

**BREAUX ACT**  
**Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act**  
**TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**27 January 2022**  
**Minutes**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Colonel Stephen Murphy convened the 104th meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. on January 27, 2022, via WebEx virtual meeting platform. The agenda is shown as Enclosure 1. The Task Force was created by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA, commonly known as the Breaux Act), which was signed into law (PL 101-646, Title III) by President George Bush on November 29, 1990.

**II. ATTENDEES**

The attendance record for the Task Force Meeting is presented as Enclosure 2. The Task Force members introduced themselves as follows:

Col. Stephen Murphy (USACE), Chairperson  
Mr. Troy Hill (EPA, Region 6) sitting for Charles Maguire  
Mr. Chad Kacir (NRCS, for the U.S. Department of Agriculture)  
Mr. Chris Doley (NOAA Fisheries Service, for the U.S. Department of Commerce)  
Mr. Jeffrey Weller (USFWS, for the U.S. Department of Interior)  
Mr. Bren Haase (CPRA, for the State of Louisiana)

**III. OPENING REMARKS**

Colonel Murphy introduced himself as Commander of the USACE – New Orleans District, serving in his third year as chairperson of the CWPPRA Task Force. He began by remarking that the CWPPRA program has invested \$1.9 billion in projects which have restored 160 sq. miles of Louisiana coastline since its inception 31 years ago. According to the state’s preliminary assessment of Hurricane Ida (which made landfall August 29, 2021), 106 square miles of were lost in Barataria Basin alone. Thus, ongoing CWPPRA efforts are crucial. Col. Murphy stated that, according to an independent Congressional report (2007), the CWPPRA program was deemed effective and received broad public support. One congressman has described Louisiana as “the canary in the coal mine” for coastal land loss in the United States. The CWPPRA program, which complies with the State Master Plan, has become the model for successful coastal restoration. Col. Murphy noted that this is the first CWPPRA meeting since Hurricane Ida cause cancellation of the fall Technical Committee and Task Force meetings, and briefly enthused about a few agenda items. Col. Murphy expressed his appreciation for and formally welcomed all in attendance; he invited Task Force members to introduce themselves as listed above.

Colonel Murphy invited Task Force members to comment. Mr. Hill announced the retirement of Brad Crawford (EPA) this past December; Mr. Crawford will be recognized at the next Task Force meeting for his service within the CWPPRA program. Mr. Doley commended Mr. Crawford’s service. No other comments were proffered.

#### **IV. AGENDA and MINUTES**

Colonel Murphy asked if the Task Force had any changes to make to the agenda; Mr. Hill formally submitted a request to change Agenda Item #8 (construction report) to include a decision for a budget increase of \$8,814,345 – the details of which will be presented in agenda order.

*Col. Murphy called for a motion to accept the suggested the agenda item change as presented. Mr. Hill made the motion, which Mr. Kacir seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

Colonel Murphy iterated the procedure for public comment within this virtual format.

#### **V: TASK FORCE DECISIONS**

##### **Agenda Item #8 – Report/Decision: Construction Update and Request of a Budget and Funding increase of \$8,814,345 for the Caminada Headlands Back Barrier Marsh Creation (BA-171) Project (Karen McCormick, EPA)**

On behalf of CPRA and EPA, Karen McCormick (EPA) provided a post-storm status/construction update and budget increase request for the Caminada Headlands Back Barrier Marsh Creation (BA-171) Project. She reviewed the project location, which is in Lafourche and Jefferson Parishes, south of LA Hwy 1 between Belle Pass and Caminada Pass. The completed project will augment the previously constructed BA-45 and BA 143 projects. She described project goals – to create and nourish 1,000 acres of marsh behind 8 miles of previously restored beach and dune, providing storm surge protection to Port Fourchon and surrounding communities. The timeline she summarized included Phase I approval in January 2014, Phase II approval in February 2018, the inclusion of BA-193 into the project footprint, and a notice to proceed in April 2020. The south containment area was heavily damaged during Hurricane Zeta in October 2020; repairs and additional migratory bird monitoring became necessary in the aftermath. Prior to landfall of Hurricane Ida in August 2021, southern containment was 100% complete and the northern containment area was 98% complete; dredge piping was staged in anticipation of marsh creation within the containment area. Post-hurricane photographic evidence shows several containment breaches as well as dredge pipe displacement, and valve and weir damage. Plans include the repair of north and south containment, 12,000 LF of fencing, bird abatement, settlement plate repair or replacement, and repair of damaged weirs. A 120-day repair time is anticipated and must commence as soon as possible to avoid nesting season. A request for funding (a budget increase of \$8,814,345) was approved for recommendation by the Technical Committee via electronic vote. Original project designs have not been altered at this point. Since much of the area's infrastructure (i.e. hotels and restaurants) have not yet been restored, repair costs must include extraordinary expenses for housing and feeding contracted construction workers. She commended the project team and all stakeholders for their efforts and dedication to this project.

