

BREAUX ACT
Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

TASK FORCE MEETING
20 January 2010

Minutes

I. INTRODUCTION

Colonel Alvin Lee convened the 74th meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. on January 20, 2010 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office, 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 who were present.

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

III. OPENING REMARKS

Colonel Lee asked the Task Force Members to introduce themselves. Colonel Lee then commented that the chair of the Technical Committee, Mr. Thomas Holden, USACE, was not in attendance today and that Ms. Melanie Goodman, USACE, would be substituting for Mr. Holden. Colonel Lee then reviewed the meeting agenda and noted that the Additional Agenda Item No. 13 would be discussed after Agenda Item No. 8 and that a 15 minute break would be taken at that time.

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

Mr. Honker made a motion to accept the agenda. Mr. Norton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 2009 TASK FORCE MEETING

Ms. Goodman presented the meeting minutes.

Mr. Norton moved to dispense with the review of the minutes. Mr. Graves seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

Colonel Lee called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the October 28, 2009 Task Force meeting.

Mr. Boggs moved to adopt the minutes from the October 28, 2009 Task Force meeting. Mr. Norton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

V. TASK FORCE DECISIONS

A. Agenda Item #6 – Report/Discussion/Decision: Status of Technical Committee Scope of Work for Review of the CWPPRA Monitoring Program

Mr. Rick Hartman, NMFS, explained that at the October 28, 2009 meeting, the Task Force directed the Technical Committee to develop a scope of work and schedule, to be completed by December 3, 2009, for a plan to evaluate the estimated life cycle cost of the Coast-wide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS). The evaluation would also address whether or not CRMS and project specific monitoring are meeting CWPPRA Program needs in terms of being able to demonstrate if the program investment in coastal restoration projects has been successful.

The first task is to identify cost reduction methods. The Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) and the Monitoring Workgroup have received information from OCPR on the cost of certain monitoring elements and are determining if any data collection can be delayed or dropped without sacrificing necessary information to evaluate project success. Because the CRMS sites were randomly selected, some sites are close together or located just outside CWPPRA project areas. The AAC and Monitoring Workgroup will evaluate potential cost savings and implications of removing duplicate sites or relocating sites and will report these findings to the Technical Committee.

The second task is to evaluate the monitoring data currently received to determine if this monitoring data is helpful in making funding decisions. Each agency will work with OCPR, develop a cost estimate and scope of work for any additional monitoring needed at their projects, and decide whether to request additional funds for each project. The Technical Committee will then determine if additional monitoring funds are warranted based on whether future operation and maintenance (O&M) decisions will be necessary. Though the mandate of this effort is to reduce CRMS costs, the result of this effort may be requests for additional funding on some projects.

The third task is to identify cost sharing partners. The Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) has many projects with CRMS sites. These projects have not begun, but they do have identified construction schedules. These CRMS stations have been identified and the next step is to speak

with action agencies for these projects to determine potential cost sharing strategies for such CRMS stations.

No action has been taken other than meeting with OCPR and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) staff to determine available information. The AAC and Monitoring Workgroup are awaiting scope of work approval before proceeding. Each Federal agency plans to conduct this work under current planning budgets, but the AAC is requesting an additional \$21,450 budget for this effort.

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

Mr. Doley asked if the May/June timeline was still on target. Mr. Hartman answered, yes, that it will be a difficult effort, but that the June timeframe is still expected to be met.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mark Schleifstein, Times-Picayune, asked if there are plans to pair this monitoring evaluation effort with LCA's data needs. Mr. Jim Paul, Deputy Director of the State's legal department and Science and Technology (S&T) Program, answered that the S&T Program has been tasked to develop LCA project monitoring needs and that CRMS currently has limited direct support from LCA because the LCA monitoring network is not yet funded.

Mr. Doley asked if LCA is currently using CRMS data. Mr. Paul answered, yes, there is a back and forth communication and sharing of data, but that the LCA limitation is that no projects have gone to construction yet so there is no formal post-construction monitoring at this time; however, CRMS data is being used for data collection in the feasibility analysis for LCA projects.

Colonel Lee asked about the timeline on LCA adaptive management of the monitoring program. Mr. Paul answered that he believes the monitoring plans will be packaged with the feasibility studies when they go to agency technical review next month.

Mr. Honker commented that there is a Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) working group looking at restoration issues in Louisiana and Mississippi including data collection, sharing, and utilization at a government-wide level. He stated that this hopefully means coordination and resource issues for data systems and sharing are getting national-level attention.

Mr. Hartman emphasized that the AAC and Monitoring Workgroup is only responsible for the cost evaluation, but that each agency will be responsible for evaluating the monitoring needs of individual projects. He also warned that insufficient monitoring data could affect O&M funding approval in the future.

Colonel Lee clarified that each agency needs a monitoring and evaluation plan and should include these costs in the O&M cost estimate or request additional monitoring funds if needed. Mr. Hartman reminded that requests for additional monitoring funds may not be approved by the Technical Committee.

