

COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT  
TASK FORCE MEETING

February 15, 2007

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 18, 2006 TASK FORCE MEETING**

**For Discussion and Decision:**

Mr. Constance will present the minutes from the last Task Force meeting. Task Force members may provide suggestions for additional information to be included in the official minutes.

**BREAUX ACT**  
**Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act**

**TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**18 October 2006**

**Minutes**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Colonel Richard Wagenaar convened the 64<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force. The meeting began at 9:40 a.m. on October 18, 2006 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, Division Assembly Room, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans, LA. The agenda is shown as enclosure 1. The Task Force was created by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA, commonly known as the Breaux Act), which was signed into law (PL 101-646, Title III) by President George Bush on November 29, 1990.

**II. ATTENDEES**

The attendance record for the Task Force meeting is presented as enclosure 2. Listed below are the six Task Force members:

Ms. Sidney Coffee, State of Louisiana, Governor's Office of Coastal Activities (GOCA)  
Mr. Donald Gohmert, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Mr. Sam Hamilton, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Mr. Bill Honker, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)  
Colonel Richard Wagenaar, Chairman, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)  
Dr. Erik Zobrist, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

**III. OPENING REMARKS**

Mr. Donald Gohmert announced that the NRCS released a new coastal wetland plant, gulf bluestem for barrier island stabilization. Foundation plant materials for commercial nursery production is available through the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Golden Meadow, LA. The plant has been released for commercial production and will appear in the NRCS Standards and Specifications for vegetating Louisiana barrier islands, shorelines and inland marshes.

Dr. Erik Zobrist reminded everyone that hurricane season does not end until November 30<sup>th</sup>. The quiet hurricane season this year has given the state an opportunity to recover. He reminded everyone of the importance of having an emergency evacuation plan and home kit to prepare for being away from homes and communities for three to five days, and encouraged everyone to maintain community vigilance.

Colonel Wagenaar added that there are a lot of moving parts between hurricane protection and coastal restoration, such as the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA),

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) revenue and Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration (LaCPR). The Task Force needs to keep these in mind to see where CWPPRA fits into the process.

#### **IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM JULY 2006 TASK FORCE MEETING**

Colonel Wagenaar called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the July 12, 2006 Task Force Meeting.

*Mr. Bill Honker moved to adopt the minutes and Mr. Sam Hamilton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **V. TASK FORCE DECISIONS**

##### **A. Decision: FY07 Planning Budget Approval (Agenda Item #4)**

Mr. Tom Podany presented the Technical Committee's recommendation to the Task Force for approval of the FY07 Planning Budget in the amount of \$4,514,834.

Mr. Scott Wilson presented the Outreach Committee's recommendation to the Task Force for approval of the FY07 Outreach Committee Budget in the amount of \$463,858.

*Mr. Gohmert moved to approve the FY07 Planning Budget in the amount of \$4,514,834 and the Outreach Committee Budget in the amount of \$463,858 (total of \$4,978,692) and Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

##### **B. Decision: CWPPRA FY07 Planning Budget Request – Central and Eastern Terrebonne Freshwater Delivery Complex Project (Agenda Item #5)**

Mr. Podany stated that Phase 0 of the USFWS-sponsored complex project was approved in 1999. The USFWS estimated that \$664,000 would be required for the complex project planning activities. To date, only \$474,000 has been provided and the USFWS is asking for the remaining \$190,000 to continue the planning effort. There have been delays in the modeling and concerns about the modeling outputs. Once Phase 0 is completed the project could request Phase I funding. The Technical Committee recommends that the Task Force approve the remaining \$190,000 of budgeted Phase 0 funds.

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

Mr. Hamilton stated that this is still a good project. Modeling issues have caused delays but the project could potentially be ready for Phase I funding with PPL17.

Colonel Wagenaar added that a lot has happened in the seven years since this project was approved. He asked the Technical Committee to consider a process for determining a point at which an ongoing CWPPRA project should have to be revalidated.

Mr. Hamilton affirmed that this was a fair question and that changes can occur in the landscape during the course of planning a project. Mr. Hamilton offered that some projects take longer than others, but they do get evaluated along the way. He agreed that there may need to be a process to check potential project viability after a certain period of time. He was unsure if the Technical Committee had considered this before.

Colonel Wagenaar recommended that the Technical Committee discuss the need for a process to determine the viability of projects based on certain trigger points such as landscape changing events or extensive time lapses in planning or engineering and design. The Technical Committee should provide an update at the next Task Force meeting.

Dr. Zobrist agreed that this was a valid question and needs to be considered on a project-by-project basis. The burden of proof is upon the State and sponsoring Federal agency to make a solid argument as to why a project should continue to stay on the books.

*Dr. Zobrist moved to approve the remaining \$190,000 budgeted Phase 0 funds for the Central and Eastern Terrebonne Freshwater Delivery Complex Project, provided the funds are used to progress the development of a fully funded cost estimate, WVA and other Phase 0 requirements to enable the project to request Phase I funding. Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force to approve the remaining \$190,000 Phase 0 budget.*

### **C. Decision: Request for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Funding (Agenda Item #6)**

Prior to discussing the specifics of the agenda item, Ms. Julie LeBlanc went over a comparison of O&M costs in the program compared to the first cost of construction. Ms. Julie LeBlanc stated that the baseline O&M cost estimate for PPLs 1-8 (69 projects) was \$33.6 million. After the re-evaluation of O&M in 1999, the estimate was increased to \$46.1 million. The current O&M estimate for PPLs 1-8 is \$63.3 million or 27 percent of the construction cost (\$236.7 million). The baseline O&M cost estimate for PPLs 9+ (27 projects) was \$112.2 million. The current O&M estimate for PPLs 9+ is \$112.5 million or 36 percent of the construction cost (\$309.1 million).

Ms. LeBlanc presented the Technical Committee's recommendations for O&M funding required in FY07 for two non-cash flow projects that have already received 20 years of estimated O&M funds and have exceeded the 20-year budgets [PPL3 Cameron-Creole Maintenance Project (CS-04a) and PPL3 Lake Chapeau Marsh Sediment Input and Hydrologic Restoration Project (TE-26)]. The Technical Committee also recommends O&M funding for cash flow projects that are requesting funds beyond Increment 1 funding [PPL11 Coastwide Nutria Control Program Project (LA-03b) and PPL9 Four Mile Canal Terracing and Sediment Trapping Project (TV-18)].

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

Colonel Wagenaar said that comments have been made before that if the Task Force is not careful, CWPPRA will spend the majority of funds to maintain projects and will not have funding for new projects. Colonel Wagenaar also expressed that another challenge to consider is

the process that the Task Force uses to determine if increasing project O&M funding is justifiable based on a project's observed benefits and performance, and total costs. In other words, just because a project exists does not mean it warrants additional investment if it is not performing to provide an acceptable benefit to cost ratio. Colonel Wagenaar wasn't sure if there is a process that the Task Force uses to determine whether a project warrants additional funding.

Mr. Gohmert said that Colonel Wagenaar raised some valid points. He believes that one of the wisest things about CWPPRA was the commitment of O&M for 20 years. He does not see a problem with requiring justification when asking for an increase in O&M funds.

Mr. Hamilton admitted that he didn't know if requests to the Technical Committee for O&M increases had to be defended and if there is a distinction between the project benefits with and without continued O&M for projects with budget shortfalls. Mr. Hamilton indicated that it would be a good business practice to have a process that requires justification for increasing O&M funding.

Mr. Podany replied that the Technical Committee does not have a process to re-evaluate project benefits as a requirement for requesting O&M funding increases. Mr. Podany indicated that for projects with changes in scope or construction costs that are more than 25 percent of what was originally approved, the project benefits are typically re-evaluated. Such projects are considered based on how they stand compared to other projects funded by the Task Force. For projects needing increases in O&M funds, the Technical Committee does discuss whether the project merits the increase based on the original projected benefits. However, there is no evaluation of realized or future benefits after a project has been functioning for a number of years to answer if it will provide the type of benefits that were originally envisioned.

Mr. Honker suggested taking another look at the project effectiveness in terms of planning for and making O&M funding decisions. There is a long-term sustainability issue that needs to be considered at the beginning of the project or at the construction decision point in terms of 20 years and beyond. A real issue will be: who will bear the responsibility of maintaining a project in perpetuity? Mr. Honker suggested that the Technical Committee be tasked with performing an analysis by O&M costs by project type to determine if O&M can be better planned in project design and construction phases to minimize the program O&M burden.

Dr. Zobrist thought that Mr. Honker made an excellent suggestion but questioned if the Technical Committee has the capability of performing such an analysis themselves and suggested that such a task be contracted out to provide a scientific and technically based assessment that may allow the program to reduce O&M costs. Dr. Zobrist acknowledged the benefits of and need for increased costs in O&M, but said he would rather pay up front for long term project performance if possible, than pay inflated costs 10-20 years later.

Dr. Zobrist expressed that there may be certain legal issues with landrights agreements that force CWPPRA to fund O&M for the whole 20 year project life. Dr. Zobrist indicated that he has no problem spending money to make sure projects continue to perform according to commitments.

Dr. Zobrist surmised that CWPPRA does not have a technical process for accurately evaluating the benefits of investing additional O&M funds and that such investment may have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Dr. Zobrist added that many of the requests for increased O&M funding only address limited time increments, and that it would be useful to know the projected total anticipated O&M cost increase over the entire 20 year project life to provide a comprehensive view of the project rather than just an estimate for a short period. Ms. LeBlanc replied that the 20-year projected cost estimates have been updated and are shown in the binders. These estimates are carried on the books but are not approved. The Task Force decided in October 2004 that pre-cash flow projects would ask for O&M funding increases beyond the approved 20-year O&M budget in three year increments in the same manner as cash flow projects.

Ms. Sidney Coffee agreed with Mr. Honker's suggestion. As these projects come into their maturity at the end of their 20 years, we have to stay flexible in terms of their O&M. She does not want to see a good project that is working, and on which people depend, fall by the wayside.

Mr. Gerry Duszynski said that O&M was not a well understood process in the beginning of the program. Conditions are worse than originally thought when the first O&M estimates were made, but we are getting better at estimating with experience.

