

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

**TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**8 February 2006**

**Minutes**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Colonel Richard Wagenaar convened the 61<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 9:40 a.m. on February 8, 2006 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, Division Assembly Room, 7400 Leake Avenue, 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:

Mr. Gerry Duszynski, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR), substituting for Ms. Sidney Coffee, State of Louisiana, Governor's Office of Coastal Activities  
Mr. Donald Gohmert, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Mr. Sam Hamilton, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Mr. William Honker, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)  
Colonel Richard P. Wagenaar, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)  
Dr. Erik Zobrist, National Marines Fisheries Service (NMFS)

**III. OPENING REMARKS**

Colonel Richard Wagenaar welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that things are settling down after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the Task Force has better knowledge of the effects of these storms on the coast. Colonel Wagenaar thanked the Technical Committee members for the work they continue to do for the Task Force.

**IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 2005 TASK FORCE MEETING**

Colonel Richard Wagenaar called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the November 2, 2005 Task Force Meeting.

*Mr. Bill Honker moved to adopt the minutes and Mr. Donald Gohmert seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

## **V. TASK FORCE DECISIONS**

### **A. Discussion/Decision: 2006 Report to Congress – FY06 Planning Budget Addendum (Agenda Item #4)**

Mr. Tom Podany stated that the 2006 Planning Budget approved at the November Task Force meeting did not include a cost to complete the 2006 Report to Congress. Section 303(b) of the Act requires that the Task Force provide a Report to Congress, including a scientific evaluation of projects under the Act, every three years. The Technical Committee recommended amending the FY06 Planning Budget to include an additional \$98,250 for the 2006 Report to Congress. Mr. Sam Hamilton asked when the report was “due” to Congress. Mr. Podany stated that the goal is the end of the fiscal year, however, it’s usually completed by the end of the calendar year.

*Mr. Donald Gohmert made a motion to accept the Technical Committee’s recommendation to approve an additional \$98,250 under the FY06 Planning Budget for the 2006 Report to Congress. Mr. Sam Hamilton seconded and the motion was passed by the Task Force.*

### **B. Discussion/Decision: Request for Additional Phase I Funds for the South Lake DeCade Project (TE-39) (Agenda Item #5)**

Mr. Tom Podany presented the Technical Committee’s recommendation to approve additional Phase I funding for the South Lake DeCade TE-39 project in the amount of \$175,000. NRCS and LDNR requested the increase in the Phase I budget due to higher than expected design and project management costs.

*Mr. Sam Hamilton made a motion to accept the Technical Committee’s recommendation to approve the funding increase to the Phase I budget for the South Lake DeCade Project (TE-39) for \$175,000 and Dr. Erik Zobrist seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

### **C. Discussion/Decision: Request for Construction Approval and Phase II Authorization for Projects on all PPL’s (Agenda Item #6)**

Colonel Wagenaar stated that Mr. Chris Monnerjahn would make project presentations in the interest of time. Mr. Chris Monnerjahn presented the fourteen projects requesting construction approval and Phase II authorization.

1. Barataria Basin Landbridge Shoreline Protection, Phase 3 – Construction Unit 7 Project (BA-27c(3)). This project, located in Lafourche Parish, would reduce shoreline erosion with the construction of 22,800 linear feet of shoreline protection. The project would create 180 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 45.55. The fully funded cost is \$19.4 million.

2. Castille Pass Channel Sediment Delivery Project (AT-04). This project would hydraulically dredge 2.1 million cubic yards of material from Castille, East, and Natal Passes to create marsh

and open channels. The project would create 577 net acres over the 20-year project life and the prioritization score of this project is 64.5. The fully funded cost is \$19.6 million.

3. Dedicated Dredging on the Barataria Basin Landbridge Project (BA-36). This project, located in Jefferson Parish, would hydraulically dredge material to recreate wetlands. The project would create 605 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 61. The fully funded cost is \$31.6 million.

4. East Grand Terre Restoration Project (BA-30). Located in the Barataria Basin, this project would restore the beach and dune to prevent breaching and restore the barrier island habitat by constructing a 2.8-mile shoreline protection and 450 acres of marsh platform. The project would create 335 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 60. The fully funded cost is \$31.2 million.