Mr. Doley stated that he hopes as agencies review individual projects, they also evaluate collective impacts and are mindful that synergy is needed among various projects to evaluate if desired effects and impacts are occurring. Dr. Jenneke Visser, head of the AAC, responded that the CRMS goal is to evaluate the effect of both individual projects and the overall CWPPRA Program on a coast-wide scale, but that this is a difficult and costly task.

Mr. Hartman reminded the Task Force to ensure that each agency has an active Monitoring Workgroup member and other available staff to participate in CWPPRA monitoring meetings over the next couple of months.

Mr. Honker made a motion to approve the execution of the Technical Committee's Scope of Work as presented by Mr. Hartman, including approval to increase the CWPPRA FY10 Planning Budget in the amount of \$21,450 for the Academic Advisory Committee to participate in executing the scope of work to review the CWPPRA Monitoring Program. Mr. Doley seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

B. Additional Agenda Item #13 - Discussion/Decision: Request for O&M Funding Increase for the East Mud Lake Marsh Management Project

Ms. Goodman presented the Technical Committee recommendation to approve a request for an O&M budget increase to cover a bid overrun in the amount of \$199,451, and incremental funding approval in the amount of \$361,690 for the East Mud Lake Marsh Management Project (CS-20).

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments. Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public. There were none.

Mr. Norton made a motion to approve the request for an O&M budget increase in the amount of \$199,451 and incremental funding in the amount of \$361,690 for the East Mud Lake Marsh Management Project (CS-20). Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

C. Agenda Item #9 – Report/Discussion/Decision: Status of the PPL 1 – West Bay Sediment Diversion Project (MR-03)

Ms. Cherie Price, USACE, provided a status update of the Pilottown Anchorage Area dredging and a summary of the West Bay Work Plan six month effort results. The Pilottown maintenance dredging was completed December 31, 2009 and the final quantity was 1.8 million cubic yards of material. Construction included two beneficial use sites: a sediment retention island perpendicular to the flow coming out of the West Bay conveyance channel and a site on the right descending bank of the River downstream of the West Bay Diversion.

The six month work plan ran from May to December 2009 and assessed shoaling quantities induced in the Pilottown Anchorage Area and the navigation channel by the West Bay Diversion and evaluated the receiving area changes since the Diversion's construction. The six

month report was completed on November 25, 2009 and presented to the Technical Committee on December 1, 2009. The peer and agency review was completed December 31, 2009. Comments have been received from the LCA Science Board, AAC, OCPR, and NMFS. The Board was in full agreement with the contents of the report and commended the USACE Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) on its effort. The Board recommended the following: that the Diversion remain open as long as possible, continuation of an additional six to twelve month effort to improve the model predictions and uncertainties, continue data collection, quarterly fathometer measurements of the sediment retention island, and annual bathymetric surveys.

Gary Brown, ERDC, gave an overview of the West Bay Diversion six month study evaluation, progress, and results. The investigation evaluated how the West Bay Diversion impacts dredging requirements downstream. Data collection was conducted, including a review of River bathymetry records and an analysis of how River morphology is changing to develop a historic perspective. Three different modeling efforts were then conducted to perform an independent investigation into the impacts of the Diversion. Three different models were used to help determine uncertainties and boundaries (1D, 2D, and 3D).

The results of the modeling show that the Pilottown Anchorage Area is located on a building point bar within the River. This bar was building prior to construction of the Diversion and would continue to build to some degree without the Diversion. Primary factors influencing the rate of development of the bar were found to be diversion of flow through outlets in the vicinity (Grand Pass, Baptiste Collette, and Cubits Gap). The ERDC field investigation indicates that 45% of flow upstream of Baptiste Collette is diverted and approximately 50% of the sediment is diverted before reaching Head of Passes.

In this reach of the River, sand moves intermittently at medium high flows, in pulses, thus if the energy drops, the sand falls out. Therefore, small changes on the River in this area can have large effects on the location of sand fallout which in turn can have large effects on dredging requirements. Additionally, in this segment of the River, deep draft is necessary for navigation which increases the required amount of dredging. The 1D model indicates that downstream of Venice, the River is aggradational and depositional, and was so before the West Bay Diversion.

The 2D and 3D models indicate that the Diversion caused a shift in deposition closer to the center of the navigation channel. This contraction and the point bar collection increases the required dredging. These findings are consistent with the morphological response found since the construction of the West Bay Diversion. Since the Diversion construction, the tendency has been toward an increase in sediment deposition downstream of the Diversion.

Even though average rates are available over a long period of time, deposition rates can vary drastically on an annual basis and year to year. There can be re-erosion if the sediment supply is exhausted; when there is an ample sediment supply more deposition occurs. The models show that the West Bay Diversion accounts for a portion of the dredging requirements downstream, contributing from 18 to 40%, but shows a long term trend in the range of 20% for the combined channel footprint. The Anchorage Area is a smaller footprint than the channel; therefore, deposition in the Anchorage Area can vary widely. Thus, confidence in the ability to

model the Anchorage Area is lessened and more science is needed to narrow down impacts within the models.

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

Mr. Honker thanked ERDC for their effort. He stated that this time last year he was frustrated with this effort, but is now pleased with the progress. He added that this report is the best science to date on the shoaling issue and is comfortable continuing this effort for the next six month period.

