

## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes from the 19 April 2012 Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) Technical Committee Meeting

1. Mr. Tom Holden opened the meeting at 9:35 a.m. The following Technical Committee members were in attendance:

Mr. Darryl Clark, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Mr. Rick Hartman, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)  
Mr. Thomas Holden, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Chairman  
Ms. Karen McCormick, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
Mr. Britt Paul, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Mr. Bren Haase (sitting in for Mr. Kirk Rhinehart), LA Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA)

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

2. Mr. Holden asked if there were any opening comments from the Technical Committee or any comments or changes to the agenda.

Mr. Clark welcomed back Ms. Gay Browning. Mr. Hartman welcomed back Mr. Holden. Mr. Holden then shared that Ms. Browning and Ms. Susan Testroet-Bergeron were recently recognized at the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana awards banquet for their positive impacts on coastal restoration.

Mr. Paul pointed out that an additional item has been added under Agenda Item No. 12 and that some other projects updates will be given under additional agenda items.

Mr. Holden stated that he would like to add a short discussion before Agenda Item No. 3 on selection of Priority Project List (PPL) projects as they relate to consistency with the State Master Plan. He also added as old business that the gap analysis requested for the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project (PO-29) has been completed by the USACE and reported back to the State and EPA.

3. Agenda Item 2. Report: Status of Breaux Act Program Funds and Projects (Gay Browning, USACE). Ms. Browning provided an overview of the status of CWPPRA accounts and available funding in the Planning and Construction Programs.

Ms. Browning reported that the January Phase II and PPL approvals changed the current and funding estimates. Right now, the total current estimate is \$2 billion \$676 million, which includes building every project on the list at this time, whether approved or unapproved. The current approved estimate is \$1 billion \$602 million, which includes approved Phase I and II projects. The total funding into the Program at this point is \$2 billion \$347 million, Federal and

State. An additional \$328.6 million would be needed to build everything in the current estimate. However, there are projects up for de-authorization today which, if removed, would lower the current estimate by \$378 million, leaving an overall surplus of \$50 million.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Clark thanked Ms. Browning for putting together the potential project cleanup list.

Ms. Browning suggested that the Technical Committee start to consider how many more PPLs can be funded in light of future operation and maintenance (O&M) and monitoring costs.

Mr. Holden stated that a challenge is financial management and preventing obligations from exceeding funding streams. He added that the USACE can only commit to project obligations within the available funding. He continued that there is a buffer right now, but O&M trends have tended to increase. There is also a liability issue that all federal agencies will have to address at the 20-year life of their projects with real consequences when structures are involved. He stated that his intent is to draft a letter from the Colonel to the Task Force outlining how the USACE expects the agencies to dispose of their projects. The letter will address two items: identifying O&M needs to financially manage the Program; and how to address disposition of projects, whether by decommissioning, leaving in place, transferring, etc. The USACE has a policy which it will follow, but the other agencies need to determine how they will address end of project life dispositions.

Mr. Holden added that there is currently a buffer in the funding and that because a cost share agreement could not be reached with the State, there are USACE projects which may not be built, therefore increasing that buffer. He emphasized that the Colonel needs to communicate to the other Task Force members that this financial management piece must be resolved. If Program finances are not properly managed, there may not be enough money to maintain all of the current projects, which would be a disservice to the supporting landowners and representatives who did their part to have these projects built.

Mr. Clark added that USFWS has studied their projects approaching the 20-year life and are prepared to provide recommendations for strategies moving forward on their projects.

Mr. Hartman stated that NMFS has also been thinking about the future of their projects. He pointed out that many projects have rock or other structures and that if the Program is not renewed past 2019 and therefore runs out of money, these projects will present unique problems. For example, if rock is not maintained and sinks beneath the water surface, it could become a danger to navigation. The dilemma is whether to invest money in removing that rock to prevent future liability knowing that there will not be money available for ongoing maintenance even if there is still some benefit to the project. The Technical Committee may need to begin decommissioning projects that still have some benefit if there is no guarantee for O&M funding after 2019.

Ms. McCormick stated that the EPA has also been thinking about the future of its projects. She asked if the Technical Committee should start to consider prioritizing projects with minimal O&M to address these concerns.

Mr. Paul stated that this is very much a project by project analysis and that NRCS is also evaluating their projects. He added that there may be landowners or the State who may be willing to fund future O&M to keep the benefits of some projects.

Mr. Holden reiterated that the Technical Committee is serious about this issue and must start developing solutions for these projects as it may impact future funding decisions.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

4. Agenda Item 3. Decision: Selection of Ten Candidate Projects and up to Three Demonstration Projects to Evaluate for PPL 22 (Kevin Roy, USFWS). *The Technical Committee considered preliminary costs and benefits of the PPL 22 project and demonstration project nominees listed below. The Technical Committee selected 10 projects and four demonstration projects as PPL 22 candidates to be evaluated for Phase 0 analysis, which will be considered later for final selection of projects that will be approved for Phase I (Planning and Engineering and Design).*

Mr. Holden opened the discussion regarding the State Master Plan's role in the voting process for choosing PPL projects. He stated that the USACE helped the State develop their Master Plan, and that the State had to make some tough decisions and he is proud of them. He then expressed reservations regarding today's vote as to whether he should vote based on the technical merits of a project or based on whether or not the State will support projects based on their Master Plan. He then presented a summary list of which projects presented for today's vote, as evaluated by his USACE staff, do or do not comport with the State Master Plan. He added that the Master Plan was not in place when this PPL list began development and asked Mr. Haase for his thoughts on this matter.

