

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

TASK FORCE MEETING

April 5, 2000

Minutes

I. INTRODUCTION

Opening comments were made by Colonel Thomas Julich, who convened the thirty-eighth meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force at approximately 9:45 a.m. on April 5, 2000, at the Estuarian Habitat and Coastal Fisheries Center, in Lafayette, Louisiana. 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 to law (PL 101-646, Title III) by President 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.

Dr. Len Bahr, State of Louisiana

Mr. William Hathaway, Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. David Frugé, U.S. Department of the Interior

Mr. Don Gohmert, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Mr. James Burgess, U.S. Department of Commerce

Colonel Thomas Julich, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

All of the Task Force members were in attendance except Mr. Hathaway who was represented by Mr. Troy Hill.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr. James Burgess asked whether or not the Technical Committee had approved Phase II funding for the Chandeleur Island project. Phase II funding had been approved on January 11, 2000 by the Task Force subject to review and approval by the Technical Committee. Mr. Robert Schroeder responded that the Technical Committee had approved Phase II funding for the Chandeleur Island project.

Motion by Mr. Dave Frugé: To approve the minutes from the Task Force meeting held on January 11, 2000.

Second to motion: Mr. James Burgess

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. TASK FORCE DECISIONS

A. Request for FY 2000 Budget Increase for Report to Congress

Mr. Robert Schroeder presented a request by LADNR for additional funds (est. \$67k) to complete the report to Congress required by the act. There was a brief discussion about the content of the report.

Motion by Mr. Donald Gohmert: To approve the \$ 67k in planning funds to complete the report to Congress required by the act.

Second to motion: Dr. Len Bahr.

Motion passed unanimously.

B. Request for FY 2000 Budget Increase for Report to Congress Companion Document

Mr. Robert Schroeder presented the recommendation of the Technical Committee to fund the printing of a companion document to the Report to Congress. The Outreach Committee was requesting \$15k in planning funds to develop and produce a special issue of the Watermarks. The amount was revised to \$8 k. Dr. Bill Good responded to a query by Mr. James Burgess that the document would be ready by the end of the fiscal year.

Motion by Mr. Donald Gohmert: To approve the \$ 8 k in planning funds to develop and produce a special issue of the Watermarks.

Second to motion: Mr. Dave Frugé

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Recommendation to Modify sections C, D, and E of the Priority List Selection Process

Mr. Robert Schroeder presented the recommendation of the Technical Committee to approve Sections C, D, and E of the Priority Project List (PPL) Selection Process. The Technical Committee reviewed proposals from the public and from agencies before making their recommendation. To allow for changes in priorities on future PPL's, the Technical Committee recommended that the Strategic Working Group meet annually with the Coastal Zone Management Working Group each fall in order to consider amending, adding or deleting strategies in the 1998 Coast 2050 Plan. Consensus recommendations (two-thirds or greater agreement) would be presented to the CWPPRA Task Force and the State Wetlands Authority, meeting jointly or separately, for final approval--approval of both groups being necessary for final adoption.

Mr. James Burgess asked if the Technical Committee had a recommendation to convene an ad hoc group to address PPL 11. There ensued a discussion about the need for process modification for PPL 11 and what the proper constituency of the ad hoc group should be. There was general agreement that an ad hoc group would be convened to address the need for modifying the selection process for PPL 11. Dr. Bill Good asked

the Task Force about modifying strategies. Mr. Burgess advised caution in changing the plan to accommodate projects.

Motion by Mr. Donald Gohmert: To approve the above procedure to modify strategies. [To allow for changes in priorities on future PPL's, the Strategic Working Group will meet annually with the Coastal Zone Management Working Group in the fall in order to consider amending, adding or deleting strategies in the 1998 Coast 2050 Plan. Consensus recommendations (two-thirds or greater agreement) will be presented to the CWPPRA Task Force and the State Wetlands Authority, meeting jointly or separately, for final approval. Approval of both groups is necessary for final adoption.]

Second to motion: Mr. James Burgess

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Donald Gohmert: To approve C, D, and E with a provision that public concerns about the WVA process, consideration of monitoring results in project formulation, and whether to allow a two-year process to fully develop large projects be addressed.

Second to motion: Mr. Dave Frugé

Motion passed unanimously.

V. INFORMATION

A. Ecological Effects of Diversions

Dr. John Day made a presentation on the Ecological Effects of Diversions.

