

**BREAUX ACT**  
**Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act**  
**TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**2 May 2024**  
**Minutes**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Colonel Cullen Jones convened the 111th meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. on May 2, 2024 and was conducted in the Oliver Pollock Room of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Galvez Building, 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, 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. Britt Paul (NRCS, for the U.S. Department of Agriculture)  
Mr. Troy Hill (EPA, Region 6)  
Mr. Patrick Williams serving for. Leslie Craig (NOAA Fisheries Service, for the U.S. Department of Commerce)  
Mr. Bren Haase (CPRA, for the State of Louisiana)  
Mr. Jeffrey Weller (USFWS, for the U.S. Department of Interior) sitting in for Jeffrey Weller

## **III. OPENING REMARKS**

Colonel Jones introduced himself as the (65<sup>th</sup>) 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. Colonel Jones thanked those who were able to enjoy the Coastal Celebration of the LaBranche Marsh Creation Project at the Bonnet Carre Spillway. He proceeded to commend the cooperation and collaboration between the five federal agencies and the state that make coastal restoration, protection, and ecosystem restoration possible. Colonel Jones then recognized Ms. Kaitlyn Richard for her decade of contributions to CWPPRA as Project Manager and then the Program Manager. He also acknowledged the contributions of the nearly three-decade contributions of Mr. Erick Swenson and Dr. Lawrence Rouse efforts on the Academic Advisory Group.

#### 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 Ms. Amanda Landry, USACE, to present minutes of the 25 January 2024 Task Force meeting. Ms. Landry 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, she 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. Williams made the motion, which Mr. Paul seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

#### V. TASK FORCE DECISIONS

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

Ms. Amanda Landry, 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 8, 2024, seven projects are hereby being recommended for a specific path forward for a project closeout with no additional cost increase:

- a. Projects requesting approval for closeout with no cost increase:

TE-37	New Cut Dune and Marsh Restoration	EPA	30 Sept 28
TE-40	Timbalier Island Dune & Marsh Restoration	EPA	19 Mar 29
TE-50	Whiskey Island Back Barrier Marsh Creation	EPA	18 June 30
PO-16	Bayou Sauvage Hydrologic Restoration #1	FWS	30 May 24
PO-18	Bayou Sauvage #2	FWS	28 May 24
BA-35	Pass Chaland to Grand Bayou Pass Barrier Shoreline Restoration Project	NMFS	25-Aug-29
BA-27d	Barataria Basin Landbridge Shoreline Protection, Phase 4	NRCS	26 April 26

There are three EPA projects seeking closeout with no cost increase, and in fact, will be returning any remaining monitoring funds. The first is TE-37, New Cut Dune and Marsh

Restoration Project that features 8,000 linear feet of barrier island and over 17,000 linear feet of sand fencing. The Terrebonne Parish project also included plantings of nine species of native barrier island vegetation. The project reaches its 20-year life 30 September 2028. The second EPA project is the TE-40 Timbalier Island Dune and Marsh Restoration Project that features 2.2 miles of beach rim and dune system, 22,750 linear feet of sand fencing and installation of 110,000 containers of eight species of plants. The project reaches its 20-year life 19 March 2029. The third EPA project is the Whiskey Island Back Barrier Marsh Creation TE-50 Project that features 319 acres of back barrier intertidal marsh habitat, 5,865 linear feet of tidal creeks, three 1-acre tidal ponds, and 13,000 linear feet of protective sand dune all while nourishing 95 acres. The project reaches its 20-year life 18 June 30.

Two FWS projects are also seeking closeout with no cost increase, the Bayou Sauvage NWR Hydrologic Restoration Phase 1, PO-16, and Phase 2, PO-18 Projects. PO-16 reaches its 20-year life in May of 2024 and features two pump stations with vertical drainage pumps and a weir in Bayou Thomas to allow independent management of each unit. PO-18 also reaches its 20-year life in May 2024 and features a dual pump station with vertical drainage pumps.