Mr. Graves asked if the modeling attempted to quantify the induced shoaling caused by the West Bay Diversion without contribution from Grand Pass. Mr. Brown answered no, that the other features are existing and therefore were added into the models. Analyzing only the effects of the West Bay Diversion would require further modeling.

Colonel Lee asked for confirmation on the time period for additional sampling. Ms. Price answered that the request for additional data collection on the River is in line with sampling conducted in the previous six months. The intent is to add three to four additional data collections on the River and sediment retention island monitoring. The current scope of work does not include island monitoring, but the River data collection is a continuation of the previous six month effort. The ideal time frame would be during the high water season. The new six month work plan will identify the specific tasks and purposes.

Mr. Norton echoed his excitement regarding the current effort and agreed to support continuation of the next six month effort. However, he noted that the sediment retention island was created during the dredging process and was not part of the original scope of work. Therefore, he believes that the island monitoring should not be integrated into the next six month effort.

Colonel Lee asked for clarification on what accomplishments are expected in the next six months. Ms. Price answered that further data collection will be conducted and the models will be improved by tightening the range of outputs through developing confidence bands, uncertainty analysis and sensitivity analysis.

Colonel Lee asked what information was expected from the additional sampling effort. Mr. Brown answered that more data points tightens the confidence bands on the models and if more data is gathered from similar timeframes, better comparisons can be made.

Colonel Lee asked if this study will be transferable to other diversion works. Mr. Brown answered that each area is unique, but that this effort is a systematic analysis of how the River is working and can be used as a baseline for other areas and as guidance to identify problems and differences.

Barb Kliess, Director of the LCA S&T Office, stated that an informal team has already been assembled for work on applying the West Bay findings to the Myrtle Grove Project because the West Bay findings will help in understanding the River as a whole and show how actions

upstream may affect the River downstream. She added that the S&T Office has funded another sub-study for data analysis between Venice and Scofield to help determine what is happening in the lower River. She emphasized that diversions such as West Bay are attempting to simulate the geologic process of creating a crevasse and that geologic processes take time, therefore more study of West Bay is needed to learn everything possible for future diversion planning.

Mr. Honker expressed concerns about the transferability of the West Bay study results. He stated that it is unfortunate that there is a great study being conducted on a rather remote diversion that is not typical of other types of diversions being contemplated on the River. However, he added that the reality is that this study is the best available information and he is therefore supportive of continuing this effort.

Colonel Lee asked if the information from the three different models is used to feed into each other and if the additional six month study would allow for better calibration of the models and help decrease uncertainty. Mr. Brown answered that the models show different scenarios and that there are still calibrations needed to better understand the differences in the model output. Additionally, moving forward, a sensitivity analysis will be conducted to determine which items along the River have the greatest impact on the model results. All of these efforts will help quantify the uncertainty in the models.

Mr. Doley agreed that this effort is commendable. He also agreed to support the next six month study, but asked if additional funds would be required to do so. Ms. Price answered that the current plan is to remain within the originally approved budget and that costs will be detailed in the new work plan for the next six month period.

Colonel Lee also expressed support to continue the study efforts and stated that he believes we have gained and will continue to gain tremendous information regarding where sediments are going within the River. He added that this knowledge can be used to make more informed decisions moving forward for restoration efforts already underway and in the future. Mr. Boggs agreed with Colonel Lee.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Paul Kemp, National Audubon Society, stated that he believes the West Bay study is important and that he has a theory that sea level rise is a major factor regarding sediment movement upstream in the River and that additional long term analysis is needed.

Mr. Clayton Brealing, OCPR, asked if Baptiste Collette and Grand Pass have played a significant role in the hydrology of the River. Mr. Brown clarified that the models account for these structures because they are features in place, but that the models were not run with these features closed off. One of the correlations found was that deepening of both of these passes in the late 1970's affected the depositional environment downstream. This is another example of how a change at one place along the River can have impacts downstream.

Mr. Honker asked if the study group needed clarification on the scope of work moving forward for the next six month period, specifically in regards to monitoring of the sediment

retention island. Colonel Lee read the original motion authorizing the twelve month plan which did not include analysis of the sediment retention island. Ms. Price confirmed that island monitoring was not included in the original scope. Colonel Lee stated that the next six month study should focus only on the originally approved scope of work.

Ms. Price stated that the new work plan would be completed by March 1, 2010 and asked if a Technical Committee peer review was needed. Mr. Doley asked if a peer review would impede the data collection schedule. Ms. Price responded that the data collection can begin upon approval, but that a peer review would take an additional thirty days, delaying the work plan until April 1, 2010.

Mr. Norton asked if there would be significant changes in the new six month work plan from the original twelve month work plan that was approved. Ms. Price answered that changes would be based on the results of the first six month study period. She added that island monitoring could be added. Mr. Norton advised that the scope stay within the original twelve month plan. Ms. Price added that many comments were received from the LCA Science Board and that it will take time to incorporate them.