Col. Murphy called for Task Force and public questions and comments; none were proffered.

*Col. Murphy called for a motion to authorize the budget and funding increase for BA-171 in the amount of \$8,814,345 as presented. Mr. Hill made the motion, which Mr. Kacir seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

**Agenda Item #9 – Decision: Request for an O&M Budget Increase for the Terrebonne Bay Shore Protection Demonstration (TE-45) Project (Kevin Roy, FWS)**

Kevin Roy (NMFS) began with a review of project location and features. Three different erosion control treatments (Reef Blocks, A-Jacks, and Gabion Mats) were placed in two areas of Terrebonne Bay (along Lake Barre') to evaluate their performance in shoreline erosion reduction and oyster reef production. The project was approved in 2001 and construction was completed in 2007 (with a fixed 8-year end-of-life.) The original cost was \$2.7 million, with an additional \$500,000 for O&M granted in 2018. All three treatments showed some success, but the Gabion Mats were deemed to have been most effective in both cost and attainment of project goals. As part of project closeout in 2020, all features were removed to avoid marine/boating hazards. Mr. Roy presented today's request for an O&M budget increase to cover an over-expenditure of \$67,016 (apparently due to unanticipated indirect costs), to balance the budget and proceed to final project closeout.

Col. Murphy called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

*Col. Murphy called for a motion to authorize the O&M budget increase for TE-45 in the amount of \$67,016 as presented. Mr. Weller made the motion, which Mr. Doley seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

**Agenda Item #10 – Decision: Request for Additional Site Selections for Coastwide Vegetative Planting (LA-39) Project (Quin Kinler, NRCS).**

Quin Kinler (NRCS) presented the request, beginning with a brief synopsis of the project intent. The LA-39 project was established to select vegetative planting sites annually for 10 years, with O&M and Monitoring so the project has a typical 20-year life. After 10 years of site selections, 30 sites have been planted in 14 coastal parishes, with 3 additional sites scheduled to be planted in 2022. In those ten years approximately 160,00 smooth cordgrass plantings, 300,000 California trade gallons and 100,000+ plants of other species have been installed across the coast. Currently, there is over \$3 million remaining in the project budget. On behalf of NRCS and CPRA, Mr. Kinler hereby requested approval of the Technical Committee recommendation to allow use of those funds to select, plant, and monitor additional sites for five years. This request does not include additional funds or project life extensions.

Col. Murphy called for Task Force and public comments or questions; none were proffered.

*Col. Murphy called for a motion to approve the selection of addition sites for LA-39 using available funds, as presented. Mr. Kacir made the motion, which Mr. Haase seconded; the motion carried without dissent.*

**Agenda Item #11 – Decision: Request for a Change in Scope for the PPL25 – Fritchie Marsh Creation and Terracing (PO-173) Project (Brandon Howard, NMFS)**

Brandon Howard (NMFS) provided a detailed review of the process by which the project's final location was determined. The Fritchie Marsh is located southeast of Slidell, north of Lake St. Catherine, between I-10 and Hwy 90. He explained that several potential locations within the marsh have been envisioned for this project since it was approved. Multiple landowners, diverse stakeholder concerns, multiple mitigation efforts, potential hydrology/flooding concerns, and the need to minimize impacts on critical habitat in the marsh have complicated the process, but Mr. Howard illustrated the latest (and most viable) location alternative to date. The determined location lies within the northeastern-most area of Fritchie Marsh; features include 288 acres of marsh creation in two confined cells and a 197-acre terrace field in which 22,670 LF of terraces would be constructed. The borrow area (Lake Pontchartrain) and pump distance is unchanged from previously considered alternatives. Mr. Howard asserts that construction risks are low because of good soils, and that this location would benefit the communities of Lacombe and Slidell and the Big Branch NWR. Mr. Howard emphasized that this is not a request for an increase in Phase I funding; it is a scope change request for a shift in specific project location. A scope change is required when an increase in the fully funded cost and the ratio of the total cost-per-net-acre-created exceeds 25% from the Phase 0 estimate. In this case the increases are 40% and 50.4% respectively. Mr. Howard pointed out that even with this increase, the costs are within the range of most CWPPRA projects. He also pointed out that this proposed location is the last possible area of the Fritchie Marsh where no restoration funds have been invested, and thus may be the last opportunity for a CWPPRA to be installed therein. He concluded with an expression of his appreciation for all planning team members.