One of the final two projects seeking closeout with no cost increase is Pass Chaland to Grand Bayou Pass Barrier Shoreline Restoration Project, BA-35. It is a NMFS project that reaches its 20-year life 25 August 2029 and features beach and dune platform along approximately 2.7 miles of gulf shoreline, 14,360 linear feet of sand fencing, and created more than 420 acres. The final project seeking closeout with no cost increase is Barataria Basin Landbridge Shoreline Protection Phase 4 BA-27d, sponsored by NRCS. It features 30,541 linear feet of rock revetment and reaches its 20-year life 26 April 2026.

Two projects are hereby being recommended for a specific path forward for a project time extension with no additional cost increase:

b. Projects requesting approval for time extension with no cost increase:

ME-19	Grand-White Lake Landbridge Restoration	FWS	1 Oct 24
BS-03a	Caernarvon Diversion Outfall Management	NRCS	19 June 24

Ms. Landry invited Mr. Roy, FWS, to present the Grand-White Lake Landbridge Restoration, ME-19, request, which reaches its 20-year life October 2024. The PPL 10 project features 12,024 linear feet of foreshore rock dike along Grand Lake shoreline and 19,544 linear feet of terraces, with vegetative plantings in Collicon Lake. Mr. Roy then presented the funds remaining, \$4,494,818. The project was approved for closeout in January of 2020. The team is requesting a 2-year, no cost two-year time extension for data collection, engineering and design and construction of the final maintenance event, which is believed to require another lift on the rock shoreline protection.

Ms. Landry then invited Ms. Angela Trahan, NRCS, to discuss the Caernarvon Diversion Outfall Management Project, BS-03a that reaches its 20-year life, following a two-year extension, in June 2024. The PPL 2 project features eight locations with flow through culverts, three plug closures with armored protection and 13,000 feet of spoil bank restoration. She then reported the project, which was completed in September 2022, had funds remaining in the amount of

\$179,912.02, Federal and State match. The team is requesting an additional two year no-cost time extension to determine final actions before closeout. At a future date, NRCS and CPRA will seek project closeout with cost increase to execute the final maintenance event.

Colonel Jones opened the floor for comment from the Task Force and the public. Mr. Weller asked Ms. Walter if the funds returned to the program were accounted for in the Status of Funds presentation presented at this meeting and if they go into carry over balance. Ms. Walter explained the funds are returned to the program as a whole, once Task Force approval is given. None from the public were proffered.

*Col. Jones called for a motion to approve the path forward as presented. Mr. Weller made the motion, which Mr. Hasse seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

#### **Agenda Item #9 –Decision: Request to Initiate Inactivation of the Freshwater Bayou Marsh Creation (ME-31) Project**

Col. Jones invited Ms. Angela Trahan, NRCS, to present the request to initiate inactivation of ME-31.

Ms. Trahan made the request on behalf of NRCS and CPRA for approval of a recommendation to the Task Force to inactivate the Freshwater Bayou Marsh Creation Project (ME-31). She briefly described the PPL 19 project completed the 95% design in October 2020 and featured 291 acres of marsh creation and 137 acres of marsh nourishment. The request to inactivate is because of the number of unsuccessful Phase 2 Requests and a backlog of more cost-effective projects with limited program funds for construction. The funds remaining are \$111,090.93.

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 inactivation as presented. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Mr. Haase seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

#### **Agenda Item #10 –Decision: Request for change in scope for the PPL 29 North Delacroix Marsh Creation and Terracing (BS-41) Project**

Col. Jones invited Mr. Brandon Howard, NMFS to present the request for the change in scope of BS-41.