Mr. Duszynski added that the Technical Committee continues to discuss the cost of closing out projects if or when O&M ends. There are permitting agreements based on project goals and features, and the program may have certain obligations associated with abandoning projects requiring additional costs.

Mr. Duszynski also pointed out that some of the CWPPRA projects are specifically O&M, such as the Coast-wide Nutria Control Program and Cameron-Creole Maintenance Project, and that such projects should be omitted from the suggested O&M analysis to get a better idea of the true cost of O&M to the program.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Mr. Randy Moertle, representing several landowners across the state, said that landowners expect a project to be maintained for 20 years and if a decision is made to re-evaluate O&M, it should be done from PPL 17 onward. He acknowledged that project values and benefits that were originally projected for 20 years are going to go down and asked at what point is someone going to say we are not going to spend anymore money. He stressed that his clients spend a lot of money to participate in the CWPPRA process and he does not want to see any sudden change in the game.

Mr. Bob Schroeder, C.H. Fenstermaker and Associates, said that as you keep building more and more projects, eventually the O&M costs exceed the construction costs. The 20-year limit was used when CWPPRA started because we were not sure the projects being built would last that long. After 20 years, a point is reached where hard decisions have to be made between construction and O&M. On a dollar-per-dollar basis, in almost every case, O&M will win. We

have to take a serious look at whether to keep maintaining a project that is giving us a 10 percent return or do we go to a new project that might give a 15 percent return.

*Mr. Gohmert made a motion to approve the O&M funding request for FY07. Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force. The approval included:*

- *\$2,103,787 for PPL3-Cameron-Creole Maintenance Project (CS-04a), completing the revised funding requirement up to 12 years post-construction in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding. The total revised O&M budget needed for FY09-FY16 is \$731,014.*
- *\$225,869 for PPL3-Lake Chapeau Marsh Creation & Hydrologic Restoration Project (TE-26), completing the revised funding requirement up to 9 years post-construction in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding. The total revised O&M budget needed for FY09-FY19 is \$549,966.*
- *\$1,832,938 for O&M costs beyond Increment 1 funding for PPL11-Coastwide Nutria Control Program (LA-03b) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.*
- *\$14,571 for O&M costs beyond Increment 1 funding for PPL9-Four Mile Canal Terracing & Sediment Trapping Project (TV-18) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.*

*Colonel Wagenaar instructed the Technical Committee to address the O&M issue at next Task Force meeting.*

#### **D. Decision: CWPPRA-CIAP Partnership (Agenda Item #14)**

Mr. Podany stated that the Technical Committee developed a three-page CWPPRA-CIAP Partnership concept and process document. He explained that the total cost for the 10 projects seeking Phase II approval in January is approximately \$221 million. Since CWPPRA does not have enough funding available, the concept is to have the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP), if it chooses, construct some of the projects that have completed Phase I. The issue is that CIAP does not provide for O&M. So the need would be for CWPPRA to consider funding O&M for CIAP constructed CWPPRA projects.

Mr. Podany stated that Ms. Melanie Goodman was available to provide an overview of the process. Ms. Goodman, Corps Project Manager, presented a conceptual plan for a CWPPRA-CIAP partnership. The concept and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was developed by the Technical Committee in coordination with the Planning and Evaluation (P&E) Subcommittee and the State at the request of the Task Force. The concept includes the use of CIAP funds to construct CWPPRA Phase II eligible projects and use CWPPRA funds for O&M of CIAP constructed CWPPRA Priority Project List (PPL) projects. The SOP parallels the annual CWPPRA funding cycle. CWPPRA projects that the State proposes to use CIAP funds for construction would be considered annually on an individual project basis. CIAP Administrators would provide a list of projects proposed for partnering by August 1<sup>st</sup> each year. In November, the State would provide a letter of intent to the Task Force including a list of projects they would like to construct using CIAP funds. The Task Force would approve individual partnerships and funds for the first increment (construction and first three years of

O&M and monitoring) at the January budgeting meeting. Subsequent O&M and monitoring funds would be approved on a year-to year basis as is typical for all CWPPRA cash flow projects. CIAP would be responsible for real estate requirements and 100 percent funding of construction. Cost sharing for O&M and monitoring would be 85% Federal and 15% state CWPPRA cost share. Currently, CIAP is not expected to propose any projects for partnership during this funding cycle. The Technical Committee recommends the Task Force adopt the CWPPRA-CIAP concept for partnership and SOP.

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

Colonel Wagenaar said that the critical pieces of information needed by the Task Force are the full scope of the O&M costs through the life of the project and the long-range impact on the CWPPRA budget. At some point there is the potential for CIAP to build projects faster than CWPPRA could, but CWPPRA may not be able to fund O&M over 20 years. We should also consider project close-out costs, as Mr. Duszynski suggested.

Mr. Hamilton said that this proposal does a good job of integrating the two programs. Everybody is looking to maximize the leveraging of public funds so that the right and left hand are working together.

Dr. Zobrist welcomes a program like CIAP to build the projects that CWPPRA is financially unable to build. He is comfortable with the concept of the partnership with the realization that the Task Force will continue to deal with those projects on a case-by-case basis to determine if O&M is warranted.

Dr. Zobrist asked if a project is transferred from CWPPRA to CIAP, then are the project first costs financially taken off the CWPPRA books and then put back on the books once the project comes back into CWPPRA for O&M. Ms. LeBlanc replied that projects up for Phase II approval currently carry the entire O&M budget “on the books” but not “approved for expenditure”. If a CWPPRA project is constructed by CIAP the construction part of the budget will be zeroed out, but the O&M portion of the budget could be left on the books.

Dr. Zobrist also asked if the project would be built under CIAP as designed under CWPPRA and suggested that estimated Phase II Federal administrative funds be provided to project Federal Sponsors to enable them to shepherd the State during construction. Mr. Duszynski replied that the partnership is a mechanism the Task Force can use to evaluate whether they want to pick up the O&M for a PPL project constructed under CIAP. He also indicated that parishes are also involved in developing the CIAP plan and suggested that the perspective be broadened to consider other projects proposed by local parishes or projects not on the CWPPRA PPL.

Mr. Hamilton added that if there is a significant modification to a project’s original design that has O&M implications beyond what was contemplated under CWPPRA, then the project would still have to come back to the Task Force for review and continued O&M approval.



Colonel Wagenaar said that it was high risk for the State not to follow the original design. There is no guarantee the Task Force will approve O&M if the project has drastically deviated from the original concept.

Mr. Honker asked about the other options the State and parishes have in terms of paying for O&M.

Colonel Wagenaar suggested that CIAP funds could be used for O&M if it is built into the project costs.

Mr. Gohmert said that no one disagrees that if we can leverage dollars to result in constructing projects faster, we are expected to do so. He asked if there was a way to communicate with the parishes when they have a project they would like to bring forward to the Task Force.

Ms. Goodman replied that they would have to further develop the concept and SOP.

Mr. Kirk Rhinehart added that the concept was developed strictly for the PPL projects ready for Phase II that the State would construct. The possibility of parishes doing the same is a third angle that wasn't considered in developing the concept. He assumed that parishes could go through the annual CWPPRA Regional Planning Team meetings and nominate their O&M project in the normal project PPL nomination process. Mr. Rhinehart added that there is an existing mechanism through the normal PPL selection process for selecting non-CWPPRA projects for O&M.

Mr. Gohmert suggested that if parishes want to construct CWPPRA projects and have CWPPRA fund O&M, they should not have to go through the PPL planning process and that the CWPPRA-CIAP partnership should be available to them since a majority of the planning and designing is already done. We do not want to exclude parishes from the partnership concept if they are willing to participate.

Mr. Rhinehart said that he was not aware of any parishes moving forward on proposing CWPPRA projects like that. The discussion has been focused on the State picking the project up and being the leader on those activities.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Dr. John Lopez, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, asked if the construction for the projects would be 100 percent CIAP-funded. Ms. Melanie Goodman responded in the affirmative. Dr. Lopez then asked if CIAP would be excluded from pursuing other Federal funding sources outside of CWPPRA. Ms. Goodman clarified that CIAP can use additional funds for partnering as long as the law provides according to the granting agency's guidelines. There is currently no information on this in the SOP.

Colonel Wagenaar added that he does not see this as an issue and Mr. Podany suggested that the CWPPRA–CIAP Partnership does not necessarily exclude the CIAP from seeking additional funding to contribute to the construction, that this is really a CIAP issue.

Dr. Lopez said that this may be clarified in the SOP. Dr. Lopez asked if CIAP is going to develop a one time 4-year plan in which potential CWPPRA projects to be captured under CIAP would be defined up-front. Ms. Goodman responded that this is correct, but there are possibilities for the plan to be modified from year to year. There maybe projects on the CIAP plan still in CWPPRA E&D, so the State may have to wait for a year before the projects are eligible for consideration.

*Mr. Hamilton moved to approve the concept of the CWPPRA-CIAP partnership and the SOP. Mr. Gohmert seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

*The Task Force asked the Technical Committee to perform an analysis of O&M emphasizing that it be by project type.*

#### **E. Decision: Request for Funding for Administrative Costs for those Projects Beyond Increment 1 Funding (Agenda Item #7)**

Ms. LeBlanc presented the Technical Committee’s recommendation to the Task Force for approval of \$17,586 for administrative costs of projects beyond Increment I funding for projects on PPL9 and above.

*Dr. Zobrist moved to approve the Technical Committee’s recommendation for administrative costs in the amount of \$17,586 and Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **F. Decision: Request for Project-Specific Monitoring Funds for Projects on PPLs 9-11 and FY10 Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) – Wetlands Monitoring Funds (Agenda Item #8)**

Mr. Greg Steyer, USGS, provided a briefing on CRMS, which is co-sponsored by US Geological Survey (USGS) and LA Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) and a cost share agreement was finalized between the two partners in June 2004. CRMS is a monitoring system designed to evaluate the effectiveness of CWPPRA restoration projects across coastal Louisiana. The project provides significant data to support O&M, engineering and design (E&D), and model validation and verification. Approximately \$17 million has been authorized to date with anticipated authorization totaling \$20.2 million. Expenses to date total \$4.7 million. The data collection contractor is Coastal Estuary Services and all data collection equipment has been acquired. All data will be accessed through the LDNR SONRIS system.