Mr. Haase agreed that this is an important discussion which has been touched on through the Master Plan public meeting process. He continued that the Master Plan was a gargantuan effort and has done a lot to focus the effort and money the State is willing to spend on coastal restoration in the future. The Master Plan has not passed in the legislature yet, but they expect that it will. He added that the State wants to support PPL projects that are in line with the Master Plan, but will not stand in the way of those that are not. He expressed hope that in the future CWPPRA will show support for those projects that are in the Master Plan. He added that in the future, the State may not cost share or vote for those projects that do not match the State Master Plan.

Mr. Clark stated that many of the agencies worked with the State on the Master Plan and congratulated the State on their effort. He commended their use of modeling to rank projects and modification of that list based on public and agency input. He added that since today's PPL projects were nominated before the draft Master Plan came out and since it is not yet approved, he intends to vote based on project technical merits. He continued that next year the voting strategy may have to be re-evaluated. He added that the State will need to give more guidance on whether projects close to Master Plan designated areas will be supported. He reiterated that the

Master Plan is not the CWPPRA master plan, but that many of the agencies gave the State advice during its development and that the CWPPRA Program will have to consider how to interact with the State’s Master Plan in the future.

Mr. Hartman stated that based on past discussions, he understands that the State is looking for projects that are “consistent” with the Master Plan and that they are taking the defined areas for potential projects in the Master Plan with a little grain of salt.

Mr. Paul stated that he will vote based on technical merits and from a CWPPRA standpoint today because it is not the CWPPRA master plan and those projects that they feel are doing the most good in areas of need should be voted for.

Ms. McCormick stated that in her opinion, EPA has been very consistent with their projects even before the State Master Plan. She expressed frustration that some EPA projects have been put on hold while waiting to see where the State Master Plan comes out. She added that they support the Master Plan, but would like to see some consistency from the State within programs.

Mr. Holden agreed that he will vote the technical merits of the projects. He added that at the June Task Force meeting they need to decide, with State input, how to proceed with future projects so that the Technical Committee and the public can understand how projects will be selected.

Mr. Clark interjected that he agrees this issue deserves discussion, but believes the Technical Committee can inform their Task Force Representatives of this issue in preparation for discussion at the June Task Force Meeting. Mr. Haase agreed that the June meeting would be an opportune time for this discussion. Mr. Holden requested that Mr. Haase communicate to Mr. Garret Graves that the Technical Committee has expressed that it will vote its conscience and requested that if these projects are chosen for their merits, the State should honor that decision and agree to cost share because it would be disingenuous to build up expectations and then dash them.

Mr. Hartman stated that EPA has a point that there have been significant funds invested in projects to date. The State needs to decide whether it will support projects that have technical merit even if they are not consistent with the Master Plan in order to not waste dollars already spent on engineering and design efforts.

Mr. Roy gave a brief overview of each of the PPL 22 nominated projects and demonstration projects listed below.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Basin</b>	<b>PPL 22 Nominees</b>
1	Pontchartrain	Small Mississippi River Reintroduction into LaBranche Wetlands
1	Pontchartrain	Triangle - Restoring Cypress-Tupelo Swamp & Marsh
1	Pontchartrain	New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization & Marsh Creation
2	Mississippi River Delta	Pass a Loutre Crevasse

2	Mississippi River Delta	Pass a Loutre Hydrologic Restoration
2	Breton Sound	Lake Lery Marsh Creation & Terracing
2	Breton Sound	Terracing & Marsh Creation South of Big Mar
2	Barataria	Elmer's Island Restoration
2	Barataria	Northeast Turtle Bay Marsh Creation & Critical Area Shoreline Protection
2	Barataria	Bayou Dupont Sediment Delivery – Marsh Creation 3
3	Terrebonne	North Catfish Lake Marsh Creation
3	Terrebonne	Lake Tambour Marsh Creation
3	Terrebonne	Grand Bayou Freshwater Enhancement/Introduction & Terraces
3	Atchafalaya	West Wax Lake Wetlands Diversion
3	Teche-Vermilion	South Little Vermilion Bay Terracing & Planting
3	Teche-Vermilion	Cote Blanche Freshwater & Sediment Introduction & Shoreline Protection
4	Calcasieu-Sabine	Cameron Meadows Marsh Creation & Wetland Restoration
4	Calcasieu-Sabine	West Cove Marsh Creation & Nourishment
4	Mermentau	East Pecan Island Marsh Creation – Increment 1
4	Mermentau	Front Ridge Freshwater Introduction & Terracing
	Coast-wide	Coast-wide Competitive Voluntary Canal Backfilling

	<b>PPL 22 Demonstration Project Nominees</b>
DEMO	Hay Bale Demo
DEMO	Reconnection of Hydrologically Isolated Wetlands
DEMO	CREPS: Coastal Restoration & Energy Production System
DEMO	Bioengineering of Shorelines & Canal Banks using Live Stakes

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the Technical Committee and public for each project.

### *Small Mississippi River Reintroduction into LaBranche Wetlands*

Allan Ensminger, representing St. Charles Land Syndicate, expressed support for the project and assured the Technical Committee that land access will be provided by the owner. He added that they have fought all kinds of salt water intrusion into that tract of land, but since the closure of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO), salinity in Lake Pontchartrain has gotten back down to 1950 levels. He stated that current salinity is about three points parts per thousand (ppt), indicating the lake is changing from a slightly brackish system back to a fresher system. Mr. Hartman asked if freshwater reintroduction is not really necessary since the Lake is freshening. Mr. Ensminger responded, yes.

### *Triangle- Restoring Cypress-Tupelo Swamp & Marsh*

Mr. Clark asked if the project sponsor would like to change the borrow source. Ms. McCormick clarified that the EPA will leave the project as proposed.

Charles Allen, with the City of New Orleans, thanked the Technical Committee for its help in getting the project to this point. He stated that they are currently tackling the issue of land rights and land rights negotiation. One project feature is taking advantage of the partially treated effluent from the Orleans Sewerage and Water Board Treatment Facility, which they are in talks with. They have entered into discussions with one of the larger land owners in this area and have been approached by a non-governmental organization (NGO) to communicate and negotiate with other land owners in this area.