Mr. Doley agreed that the scope should remain within the bounds of the original twelve month work plan and stated that he did not feel an additional peer review was necessary for the next six month work plan. Mr. Honker, Mr. Norton, and Ms. Kliess agreed.

Ms. Goodman asked if any of the peer review comments received recommended island monitoring. Mr. Norton stated that while he appreciates the peer review comments, there is a limited amount of funding. Colonel Lee agreed that some peer review comments may be handled by future S&T Program or LCA efforts and that at this point, the CWPPRA Program should not be burdened with additional efforts outside the originally approved twelve month scope.

Kerry St. Pe, BTNEP, asked for the flow in cubic feet per second (cfs) through Cubits Gap and Grand Pass. Mr. Brown answered that Grand Pass and Baptiste Collette each accounts for approximately 10%, so up to 120,000 cfs, and that Cubits Gap accounts for approximately 15%, so close to 200,000 cfs. Mr. St. Pe then asked how much island monitoring would cost. Ms. Price answered that it has not been scoped or priced yet. Mr. St. Pe stated that the land built at West Bay was built when the River was dredged and then lost when the West Bay Diversion was installed and that it is important to know what happened with the sediment retention island and recommended that additional funds may be acquired to investigate.

Ms. Goodman asked if the six month study period includes completion of the report and peer review or just data collection and monitoring. Mr. Brown responded that the six month time frame includes completing the report, but not the peer review. Colonel Lee confirmed that the peer review and final report will occur after the six month period and will take an additional two months. He then asked if the current budget would cover this work. Ms. Price answered yes.

Mr. Norton made a motion that the West Bay Diversion be closed during the 2010 low water period and that a closure plan be initiated by the USACE, coordinated with the Technical

Committee, and approved by the Task Force. He stated that it is fairly apparent that the CWPPRA Program can not sustain dredging the Anchorage Area on a three year cycle. Mr. Honker seconded the motion.

Mr. Graves expressed disappointment with closure of the West Bay Diversion, but believes that it is a necessary step since the parameters do not allow for other options. He added that the CWPPRA Program has already spent \$10 million on dredging in this area and that the ramifications of induced shoaling have not been fully addressed. He stated that under the current parameters there are no clear data on deposition, and no clear picture of the base line now to compare to conditions before West Bay versus a similar area with no diversion similar to West Bay. He said that there is no clear picture of the freshwater benefits the Diversion provides and believes that under the current operating parameters, if the Diversion is to remain open, coastal restoration dollars will have to be spent for dredging in this area. He cautioned that these lessons need to be applied moving forward in the future and reiterated that the issues must be addressed in a sustainable manner and remain on the front burner. He also stated that he is a proponent of experimenting and there is a need to experiment, but baseline conditions need to be determined in these areas before moving forward and that active monitoring of diversion benefits are necessary.

Mr. Honker agreed that this is a tremendous issue for the CWPPRA Program and coastal restoration. He spoke in support of freshwater diversion, but stated that given the financial reality and location of West Bay, he feels closure is necessary. He stated that costs would increase if closure was delayed until 2012 and that the economics require an earlier timeframe.

Mr. Norton agreed that the West Bay Diversion is unique in its location and that it is uncontrolled. He added that the flow of the Diversion has grown beyond that which was intended and the resultant scouring, if left open, would create additional O&M problems outside the shoaling issues.

Colonel Lee echoed the sentiment that there are a number of future diversions planned and the lessons learned from West Bay will be used moving forward to try and minimize similar issues. He added that this is an example of adaptive management, making decisions based on science and what is occurring on the ground to use the resources of the River for the highest priorities.

Mr. Graves reiterated that there is a finite resource of fresh water coming down the River and that the amount of water for deep draft navigation needs should be recognized and the question should be asked whether this Diversion is the best investment of 50,000 cfs.

Mr. Honker stated that at the time the Task Force approved the West Bay Project, they wrote a virtual blank check to approve maintenance dredging which is another lesson that should be learned from this project. He added that the study findings still show a very high cost to continue with the West Bay Diversion.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public on the motion.

Mr. Paul Kemp stated that he understands CWPPRA wanting to avoid funding maintenance dredging, but that there will still be dredging needs even if the West Bay Diversion is closed. Colonel Lee answered that the USACE does not have the authority to dredge the Anchorage Area, but that such dredging could be authorized in the future. He added that if the West Bay Diversion is closed and shoaling continues, the navigation industry will have to make some decisions.

Mr. Graves added that the State has submitted a request for the Anchorage Area to be eligible for USACE dredging.

Mr. Norton made a motion that USACE conduct appropriate action necessary for the West Bay Diversion to be closed during the 2010 low water period and that the closure plan be coordinated with the CWPPRA Technical Committee and approved by the CWPPRA Task Force. Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

D. Agenda Item #10 – Report/Discussion/Decision: Status of Unconstructed Projects

Ms. Goodman reported on the status of unconstructed projects. She presented the Technical Committee's recommendation to initiate procedures to deauthorize the PPL 12 Lake Borgne/MRGO Shoreline Protection Project (PO-32).