5. Freshwater Bayou Bank Stabilization – Belle Isle to Lock Project (TV-11b). This project would create a 40,000 linear foot rock dike to stop shoreline erosion. This project would create 241 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 42.5. The fully funded cost is \$17.7 million.

6. GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas in Terrebonne Project (TE-43). This project would create a 41,000 linear foot rock dike to protect the southern bank of the GIWW and fragile floating marshes. This project would create 366 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 40.25. The fully funded cost is \$29.9 million.

7. Grand Lake Shoreline Protection Project (ME-21). This project would create a 43,500 linear foot rock dike to reduce shoreline erosion. This project would create 540 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 66.25. The fully funded cost is \$17.2 million.

8. Lake Borgne and MRGO Shoreline Protection Project (PO-32). This project would create 33,180 linear feet of rock dikes (18,820 linear feet along Lake Borgne segment, 14,360 linear feet along the MRGO segment) to stop erosion along the southern shoreline of Lake Borgne and northern shoreline of the MRGO. The project would create 266 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a fully funded cost of \$39.1 million. The prioritization score is 43.05. This project's features are also broken into two separate pieces, as requested by the Task Force at the time the project was approved for Phase I funding.

9. Lake Borgne Shoreline Protection Project (PO-30). This project would construct 28,000 linear feet of rock dikes and steel sheet pile to protect and re-establish a lake rim to prevent shoreline erosion. This project would create 165 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a fully funded cost of \$18.7 million. The prioritization score is 41.5.

10. Pass Chaland to Grand Bayou Pass Project (BA-35). This project would create a beach and dune feature to prevent breaching and maintain shoreline integrity. Barrier island habitats would be created by restoring 2.6 miles of dune and beach berms as well as a 371 acre marsh platform. The project would create 262 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 49.7. The fully funded cost is \$30.2 million.

11. Rockefeller Refuge Gulf Shoreline Stabilization Test Sections (ME-18). This project would construct and monitor four test sections of different shoreline protections to determine the constructability and performance of each in order to select the best alternative for the 9.2 miles of shoreline to be protected. The fully funded cost is \$10 million.

12. Ship Shoal: Whiskey Island West Flank Restoration Project (TE-47). This project would mine sand from Ship Shoal for coastal restoration on the west side of West Flank and includes beach and marsh platforms. The project would benefit 195 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 60. The fully funded cost is \$42.9 million.

13. South Lake DeCade Freshwater Introduction Project (TE-39). Located in Terrebonne Parish, this project would create an 8,700 linear foot rock revetment along the south embankment of Lake DeCade. The project would benefit 202 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 74.95. The fully funded cost is \$3.6 million.

14. West Lake Boudreaux Shoreline Protection and Marsh Creation Project (TE-46). The project includes hydraulically dredging material to create marsh cells and reduce erosion along 13,000 linear feet of shoreline. The project would create 277 net acres over the 20-year project life and has a prioritization score of 51.4. The fully funded cost is \$17.5 million.

The Technical Committee is recommending approval of Phase II Increment 1 costs in the total amount of \$58,181,491 for the following three projects: Lake Borgne Shoreline Protection (PO-30), Pass Chalant to Grand Bayou Pass (BA-35), and West Lake Boudreaux (TE-46).

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the Task Force:

*Ship Shoal: Whiskey Island West Flank Restoration (TE-47)*

Mr. Bill Honker noted that although the Ship Shoal: Whiskey Island West Flank Project did not make the Technical Committee's recommendation, it includes a 10-mile sediment pipeline, which is an important part to future coastal restoration in the state. Mr. Honker hopes to fund this or a similar project in the future.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to public comments:

*Lake Borgne and MRGO Shoreline Protection (PO-32)*

Mr. Addison Ellis, a citizen, asked if any part of the Lake Borgne and MRGO Shoreline Protection Project would interfere with "closing" the MRGO, which is a goal for many citizens in Louisiana. Colonel Wagenaar noted that the MRGO is a Federally authorized project. Since Hurricane Katrina and Rita, no dredging has occurred on the MRGO, there is no near-term plan of dredging, and Congress has zeroed the budget out. This does not mean the project is no longer authorized. The project must be de-authorized to end the life of the project. There is a technical report due to Congress on a comprehensive flood control, hurricane protection, and coastal restoration plan. The MRGO is one of the areas being looked at in this report. There is no guarantee in the future that the MRGO will be closed. This CWPPRA project will protect a shoreline inside the channel. Mr. Sam Hamilton added that there is no decision yet on the MRGO and the marsh continues to erode because of wind and storm driven events. Closing and

filling in the MRGO would take several years and it would be a mistake to sit by and let the erosion continue. Mr. Gerry Duszynski added that emergency situations should be looked at, especially keeping Lake Borgne out of the MRGO. Colonel Wagenaar asked Mr. Ellis if the Task Force answered his questions. Mr. Ellis replied: not really. He further suggested using the \$100M cost of the CWPPRA projects to construct a large dam where the MRGO enters the Industrial Canal to reduce water from spilling into habited areas to the west, which is more important than keeping Lake Borgne out of the MRGO.

*Lake Borgne Shoreline Protection (PO-30)*

Ms. Kathy Haggart, working with the FEMA Emergency Support Function (ESF) 14 Task Force in St. Bernard Parish, noted that this project is one of the projects considered for their final report. While she is very pleased with the projects, especially to help plug the gap between Lake Borgne and the MRGO, she asked the Task Force to consider additional armoring for the gap between Lake Borgne and the MRGO. Colonel Wagenaar asked the Technical Committee to look into this issue before the next meeting.

Dr. John Lopez, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, supports the recommendations of the Technical Committee, in particular because of the Lake Borgne Shoreline Protection project.

*Ship Shoal: Whiskey West Flank Restoration (TE-47)*

Mr. Al Levron, Terrebonne Parish Public Works Director, appreciated Mr. Honker's comments on the 10-mile sediment pipeline. Terrebonne Parish has been a long supporter of pipeline sediment transport. The barrier islands are Terrebonne Parish's first line of defense. Terrebonne supports this project.

*West Lake Boudreaux Shoreline Protection and Marsh Creation (TE-46)*

Mr. Al Levron, Terrebonne Parish Public Works Director, noted that the parish does not have a hurricane protection system in place and is still awaiting authorization of the Morganza to the Gulf Project. Barrier islands are the first line of defense to protect communities; the second is the shoreline. There needs to be a buffer between the levee and open water. There has to be synergies between hurricane protection and coastal protection. Terrebonne Parish hasn't seen anything from the \$29 billion that Congress appropriated for post-hurricane relief.

*Pass Chalant to Grand Bayou Pass (BA-35)*

Mr. Andrew MacInnes, Coastal Zone Administrator for Plaquemines Parish, stressed the importance of funding the Pass Chalant to Grand Bayou Pass Project. There are already several breaches in this area. The marsh to the north of the project area will not be able to withstand the daily pounding of the Gulf surf. Mr. MacInnes would like to see this project funded.

*Mr. Sam Hamilton made a motion to accept the Technical Committee's recommendation to approve Phase II Increment 1 funding for the following projects: Lake Borgne Shoreline Protection Project (PO-30) in the amount of \$16,622,590, Pass Chalant to Grand Bayou Pass Project (BA-35) in the amount of \$26,904,301, and West Lake Boudreaux Shoreline Protection and Marsh Creation Project (TE-46) in the amount of \$14,654,600. Mr. Bill Honker and Mr. Donald Gohmert seconded and the motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **D. Discussion/Decision: Selection of the 15<sup>th</sup> Priority Project List (Agenda Item #7)**

Mr. Tom Podany stated that the Technical Committee looked at 11 nominees and then 6 candidates under PPL15 and is recommending four projects for Phase I funding. He asked if the Task Force would like to hear a short briefing on the candidate projects before taking action on the Technical Committee's recommendation. Mr. Chris Monnerjahn reviewed the selection process for PPL 15.

Mr. Chris Monnerjahn presented the six candidate projects under PPL 15.

1. Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion Project. This project, located in Plaquemines Parish, involves the removal of gates from existing structures and creating gaps in the banks to allow water to enter shallow open water areas. The project would benefit 620 acres after the 20-year project life and has a fully funded cost estimate of \$5.3 million.
2. Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation Project. Located in Plaquemines Parish, this project would hydraulically dredge material from the Mississippi River to create and nourish 593 acres of marsh and construct 25,000 linear feet of earthen terraces and a 6,000 linear foot rock dike. The project would create 438 net acres after the 20-year project life and the fully funded cost estimate is \$32.6 million.
3. Venice Ponds Marsh Creation and Crevasses Project. This project, located in Plaquemines Parish, includes the hydraulic dredging of material from Grand and Tiger Passes to create 178 acres of marsh. Four new crevasses would also be constructed. This project would create 511 net acres after the 20-year project life and has a fully funded cost estimate of \$8.9 million.
4. South Terrebonne Terracing Project. This project, located in Terrebonne Parish, involves the construction of 113,340 linear feet of terraces. The project would create 80 net acres after the 20-year project life and has a fully funded cost estimate of \$7.4 million.
5. Bird Island/Southwest Pass Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection Project. This project, located in Iberia and Vermilion Parishes, involves the construction of 13,400 linear feet of rock shoreline protection, creation and nourishment of marsh on Tojan Island using hydraulically dredged material, and creation of a new island for bird habitat. The project would create 133 net acres after the 20-year project life and has a fully funded cost estimate of \$17.8 million.
6. South Pecan Island Freshwater Introduction Project. This project, located in Vermilion Parish, involves the construction of four 48-inch diameter pipes under Highway 82 and the improvement/excavation of a 7,000 linear foot conveyance channel to allow waters from South White Lake to enter the area. This project would create 98 net acres after the 20-year project life and has a fully funded cost estimate of \$4.4 million.

Demonstration Projects. Demonstration projects apply new and unique technology that has not been fully developed and could be transferred across the coast. There are thirteen candidate demonstration projects under PPL15.

The Technical Committee recommended approving Phase I funding in the total amount of \$4,579,509 for the following four candidate projects: Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation Project, Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion Project, Venice Ponds Marsh Creation and Crevasses Project, and South Pecan Island Freshwater Introduction Project. The Technical Committee recommended that no demonstration projects be funded at this time.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the Task Force:

*Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion*

Mr. Gerry Duszynski asked if operation and maintenance for this project will be considered during the design phase. Mr. Chris Monnerjahn noted that there is a budget to ensure the sediment is reaching the benefit area and not silting up the conveyance channel, replacement of bulkheads in front of the structures, and annual structure inspections. Mr. Duszynski requested that maintenance issues be looked at in the design phase.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to public comments:

*Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion*

Ms. Kathy Haggar supports this project as it is beneficial to both Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes.

Dr. John Lopez, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, supports the Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion Project and the Technical Committee's recommendation.

Mr. Andrew MacInnes, Plaquemines Parish, supports the recommendation of the Technical Committee. The Bayou Lamoque project is a low cost project to rehabilitate an existing structure. Plaquemines Parish supports the project.

*Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation*

Mr. Andrew MacInnes noted that the important feature of this project is that it utilizes sediment delivery from the Mississippi River, as supported by the USEPA. Plaquemines Parish supports the project.

*Venice Ponds Marsh Creation and Crevasses*

Mr. Andrew MacInnes noted that this project has had the benefit of new ideas to create a stronger project. Plaquemines Parish supports the project.

*South Terrebonne Terracing*

Mr. Al Levron, Terrebonne Parish, noted that the parish probably experiences one-third of the land loss for the entire State of Louisiana. Although this project did not make the Technical Committee's recommendation, this project is being morphed into a better project based on the advice of the agencies. This project is being developed under PPL 16 and Terrebonne Parish would appreciate the Task Force support.

### *South Pecan Island Freshwater Introduction*

Mr. Randy Moertle, representing M.O. Miller Estates, believes this is a very important project for Region 4 because there is no riverine input in the area. This project will provide a good nutrient input to help the submerged aquatic vegetation. Mr. Moertle noted that there would still be money left in the program if this project were funded for Phase I as part of PPL15.