Col. Murphy called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

*Col. Murphy then called for a motion to approve the requested scope change for PO-173. Mr. Doley made the motion, which Mr. Haase seconded; the motion carried without dissent.*

**Agenda Item #12 – Report/Decision: Request for Phase II Authorization and Approval of Phase II Increment I funding (Sarah Bradley, USACE).**

During December 2021 proceedings, the Technical Committee reviewed project information, took public comments, and voted on projects seeking Phase II approval. All such projects are listed in the table below. Highlighted in the table are the projects that received the highest rankings as the result of voting during those proceedings. Project representatives were asked by Ms. Bradley to provide an overview of each of the highlighted projects for Task Force consideration.

Agency	Project No.	PPL	Project Name	Phase II, Increment 1 Request	Fully-Funded Phase 1 Cost	Fully-Funded Phase II Cost incl O&M	Total Fully Funded Cost Est.	Net Benefit Acres	Total Cost per Acre
FWS	BS-24	22	Terracing and Marsh Creation South of Big Mar	\$22,467,322	\$2,308,599	\$23,907,328	\$26,215,927	322	\$81,416
NMFS	BS-38	28	Breton Landbridge MC (West) River aux Chenes to Grand Lake	\$26,459,920	\$3,837,365	\$27,939,717	\$31,777,082	379	\$83,845
FWS	BA-217	28	Grand Bayou Ridge and Marsh Restoration-Increment 1	\$36,173,264	\$3,463,474	\$37,406,527	\$40,870,001	297	\$137,609
NRCS	BA-195	25	Barataria Bay Rim Marsh Creation and Nourishment	\$26,543,561	\$2,693,708	\$27,600,583	\$30,294,291	226	\$134,046
NRCS	BA-206	27	Northeast Turtle Bay	\$32,341,815	\$3,952,451	\$33,571,605	\$37,524,056	536	\$70,008
NRCS	TE-112	22	North Catfish Lake	\$31,121,999	\$3,216,194	\$32,321,142	\$35,537,336	489	\$72,673
NMFS	TE-117	23	Island Road Marsh Creation and Nourishment Project	\$24,722,496	\$3,721,447	\$26,136,944	\$29,858,391	206	\$144,944
NRCS	ME-31	19	Freshwater Bayou Marsh Creation	\$28,868,058	\$2,425,997	\$30,252,567	\$32,678,564	283	\$115,472
NMFS	CS-78	24	No Name Bayou Marsh Creation	\$27,022,820	\$2,724,524	\$28,491,392	\$31,215,916	468	\$66,701
NMFS	CS-79	25	Oyster Lake Marsh Creation and Nourishment	\$36,025,729	\$3,608,939	\$37,323,973	\$40,932,912	250	\$163,732

January Murray, (NMFS) was called to present the Breton Landbridge MC (West) River aux Chenes to Grand Lake (BS-38) project. She observed that this project has moved quickly through the process, beginning with its selection as a PPL-28 candidate in 2018, its approval for Phase I funding in February 2019, its subsequent 30% and 95% design completion, and its Technical Committee selection in December 2021. She described the project location and its position in relation to other projects (BS-32, BS-42, BS-44) within the Breton Landbridge concept. Ms. Murray provided statistical and photographic land loss information and iterated project features and benefits, asserting that shallow fill areas make this project cost-effective. Located on the south/southeast shore of Grand Lake, the project seeks to create and nourish 561 acres of marsh in five permanently confined cells. No land rights, oyster lease, or pipeline crossing issues have been identified. The funding request today reflects a reduction in costs (and an increase in acreage) realized between Phase 0 and the 95% design phase. The Phase II Increment I funding request is \$26,459,920 million.

Col. Murphy called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

Angela Trahan (NRCS) was called to present the request for the Northeast Turtle Bay (BA-206) project. The project is located along the northeast shore of Turtle Bay, within the Barataria landbridge, an area directly impacted by Hurricane Ida. She iterated landloss rates and

summarized project benefits. She reviewed the original project features and provided rationale for modifications. Current plans are to create and protect 792 acres of marsh in five fully contained cells. Permanent earthen containment dikes along 10,000 LF of Turtle Bay will be vegetatively planted to serve as shoreline stabilization. Eventually, strategically placed containment gaps and tidal creeks (in deeper areas of the interior marsh) will be created to facilitate tidal exchange. Vegetative plantings may be installed if the marsh does not revegetate naturally. The Phase II Increment I funding request is \$32,341,815.