John Day, with Louisiana State University, stated that salinity in this area is now three parts per thousand and they believe the salinity issues are being handled. They have been monitoring this area since closure of the MRGO and have seen indications that soil salinities are freshening enough to support cypress growth.

Amanda Moore, with National Wildlife Federation, expressed support for the project since it is highly visible with the potential to engage thousands of people every year and educate them on Louisiana coastal restoration. The project is also an innovative cypress-tupelo swamp restoration project in an urban wetland area. She also pointed out that the project is recognized in both the 2012 State Coastal Master Plan and the Corps' MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan.

Darryl Malek-Wiley, representing the Sierra Club and the Lower Ninth Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development, stated that they strongly support this project and have been pushing for restoration of these wetlands since 2007. The project has strong community support, is a premiere site for wetland education, is an internationally known site, and would be a great benefit to coastal restoration education.

Scott Eustis, Coastal Wetland Specialist for the Gulf Restoration Network, echoed support for the project.

W.P. Edwards, representing Vermilion Corporation and Vermilion Parish, stated that it is a great project with a lot of public support and potential for much agency cooperation. The project is very visible and he thinks it would be a worthy candidate for any number of funding sources. He expressed regret that this project would be taking CWPPRA funds needed in other locations when this is a good candidate for other funding sources.

Mr. Clark asked if this is part of the MRGO restoration. Mr. Holden responded that this area has been identified as an essential piece of the features to repair the environment impacts from the MRGO, is in the State Master Plan, and he understands that it is a great project.

Mr. Hartman suggested that if this project is not selected by CWPPRA, he would urge local supporters to take care of the land rights issue so that the area could be used for mitigation. He added that if the parish resolves the land rights issue, there would be no reason that agencies could not direct mitigation there.

Mr. Paul asked if this project is being funded by the USACE. Mr. Holden answered no, it is just part of the MRGO impacts study. Mr. Hartman added that 50 acres of this area has been targeted as mitigation for some Inner Harbor Navigation Channel (IHNC) impacts. Mr. Holden agreed.

#### *New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization & Marsh Creation*

There were no comments on this project.

#### *Pass a Loutre Crevasse and Pass a Loutre Hydrologic Restoration*

Mr. Holden asked if the State will support cost sharing on these projects if they are selected. Mr. Haase responded that, as previously expressed, the State will not cost share on these projects. He added that this does not reflect on the merits of the projects, but that the State has limited restoration funds and must focus where those are spent. Additionally, the State believes the issue of the continued dredged material placement in Pass a Loutre would compromise the projects.

Allan Ensminger, representing St. Charles Land Syndicate, stated that he used to manage that tract of land for the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and one of their efforts was to seal off breaks in the pass banks to keep them from dumping silt into the marsh and that it has come a long way. He strongly supports use of the river in this area because once you go another 10 to 12 miles downstream, the river is at 1,000 feet and any silt is lost.

John Hebert, resident of New Orleans, stated that he fully supports this project because it is a great bang for the buck, would have minimal maintenance, and is a good project.

W.P. Edwards, representing Vermilion Corporation and Vermilion Parish, agreed that it is a great bang for the buck and suggested that blowing holes in the embankments with dynamite would be cheaper than dredging. Mr. Hartman responded that in the early years of CWPPRA, oil and gas companies would dig crevasses in this area as mitigation.

*Lake Lery Marsh Creation & Terracing*

There were no comments on this project.

*Terracing & Marsh Creation South of Big Mar*

Allan Ensminger, representing St. Charles Land Syndicate, stated that this is a good project.

*Elmer's Island Restoration*

Rob Bourgeois, with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, stated support for the project, which is on their land.

Vickie Duffourc, with the Bayou Segnette Boaters Association, expressed support for the project because barrier islands are the first line of defense, it is a good project, and is on State owned land.

Jason Smith, with the Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Affairs, stated that Jefferson Parish supports this project since the over-washing on Elmer's Island is significant, the breach in Caminada Pass is enlarging, and the project protects Highway 1 which is the only evacuation route for Grand Isle.

Henry Haller, with Madison Land Company, expressed support for this project because barrier islands are very important since if you lose barrier islands, you lose the marsh inland. Their land is north of this area and they want to protect the barrier islands.

*Northeast Turtle Bay Marsh Creation & Critical Area Shoreline Protection*

Jason Smith, with the Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Affairs, stated that Jefferson Parish supports this project because it is a very critical project that works hand in hand with other projects. Jefferson Parish is very focused on the landbridge in the central basin and going all the way up the river.

Buddy Smith, representing ConocoPhillips, stated that the project is on their property and they are in full support of the project.

Allan Ensminger, representing St. Charles Land Syndicate, stated that this area is part of the Madison Land Company's land and is a great piece of marsh with lots of ducks and alligators.

*Bayou Dupont Sediment Delivery – Marsh Creation 3*

Albertine Kimble, representing Plaquemines Parish Government, stated that this is their number one project. She added that the levee this would protect is vital, that LA 23 is the only evacuation route for them, and there is a chance of the levee breaching in this area.



Jason Smith, with the Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Affairs, stated that Jefferson Parish supports this project and that it works hand in hand with the prior landbridge projects and is just a continuation of saving the landbridge and the metropolitan area it protects.

Henry Haller, with Madison Land Company, expressed support for the beneficial use of material out of the Mississippi River, emphasizing how important it is to get spoils into the marsh in this area.

Marietta Green, with Madison Land Company, stated that this project is critical in this area, ties in with other projects in the area, and that it affects their land even though it is not part of their land. She added that as landowners, they fully support this project.