There are five major milestones: landrights, site characterization, site approvals, site construction, and data collection. Landrights have been secured for 486 of 612 sites across the coast. Site characterizations have been performed for 294 sites and 215 sites have been approved for data collection. There are 153 sites constructed and 91 sites have full data collection

capability. Sixty benchmarks have been incorporated into the LDNR vertical control network. There are 179 CRMS sites undergoing post-hurricane assessment. Coastwide aerial photography and satellite imagery was collected in the fall of 2005. Land-water analysis has been completed for 55 CRMS sites.

Projections for 2007 include meeting with the Monitoring Workgroup to discuss landrights issues, installing the remaining 26 benchmarks, completing construction on all year one sites, web enabling the vegetation and sediment data, and assembling the analysis team to support basin-level assessments. Mr. Steyer requested CRMS FY10 monitoring funds in the amount of \$3.185 million in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.

Mr. Steyer also requested project-specific monitoring funding beyond Increment 1 funding of \$121,507 in order to maintain a 3-year funding cash-flow through FY10 for four CWPPRA projects that have project specific monitoring plans, including the GIWW - Perry Ridge West Bank Stabilization (CS-30), New Cut Dune and Marsh Restoration (TE-37), Four Mile Canal Terracing and Sediment Trapping (TV-18), and Delta Management at Fort St. Phillip (BS-11).

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

Colonel Wagenaar asked about the financial impact on the CRMS system from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and if CWPPRA has been reimbursed by FEMA? Mr. Steyer replied that out of those 179 CRMS stations that were re-evaluated, 49 required some level of rehabilitation. Mr. Steyer stated that Mr. Rhinehart could answer the question regarding FEMA reimbursement. Mr. Rhinehart stated that \$175,000 was spent on post-hurricane damage assessment for CRMS sites and that the direct costs associated with the damages were not reimbursable by FEMA.

Mr. Gohmert acknowledged the need for system-wide monitoring and evaluation and asked when we will get past the startup, i.e., when CRMS will be fully operational coastwide to provide real meaningful that we can use in our reports back to Congress. He asked if the website provided analysis capabilities or just raw data.

Mr. Steyer advised that the data currently collected is meaningful as a starting point for the implementation of the program. By March 2007, 375 sites across the coast will be collecting data. Currently, hydrology, end of season vegetation, sediment elevation, land change, and coastwide satellite imagery data can be accessed from the LDNR website for 91 CRMS stations. However, data has only been collected for the first cycle. Once the data passes quality control it is put into a graphics program on SONRIS that illustrates hydrographs and salinity. Vegetation data is available for only one point in time, and technically there won't be sufficient data to analyze until the next cycle. CWPPRA agency personnel have been trained to access the CRMS data online through the LDNR SONRIS system, which is accessible through the LaCoast.gov website

Mr. Hamilton asked if all efforts had been exhausted in securing landrights for the remaining 20-25 percent of the stations.

Mr. Steyer said that there are only a handful of sites that are off the table because of the lack of commitment from the landowners. We will only be able to collect aerial photography and satellite data from these sites. The remaining sites are under discussion. The pending landrights will be discussed with the Monitoring Workgroup.

Dr. Zobrist said that CWPPRA has made a sizeable investment for a number of years and there are a fair number of stations collecting data. He echoed Mr. Gohmert's concern that we need to generate reports that evaluate whether projects are working or not to help guide us to make better decisions in the future. He asked if there is a threshold for the minimum number of stations providing data before a coherent coastwide perspective can be given. Mr. Steyer said that as part of the CRMS design, the total planned 612 sites would be on rotation with a target of 368-375 sites collecting data annually to provide the coastwide assessment.

Dr. Zobrist asked why only \$4.7 million had been expended to date and questioned if the additional money is needed now when there is currently a \$12.3 million balance. Mr. Steyer explained that they are following the cash-flow approach, and that hurricanes and other issues prohibited the expenditure of funds. The CRMS Program is in the ramp-up stage in terms of expenditures to get back on the expected target. The original projection estimated that \$10.1 million would be expended at this point.

Dr. Zobrist clarified that he was not questioning the level of CWPPRA program commitment to CRMS, but asked the Task Force to consider the financial commitment requested at this point and whether that money could be used elsewhere for immediate needs.

Mr. Rhinehart said the Task Force may be suffering from CRMS fatigue. CRMS had been talked about since 1999, but the contract was not approved until 2005. The program is still in its infancy. One benefit of CRMS was evident immediately after the storms. The coastwide aerial photography was able to be performed very quickly because the program was in place. It is in the SOP to have requests for three years and he would hate to see CRMS treated differently by going to a shorter cash-flow type scenario. This is not a funding increase; this is just the out-year funding request and it is consistent with the way the CWPPRA program works.

Dr. Zobrist conceded that with the program ramp-up that is expected, the request may be appropriate.

*Mr. Gohmert moved to approve the monitoring request up for and Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force. The approval included:*

- *\$17,863 in project-specific monitoring for the PPL9-GIWW-Perry Ridge West Bank Stabilization Project (CS-30) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.*
- *\$77,808 in project-specific monitoring for the PPL9-New Cut Dune/Marsh Restoration Project (TE-37) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.*

- \$3,215 in project-specific monitoring for the PPL9-Four Mile Canal Terracing and Sediment Trapping Project (TV-18) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.
- \$22,621 in project-specific monitoring for the PPL10-Delta Management at Fort St. Phillip (BS-11) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.
- \$3,185,809 in FY10 CRMS funding in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.

**G. Decision: Selection of the 16<sup>th</sup> Priority Project List (Agenda Item #9)**

Mr. Podany presented the Technical Committee’s recommendation for Task Force approve for Phase I of four candidate projects (Alligator Bend Marsh Restoration and Shoreline Protection, Southwest LA Gulf Shoreline Nourishment and Protection, Madison Bay Marsh Creation and Terracing, and West Belle Pass Barrier Headland Restoration) and one demonstration project (Enhancement of Barrier Island Vegetation Demo). The recommendation includes a provision to add the next project on the list, which would be Violet Siphon Enlargement Project, if any of the recommended four projects were adopted by CIAP.

*Mr. Gohmert made a motion to approve selection of the 16<sup>th</sup> Priority Project List and Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force. The approval included:*

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| • Alligator Bend Marsh Restoration and Shoreline Protection | \$1,660,985 |
| • Southwest LA Gulf Shoreline Nourishment and Protection    | \$1,266,842 |
| • Madison Bay Marsh Creation and Terracing                  | \$3,002,170 |
| • West Belle Pass Headland Restoration                      | \$2,694,363 |
| • Enhancement of Barrier Island Vegetation Demo             | \$ 919,599  |

**H. Decision: Creation of a Contingency Fund for ‘Storm Recovery Procedures’ (Agenda Item #10)**

Ms. LeBlanc stated that in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, LDNR completed post-storm assessments that exceeded the FY06 Planning Budget for “Storm Recovery Procedures”. The total cost of the post-storm assessments was approximately \$398,400. LDNR asked the Technical Committee to recommend approval of the unused budgeted FY05 Planning funds for storm recovery in the amount of \$97,534 plus an additional \$203,358.92 as part of the Planning Program to cover the completed post-storm assessments. The Technical Committee recommends approval of the use of the budgeted FY05 Planning funds in the amount of \$97,534 for this effort, in addition to the FY06 budget that was approved. Rather than recommend an additional \$203,358.92 under the Planning Program budget, the Technical Committee recommends that a “Storm Recovery Procedures Contingency Fund” be developed under the Construction Program to include immediate approval of \$203,358.92 to cover the remaining cost of FY06 expenses and an additional \$100,000 for assessments of future storm damage. The Federal sponsor would be USGS.

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

Colonel Wagenaar said that there is a process issue and a funding issue. The State exceeded what was authorized. He is concerned that the contingency fund could also be exceeded. How do we fix this process so there is a vote before funding is exceeded? Colonel Wagenaar suggested that the Task Force could vote to approve additional funding via Fax.

Dr. Zobrist said that with the two hurricanes, the cost is justified and that kind of effort needed to be done. He agrees that there should be a process and he does not see why there cannot be a Fax vote. We should learn from this experience. There is an expectation that there should be a certain level of communication. Just come and ask the Task Force between hurricanes if more money is needed.

Mr. Duszynski added that there was a Technical Committee discussion directly after the first storm. He recalled that they were told to do what was needed and worry about it later. In hindsight, that might not have been a good idea. LDNR does not have a problem alerting the partners when more funds are needed. It was a particularly bad occasion because the evaluation process had already begun when the second storm hit and some projects had to be re-evaluated. Mr. Duszynski added that LDNR coordinates post-storm assessments with all agencies.

Mr. Gohmert questioned whether contingency funds would remain in the budget if they are not used and if the budget would build over time.

Ms. LeBlanc suggested that a process similar to the monitoring contingency fund could be setup. A dollar amount threshold of \$50,000 per storm could be set and funds could be added as needed. She indicated that USGS agreed to be the Federal sponsor to manage the funds. Colonel Wagenaar suggested capping and maintaining the Storm Recovery Procedures Contingency Fund at \$100,000. Ms. LeBlanc asked if the P&E would need to approve expenditures for the contingency fund, since this wasn't confirmed. Colonel Wagenaar stated that approval for anything in excess of the \$100,000 will require Task Force approval.

*Mr. Gohmert motioned to approve use of \$97,534 from the FY05 Planning Budget to cover costs for LDNR post-storm assessments following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, in addition to the FY06 Planning funds budgeted for two storms (\$97,534). Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

*Dr. Zobrist moved to create a "Storm Recovery Procedures Contingency Fund" for \$303,358.92 to be sponsored by the USGS. A sum of \$203,358.92 would be immediately approved for Katrina/Rita expenditures and the contingency fund would maintain a balance of \$100,000. Expenditure of anything in excess of \$100,000 would require a fax vote by the Task Force. Mr. Gohmert seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

### **I. Decision: PPL5 Mississippi River Reintroduction into Bayou Lafourche Project – BA-25b (Agenda Item #11)**

Mr. Podany stated that at the Task Force meeting in July, the Task Force voted to defer a decision to allow or deny approval to proceed to 95 percent design and a \$5 million increase in Phase I funding for BA-25b, until three issues were addressed by the project sponsors and the

Corps. The issues included: 1) identifying \$2.5 million in existing CWPPRA Federal construction funds to use for the Federal Share of the proposed budget increase; 2) answering the legal question on whether Federal funds should be obligated to construct a project without a feasibility determination, and 3) conducting an Independent Technical Review (ITR) to evaluate modeling efforts and benefit. Mr. Podany advised that in August, the Task Force Chairman was notified that the State would fund 100 percent of the remaining Engineering and Design and proposed that EPA complete NEPA compliance documentation using CWPPRA funds. He explained that after considering various options for moving forward with the project, the Technical Committee is recommending that the Task Force approve EPA's proposal to complete the EIS under CWPPRA subject to receipt of an accounting of fiscal expenditures to date and a budget for completion of the NEPA documentation.