Mr. Howard began with project background; the PPL 29 project initially included two marsh configuration cells totaling 411 acres with 8500 linear feet of terraces to support Highway 300. At the 30% design timeframe, some deeper water areas were identified that were not conducive for marsh creation, and there were landowner issues. Solutions for these obstacles were veering away from the project's original intent with 371 acres of marsh creation and nourishment and 5250 linear feet of terraces. With the authorization of the Reggio project, the polygons were reconfigured more northerly to protect infrastructure in the Delacroix community. The proposed 95% design layout is 378 acres of marsh creation and nourishment with 7250 linear feet of terraces. Additionally, the borrow area was moved to Lake Amedee, and requires the same

pump distance as the original borrow source. This request, between the 30% and 95% designs, is for a scope change and not for additional funds and is inflation driven. Because of the 27% change in fully funded costs, the resulting cost per net acre saw a 39% cost increase. The new Fully Funded Cost will be \$45,241,802, resulting in a cost effectiveness of \$168,185 per net acre, making it the least cost-effective in a Breton Sound Basin cost comparison.

Colonel Jones opened the floor for comment from the Task Force and the public. Mr. Hill commended NMFS for their collaboration with EPA and creating synergy with the Reggio project. None from the public were proffered.

*Col. Jones called for a motion for a change in scope as presented. Mr. Williams made the motion, which Mr. Hill seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

#### **Agenda Item #11 –Decision: Request for Operations and Maintenance Budget Increase for Oaks/Avery Canal Hydrologic Restoration (TV-13a) Project**

Col. Jones invited Mr. Dion Broussard, CPRA to present the request for Operations and Maintenance Budget Increase for TV-13a.

Mr. Broussard proceeded to present the features of the PPL 6 project for which construction was complete in 2002. In order to achieve the original project goals to improve the hydrology and reduce tidal fluctuation to protect marsh loss and protect the eroding shoreline, there are features that are in need of attention. These features include shoreline stabilization, spoilbank maintenance, and a sheetpile weir. In September of 2020, a budget increase was approved to repair the sheetpile, however, a survey conducted revealed a more aggressive approach than planned was needed. In April 2022 a one-year no cost time extension was approved, followed by two-year no cost time extension in September 2023. At this time, the team is requesting a budget increase to rebid with no alteration to the scope of work or permit. This request reflects the current market conditions to remove and replace the weir structure, which are estimated at \$687,508 and does include a 25% contingency. The remaining budget is \$239,675. The request is for a budget increase of \$501,995; this will leave the project in good working condition prior to the end of life.

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 budget increase as presented. Mr. Paul made the motion, which Mr. Haase seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

#### **Agenda Item #12 –Decision: FY25 Planning Budget Approval, including the PPL 35 Process, and Presentation of FY25 Outreach Budget (Process, Size, Funding, etc.)**

Ms. Landry explained the P&E Subcommittee reviews the PPL process for the upcoming year where recommendations for changes can be made. FY25 Planning Program Budget development, including the PPL 35 Process is presented as follows:

- a. The Task Force will vote based on the Technical Committee recommendation to update the PPL 35 Process. After meeting on 8 March 2024, the P&E Committee is recommending minor changes to the PPL process. These changes include discussion of the Selection Criteria for Project Selection throughout the document and establishing a due date for the Coastwide vote. A recommendation to the Task Force to approve that the PPL 35 Process includes selecting four nominees each in the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins; three projects each in the Breton Sound and Pontchartrain Basins; two nominees each in the Mermentau, Calcasieu/Sabine, and Tech/Vermilion Basins; one nominee in the Atchafalaya Basin; and one nominee in the Coastwide category. The nominees per basin remains unchanged, however, CWPPRA remains flexible and if changes are required prior to the RPT meetings, those changes will be brought forth through a public meeting later in the year.

Col. Jones called for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public about the PPL 35 process; none were proffered.

*Col. Jones called for a motion to approve the Technical Committee's recommendation for the PPL 35 process as presented. Mr. Williams 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 FY25 Outreach Committee Budget, which is unchanged from previous years.