#### *North Catfish Lake Marsh Creation*

Archie Chaisson, representing Lafourche Parish Government, stated that this project is Lafourche Parish's number one priority project this year, as it protects the marsh behind it and their hurricane protection system. About 75 acres of marsh creation was just added in this area, showing that it is sustainable; and the project is consistent with the State Master Plan.

Buddy Smith, representing ConocoPhillips, stated that this project is on their property, there will be no land rights issues, and they are in full support of the project.

#### *Lake Tambour Marsh Creation*

Nic Matherne, representing Terrebonne Parish Government, stated that they fully support this project as it would continue their basin-wide approach to protect the north rim of Terrebonne Bay and helps protect investments that have already been made in the CWPPRA Program.

#### *Grand Bayou Freshwater Enhancement/Introduction and Terraces*

Archie Chaisson, representing Lafourche Parish Government, stated that this is a top priority in Lafourche Parish as it benefits both Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. There have been concerns with salt water influx in the past, but they have worked through those issues and do not feel salt water will be an issue. The Parish fully supports this project.

Nic Matherne, representing Terrebonne Parish Government, echoed Mr. Chaisson's comments. Terrebonne Parish fully supports this project. Marsh creation in this area is not sustainable so we need to make it sustainable by increasing freshwater there. He applauded Mr. Holden's effort to clarify which of today's projects are consistent with the State Master Plan, but would argue that this project falls under the Master Plan by increasing Atchafalaya flow into eastern Terrebonne marshes. This project takes water out of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) which is one of the only ways to get freshwater into this area to make marsh creation more sustainable.

#### *West Wax Lake Wetlands Diversion*

Karen Wicker, representing SM Energy, a landowner in this project area, commented that this project does comply with the State's Master Plan to encourage Atchafalaya River sediment diversion and delta building. The bayous in this area are becoming severed from the Wax Lake Outlet and once those are cut off, no freshwater, sediment, or nutrient diversion will get to the area between the Wax Lake Outlet and Bayou Salle. This project uses the natural plumbing to sustain continued input of freshwater and land building in this area.

Paul Naquin, St. Mary Parish President, stated that this is a great project, very viable, and a great opportunity to get sediment into the area. This area was severely hurt by storms in 2005 and 2008, with 100 mile per hour (mph) winds and 12-foot tidal surge, creating several lakes. No pumps are needed to get water into the project area because it comes off of the Wax Lake Outlet representing a great opportunity to get sediment into this marsh area.

W.P. Edwards, representing Vermilion Corporation and Vermilion Parish, supported this project and added that it should be the poster child for diversion projects where water will be directed into wetlands from the Mississippi River. He added that there are no levees here and the project represents a good bang for the buck.

J.P. Hebert, Chairman of the St. Mary Soil and Water Conservation District and Vice-Chairman of St. Mary Levee District, strongly supported this project.

#### *South Little Vermilion Bay Terracing & Planting*

Randy Moertle, representing E.A. McIlhenny Enterprises and the Rainey Conservation Alliance, spoke in support of this project and stated that there is an existing delta building project in this area. He added that the plantings between the terraces have taken off and almost completely filled in. Additional planting will be conducted this year to create marsh in the area.

W.P. Edwards, representing Vermilion Corporation and Vermilion Parish, stated that the existing CWPPRA terracing project is a poster child for terracing projects and that this project would be an extension of that success story.

#### *Cote Blanche Freshwater & Sediment Introduction & Shoreline Protection*

Paul Naquin, St. Mary Parish President, stated that this is their number one project, has been a nominee for many years, and was 8<sup>th</sup> for projects in 2010. When storms came through with tidal surge of 12 feet and winds of 100 mph, this marsh area was really devastated. He added that water can be taken from the GIWW without pumps, using a suction dredge in the area and material could be pumped into some of these lakes in addition to digging some channels to get water in the area. They are also asking for some type of barrier from Bayou Coline to Humble Canal to connect previous projects if this project goes through.

J.P. Hebert, Chairman of the St. Mary Soil and Water Conservation District, spoke in support of this project.

#### *Cameron Meadows Marsh Creation & Wetland Restoration*

There were no comments on this project.

*West Cove Marsh Creation & Nourishment*

Mr. Hartman stated that if this project is not funded, disposal in this area would be defined within the new Federal standard for the Calcasieu Ship Channel. Mr. Holden agreed, but cautioned that until they can build new facilities they are in a difficult situation implementing the new Federal standard. We'll have to see what the budget looks like before implementing it.

*East Pecan Island Marsh Creation – Increment 1*

Randy Moertle, representing E.A. McIlhenny Enterprises and Rainey Conservation Alliance, supports this project.

W.P. Edwards, representing Vermilion Corporation, Vermilion Parish, and the Rainey Conservation Alliance, fully supports this project.

*Front Ridge Freshwater Introduction & Terracing*

W.P. Edwards, representing Vermilion Corporation, Vermilion Parish, and the Rainey Conservation Alliance, fully supports this project. Mr. Holden asked which is his number one project, and Mr. Edwards responded that this one is.

Randy Moertle, representing E.A. McIlhenny Enterprises and Rainey Conservation Alliance, fully supports this project.

*Coast-wide Competitive Voluntary Canal Backfilling*

Scott Eustis, with the Gulf Restoration Network, spoke in support of this project, especially on public lands. He added that this type of project has no O&M and is an order of magnitude cheaper than marsh creation. This method also gets the soil function back a lot quicker. Recent publications explain the benefits of restoring hydrology and the park has an innovative design to degrade the spoil bank, get marsh on the spoil and get to that area while maintaining channel access. He spoke in support of the park's efforts and added that this type of activity could benefit many other CWPPRA projects.

