

BREAUX ACT
Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

TASK FORCE MEETING
27 June 2007

Minutes

I. INTRODUCTION

Colonel Richard Wagenaar convened the 66th meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 9:40 a.m. on June 27, 2007 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, District 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:

Ms. Sidney Coffee, State of Louisiana, Governor's Office of Coastal Activities (GOCA)
[Mr. Gerry Duszynski served as the State's representative on from agenda item #11 till the end of the meeting]
Mr. Dan Farrow, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Mr. Sam Hamilton, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Ms. Sharon Parrish, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), substituting for Mr. Bill Honker, USEPA
Mr. Britt Paul, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), substituting for Mr. Donald Gohmert, NRCS
Colonel Richard Wagenaar, Chairman, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)

III. OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Coffee welcomed Mr. Farrow to the Task Force and wished farewell to Colonel Wagenaar, as this would be Colonel Wagenaar's last meeting as a member of the Task Force.

Mr. Hamilton, on behalf of the Task Force, presented Colonel Wagenaar with a certificate of commendation for exemplary service from July 2005 to July 2007, in the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act Program, as Chairman of the Task Force representing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. On behalf of USFWS, Mr. Hamilton also presented Colonel Wagenaar with the USFWS Regional Director's Stewardship award in recognition of the Colonel's lifetime commitment to conservation and natural resources.

On behalf of NMFS, Mr. Farrow presented Colonel Wagenaar with the NOAA Restoration Center Excellence in Restoration award to recognize the Colonel's strong leadership in the advancement of projects to the construction phase and contribution to wetlands restoration in Louisiana.

Colonel Wagenaar recognized his staff and committee members for their work behind the scenes that lay the groundwork for successful Task Force meetings. The Colonel said that CWPPRA is the only coastal restoration show in town that has an expedient timeline with regard to construction and coastal restoration. He added that public input is an important part of the CWPPRA process and recognized the Outreach Program for its major efforts to educate Congress and other members of the administration on what the program is all about. CWPPRA is the epitome of teamwork and shows what can be accomplished when multiple Federal agencies and the State of Louisiana work together. Colonel Wagenaar hoped that the Task Force would continue to do great things into the future.

IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 2007 TASK FORCE MEETING

Colonel Wagenaar called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the February 15, 2007 Task Force Meeting.

Mr. Hamilton moved to adopt the minutes and Mr. Paul seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

V. TASK FORCE DECISIONS

A. Decision: Additional Phase II Increment I Funding for the PPL 10 North Lake Mechant Landbridge Restoration Project (TE-44) (Agenda Item #5)

Mr. Troy Constance, Acting Technical Committee Chair, presented the Technical Committee's recommendation to the Task Force for approval of an increase in Phase II, Increment I funding for the North Lake Mechant Landbridge Restoration Project, Construction Unit 2, in the amount of \$8,026,512. This cost increase is due to increased construction costs associated with the 2005 hurricanes. The Task Force previously approved Phase II, Increment I funding for this project construction unit in the amount of \$27,400,960 on October 2004. Mr. Constance also noted that when the Task Force granted a one-year extension to award the project construction contract in February 2007, they also requested that a status report be provided at quarterly Task Force meetings until a construction contract is awarded.

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

Mr. Hamilton commented that the North Lake Mechant Landbridge Restoration Project is a good project. Construction costs are continuing to rise on projects that were approved prior to the storms. The costs need to reflect increased construction and material expenses.

Mr. Paul moved to approve the Technical Committee's recommendation for an increase in Phase II Increment I funding for the North Lake Mechant Landbridge Restoration Project

(TE-44) in the amount of \$8,026,512 and Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force. A briefing on the status was not requested nor provided.

B. Decision: Request for Construction Cost Increases for the PPL 11 Pass Chalard to Grand Bayou Pass Barrier Shoreline Restoration Project (BA-35) (Agenda Item #6)

Mr. Constance presented the Technical Committee's recommendation to the Task Force for approval of an increase in Phase II, Increment I funding for the Pass Chalard to Grand Bayou Pass Barrier Shoreline Restoration Project in the amount of \$6,264,885. This cost increase is due to increased construction costs associated with the 2005 hurricanes. The Task Force previously approved Phase II, Increment I funding for this project in the amount of \$26,904,301 on February 8, 2006.

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

Colonel Wagenaar commented that construction costs across the region have escalated following the 2005 storms. He assured the public that there is a process in place to revalidate projects that are subject to construction cost increases.