- a. The Task Force will vote based on the Technical Committee recommendation to approve the FY25 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 FY25 Outreach Committee budget in the amount of \$452,113. Mr. Hill made the motion, which Mr. Weller seconded; the motion carried without dissent.*

Ms. Walter was asked to present the FY25 planning budget:

- b. The Task Force will vote based on the Technical Committee recommendation to approve the FY25 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 FY25 Planning Budget in the amount of \$5,000,000. Mr. Williams made the motion, which Mr. Weller seconded; the motion carried without opposition.*

### **Agenda Item #13 – Report: Selection of Ten Candidate Projects to Evaluate for PPL 34**

Ms. Ramsey was called upon to announce the ten (of twenty-one nominated) projects selected as PPL 34 candidates for Phase 0 analysis at the 4 April 2024 Technical Committee meeting. She summarized each project (location, features, net acreage and estimated cost) as listed below:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Basin</b>	<b>PPL 33 Candidates</b>	<b>Agency</b>
2	Breton Sound	East Lake Lery Shoreline Restoration	FWS
2	Breton Sound	Wood Lake Marsh Creation	NRCS
2	Barataria	Bayou L'Ours Ridge Restoration and Marsh Creation	NRCS
2	Barataria	West Dupre Cut Marsh Creation	NRCS
2	Barataria	Elmer's Island Restoration	NMFS
2	Barataria	Southeast Lafitte Marsh Creation	NMFS
3	Terrebonne	Eastern Terrebonne Landbridge Marsh Creation Increment 1	FWS
3	Terrebonne	South Isle de Jean Charles Landbridge Increment	NRCS
4	Mermentau	Grand Chenier Marsh Creation	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. None were proffered.

## **VI: TASK FORCE REPORTS**

### **Agenda Item #3 – Report: Electronic Votes and Approvals**

#### **BS-32 Mid-Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing Project**

Ms. Landry reported on the one electronic vote since the last meeting regarding the BS-32 Mid-Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing Project. On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the FWS and CPRA requested that the CWPPRA Technical Committee and Task Force review the proposal to expand the BS-32 Mid-Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing Project by 61 acres, while remaining within the available project budget. The project is currently under construction.

The request was approved February 16, 2024, in accordance with CWPPRA SOP, Section 6 (l)(3): Project Bid Underruns.

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 – 33 is \$3.443 billion. Total projected state and federal sources of funding (through FY24) for all authorized

projects in addition to projected Department of the Interior (DOI) funds is \$2.730 billion. A potential gap of \$712 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 \$2.701 billion. Authorized funding obligated to each agency for approved project phases currently totals \$2.386 billion.

A request for approval of the FY25 Planning Program budget is on the agenda. A total of \$254,972 has been carried over cumulatively through FY24. Added to that is the expected allocation of \$5,000,000 for Planning activities. Today's funding request for FY25 Planning and Outreach totals \$5,000,000. If approved, a surplus of \$254,972 would remain for FY25.

Ms. Walter then presented a pie chart summarizing projects as follows: CWPPRA has authorized 238 projects. There are 133 active projects including 24 in Phase 1 Engineering and Design, 29 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 ten projects, and placed six in the inactive category.

#### **Agenda Item #5 – Report: Construction Update**

Ms. Landry invited Ms. Donna Rodgers, NMFS, to present the construction update of the CS-78 No Name Bayou Marsh Creation and Nourishment Project. Ms. Rodgers began by thanking the CPRA project team Travis Moore, Project Manager, Joanne Tribou, Project Engineer, Jacques Boudreaux, Construction Manager, as well as engineer Jason Kroll of NOAA. The project is located in Cameron Parish, south of Calcasieu Lake. The construction contract was awarded in December 2023, notice to proceed in March 2024 and the estimated construction start in the next few months, with a 455-day construction time and a cost of \$14.8 million base bid and bid option. A series of slides showing the project layouts followed. There are three marsh creation cells for a total 466 acres of marsh creation with 17,430 linear feet of containment dikes.

