

BREAUX ACT
Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

TASK FORCE MEETING
24 May 2018

Minutes

I. INTRODUCTION

Colonel Michael Clancy convened the 96th meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 9:32 a.m. on May 24, 2018, at the Estuarine Habitats and Fisheries Center, Conference Room 119, 646 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette, Louisiana. The agenda is shown as Enclosure 1. The Task Force was created by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA, commonly known as the Breaux Act), which was signed 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. The Task Force members introduced themselves as follows:

Col. Michael Clancy (USACE)
Mr. Jeffrey Weller (USFWS)
Mr. Chris Doley (NMFS)
Mr. Johnny Bradberry (CPRA)
Mr. Britt Paul (NRCS)
Mr. David Garcia (EPA)

III. OPENING REMARKS

Colonel Clancy introduced himself, expressed appreciation for those in attendance, and asked Task Force members for any opening remarks or comments. None were proffered.

IV. AGENDA and MINUTES

Colonel Clancy asked if the Task Force had any questions regarding or changes to the agenda. None were proffered; Mr. Paul made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Mr. Bradberry seconded, and the motion was passed by the Task Force.

Colonel Clancy explained that the public would be given the opportunity to comment on each agenda item, and that each commenter should provide their name and affiliation so that their comments could be included in the official record. He reminded all attendees to sign in at the entrance to the conference room.

V: TASK FORCE DECISIONS

Agenda Item #5 – Report/ Decision: 2018 Report to Congress Outline (Brad Crawford, EPA)

Mr. Crawford began with a reminder that Congress requires CWPPRA to report on the effectiveness of its projects every three years, specifically citing scientific analysis and benefits to fish and wildlife. The Task Force has been provided an updated report outline for their consideration. The outline provides a general structure for the format of the report, which would reduce the length of the report from 50-75 pages to 16-20 pages. The intent is to generate an accurate, more concise, more readable report.

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force questions or comments; none were proffered. He then called for public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Colonel Clancy called for a motion to accept the recommended format for the Report to Congress. Mr. Doley made the motion to approve the format, which Mr. Bradberry seconded; the motion passed without dissent.

Agenda Item #7 – Report/ Decision: Upcoming 20-Year Life Projects (Brad Inman, USACE)

On behalf of the project sponsors, Brad Inman presented the recommendation for projects nearing the end of their 20-year lives. He began with a review of the process, conducted by the Planning and Evaluation (P&E) Committee, to evaluate projects at this stage, considering project objectives, potential management requirements, coastal priorities, and overall Program benefits. To date, thirteen projects have been approved for closeout, six have been approved for no-cost extensions, and one has been approved to pursue an extension. At these proceedings, the Task Force is asked to vote on the Technical Committee’s recommendation on the path forward to closeout for the following projects, for which no additional costs are yet anticipated.

TE-28	Brady Canal Hydrologic Restoration	NRCS	2020
BA-02	GIWW to Clovelly	NRCS	2020
TV-14	Marsh Island Hydrologic Restoration	COE	2021

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force questions or comments; none were proffered. He then called for public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Colonel Clancy called for a motion to accept the recommendation. Mr. Paul made the motion to approve the path forward to closeout for the projects specified above. Mr. Garcia seconded; the motion passed without dissent.

Mr. Doley pointed out that about 5 years ago the Task Force developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the closeout process. Due to the complexity of some projects, and for due-diligence purposes, he made a motion that the Technical Committee be tasked with evaluating that SOP, and as a result, recommend any changes or updates to the Task Force for consideration.

Colonel Clancy accepted Mr. Doley's motion to task the Technical Committee with reviewing and recommending changes to the SOP for project closeout and called for a second. Mr. Garcia seconded, and the motion carried without dissent.

Agenda Item #8 – Decision: FY19 Planning Budget Approval, including the PPL 29 Process, and Presentation of FY19 Outreach Budget (Process, Funding, etc.) (Brad Inman, USACE) The P&E Subcommittee presented their recommended FY19 Planning Program Budget development, including the PPL 29 Process.

- a. The Task Force considered the Technical Committee's recommendation to approve the PPL 29 Process.