Mr. Farrow moved to approve the Technical Committee's recommendation for an increase in Phase II, Increment I funding for the Pass Chalard to Grand Bayou Pass Barrier Shoreline Restoration Project in the amount of \$6,264,885 and Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

C. Discussion/Decision: Additional Requests for Phase II, Increment I Funding (Agenda Item #7)

Mr. Constance stated that the Technical Committee was tasked with breaking down the CWPPRA and Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) construction and operations and maintenance (O&M) costs for East Grand Terre Island Restoration (BA-30), GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas in Terrebonne Parish, Segments 1, 2, and 6 (TE-43), Ship Shoal, Whiskey West Flank Restoration (TE-47) and South Lake DeCade, Construction Unit 1 (TE-39). Ms. Melanie Goodman, Corps, was available to brief the Task Force.

Ms. Goodman said that if CWPPRA were to fund the first three years of O&M for the East Grand Terre Island Restoration and GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas Projects, the cost would be \$2.6 million and \$1.6 million, respectively. The Ship Shoal, Whiskey West Flank Restoration and South Lake DeCade Projects are Tier 2 CIAP projects; currently there is no intent to move those projects to construction under CIAP. Therefore, any funding consideration for these later two projects would be for construction and the first three years of O&M, in the amounts of \$49 million for Ship Shoal and \$2.2 million for South Lake DeCade.

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

Mr. Hamilton asked for an update on the status of CIAP projects from the State and asked if CWPPRA O&M or CIAP would be automatic or on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Gerry

Duszynski, LDNR, replied that the East Grand Terre and GIWW Bank Restoration Projects will be moving to construction within six months. It will be next year before requests can be made for O&M.

Mr. Paul suggested delaying this decision item since construction has not begun. Funds could be requested at a future meeting. Mr. Hamilton agreed.

The Task Force decided not to make a decision at this time.

D. Decision: Project Transfer Request: Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion (BS-13) (Agenda Item #9)

Mr. Constance said that the State has requested that the Bayou Lamoque Project be transferred from the CWPPRA program to the State's CIAP program since it is a Tier 1 project in that plan. The State is currently designing the project to be executed in under CIAP. The Technical Committee recommends that the Task Force transfer this project to the State CIAP.

Mr. Hamilton moved to transfer the Bayou Lamoque Freshwater Diversion Project (BS-13) to the State's CIAP. Mr. Paul and Ms. Parrish seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

E. Decision: Approval of Priority Project List (PPL) 18 Process (Agenda Item #10)

Mr. Constance stated that the Technical Committee developed a draft planning process for PPL 18 and recommended Task Force approval.

Mr. Paul moved to approve the PPL 18 process as developed by the Technical Committee. Mr. Farrow seconded. The motion was approved by the Task Force.

VI. INFORMATION

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

Ms. Gay Browning, Corps, stated that the Task Force approved \$5.2 million for the FY07 Planning Budget on October 18, 2006. The current Planning Program surplus going into FY08 is \$926,000. To date, \$714 million in Federal funds have been received into the Construction Program with an estimated \$76 million in Federal funds expected in FY08. Total obligations are \$616 million, and total expenditures are \$356 million. There are 143 active projects: 74 have completed construction, 14 are currently under construction, and 55 have not yet started construction. Five projects are scheduled to start construction in FY07; two have started construction (one cash flow and one non-cash flow). As of June 18, 2007, the unencumbered balance in the Construction Program, including Federal and non-Federal cost share, is \$13.8 million. Total funds in the Construction Program, including non-Federal cost share and FY08 funds, are estimated to be \$89 million.

Ms. Julie LeBlanc, Corps, reviewed the funding requests up for consideration. Two fax votes were approved by the Task Force: \$500,000 for an increase in O&M funding for Cameron-Creole Maintenance Project (CS-04a) and \$215,000 for an increase in construction funding for Terrebonne Bay Demonstration Project (TE-45). Two items up for consideration at this meeting include construction cost increases of \$8 million for North Lake Mechant Landbridge Restoration Project (TE-44) and \$6.3 million for Pass Chaland to Grand Bayou Pass Barrier Shoreline Restoration Project (BA-35). The approved fax votes and Technical Committee recommendations for cost increases total \$15 million. There are \$13.8 million in available funding (Federal and non-Federal) prior to the day's Task Force decisions. If all Technical Committee recommendations were to be approved, the remaining available Federal funding in the Construction Program would be negative \$1.2 million.

Ms. LeBlanc stated that the current unobligated balance is \$168.6 million. The obligated balance is \$694 million. Currently, there are \$847 million in funds that are set aside. There are \$14.7 million available, including \$925,000 in the Planning Program and \$13.8 million in the Construction Program. The projected total program funding (Federal and non-Federal) over the life of the program is estimated to be \$2.44 billion. The total cost for all projects on PPLs 1-16, including planning is \$1.95 billion. Approximately \$1.099 billion has already been committed for 20 years of O&M for projects that have been approved for construction. There is enough funding to construct and provide O&M for projects currently under construction.