Ms. Landry introduced Ms. Kristen Ramsey, FWS, as presenter of the PO-169 New Orleans Landbridge Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation Project. Ms. Ramsey thanked her project team, Mr. Joe Wyble, Project Manager, Jacques Boudreaux, Design Engineer, and David Chambers, Construction Engineer. She then showed a series of slides indicating the project location along Highway 90 and features of three marsh creation cells with two borrow areas. A total of 253 acres of marsh will be created and nourished with approximately three miles of shoreline protection. A northern expansion of MCA2 was approved last year and will yield an additional 25 acres behind the shoreline protection and has been completed. Construction progress to date includes the completion of MCA3. Pumping has been completed in MCA2, both the base and the expansion areas. Repairs of about 1000 linear feet were required on the Lake Pontchartrain side containment of MCA1 and have been completed. MCA2 was surveyed and has been found to be below target elevation, and will continue pumping. MCA1 is currently at 80% completion. Important dates include the notice to proceed in November 2021, with construction starting December 2021, the expansion of MCA2 was approved in 2023 and completion is anticipated this summer. The expected construction cost is \$12,569,480, which is under the \$15.9 million budget.



Ms. Landry asked Mr. Mike Nichols, NRCS, to present the construction update for the PO-75 LaBranche Marsh Creation Project. Mr. Nichols explained PO-75 and PO-133 LaBranche East and Central projects were combined. The project is located on the southwest shoreline of Lake Pontchartrain with the original CWPPRA project PO-17 to the east. Features include 54,618 linear feet of containment dikes that are under construction with 6.2 million cubic yards of borrow material. Additionally, there are 6,848 linear feet of tidal creeks under construction with 39 tidal ponds being excavated. Mr. Nichols then presented a series of slides highlighting the construction progress of the three marsh creation cells, the interior ponds and the containment dikes. The original PO-75 had 726 acres, a second marsh creation cell with 75 acres, and the third marsh creation cell for PO-133 with 671 acres. The newly created habitat is a favorite of birds in the area. The earthen containment dikes in MCA 1 with 7,611, MCA 2 with 26,000 and MCA 3 with 20,899, for a total of 54,510 linear feet have been constructed. The 19 ponds in MCAs 1 and 2 as well as 20 ponds in MCA 3 have been constructed. In MCA 2 3725 linear feet of tidal channel are under construction with 2955 linear feet of tidal channel in MCA 3. Mobilization if the dredge pipeline is scheduled for May 20, 2024 and pumping of 6.1 million cubic yards is expected to begin in July and to be completed by the end of the year.

Ms. Landry initiated the presentation of the BS-32 Mid-Breton Landbridge Marsh Creation and Terracing by introducing Mr. Robert Dubois, FWS. Mr. Dubois thanked the project team from CPRA, the Project Manager, April Newman, the Project engineer Chris Scalco, and the Construction Engineer, Taylor Chassaignac. He then presented the project map, with the newly approved MCA 2 marsh creation expansion of 61 acres. The map does not include the terraces nor MCA 5 which was turned over to BS-38 because of the closer borrow site. The project is located in Plaquemines Parish, west of Delacroix and north of Bayou Gentilly. The Phase II construction plus contingency is \$27,185,568 and the construction contract award that includes the 61 acres of the expansion is \$25,524,854. The project status includes the scope change in April 2023, the construction contract that was awarded in May 2023, with construction beginning in September 2023, and the expansion request that was granted in February 2024. The anticipated completion date is May 2025. Mr. Dubois proceeded to show a series of drone photos showing the marsh creation areas and their containment dikes, rocks from a parish project as well as the town of Delacroix. The MCA 3 area is currently under construction and is challenging because of the large amount of organic material that require geotextile materials strategically placed on the earthen containment dikes. The final slide showed the drone image of project in its entirety.