Ms. Sarah Bradley began with an assertion that the PPL 29 process as proposed is the largely the same as in prior years. She provided a review of the number of project nominees in each basin thus: four nominees in the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins; three projects in the Breton Sound and Pontchartrain Basins; two nominees in the Mermentau, Calcasieu/Sabine, and Tech/Vermilion Basins; and one nominee in the Atchafalaya Basin. She also presented (in Task Force binders) minor language changes in the SOP process pertinent to Coastwide and Demonstration projects. She finally read aloud recommended changes in the process as it pertains to project overlap:

“If projects are not sufficiently different, such projects will be combined into one project nominee, and a federal sponsor will be determined. This decision to either combine similar projects or to allow each to move forward will be made at the RPT meeting where the similar projects are proposed. If a mutually agreeable position on sponsorship cannot be determined by overlapping sponsors, voting by the RPT representatives (including agencies and only the parishes within the project basin) will occur to determine sponsorship at the RPT meeting. For non-overlapping projects, a federal sponsor does not have to be identified prior to the coastwide vote.”

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force questions or comments; none were proffered. He then called for public questions or comments.

Chad Courville, Miami Corp, approached the microphone and asked where the landowners fit into the decision-making process [during RPT meetings.] Mr. Inman replied with the presumption that the landowners are (or could be) working closely with the parish representatives in the process. Mr. Courville replied that agencies do not always work directly with landowners; as a result, in the current SOP parish representatives could be out-voted, suggesting that landowners could be effectively ignored.

Randy Moertle, Rainey Alliance, then spoke in agreement with Mr. Courville, stating that landowners are often asked for permission initially to begin project development, which landowners (generally) will not reject even if there is potential overlap, although they may have a preference. But when projects are presented [at RPT

meetings], landowners are then excluded in the process of deciding the rationality of combining them.

Mr. Courville came back to the microphone and added that land-rights issues are a concern throughout project planning and development. He asked that additional language be added to the SOP to include landowner “approval” after the parish representatives and agencies vote on project overlap. He asserted that such landowner input could potentially expedite project progression.

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force questions or comments. Mr. Doley expressed his appreciation for the common sense of the previous public comments, and offered assurances (on behalf of NMFS) that the Program will strive to include landowners early and often in the Process of project development.

Colonel Clancy called for a motion to adopt the PPL 29 process as presented by Ms. Bradley. Mr. Doley made the motion to approve the PPL 29 Process, which Mr. Paul seconded. The motion passed with one dissenting vote. (Mr. Weller was in dissent, asserting that the language of PPL process, as it relates to project overlap, should be edited at these proceedings to include landowner input.)

b. The Task Force voted on a recommendation to approve the FY 19 Outreach Committee Budget, in the amount of \$452,113.

Scott Wilson provided a budget overview by item and a brief verbal summary of Outreach Committee activities, publications and other services. He noted that the budget request has remained stationary for the last decade.

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force and public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Colonel Clancy called for a motion to adopt the FY 19 Outreach Budget as presented. Mr. Paul made the motion which Mr. Doley seconded; the motion passed without dissent.

c. The Task Force voted on a recommendation to approve the FY 19 Planning Budget (includes Outreach Committee Budget), in the amount of \$5,008,132.

Ms. Bradley presented a line-item budget summary, noting that it does not include the Report to Congress, and asserting that it is unchanged from previous years.

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force and public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Colonel Clancy called for a motion to adopt the FY 19 Planning Budget as presented. Mr. Doley made the motion which Mr. Weller seconded; the motion passed without dissent.

VI. INFORMATION

Agenda Item #2 – Report: Status of CWPPRA Program Funds and Projects (Sarah Bradley, USACE)

Ms. Sarah Bradley, USACE, presented an overview of CWPPRA funds. The fully funded total program estimate since its inception to 2019 is \$2.783 billion. Total projected funding received from Department of the Interior (DOI) as well as state funding is \$2.079 billion, leaving a potential gap of \$705704 million. Current Task Force-approved funding for projects in Phase I, Phase II and O&M totals \$1.857 billion. Authorized funding obligated for each agency as requested currently totals \$1.756 billion.

Ms. Bradley reiterated the program estimate which totals \$2,782,739,943. The CWPPRA Program has \$9,033,393 of funding carried from the last Task Force meeting. There will be no changes to the construction requests at today's meeting, so \$9,033,393 will be carried into the fall meetings. In regard to the FY19 Planning Program budget, a total of \$111,860 has been carried over from the last Task Force meeting. Added to that is the allotted \$5,000,000 for Planning activities; total available funding is \$5,111,860. Today's requested funding for FY19 Planning and Outreach totals \$5,008,132, which would result in a \$103,728 remainder.