Ms. Vicki Duffour, Jefferson Parish, supports the Technical Committee's recommendation because it includes projects that utilize dredging of sediment from the river.

### *Demonstration Projects*

Dr. Jenneke Visser, LSU, noted that the Task Force has not funded demonstration projects in recent years. Demonstration projects are a small investment for new ideas. Dr. Visser believes there needs to be more tools for restoration. The CWPPRA program encourages people to come up with new ideas but does not fund them, which is a dangerous precedent.

Dr. John Foret, speaking as a public citizen, added that hard work goes into developing new and innovative ideas for demonstration projects. Dr. Foret proposed the consideration of annually setting aside money for demonstration projects. He asked that \$1 million be considered for these projects. Dr. Foret believes that having the public develop innovations and then not funding these projects is a dangerous practice.

*Mr. Bill Honker made a motion to accept the Technical Committee's recommendation for Phase I approval for the following projects under PPL15: Lake Hermitage Marsh Creation Project in the amount of \$1,197,590, Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion Project in the amount of \$1,205,354, Venice Ponds Marsh Creation and Crevasses Project in the amount of \$1,074,522, and South Pecan Island Freshwater Introduction Project in the amount of \$1,102,043. Dr. Erik Zobrist seconded and the motion was passed by the Task Force.*

### **E. Discussion/Decision: Priority Project List 16 Process (Agenda Item #8)**

Mr. Tom Podany stated that the PPL 16 process began in January 2006 with the identification of twenty nominees by the Regional Planning Teams (RPTs). The currently approved PPL16 process calls for the Technical Committee to select six candidates on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006. There has been some discussion that whittling the list from twenty nominees to six candidates this early in the process may be a bit too fast. The Technical Committee would like the Task Force to discuss selecting more candidate projects (maybe ten) to allow for a bigger pool from which to select projects for Phase I funding.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the Task Force:

Mr. Gerry Duszynski noted that cutting projects early in the process before engineering work can be done could mean a very limited selection when nominees are reduced to six projects. Having more candidates would allow for a broader and richer selection.

Mr. Donald Gohmert believes the recommendation is a good idea and it speaks well for the Technical Committee. This will ensure that the Task Force has the very best selection of



projects. While more candidate projects would mean more work, it would be worth the extra effort to have a larger, diverse list from which to select.

Dr. Erik Zobrist agreed that selecting from six projects is restricting. We need to spend more time fleshing out the details of these concepts. Increasing the number should not create a significant burden; if it does, additional funding could be provided.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to public comments:

Dr. John Lopez, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, supports the Technical Committee's recommendation. Dr. Lopez also asked that the Task Force consider increasing the number of Phase I projects selected for PPL16 from a max of four to six projects.

*Colonel Wagenaar recommended increasing the number of PPL16 candidates from six to ten. Mr. Donald Gohmert made a motion to accept the recommendation to increase the number of candidate projects under PPL16 from six to ten. Mr. Bill Honker seconded and the motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **F. Discussion/Decision: Status of CWPPRA Programmatic Assessment (Agenda Item #9)**

During the first meeting as CWPPRA Chairman, Colonel Wagenaar was updated on the need and why his predecessor asked for a programmatic assessment. The Colonel stated that it is critically important for us to understand where we are and where we need to go as a Task Force. The Task Force was challenged by a requirement to educate the public, the Administration, and Congress about CWPPRA. Colonel Wagenaar believes these are two separate elements. There is a need for a programmatic assessment to highlight the areas that have been and have not been successful and the lessons learned in the program. There is also a need to educate the public and continually educate the Administration and Congress. He reiterated that these are two separate tasks.

Mr. Sam Hamilton believes it is a real responsibility to educate and remind people of the value and success of the program. The process has been started with the programmatic assessment. A unique strength of CWPPRA is that it can quickly put projects on the ground. Mr. Hamilton believes that highlighting the successes of the program is a good governmental duty.

Mr. Bill Honker agreed with the Colonel in that there are two documents needed. He believes that the educational document is in good shape and could be used as a handout. There is value in a programmatic assessment to determine what works well and what does not.