The P&E Subcommittee conducts a regular assessment of projects that have not gone to construction within five years of authorization. The P&E Subcommittee recommended the Lake Borgne Project for deauthorization and the Technical Committee agreed. The P&E Subcommittee also recommended the Benney's Bay Project be deauthorized, but the Technical Committee decided not to recommend deauthorization proceedings pending the outcome of the West Bay Diversion Report.

The Weeks Bay Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection Project/Fresh Water Redirection Project six month status is due. The P&E Subcommittee recommended deauthorization of this project, but the Technical Committee and Task Force delayed deauthorization in response to local stakeholder requests to pursue outside engineering alternatives.

Mr. Randy Moertle, representing Iberia and Vermilion Parishes, reported that the Weeks Bay Project was not moving forward in the CWPPRA process so Iberia Parish applied for and received a \$100,000 grant from the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) Program to have an outside firm evaluate the engineering done within CWPPRA. Vermilion Parish has also submitted a grant application for \$100,000 and the two funds will be combined to work with the engineering consultant to determine an alternative to get the project back on track. The Parishes were afraid deauthorization would permanently kill the project. Iberia Parish is currently waiting for the CIAP funds to be released and Vermilion Parish has submitted its application for a grant based on the Iberia Parish application.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public. There were none.

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

Mr. Graves asked about the status of the Brown Lake Project. Ms. Goodman answered that deauthorization procedures have been initiated, but that the public letter of notice has been delayed because the CWPPRA attorneys are investigating whether the condemnation process should have been instigated and project viability.

Mr. Norton made a motion to approve initiating deauthorization procedures on the PPL 12 Lake Borgne/MRGO Shoreline Protection Project (PO-32). Mr. Boggs seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

E. Agenda Item #11 – Discussion/Decision: 19th Priority Project List

Ms. Goodman presented the four candidate projects recommended by the Technical Committee for PPL 19 and Phase I approval. Public meetings were held to present the findings of the PPL 19 and demonstration projects, public comments were received, and the Technical Committee voted to rank the projects at the December 2, 2009 meeting. The Technical Committee is recommending approval of the top four projects. The Technical Committee voted not to recommend a demonstration project. The total funding approval amount is \$10,736,747 and the breakdown per project is as follows:

- Lost Lake Marsh Creation and Hydrologic Restoration, \$2,320,214
- Freshwater Bayou Marsh Creation, \$2,425,997
- LaBranche East Marsh Creation, \$2,571,273
- Cheniere Ronquille Barrier Island Restoration, \$3,419,263

Colonel Lee stated that a presentation on each project was unnecessary.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments. Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public. There were none.

Mr. Boggs made a motion to approve the following projects for PPL 19 and Phase I funding in the total amount of \$10,736,747 (Lost Lake Marsh Creation and Hydrologic Restoration, \$2,320,214; Freshwater Bayou Marsh Creation, \$2,425,997; LaBranche East Marsh Creation, \$2,572,273; and Cheniere Ronquille Barrier Island Restoration, \$3,419,263). Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

F. Agenda Item #12 – Discussion/Decision: Request for Phase II Authorization and Approval of Phase II Increment 1 Funding

Ms. Goodman presented the Technical Committee's recommendation to approve requests for Phase II Authorization and Increment 1 Funding. The Technical Committee reviewed project information, and took public comments on requests for Phase II approval on the seven projects shown in the following table. The Technical Committee ranked the seven projects based on individual agency votes. Based on the voting results, the Technical Committee recommends Phase II authorization and Increment 1 Funding for the top four projects (Cameron-Creole Fresh

Water Intro, Vegetative Plantings - CU 1, Barataria Basin Landbridge, Phase 3 - CU 8, West Belle Pass Barrier Headland Restoration, and South Grand Chenier Hydrologic Restoration). The Technical Committee only recommends approval of the top four projects, though the top five would fit within the available funding limits, to leave more available funding in the Program for unexpected funding increases in FY 10.

| Recommended Approval by Tech Committee | Agency | Project No. | PPL | Project Name | No. Of Agency Votes | Sum of Weighted Score | Total Fully Funded Cost Est. |
|----------------------------------------|--------|-------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| X | NRCS | CS-49 (1) | 18 | Cameron-Creole Fresh Water Intro, Vegetative Plantings – CU 1 | 6 | 14 | \$1,147,096 |
| X | NRCS | BA-27c(4) | 9 | Barataria Basin Landbridge, Phase 3 - CU 8 | 5 | 10 | \$20,498,664 |
| X | NMFS | TE-52 | 16 | West Belle Pass Barrier Headland Restoration | 4 | 12 | \$42,250,417 |
| X | FWS | ME-20 | 11 | South Grand Chenier Hydrologic Restoration | 4 | 8 | \$29,046,128 |
| | NRCS | TE-43 | 10 | GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas in Terrebonne | 2 | 7 | \$13,022,246 |
| | COE | TV-11b | 9 | Freshwater Bayou Canal, Freshwater Bayou Lock and Belle Isle Canal | 2 | 5 | \$38,065,335 |
| | EPA | TE-47 | 11 | Ship Shoal: Whiskey West Flank Restoration | 1 | 4 | \$61,750,785 |

Colonel Lee stated that a presentation on each individual project was not necessary at this time.