Ms. Bradley then presented a pie chart summarizing projects as follows: CWPPRA has authorized 218 projects. There are 158 active projects including 26 in Phase 1 Engineering and Design, 14 in Phase 2 Construction and 5 support projects. There are 113 projects which have been constructed and are either completed complete or are now in Operations, Maintenance and/ or Monitoring phase. Additionally, CWPPRA has deauthorized 46 projects, transferred 8 projects, and placed 6 in the inactive category.

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force questions or comments; none were proffered. He then called for public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Agenda Item #3 – Report: Electronic Votes and Approvals (Brad Inman, USACE)

Mr. Brad Inman reported on recent requests approved via electronic vote. He began by explaining that the last Task Force meeting was held electronically because of the temporary government shut down which occurred early in the week of the meeting scheduled in January, and which resulted in travel cancellations. In lieu of that meeting an electronic vote was held February 9, 2018, during which the Task Force unanimously approved all the Technical Committee recommendations. The items approved are as follows:

- a. Minutes of the October Task Force meeting;
- b. Final transfer of the Shell Beach South Marsh Creation Project (PO-168);
- c. Closeout of Terrebonne Bay Demonstration Project (TE-45) with removal of all features except the gabion mats at Reach A and B, at a cost of \$498,730;
- d. Monitoring Budget increase for the Hwy 384 Hydrologic Restoration Project (CS-21) in the amount of \$20,000;

e. Four projects to proceed to Phase I Engineering and Design for a combined cost of \$14,732,575:

PPL 27 Recommended Projects	Agency	Phase I Cost
Mid-Breton Land Bridge Marsh Creation	FWS	\$3,715,465
Bayou Cane Marsh Creation	FWS	\$3,239,930
NE Turtle Bay Marsh Creation and Critical Area Shoreline Protection	NRCS	\$3,852,451
Sabine Marsh Cycles 6 & 7	FWS	\$3,824,731

f. Projects authorized for Phase II Incremental funding at a combined cost of \$47,294,002:

Recommended Phase II Projects	Agency	Phase II Increment I Cost
Cameron-Creole Freshwater Introduction CU-2	NRCS	\$18,567,073
Caminada Headland Back Barrier Restoration	EPA	\$28,726,929

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force questions or comments; none were proffered. He then called for public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Agenda Item #4 – Report: Construction Update (Brad Inman, USACE)

CWPPRA agencies reported on several projects that are currently under construction and projects that have recently completed construction.

Kevin Roy, FWS, presented an update for the Lost Lake Marsh Creation and Hydrologic Restoration project (TE-72). The project began with a notice to proceed in January 2017. It consists of several marsh creation cells which are in various stages of construction. Five water control structures have been installed, which will provide an influx of freshwater and sediments into the project area. Containment dikes are under construction around a 245-acre area of expansion, as are 30,000 linear feet of terraces to the north of two marsh creation cells.

Angela Trahan, FWS, provided an update for the Cameron-Creole Grand Bayou Marsh Creation project, (CS-54). The notice to proceed was issued in the Fall of 2017; construction began in February 2018. Project goals are to construct two marsh creation cells, totaling 600 acres. The dredging contractor has pumped an estimated 800,000 cubic feet of material from Calcasieu Lake into the northern-most cell. Containment dikes have been constructed around the southern cell, and pumping is to ensue within the next couple of months. The contract deadline is December 2018; contracted costs \$8.2 million, much lower than the original estimate.

Robert Dubois, FWS, gave an update for the Bayou Bonfouca Marsh Creation Project (PO-104). The project began with hydraulic dredging in January 2017 and

continued until December 2017. Construction was completed in January 2018. Four contained marsh creation cells totaling 638 acres were constructed with areas of unconfined overflow. A recent survey indicates that more than 2,100 acres of confined and unconfined marsh have been created, 1,300 acres of which now meet target elevations. Additionally, shoreline protection was added adjacent to cell #1 (utilizing St. Tammany Parish CIAP funds). Mr. Dubois concluded with a photograph taken in late March 2018 to illustrate the emergence of vegetation at the site.

Quin Kinler, NRCS, presented an update for the Coastwide Vegetative Planting project (LA-39). He began by explaining that this ten-year project is now in its eighth year. The project has resulted in 3-5 sites being planted per cycle. He briefly reviewed a slide with all plantings since project inception, then specified those that are to be planted, those that have been awarded, and those that are out for bid. He specified plans for upcoming plantings at Belle Isle, Joyce WMA, Big Branch NWR, the Mississippi River Delta Field Trial, and Little Vermillion Bay, all of which are expected to occur by this time next year.

