

**BREAUX ACT**  
**Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act**

**TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**16 January 2014**

**Minutes**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Colonel Richard Hansen convened the 85th meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. on January 16, 2014, at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers building in New Orleans, LA. 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. Listed below are the six Task Force Members who were present.

Colonel Richard Hansen, Chairman, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)  
Mr. Jeffrey Weller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Mr. William Honker, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
Mr. Garret Graves, State of Louisiana, Governor's Office of Coastal Activities (GOCA)  
Mr. Kevin Norton, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Mr. Christopher Doley, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

**III. OPENING REMARKS**

Colonel Hansen introduced himself, welcomed everyone, and asked the members of the Task Force to introduce themselves.

Colonel Hansen asked if the Task Force had any opening comments or changes to the agenda. Colonel Hansen noted that the October 2013 Task Force meeting was cancelled due to the government shutdown. Some of the business from that meeting was postponed to today's January 2014 meeting. Other items were reviewed and voted on electronically.

Colonel Hansen explained that the public would be given the opportunity to comment on agenda items and that each commenter should provide their name and affiliation so that their comments could be included in the official record. All attendees should sign in at the entrance to the conference room.

*Mr. Honker made a motion to add two items to the agenda: a report on the status of the RESTORE Council and a Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) update. Mr. Norton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

*Mr. Garret made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 4, 2013 TASK FORCE MEETING**

Colonel Hansen noted that the October 2013 Task Force meeting was cancelled due to the government shutdown. Mr. Brad Inman, USACE, indicated that the minutes from the June 4, 2013 Task Force Meeting were sent to the Task Force members and all comments and recommended changes were incorporated. Colonel Hansen asked the Task Force members if they had any comments on the minutes. There were no comments.

*Mr. Honker made a motion to adopt the minutes from the June 4, 2013 Task Force meeting. Mr. Doley seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **V. TASK FORCE DECISIONS**

##### **A. Agenda Item #5 – Report/Decision: Status of Unconstructed Projects**

Mr. Inman, representing the Planning and Evaluation (P&E) Subcommittee, reported on the status of unconstructed CWPPRA projects recommended for de-authorization, inactivation, or transfer. These were presented in groups as shown below.

Unconstructed projects recommended by the project team for de-authorization:

- Bayou Sale Shoreline Protection (TV-20), NRCS
- Bertrandville Siphon (BS-18), EPA

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

Unconstructed project requested by the P&E Subcommittee for transfer:

- River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp (PO-29), EPA – recommended transfer to CPRA

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

Unconstructed projects requested by the P&E Subcommittee for inactivation:

- Ship Shoal: Whiskey West Flank Restoration (TE-47), EPA
- Venice Ponds Marsh Creation & Crevasses (MR-15), EPA

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force.

Mr. Inman noted that both of these projects are 95% designed. The Ship Shoal Project has been nominated for Phase II funding nine separate times and has not received funding. The Venice Ponds Project has been nominated for Phase II funding three times and has not received funding.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

*Mr. Honker made a motion to de-authorize the Bayou Sale Shoreline Protection (TV-20) and Bertrandville Siphon (BS-18) Projects. Mr. Doley seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

*Mr. Honker made a motion to transfer the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp (PO-29) Project to the CPRA. Mr. Doley seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

*Mr. Honker made a motion to inactivate the Ship Shoal: Whiskey West Flank Restoration (TE-47) and Venice Ponds Marsh Creation & Crevasses (MR-15) Projects. Mr. Paul seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

**B. Agenda Item #6 – Decision: Request for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Incremental Funding and Budget Increase for GIWW to Clovelly Hydrologic Restoration Project (BA-02)**

Mr. Quin Kinler, NRCS, presented the background information on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) to Clovelly Hydrologic Restoration (BA-02) Project. This project was constructed under two contracts which were completed in 1997 and 2000. It consists of fixed crest weirs, rock channel plugs, a rock plug with culvert and flat gates, a rock riprap channel plug, a variable crest weir, lake rim restoration, and earthen embankment stabilization. The primary goal of the project is hydrologic restoration to reduce the adverse effect of the manmade canals and two natural bayous while also reducing expansion of those bayous to reduce tidal exchange into interior marshes. The project has had two maintenance events: one minor event in 2006 at a cost of approximately \$14,000 and another more significant event in 2012 at a cost of approximately \$3 million, with about \$500,000 of that cost being paid by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The two structures on the natural bayous are Structures 2 and 4. The intent of these structures is not to impede tidal exchange but to prevent expansion of the bayous and the corresponding increase in tidal exchange. The current request of Fiscal Year (FY) 16 incremental funding in the amount of \$1,692,883 and an operations and maintenance (O&M) budget increase in the amount of \$1,754,749 is primarily intended to repair shoreline breaches between these two structures and construct 1,700 linear feet of rock dike to maintain hydrologic control in this area. If the current breaches into the marsh, which occurred during Hurricane Isaac, are allowed to continue, CWPPRA will lose hydrologic control of this area, which will undermine the integrity of the entire project. The current request also includes funding for the next three years of maintenance.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Randy Moertle, Surface Manager for Little Lake Land Company, added that this area will breach completely in a very short period of time and once this happens the marsh will break up very rapidly. As a landowner in this area, he is completely supportive of this maintenance event. Without this maintenance, the entire project will become nonfunctional.