W.P. Edwards, representing Vermilion Corporation and Vermilion Parish, stated that the best part of this project is that it is voluntary. He added that in most CWPPRA projects they are trying to gain elevation, but this project seeks to reduce elevation. He cautioned that, in his part of the State, when this type of organic material is put into a canal, the light, organic materials become suspended in the water column and leave the system when the tide goes out. Mr. Eustis replied that one of the benefits to restoring hydrology is improvement to vertical accretion and that this technique would work best in interior areas where most of the elevation comes from the marsh

itself and not from sediment. He added that having a natural sheet flow increases the plants' ability to vertically accrete themselves, creating elevation.

### *Demonstration Projects*

John Hebert, resident of the City of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish landowner, spoke in support of the Hay Bale Demo. He added that when he duck hunts, he takes a bag of leaves to his duck blind and that over time, he has built land there. He suggested a program to collect leaves and plant refuse in biodegradable bags in order to recycle that material to create land in marsh areas. This would avoid putting that material in landfills while also creating marshes. Mr. Hartman responded that many years ago, an EPA demonstration project tried collecting and stockpiling yard refuse to place into marshes, but that there were problems with the stockpiles. Mr. Hebert responded that now more people are tuned into recycling and that it might be more successful at this point in time.

Archie Chaisson, representing Lafourche Parish Government, commented that they have used hay bales for containment in Lafourche Parish and that the method was cheaper than building a containment dike and worked fabulously. He offered the Lafourche Parish project as a model of the hay bale success.

Vickie Duffourc, with the Bayou Segnette Boaters Association, spoke in support of the Hay Bale Demonstration Project because often the soils in the Barataria Basin are too poor to support even *in situ* materials and the hay bales would remain natural while vegetating.

Kerin Leche, with Erosion Management Solutions, offered her company's product, Deltalok, as a non-rock alternative to coastline restoration. She stated that since the Mississippi Delta does not produce rock, it is a great idea to use any non-rock alternative such as hay bales or the Deltalok system, which can be used in conjunction with other methods of coastal restoration.

Mr. Clark clarified that Deltalok was looked at as a demonstration project last year and that projects must be re-submitted each year. Deltalok is not on the list this year, and today's vote is only for the items that are on the nomination list. Mr. Hartman suggested that it could be submitted as part of the NRCS non-rock alternative demonstration project. Mr. Paul added that proposals for that project have already been received, but that Deltalok may have been one of them.

Albertine Kimble, representing Plaquemines Parish Government, supports the CREPS: Coastal Restoration & Energy Production System Demonstration Project. She added that everyone used to have their own siphons and that if this is the closest she can get to having her own siphon, then she fully supports it.

W.P. Edwards, representing Vermilion Corporation and Vermilion Parish, agreed with Ms. Kimble and added that they have been looking into this informally for years and that he is glad it has finally made the official demonstration list. He continued that if a multitude of these systems

could be placed, these small diversions could carry a lot of sediment and start rebuilding the coast. He also spoke in support of the Hay Bale Demonstration Project.

Mr. Clark asked if the USACE had a statement regarding burrowing under the levees for the CREPS Demonstration Project. Mr. Inman answered that they have provided information to the work groups and that the effort to go under the levees would be extensive.

John Hebert, resident of the City of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish landowner, spoke in support of the CREPS Demonstration Project and explained that diversions putting freshwater back into the marshes cause an explosion of growth. He added that this project would require little or no maintenance and adding a power generator grid to the backside would be a great idea.

**DECISION: The Technical Committee selected the following ten (10) projects as PPL 22 candidates to be evaluated for Phase 0 analysis: Bayou Dupont Sediment Delivery – Marsh Creation 3, North Catfish Lake Marsh Creation, Front Ridge Freshwater Introduction & Terracing, Terracing & Marsh Creation South of Big Mar, Elmer’s Island Restoration, Grand Bayou Freshwater Enhancement/Introduction & Terraces, Cameron Meadows Marsh Creation & Wetland Restoration, South Little Vermilion Bay Terracing & Planting, Lake Lery Marsh Creation & Terracing, and Northeast Turtle Bay Marsh Creation & Critical Area Shoreline Protection. The Technical Committee selected all four (4) demonstration projects as PPL 22 candidates to be evaluated for Phase 0 analysis due to a tied vote, these include: Hay Bale Demo, Reconnection of Hydrologically Isolated Wetlands, CREPS: Coastal Restoration & Energy Production System, and Bioengineering of Shorelines & Canal Banks using Live Stakes.**

5. Agenda Item 4. Report: Draft 2012 Report to Congress (Karen McCormick, EPA). Ms. McCormick presented the draft 2012 Report to Congress. The USFWS, EPA, CPRA, and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have been leading the 2012 Report to Congress efforts.

Ms. McCormick gave an update on the Draft 2012 Report to Congress and apologized for not providing a draft to the Technical Committee before the meeting. She thanked Mr. Clark and all parties that have helped with drafting the monitoring portions. She reported that the draft report is about 18 pages without Mr. Clark’s component showing the Coast-wide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) monitoring results. She told the Technical Committee that she has copies with her today and that they will have until May 15<sup>th</sup> to comment on whether the draft report is headed in the right direction. She added that the June draft completion deadline is still good unless major comments are received on the current work product. The team will polish up the draft before submitting to the Task Force for review. She also added that some sample project write-ups are included on which she would like feedback before including the complete information.

Mr. Clark added that six monitoring write-ups are included in the Technical Committee’s binders and should also be commented on by May 15<sup>th</sup>. He clarified that they hope to then have a draft ready in June and a final document published by August or September.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee. There were no further comments.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

6. Agenda Item 5. Discussion: Initial Discussion of Fiscal Year (FY) 13 Planning Budget Development (Process, Size, Funding, etc.) (Brad Inman, USACE). *Mr. Inman initiated the FY13 Planning Program budget development, including the PPL 23 process.*

Mr. Inman gave an overview of the status of the FY 13 Planning Program budget development. The Planning and Evaluation (P&E) Subcommittee used the FY12 budget as a starting point and have three recommended changes as follows: 1) to eliminate the February face-to-face coast-wide voting meeting held in Baton Rouge and have an electronic voting instead, 2) to eliminate the November Abbeville PPL public meeting due to low attendance in recent years, and 3) to increase the EPA travel budget as requested by EPA. He pointed out that the FY13 budget will not include a line item for the Report to Congress.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Clark stated support for only one public meeting in the fall and for an electronic coast-wide voting. He suggested the agency budgets be left the same as in FY12, the two meetings be dropped and the EPA travel budget be increased as requested.