Col. Murphy called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

Donna Rogers (NMFS) was called to present the request for the No Name Bayou Marsh Creation (CS-78) project. She began with an acknowledgment of the project team and their efforts as the project has moved through the CWPPRA process to get to this point; she summarized the timeline thus far. The project is in the Cameron-Creole watershed, south of Calcasieu Lake and north of the town of Cameron. Most of the land loss has occurred between 1958 and 1977, but the loss continues; the area is repeatedly affected by hurricanes – most notably (and recently) Laura and Delta (2020), and Rita and Ike previously. The project area is mostly open water with fringe marsh. It lies primarily within the boundaries of the Sabine NWR south of Calcasieu Lake, but it extends (onto private property) westward toward the Calcasieu ship channel. Ms. Rogers depicted the dredge area, the pipeline corridor, and the marsh creation area (including a potential area of expansion.). The shallow fill area and proximity of the borrow area render this project cost-effective. Oyster seed grounds and an existing pipeline have been taken into consideration. Ms. Rogers concluded with a list of project benefits. The Phase II Increment I funding request is \$27,022,820.

Col. Murphy called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered. Col. Murphy observed that these three projects potentially restore a total of 2,000 net wetland acres.

*Col. Murphy then called for a motion to approve the selected projects for Phase II authorization, and approval of Phase II Increment I funding which totals \$85,824,555. Mr. Hill made the motion, which Mr. Doley seconded. The motion carried without dissent.*

### **Agenda Item #13 – Report/Decision: 31<sup>st</sup> Priority Project List (Kristen Ramsey, FWS)**

Also during December 2021 proceedings, the Technical Committee reviewed project information, took public comments, and voted on projects seeking PPL 31 Phase 1 authorization. Listed below are the projects that received the highest rankings as the result of voting during those proceedings. Kristen Ramsey (FWS), who serves as the Environmental Workgroup Chair, presented an overview of the four candidate projects being recommended by the Technical Committee for Task Force consideration.

- |   |      |             |
|---|------|-------------|
| • Grand Bayou Ridge and Marsh Restoration Increment 2 | FWS  | \$3,411,317 |
| • Northeast Turtle Bay Marsh Creation Extension       | NRCS | \$3,591,775 |
| • Port Fourchon Marsh Creation                        | EPA  | \$3,484,176 |

- East Cove Marsh Creation NRCS \$2,765,587

She provided a depiction of project distribution across the coast, then presented facts sheets, which specified the location, scope, features, benefits and cost of each project individually.

Col. Murphy called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

*Col. Murphy called for a motion to authorize the Technical Committee's recommendation for Phase I funding which totals \$13,252,855 for the PPL 31 projects as presented. Mr. Waller made the motion, which Mr. Kacir seconded; the motion passed without dissent.*

## VI. INFORMATION

### **Agenda Item #2 – Report: Status of CWPPRA Program Funds and Projects (Jernice Cheavis, USACE)**

Ms. Jernice Cheavis, USACE, presented an overview of CWPPRA funds. The fully funded total Program Estimate since its inception to the present (authorized projects from PPLs 1 – 30) is \$3.112 billion. The total funded estimate (received since inception through FY2022) is \$2.198 billion, leaving a potential gap of \$914 million if the Program were to construct all projects to date. Current Task Force-approved funding for projects in Phase I, Phase II, and O&M and Monitoring totals \$2.302 billion. The estimate of total authorized funding for each agency as requested currently totals \$1.971 billion.

Ms. Cheavis presented a slide of funding actions since October 2021, noting that the Technical Committee recommendations today are a result of electronic voting (necessitated by meeting cancellations). The CWPPRA Program has \$80,502,853 of funding carried forth from the October Task Force meeting. A series of project reviews and subsequent financial reconciliations have effectively returned \$32,220,376 to the program. Anticipated DOI funding for FY22 has been corrected since October, reducing that net total by \$805,179. The Technical Committee will make two funding recommendations today – four PPL-31 candidate projects for Phase I funding (totaling \$13,252,855), and three projects for Phase II Increment 1 funding (totaling \$85,825,555). Finally, a budget increase of \$67,016 for the Terrebonne Bay demonstration project will be requested. If all requests are authorized, the remaining balance forward would total \$12,773,624. Ms. Cheavis noted that the newly included budget increase request in Agenda Item #8, if approved, would be deducted from this remaining balance.

Ms. Cheavis concluded with the overall Project Status graphic. CWPPRA has authorized 230 projects. The 126 active projects include 27 in Phase 1 Engineering and Design, 19 in Phase 2 Construction, 74 projects in the O&M and Monitoring phase, and 40 projects that have been completed and closed financially. Additionally, CWPPRA has deauthorized 49 projects, transferred 10 projects, and placed 5 in the inactive category. There are 6 technical support projects, which include Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS), monitoring contingency, storm recovery, Construction Program technical support, the wetland conservation plan, and Programmatic Signage.