Adrian Chavarria, EPA, provided an update for the Hydrologic Restoration and Vegetative Plantings at des Allemands Swamp (BA-34-2). He began by explaining the location of the project and reviewed the project timeline. Originally a freshwater diversion project approved in 2001, the project was deemed not feasible; in 2013 the project was re-scoped as a hydrologic restoration project. Construction began in October 2017; final inspection occurred in February 2018. Project features consist of the creation of eight gaps along the northern shore of Bayou Chevreull to relieve the impoundment of des Allemands Swamp. Dredge spoils were placed on either side of each gap; spoil banks were planted with bald cypress and tupelo saplings. Research is underway by Southeastern Louisiana University to evaluate project success. Mr. Chavarria commended CPRA for the engineering and design of the project, and for its efforts to advance the project efficiently; total project costs were well under-budget.

Donna Rogers, NOAA Fisheries, gave the updates for three NMFS projects, beginning with Chenier Ronquille Barrier Island Restoration project (BA-76). This project was de-authorized by CWPPRA and became a NRDA-funded project. The project was completed in March 2017, with 212 acres of beach and dune creation, 306 acres of back barrier marsh creation (confined), and 8,655 linear feet of sand fencing. Beach and dune plantings occurred in March 2018, and twenty-one one-year-old diamondback terrapins were released onto the island. Ms. Rogers proceeded with an update of the Oyster Bayou Marsh Restoration project (CA-59). Construction began in December 2016 and was completed in September 2017. The project resulted in the creation of 836 acres of confined marsh, 13 acres of unconfined marsh, 96 acres of marsh nourishment, containment for three ponds and connecting trenasses, and a permanent pipeline crossing. Remaining roadwork is planned. Ms. Rogers' final presentation was on the Rockefeller Refuge Gulf Shoreline Stabilization project (ME-18). The project is currently under construction; its features include three miles of lightweight aggregate, bagged and placed along the shoreline. Barges of quarried rock are expected in June 2018; breakwater construction can then ensue.

Mr. Inman concluded the presentations by iterating the fact that there are approximately fourteen projects under construction along the Gulf Coast of Louisiana,

which utilize different restoration techniques, funding mechanisms, and sources of expertise.

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force questions or comments; none were proffered. He then called for public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Agenda Item #6 – Report: Selection of Ten Candidate Projects to Evaluate for PPL 28 (Kevin Roy, FWS)

Kevin Roy, FWS, provided a review of the ten candidate projects voted on at the most recent Technical Committee meeting. They are presented at these proceedings for recommendation to the Task Force, so they may proceed to Phase 0, analysis. Mr. Roy provided location, net acreage benefits, proposed features, and costs estimates for each of the following:

Region	Basin	PPL 28 Candidates	Agency
4	Calcasieu-Sabine	Long Point Bayou Marsh Creation	EPA
4	Mermentau	Southeast White Lake Marsh Creation	FWS
3	Teche Vermilion	North Marsh Restoration (North Increment)	NMFS
3	Terrebonne	East Catfish Lake Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection	FWS
3	Terrebonne	Small Bayou LaPointe Marsh Creation	FWS
2	Barataria	Grand Bayou Ridge and Marsh Restoration	FWS
2	Breton Sound	East Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing	NMFS
2	Breton Sound	Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation (West) River aux Chenes to Grand Lake	NMFS
2	Breton Sound	Bayou Terre aux Boeuf Ridge Restoration and Marsh Creation	NRCS
Coastwide		Coastwide Hydrologic Improvements	NMFS
PPL 28 Demonstration Candidate			Agency
DEMO		Shoreflex II	NMFS

Colonel Clancy called for Task Force questions or comments; none were proffered. He then called for public questions or comments; none were proffered.

Agenda Item #9 – Report: Public Outreach Committee Report (Mirka Zapletal, USGS)

Ms. Mirka Zapletal presented the Public Outreach Committee report as follows:

In February the Outreach committee participated in World Wetlands Day (local school outreach), and in the LA Environmental Education Symposium (outreach/education for teachers and environmental educators). In March outreach activities included the Lafayette Family Adventure Day hosted by an area non-profit for children and families experiencing grief, and the Audubon Zoo Earth Festival (outreach in the New Orleans area). In April the Outreach Committee participated in the ULL Fete de la Terre (student outreach), and at the Bayou Teche Black Bear Festival (public wildlife awareness). Outreach Committee member Sinead Borchert coordinated with several project sponsors/agencies to procure photographs at project sites to document and convey project progress; the Outreach Committee expressed the desire to continue those site visits. Ms. Zapletal contacted the ULL Communications department requesting student study/input regarding CWPPRA’s outreach – i.e. to garner ideas about social media, branding, product format.