B. Report: Results of Two Fax Votes by the Task Force (Agenda Item #4)

Ms. Goodman reported that the Task Force approved increases of \$500,000 in O&M funding for Cameron-Creole Maintenance Project (CS-04a) and \$215,000 in construction funding for Terrebonne Bay Demonstration Project (TE-45). Both projects received favorable votes from NMFS, NRCS, USFWS, and USEPA. The State and USACE did not vote.

C. Discussion: Status of Unconstructed Projects (Agenda Item #8)

Ms. LeBlanc presented the Planning and Evaluation (P&E) Subcommittee status report on unconstructed CWPPRA projects that are experiencing project delays. All projects that are potentially delayed were placed on one of five lists: Watch, Watch/Critical, Watch/Critical*, De-authorization, and Large Scale Projects.

1. **Watch List** – There are 15 projects on the Watch list. These projects are not currently experiencing delays but have standard 30 percent and 95 percent milestones to meet.
2. **Watch/Critical List** – There are seven projects on the Watch/Critical list. These projects have critical milestones that must be met to keep the project on track. The total unexpended funds on these projects are \$14.5 million and the total unobligated funds are \$11.2 million.
 - a. Central and Eastern Terrebonne Freshwater Delivery – This is a complex project that is currently in Phase 0. Modeling is the critical milestone and will be completed by September 2007. The Wetland Value Assessment (WVA), and environmental and

economic analyses will be completed by spring 2008. The Phase I funding request would be made in September/October 2008.

- b. Fort Jackson Sediment Diversion – This is a complex project that is currently in Phase 0. The State indicated that they were willing to move forward with this project. The State has reviewed the draft State Master Plan and determined that the project is consistent with the plan. The project team will complete a revised cost estimate and request Phase I funding approval in September/October 2007.
 - c. West Pointe a la Hache Outfall Management (PPL 3) – The sponsors notified the Technical Committee via email of a change in scope from an Outfall Management Project to a modification of the siphon. The intent is to request a formal change in scope at the September 2007 Technical Committee meeting.
 - d. Grand Bayou Hydrologic Restoration (PPL 5) – Hydrologic modeling runs will be completed by October 2007. An interagency meeting will be held, potentially in November 2007, to determine the benefits and costs. Modeling results will be reviewed to ensure that the benefits are still viable. The costs are to be reviewed along with the benefits. The change in scope will be presented to the Technical Committee at the December 2007 meeting. Environmental, engineering, and economic analyses will be completed by spring 2008.
 - e. Benneys Bay Diversion (PPL 10) – This project has been completed to the 95 percent design review level. There is an unresolved issue with the cost of induced shoaling. LDNR is preparing a letter to the Corps requesting a reduction in diversion size. A policy-level decision by the Corps and LDNR is necessary to determine a position on induced shoaling if the project should have to bear the cost.
 - f. Small Freshwater Diversion to the Northwestern Barataria Basin (PPL 10) – There is a mitigation bank in the project area that is currently pending approval. Once the mitigation bank is approved, there will be a meeting with landowners to determine if they support moving forward with the CWPPRA project. Also, the status of other landowners on the project alignment needs to be determined to justify moving forward with Phase I modeling. The project team will not proceed with engineering and design (E&D) until the landowner issues have been resolved.
 - g. Mississippi River Sediment Trap (PPL 12) – This project is a one-time event to build marsh and is cost-effective solely with the mining and marsh creation components. LDNR is preparing a letter to the Corps requesting a reduction in project size. The plan is to report the updated cost estimate and change in scope to the Technical Committee and Task Force by spring 2008.
3. **Watch/Critical* List** – There are three projects on the Watch/Critical* list. The P&E Subcommittee needs more information on these projects before deciding on a recommendation. The total unexpended funds on these projects are \$14.1 million and the total unobligated funds are \$12.3 million.