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

Colonel Wagenaar acknowledged that progress has been made on the project, but asserted that the challenge is to decide when it is proper to obligate Federal dollars to a project that is potentially not feasible. He has concerns regarding the project benefits being presented to the Task Force and indicated that he wanted the ITR to evaluate the modeling and resulting reported benefits.

Mr. Honker contended that the question is simple: Does EPA continue with the investment made with the EIS or do we stop and lose the investment that has been made? He asserted that the Corps was impressed enough with earlier benefit estimates to include the project in the LCA near-term plan, and that it would not be appropriate to invest CWPPRA funds for an ITR as suggested since the State has agreed to fund the remaining E&D cost. He further asserted that the NEPA review is prudent, that it should be continued to complete the preliminary EIS rather than lose about a half million dollar investment if the work is terminated because the contract has already been paid, and that starting the EIS again down the road by someone else would potentially delay the project.

Ms. Coffee agreed with Mr. Honker that the ITR is an inappropriate action and would set an unreasonable precedent. She urged the Task Force to let the EPA finish the NEPA exercise.

Mr. Hamilton asked about the economics related to the costs of the EIS. There are technical concerns about the reported benefits and the amount of sediment that will reach the marshes. Addressing those technical issues should be the first step to make sure this is a sound project and then go through the NEPA analysis.

Mr. Honker stated that Mr. Tim Landers, EPA, could answer questions about the EIS.

Mr. Landers said that the EPA is about halfway through the half million dollar contract to complete the final EIS. It is estimated that an additional \$457,000 is needed to complete the EIS, including \$242,800 for contract obligations, \$200,000 for administrative costs and \$15,000 for a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey. Additional conditional expenditures would include \$200,000 for a possible Phase 2 cultural resources survey if needed as determined by the Phase I survey,

and \$500,000 for sediment testing if needed as determined by the final design, bringing the total estimate to \$1.16 million.

Mr. Honker added that if the EPA continued with the EIS, it would be with the understanding that work would stop if it became apparent that it would be a good time to stop and transition the project to another agency.

Mr. Gohmert questioned if it would be legitimate to proceed with an EIS if there are still questions about the technical reasonableness and logic of the expected benefits and alternatives. Mr. Gohmert stressed that the discussions and reports about the model, the data that went into it were not very transparent for individuals trying to understand how the resulting estimated benefits would be derived from a 1,000 cfs diversion and asked how an EIS can be completed without answering these concerns.

Mr. Honker stated that this is a reason for continuing an EIS in tandem with E&D. The environmental impact issues are assessed as we go through that process. If the EIS is stopped at this point, you would lose the ability to impact the E&D based on environmental impact factors.

Mr. Gohmert asked if a preferred alternative had been selected.

Both Mr. Duszynski and Ms. Coffee answered yes.

Mr. Duszynski added that 144 alternatives have gone through a serious screening process and that the State's preferred alternative is a 1,000 cfs freshwater diversion with moderate dredging and expected low rise in water levels in the bayou. He indicated that LDNR has requested a meeting with all the agencies to review and explain the WVA results compared to modeled salinity changes and sediment transport. Once this is done, the agencies will be satisfied with the results of the model runs. Mr. Duszynski expressed willingness to discuss these details with the agencies and that the project has completed 30 percent design review requirements and is ready to move forward.

Dr. Zobrist said that when the suggestion to conduct an ITR was first brought up, it made sense because there were many questions about the project benefits and other things. He agreed that in general it is not necessarily appropriate to conduct ITRs on CWPPRA projects; however, the fact that it is being considered for the Bayou Lafourche project indicates that the project is not a CWPPRA project. He also said that he is not convinced that a satisfactory EIS could be completed at the 30 percent design level and has reservations about any further CWPPRA funding commitment.

Mr. Landers said that the EPA would maintain a schedule that would run concurrently with the State's E&D efforts. The goal is to complete the E&D and EIS in 2-3 years.

Ms. Coffee said that this is a perfect example of the Federal agencies being able to help the State complete a portion of this CWPPRA project. The Federal money has already been allocated and the State is committed to moving forward with the project. She urged the Federal partners to honor their previous commitments.



Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Mr. Windell Curole, Coastal Zone Management Coordinator for Lafourche Parish, said that this was a dual purpose project from the beginning. Right now, chloride levels in the drinking water from Bayou Lafourche are high. Salinity levels have been increasing, so any freshwater will benefit us. The estuary system is broken and the Gulf comes in anytime it wants. Mr. Curole asked the Task Force to look at this from a business point of view. Providing fresh drinking water for society is a critical thing. It is disappointing that it has taken 11 years and we still do not know where to go with this project. Decisions need to be made a lot quicker, and we need to allocate 75 cents for every dollar to construct coastal projects. From a person living in the community, you want to use all the benefits you can from any kind of project.

Ms. Charlotte Randolph, Lafourche Parish President, thanked the State for stepping up to take on this issue. This is the reason the Task Force should continue to fund this EIS. We do not have a lot of time and there are projects being studied to potentially help us in the future. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught us that if we wait any longer, we will be sorry rather than safe. Completion of the EIS will parallel what the State is doing with the E&D and will parallel efforts to get funding. When we receive the WRDA and OCS funding, we will be ready. This project will also help with the salinity levels which are dangerously high. Any benefit to the marsh is more than we are getting right now.

Mr. Wayne Keller, Director of the Grand Isle Port Commission, reported recent flooding in Chenier Caminada. This flooding occurred because of a non-storm event (strong south winds for a few days). One week ago there was a 2,500 foot gap at Elmer's Island; after two days of 15 to 30 mile per hour winds, the gap is now 3,500 feet. As this continues, there will be a breach in Highway 1. Because of recent events, he feels that it is best to concentrate on the barrier islands in the short-term. He added that the dynamics are much worse than people realize. We need to look at the beneficial use of dredging more efficiently and stop using the word "demo." The Chenier's need more freshwater and this project will help.

Ms. Leslie Suazo, Director of Costal Restoration in Terrebonne Parish, urged the Task Force to continue with this project. She appreciates the State stepping up to the plate. She sees the needs for and the possibilities for this project to enhance the Terrebonne Basin

Ms. Gay Browning asked how much had been obligated for the NEPA contract and about the potential NEPA cost. Mr. Landers replied that approximately \$560,000 is obligated to the NEPA contractor. Additional "conditional" expenses are expected to cost \$700,000, making the total \$1.475 million.

Mr. Honker read a quote from the Chief of Engineer's Report to Congress about completion of the feasibility study and EIS. He feels that the best thing to do is continue with the EIS process.

Ms. Coffee agreed with Mr. Honker. She said that the intent of this program was to assist the State in moving out projects. This is a small amount to help the State move projects forward for the benefit of people in Louisiana and the rest of the nation.

*Mr. Honker moved to approve use of available funds by the EPA to complete the EIS for the Mississippi River Reintroduction into Bayou Lafourche Project and return the remainder of funds that are non-NEPA related. Colonel Wagenaar asked for a second. No one seconded. The motion was not passed by the Task Force.*

**J. Decision: Modification of the Scope of the PPL10 East Sabine Lake Hydrologic Restoration Project (Agenda Item #12)**

Mr. Podany said that this project is being constructed in two units. The USFWS and others have determined that construction of Unit 2 would not produce the benefits that were originally envisioned. The plan is to discontinue further design of the Construction Unit 2 water control structures at Willow, Three, Greens and Right Prong Black Bayous; transfer \$250,000 in surplus construction funding to O&M to repair the Pines Ridge Weir damaged by Hurricane Rita; add additional duck-wing earthen terraces using Construction Unit 1 surplus budget funds; and modify the recently constructed terraces 3,000 linear foot foreshore dike to add four 50-foot wide gaps, using surplus construction funds. The Technical Committee recommends that the Task Force approve the change in scope with no cost increase.

*Mr. Hamilton moved to adopt the changes in scope for PPL10 East Sabine Lake Hydrologic Restoration Project and Dr. Zobrist seconded. The motion was approved by the Task Force.*

**K. Decision: Final CWPPRA Strategic Vision Document (Agenda Item #13)**

Ms. LeBlanc said that the purpose of the Strategic Vision Document was to evaluate where the program stands and where it fits into the existing landscape given all the other efforts in the State. The document was sent to Parishes Against Coastal Erosion (PACE), parish CZM Committees, and other coastal program coordinators including CIAP, LaCPR, State Master Plan, and LCA for comment. The Task Force is asked to approve the final version of the document. Once approved, the document will be incorporated into the 2006 Report to Congress.

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

Dr. Zobrist complimented the people who have worked hard to get the strategic document to this point.

Ms. Coffee asked how much was spent on the document and Ms. LeBlanc answered that the current version of the document was done within existing agency budgets.

*Mr. Honker moved to approve the final version of the CWPPRA Strategic Vision Document and Mr. Gohmert seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

## **VI. INFORMATION**

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

Ms. Browning stated that the Planning Program has a current surplus of \$1.1 million. With receipt of \$5 million in FY07, the Planning Program has \$6.1 million available for FY07 planning activities. The Construction Program received a total of \$643 million in Federal funds through FY06. Total obligations are \$587 million and total expenditures are \$313 million. There are 138 active projects: 68 have completed construction, 19 are under construction, and 51 have not yet started construction. Twenty-two projects are scheduled for construction in FY07; one project has started construction and there are four non-cash flow and five cash flow projects funded and scheduled to start construction in FY07. The remaining 12 cash-flow projects scheduled for FY07 construction are not yet funded but will request Phase II approval in January 2007. Available funding in the Construction Program is currently \$30,000. Estimated total funds in the Construction Program for FY07 will be \$83.5 million (Federal and non-Federal). Construction Program items up for Task Force funding approval today total \$17.3 million. If all Technical Committee recommendations are adopted, the remaining available Federal and non-Federal funding in the Construction Program will be \$66.1 million. The total Phase II Increment 1 cost estimate for the 12 projects scheduled to request Phase II approval in January 2007 is \$219 million, leaving a shortfall of \$153 million in the Construction Program.

