

BREAUX ACT
Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act
TASK FORCE MEETING
4 May 2023
Minutes

I. INTRODUCTION

Colonel Cullen Jones convened the 108th meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. on May 4, 2023 and was conducted in Conference Room of the U.S.G.S. National Wetlands Research Center, 700 Cajundome Blvd. Lafayette, LA and via WebEx virtual meeting platform. 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. Cullen Jones (USACE), Chairperson
Mr. Troy Hill (EPA, Region 6) sitting for Charles Maguire
Mr. Britt Paul (NRCS, for the U.S. Department of Agriculture) sitting in for Chad Kacir
Ms. Leslie Craig (NOAA Fisheries Service, for the U.S. Department of Commerce)
Mr. Robert Dubois (USFWS, for the U.S. Department of Interior) sitting in for Jeffrey Weller
Mr. Bren Haase (CPRA, for the State of Louisiana)

III. OPENING REMARKS

Colonel Jones introduced himself as the recently installed (65th) Commander of the USACE – New Orleans District, serving as chairperson of the CWPPRA Task Force. Col. Jones expressed his appreciation for and formally welcomed all in attendance. He then invited Task Force members to introduce themselves; they did so in turn. Task Force attending members are listed above. Mr. Bren Haase delivered the sad news of Chuck Perrodin’s recent passing, reminding all in attendance of his stalwart championing of Louisiana's Coastal Program. Col. Jones then introduced Audrie Hillis as the new engineering work group chair.

IV. AGENDA and MINUTES

Colonel Jones asked if the Task Force had any changes to make to the agenda; none were proffered.

Col. Jones called for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Mr. Haase made the motion, which Mr. Hill seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

Colonel Jones reported the procedure for public comment within this hybrid meeting format, for those in person and attending virtually. Col. Jones also asked those attending in person to sign in for the record.

Colonel Jones called on Brad Inman, USACE, to present minutes of the 26 January 2023 Task Force meeting. Mr. Inman stated that the minutes had been sent to Task Force members previously for comment and approval; edits have been incorporated and the final draft of the minutes is provided in the Task Force binders. In lieu of reading them, he asks that the Task Force consider approving them as submitted.

Colonel Jones opened the floor for comment from the Task Force and none were proffered.

Col. Jones called for a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Mr. Haase seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

V. TASK FORCE DECISIONS

Agenda Item #8 – Report/Decision: Upcoming 20-Year Life Projects

Ms. Kaitlyn Richard, USACE, provided a brief reminder that annually, the Planning and Evaluation subcommittee meets to determine a path forward for all projects reaching their 15-20-year project life. As a result of that meeting on March 2, 2023, one project is hereby being recommended for a specific path forward.

BA-37	Little Lake Shoreline Protection & Marsh Creation	NMFS	30-Mar-27
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Ms. Richard explained the recommended path forward is to include closeout without a cost increase. This project is located in Barataria Basin within Lafourche Parish and was constructed in 2007. The project includes approximately 26,000 feet of foreshore rock dike, as well as over 900 acres of marsh created and nourished using material from Little Lake. Any specific questions can be addressed to National Marine Fisheries Service, as this is their project.

Colonel Jones opened the floor for comment from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

Col. Jones called for a motion to approve the path forward as presented. Ms. Craig made the motion, which Mr. Hill seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

Agenda Item #9 –Decision: Request to Initiate Transfer of the Long Point Bayou Marsh Creation (CS-85) Project

Col. Jones invited Mr. Troy Hill, EPA to present the request to initiate transfer for CS-85.

Mr. Hill stated that the project was worked through 95% engineering and design when it was identified as eligible to be funded under the NRDA Non-Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement funds. Mr. Hill cited the EPA partnership with CPRA and invited Mr. Haase to continue. Mr.

Haase highlighted the firsts of the project such as the project design was completed outside of the Corps and was adopted by CWPPRA. He explained an area harmed by the oil spill is being restored and CWPPRA is not paying for all of it. EPA and CPRA will return the remaining Phase I Engineering and Design CWPPRA funds to the program.

