structures, fabrics, vegetation, and dimensions. Phase 2, scheduled to begin June 2005, consists of testing three selected designs

under sheltered and exposed conditions. Mandalay Refuge has been identified as a preferred site.

Mr. Rick Hartman asked how nutria might affect this potential technology. Dr. Visser replied that a nutria control program has been implemented at the experiment site because of significant grazing by nutria and muskrats during the establishment phase. Dr. Visser hoped that following establishment this wouldn't be an issue. In addition, the location was chosen in an area that is heavily trapped for nutria.

8. Agenda Item 7. Announcement: PPL 15 Demonstration Projects (Monnerjahn). Mr. Chris Monnerjahn announced that nominations for PPL15 demonstration projects are due by June 1st (and must be submitted to the Engineering Workgroup Chairman).

9. Agenda Item 8. Additional Agenda Items (Podany). There were no additional agenda items.

10. Agenda Item 9. Date of Upcoming Task Force Meeting (Podany). Mr. Tom Podany announced that the next Task Force meeting would take place on May 4, 2005 in Lafayette. The next Technical Committee meeting will be held in Baton Rouge on June 8, 2005.

11. The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.