Ms. LeBlanc stated that the current total program unobligated balance is \$123.7 million at the close of FY06. Cumulative funds into the program through FY06 total \$786 million, of which \$785 million is set aside. The remaining available funds total \$1.13 million, which includes \$1.1 million in the Planning Program and \$30,000 in the Construction Program. Based upon the latest projection, the total program funding is estimated to be \$2.4 billion over the life of the program. The total fully funded costs for all projects on PPLs 1-15 including planning is \$1.8 billion. Approximately \$1.02 billion is required for construction and 20-years of O&M for all projects that have been approved for Phase II, to date. The gap between the total funds into the program (\$2.4 billion) and the funding required for those projects already approved for construction (\$1.0 billion; includes funds for 20 years O&M) is \$1.4 billion. If the 12 projects that are eligible for Phase II approval in January are funded, the gap between expected funds into the program and total project costs would become \$1.1 billion.

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

Mr. Honker asked where the surplus of \$1.1 million in the Planning Budget came from. Ms. Browning replied that this money was originally obligated, but has been de-obligated from previous year budgets because not all of the estimated funding was needed.

Dr. Zobrist commended the financial staff in the various agencies for finding the money to return to the program.

## **B. Report: Transitioning Projects from CWPPRA to Other Authorities (Agenda Item #15)**

Mr. Podany updated the Task Force that the P&E Subcommittee has been working to refine the procedure for transitioning projects from CWPPRA to other authorities. They are working on streamlining the process and making it less bureaucratic. The P&E Subcommittee should have a revision ready for Task Force review and potential approval at the next Task Force meeting.

## **C. Report/Request for Public Comments: PPL10 Delta Building Diversion at Myrtle Grove Project (BA-33) (Agenda Item #16)**

Mr. Podany said that at the last meeting, the Task Force agreed to initiate the process of transferring the Myrtle Grove Project to the LCA. A letter was sent out to solicit comments on the transition. It appears that the LCA would not be in a position to accept this project until the Spring of 2007.

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

Colonel Wagenaar said that LCA is stuck in WRDA and WRDA is stuck between a rock and a hard place. Mr. Podany noted that if LCA is not authorized for project construction, there will not be any movement beyond the study phase. Mr. Troy Constance added that there is always the option of submitting the feasibility report independent of an LCA Program.

Mr. Tim Axtman stated that all of the design and scoping information developed under CWPPRA has been combined and put into an electronic file cabinet to provide password protected common access for individuals interested in the project. It is estimated that the modeling may take six months or longer because the super computer needed to make the model runs is not immediately available. No letters have been received at this point, although Mr. Axtman has received a number of telephone calls indicating that letters would be coming.

Colonel Wagenaar asked that if LCA does not go anywhere, is it possible to get the projects into the LaCPR as separable projects? The mark on the wall has got to be LaCPR as a separable element of South Louisiana protection. Mr. Axtman replied that in terms of integrating Myrtle Grove into LaCPR, the State's Master Planning and Corps efforts include all LCA recommended, so it could be a component of these proposals. There are a number of ways to engineer and construct this project.

Mr. Honker asked about the status of the EIS for this project and Mr. Axtman answered that the scoping document has been produced. They are currently working on updating existing conditions information from the LCA for the programmatic EIS.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Ms. Marnie Winter, Jefferson Parish, presented the Task Force with a letter from Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard asking the Task Force not to transfer the Myrtle Grove Project to the LCA at this time.

Mr. Andrew MacInnes, Coastal Zone Administrator for Plaquemines Parish, supports keeping the Myrtle Grove Project in the CWPPRA Phase I process. The Task Force and Technical Committee made a commitment to fully expend monies set aside for CWPPRA Phase I development. Mr. MacInnes believes it is safest to continue nurturing the project through the CWPPRA program as the other theoretical programs may or may not materialize. LCA is not a guarantee. He prefers to keep the project in CWPPRA and not move it until LCA is ready.

**D. Report: Land Loss since the 2005 Hurricanes (Agenda Item #17)**

Dr. Jimmy Johnston, USGS, said that the regional post hurricane land-water assessments were funded through CRMS and announced that Mr. John Barras, USGS, would provide the update. Mr. Barras stated that the purpose of this assessment was to provide preliminary information on land changes shortly after the hurricane and serve as a regional baseline for monitoring. This is not an assessment of permanent loss. He presented the preliminary land-water change between October 2004 and October 2005. The Chenier Plain analysis has been problematic due to surge retention and flooding duration. There was a net land area change of 62 square miles in the Mermentau Basin and 41 square miles in Breton Sound. The total land area change from October 2004 to October 2005 was 217 square miles. There was a 67 percent land change in the Chandeleur Islands from 2004 to 2005. In the Mississippi River Delta, the Garden Island Bay and Pass a Loutre areas had the most significant land change.

**E. Report: Public Outreach Committee Quarterly Report (Agenda Item #18)**

Mr. Scott Wilson, USGS Public Outreach Chairman, presented the Public Outreach Committee's quarterly report. He announced that Ms. Ann Burruss has been hired as the new Outreach Coordinator. The committee had an exhibit at the Clean Gulf Conference in New Orleans and is a major sponsor of the Restore America's Estuary Conference in December. The committee has also been involved in helping with the land loss maps. Also, approximately 22 gigabytes of data is transferred daily on the LaCoast website.

**F. Report: Envisioning the Future of the Gulf Coast (Agenda Item #19)**

Dr. Denise Reed presented a report for the sustainable restoration of Louisiana's coast. A technical group of 35 engineers and scientists from around the world provided their thoughts on the future of the Louisiana coast for the report. The group felt that the issue of climate change needed to be taken very seriously. Sea levels and storm intensity would continue to rise, and therefore, we would need higher and wider levees to retain the level of protection we have now. Outlying communities and evacuation routes would become more frequently flooded. The change in the fundamental processes in the coast would intensify our existing problems by affecting wave action, eroding marshes, and damaging infrastructure. If current management practices continue, more than 120 million tons of river sediment that could be used to rebuild the coast would be lost to the Gulf of Mexico each year. The group recommended that the most fundamental and essential action needed to sustain the coast is to reduce the amount of sediment and freshwater flowing directly into the deep water of the Gulf. Trying to maintain the existing or historic landscape is futile and would deny the inherently dynamic nature of the Mississippi

River Delta Plain and Chenier Plain. This is not a new idea. If we want to tell the rest of the country that we are serious about restoring our coast, then we have to take this issue seriously.

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

Colonel Wagenaar said that this has to be an option in the LaCPR. The biggest challenge is going to be the users and the competition between navigation and the coast. Dr. Reed replied that the best way forward is to see how this is in the best interest of all of us. This is a new era for the coast of Louisiana and everybody has to make adjustments; this is not about eliminating navigation

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Mr. Robert Tannin wondered if the RAND Corporation could be asked to carry this concept further and evaluate it from a policy standpoint to support Dr. Reed's work.

Mr. Honker said that Dr. Reed presented some very interesting ideas. The impact to the nutrient redistribution needs to be evaluated; this is a major issue in creating hypoxic zones in the Gulf.

## **VII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

Colonel Wagenaar announced that this meeting would be the last for Dr. Johnston and presented a Task Force Certificate to him for the support and work he has done for the Task Force.

Mr. Hamilton said that he recently had the opportunity to do a helicopter fly-over of the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge. The amount of debris on the refuge after Hurricane Rita was unbelievable. Under the EPA's leadership, cleanup of debris at the refuge is ahead of schedule and the refuge should be reopened this spring.

## **VIII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

## **IX. CLOSING**

### **A. Dates and Locations of Upcoming CWPPRA Meetings**

Ms. LeBlanc announced that the next Task Force Meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2007 in Baton Rouge, LA. The next Technical Committee Meeting will be held on December 6<sup>th</sup> in Baton Rouge, LA.

### **B. Adjournment**

Colonel Wagenaar adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Colonel Wagenaar added that he does not see this as an issue and Mr. Podany suggested that the CWPPRA–CIAP Partnership does not necessarily exclude the CIAP from seeking additional funding to contribute to the construction, that this is really a CIAP issue.

Dr. Lopez said that this may be clarified in the SOP. Dr. Lopez asked if CIAP is going to develop a one time 4-year plan in which potential CWPPRA projects to be captured under CIAP would be defined up-front. Ms. Goodman responded that this is correct, but there are possibilities for the plan to be modified from year to year. There maybe projects on the CIAP plan still in CWPPRA E&D, so the State may have to wait for a year before the projects are eligible for consideration.

*Mr. Hamilton moved to approve the concept of the CWPPRA-CIAP partnership and the SOP. Mr. Gohmert seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

*The Task Force asked the Technical Committee to perform an analysis of O&M emphasizing that it be by project type.*

#### **E. Decision: Request for Funding for Administrative Costs for those Projects Beyond Increment 1 Funding (Agenda Item #7)**

Ms. LeBlanc presented the Technical Committee’s recommendation to the Task Force for approval of \$17,586 for administrative costs of projects beyond Increment I funding for projects on PPL9 and above.

*Dr. Zobrist moved to approve the Technical Committee’s recommendation for administrative costs in the amount of \$17,586 and Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **F. Decision: Request for Project-Specific Monitoring Funds for Projects on PPLs 9-11 and FY10 Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) – Wetlands Monitoring Funds (Agenda Item #8)**

Mr. Greg Steyer, USGS, provided a briefing on CRMS, which is co-sponsored by US Geological Survey (USGS) and LA Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) and a cost share agreement was finalized between the two partners in June 2004. CRMS is a monitoring system designed to evaluate the effectiveness of CWPPRA restoration projects across coastal Louisiana. The project provides significant data to support O&M, engineering and design (E&D), and model validation and verification. Approximately \$17 million has been authorized to date with anticipated authorization totaling \$20.2 million. Expenses to date total \$4.7 million. The data collection contractor is Coastal Estuary Services and all data collection equipment has been acquired. All data will be accessed through the LDNR SONRIS system.