Colonel Jones opened the floor for comment from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

Col. Jones called for a motion to initiate project transfer as presented. Mr. Hill made the motion, which Mr. Haase seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

Agenda Item #10 –Decision: Request to Initiate Transfer of the Bayou La Loutre Ridge and Marsh Restoration (PO-178) Project to the NRDA LA TIG.

Col. Jones invited Mr. Brian Lezina, CPRA to present the request to initiate transfer for PO-178.

Mr. Lezina took the opportunity to feature the keystone role that the CWPPRA program plays in the State's larger coastal program. The project, which enjoyed public support, was part of PPL 26 and requested Phase II funding in December 2020. The project has been included in and approved for construction funding within NRDA LA TIG Restoration Plan/ Environmental Assessment Plan 8.

Colonel Jones opened the floor for comment from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

Col. Jones called for a motion to initiate project transfer as presented. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Ms. Craig seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

Agenda Item #11 –Decision: FY24 Planning Budget Approval, including the PPL 34 Process, and Presentation of FY24 Outreach Budget (Process, Size, Funding, etc.)

Ms. Richard explained the P&E Subcommittee reviews the PPL process for the upcoming year where recommendations for changes can be made. FY24 Planning Program Budget development, including the PPL 34 Process is presented as follows:

- a. The Task Force will vote based on the Technical Committee recommendation to update the PPL 34 Process. It is recommended to change from the 2017 to the 2023 Master Plan, so that upcoming projects must be consistent with the 2023 State Master Plan. A minor clarification was recommended to allow “up to ten” candidate projects for Phase Zero selection. This provided consistency with the language to the PPL selection which states that up to four projects can be selected in December. The Technical Committee recommends the Task Force approve that the PPL 34 Process include selecting 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 will be selected in the Atchafalaya Basin.

Col. Jones called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public about the PPL 34 process; none were proffered.

Col. Jones called for a motion to approve the Technical Committee’s recommendation for the PPL 34 process as presented. Mr. Hill made the motion, which Mr. Haase seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

Lauren Leonpacher was called upon to present the Technical Committee recommendation to approve the FY24 Outreach Committee Budget, which is unchanged from previous years.

- b. The Task Force will vote based on the Technical Committee recommendation to approve the FY24 Outreach Committee Budget, in the amount of \$452,113.

Col. Jones called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public regarding the Outreach budget; none were proffered.

Col. Jones called for a motion to accept the FY24 Outreach Committee budget in the amount of \$452,113. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Ms. Craig seconded; the motion carried without dissent.

Ms. Walter was asked to present the FY24 planning budget:

- c. The Task Force will vote based on the Technical Committee recommendation to approve the FY24 Planning Budget (includes Outreach Committee Budget), in the amount of \$5,000,000.

Col. Jones called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public regarding the Planning Budget; none were proffered.

Col. Jones called for a motion to accept the Technical Committee recommendation for the FY24 Planning Budget in the amount of \$5,000,000. Mr. Hill made the motion, which Mr. Paul seconded; the motion carried without opposition.

Agenda Item #12 – Report: Selection of Ten Candidate Projects to Evaluate for PPL 33

Ms. Ramsey was called upon to announce the ten (of twenty-two nominated) projects selected as PPL 33 candidates for Phase 0 analysis at the 6 April 2023 Technical Committee meeting. She summarized each project (location, features, net acreage and estimated cost) as listed below:

Region	Basin	PPL 33 Candidates	Agency
1	Pontchartrain	Biloxi Marsh Shoreline Protection	FWS
1	Pontchartrain	Bayou Ducros Marsh Creation	NRCS
2	Barataria	Northwest Little Lake Marsh Creation	FWS
2	Breton Sound	Bayou Terre aux Boeufs Ridge Restoration & Marsh Creation	NRCS
2	Breton Sound	South Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing	NMFS
2	Barataria	Southeast Golden Meadow Marsh Creation	FWS
2	Barataria	West Dupre Cut Marsh Creation	NRCS
3	Terrebonne	Eastern Terrebonne Landbridge Marsh Creation Increment 1	FWS

3	Terrebonne	Carencro Bayou Diversion	NRCS
4	Mermentau	Gulf Shoreline Protection West	FWS

Col. Jones acknowledged the efforts of the workgroups, as well as local, state, federal & university participation in the development of candidate project nominees. Col. Jones then called for questions or comments from the Task Force regarding the ten Phase 0 candidate projects. There were none.