Col. Murphy called for Task Force and Public comments; none were proffered.

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

Col. Murphy called upon Sarah Bradley to present results of recent electronic voting held in lieu of the fall Technical Committee and Task Force meetings, which were cancelled in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. Ms. Bradley announced that on September 29, 2021, the Technical Committee approved for recommendation the following:

- Final draft of the 2021 Report to Congress,
- Initiation and Incremental funding for the Programmatic Signage support project,
- Typical Incremental Funding requests, including \$10million for CRMS.

On November 1, 2021, also in electronic voting, Task force approved the above items/ requests. Voting results are available through the *LA Coast* website and the *CWPPRA Newsflash*.

Additionally, in electronic voting yesterday the Technical Committee approved for recommendation the BA-171 budget increase, to be presented in Agenda Item #8.

Col. Murphy opened the floor for Task Force and public comments; none were proffered.

### **Agenda Item #4 – Report: Construction Update (Sarah Bradley, USACE)**

Col. Murphy called upon Ms. Bradley to present the Construction Report. Ms. Bradley in turn called upon agency representatives to provide the following construction status reports:

Ron Boustany (NRCS) provided an update for Cameron-Creole Freshwater Introduction (CS-49), beginning with a review of project features. Project construction was completed in September 2021; the entire project area consists of 22,000 acres located south of the GIWW, west of Highway 27 at the Gibbstown Bridge. The primary project feature is a freshwater introduction structure, which allows water to flow southward from the GIWW into the project area. Over 8,400 LF of rock dike flanks the freshwater introduction structure and is designed to protect the associated bank along the GIWW. An earthen plug along the GIWW was replaced with a sturdier 400' sheet-pile plug to ensure successful elimination of a breach therein. Earthen terraces within the outfall area of the water inlet are designed to capture nutrients and sediment, thus promoting marsh accretion within about 1,000 acres; terrace creation was increased to approximately 187,000 LF to fill gaps left by the removal of a derelict power line. Vegetation now covers the terraces which were largely resilient against Hurricane Laura (August 2020). Vegetative plantings adjacent to Calcasieu Lake (along the westernmost edge of the project area) were installed several years ago to mitigate hurricane damage. The final cost of construction was \$9.3 million – less than the \$15.1 million originally budgeted; final costs calculations will likely result in a significant return of funds to the CWPPRA program. In closing, Mr. Boustany acknowledged the design team, construction crew, associated agencies, and landowners.

Quin Kinler (NRCS) provided an update of the Coastwide Vegetative Planting (LA-39) project, which provided for 10 years of project site selection and plant installations across the coast. Mr. Kinler began with a chart of all projects, locations, completion dates, and costs noting that most installations utilized California bullrush or smooth cordgrass as the chosen plant species. He highlighted two recently planted sites and three upcoming planting sites for this



presentation. The Big Branch #2 site is located along Lake Ponchartrain on the Big Branch NWR. It is the second LA-39 planting on the refuge and consists of four separate double row plantings between Lacombe and Fritchie Marsh. More than 17,400 California bullrush plugs were planted a couple of months prior to Hurricane Ida. Post-storm surveys conducted by refuge staff indicate that most of the double-row plantings survived. Planting of 21,000 smooth cordgrass plugs at the MRG and Shell Beach site was completed just days prior to Hurricane Ida landfall. Mr. Kinler described the planting technique utilized along the eroding shore of the MRGO where soils are firm. Preliminary reports from landowners indicated survival on a portion of the project site; a full assessment is anticipated in the spring of 2022. The next three sites are expected to be completed by the Summer 2022. The Bay Densse site is currently receiving sediment from the Mississippi River and functioning more as a delta than a bay; the planting thereupon of California Bullrush will accelerate vegetation on the mudflats. The Little Vermilion Bay #3 site will be planted with a combination of grid and double row designs; photographic verification of adjacent (previous) plantings suggests favorable conditions and outcome for this site. The Tigre Lagoon site will be planted with more than 8,000 California Bullrush in an area between the lagoon and Vermilion Bay to try to prevent coalescence of the two; a strategically placed combination of grid and double row plantings will be used.