- a. Brown Lake Hydrologic Restoration (PPL 2) – This project has construction approval. The P&E Subcommittee has requested that the sponsors complete another WVA because it has been 15 years since the last WVA. There is potential uncertainty in benefits, changes in the project area, and new model development. The P&E Subcommittee will take another look at a specific recommendation once the benefits are re-evaluated. The plan is to reaffirm construction approval from the Technical Committee and Task Force in September/October 2007.
 - b. Lake Boudreaux Freshwater Introduction (PPL 6) – LDNR informed the Technical Committee on May 29, 2007 that the parish obtained landrights for the conveyance channel. A new WVA and cost estimate will be completed by the spring 2008 Technical Committee meeting.
 - c. Periodic Introduction of Sediment and Nutrients at Selected Diversion Sites (PPL 9) – This is a demonstration project. The P&E Subcommittee needs more information from the project team. The project management team will complete a feasibility report by mid-November 2007 to determine whether or not to de-authorize this due to the belief that the demonstration project is not cost-effective or innovative.
4. **De-authorization List** – There are six projects on the potential de-authorization list. The P&E Subcommittee recommends by a majority vote that all projects on this list be considered for de-authorization procedures. The total unexpended funds on these projects are \$3.6 million and the total unobligated funds are \$2.2 million.
- a. Opportunistic Use of the Bonnet Carre Spillway (PPL 9) – The project has questionable benefits and does not have support of the local stakeholders for flow into Lake Pontchartrain. There are also inadequate funds for construction to address other alternatives.
 - b. Weeks Bay Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection (PPL 9) – Extensive study of the area conducted under numerous authorities failed to find sufficient environmental benefits to justify the project. As a result of project cost increases, this is no longer a constructible, cost-effective project. It is not believed that the project will achieve original benefits. Also, the project area has poor soil conditions.
 - c. Bayou Lafourche Siphon and Mississippi River Re-introduction into Bayou Lafourche (PPL 5) – The project reached the 30 percent E&D milestone in April 2006. The Task Force did not approve the State and USEPA’s request to continue with project development. The State is committed to developing this project and is continuing design efforts toward completion beyond the project’s current authorization under CWPPRA.
 - d. Myrtle Grove Siphon (PPPL 5) – All funds for this project have been returned and there are no ongoing project activities. De-authorization would be a book-keeping exercise to officially de-authorize the project following the Task Force decision to authorize a larger diversion on PPL 10 at the same location.

- e. LaBranche Wetlands Terracing, Planting, and Shoreline Protection (PPL 9) – All funds for this project have been returned and there are no ongoing activities. The project is being de-authorized because the landowner objected to the project features.

5. **Large Scale Projects** – There are five projects on Large Scale Project list. This list is for informational purposes only.

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

Colonel Wagenaar noted that this task was done because there are more than 50 projects that have not yet gone to construction. This is understandable for more recent projects, but it makes one wonder how important a project really is if it was approved in PPL 1 and has not started construction yet. The Task Force does not want now viable projects sitting on the books and tying up money when the funds could be spent on new projects that have more validity than the older PPL projects.

During the Benney's Bay Diversion Project discussion, Colonel Wagenaar asked how many other induced shoaling costs are currently being paid for by CWPPRA. Ms. LeBlanc replied that the program is paying for a part of shoaling associated with the West Bay Project, which is the only constructed project that has induced shoaling. Mr. Constance added that the difficulty with the induced shoaling issue is determining the actual effect of the diversion versus the annual variations in sediment in the river. Mr. Constance feels that more information is needed from the LCA Science and Technology Team on sediment variability to have a better understanding of the issue. Mr. Constance indicated that until we have a better understanding of all of the issues, the only other option is to scale the restoration projects. Colonel Wagenaar expressed his thought that if a CWPPRA project causes shoaling, it should be dredged to keep the Mississippi River navigable and indicated that if there are not sufficient O&M funds to maintain to keep the river open, then it is an issue between the navigation industry and Congress, not a CWPPRA issue. The Colonel further indicated that the issue and current position would prevent the program from building diversions.

Mr. Constance indicated that the Corps has a position and that they are working with the State to resolve the issues.

In a discussion on the Brown Lake Hydrologia Restoration Project, Mr. Paul stated that the project has been around a long time. It had construction approval at one time and then there were issues associated with the location of one structure, however modeling exercises helped to determine an alternative plan. There were also land ownership and permit transfer changes. This is the final attempt at determining if the project is feasible. Mr. Paul stated that he would like the P&E Subcommittee and the Technical Committee to make a recommendation on whether to construct or deauthorize the project.

In discussing the Periodic Introduction of Sediment and Nutrients at Selected Diversion Sites Demonstration Project, Colonel Wagenaar asked how much it would cost to complete the

feasibility report. Ms. Joan Lanier, Corps, replied that it should not take more than \$10,000 to finish the report.

Colonel Wagenaar noted that some projects, like Myrtle Grove, are being de-authorized because it is going to be authorized under the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA). Also, projects are being de-authorized because the Task Force does not believe them to still be viable.

Mr. Rick Hartman, NMFS, summarized the deauthorization process. At a Task Force meeting and accompanying Technical Committee meeting, an agency would nominate, with the concurrence of the State partner, that a project be de-authorized. The Task Force would make a motion to begin the de-authorization on a certain project and notify the local politicians and stakeholders of such intent. This allows the public enough time to make a presentation at the next Task Force and Technical Committee meetings on why the project should not be de-authorized or deserves more time. If there was no opposition to the de-authorization at the second Task Force meeting, the Task Force would vote to de-authorize the project.