Col. Jones commended the project teams on the construction of these critical projects and then called for Task Force and public questions and comments. Mr. Williams, NMFS, thanked FWS and CPRA for the cooperation with additional information that was requested in preparation for this meeting. The NOAA sponsored BS-38 project was recently authorized for Phase II construction and is undergoing final design. NMFS is investigating the potential to incorporate BS-32 MCA 5 into BS-38 once the authorized BS-38 MCAs features are finalized. Mr. Williams continued with thanks to NRCS for the LaBranche project which is quite large in scale and required extensive collaboration at the Phase 0, the Phase I and the Phase II stages with NOAA Fisheries. Notably, the project has the largest number of tidal creeks and ponds seen in CWPPRA to this date and is not only because of the scale of the project but because of their initiative. NRCS went through the extra effort to coordinate with NOAA Fisheries at each of

those phases to include habitat diversity and NMFS look forward to seeing the results of those design efforts. None from the public were proffered.

### **Agenda Item #6 – Report: Public Outreach Committee Report**

Col. Jones requested Ms. Lauren Leonpacher of USGS present the Outreach Committee Report. Ms. Leonpacher expressed that it is an honor to present the Outreach efforts to the Task Force. She explained she did not have any slides covering the previous day's Coastal Celebration and thanked all those who came to support the event and then acknowledged the contributions of the NRCS partners, Angela Trahan, Audrina Lange, Mike Nichols, Alex Felter. She thanked Terri Von Hoven and then offered a special acknowledgement to Kacie Wright for all of her expertise with planning to make the ceremony a success. Ms. Leonpacher then highlighted the outreach activities from January 2024 through April 2024 as follows:

- The CWPPRA Outreach Committee attended two conferences. The Gulf of Mexico Alliance in Tampa, FL in February 2023 with Dr. Sharon Osowski which was well attended by science professionals from all along the coast. The Mereaux Foundation and Restore the Mississippi River Delta Cook-off for the Coast, also in February, provided the opportunity to interact with restoration organizations as well as the community.
- Community events such as Healing House Family Adventure Day sponsored by US Fish and Wildlife Service in March in Lafayette allow Outreach to connect with aspiring CWPPRA professionals. The LDWF and New Orleans City Park Conservancy 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Big Bass Rodeo and Fishtival in New Orleans in March was very well attended and provided the opportunity for the community to learn about the importance of coastal wetlands. The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Coastal Day at the Louisiana Legislature in Baton Rouge in March allows for the connection with partners and to hear the Governor speak about wetlands restoration.
- Electronic outreach and social media remain an important component. There are just under 1900 Newsflash subscribers. Since January over 80 community calendar events and 13 Newsflashes have been shared. CWPPRA has nearly 5000 social media followers and since January almost 6000 feeds.
- Watermarks360 remains hugely successful. In April 2024, the Caminada Headlands reached over two million page views. Since January, Our Changing Delta has had over 60,000 new users. About 50% of page views of Caminada website were accessed from Our Changing Delta. Approximately 70% of users are from Louisiana, 25% of from throughout the USA, and 5% are international. The next Watermarks360 is in development with NRCS and features the Cameron-Creole Freshwater Introduction, CS-49.
- Teacher training workshops partnering with UNO are scheduled for June.
- The Nicholls State University Coastal Center construction images were shown, and Outreach submitted recommendations for content and aesthetics for the exhibit space.

- The deadline for the Wetlands Writing Contest is Monday 6 May with winning submissions compiled into a PDF.
- The Louisiana Environmental Education Book Display remains popular and is in its seventh installation in the St. Charles Parish Public Library System in Luling.
- A revised CWPPRA How-To Guide was developed to let the public know how to submit project ideas. It has clickable links so the public can easily access additional information. It is also easy to update so it can be sent annually as a PDF with Newsflashes and will be housed on the LAc coast.gov website.
- Ongoing projects include being on the development team for the 2025 National Marine Educators Conference. More education and community engagement fieldtrips have been made available for students at the USGS offices. Outreach remains involved with the Atchafalaya NERR Education program. Also in the future is an updated CRMS User Guide and Educational Video Series.
- The next few months will be busy, however, if there is an event the Outreach team is missing, please contact the committee with the information.