Mr. Graves made several comments about the technical aspects of this proposed event. He questioned whether a hard structure would increase wave energy on nearby softer shorelines, which would then also experience breaches. He noted that a review of the original project shows that the difference in land loss of protected shorelines and unprotected shorelines is less than one foot. This maintenance event also has a very high cost per acre at approximately \$170,000. He questioned whether a FEMA claim was pursued since the breach was caused by Hurricane Isaac. Finally, Mr. Graves noted that this project was completed in 2000 and is only six years away from the end of its project life. The addition of a hard structure with so few remaining years could increase the challenge of determining the long term disposition of the project, in terms of both ownership and liability.

Mr. Moertle responded that there are certain restoration components for which many landowners would be willing to assume ownership and liability. This particular project has multiple types of components, most of which are offshore or on State land. There is only one part of this project that is on private land. As a landowner, he makes every effort to maintain these items. However, coastal restoration is extremely expensive. He questioned whether any landowner would be willing to assume liability for any type of shoreline protection feature. Additionally, the Task Force should note that the landowner will always have liability no matter who "owns" the project because if someone gets hurt they will sue everyone that they can sue. Mr. Moertle doubted the effectiveness of transferring that liability away.

Mr. Graves suggested including landowners and their representatives like Mr. Moertle in the Task Force's discussions about long term liability and end-of-life transitions. This will become a larger issue as more time passes and more projects reach the end of their project lives. Mr. Moertle noted that a landowner group exists but has not met recently. That might be a good

channel to open that dialogue between CWPPRA and landowners. Mr. Norton agreed with Mr. Graves but added that CWPPRA already has a process to engage landowners. Mr. Graves stated that the maintenance event currently being considered is an example where the Task Force is considering adding to their long term liability without addressing that liability directly.

Mr. Doley added that CWPPRA's ability to construct new projects is being severely impacted by the increased O&M costs for existing projects. CWPPRA needs to do more than discuss this issue and should meet with landowners and other stakeholders immediately. Mr. Moertle responded that the Task Force cannot be so scared of liability that they do not construct any more projects. Mr. Moertle added that some of the liability is beyond the landowners' capabilities to assume. Mr. Doley agreed with Mr. Moertle and noted that there is a difference between responsibility and liability. He noted that CWPPRA has a responsibility to maintain projects over a time period that may extend beyond the existence of the Program. Mr. Moertle praised the CWPPRA Program as an existing program that works to get projects designed and built and that the public likes. He stated that CWPPRA should push for higher funding, especially from the BP monies. Mr. Norton added that CWPPRA is a dynamic program that is continually looking for better ways to protect and restore the coast. The Task Force should not back away from its mission, but needs to balance existing and future needs without committing to so much O&M in the future that O&M spending impedes construction of new projects. Mr. Honker added that he likes the idea of engaging landowners and other agencies beyond those already represented in CWPPRA.

Mr. Inman noted that the 20-year life plan requires CWPPRA to look at projects as they reach Year 15, and as many as 20 projects will reach that milestone this year. Each sponsoring agency and the State will have to decide on their recommendations for the disposition of these projects. Mr. Doley asked for a list of each of those projects at the next Technical Committee meeting with an initial estimate from each agency of their plans. Mr. Graves stated that if the disposition of a project is not considered until Year 15, then CWPPRA is missing opportunities to make informed investment decisions when allocating scarce construction funds among numerous projects.

*Mr. Norton made a motion to approve the Technical Committee recommendation for FY16 incremental funding in the amount of \$1,692,883 and an operations and maintenance (O&M) budget increase in the amount of \$1,754,749 for the GIWW to Clovelly Hydrologic Restoration (BA-02) Project. Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

### **C. Agenda Item #10 – Decision: Future Priority Project List Public Meetings**

Mr. Inman reported that, due to low attendance at the past Project Priority List (PPL) Public Comment meetings, the P&E Subcommittee and the Technical Committee recommend eliminating this annual meeting. If the meeting is eliminated, the candidate project evaluation information will continue to be distributed in early November to the public via the website and CWPPRA Newsflash. Additionally, a presentation on the projects will be provided at the December Technical Committee meeting. Colonel Hansen added that comments will continue to be accepted orally at the December and January meetings.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Nic Matherne, Terrebonne Parish Government, repeated his request from the Technical Committee meeting that the information should still be released at the same time to give the public ample time to consider the projects and make informed comments.