Dawn Davis (NOAA) presented the update for the Delta-Wide Crevasses-Phase IV (MR-09) project. She introduced the project team and provided a brief timeline for the project, which received construction funding approval in 1997. All phases of the project have been completed; the NTP for this fourth phase was issued in July 2021 with a 130-day contract time. Ms. Davis indicated seven specific crevasse creation areas – four of which are located within the Passe-a-Loutre Wildlife Management Area, three of which lie within the Delta National Wildlife Refuge. For purposes of this presentation, she highlighted one crevasse identified as Raphael Pass-9. Ms. Davis asserted that the design and construction of all crevasses were simple and relatively easy, especially when utilizing an “E-crane”; the purpose of the crevasses is to provide connectivity from tributaries into outfall areas to encourage deltaic land formation. Phase IV of this project is expected to create 120 acres; MR-09 is very cost-effective at approximately \$3600 per acre. A presentation of detailed project extension benefits along with a project extension request is anticipated in Fall 2022. In conclusion, Ms. Davis provided evidence of project success at crevasse creation area 81 (Baptiste-Collette Bayou) with a 2021 photograph that clearly indicates land formation within the outfall area of the crevasse when compared to a photo of the site one year after completion (2006).

Jennifer Smith (NOAA Fisheries) gave an update for the Cameron Meadows Marsh Creation and Terracing (CS-66) project, which was approved for Phase 2 funding in January 2017. After revisions in June 2020 a Notice to Proceed (NTP) was issued in August of 2020 and was subject to a 400-day contract period. Located between the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge and the Gulf of Mexico, the project includes a pipeline corridor that extends from the Gulf, under Hwy 82, and into the marsh creation area. Construction of terraces (12,000+ LF) and earthen containment dikes (18,000+ LF) has been completed. Dredging began in October 2021 and construction of the 303-acre marsh creation cell has commenced; completion is expected in early February 2022. The marsh creation cell is expected to revegetate naturally. Hwy 82 (under which the dredge pipeline was placed) will be resurfaced in February 2022. Ms. Smith provided pictorial evidence of various construction activities.

Ms. Smith continued with a status update for the Bayou DeCade Ridge and Marsh Creation (TE-138) project. The project was approved for Phase 2 funding in January 2019; the NTP was issued in September 2020 and was subject to a 500-day contract period. The project is located south of Houma, LA, westward of Lake De Cade, adjacent to Bayou De Cade. It consists of an earthen ridge feature along the bayou and temporary earthen dikes within three marsh creation cells (totaling 473 acres.) The earthen ridge (11,174 LF) and dikes are complete and the dredge pumping into MCA 1 & 2 has commenced. Hurricane Ida inflicted damage to the MCAs; dewatering was necessary, and repairs of the internal dikes are underway. Continued pumping into MCA 3 will occur until its completion in February 2022. The rim of Lake DeCade adjacent to MCA 3, which is maintained by Apache (landowner), is vulnerable to constant erosion due to high tide events and persistent south/southeast winds. To protect the newly established MCAs in this project, a change order was successfully negotiated for the installation of Articulated Concrete Mats (ACMs) along that portion of the lake rim. Due to supply interruptions the ACMs will not likely be installed until the end of March 2022. The ACMs will be monitored and removed once the MCAs have become established. Plans are to conduct plantings on the ridge feature in the fall of 2022.

Col. Murphy called for Task Force and public questions or comments, encouraging participants to utilize the “chat” feature within this virtual platform; no verbal comments or questions were proffered.

#### **Agenda Item #5 – Report: Public Outreach Committee Report (Lauren Leonpacher, USGS)**

Ms. Lauren Leonpacher was called upon to present the Public Outreach Committee report. She began by introducing herself as the Outreach Coordinator; she accepted the position and began serving in June 2021. She then gave an enthusiastic update on the newly developed curriculum about Louisiana wetlands. The *Watermark 360* Caminada Headlands project is a virtual field trip, which includes an educational guide for teachers and students (available in print and virtually). Student materials are available as a printed “activity box” and in an interactive virtual format. Teacher workshops will occur this spring and summer; teachers will receive materials that could potentially reach 3,000 Louisiana students. The virtual field trip can be a standalone product and will be made available to the general public online. It will be hosted on the Hamlin University kiosks that span the Mississippi River. The product development team includes some of the only State-approved curriculum vendors for environmental science curriculum, who are also helping with outreach to teachers through the LaSTEM program. Final touches are being made to the website to ensure smooth functioning before its release. Another (ongoing) educational outreach initiative is the Wetlands Writing Contest in memory of Jennifer Ritter Guidry. It's open to all school-aged students in Louisiana; submissions are being accepted for the contest through March 1<sup>st</sup>. She encouraged attendees to share the information (available on the LA Coast website) with educators and at home.

Ms. Leonpacher reported that the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the CWPPRA program in November was very successful. Held virtually, it showcased various examples of communities in support of wetlands conservation. It featured infographics, recorded interviews, highlighted projects, and included an “adventure pack” contest. With different content posted

every day, more than 64,000 people were reached using four different platforms. She expressed appreciation to all who contributed and participated, and who liked or shared on social media. She also thanked the Outreach Committee for connecting with community members and businesses that made the event possible. She noted that all the content and all the interviews remain available on the *WordPress* webpage.