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

M. O. Miller, landowner and beneficiary, spoke in support of the South Branch Hydrological Project.

Mr. Boggs made a motion to approve the requests for Phase II Authorization and Increment 1 Funding for the following projects (Cameron-Creole Fresh Water Intro, Vegetative Plantings - CU 1, Barataria Basin Landbridge, Phase 3 - CU 8, West Belle Pass Barrier Headland Restoration, and South Grand Chenier Hydrologic Restoration). Mr. Doley seconded.

Mr. Norton made a motion to amend the previous motion to approve the GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas in Terrebonne Project as well since the project was under consideration at this time last year, was deemed a valuable project, and is designed and ready to begin construction within the next few months.

Mr. Doley asked if there are any anticipated cost increases or expected returns into the Program. Ms. Browning clarified that the South Grand Cheniere Project shows approximately \$9,037 short on the spreadsheet and then answered that after clean up of the budgets, approximately \$27 million from projects already constructed or deauthorized will be returned to the Program, but that those anticipated returns are already reflected in the budgets shown earlier today. She added that with approval of the GIWW Project, there is approximately \$336,000 left

in the budget. Ms. Browning also stated that there is budget approved for the West Bay Diversion Project, but incremental funding would need to be requested to close the project.

Mr. Norton stated that there are projects on the list that are known will not be funded by CWPPRA. Ms. Browning cautioned that those numbers represent an estimate clean up and not actual funding returned to the Program.

Mr. Norton asked for the total amount promised to projects, but not sent to projects. Ms. Browning answered that the approved future funding requirement is \$139 million, with unapproved estimates for those projects at \$1 billion.

Mr. Graves acknowledged that while the State supports money back into the Program, the State also supports the GIWW Project because there is a CIAP project underway on either side of the GIWW Project location and the GIWW Project will assist, be complementary to, and may even be necessary to convey Atchafalaya River water to the Terrebonne Marshes for a LCA project. He noted that the State has serious concerns with CWPPRA investing in projects or needs that should be included within the USACE O&M program.

Colonel Lee asked if the bottom line is that \$336,624 will be available if the GIWW Project is approved. Ms. Browning answered yes. Colonel Lee then stated that the West Bay Diversion was voted to be closed, but the vote did not fund the increment for FY 12 and the closure increment will need to be moved to FY 10. Funding for closure will need to happen by the low water season of 2010. He added that right now awarding contracts are favorable to such work.

Mr. Norton stated that the cost to close West Bay is unknown at this time and there may still be a possibility to recover some funds. He added that since CIAP is conducting some work on the GIWW now, CWPPRA may be in a better position to save money on construction. He recognized that with approval of the GIWW Project, there is a narrow margin of remaining funds, but that if this project is not approved, then \$9 million is being left unspent.

Mr. Doley clarified that the \$9 million is not currently available, but based on cleaning up the books and returning \$27 million into the Program. Ms. Browning agreed, but pointed out that the \$27 million is a conservative estimate.

Ms. Browning asked for clarification on whether the West Bay closure needed funding now. Colonel Lee answered that funding is unsure at this time, but that given Mr. Norton's motion, the USACE will develop a closure plan and the Task Force will then make a decision as to how to proceed and develop a cost estimate.

Mr. Doley asked if approving the GIWW Project would preclude funding to close the West Bay Diversion in 2010. Ms. Browning answered that money would have to be borrowed from FY 11 funding to close West Bay in 2010.

Mr. Honker agreed with concerns regarding CWPPRA funding projects located on USACE navigation waterways. He stated that this reason is why EPA did not support funding the

GIWW Project at the Technical Committee level. He then added that based on additional information, he believes there is a unique opportunity to approve this project now given the CIAP projects in the vicinity and possible economic advantages. He stated that CWPPRA functions better by flexibly taking advantage of opportunities to save money.

Colonel Lee stated that the USACE is unable to conduct more O&M activities because they have a limited O&M budget and must focus on the highest priority needs first.

Mr. Norton made a motion to include the GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas in Terrebonne Project for approval of Phase II Authorization and Increment 1 Funding. Mr. Boggs seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

Mr. Graves noted that the Phase I and Phase II funding approved today is the largest allocation in CWPPRA history.

Mr. Norton made a motion to approve the requests for Phase II Authorization and Increment 1 Funding for the five projects (Cameron-Creole Fresh Water Intro, Vegetative Plantings - CU 1, Barataria Basin Landbridge, Phase 3 - CU 8, West Belle Pass Barrier Headland Restoration, South Grand Chenier Hydrologic Restoration, and the GIWW Bank Restoration of Critical Areas in Terrebonne Project). Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.

VI. INFORMATION

A. Agenda Item #3 – Status of Breaux Act Program Funds and Projects

Ms. Gay Browning, USACE, briefed the Task Force on the status of CWPPRA accounts and available funding in the Planning and Construction Programs. The Task Force approved \$5,400,736 for FY 10 for the Planning Program which includes the planning budget and outreach program. Today the Task Force will vote on an increase of \$21,450 for the AAC budget.