In response to the Colonel Wagenaar opening the floor to comments from the public, Mr. Randy Moertle, representing Avery Island Incorporated, said that the Weeks Bay Project has many components such as marsh creation, shoreline protection, and freshwater redirection. He said that it is important to note that a lot of the projects on the Watch/Critical and De-authorization lists have many different components. Mr. Moertel indicated that the Task Force should think about separating some of these project components out in lieu of deauthorizing the entire project because it is very difficult to get a project nominated in the first place. If the Weeks Bay Project is de-authorized, it is highly unlikely that another project will be nominated in this critical area. The private sector, through the use of a NOAA Fisheries grant, is installing HESCO Concentrator units to address the poor soil conditions. The Iberia Parish Coastal Advisory Committee has dedicated \$100,000 of CIAP money to this area specifically to see if the HESCO units work. It is important to Iberia Parish that the Weeks Bay Project stays on the books. Vermilion Parish has also dedicated \$100,000 of their CIAP money for this shoreline protection project to keep the sediment moving west from the Atchafalaya River. Mr. Moertel asked the Task Force not to de-authorize the Weeks Bay Project. It will not cost any more money to keep it on the books while the local government can test the effectiveness of the HESCO baskets.

Mr. Charles Broussard, Vermilion Parish Coastal Advisory Committee, helped put the Weeks Bay Project together. Vermilion Parish is happy to cooperate with Iberia Parish on this project. If the conveyance of sediment is lost, there will be no more silt to provide the restoration of Vermilion Parish marshes or wetlands. He asked the Task Force to consider the hydrology aspect of the Weeks Bay Project and keep the project ongoing.

Mr. Oneil Malbrough, from the Port of Iberia, said that there is a significant amount of dredged material in the Intracoastal Canal and the port itself. If the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) ever gets passed, then the dredging will be done in these areas. Based on the Environmental Impact Statement for this dredging work, the Weeks Bay site was one of the disposal sites for dredge material from the channel. If the WRDA project moves

forward it could enhance the quantity of dredge material that is available for the Weeks Bay site. It would be advantageous to wait to make a decision on deauthorizing the project because there could be a significant amount of sediment and dredged material that can be used to benefit the coast.

Mr. Malbrough, on behalf of Jefferson Parish, said that there is an assumption that there will be a large diversion at Myrtle Grove. What if in fact the modeling shows that the area and situation does not warrant as large of a diversion as everyone thought? Mr. Malbrough was concerned that the small diversion would be deauthorized before modeling results are completed, which could show that a smaller diversion project would be sufficient. Mr. Constance replied that Myrtle Grove is being investigated under CWPPRA, LCA, and the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (LACPRA). It is a critical project and it is being scaled to meet the maximum amount of benefits, including adding dredge material disposal to both platforms. Determining the size of the project is the first and foremost goal. Mr. Constance said that it is safe to say that the diversion will be larger than the existing one. Mr. Malbrough added that he wanted to make sure that nothing was being deleted from the Myrtle Grove Project.

Mr. Farrow suggested, with the exception of the Weeks Bay Project, that this Task Force meeting serve as the first meeting in the two step process to initiate the de-authorization process.

Colonel Wagenaar requested a briefing on the West Pointe a la Hache Outfall Management Project at the next Task Force meeting.

Mr. Farrow moved to formally initiate the de-authorization process for five projects on the de-authorization list, with the exception of Weeks Bay. Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion was approved by the Task Force.

Mr. Farrow made a motion to move the Weeks Bay Project from the de-authorization list to the Watch/Critical list for further evaluation but that no additional funding be spent until the evaluation is complete. He also requested the Technical Committee to develop a milestone list for the project. Mr. Paul seconded. The motion was approved by the Task Force.*

Colonel Wagenaar tasked the Technical Committee and the Federal sponsor to brief the Task Force on the Weeks Bay Project at the next Task Force meeting.

D. Discussion: Impacts of Converting Non-Cash Flow Projects to Cash Flow (Agenda Item #11)

Mr. Gerry Duszynski replaced Ms. Coffee as the State's Task Force representative for this agenda item.

At their March 14, 2007 meeting, the Technical Committee directed the P&E Subcommittee to determine the impacts of converting PPLs 1-8 to cash flow. Ms. LeBlanc said that the primary reason for considering moving PPL 1-8 projects to cash flow would be to make construction and long-term O&M and monitoring funds that are committed to these projects available to fund other projects ready for construction. Currently, the committed, unobligated balance for PPL 1-8 projects is \$59 million, and it is \$109 million for PPL 9+ projects for a total

of \$168 million. There are \$139 million in unexpended funds for PPLs 1-8 and \$219 million for PPL 9+ projects for a total of \$358 million. Some of the unobligated \$59 million and unexpended \$139 million for PPL 1-8 projects could be returned to the program if cash flow procedures were adopted for these projects.