Concurrent with the coastal celebration in November, the "I Remember" exhibit, was displayed with the Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit at the Bayou Tech Museum in New Iberia. Programming associated with the exhibit was deemed successful, with approximately 1,200 visitors to the site. A graphic designer intern created posters to advertise the event and to display the first-place poetry winners' poems. Readings from regional poet laureates were featured during poetry night; the poets were depicted in front of the Wetlands Writing Contest posters. The exhibit then traveled to Natchitoches and received much public exposure during the Festival of Lights activities hosted there. Another exciting development with the "I Remember" portrait interview series is that the audio recordings are all now archived within the Library of Congress at the American Folklife Center as part of DC's *StoryCorps*. Hopefully, this collection of oral history will grow along with future projects. These audio clips are now accessible online.

Ms. Leonpacher reported that all CWPPRA's free outreach materials are now being made available on Teachers Pay Teachers, a popular online marketplace for teaching resources. Materials are tagged by educational standard and by topic so teachers can search for and find CWPPRA materials more easily. Since August more than 550 downloads of CWPPRA educational materials have been tracked. All free materials remain available through the CWPPRA website as well.

Social media engagement and or electronic outreach resulted in more than 65,000 feeds in 14 different countries, including Canada, Greece, the United Kingdom, Ethiopia and Indonesia. The coastal celebration in November likely affected high activity levels and generated many new followers.

Ms. Leonpacher continued her report with the following ongoing and upcoming activities:

- "I Hope": Visions for a Sustainable Future in Coastal Louisiana – a forward-looking version of the "I Remember" series.
- Youth Wetlands Writing Contest
- A Louisiana Environmental Education curated reading list and book display to be hosted in public libraries,
- Coastal restoration and associated STEM careers presentations to area high school students
- Watermarks360 Professional Development workshops for educators
- Redesign of the LACoast website

Ms. Leonpacher closed by encouraging attendees to check the CWPPRA calendar for details of upcoming events, and to submit any outreach suggestions and/or questions at any time.

Col. Murphy commended Ms. Leonpacher for her presentation and the efforts of the Outreach Committee; comments in the chat feature of this meeting were all positive as well.

Col. Murphy called for Task Force and public questions or comments. Mr. Doley echoed the positive feedback and expressed his appreciation to all presenters for their encouraging, “on-the-ground” reporting.

### **Agenda Item #6 – Report: Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) Report (Leigh Anne Sharp, CPRA)**

Leigh Anne Sharp (CPRA) was called to present the CRMS update. She reported on conditions in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, including preliminary land loss estimates, peak storm surge data, and physical damage at some CRMS sites.

She began with the assertion that the coastwide vegetative helicopter survey was done in 2021; that survey is the most recent in a series of habitat classifications that go back to 1949. Those classifications will be available on the CRMS website this spring. The 2018 coastwide aerial photography products are now in the database. The 2018 classification now includes a matrix map that differentiates areas of persistent land loss or persistent land gain, and areas of oscillating land change. The 2021 coastwide flight occurred after Hurricane Ida in November. As the data is compiled, land loss specifics will be apparent. Elevations on all CRMS sites are currently being updated.

Ms. Sharp declared that the footprint of three NRDA marsh creation projects will overlay CRMS sites. CRMS equipment therein will be moved during project construction and (ideally) replaced in the same location on top of new marsh created, or (if necessary) relocated to avoid interference with project features and CRMS data collection. She made the point that avoiding CRMS sites while designing marsh creation projects is not necessary.

Ms. Sharp then presented several slides and discussed Hurricane Ida damage assessment. Peak water elevation at landfall occurred within the Breton Sound and was measured at 11.4'. (A 12' surge was projected). More data may be obtained from damaged sondes; other sondes are missing completely. Hydro stations were deployed during damage assessments; they will soon render information regarding salinity and tidal alterations. Preliminary Hurricane Ida land change assessment estimates a loss of 275 square kilometers, although some of that may be ephemeral. If converted, 275 square kilometers equals 106 square miles (or 68,000 acres, or 27,000 hectares, or more than 51,000 football fields.) Assuming a depth of one meter a meter deep, the volume of marsh loss would fill the Superdome 78 times (78 Superdome units, or SDUs.)