Mr. Graves asked if there would be an administrative cost reduction. Colonel Hansen asked Ms. Susan Mabry and Mr. Inman to provide an estimate for the cost savings.

*Mr. Honker made a motion to approve the Technical Committee recommendation to eliminate the PPL Public Comment meeting. Mr. Norton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

**D. Agenda Item #11 – Decision: Funding Increase Scope Change Request for Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation Cycles 4 & 5 Project (CS-28-4&5)**

Mr. Inman reported that the Technical Committee recommends approval of the USFWS, USACE, and CPRA request to increase the current cost for the Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation Cycles 4 & 5 Project from \$8,111,705 to \$10,328,064, an increase of \$2,216,359 (27.3%). The revised incremental funding amount is \$10,169,154. USACE, CPRA, and USFWS plan to return approximately \$2.1 million to the CWPPRA Program from the Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation Cycle 2 project, which makes this request budget neutral.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

*Mr. Honker made a motion to approve the recommendation by the Technical Committee to increase funding for the Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation Cycles 4&5 (CS-28-4&5) Project by \$2,216,359. Mr. Norton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

**E. Agenda Item #12 – Decision: Request for Incremental Funding Increase for the Black Bayou Culverts Project (CS-29)**

Mr. Inman reported that the Technical Committee recommends the approval of the NRCS and CPRA request for a total project budget increase of \$8,021,455 and an incremental funding increase of \$8,237,204 for the Black Bayou Culverts (CS-29) Project for the immediate repair of the structure and the next three years of project expenditures. The revised total project cost would be \$16,399,059, which represents a total project budget increase of \$8,021,455.

Colonel Hansen noted that the Task Force has reviewed the project information in detail, but asked if any members of the public would like more information on this project and budget increase.

Mr. Ken Ragas, landowner, stated that this budget increase would double the cost of the project and asked for more information.

Mr. John Jurgensen, NRCS, provided a brief overview of the background of the project and the reason for the budget increase request. This project was designed to alleviate the excessive water levels in the Mermentau Lakes Sub-basin. It consists of a battery of culverts under Highway 384 with flat gates that allow water to exit the Mermentau Lakes Sub-basin without allowing for saltwater intrusion. During the design of the project, the project team decided against installing a cutoff wall based on results of the initial geotechnical evaluations and the location of the project in Cameron Parish, where it was considered unnecessary. However, the lack of a cutoff wall allowed for voids to form adjacent to the culverts where saltwater could enter the Mermentau Lakes Sub-basin. NRCS has conducted a formal investigation, installed cofferdams around the structure, and dewatered the site. The result of the investigation is that a cutoff wall needs to be installed to repair the project.

Colonel Hansen emphasized that the structure is leaking and saltwater is entering this fragile freshwater basin. The Task Force's choice is to spend \$8 million to fix it or \$5 million to close it. Fortunately, the problem was caught early so there are still 16 years in the project life.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force.

Mr. Doley questioned whether NRCS has captured the true cost of the project because the disposition at Year 20 remains uncertain. The responsibilities and liabilities to the Program are a real cost that has not been properly captured. This is true for each CWPPRA project. Mr. Jurgensen responded that, even with the cost increase, the Black Bayou Culverts Project is a good project by CWPPRA's current standards. Even if the costs of removal, approximately \$6 million, are added to the project costs, this project's benefit cost comparison still beats other projects that are being presented for approval today which do not include the costs of removal.

Mr. Graves stated that the Task Force tries to make informed decisions based upon cost estimates. Cost increases of this magnitude distort those decisions about what projects receive Phase I and Phase II funding. Mr. Graves suggested that in the future the Task Force should place more responsibility on the project sponsor, including the State, to remedy problems such as this one. Mr. Graves also questioned whether the project would actually achieve the stated benefits. However, he agreed that, because the project affects a roadway, CWPPRA cannot just walk away from this project. Removing the project would cost around \$5 million, so the incremental cost of repairing the project is only \$3 million. Therefore, it is likely that this investment is worthwhile, provided that the Task Force is assured that the benefits will be realized.

Mr. Doley agreed with Mr. Graves, but added that the project is being discussed in isolation. The benefits and costs of the Black Bayou Culverts Project should be compared to the benefits and costs of the project that is not being funded in its place.

Mr. Norton admitted that Mr. Graves and Mr. Doley have good points. NRCS made a mistake in the initial design of the project. However, even with this mistake this is still a high value project. He added that the anecdotal information from the local residents in the project area indicate that this was a good project when it was functioning. This structure can still achieve its goals.