She reportedly received valuable insights, ideas and examples of re-worked products, which the committee will evaluate for potential incorporation into current outreach efforts. Two outreach interns (recent ULL graduates) were introduced – Gabe Griffard (Biology) and Blair Miller (General Studies/Natural Science). Recent publications include *Landmarks* (digital), *Watermarks #57* (emphasis on green infrastructure), an updated and expanded CRMS factsheet, and magnets and stickers based on the Protect Our Coast poster series. Other collaborations involve the Youth Wetlands Program (to develop science curricula based on new state standards), CPRA, USACE, RESTORE and other agencies (to disseminate information and develop wetland function outreach.)

Colonel Clancy asked for comments or questions from the Task Force; Mr. Doley commended efforts and innovation, especially the ULL communications product. Colonel Clancy asked for comments and questions from the public; none were proffered.

Agenda Item #10 – Report: Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) (Leigh Anne Sharp, CPRA)

Leigh Anne Sharp (CPRA) began with an assertion that the CRMS website is being updated for increased security purposes. Mapping features will function similarly, but will be improved. Website training is available as usual and will include new tools; agency-specific training will also be available. “Roadshows” are planned and will focus on the new website. In response to the Colonel’s request, an updated CRMS factsheet is now available.

The CRMS will be programmatically included at several upcoming events: State of the Coast conference, Society of Wetland Scientists, Ecological Society of America, and others. CRMS data is widely used, and the longer the data is collected, the more informative it becomes.

Ms. Sharp then gave a detailed summary of the Mermentau Basin Report, the first basin-wide report attempted thus far, based on data from 50+ CRMS sites therein. The report also provided data about salinity, flooding, drainage, land loss or gain, and project effectiveness. She concluded with a summary of recommendations to reduce land-loss potential.

Colonel Clancy commented that he’d like to meet with the report authors/ collaborators to discuss the possible implementation of recommendations made. He then called for questions or comments from the Task Force. Mr. Doley expressed his appreciation for the efforts. Ms. Sharp assured the Task Force that similar efforts will be occurring across other basins, and those reports generated (likely) with a shorter turnout time.

Colonel Clancy called for questions or comments from the public. Laurie Cormier, CPPJ, expressed her appreciation of the presentation and emphasized the effectiveness of shoreline protection. Chad Courville, Miami Corp., also expressed his appreciation of the analysis and commended the USACE for maintenance and operations of locks, especially as it is relevant to Miami Corp properties.

VII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Colonel Clancy announced the end of formal agenda items and called for any additional questions or comments of the CWPPRA Task Force. None were proffered. He asked for final public comments.

Randy Moertle, property manager for several holdings in multiple parishes, approached the microphone with concerns about LA House Bill 391, which is an effort by charter, tournament and sport fishermen to access private property. According to Mr. Moertle, the issue is contentious because the waterways are considered public, but the water bottoms are often privately-owned. He is admonishing CWPPRA to develop a stance in the matter because there is contention that private land being protected by federal (public) funds should be accessible to the public. He further stated that many landowners would be less likely to accept CWPPRA projects on their properties if the public is allowed access thereon. Finally, he stated that landowners often allow controlled access, as opposed to uncontrolled access by the public, whose vessels and equipment may cause damage to the landscape. He also pointed out that 84% of Louisiana's coast is privately owned, and without private landowner cooperation the CWPPRA program would be rendered ineffectual.

Mr. Bradberry concurred, citing the contentiousness of Bill 391 and urging the Task Force to formulate their position prior to the next legislative session. He also advised temperance and cooperation on both sides to achieve a balanced solution.

Colonel Clancy called for final public comments; none were proffered.

VIII. CLOSING

A. Announcement: Dates of Upcoming CWPPRA Program Meeting

Brad Inman (USACE) was called upon to iterate upcoming CWPPRA meetings and business, which he did as follows:

The next Technical Committee meeting will be held September 13, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (Louisiana Room), 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

B. Announcement: Scheduled Dates of Future Program Meetings (Brad Inman, USACE)

September 13, 2018	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee	Baton Rouge
October 11, 2018	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	Lake Charles
December 6, 2018	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee	Baton Rouge

C. Decision: Adjourn

Colonel Clancy called for any closing remarks from the Task Force members and the public; none were proffered. With no further business, Colonel Clancy made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Paul seconded the motion, which passed without dissent. The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 a.m.