Col. Jones called for questions or comments from the public. Mart Black, Terrebonne Parish, presented a comment via the chat feature which was read to the Task Force by Ms. Richard. "The Carencro Bayou Diversion brings needed freshwater and sediment from the Atchafalaya into the marshes of Western Terrebonne, and with the control structures, will keep the water and sediment from circling back to the Atchafalaya, and the price is right." There were no additional comments.

VI: TASK FORCE REPORTS

Agenda Item #3 – Report: Electronic Votes and Approvals

PO-169 New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation

Mr. Inman reported one of the electronic votes since the last meeting was regarding the New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation (PO-169) project expansion as requested by FWS and CPRA. The Technical Committee voted on 8 February 2023, to recommend Task Force approval to expend Phase II, Increment 1 funding to expand the project footprint. The Task Force approved the request on 15 February 2023.

The request was in accordance with CWPPRA SOP, Section 6 (l)(3): Project Bid Underruns

BS-32 Mid Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing

A second vote was taken to recommend a path forward for a recent bid opening for the Mid Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing project, BS-32. The Task Force voted on 20 April 2023 to approve the award of the base bid.

Col. Jones called for Task Force and public questions and comments; none were proffered.

Agenda Item #4 – Report: Status of CWPPRA Program Funds and Project

Ms. Baylissa Walter, USACE, presented an overview of the status of CWPPRA funds as follows: The fully funded total program estimate since its inception through PPL 1 – 32 is \$3.377 billion. Total projected state and federal sources of funding (through FY23) for all authorized projects in addition to projected Department of the Interior (DOI) funds is \$2.725 billion. A potential gap of \$652 million remains if the Program were to construct all projects to date. Current Task Force-approved budgets for projects in Phase I, Phase II and O&M totals \$2.594 billion. Authorized funding obligated to each agency for approved project phases currently totals \$2.338 billion.

A request for approval of the FY24 Planning Program budget is on the agenda. A total of \$254,972 has been carried over cumulatively through FY23. Added to that is the expected allocation of

\$5,000,000 for Planning activities. Today's funding request for FY24 Planning and Outreach totals \$5,000,000. If approved, a surplus of \$254,972 would remain for FY24.

Ms. Walter then presented a pie chart summarizing projects as follows: CWPPRA has authorized 236 projects. There are 131 active projects including 25 in Phase 1 Engineering and Design, 26 in Phase 2 Construction, 74 projects that have been completed and are now in Operations, Maintenance and/ or Monitoring phase, and 6 program support projects. Additionally, CWPPRA has completed 40 projects (i.e. reached the 20-year life mark), deauthorized 49 projects, transferred 10 projects, and placed 6 in the inactive category.

Col. Jones called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public; none were proffered.

Agenda Item #5 – Report: Construction Update

PO-169 project, the New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation

Mr. Inman introduced Ms. Kristen Ramsey, FWS, to present the construction update of the PO-169 project, the New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation project. After acknowledging the project team and partners, Ms. Ramsey highlighted the goals of the project as to stabilize the shoreline, address interior marsh loss, help maintain the integrity of East Orleans Landbridge, which separates Lake Pontchartrain from Lake Borgne, and to provide protection to US Highway 90. The PPL 24 project features include creating and nourishing 253 acres of marsh in three marsh creation area (MCA) cells while protecting approximately three miles of shoreline through the placement of articulated concrete mats on the earthen containment dikes. The project was approved for Phase II construction in 2019; the Notice to proceed (NTP) was issued in November 2021. Construction began in December 2021. MCA 3 has been completed, while MCA 1 is reaching completion. For MCA 2, the containment north of the cell as well as the expansion area are complete, while the marsh creation area itself is approximately 50% complete. The project was fortunate to have received a favorable bid. Based on this, the Task Force approved the FWS request for project expansion. Unfortunately, CPRA completed an engineering analysis of the proposed shoreline protection expansion and found the stability analysis did not provide the necessary factor of safety and thus did not recommend constructing the expansion. FWS then sought to expand the marsh creation and nourishment in the area north of MCA 2. Magnolia Dredge and Dock is having insolvency issues and do not have the funds to complete the job. FWS is working diligently to complete the project without any unnecessary delays. This is a very cost-effective measure, and funds will be returned to the program.