Mr. Donald Gohmert believes that the programmatic assessment needs to be completed. CWPPRA has been one of the best outdoor laboratory programs available and has learned what it takes to get projects on the ground. There is a need to illustrate to the popular reader that CWPPRA is a critical element in a comprehensive approach to restoration that includes storm and hurricane protection. There is no time to wait for additional resources without losing the coast that is trying to be saved. If that means we need 2 reports, he was okay with it.

Dr. Erik Zobrist noted that the document has evolved over time but there needs to be a distinct direction. The CWPPRA program should be described with an offensive and positive tone where the best assets are the accomplishments. Every agency and parish has a lot to be proud of in this program. This is a continuing story that is not going to end anytime soon.

Mr. Gerry Duszynski added that the assessment needs to be finished; otherwise it could continue indefinitely. A separate assessment can be completed later if needed.

Colonel Wagenaar noted that one of the challenges faced by this document relates to Federal agencies “informing” Congress versus “soliciting” Congress. Then there’s the programmatic assessment and the Report to Congress to complete. Colonel Wagenaar asked for recommendations from the Task Force regarding the educational document and the programmatic assessment.

Mr. Donald Gohmert agreed that there is a concern about the impression of lobbying Congress. Everyone knows about the conditions of the coastal wetlands of Louisiana. Mr. Gohmert would yield the decisions to the editors and advisors regarding lobbying in the educational document. Mr. Bill Honker would like to see the educational document move forward and be finalized.

Colonel Wagenaar presented two recommendations; the first is that the Task Force make a decision on a true programmatic assessment at the next Task Force meeting. The second recommendation is to finalize the educational document, approve it, and have a final copy ready for the next Task Force meeting.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to public comments:

Mr. Glen Jacoby, citizen of Louisiana, stated that he recalled when the Task Force first discussed this. At that time it was such a dire need that completion of the document may have meant putting PPL16 on hold. This document is still needed and it is still a dire need.

*Mr. Donald Gohmert made a motion to accept Colonel Wagenaar’s recommendation to: (1) make a decision on the programmatic assessment at the next meeting and (2) finalize the education document, approve it virtually, and have it ready for the next Task Force meeting. Mr. Bill Honker seconded and the motion was passed by the Task Force.*

## **VI. INFORMATION**

### **A. Report: Status of Breaux Act Program Funds and Projects (Agenda Item #3)**

Mr. Chris Monnerjahn provided an overview of the current funding situation, the projected funding situation, and a summary of today’s funding requests. Mr. Chris Monnerjahn stated that from FY92 to FY06 the construction program has received a total of \$643 million in Federal funds. Obligations to date total \$522 million and total expenditures are \$272 million.

There are 134 active projects: 67 complete, 16 under construction, and 51 have not started yet. Twenty projects are scheduled to begin construction in FY06 (8 have Phase II approval and 12 require Phase II approval). Two of the approved projects have already started construction. The unencumbered balance as of 18 January 2006 was negative \$4.5 million. If all requests are approved, in addition to receiving the anticipated FY06 federal funding, the unencumbered balance (Federal) will be \$81,000 after this Task Force Meeting.

The total cumulative funds received for the CWPPRA program (Federal and non-Federal) through FY06 is \$775.7 million. As of today, there is \$712.69 million set aside for projects and \$63 million is unencumbered. As of today, there is \$173.9 million in unobligated funds. The total program funding through FY20 is estimated to be \$2.4 billion (Federal and non-Federal) while the total cost for all projects on PPLs 1–14, including Planning, is \$1.82 billion. The funding projection has been updated because of a change in the formula used (from 18% to 18.5%) to calculate the percentage of funds provided to CWPPRA. In August 2005, Congress enacted the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFE TEA LU) which merged two accounts in the Aquatic Restoration Trust Fund and renamed it the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Trust Fund. Although the program was extended through 2019, the excise tax on fishing and small engine fuel was only extended through 2011.

Fourteen projects are requesting Phase II funding at a total Increment 1 (construction plus 3 years OM&M) cost of \$257.4 million. The Technical Committee is recommending funding 3 projects with an Increment 1 cost of \$58.2M. Four projects are recommended for Phase I funding at a total cost of \$4.6 million. Funding requests for this meeting total \$62.8 million for three projects recommended for Phase II funding and four projects recommended for Phase I funding.