There are five major milestones: landrights, site characterization, site approvals, site construction, and data collection. Landrights have been secured for 486 of 612 sites across the coast. Site characterizations have been performed for 294 sites and 215 sites have been approved for data collection. There are 153 sites constructed and 91 sites have full data collection

capability. Sixty benchmarks have been incorporated into the LDNR vertical control network. There are 179 CRMS sites undergoing post-hurricane assessment. Coastwide aerial photography and satellite imagery was collected in the fall of 2005. Land-water analysis has been completed for 55 CRMS sites.

Projections for 2007 include meeting with the Monitoring Workgroup to discuss landrights issues, installing the remaining 26 benchmarks, completing construction on all year one sites, web enabling the vegetation and sediment data, and assembling the analysis team to support basin-level assessments. Mr. Steyer requested CRMS FY10 monitoring funds in the amount of \$3.185 million in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.

Mr. Steyer also requested project-specific monitoring funding beyond Increment 1 funding of \$121,507 in order to maintain a 3-year funding cash-flow through FY10 for four CWPPRA projects that have project specific monitoring plans, including the GIWW - Perry Ridge West Bank Stabilization (CS-30), New Cut Dune and Marsh Restoration (TE-37), Four Mile Canal Terracing and Sediment Trapping (TV-18), and Delta Management at Fort St. Phillip (BS-11).

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

Colonel Wagenaar asked about the financial impact on the CRMS system from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and if CWPPRA has been reimbursed by FEMA? Mr. Steyer replied that out of those 179 CRMS stations that were re-evaluated, 49 required some level of rehabilitation. Mr. Steyer stated that Mr. Rhinehart could answer the question regarding FEMA reimbursement. Mr. Rhinehart stated that \$175,000 was spent on post-hurricane damage assessment for CRMS sites and that the direct costs associated with the damages were not reimbursable by FEMA.

Mr. Gohmert acknowledged the need for system-wide monitoring and evaluation and asked when we will get past the startup, i.e., when CRMS will be fully operational coastwide to provide real meaningful that we can use in our reports back to Congress. He asked if the website provided analysis capabilities or just raw data.

Mr. Steyer advised that the data currently collected is meaningful as a starting point for the implementation of the program. By March 2007, 375 sites across the coast will be collecting data. Currently, hydrology, end of season vegetation, sediment elevation, land change, and coastwide satellite imagery data can be accessed from the LDNR website for 91 CRMS stations. However, data has only been collected for the first cycle. Once the data passes quality control it is put into a graphics program on SONRIS that illustrates hydrographs and salinity. Vegetation data is available for only one point in time, and technically there won't be sufficient data to analyze until the next cycle. CWPPRA agency personnel have been trained to access the CRMS data online through the LDNR SONRIS system, which is accessible through the LaCoast.gov website

Mr. Hamilton asked if all efforts had been exhausted in securing landrights for the remaining 20-25 percent of the stations.



Mr. Steyer said that there are only a handful of sites that are off the table because of the lack of commitment from the landowners. We will only be able to collect aerial photography and satellite data from these sites. The remaining sites are under discussion. The pending landrights will be discussed with the Monitoring Workgroup.

Dr. Zobrist said that CWPPRA has made a sizeable investment for a number of years and there are a fair number of stations collecting data. He echoed Mr. Gohmert's concern that we need to generate reports that evaluate whether projects are working or not to help guide us to make better decisions in the future. He asked if there is a threshold for the minimum number of stations providing data before a coherent coastwide perspective can be given. Mr. Steyer said that as part of the CRMS design, the total planned 612 sites would be on rotation with a target of 368-375 sites collecting data annually to provide the coastwide assessment.

Dr. Zobrist asked why only \$4.7 million had been expended to date and questioned if the additional money is needed now when there is currently a \$12.3 million balance. Mr. Steyer explained that they are following the cash-flow approach, and that hurricanes and other issues prohibited the expenditure of funds. The CRMS Program is in the ramp-up stage in terms of expenditures to get back on the expected target. The original projection estimated that \$10.1 million would be expended at this point.

Dr. Zobrist clarified that he was not questioning the level of CWPPRA program commitment to CRMS, but asked the Task Force to consider the financial commitment requested at this point and whether that money could be used elsewhere for immediate needs.

Mr. Rhinehart said the Task Force may be suffering from CRMS fatigue. CRMS had been talked about since 1999, but the contract was not approved until 2005. The program is still in its infancy. One benefit of CRMS was evident immediately after the storms. The coastwide aerial photography was able to be performed very quickly because the program was in place. It is in the SOP to have requests for three years and he would hate to see CRMS treated differently by going to a shorter cash-flow type scenario. This is not a funding increase; this is just the out-year funding request and it is consistent with the way the CWPPRA program works.

Dr. Zobrist conceded that with the program ramp-up that is expected, the request may be appropriate.

*Mr. Gohmert moved to approve the monitoring request up for and Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force. The approval included:*

- *\$17,863 in project-specific monitoring for the PPL9-GIWW-Perry Ridge West Bank Stabilization Project (CS-30) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.*
- *\$77,808 in project-specific monitoring for the PPL9-New Cut Dune/Marsh Restoration Project (TE-37) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.*

- \$3,215 in project-specific monitoring for the PPL9-Four Mile Canal Terracing and Sediment Trapping Project (TV-18) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.
- \$22,621 in project-specific monitoring for the PPL10-Delta Management at Fort St. Phillip (BS-11) in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.
- \$3,185,809 in FY10 CRMS funding in order to maintain a 3-year rolling amount of funding.

**G. Decision: Selection of the 16<sup>th</sup> Priority Project List (Agenda Item #9)**

Mr. Podany presented the Technical Committee’s recommendation for Task Force approve for Phase I of four candidate projects (Alligator Bend Marsh Restoration and Shoreline Protection, Southwest LA Gulf Shoreline Nourishment and Protection, Madison Bay Marsh Creation and Terracing, and West Belle Pass Barrier Headland Restoration) and one demonstration project (Enhancement of Barrier Island Vegetation Demo). The recommendation includes a provision to add the next project on the list, which would be Violet Siphon Enlargement Project, if any of the recommended four projects were adopted by CIAP.

*Mr. Gohmert made a motion to approve selection of the 16<sup>th</sup> Priority Project List and Mr. Honker seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force. The approval included:*

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| • Alligator Bend Marsh Restoration and Shoreline Protection | \$1,660,985 |
| • Southwest LA Gulf Shoreline Nourishment and Protection    | \$1,266,842 |
| • Madison Bay Marsh Creation and Terracing                  | \$3,002,170 |
| • West Belle Pass Headland Restoration                      | \$2,694,363 |
| • Enhancement of Barrier Island Vegetation Demo             | \$ 919,599  |

**H. Decision: Creation of a Contingency Fund for ‘Storm Recovery Procedures’ (Agenda Item #10)**

Ms. LeBlanc stated that in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, LDNR completed post-storm assessments that exceeded the FY06 Planning Budget for “Storm Recovery Procedures”. The total cost of the post-storm assessments was approximately \$398,400. LDNR asked the Technical Committee to recommend approval of the unused budgeted FY05 Planning funds for storm recovery in the amount of \$97,534 plus an additional \$203,358.92 as part of the Planning Program to cover the completed post-storm assessments. The Technical Committee recommends approval of the use of the budgeted FY05 Planning funds in the amount of \$97,534 for this effort, in addition to the FY06 budget that was approved. Rather than recommend an additional \$203,358.92 under the Planning Program budget, the Technical Committee recommends that a “Storm Recovery Procedures Contingency Fund” be developed under the Construction Program to include immediate approval of \$203,358.92 to cover the remaining cost of FY06 expenses and an additional \$100,000 for assessments of future storm damage. The Federal sponsor would be USGS.

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

Colonel Wagenaar said that there is a process issue and a funding issue. The State exceeded what was authorized. He is concerned that the contingency fund could also be exceeded. How do we fix this process so there is a vote before funding is exceeded? Colonel Wagenaar suggested that the Task Force could vote to approve additional funding via Fax.

Dr. Zobrist said that with the two hurricanes, the cost is justified and that kind of effort needed to be done. He agrees that there should be a process and he does not see why there cannot be a Fax vote. We should learn from this experience. There is an expectation that there should be a certain level of communication. Just come and ask the Task Force between hurricanes if more money is needed.

Mr. Duszynski added that there was a Technical Committee discussion directly after the first storm. He recalled that they were told to do what was needed and worry about it later. In hindsight, that might not have been a good idea. LDNR does not have a problem alerting the partners when more funds are needed. It was a particularly bad occasion because the evaluation process had already begun when the second storm hit and some projects had to be re-evaluated. Mr. Duszynski added that LDNR coordinates post-storm assessments with all agencies.

Mr. Gohmert questioned whether contingency funds would remain in the budget if they are not used and if the budget would build over time.

Ms. LeBlanc suggested that a process similar to the monitoring contingency fund could be setup. A dollar amount threshold of \$50,000 per storm could be set and funds could be added as needed. She indicated that USGS agreed to be the Federal sponsor to manage the funds. Colonel Wagenaar suggested capping and maintaining the Storm Recovery Procedures Contingency Fund at \$100,000. Ms. LeBlanc asked if the P&E would need to approve expenditures for the contingency fund, since this wasn't confirmed. Colonel Wagenaar stated that approval for anything in excess of the \$100,000 will require Task Force approval.