The current Planning Program surplus is \$377,844 with an additional \$500,000 if the FY 08 books are cleaned up for a potential Planning Program surplus of almost \$900,000. The total Federal construction funds received between 1992 and 2009 was \$882.6 million. The anticipated FY 10 Federal funds are \$79.6 million. The FY 10 anticipated total, including non-Federal contributions, is \$93.6 million. Total obligations to date are \$817.0 million and total expenditures against those obligations are \$551.6 million.

The Program currently has 144 active projects: 82 completed construction, 15 currently under construction, and 47 in the engineering and design stage or waiting for construction approval. Three projects began construction in FY 09. Thirteen projects are scheduled to begin construction in FY 10: two are non-cash flow with funding in place, seven are cash flow that are approved and have funding in place, and four are cash flow requesting Phase II funding today.

There is approximately \$102.4 million in the Construction Program going into approvals today and \$92.5 million in potential approvals today which would leave a balance of \$9,858,776

surplus in the Construction Program. The cumulative work allowance into the Program is \$1.134 billion, with \$919.2 million in obligations to date and an unobligated balance of \$215 million (work allowance less obligations today). There was a \$62 million decrease in the Federal funds estimate between December 2008 and December 2009.

Colonel Lee asked how the \$62 million occurred. Ms. Browning answered that in December 2008, Federal funds were projected and then in June 2009, the funds were projected at a decrease of \$32 million and then in December 2009, the projection decreased another \$29.5 million. Therefore the \$32 million decrease and the \$29.5 million decrease is a total decrease of \$61.6 million between December 2008 and December 2009.

Ms. Browning continued that if approvals for PPL 19 are passed today, then the forecast will be in the red which is the first time that the estimated funding has shown as over budget.

Mr. Boggs asked if these numbers include potential returned funds from the West Bay and Maruepas Swamp Projects. Ms. Browning answered, no, these numbers only include the current estimate on the books and that after those two projects are cleaned up, an additional \$249 million and another potential \$52 million from other projects would be added which would put the overall program budget back into the black.

B. Agenda Item #4 – Report: Public Outreach Committee Report

Ms. Susan Bergeron, USGS, presented the quarterly Public Outreach Committee Report. She stated that current tasks include developing fact sheets for each CWPPRA project and reminded agencies that a project manager signature is needed on each and that project photos are appreciated. The CWPPRA spring celebration for the 20th anniversary of CWPPRA is tentatively scheduled for April 8, 2010 at the Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge to be hosted by the USFWS. A fall celebration will also be held with date to be determined.

The Wetlands Oral History Project: In the Slow Blink of an Alligator's Eye is underway. Eleven teachers in the Terrabonne and LaFourche Parishes have been trained to train students to collect oral histories about human connections to wetlands. Only 250 histories will be collected because the cost to translate and transcribe each is \$1,000. A document has been prepared for the teachers' use and fact sheets for the projects in the Barataria and Terrabonne Basins are being developed. The next step is to take the teachers on a field trip to a CWPPRA project site. Further discussions will be held as to the field trip location.

Ms. Bergeron recognized Rachel Sweeney for giving a presentation on how CWPPRA works at a recent Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) meeting and highlighted how this is an example of how the Outreach Committee is not the only means of outreach. The Outreach Committee is also working on obtaining grant money to create a master coastal calendar for all wetlands related meetings to place on their website. The Committee is also preparing standard briefing packets for Task Force member use and working with Rachel Rodi to develop a one page overview of CWPPRA.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments. Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public. There were none.

C. Agenda Item #5 – Report: Status of the PPL 12 – Floating Marsh Creation Demonstration Project (LA-05)

Dr. Jenneke Visser, AAC, presented the major findings from the Floating Marsh Creation Demonstration Project. The project has reached the end of its final growing season and data collection. Two structure types, bamboo and PVC, were tested in two different wave exposure areas, open large ponds and small ponds, with two planting techniques, potted plants and stem material. The structures weathered Hurricane Gustav in 2008 relatively well; however, nutria grazing, water hyacinth spraying, and boat strikes did cause damage to some of the structures and plants. The results show that this method of planting only works in areas where fresh water conditions can be maintained. While potted plants give quicker cover, stem establishment also worked. Overall, the project was very successful and this method has enormous restoration potential, with about 82,000 acres of shallow freshwater areas that could be potential sites for using this method.

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

Mr. Doley asked if there were cost differences between PVC versus bamboo. Dr. Visser answered that the bamboo used for this effort was not purchased, but that bamboo is commercially available so the cost differences are currently being researched.

Mr. Doley then asked if these methods could be scaled to a larger project. Dr. Visser answered that this method uses small structures that can be connected to one another to build over a large area.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public. There were none.

D. Agenda Item #7 – Report/Discussion: Status of the PPL 8 – Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation Project, Cycle II, IV, and V (CS-28-4&5)

Mr. Scott Wandell, USACE, provided a status update on the construction of the permanent pipeline (Cycle II) and potential construction schedule for Cycles IV and V to meet the Calcasieu Ship Channel FY 11 maintenance cycle in winter 2010/2011. Mr. Wandell stated that construction funding was not requested at the December Technical Committee meeting because cost estimates were not ready at that time and a cost share agreement is not yet in place.