#### **B. Report: Construction of New Cut Dune and Marsh Creation Project (TE-37) and the Delta Management at Fort St. Phillip Project (BS-10) (Agenda Item #10)**

Mr. Chris Williams, LDNR project manager for the New Cut Dune Project, announced that the project is now ready for advertisement. The reason for the delay in advertisement was to address hurricane damage inflicted on the island. A breach in the island will be closed using additional funds in the budget. Construction is anticipated to occur in the summer of 2006.

Colonel Wagenaar noted that this project was placed on the agenda because of the delays. He asked when the contract would be advertised. Mr. Chris Williams responded late March or early April. Colonel Wagenaar asked that the Task Force be notified of the status of the advertisement for this project by the end of March.

Mr. Kevin Roy, FWS, announced that the Delta Management at Fort St. Phillip Project was advertised for bids on January 30<sup>th</sup> and pre-bid meetings and site visits have taken place with six contractors. Bid opening is scheduled for February 21<sup>st</sup>. A contract should be awarded 30-60 days after opening bids.

### **C. Report: Mississippi River Reintroduction into Bayou Lafourche (BA-25b) (Agenda Item #11)**

Mr. Bob Roberts, DNR, announced that the project is approaching the 30% design milestone. In April, Mr. Roberts anticipates returning to the Task Force to seek funding beyond 30% design. The Task Force will need to provide approval in order to move beyond the 30% design. This project was approved to the 30% design with stipulations that the State pay 50% of the Phase I costs, the allocation of Phase I funds does not commit CWPPRA to Phase II funding, and construction cost share will be proportional to the project benefits. The 30% design review meeting is scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup>, one week before the Task Force meeting. They plan to ask the Engineering and Environmental Workgroups to participate in the review along with the Technical Committee. They plan to ask for Task Force approval on April 12<sup>th</sup>, including a Phase I funding adjustment to allow continuation beyond 30% design.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the Task Force:

Mr. Sam Hamilton asked if this was one of the projects identified in the LCA. Mr. Gerry Duszynski replied that it is one of the five priority projects in the LCA report. Mr. Duszynski asked if money had already been set aside for efforts beyond the 30% design. Mr. Roberts noted that more money will be needed to proceed beyond 30%.

### **D. Report: Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (Agenda Item #12)**

Mr. Gerry Duszynski announced that the State has created a policy committee, Coastal Protection Restoration Authority (CPRA), for levees and coastal restoration that will work with the Corps for the comprehensive plan and act as a point of contact for the State. The intent is to ensure everyone is working together. The CPRA would be over any consolidated levee districts that happen to come out of the new legislative session. This overarching authority will be good because it can provide a definitive point of view to the Federal agencies.

### **E. Report: Coastal Impact Assistance Program (Agenda Item #13)**

Mr. Dave Frugé presented an overview of the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP), which was authorized by Congress in 2005 for an estimated \$540 million over a four-year period beginning in FY07. The State and parishes will receive 65% and 35%, respectively. The Minerals Management Services will be the granting agency. There are five authorized uses for CIAP: conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal areas; planning assistance; administrative costs (23% cap for administrative costs); implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive management plan; and mitigation of impacts to infrastructure and public service needs.

To obtain CIAP funds, the State has to submit a CIAP plan to the Secretary of the Interior for approval. LDNR is the agency authorized to represent the State. The plan must be consistent with the authorized uses, describe an implementation program, consider the availability of other federal programs, and be certified by the Governor that the public will have an opportunity to comment during the planning process.

Mr. Frugé noted that input from the parishes is important for a good CIAP plan. They are already interacting with the parishes and offering assistance. There will also be coordination with other entities including the Task Force and the Governor's Coastal Advisory Commission. An extensive public involvement program will also be required.

The draft guidance will be received in March with final guidance in June. There will be a series of initial informational public meetings next week and a series of public meetings in April for comments on the plan. The plan is expected to be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior in June. Once the plan is submitted, some of the plan features with a high level of assurance will be implemented using State trust fund money that will be reimbursed with the Federal allocation.