Agenda Item #6 – Report: Public Outreach Committee Report

Col. Jones requested Ms. Lauren Leonpacher of USGS present the Outreach Committee Report. Ms. Leonpacher highlighted the outreach activities from January 2023 through April 2023 as follows:

- The interactive exhibits being housed at the Acadiana Center for the Arts, one of which is the "I Remember..." oral history project, and the other "I Hope..." project, entitled "Visions for a Sustainable Future in Coastal Louisiana. The exhibit proved so successful, especially with the Festival International, that it was extended.

- The WaterMarks360 Virtual Field Trip to the BS-11, Delta Management at Fort St. Philip project is available.
- Several outreach events including World Wetlands Day, Louisiana Fisheries Forward Summit, Cook-off for the Coast, FishSTOCK, and Acadiana Family Adventure Day were hugely successful. The Wetlands Writing Contest enjoyed lovely submissions.
- The Louisiana Environmental Education Book Display remains popular and is perpetually travelling.
- Electronic outreach and social media remain an important component. The new website has been released and contains all of the information of the previous website in an updated format. Social media highlights activities like the Wetlands Writing Contest
- We are also looking forward to the upcoming events of Department of Education conference, State of the Coast and GOMA. The LDWF teacher workshop, WETshop is also accepting applications.

Col. Jones commended Ms. Leonpacher for the great work of the committee.

Col. Jones called for questions or comments from the Task Force. Mr. Haase complimented the Virtual Tours claiming them fantastic. Col. Jones then called for questions from the public; none were proffered

Agenda Item #7 – Report: Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) Report

Colonel Jones invited Ms. Leigh Anne Sharp of CPRA to present the CRMS update. Ms. Sharp began with highlighting the new elevations that will be in the database as GEOID12B. She then presented a summary of the agency survey regarding CRMS monitoring priorities. In general, the agencies support maintaining the integrity of the network. If additional funding is found, additional sites are desirable. Rather than disturb the network, it is preferable to identify alternative methods for imagery collection as opposed to less frequent imagery collection. There was no support for reduction of the annual surface elevation and accretion monitoring. Ms. Sharp continued with the capture of accelerated sea level rise in the Gulf of Mexico as well as increased flooding and marsh inundation. The decrease in salinity as measured with CRMS was attributed to the increased rainfall in the area. Ms. Sharp then indicated synthesis reports are in the works. She completed her report with images of improved vegetation at a CRMS site that was attributed to alligators removing nutria.

Col. Jones complimented Ms. Sharp for the outstanding presentation. He then called for questions or comments from the Task Force and from the public; none were proffered

Agenda Item #13 -- Additional Agenda Items

Colonel Jones inquired if there were any additional agenda items and none were offered.

VII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Colonel Jones called for any additional public comments; none were proffered.

VIII. CLOSING

Mr. Inman was called upon to iterate the following schedule of meetings, which he did as follows:

A. Announcement: Date of Upcoming CWPPRA Program Meeting

The next Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

B. Announcement: Scheduled Dates of Future Program Meetings

Future Program Meetings*

September 7, 2023	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	New Orleans
October 5, 2023	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	New Orleans
December 14, 2023	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	New Orleans

*subject to change

IX. Adjournment

Col. Jones expressed appreciation for everyone in attendance and their comments in today's meeting. He asked for final Task Force comments, then final public comments. Seeing none, Col. Jones then invited Mr. Haase to provide an update on the 2023 State Master Plan.

Mr. Haase then proceeded to explain that the draft 2023 Master Plan was presented to the state legislature. It has been unanimously approved by the Senate and has moved on to the House, where it must go through two committees, then the full House before the plan can be approved. Hopefully in the next few weeks it will be approved and that the next meeting the new Master Plan will be in place.

Colonel Jones asked for a motion to adjourn the proceedings. Mr. Hill made the motion; there Mr. Paul seconded. The motion carried without dissent and the meeting was adjourned at 10:42 a.m.