Of the \$59 million in unobligated funds for PPLs 1-8, \$34.3 million are for construction, \$1.5 million are for monitoring, and \$23.6 million are for O&M. The 20-year obligations total \$74 million in construction, \$14.4 million in monitoring, and \$50.7 million in O&M. Additional analysis is required to determine how much of the unobligated or unexpended balance could be returned to the program. The monitoring needs have been determined and the State is currently working on the O&M analysis. It is estimated that \$4.8 million in monitoring funds could potentially be returned to the program if cash flow is adopted. It is anticipated that unobligated O&M funds could potentially be returned to the program as well. However, an analysis of O&M funds has not yet been completed as was done for monitoring funds.

Ms. LeBlanc summarized the impacts of moving PPL 1-8 projects to cash flow on cost share and landrights agreements for each agency. The Corps says that its cost share and landrights agreements may be valid without modification. NRCS needs to review the cost share agreements as some modifications may be required. LDNR does not believe that landrights agreements need to be modified, but some cost share agreements may need to be amended. USFWS is not aware of any issues related to cost share or landrights agreements, but moving PPL 1-8 projects to cash flow may require a return of obligated funding.

Ms. LeBlanc asked the Task Force if they were also going to consider applying cash flow procedures to unconstructed PPL 1-8 projects. If so, would these projects become subject to the same requirements as projects that are already in Phase I and Phase II such as 30% and 95% design reviews, and would they have to compete annually for Phase II construction funding.

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

Mr. Paul noted that the Task Force is waiting on some additional information from the Corps to determine the total amount of money that may become available.

Mr. Hamilton asked for clarification that the conversion of PPL 1-8 projects to cash flow would include O&M, monitoring, and construction. Ms. LeBlanc replied that this is a decision the Task Force needs to make. Will it only apply to projects that have been constructed? Would it also apply to PPL 1-8 projects that have not been constructed for return of first cost construction? Ms. LeBlanc added that if a project has a construction schedule to begin within the next three years, it does not make sense to return those funds. Mr. Paul agreed.

Ms. LeBlanc added that if PPL 1-8 projects that have not been constructed move into the cash flow arena, then that raises the questions: do the projects then compete annually for Phase II funding and are they required to meet 30 and 95 percent design review requirements?

Colonel Wagenaar said that the issue of fully funding versus phase funding projects is a challenge. He understands that phase funding allows CWPPRA to fund more projects. He

requested another briefing at the next Task Force meeting. Ms. LeBlanc said that the expectation is to have the same breakdown for O&M as there is for monitoring by the next Task Force meeting.

Colonel Wagenaar also asked if there should be criteria on whether or not certain projects should be fully funded because of their importance and to guarantee their existence in the future. Mr. Constance said that there is a time frame in which the Task Force will have to consider not progressing with additional projects.

Mr. Hamilton felt that this was a healthy exercise and a good accounting analysis of the O&M dollars. At some point all of the O&M funds will be tied up and this will affect CWPPRA's ability to fund new projects. Ms. LeBlanc added that over \$2.4 billion has come into the program. All Phase I, Phase II, and 20-years of construction costs total \$1.95 billion for PPLs 1-16. The Task Force can fund all projects on PPLs 1-16.

Mr. Constance noted that there is variability in the annual funding and this can affect the decisions made each year. Mr. Hamilton added that there is also variability in projecting O&M costs for 20 years.

Ms. Coffee cautioned against making blanket decisions for all projects that would abandon projects at some point.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Mr. Junior Rodriguez, St. Bernard Parish President, said that the move of the Violet Diversion and Bayou Lamoque Projects to CIAP concerns him because CIAP does not include O&M money. He asked who was going to pick up the cost for O&M as the parishes can't afford this. Is it the State's responsibility? Mr. Duszynski replied that it would be the State's responsibility to maintain and operate the Violet Diversion and Bayou Lamoque Projects.

The Task Force asked the Technical Committee to present another briefing on the impacts of converting non-cash flow projects to cash flow at the next Task Force meeting. This issue will be dealt with separately from the O&M and construction perspectives and will be a decision item at the next meeting.