The two goals for this plan are conservation and restoration projects and infrastructure projects. Mr. Frugé would like to use this funding source to advance coastal restoration strategies, reduce storm surge impacts, and implement and support infrastructure projects that mitigate onshore impacts. After the four-year plan is developed, Mr. Frugé envisions an annual opportunity to update and modify the plan. The strategy for these funds is as a match for selected LCA near-term projects, build CWPPRA projects awaiting construction funding, and cost sharing beneficial projects. Projects will be selected based on ranking criteria that includes implementability, infrastructure benefits, cost effectiveness, and addressing areas of critical need.

Mr. Sam Hamilton asked if this plan would only address the State's 65% of the funding. Mr. Frugé replied that the plan would include the proposals from the parishes for a comprehensive plan. Colonel Wagenaar asked who the deciding authority will be at the parish level for the execution of their 35% of the funding. Mr. Gerry Duszynski noted that they are working hard to ensure the parishes understand the goals and it is up to the parishes to select a point of contact. Dr. Erik Zobrist asked if the CIAP funds can be used as State funds to meet cost shares. Mr. Frugé noted that the President said they could be used for that purpose, but nothing has been placed in writing. It has been requested that the new guidelines address this issue.

#### **F. Report: Public Outreach Committee Quarterly Report (Agenda Item #14)**

Ms. Gabrielle Bodin, Outreach Coordinator for CWPPRA, announced that Congressman Wayne Gilchrest visited Lafayette in October and was briefed on the environmental impacts of the hurricanes, the coastal restoration efforts prior to those events, and Louisiana land loss. In December, CWPPRA will be hosting the Restore America's Estuaries conference. The deadline for proposed panel sessions and individual presentations are approaching. Also, the Marsh Mission exhibit will be ending at the LSU Museum of Art on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

The sediment transport issue of Watermarks is extremely popular and will need to be reprinted. The current Watermarks issue is on hurricanes and the resilience of CWPPRA projects. The next issue will be on the importance of wetlands to sportsmen and Louisiana's economy. The Public Outreach Office has worked with several media outlets including a Swedish publication called the Scientist, NOVA online, the Chicago Tribune, Popular Science, and CNN. Two books, Marsh Mission and the America's Wetland, also feature pictures of

CWPPRA projects. Ms. Bodin also informed the Task Force that a dedication ceremony that was planned in Grand Isle for November may be rescheduled for Earth Day in April.

Dr. Erik Zobrist liked the idea of moving the dedication to Earth Day. Why wait a long time to have the groundbreaking for projects that are being built in spite of all the devastation? Earth Day is a perfect opportunity to celebrate; it will be spring and there will be signs of rejuvenation. Earth Day also receives a great deal of attention from high-ranking administration officials. Dr. Zobrist encouraged Ms. Bodin to pursue this opportunity and is willing to help.

## **VII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

Colonel Wagenaar reviewed the action items for the Technical Committee. For the next Task Force meeting, the Technical Committee will discuss and possibly make a recommendation for setting aside funding for demonstration projects. The Technical Committee will also reconsider the number of projects selected for Phase I funding and provide an briefing on the issue. Dr. Erik Zobrist suggested that the Technical Committee come to the next meeting with a possible decision on this item. Mr. Bill Honker supports Technical Committee evaluation of the demonstration project issue.

Mr. Bill Honker added that Ms. Haggar is working on the long-term recovery planning aspect of the FEMA response system. Parishes are developing plans, due at the end of February, listing recovery and mitigation needs. Mr. Honker encourages the parishes to include coastal restoration needs and projects.

## **VIII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Jimmy Johnston, USGS, announced that updated land change analysis posters are available for download from the CWPPRA website. The 5<sup>th</sup> annual crawfish boil will also take place on the evening before the April 12<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting in Lafayette.

## **IX. CLOSING**

### **A. Dates and Locations of Upcoming CWPPRA Meetings**

Colonel Wagenaar announced that the next Task Force meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. in Lafayette.

### **B. Adjournment**

Colonel Wagenaar adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.