Mr. Graves stated that NRCS performs good work and that the State and other agencies have all constructed projects that did not meet design targets. Mr. Graves asked for a review of the updated models created by the USACE for the Southwest Study to verify that the project benefits are still reasonable. Mr. Mark Wingate, USACE, indicated that the USACE could assist in that effort.

Mr. Doley stated that it will be NMFS' position to vote no on future requests of this nature until the Task Force can resolve the issues discussed today. Mr. Honker added that the deciding factor for his vote was the letter of support provided by Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development because the project affects a hurricane evacuation route.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

*Mr. Norton made a motion to approve a total project budget increase of \$8,021,455 and an incremental funding increase of \$8,237,204 for the Black Bayou Culverts (CS-29) Project. Mr. Graves seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **F. Agenda Item #13 – Report/Decision: 23rd Priority Project List**

Mr. Inman presented the four candidate projects recommended by the Technical Committee for PPL 23 Phase I approval, totaling \$12,471,926. The projects are:

- Bayou Grande Chenier Marsh & Ridge Restoration, FWS, \$2,742,302
- Caminada Headlands Back Barrier Marsh Creation, EPA, \$3,354,935
- Island Road Marsh Creation & Nourishment, NMFS, \$3,721,447
- South Grand Chenier Marsh Creation – Baker Tract, NRCS, \$2,653,242

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Martin Miller III, Rellim Surface Management, along with his father Mr. M.O. Miller and cousins Mr. John Currier and Mr. Greg Currier, stated that as landowners for the



South Grand Chenier Marsh Creation – Baker Tract Project they are in full support for this project.

Mr. Ragas gave full support for the Bayou Grande Chenier Marsh & Ridge Restoration Project.

*Mr. Honker made a motion to approve the Bayou Grande Chenier Marsh & Ridge Restoration, Caminada Headlands Back Barrier Marsh Creation, Island Road Marsh Creation & Nourishment, and South Grand Chenier Marsh Creation – Baker Tract Projects for Phase I Engineering & Design (E&D) with a total Phase I cost of \$12,471,926. Mr. Weller seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **G. Agenda Item #14 – Report/Decision: Request for Phase II Authorization and Approval of Phase II Increment 1 Funding**

Mr. Inman reported that the Technical Committee recommends approval of the South Grand Chenier Project for Phase II Increment 1 funding totaling \$20,264,925. This amount is within the construction program's available funding limits.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Martin Miller III expressed support for this project. As a family, the Miller family has spent significant sums on restoration projects in this area. Mr. Graves and Mr. Miller discussed the possibility of increased landowner support for future CWPPRA projects. Mr. Miller noted that the Miller family has made significant investments in their property and those investments will work synergistically with CWPPRA projects.

Colonel Hansen asked about the history of this project. Mr. Darryl Clark responded that this project was approved for Phase II funding in 2010, but the funds were returned to the Program due to landrights issues. Those landrights issues have since been resolved. The project was nominated but not selected in 2012.

*Mr. Weller made a motion to approve the South Grand Chenier (ME-20) Project for Phase II Construction and Increment 1 funding totaling \$20,264,925. Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

## **VI. INFORMATION**

### **A. Agenda Item #2 – Report: Status of CWPPRA Program Funds and Projects**

Ms. Mabry reported on the current CWPPRA budget. The current Program estimate is \$2.4 billion. Projected funding is \$2.1 billion, leaving a potential funding gap of \$274 million. The current approved amount is \$1.5 billion, and the current funded amount is \$1.4 billion. With

the projects to be de-authorized, transferred, or inactivated under Agenda Item 5 and the various budget increases, the Program will have a surplus of approximately \$9 million.

The CWPPRA Program currently has 151 active projects. 36 projects are in Phase I, 19 are in Phase II, one has been transferred, one is inactive, and 43 have been de-authorized. The Program has constructed 100 projects.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen asked Ms. Mabry about the gap between the current approved and the current funding. Ms. Mabry explained that the Program does not fund projects completely at the beginning of the project; they are funded in increments. Funds are set aside for those projects, but the money has not been allocated to the project sponsor.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

### **B. Agenda Item #3 – Report: Status of “Consistency with the 2012 Coastal Master Plan: Guidelines for Restoration Projects Receiving State Funding” Document**

Mr. Graves reported on the status of the “Consistency with 2012 Coastal Master Plan: Guidelines for Restoration Projects Receiving State Funding” document. The CWPPRA Task Force has decided to integrate the 2012 State Master Plan as part of the review process for future CWPPRA projects. The Master Plan was designed to provide a common vision to ensure that State investments work together to contribute to that common vision. He stated that he could provide updates to the Task Force as future projects commence.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Ragas asked Mr. Graves about how new projects could be considered for addition to the Master Plan. Mr. Graves stated that consistency with the Master Plan does not mean that a project must be the exact type and footprint identified in the Master Plan. Individual projects are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not they meet the strategic objectives of the Plan.