E. Discussion: Project Costs and Benefits Reevaluation Procedures for Requesting O&M Funding Increases (Agenda Item #12)

Ms. Goodman said that over the last several years the Technical Committee and Task Force have seen several requests for O&M budget increases due to various reasons. The question has arisen on whether the increase is justified or if the project has been performing as expected. The Technical Committee directed the P&E Subcommittee to develop a decision-making process to be used when considering requests for O&M increases. The P&E Subcommittee developed a draft template fact sheet to be used by sponsoring agencies when requesting O&M funding increases. The fact sheet includes the specific information needed for the Task Force to make a decision: 1) the original project cost; 2) is the purpose of O&M; 3)

what work has been completed to date; 4) what is the new fully funded cost estimate; 5) the current O&M increment increases requested; 6) the initial and existing project benefits; and 7) the project performance. The P&E Subcommittee asked the Task Force for further direction on how to move forward with this effort. The draft template also includes sections for economic information and habitat analysis to be used as a measure to determine the cost-effectiveness of the project.

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

Mr. Clark pointed out that the Technical Committee is still reviewing this draft.

Colonel Wagenaar commented that this is another step forward by the Task Force to become efficient and proactive in managing every dollar. This is a great tool to help set a benchmark on how briefings are presented to the Task Force.

F. Report: Presentation on the Standard Operating Procedures for Checks and Balances for Determining Benefits and Updating Cost Estimates (Agenda Item #13)

Mr. Kevin Roy, USFWS, and Mr. John Petitbon, Corps, presented the process for nominee projects during Phase 0. Mr. Roy said that preliminary benefit estimates are prepared by the agency sponsors for each of the 20 nominees. The estimates are reviewed by the Environmental Workgroup. The 20 nominees are narrowed down to 10 candidate projects. Another benefits analysis is performed utilizing the WVA methodology. The Environmental Workgroup reviews and provides comments on the draft WVA and all supporting information. The final WVA and other information for the candidate project is submitted to the Technical Committee for Phase I approval.

Mr. Petitbon said that preliminary cost estimates are prepared for each of the 20 nominees by the project's sponsor and are submitted to the Engineering Workgroup for review. More detailed costs estimates are performed on the candidate projects. The Engineering Workgroup reviews all supporting data and calculations and comments on the draft cost estimate. Based on the Engineering Workgroup's input, the final cost estimate is submitted along with the benefits and other data for Phase I approval.

Mr. Roy said that any change in project scope which is greater than 25 percent, in terms of acres benefited or the ratio of total cost to benefits, must be reported to the Technical Committee and Task Force. Also, before the 95 percent design review for each project in Phase I, sponsoring agencies should have a WVA that has been reviewed and approved by the Environmental Workgroup.

Mr. Petitbon said projects selected for Phase I must have a preliminary design report, which requires a revised construction cost estimate based on the current preliminary design. Any changes in project scope of 25 percent or more, in terms of total project cost or the ratio of total cost to benefits, must also be reported to the Technical Committee and Task Force. A revised construction cost estimate is required at the 30 percent design review. A fully funded cost

estimate is required at the 95 percent design review. The revised fully funded cost estimate must be reviewed by the Engineering Workgroup.

G. Report: Coast-wide Nutria Control Program - Year 5 Report (Agenda Item #14)

Mr. Edmond Mouton, LDWF, said that the initial goal of the Coast-wide Nutria Control Program was to significantly reduce marsh damage from nutria by removing 400,000 nutria from the coastal wetlands each year. In Year 5, the incentive payments were increased from \$4 to \$5 per tail. A total of 375,683 tails were collected from 365 participants, totaling \$1,878,415 in incentive payments. Approximately 73% of the harvest came from the south central part of the state. Approximately 60 percent of the nutria were shot and 40 percent were trapped. The highest number of nutria was harvested from St. Martin Parish. The 2007 Vegetative Damage Survey yielded a total of 9,244 acres of damage from 25 sites, which extrapolated to 34,665 acres coast-wide. This is a 38 percent decrease in the number of acres as compared to 2006. In the three years prior to the program, low harvest numbers contributed to higher numbers of vegetative damage. Since the program's inception five years ago, there has been a significant reduction in damage. The program has served to drastically increase the nutria harvest in coastal Louisiana to over an average of 297,000 nutria per year. The program is encouraging landowners with damaged sites and little or no trapping history to participate. Landowners are supplied with maps of their area and leases of trappers so they can direct the trappers to the areas of high impact.

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

Mr. Hamilton asked if the hurricanes had an effect on the nutria population. Mr. Mouton replied that the hurricanes decimated some populations and displaced others.

Mr. Clark asked if alligators had anything to do with controlling the nutria population in areas where alligator hunting was prohibited. Mr. Mouton replied that a lot of the nutria were displaced following the hurricanes and populations popped up in new areas. If the population is not addressed, the nutria can increase in density very rapidly.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Mr. Charles Broussard said that the figures do not reflect total harvest because the rice farmers have to kill nutria to prevent crop damage. He recalled killing over 5,000 nutria in one year. Mr. Mouton replied that a lot of those areas are outside of the program area.