Ms. Sharp provided pictorial evidence of CRMS site damage, stating that wherever there is damage or complete loss of CRMS equipment, so it is with the marsh (and vice versa). Beginning with the area east of Bayou Lafourche, she illustrated sites that were completely devastated, providing pre- and post-storm photos. The sites will still be monitored in the same locations; only the elevation data will change. One CRMS site is covered by displaced, inverted marsh material referred to as “marsh balls” or “wrack”; that material is widespread. Eastward in the Barataria Basin many CRMS sites and much of the marsh was also heavily damaged. The one exception is at BA-37 – Little Lake Shoreline and Marsh Creation project, a dedicated dredging project; damage therein was less than elsewhere in the directly affected area, as evidenced in the preliminary land loss analysis. She reported that CWPPRA projects sites within the Barataria Basin sustained relatively “minor” damage – primarily to signage, and man-made structures. Further east on the Breton side, marsh loss was not as extensive, although marsh

damage is widespread. Elevation, vegetation and hydrology data will be obtained through regularly scheduled monitoring events and will be compared to pre-storm data already available. She concluded with two slides depicting vegetative cover along the entire Louisiana coastline before and after the 2020 storms as a reminder of the areas heavily damaged prior to Hurricane Ida.

Col. Murphy thanked Ms. Sharp for her presentation, particularly the photos and color-coded graphics/ commentary; comments in the chat feature were appreciative and generally positive as well.

Col. Murphy called for Task Force and public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Col. Murphy called for a brief recess at 11:03 a.m.; he reconvened proceedings at 11:15 a.m.

### **Agenda Item #7 – Report: Bio-Engineered Oyster Reef Creation Demonstration (LA-08) Project Final Report (Donna Rogers, NMFS)**

Donna Rogers (NMFS) presented the Final Report for the Bio-Engineered Oyster Reef Demonstration (LA-08) Project. The project was authorized in PPL-17 and is positioned in the Gulf of Mexico just off the Rockefeller NWR shoreline. The project consists of two 215 ft. structures placed 140 ft apart; one structure was composed of concrete and the other of “OysterKrete®” – to compare their respective efficacy in wave attenuation and oyster production, as well as their structural stability on low load-bearing soils at the site. Total project implementation costs were \$1.9 million. Naturally occurring variations in water depths resulted in differing slopes and depths of the structures upon construction. The concrete structure was built at a higher elevation but settled more; the OysterKrete structure was submerged more often but settled less. Evaluation is based on monitoring data from the 2.5-year project age. The concrete structure was deemed 66% more effective in the prevention of soil erosion, and about 15% more effective in wave attenuation, although these comparisons are likely a result of the concrete structure being built at a higher elevation. Oyster accumulation was minimal on both structures, although slightly better on the leeward side of the concrete structure. Ms. Rogers summarized lessons learned in the demonstration project thus:

- 90% of project costs were for construction.
- A mix of the two materials on each structure may have provided a better comparison of stability,
- Smaller gaps between structures would have provided more erosion protection behind them,
- Higher construction elevation provides more erosion protection,
- Wave action and predation along the Gulf shoreline are natural inhibitors of oyster production, especially on the windward side.

Finally, Ms. Rogers asserted that original intent was to integrate the LA-08 project within the ME-18 project (constructed in 2019), but ongoing soil erosion necessitated the placement of ME-

18 behind LA-08. Lighted navigational aids mark the location of the LA-08 features. Both projects sustained minimal damage during Hurricanes Laura and Delta in 2020. Plans are to eventually combine the adjacent projects, and LDWF will assume management responsibility of both as CWPPRA project life expires.

Col. Murphy called for Task Force and public questions or comments; none were proffered. Chat comments were generally positive.

#### **Agenda Item #14 -- Additional Agenda Items**

Colonel Murphy deferred this item, as no changes were proposed.

### **VII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Colonel Murphy called for any additional public comments.; none were proffered. He concluded with an observation that today's funding authorizations could result in the restoration of a total of 5 square miles of LA coastline.

### **VIII. CLOSING**

Ms. Bradley was called upon to iterate the following schedule of meetings, which she did as follows:

#### **A. Priority Project List 31 Regional Planning Team Meetings**

February 8, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 9, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Region III Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 10, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Region I & II Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 24, 2022	10:30 a.m.	Coastwide Electronic Voting	<i>(via email, no meeting)</i>

B. The Technical Committee meeting will be held April 7, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. at a location to be determined.

#### **C. Future Program Meetings\***

February 8, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 9, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Region III Planning Team Meeting	TBD
February 10, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Region I & II Planning Team Meeting	TBD
April 7, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	TBD
May 5, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	TBD
September 1, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	TBD
October 6, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	TBD
December 8, 2022	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	TBD

\*subject to change

### **IX. Adjournment**

Col. Murphy expressed appreciation for everyone in attendance and their comments in today's meeting.

*Colonel Murphy called for a motion to adjourn the proceedings. Mr. Doley made the motion, which Mr. Kacir seconded. The motion carried without dissent and the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.*