*Mr. Gohmert motioned to approve use of \$97,534 from the FY05 Planning Budget to cover costs for LDNR post-storm assessments following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, in addition to the FY06 Planning funds budgeted for two storms (\$97,534). Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

*Dr. Zobrist moved to create a "Storm Recovery Procedures Contingency Fund" for \$303,358.92 to be sponsored by the USGS. A sum of \$203,358.92 would be immediately approved for Katrina/Rita expenditures and the contingency fund would maintain a balance of \$100,000. Expenditure of anything in excess of \$100,000 would require a fax vote by the Task Force. Mr. Gohmert seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

#### **I. Decision: PPL5 Mississippi River Reintroduction into Bayou Lafourche Project – BA-25b (Agenda Item #11)**

Mr. Podany stated that at the Task Force meeting in July, the Task Force voted to defer a decision to allow or deny approval to proceed to 95 percent design and a \$5 million increase in Phase I funding for BA-25b, until three issues were addressed by the project sponsors and the

Corps. The issues included: 1) identifying \$2.5 million in existing CWPPRA Federal construction funds to use for the Federal Share of the proposed budget increase; 2) answering the legal question on whether Federal funds should be obligated to construct a project without a feasibility determination, and 3) conducting an Independent Technical Review (ITR) to evaluate modeling efforts and benefit. Mr. Podany advised that in August, the Task Force Chairman was notified that the State would fund 100 percent of the remaining Engineering and Design and proposed that EPA complete NEPA compliance documentation using CWPPRA funds. He explained that after considering various options for moving forward with the project, the Technical Committee is recommending that the Task Force approve EPA's proposal to complete the EIS under CWPPRA subject to receipt of an accounting of fiscal expenditures to date and a budget for completion of the NEPA documentation.

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

Colonel Wagenaar acknowledged that progress has been made on the project, but asserted that the challenge is to decide when it is proper to obligate Federal dollars to a project that is potentially not feasible. He has concerns regarding the project benefits being presented to the Task Force and indicated that he wanted the ITR to evaluate the modeling and resulting reported benefits.

Mr. Honker contended that the question is simple: Does EPA continue with the investment made with the EIS or do we stop and lose the investment that has been made? He asserted that the Corps was impressed enough with earlier benefit estimates to include the project in the LCA near-term plan, and that it would not be appropriate to invest CWPPRA funds for an ITR as suggested since the State has agreed to fund the remaining E&D cost. He further asserted that the NEPA review is prudent, that it should be continued to complete the preliminary EIS rather than lose about a half million dollar investment if the work is terminated because the contract has already been paid, and that starting the EIS again down the road by someone else would potentially delay the project.

Ms. Coffee agreed with Mr. Honker that the ITR is an inappropriate action and would set an unreasonable precedent. She urged the Task Force to let the EPA finish the NEPA exercise.

Mr. Hamilton asked about the economics related to the costs of the EIS. There are technical concerns about the reported benefits and the amount of sediment that will reach the marshes. Addressing those technical issues should be the first step to make sure this is a sound project and then go through the NEPA analysis.

Mr. Honker stated that Mr. Tim Landers, EPA, could answer questions about the EIS.

Mr. Landers said that the EPA is about halfway through the half million dollar contract to complete the final EIS. It is estimated that an additional \$457,000 is needed to complete the EIS, including \$242,800 for contract obligations, \$200,000 for administrative costs and \$15,000 for a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey. Additional conditional expenditures would include \$200,000 for a possible Phase 2 cultural resources survey if needed as determined by the Phase I survey,

and \$500,000 for sediment testing if needed as determined by the final design, bringing the total estimate to \$1.16 million.

Mr. Honker added that if the EPA continued with the EIS, it would be with the understanding that work would stop if it became apparent that it would be a good time to stop and transition the project to another agency.

Mr. Gohmert questioned if it would be legitimate to proceed with an EIS if there are still questions about the technical reasonableness and logic of the expected benefits and alternatives. Mr. Gohmert stressed that the discussions and reports about the model, the data that went into it were not very transparent for individuals trying to understand how the resulting estimated benefits would be derived from a 1,000 cfs diversion and asked how an EIS can be completed without answering these concerns.

Mr. Honker stated that this is a reason for continuing an EIS in tandem with E&D. The environmental impact issues are assessed as we go through that process. If the EIS is stopped at this point, you would lose the ability to impact the E&D based on environmental impact factors.

Mr. Gohmert asked if a preferred alternative had been selected.

Both Mr. Duszynski and Ms. Coffee answered yes.

Mr. Duszynski added that 144 alternatives have gone through a serious screening process and that the State's preferred alternative is a 1,000 cfs freshwater diversion with moderate dredging and expected low rise in water levels in the bayou. He indicated that LDNR has requested a meeting with all the agencies to review and explain the WVA results compared to modeled salinity changes and sediment transport. Once this is done, the agencies will be satisfied with the results of the model runs. Mr. Duszynski expressed willingness to discuss these details with the agencies and that the project has completed 30 percent design review requirements and is ready to move forward.

Dr. Zobrist said that when the suggestion to conduct an ITR was first brought up, it made sense because there were many questions about the project benefits and other things. He agreed that in general it is not necessarily appropriate to conduct ITRs on CWPPRA projects; however, the fact that it is being considered for the Bayou Lafourche project indicates that the project is not a CWPPRA project. He also said that he is not convinced that a satisfactory EIS could be completed at the 30 percent design level and has reservations about any further CWPPRA funding commitment.

Mr. Landers said that the EPA would maintain a schedule that would run concurrently with the State's E&D efforts. The goal is to complete the E&D and EIS in 2-3 years.

Ms. Coffee said that this is a perfect example of the Federal agencies being able to help the State complete a portion of this CWPPRA project. The Federal money has already been allocated and the State is committed to moving forward with the project. She urged the Federal partners to honor their previous commitments.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Mr. Windell Curole, Coastal Zone Management Coordinator for Lafourche Parish, said that this was a dual purpose project from the beginning. Right now, chloride levels in the drinking water from Bayou Lafourche are high. Salinity levels have been increasing, so any freshwater will benefit us. The estuary system is broken and the Gulf comes in anytime it wants. Mr. Curole asked the Task Force to look at this from a business point of view. Providing fresh drinking water for society is a critical thing. It is disappointing that it has taken 11 years and we still do not know where to go with this project. Decisions need to be made a lot quicker, and we need to allocate 75 cents for every dollar to construct coastal projects. From a person living in the community, you want to use all the benefits you can from any kind of project.

Ms. Charlotte Randolph, Lafourche Parish President, thanked the State for stepping up to take on this issue. This is the reason the Task Force should continue to fund this EIS. We do not have a lot of time and there are projects being studied to potentially help us in the future. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught us that if we wait any longer, we will be sorry rather than safe. Completion of the EIS will parallel what the State is doing with the E&D and will parallel efforts to get funding. When we receive the WRDA and OCS funding, we will be ready. This project will also help with the salinity levels which are dangerously high. Any benefit to the marsh is more than we are getting right now.

Mr. Wayne Keller, Director of the Grand Isle Port Commission, reported recent flooding in Chenier Caminada. This flooding occurred because of a non-storm event (strong south winds for a few days). One week ago there was a 2,500 foot gap at Elmer's Island; after two days of 15 to 30 mile per hour winds, the gap is now 3,500 feet. As this continues, there will be a breach in Highway 1. Because of recent events, he feels that it is best to concentrate on the barrier islands in the short-term. He added that the dynamics are much worse than people realize. We need to look at the beneficial use of dredging more efficiently and stop using the word "demo." The Chenier's need more freshwater and this project will help.

Ms. Leslie Suazo, Director of Costal Restoration in Terrebonne Parish, urged the Task Force to continue with this project. She appreciates the State stepping up to the plate. She sees the needs for and the possibilities for this project to enhance the Terrebonne Basin

Ms. Gay Browning asked how much had been obligated for the NEPA contract and about the potential NEPA cost. Mr. Landers replied that approximately \$560,000 is obligated to the NEPA contractor. Additional "conditional" expenses are expected to cost \$700,000, making the total \$1.475 million.

Mr. Honker read a quote from the Chief of Engineer's Report to Congress about completion of the feasibility study and EIS. He feels that the best thing to do is continue with the EIS process.

Ms. Coffee agreed with Mr. Honker. She said that the intent of this program was to assist the State in moving out projects. This is a small amount to help the State move projects forward for the benefit of people in Louisiana and the rest of the nation.

*Mr. Honker moved to approve use of available funds by the EPA to complete the EIS for the Mississippi River Reintroduction into Bayou Lafourche Project and return the remainder of funds that are non-NEPA related. Colonel Wagenaar asked for a second. No one seconded. The motion was not passed by the Task Force.*

**J. Decision: Modification of the Scope of the PPL10 East Sabine Lake Hydrologic Restoration Project (Agenda Item #12)**

Mr. Podany said that this project is being constructed in two units. The USFWS and others have determined that construction of Unit 2 would not produce the benefits that were originally envisioned. The plan is to discontinue further design of the Construction Unit 2 water control structures at Willow, Three, Greens and Right Prong Black Bayous; transfer \$250,000 in surplus construction funding to O&M to repair the Pines Ridge Weir damaged by Hurricane Rita; add additional duck-wing earthen terraces using Construction Unit 1 surplus budget funds; and modify the recently constructed terraces 3,000 linear foot foreshore dike to add four 50-foot wide gaps, using surplus construction funds. The Technical Committee recommends that the Task Force approve the change in scope with no cost increase.

*Mr. Hamilton moved to adopt the changes in scope for PPL10 East Sabine Lake Hydrologic Restoration Project and Dr. Zobrist seconded. The motion was approved by the Task Force.*

**K. Decision: Final CWPPRA Strategic Vision Document (Agenda Item #13)**

Ms. LeBlanc said that the purpose of the Strategic Vision Document was to evaluate where the program stands and where it fits into the existing landscape given all the other efforts in the State. The document was sent to Parishes Against Coastal Erosion (PACE), parish CZM Committees, and other coastal program coordinators including CIAP, LaCPR, State Master Plan, and LCA for comment. The Task Force is asked to approve the final version of the document. Once approved, the document will be incorporated into the 2006 Report to Congress.

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

Dr. Zobrist complimented the people who have worked hard to get the strategic document to this point.

Ms. Coffee asked how much was spent on the document and Ms. LeBlanc answered that the current version of the document was done within existing agency budgets.