### **C. Agenda Item #4 – Report: Construction Update**

Mr. Josh Carson, USACE, provided an update on the Shoreline Protections Foundation Improvements (LA-06) Demonstration Project. The construction was performed in 2006 and the five years of monitoring were recently completed. The final project cost was \$708,000, which was less than the budget of \$1 million, so the USACE will be returning funds to the Program. This project was constructed within the White Lake ME-22 Project. The location was selected because the initial geotechnical work showed that the soils in this area were unstable compared

to the rest of the project. Three different methods were studied to determine the best way to reduce settlement of shoreline protection projects. The results of the demonstration project showed that the control section settled the least, which was unexpected. There were very little differences in the settlement rates between the three methods. In conclusion, the project team probably should have chosen a different location for this demonstration project. Colonel Hansen asked about the intent to incorporate these results into the larger project. Mr. Carson responded that this area of Louisiana has less settlement than the eastern part of the state. Mr. Clark added that it was more efficient to construct this demonstration project as part of another project, because if the demonstration project would have required its own dredging, access channels, and mobilization, the cost of the demonstration project would likely have multiplied by four or five times. Mr. Carson stated that if the sand option would have decreased settlement, then that methodology would be incorporated into other projects to reduce costs. Colonel Hansen asked if the intent is to leave the project in place. Mr. Carson responded affirmatively. Mr. Inman stated that this will be the final report on this project; CWPPRA will fiscally close this project and it will be complete.

Mr. Rick Hartman, NMFS, presented an overview of the Barataria Barrier Island Complex Project: Pelican Island and Pas La Mer to Chaland Pass Restoration (BA-38) Project. The Chaland Headland section was completed in January 2006 and the Pelican Island section was completed in February 2013. Over 1,000 acres were built, which is more than the 800 acres that were planned. Additionally, NMFS will be returning over \$3 million to the Program. Colonel Hansen asked about performance monitoring for the project. Mr. Hartman answered that there are funds allocated for surveys in future years. Barrier island construction and design has been adapted and modified based on lessons learned in previous projects.

Mr. Jurgensen presented an overview of several constructed projects. The Sediment Containment for Marsh Creation (LA-09) Demonstration Project was completed in August 2013 in the Labranche Wetlands in St. Charles Parish. The goal is to find alternatives to marsh containment other than dikes. The main challenge associated with containment dikes is that typically the soils are very soft and the dikes subside. This demonstration project is using a product developed by Net Gains, which consists of a fencing system that is anchored in place but can rise and fall with the water level to trap sediment. Because it is not a rigid structure, the goal of the demonstration project is to determine whether it can withstand a large scale dredging effort. The project cost was almost \$700,000.

Several Coastwide Vegetative Plantings (LA-39) Projects have recently completed construction or will complete construction soon. Over 49,000 gallons of smooth cordgrass were planted in Cameron-Creole in June 2013 at a cost of \$400,000. 525 gallons of smooth cordgrass and 13,040 gallons of California bulrush are in the process of being planted in The Prairie, between Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas, at a cost of approximately \$100,000. This should be complete prior to the May 2014 Task Force meeting.

Construction on the GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas in Terrebonne Parish (TE-43) Project began in June 2013. The construction contract cost is \$6.2 million. The GIWW is a very leaky system due to bank erosion caused by wave action from vessel traffic. The original project to close some of the breaches was performed by the Coastal Impact Assistance Program

(CIAP), and CWPPRA is only doing the remaining portion. This project should be completed in March 2014.

The Non-Rock Alternative Shoreline Protection (LA-16) Demonstration Project should be complete by the April Technical Committee meeting. This project is investigating ways to reduce the cost of shoreline protection by using alternatives to rock and sheetpile. A presentation was made at the December Technical Committee meeting where a brochure describing the four test products was distributed.

Mr. Clark presented an overview of the Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation (BA-42) Project. The project is located southeast of Lake Hermitage and includes 650 acres of marsh creation and 6,300 feet of shoreline restoration using a Mississippi River borrow site. Construction began in February 2012 and the project is currently approximately 65% complete. Retention dikes have been constructed; Section A should be complete in mid-2014 with the remainder of the project expected to be complete in 2015. Altogether, the Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation and West Pointe a la Hache Marsh Creation CWPPRA Projects and another Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) project in this area should yield over 1,000 acres.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force.

Mr. Doley noted that the Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation Project is a good example of the State's attempt to use different funding sources together to create larger projects or build on existing work.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Ragas asked if the non-rock alternatives could be used for barrier island construction and restoration. Mr. Jurgensen responded that most barrier island projects do not use hard structures. This possibility could be investigated further once the results are finalized.