Mr. Hartman pointed out that the agency budgets have been static for the past three to four years and recommended leaving the agency budgets as in FY12, with the requested increase for EPA since they have less local people, but with a reallocation among the remaining tasks after the other recommended changes are made.

Mr. Clark pointed out that there are sufficient funds for this and that the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will need to be revised for PPL 23. Mr. Holden agreed.

**DECISION: Mr. Paul moved to recommend Task Force approval of the FY13 Planning Program budget by using the FY12 agency budgets, with the requested increase for EPA travel, and reallocating those budgets amongst the remaining tasks after dropping the coast-wide voting meeting and the Abbeville public meeting. Mr. Hartman seconded. All Technical Committee members voted in favor and the motion passed.**

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

7. Agenda Item 6. Report/Discussion: Decision Structure for Projects Reaching 20-Year Life Span (Brad Inman, USACE). *At the October 13, 2011 meeting, the Task Force directed the Technical Committee to develop a decision structure (a course of action for the CWPPRA SOP) to be used as a tool for making logical decisions for projects reaching their 20-year life span. The P&E Subcommittee reported on their ongoing efforts with the decision structure.*

Mr. Inman gave a summary of the development of a SOP for dealing with projects reaching their 20-year life span. Analysis will need to include an evaluation of whether the project was

successful, project goals were met, additional maintenance will be required, etc. The SOP is a work in progress to create a decision structure which the USACE will polish before submitting a letter to the Task Force. There has been a trend of increasing O&M and monitoring budgets and it must be determined how those costs will be accounted for if the CWPPRA Program is not re-authorized. The P&E Subcommittee has asked each agency to start reviewing their projects. He suggested evaluating the easy projects first and then tackling the more difficult ones.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee.

Ms. McCormick asked about the projects after 2019, those projects still being built. Mr. Inman answered that they have a list of projects that stretches to the end of the Program. Ms. McCormick recommended that the Technical Committee give the P&E Subcommittee guidance as to how to deal with these beyond 2019 projects.

Mr. Hartman stated that any projects built after 2015 should not have O&M unless the Program is re-authorized. Ms. McCormick agreed that they should start thinking about the projects on the table now. Mr. Holden agreed since there is a limited amount of funding and they do not want to unhinge the commitment to landowners who have signed onto the CWPPRA Program expecting to see a 20-year project funded by the Federal Government and the State.

Mr. Hartman emphasized that this must be addressed soon and that if the Program is not re-authorized, they need to seriously start thinking about shutting down the CWPPRA Program. He continued that if the State is not taking action to get CWPPRA re-authorized in Congress, the Technical Committee needs to be kept up to date. Mr. Haase agreed that updates will be needed, but that he does not have a status update today. He also agreed that there are no guarantees of re-authorization so the Technical Committee will need to be deal with this issue.

Mr. Clark explained that without re-authorization, there is no more new money after 2019. He cautioned that available old money with which to finish up projects is not a guarantee that any project will have funding for 20-years of O&M. He added that funding for O&M is only given in three year increments in the CWPPRA cash flow system.

Mr. Holden summarized that financial management of the Program falls with the USACE and therefore, the Army will decide when the Program is over-obligating which is why they will craft a letter to explain the risks and consequences faced by the Army as the manager of this Program. He continued that it is important because it may shape future funding decisions, including funding out beyond three year increments and de-authorization or removal of projects that are not performing, both built and in progress.

Mr. Inman welcomed any guidance from the Technical Committee on the approach for this SOP and added that the letter will contain a legal component. Therefore, it may be prudent to have a meeting with all agencies, attorneys, and real estate folks to make sure that the correct language is included.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

8. Agenda Item 7. Report/Discussion: SOP for Project Transfers Between Federal Agencies (Brad Inman, USACE). At the June 8, 2011 meeting, the Task Force directed the Technical Committee to develop a SOP to address the situation where a project is transferred from one Federal sponsor to another. Draft language has been presented to the P&E Subcommittee and Mr. Inman presented an updated draft that incorporates the P&E Subcommittee's comments.

Mr. Inman presented the draft SOP language for transfers of a project from one Federal sponsor to another. He asked that the Technical Committee make comments in time for inclusion into the SOP for voting at the June Task Force Meeting. He added that the current draft includes the P&E Subcommittee's comments and has been vetted through the USACE counsel.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Clark asked how much has been changed since the last meeting and Mr. Inman responded, a lot. Mr. Clark stated that he was happy that the SOP was limited to one and a half pages.

Mr. Hartman suggested the Technical Committee review the language and send comments to Mr. Inman. He added that a fax vote will be needed before the next Task Force Meeting.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

9. Agenda Item 8. Discussion: Transfer of the PPL 12 – Avoca Island Fresh Water Diversion and Land Building Project (TE-49) (Britt Paul, NRCS). The landowner of this Project has requested transfer of this Project from the current federal sponsor, the USACE, to NRCS. The project's construction has been delayed due to challenges with the cost share agreement.