H. Report: Public Outreach Committee Quarterly Report (Agenda Item #15)

Ms. Ann Burruss, Public Outreach Committee Coordinator, said that there is ongoing work on the *WaterMarks* magazine. Fact sheets are available on the LaCoast website. The Outreach Committee is investigating the acquisition of digital archive software which would help to create a photo library and better manage outreach materials. A CWPPRA project dedication was held at the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge on May 4, 2007. Another ceremony will take place in October at LUMCON.

VII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

Colonel David Bersczek presented the results from the Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force (IPET) risk and reliability report for New Orleans to convey the risk of living in New Orleans and the risk of inundation from a tropical event. The report looked at the risk when Hurricane Katrina hit, what is the current risk today, and what the anticipated risks will be once the next levels of hurricane protection are in place. The IPET team applied a risk assessment model to determine the index of the potential for loss of property or loss of life as a result of flooding caused by hurricanes. The model evaluated how the hurricane protection system would perform under different water levels and the potential failure due to overtopping. Results show that there is a direct correlation among a hurricane's intensity, size, track, and storm surge potential. Hurricanes that track through the warmer waters of the Gulf of Mexico are 4 to 6 times more likely to grow in intensity and have higher storm surges. The IPET team applied a range of 152 different storms, which varied in size, wind speed, forward speed, track, and rainfall, to the 350 miles of levees and floodwalls in the Greater New Orleans area to determine the water levels and forces expected on the system. A series of color-coded depth maps and terrain profiles were created based on the results from the risk assessment model. These maps show the potential depth of flooding for particular areas. As a result of the gated control structures in the Lakeview area, the flooding potential has been reduced by 5 feet. In the Lower Ninth Ward, there is a 2 foot reduction in flooding depth. This information is just a piece of the puzzle. It is important to know and understand the information to be able to identify and make decisions on future land use and hurricane protection solutions. This information can be found at the NOLArisk.usace.army.mil website. The website also has links to ongoing projects in the area. The depth maps are also available as Google Earth overlays. The public can use this information to make personal decisions and help identify vulnerabilities that still exist.

Colonel Wagenaar added that the 100-year maps will be published in about three weeks. Everyday the Corps works on the levees, the risk continues to decrease. This tool can help the public make decisions based on risk.

VIII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Charles Broussard, Vermilion Parish Coastal Restoration Committee, thanked the committee and Corps for their efforts to implement 14 projects that have been successful in Vermilion Parish. He said that the GIWW benefited the nation as a whole by allowing waterborne transport through southwest Louisiana. In 1929, a levee was built from the Intracoastal City Locks to the Seventh Ward Canal and prevented saltwater intrusion into the Mermentau Basin. Now the Leland Bowman Locks, which replaced the Vermilion Locks, is circumvented with saltwater intrusion and this is a detriment to Vermilion Parish. Vermilion Parish had always been number one in agriculture in Louisiana until Hurricane Rita adversely affected the economy of the Parish. Hurricane Rita caused saltwater intrusion problems that prevent rice planting, cattle raising, and crawfish farming. After Hurricane Rita, saltwater began to enter and exit Schooner Bayou through the control structure known as North Prong. The Corps placed rock at this location after Hurricane Audrey and did not open it back up after Rita. As a result, two 12-foot deep openings washed out. Since then, LDNR closed the two washouts,

but there are now 17 other minor washouts between Schooner Bayou and the GIWW. These openings need to be closed to save Louisiana and the Mermentau Basin. The Vermilion Parish saltwater intrusion problem needs to be addressed because it is only going to get worse. Mr. Broussard thanked Mr. Gohmert for his work and effort in helping Vermilion Parish prevent saltwater intrusion.

Ms. Coffee added that the State is transferring money to Vermilion Parish to fix those breaches.

IX. CLOSING

A. Dates and Locations of Upcoming CWPPRA Meetings

Ms. Goodman announced that the PPL 17 public meetings will take place on August 29, 2007 at 7 p.m. in Abbeville and August 30, 2007 at 7 p.m. in New Orleans. PPL 17 projects will be considered for Phase I funding at the September 12, 2007 Technical Committee Meeting in New Orleans. The Task Force will vote on the Technical Committee recommendations at the October 17, 2007 Task Force meeting in New Orleans. As a result of the PPL 18 process, the 2008 schedule has changed. The summer 2008 Technical Committee and Task Force meetings have been eliminated.

B. Adjournment

Colonel Wagenaar adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.