*Mr. Honker made a motion to fiscally close the Shoreline Protections Foundation Improvements (LA-06) Project. Mr. Weller seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **D. Agenda Item #7 – Report: Outreach Committee Quarterly Report**

Ms. Susan Testroet-Bergeron, CWPPRA Outreach, reported on the activities of the CWPPRA Outreach Committee. CWPPRA agencies attended the Barrier Island Workshop at Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON), which provided teachers with lessons to use in their classrooms. CWPPRA also attended the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) WETSHOP 2013, which provided a full week of teacher training with field experiences to demonstrate the importance of Louisiana's wetlands. CWPPRA attended the National Hunting and Fishing Day, Ocean Commotion, Rougarou Fest, and DredgeFest.

Additions to the LACoast.gov website include buttons for Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress, Flickr, and YouTube. CWPPRA currently has over 1,000 photos on Flickr, all of which are available for public use. CWPPRA is using Wordpress to create *LandMarks*, an e-newsletter to complement the paper *WaterMarks*.

Recent media activities included the West Bay Media Day. Ms. Bergeron particularly thanked Josh Carson with the USACE for getting the media out to the West Bay project to see activities there. Additionally, the Advocate recently ran a front-page article titled “Beyond Building Marsh: CWPPRA at 23 still vital.”

Other CWPPRA Outreach activities include the creation of a new video titled *Louisiana: A Certain Pride of Place: Barrier Islands and Shoreline Restoration* and the Saving Paradise program, which asks people why we should save coastal Louisiana. The Saving Paradise program has been combined with the *I Remember* art exhibit. The *I Remember* art show is continuing at the Abbeville Library and will then move to the Waterlife Museum in Terrebonne Parish, the Chalmette Battlefield, and Hill Memorial Library at Louisiana State University (LSU). Eleven more interviews have been conducted and will be added to the oral history part of the exhibit.

Ms. Bergeron congratulated Cole Ruckstuhl for his appointment to the Governor’s Environmental Education Commission. Upcoming CWPPRA Outreach events include several conventions, including the State of the Coast Convention in March in New Orleans. The CWPPRA Dedication Event has been rescheduled for April 16.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

#### **E. Agenda Item #8 – Report: Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) Report**

Ms. Dona Weifenbach reported that ten 2013 Operations, Maintenance, and Monitoring (OM&M) reports are available on the CRMS website and the remaining three are in the comment period but should be complete before the April Technical Committee meeting. One of the reports is the 20-year closeout report for the Bayou Labranche Wetland Creation Project.

The results from the 2012 aerial photography should be available on the CRMS website by May 2014. A vegetative helicopter survey was conducted in 2013 and the results will be presented at the State of the Coast Conference in March 2014. CWPPRA Roadshows with federal partners are currently being scheduled to ensure that the CRMS website is meeting their needs. Ms. Weifenbach is working with CWPPRA Outreach to create a CRMS educational document, “A Beginners Guide to Retrieving Data” for release in early 2014.

CRMS representatives attended multiple meetings, workshops, and conferences in the latter of half of 2013, including the System Wide Assessment Monitoring Program (SWAMP)

Restoration Workshop, Workshop on Coastal Subsidence, Basics of the Basin, and the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference. Upcoming conferences include the State of the Coast Conference and the Conference on Ecological and Ecosystem Restoration.

The CRMS analytical team presented the CRMS report card in 2012, developed and refined several new tools in 2013, and has a number of different activities planned for 2014. These include the land:water analysis, the addition of a landscape index, larger spatial scale analyses involving multiple indices, and multiple website improvements including the addition of journal articles, theses, and dissertations that use CRMS data, exporting capabilities, and a password protected environment.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force.

Mr. Doley thanked Ms. Weifenbach for her contribution to the CWPPRA Program. He suggested that the State consider offsetting some of the costs of the valuable CRMS Program. Ms. Weifenbach and Mr. Graves noted that the State has several other monitoring programs, such as SWAMP, that work in conjunction with CRMS, and that the State pays additional funds beyond its cost share for CRMS and fully funds barrier island monitoring. Mr. Doley stated that he would like to see a presentation on the other monitoring systems and how they work together to inform decision making.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

#### **F. Agenda Item #9 – Report: Coastwide Nutria Control Program – Annual Report**

Ms. Jennifer Manuel, LDWF, reported on the status of the Coastwide Nutria Control Program. This program is currently in its 11<sup>th</sup> year and is implemented by LDWF and their contractor. The project area is the entire Louisiana coast south of the I-10/I-12 corridor. The annual goal is to collect 400,000 nutria tails. The program pays a bounty of \$5 per tail. Participants must apply and be approved to receive the bounty, and they must indicate where and how they trap or hunt the nutria. Last year the program collected 388,160 nutria tails worth \$1,940,800 from 252 active participants. The harvest has remained relatively constant over the past few years and the damaged acres have decreased.