Col. Jones commended Ms. Leonpacher for the great work of the committee, especially with the success of the LaBranche Celebration Ceremony.

Col. Jones called for questions or comments from the Task Force and 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 programmatic notes. The CRMS website is 99% updated. The elevation data are currently in Geoid 12b and there are conversions to convert 99 to 12b. She expressed gratitude to USGS for their assistance with that endeavor. The next survey is scheduled for 2026/2027 and will incorporate Gravimetric datum.

With ongoing monitoring, the RSET and accretion wrapped 30 April 2024 and was able to capture the elevation loss due to drought. Additional porewater and soil salinity cores were taken to capture drought impacts and to supplement areas where no water samples could be taken. Ms. Sharp expressed appreciation for the efforts of LSU for their assistance with sample collection. June 15<sup>th</sup> begins the vegetation monitoring, with this year being a tree year. The Coastwide flight is scheduled for October, where some land gain is expected due to expansion of the mudflats.

Ms. Sharp continued reporting data synthesis has been the recent focus. She then presented a map with land change between 2005 and 2021 that demonstrated CRMS sites capture the historic land loss trends. In the Delta, some sites are all gone while the Chenier Plain is fairly intact. Since 2021, there is a variety of ground change, some land loss is episodic, while others are recovering. In fact, land gain is seen in Breton Sound where previous land loss had occurred outside of Caernarvon. However, in the Calcasieu Sabine area there is land loss in the East Mud

Lake Hydrologic Restoration area due to the last few years of high water and saltwater flooding. Additionally, there is a band in the basin that is suffering land loss due to inundation stress that was initially hurricane induced. The entire Calcasieu Sabine Basin is in need of hydrologic restoration. In fact, the only land gain at CRMS sites in the basin are due to marsh creation.

A research paper by Camille Stagg has recently been published that concludes the elevation change and land loss at 159 CRMS sites from 2008 to 2021 are mostly being caused by tidal erosion. Prior to the loss of marsh, an accelerating elevation gain was noted. Ms. Sharp then showed a map depicting that landloss process appears to be tidally driven in the Mississippi River Deltaic Plain. There was some land gain occurring in the delta. She explained that land change does need to be considered when interpreting elevation strategies, since different rates have different meanings in different regions.

The Coastal Master Plan for 2029 is being updated. In much the same manner as in 2023, hydrologic stressors are identified in the monitoring data set that predict land loss. Between 2017 and 2023 the predicted flooding and salinity conditions were seen, however, the expected vegetation loss did not occur. The assumptions made in 2023 regarding the impacts of flooding and salinity were proven and are being investigated for 2029.

Ms. Sharp then continued with new findings discovered at CRMS 162 in the delta. There are five sites that have land loss associated with water hyacinth rafting. Initially phragmites scale damaged vegetation, then hyacinth rafts smothered the vegetation and deposited sediment. When the raft then washes out, it takes the vegetation and sediment with it. She then stated events such as these can be captured with CRMS data and are available on social media.

Col. Jones complimented Ms. Sharp for the outstanding presentation. He then called for questions or comments from the Task Force and from the public. Mr. Weller inquired in addition to TBH, about how the health of trees is monitored. Ms. Sharp explained trees are marked when they are initially established and TBH is measured every three years. Additionally, there is a Forested Forensic Quality Index that incorporates canopy cover. None from the public were proffered.

#### **Agenda Item #14 -- 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**

Ms. Landry 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 5, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

**B. Announcement: Scheduled Dates of Future Program Meetings**

Future Program Meetings\*

September 5, 2024	9:30 a.m.	Technical Committee Meeting	New Orleans
October 3, 2024	9:30 a.m.	Task Force	New Orleans
December 5, 2024	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 requested a motion to adjourn.

*Colonel Jones asked for a motion to adjourn the proceedings. Mr. Haase made the motion; there Mr. Hill seconded. The motion carried without dissent and the meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m.*