The project consists of five marsh creation sites in the Sabine Wildlife Refuge that will produce approximately 1,120 acres of marsh using material from the Calcasieu River Ship Channel maintenance dredging. Cycle I was completed in January 2002 and created 200 acres of marsh at a cost of \$3.4 million. Cycle II marsh creation was removed from the CWPPRA project in 2008 because the State agreed to pay for this portion. Construction on Cycle II is to begin in March 2010 and is expected to be completed by May 2010. Construction on the permanent pipeline began in summer of 2009 and is currently in the process of being finalized. Cycle III

was completed in March 2007 and constructed 230 acres. Mr. Wandell is currently working on the cost estimate for gapping and creating containment dikes for that site.

Cycles IV and V would construct 460 acres of marsh; the estimated cost is \$4 to 5 million. There are two alternative construction schedules for use during the next event in FY 11: use the permanent pipeline and material from reach in miles 15 to 12 for both Cycles; or use the permanent pipeline and material from reach in miles 14 to 12.5 for Cycle IV and use material from reach mile 10 to 8.5 and the West Cove Canal Corridor temporary pipeline for Cycle V. The most cost effective option is to use the permanent pipeline for both Cycles. The next steps are to coordinate with the State and USFWS to review the alternative construction schedules and cost estimates, develop a recommendation, and request Task Force approval.

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

Mr. Doley asked when a Task Force decision would be needed to meet the timeline for the FY 11 event. Mr. Wandell answered that the contract would be awarded later in 2011. Colonel Lee asked if a decision on funding at the June Task Force meeting would allow enough time to be ready to request action. Mr. Wandell answered yes.

Mr. Boggs asked if the permanent pipeline could be used for the Cycle II work. Mr. Wandell answered no. Mr. Rick Broussard, USACE, clarified that the dredging contract on Cycle II was awarded before the permanent pipeline work was underway and that shipping interests restricted the timeline on Cycle II such that the current dredging contract work could not wait for the permanent pipeline to be ready.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public. There were none.

E. Agenda Item #8 – Report/Discussion: Status of the PPL 17 – Bio-Engineered Oyster Reef Demonstration Project (LA-08)

Dr. John Foret, NMFS, provided a status update on the engineering and design and a potential change in project scope for the Bio-Engineered Oyster Reef Demonstration Project due to an estimated budget increase. Dr. Foret reviewed the project history and explained that at the October 2009 Technical Committee meeting, the project was ready for construction, but the costs were too high. As a result, the project was redesigned. By reducing the wave energy parameter from a 50% target to a 45% target, the price was reduced by 50%. The new fully funded cost estimate is \$2.325 million. Today's presentation will be followed by a fax vote to the Technical Committee to approve a fully funded cost estimate increase of \$343,713.

Mr. Boggs thanked Dr. Foret for conducting the design re-evaluation. Dr. Foret responded that it was a learning lesson such that the project was right on the cusp of being viable, but they were not aware of it until the re-evaluation.

Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the Task Force. There were no comments. Colonel Lee opened the floor to comments from the public. There were none.

VII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

No additional agenda items were presented.

VIII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

No additional public comments were made.

IX. CLOSING

A. Announcement: Dates of Priority Project List 20 Regional Planning Team Meetings

Colonel Lee announced the times, dates, and locations of the upcoming PPL-20 Regional Planning Team meetings as follows:

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| January 26, 2010 | 1:00 p.m. | Region IV Planning Team Meeting | Rockefeller Refuge |
| January 27, 2010 | 9:30 a.m. | Region III Planning Team Meeting | Houma |
| January 28, 2010 | 9:30 a.m. | Region II Planning Team Meeting | New Orleans |
| January 28, 2010 | 1:00 p.m. | Region I Planning Team Meeting | New Orleans |
| February 24, 2010 | 10:00 a.m. | RPT Voting Meeting | Baton Rouge |

B. Announcement: Date of Upcoming CWPPRA Program Meeting

Colonel Lee announced that the next Technical Committee Meeting will be held on April 20, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA in the District Assembly Room (DARM). He also announced that the CWPPRA 20th anniversary is tentatively set for April 8, 2010.

C. Announcement: Scheduled Dates of Future Program Meetings

Colonel Lee announced that the schedule for upcoming 2010 meetings is as follows:

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------|
| April 20, 2010 | 9:30 a.m. | Technical Committee | New Orleans |
| June 2, 2010 | 9:30 a.m. | Task Force | Lafayette |
| September 22, 2010 | 9:30 a.m. | Technical Committee | Baton Rouge |
| October 27, 2010 | 9:30 a.m. | Task Force | New Orleans |
| November 16, 2010 | 7:00 p.m. | PPL 20 Public Meeting | Abbeville |
| November 17, 2010 | 7:00 p.m. | PPL 20 Public Meeting | New Orleans |
| December 1, 2010 | 9:30 a.m. | Technical Committee | Baton Rouge |

D. Adjournment

Colonel Lee adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.