February was the most productive month last year. Most tails were collected in fresh marsh. 120 participants reported problems purchasing ammunition last year, so there was a small increase in the use of shotguns or traps compared to rifles. Terrebonne Parish has the highest number of nutria collected, followed by Lafourche, St. Mary, and Plaquemines. Nutria damage is observed via helicopter, with the observers flying 155 transect lines covering 2,300 total miles. Fourteen damage sites were observed in 2013, with four decreasing in size, six increasing in size, two recovered sites, and three new sites. The sites that are increasing in size are all located on one landowner's property where access is limited. At one of the recovered sites, a trapper collected 3,500 tails in 2013, which contributed to that site's recovery. Overall, there was an 8% increase in damaged acres in 2013.

Ms. Manuel noted that the incidence of hog damage in association with nutria damage has increased from one site in 2012 to six sites in 2013.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

## **VII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

### Report: Status of the RESTORE Council

Mr. Justin Ehrenwerth, Department of Commerce, reported on the status of the RESTORE Council. The RESTORE Act was passed in 2012 and created a new federal government council populated by the governors of the five Gulf Coast states and the heads of six federal agencies. The Council will receive 80% of the Transocean and BP settlements. Transocean has settled for \$1 billion but the BP litigation is ongoing. The Department of the Treasury regulations that govern the RESTORE Council were released in draft form last year and are in the process of finalization.

The RESTORE Council met in August 2013 to develop an initial comprehensive ecosystem restoration plan. The primary goal of this plan is to develop procedures for how specific projects and programs will be chosen. A major obstacle to this planning effort is that the total funding amount will not be known until the BP lawsuit is settled. The Council is also working to determine how to apportion the third “bucket” of funds between the states. Other issues that need to be addressed include public engagement, coordination with other groups involved in restoration, environmental compliance, and ensuring that decisions are made based upon the best available science.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force.

Mr. Honker thanked Mr. Ehrenwerth for the update. He asked for information on the staffing and physical location of the Council. Mr. Ehrenwerth replied that the current staff is loaned to the Council because the Treasury regulations are not complete. Once the regulations are complete, they will work quickly to select full time staff and an office space. Colonel Hansen thanked Mr. Honker for suggesting this update.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.

### Report: CPRA Update

Mr. Kyle Graham, CPRA, presented a CPRA update on the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Early NRDA, the FY15 Annual Plan, and the recently announced Water Campus. In the BP oil spill criminal settlement, funds were specifically allocated to barrier

islands and freshwater diversions. The State of Louisiana's first funding requests have been approved and include Caminada Increment II E&D, East Timbalier E&D, Increase Atchafalaya River Flow to Terrebonne Planning, Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion E&D, and Mississippi River Diversions Planning. The second funding request, which includes Caminada Headland Beach and Dune Restoration Increment II, has not yet been approved. If this receives approval, it could begin construction in June or July of 2014. Most of these funds are currently being used for planning efforts for diversions. Mr. Graham explained that the studies will be complete by the summer of 2015. At that time, the community will have to decide whether sediment diversions are worthwhile.

Regarding Early NRDA restoration, CPRA is currently conducting roadshows with the Draft Early Restoration Plan (DERP). Previously approved Louisiana projects are the Lake Hermitage Marsh Restoration and Oyster Cultch Placement Projects. Proposed Louisiana projects include Louisiana Outer Coast Restoration in Terrebonne and Plaquemines Parishes and Louisiana Marine Fisheries Enhancement, Research and Science Centers in Calcasieu and Plaquemines Parishes. The Louisiana Outer Coast Restoration Project would complete the last sections of the entire Barataria Barrier Island shoreline.

CPRA is currently presenting the FY15 Annual Plan via roadshows. The document is available for public comments through February 19. Mr. Graham encouraged the public to take a copy of the plan or to view it online. It includes \$668 million in expenditures, of which 62% will go towards construction, 10% to E&D, 10% to planning, and the remainder to OM&M, ongoing programs, and operating costs. Some of the larger projects in the plan include the Houma Navigation Lock and the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion.

Finally, Mr. Graham noted that coastal restoration in Louisiana will be an ongoing need. To be able to meet that need in the future, Louisiana is investing more into monitoring and scientific research. The Baton Rouge Water Campus will be constructed on a 50-acre parcel in downtown Baton Rouge to house restoration and research agencies. The initial phase will include three buildings, and the State anticipates additional phases.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the Task Force.

Colonel Hansen thanked Mr. Graham for his presentation.