Mr. Holden explained that the landowner has asked for a project transfer from the USACE to NRCS. Mr. Paul stated that NRCS has reviewed the project and is not interested in taking another project from the USACE.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Hartman explained that it is critical at this time in the Program's life that the USACE be an active player in the Program. He continued that the USACE is almost finished with a \$15 billion project to rebuild the New Orleans levees and are a very experienced construction agency. He summarized that the USACE requires certain language in the cost share agreement that the State does not like; however, his understanding is that the State has accepted this language outside of the CWPPRA Program. He emphasized the importance of the CWPPRA Program to the State and asked that they affirm that importance by signing the cost share agreement. He added that he is unwilling to transfer a project from USACE to avoid the cost share language.

Ms. McCormick stated that we are hurting ourselves as a Program by touting CWPPRA as the model for cooperation when the cooperation is tainted like this. She continued that the USACE is an important member of the CWPPRA family and asked the State to reevaluate its decision and look to moving these projects forward.



Mr. Clark agreed and urged the State to look at the cost share agreement again. He pointed out that the USACE uses the same cost share agreement language in all states and that the State of Louisiana has signed the same language for other programs and projects outside of CWPPRA.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public.

Wade Walk, with URS Corporation, representing Avoca, Inc., explained that the request for transfer was to try to get the project moving forward because it is a good project in an area of need. He asked for any guidance the Technical Committee has to get the project moving forward.

Ms. McCormick responded that she understands Mr. Walk's intent and agrees that projects should move forward, but that they must maintain the CWPPRA family, of which the USACE is a vital part. Mr. Walk responded that he understands and agrees that the USACE is the appropriate sponsoring agency for the project.

Mr. Haase stated that the message has been heard and agrees that the State owes it to the public and the CWPPRA Program to resolve this issue.

10. Agenda Item 9. Report: Status of the PPL 1- West Bay Sediment Diversion Project (MR-03) (Nick Sims, USACE). Mr. Sims provided a status update on the West Bay Work Plan and Closure Plan.

Mr. Holden stated that the closure method will not be voted on, but chosen by the USACE because they are the experts and will be responsible for the risk if there is a failure or future maintenance.

Mr. Sims gave a brief status update. Of the three alternative closure methods (earthen plug, pumped in earthen dike, and semicircle rock dike), the rock dike has been selected as the alternative for construction. The rock dike is the least costly alternative, but was chosen because it is a more stable option. This design is about 95% complete and will go through the USACE Agency Technical Review. Real estate acquisition can now begin with the design footprint. The engineers are also looking at an option to pump sand behind the dike to increase stability, with the Pilottown Anchorage Area (PAA) as a possible dredge source which could offset additional costs.

Mr. Holden pointed out that the Mississippi River Commission will review the closure plan which is part of the reason the USACE is working to find the most viable alternative. He added that once the closure is complete, the USACE will no longer be authorized to dredge the PAA. The closure schedule is currently 18 months out and they are working with the pilots to try to avoid an additional dredging event before the final closure dredging.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Hartman agreed that it would be ideal if CWPPRA did not have to pay for two dredging events. He then asked if the 18 months was for initiation or completion of construction. Mr. Sims responded that it was for construction initiation. Mr. Hartman asked that the Technical

Committee have an opportunity to review the spoil disposal plan as it is developed. Mr. Holden agreed.

Mr. Holden emphasized that the schedule driver is the real estate acquisition. The State authority for construction right-of-way does not extend to expedited types of measures and only the Federal alternative, which is likely condemnation, can be used in this case and is a very slow process.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Sean Duffy, representing Big River Coalition and other maritime associations and interests, stated that navigation has never requested the diversion be closed. There is an agreement that took a decade to come to fruition, but is now signed and approved. He continued that in recent meetings there has been great interest in navigation impacts on the Mississippi River. Navigation would be very willing to help accommodate the requests for avoiding two dredging events, but multiple pilot groups still must be able to use the PAA and they will need to see survey data before decisions can be made. He reiterated that the diversion was built to create land and now appears to be doing so, and the Mississippi River Commission has stated that uncontrolled diversions will no longer be allowed on the River. He added that navigation will stand behind the USACE's engineering, as it has done for some time. He emphasized that as discussions involving navigation are carried on, navigation should be invited to the table for input. Yesterday there was important movement with the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund in the House of Representatives and they are hoping that it will pass through the House this year.

11. Agenda Item 10. Decision: Request for a Change in Scope for the PPL 16 – Madison Bay Marsh Creation and Terracing Project (TE-51) (Dr. John Foret, NMFS). NMFS and CPRA requested a project scope change to proceed with the design to 30% and 95% for the Madison Bay Project. The project location is proposed to be moved three miles to the northeast. The constructed acres restored are estimated at 470 acres, while the original concept was targeting 688 constructed acres restored. NMFS and CRPA also requested a cost estimate increase from the original \$32,353,377 to an estimated \$38,798,788. No additional funds are needed to complete Phase I of this Project. The Technical Committee voted on a recommendation to the Task Force to approve the requested scope change for the Madison Bay Marsh Creation and Terracing Project (TE-51).

Dr. Foret gave an overview of the requested scope change. Last year a request was made to conduct a geotechnical investigation outside of the original project location to find a more suitable site. Two alternative areas were investigated and today's request is for a change in project scope to move the project location to the Wonder Lake area. As compared to the original location, this location has less landowners, no pipeline corridors, the same number of oyster leases, better soils, and would utilize the same borrow area. The scope change will have a constructed acres reduction of 32% and a fully funded cost estimate increase of 19%. Today's request is to move the project location and use the remaining approved Phase I budget to finish the design.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee.

Ms. McCormick asked if the State would support this project change. Mr. Haase responded, yes, that even though internal borrow does not overlay with the State Master Plan, they understand that 100% of borrow cannot be from external sources.

Mr. Clark stated that he is supportive of the requested changes.

Mr. Holden asked about the cost estimate for future maintenance to ensure performance. Dr. Foret answered that this project area has the potential for high energy and that they anticipate some wearing of the system. Therefore, they expect to have a maintenance event around year 12, but that they do not have a cost estimate yet.