B. Status of Funds in the Breaux Act Planning and Construction Programs

Mr. Tom Podany briefed the Task Force on the status of funds in the Breaux Act planning and construction programs. He requested initiation of the process to deauthorize the Hopper Dredge demonstration project. Dave Frugé asked about the Bayou Lafourche project. Mr. Troy Hill responded that the EPA would complete their analysis in about six months.

Motion by Mr. Dave Frugé: To begin deauthorization of the Hopper Dredge demonstration project.

Second to motion: Dr. Len Bahr

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Discussion of Cash Flow Management Tracking Measures

Mr. Tom Podany discussed the procedure developed by the Corps of Engineers to track Breaux Act expenditures under a cash flow management system. Messrs. Jack Caldwell, Randy Hanchey, and James Burgess made suggestions for minor modifications of the tracking report. Dr. Len Bahr requested that summary information be provided in the form of easy to read graphs.

D. Status of 10th Priority Project List

Mr. Gary Rauber reported on the status of the 10th PPL project selection process. Regional strategies were prioritized by the Regional Planning Teams. The Technical Committee selected the high priority strategies from which the basin subcommittees nominated projects for each basin. Project fact sheets were prepared by the Breaux Act agencies. Dr. Denise Reed asked about the overlap among the Barrier Island feasibility study, the 2050 feasibility study, the Barrier Island complex project, and barrier island projects nominated for PPL 10. A general discussion followed. Colonel Julich directed his staff to prepare a guiding document to coordinate the efforts. Mr. Oneil Malbrough commented that he thought the public understood the different efforts, specifically that the PPL projects could address smaller immediate needs. Mr. Mark Davis welcomed the idea of a guiding document. Dr. Len Bahr asked Colonel Julich to include other Corps projects in the document.

E. Status Report on Improvements to Demonstration Project Process

The Technical Committee reviewed the demonstration nomination and selection process to consider improvements. Colonel Julich had specifically directed that the discussions include a "willingness to consider funding other demonstration projects later" during this review. The Technical Committee directed the engineering work group to revise the demonstration nomination and selection process, incorporating ideas that were discussed by the Technical Committee. A revised Demonstration Project SOP will be developed prior to the next Task Force meeting on July, 6, 2000.

Mr. Tom Podany briefed the Task Force on the status of the effort to revise the Demonstration Project SOP. He presented some ideas that were being considered. A discussion followed with several Task Force members and Mr. Randy Hanchey, Mr. Mark Davis, and Ms. Beverly Ethridge making suggestions.

F. Public Outreach Committee Report

Mr. Jay Gamble, Outreach Coordinator, presented a short activity report to the Task Force regarding outreach activities. He credited Mr. Rodney Guilbeaux with showing him around and getting him on television and in a newspaper. Mr. Scott Wilson, Outreach Committee Chairman, stated that there were 1000 requests for the outreach CD in March. A discussion followed with general agreement among the Task Force members of the need to reach Congressional staffers and industry types. Environmental groups were suggested targets, also. Mr. Don Gohmert stated the need to get Dr. Day's information out, stressing the value of wetlands in improving water quality by utilizing excess nutrients in the river.

G. Presentation of vegetation and Aerial Photography CD ROMS

Mr. Jimmy Johnson introduced Mr. Greg Linscomb to present the CD-ROM. Dr. Len Bahr stated the need for elevations and Mr. James Burgess would like to see

Breaux Act projects presented. Training sessions will be required to make full use of the CD.

H. Delivery of Status Reports

Mr. Tom Podany reported the status of the following initiatives:

- a. Program Performance and Project Implementation
- b. Reports to Congress (on Conservation Plan and Restoration Plan)
- c. Feasibility Studies Steering Committee
- d. Atchafalaya Liaison Group

Mr. Mark Davis wanted to know the status of MRSNFR. Mr. Podany replied that it should be ready in a month. Mr. Randy Hanchey questioned the complex project process. This started a brief discussion of the issue.

VI. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

A. Mr. James Burgess wants a monitoring report at the next Task Force meeting. Dr. Bill Good agreed to provide a 15 minute briefing.

B. Dr. Bill Good informed the Task Force that the Technical Committee would develop a format for project completion reports. Mr. Rick Hartman stated the need for completion reports to be distributed to the agencies and available to the public.

VII. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Rodney Guilbeaux commended the Task Force and its committees for their efforts.

VIII. DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING

The next Task Force meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on July 6, 2000, at the District Assembly Room (A, B, & C) in New Orleans, Louisiana. Final details will be provided via public notice and the CWPPRA Internet Web Page.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The Task Force Meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m. in the afternoon.