Mr. Graves added that it is imperative for the State to find funding synergies between the various existing programs. The flexibility to transfer projects from one program to another with the ultimate goal of constructing projects quickly and inexpensively is important. He noted that the State recently signed a construction contract for the Long Distance Sediment Pipeline, which will ultimately use six different funding sources.

Mr. Honker stated that it would be very helpful to see these projects on a geographic scale to see how all of the funding sources fit together.

Colonel Hansen opened the floor to comments from the public. There were no public comments.



## VIII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Phil Tunipseed, representing the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), announced that the Louisiana section of ASCE is celebrating its centennial year. Many activities are planned for April of this year. They are trying to get five to eight civil works projects from each branch to build a coffee table book. He asked for support from the CWPPRA agencies in contacting members for access to projects. Colonel Hansen encouraged individual agencies to provide the appropriate contact information to Mr. Turnipseed.

Ms. Bergeron congratulated Ms. Cecelia Linder and Ms. Rachel Sweeney for winning an internal Department of Commerce award for the Pelican Island Project. She announced that ConocoPhillips and Ducks Unlimited will host the next dedication event on April 16. She also thanked Ms. Sarai Piazza for her work on the CRMS Outreach document. Mr. Doley thanked Ms. Bergeron and said that he is always excited to see what the Outreach Committee is doing.

Mr. Mark Schleifstein, Nola.com/Times Picayune, stated that the Society of Environmental Journalists conference will be held in New Orleans September 3-7. Seven of the nine full-day tours will encompass activities related to CWPPRA and the CWPPRA agencies, including the BP aftermath, restoring wetlands, Bayou Corne sinkhole, storm surge risk reduction in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, fishing issues, Lake Pontchartrain, Maurepas, and Turtle Cove, and rebuilding after a disaster. He asked for the Task Force members' assistance in contacting their agencies related to these tours. Approximately 500 reporters are expected to attend the conference and this would be a wonderful opportunity for the agencies to educate and inform the public about their activities.

Mr. Ragas stated that he has been involved with CWPPRA since PPL 2. He has always tried to participate in the meetings to bring the message back to local people. He stated that it is a tragedy that most members of the public will not know what occurred in today's meeting. The people in lower Plaquemines Parish are victims of miscommunication, and they are the people who will be directly affected by river diversions and other projects. He thanked the members of the Task Force for holding the meeting and for everything that they do for coastal Louisiana.

Mr. Kerry St. Pe, director of BTNEP, announced that a 2014 calendar was given to each Task Force member prior to the meeting and more were available for members of the public. This is an enormously popular calendar because the tides are shown for each day. This year's theme is Great Naturalists of Louisiana.

## IX. CLOSING

### **A. Announcement: Priority Project List 24 Regional Planning Team Meetings**

Mr. Inman announced that the PPL 24 RPT meetings will begin on January 28. They will be held in Abbeville, Morgan City, and New Orleans. These meetings provide an opportunity for members of the public to nominate projects that they would like to see designed and constructed by CWPPRA, as long as they are consistent with the State Master Plan.

January 28, 2014	11:00 a.m.	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	Abbeville
January 29, 2014	9:00 a.m.	Region III Planning Team Meeting	Morgan City
January 30, 2014	8:00 a.m.	Region I Planning Team Meeting	New Orleans
January 30, 2014	11:30 a.m.	Region II Planning Team Meeting	New Orleans
February 18, 2014	10:30 a.m.	Coastwide Electronic Voting	<i>(via email, no meeting)</i>

**B. Announcement: Date of Upcoming CWPPRA Program Meeting**

Mr. Inman announced that the next Technical Committee meeting will be held April 15, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana in the District Assembly Room (DARM).

**C. Announcement: Scheduled Dates of Future Program Meetings**

Mr. Inman announced the scheduled dates of future Program meetings, shown below:

<b>2014</b>			
January 28, 2014	11:00 a.m.	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	Abbeville
January 29, 2014	9:00 a.m.	Region III Planning Team Meeting	Morgan City
January 30, 2014	8:00 a.m.	Region I Planning Team Meeting	New Orleans
January 30, 2014	11:30 a.m.	Region II Planning Team Meeting	New Orleans
April 15, 2014	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee	New Orleans
May 22, 2014	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	Lafayette
September 11, 2014	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee	Baton Rouge
October 7, 2014	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	New Orleans
<del>November 12, 2014</del>	<del>7:00 p.m.</del>	<del>PPL 24 Public Meeting</del>	<del>Baton Rouge</del>
December 11, 2014	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee	Baton Rouge

**D. Adjournment**

Colonel Hansen called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Honker so moved and Mr. Norton seconded. Colonel Hansen adjourned the meeting at 1:05 p.m.