Mr. Clark asked what the maintenance event would be. Dr. Foret answered that they expect wear and tear on the fringe of the terrace fields due to the high wave energy environment and therefore would have to rebuild these terraces to reach the project's 20-year life.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public.

Nic Matherne, representing Terrebonne Parish Government, thanked the Technical Committee for allowing Dr. Foret's team to gather additional geotechnical data and expressed appreciation for the change in the project location. They are in full support of moving this project forward as it will protect the people of lower Montegut who are being slowly encroached upon by Madison Bay. He added that the State Master Plan has areas in the immediate vicinity of the new project alternative location and would therefore be in conformance with the Master Plan.

**DECISION: Ms. McCormick moved to recommend Task Force approval for the requested change in scope for the Madison Bay Marsh Creation and Terracing Project (TE-51). Mr. Hartman seconded. All Technical Committee members voted in favor and the motion passed.**

12. Agenda Item 11. Decision: Request for Approval to Initiate De-authorization of the PPL 10 - Benneys Bay Diversion Project (MR-13) (Scott Wandell, USACE). USACE and CPRA requested formal de-authorization procedures be initiated for the Benneys Bay Diversion Project (MR-13) based on the high cost of dredging associated with the project. At the December 13, 2012 meeting, the Technical Committee recommended to "suspend" this project; however, the Task Force did not approve the recommendation for a suspension category. The Technical Committee voted on a recommendation to the Task Force to initiate de-authorization of the Benneys Bay Diversion Project (MR-13).

Mr. Wandell requested initiation of de-authorization for the project.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee. There were no further comments.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

**DECISION: Mr. Hartman moved to recommend Task Force approval to initiate de-authorization of the Benneys Bay Diversion Project (MR-13). Mr. Paul seconded. All Technical Committee members voted in favor and the motion passed.**

13. Agenda Item 12. Additional Agenda Items (Tom Holden, USACE).

Decision: Request for Approval to Initiate De-authorization of the PPL 9 -- Little Pecan Hydrologic Restoration Project (ME-17) (Britt Paul, NRCS). NRCS and CPRA requested formal de-authorization procedures be initiated for the Little Pecan Hydrologic Restoration Project (ME-17). As a result of the Phase I Engineering and Design analysis, the project team has determined the current ME-17 project features do not yield sufficient wetland benefits to warrant a Phase II request for construction and 20 years of maintenance. The Technical Committee voted on a recommendation to the Task Force to initiate de-authorization of the Little Pecan Hydrologic Restoration Project (ME-17)

Mr. Paul requested initiation of de-authorization for the project.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to discussion from the Technical Committee.

Mr. Hartman clarified that the reason for de-authorization was cost effectiveness and not landowner issues. Mr. Paul answered, yes.

Mr. Holden opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

**DECISION: Mr. Hartman moved to recommend Task Force approval to initiate de-authorization of the Little Pecan Hydrologic Restoration Project (ME-17). Mr. Clark seconded. All Technical Committee members voted in favor and the motion passed.**

Additional Agenda Item: Jonathan Davis Wetland Protection Project (BA-20) and Black Bayou Culverts Hydrologic Restoration Project (CS-29) (Britt Paul, NRCS).

Mr. Paul explained that the Jonathan Davis Project has experienced vandalism and that several brackets on the concrete panel walls have been removed. He added that they are working on a design to replace the brackets more securely and will be asking for more funds in the future to expedite the repairs before more damage occurs.

Jason Smith, with the Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Affairs, reported that an arrest has been made in this matter. He added that some of the panels have fallen into the water and others are leaning. If a storm comes, more will fall. He cautioned that NRCS needs to find a better welding technique for the brackets to prevent future vandalism.

Mr. Hartman suggested a fax vote be taken on the funding increase request before the June Task Force meeting. Mr. Holden asked that photos be included. Mr. Paul agreed that the funding request could be made via fax vote and that he would include photos of the site.

Mr. Paul reported that they had issues with the piping under the Black Bayou Culverts Project, but were able to coffer-dam the area last year and are waiting on investigation results to develop an estimate to fix the saltwater intrusion issue.

14. Agenda Item 13. Request for Public Comments (Tom Holden, USACE).

Brian Little, with Remedial Construction Services and speaking on behalf of Noranda Aluminum, stated that they are working in Gramercy, Louisiana to produce a beneficial use product for agency use or as a demonstration project. He added that they will take into consideration O&M costs when they present their nomination and hopefully can find a way to present a cost savings.

Mr. Hartman asked if the product was called red mud. Mr. Little answered yes, it is red. Mr. Hartman explained that a previous demonstration project was done in Plaquemines Parish used red mud and suggested Mr. Little look for the reports from the previous project.

Jason Smith, with the Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Affairs, expressed concerns about removing the coast-wide voting meeting since many of their stakeholders travel to attend these meetings. He asked if there were possibly other options to have dialogue with Jefferson Parish.

15. Agenda Item 14. Announcement: Date of Upcoming CWPPRA Project Meetings (Brad Inman, USACE). *The Task Force meeting will be held June 5, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. at the Estuarine Fisheries and Habitat Center, 646 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette, Louisiana.*

16. Agenda Item 15. Scheduled Dates of Future Program Meetings (Brad Inman, USACE).

June 28, 2012	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	Lafayette
June 5, 2012	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	Lafayette
September 12, 2012	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee	Baton Rouge
October 11, 2012	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	New Orleans
November 14, 2012	7:00 p.m.	PPL 23 Public Comment Meeting	Abbeville
November 15, 2012	7:00 p.m.	PPL 23 Public Comment Meeting	New Orleans
December 12, 2012	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	Baton Rouge

17. Agenda Item 16. Decision: Adjourn. Mr. Clark moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Haase seconded. Mr. Holden adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:15 p.m.