*Mr. Honker moved to approve the final version of the CWPPRA Strategic Vision Document and Mr. Gohmert seconded. The motion was passed by the Task Force.*

## **VI. INFORMATION**

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

Ms. Browning stated that the Planning Program has a current surplus of \$1.1 million. With receipt of \$5 million in FY07, the Planning Program has \$6.1 million available for FY07 planning activities. The Construction Program received a total of \$643 million in Federal funds through FY06. Total obligations are \$587 million and total expenditures are \$313 million. There are 138 active projects: 68 have completed construction, 19 are under construction, and 51 have not yet started construction. Twenty-two projects are scheduled for construction in FY07; one project has started construction and there are four non-cash flow and five cash flow projects funded and scheduled to start construction in FY07. The remaining 12 cash-flow projects scheduled for FY07 construction are not yet funded but will request Phase II approval in January 2007. Available funding in the Construction Program is currently \$30,000. Estimated total funds in the Construction Program for FY07 will be \$83.5 million (Federal and non-Federal). Construction Program items up for Task Force funding approval today total \$17.3 million. If all Technical Committee recommendations are adopted, the remaining available Federal and non-Federal funding in the Construction Program will be \$66.1 million. The total Phase II Increment 1 cost estimate for the 12 projects scheduled to request Phase II approval in January 2007 is \$219 million, leaving a shortfall of \$153 million in the Construction Program.

Ms. LeBlanc stated that the current total program unobligated balance is \$123.7 million at the close of FY06. Cumulative funds into the program through FY06 total \$786 million, of which \$785 million is set aside. The remaining available funds total \$1.13 million, which includes \$1.1 million in the Planning Program and \$30,000 in the Construction Program. Based upon the latest projection, the total program funding is estimated to be \$2.4 billion over the life of the program. The total fully funded costs for all projects on PPLs 1-15 including planning is \$1.8 billion. Approximately \$1.02 billion is required for construction and 20-years of O&M for all projects that have been approved for Phase II, to date. The gap between the total funds into the program (\$2.4 billion) and the funding required for those projects already approved for construction (\$1.0 billion; includes funds for 20 years O&M) is \$1.4 billion. If the 12 projects that are eligible for Phase II approval in January are funded, the gap between expected funds into the program and total project costs would become \$1.1 billion.

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

Mr. Honker asked where the surplus of \$1.1 million in the Planning Budget came from. Ms. Browning replied that this money was originally obligated, but has been de-obligated from previous year budgets because not all of the estimated funding was needed.

Dr. Zobrist commended the financial staff in the various agencies for finding the money to return to the program.



## **B. Report: Transitioning Projects from CWPPRA to Other Authorities (Agenda Item #15)**

Mr. Podany updated the Task Force that the P&E Subcommittee has been working to refine the procedure for transitioning projects from CWPPRA to other authorities. They are working on streamlining the process and making it less bureaucratic. The P&E Subcommittee should have a revision ready for Task Force review and potential approval at the next Task Force meeting.

## **C. Report/Request for Public Comments: PPL10 Delta Building Diversion at Myrtle Grove Project (BA-33) (Agenda Item #16)**

Mr. Podany said that at the last meeting, the Task Force agreed to initiate the process of transferring the Myrtle Grove Project to the LCA. A letter was sent out to solicit comments on the transition. It appears that the LCA would not be in a position to accept this project until the Spring of 2007.

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

Colonel Wagenaar said that LCA is stuck in WRDA and WRDA is stuck between a rock and a hard place. Mr. Podany noted that if LCA is not authorized for project construction, there will not be any movement beyond the study phase. Mr. Troy Constance added that there is always the option of submitting the feasibility report independent of an LCA Program.

Mr. Tim Axtman stated that all of the design and scoping information developed under CWPPRA has been combined and put into an electronic file cabinet to provide password protected common access for individuals interested in the project. It is estimated that the modeling may take six months or longer because the super computer needed to make the model runs is not immediately available. No letters have been received at this point, although Mr. Axtman has received a number of telephone calls indicating that letters would be coming.

Colonel Wagenaar asked that if LCA does not go anywhere, is it possible to get the projects into the LaCPR as separable projects? The mark on the wall has got to be LaCPR as a separable element of South Louisiana protection. Mr. Axtman replied that in terms of integrating Myrtle Grove into LaCPR, the State's Master Planning and Corps efforts include all LCA recommended, so it could be a component of these proposals. There are a number of ways to engineer and construct this project.

Mr. Honker asked about the status of the EIS for this project and Mr. Axtman answered that the scoping document has been produced. They are currently working on updating existing conditions information from the LCA for the programmatic EIS.

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Ms. Marnie Winter, Jefferson Parish, presented the Task Force with a letter from Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard asking the Task Force not to transfer the Myrtle Grove Project to the LCA at this time.

Mr. Andrew MacInnes, Coastal Zone Administrator for Plaquemines Parish, supports keeping the Myrtle Grove Project in the CWPPRA Phase I process. The Task Force and Technical Committee made a commitment to fully expend monies set aside for CWPPRA Phase I development. Mr. MacInnes believes it is safest to continue nurturing the project through the CWPPRA program as the other theoretical programs may or may not materialize. LCA is not a guarantee. He prefers to keep the project in CWPPRA and not move it until LCA is ready.

**D. Report: Land Loss since the 2005 Hurricanes (Agenda Item #17)**

Dr. Jimmy Johnston, USGS, said that the regional post hurricane land-water assessments were funded through CRMS and announced that Mr. John Barras, USGS, would provide the update. Mr. Barras stated that the purpose of this assessment was to provide preliminary information on land changes shortly after the hurricane and serve as a regional baseline for monitoring. This is not an assessment of permanent loss. He presented the preliminary land-water change between October 2004 and October 2005. The Chenier Plain analysis has been problematic due to surge retention and flooding duration. There was a net land area change of 62 square miles in the Mermentau Basin and 41 square miles in Breton Sound. The total land area change from October 2004 to October 2005 was 217 square miles. There was a 67 percent land change in the Chandeleur Islands from 2004 to 2005. In the Mississippi River Delta, the Garden Island Bay and Pass a Loutre areas had the most significant land change.

**E. Report: Public Outreach Committee Quarterly Report (Agenda Item #18)**

Mr. Scott Wilson, USGS Public Outreach Chairman, presented the Public Outreach Committee's quarterly report. He announced that Ms. Ann Burruss has been hired as the new Outreach Coordinator. The committee had an exhibit at the Clean Gulf Conference in New Orleans and is a major sponsor of the Restore America's Estuary Conference in December. The committee has also been involved in helping with the land loss maps. Also, approximately 22 gigabytes of data is transferred daily on the LaCoast website.

**F. Report: Envisioning the Future of the Gulf Coast (Agenda Item #19)**

Dr. Denise Reed presented a report for the sustainable restoration of Louisiana's coast. A technical group of 35 engineers and scientists from around the world provided their thoughts on the future of the Louisiana coast for the report. The group felt that the issue of climate change needed to be taken very seriously. Sea levels and storm intensity would continue to rise, and therefore, we would need higher and wider levees to retain the level of protection we have now. Outlying communities and evacuation routes would become more frequently flooded. The change in the fundamental processes in the coast would intensify our existing problems by affecting wave action, eroding marshes, and damaging infrastructure. If current management practices continue, more than 120 million tons of river sediment that could be used to rebuild the coast would be lost to the Gulf of Mexico each year. The group recommended that the most fundamental and essential action needed to sustain the coast is to reduce the amount of sediment and freshwater flowing directly into the deep water of the Gulf. Trying to maintain the existing or historic landscape is futile and would deny the inherently dynamic nature of the Mississippi

River Delta Plain and Chenier Plain. This is not a new idea. If we want to tell the rest of the country that we are serious about restoring our coast, then we have to take this issue seriously.

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

Colonel Wagenaar said that this has to be an option in the LaCPR. The biggest challenge is going to be the users and the competition between navigation and the coast. Dr. Reed replied that the best way forward is to see how this is in the best interest of all of us. This is a new era for the coast of Louisiana and everybody has to make adjustments; this is not about eliminating navigation

Colonel Wagenaar opened the floor to comments from the public:

Mr. Robert Tannin wondered if the RAND Corporation could be asked to carry this concept further and evaluate it from a policy standpoint to support Dr. Reed's work.

Mr. Honker said that Dr. Reed presented some very interesting ideas. The impact to the nutrient redistribution needs to be evaluated; this is a major issue in creating hypoxic zones in the Gulf.

## **VII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

Colonel Wagenaar announced that this meeting would be the last for Dr. Johnston and presented a Task Force Certificate to him for the support and work he has done for the Task Force.

Mr. Hamilton said that he recently had the opportunity to do a helicopter fly-over of the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge. The amount of debris on the refuge after Hurricane Rita was unbelievable. Under the EPA's leadership, cleanup of debris at the refuge is ahead of schedule and the refuge should be reopened this spring.

## **VIII. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

## **IX. CLOSING**

### **A. Dates and Locations of Upcoming CWPPRA Meetings**

Ms. LeBlanc announced that the next Task Force Meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2007 in Baton Rouge, LA. The next Technical Committee Meeting will be held on December 6<sup>th</sup> in Baton Rouge, LA.

### **B. Adjournment**

Colonel Wagenaar adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.



# ATTENDANCE RECORD



DATE(S) October 18, 2006 9:30 a.m.	SPONSORING ORGANIZATION COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT	LOCATION District Assembly Room U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District 7400 Leake Avenue New Orleans, Louisiana
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PURPOSE  
MEETING OF THE  
CWPPRA TASK FORCE

PARTICIPANT REGISTER\*

NAME	JOB TITLE AND ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Randy Moertle	M.O. Miller Estates, McIlhenny Co.	(985) 532-6388
Joby Merino	NORA NMFS	337-291-2109
Kevin Roy	USFWS	337-291-3120
CHRIS WATERS	BEAN DREDGING LLC	504-587-8720
DAN LLEWELLYN	DNR	225-342-5159
LIRK Rhinley	DNR	225 342 2179
DR CHAD ZULLIG	DNR	
ANDREW MACINNIS	PLAR. CEM/GIS	504 297-5320
DAVID BURKHOLDER	DNR	225-342-6814
A.P. Chaisson	Bayou Lafourche Fresh Water District	985-449-7155
Ann Burruss	USFWS Outreach Project Leader	237-262-8623
Greg Dyer	USGS NWRC	225-578-7201
Gary Barone	NMFS	301 713 0174
Andy Watson	FWS	
Sam Yip	USFWS	337-291-3111
Sam Hamilton	USFWS	
Ernie Ehr	Daily Comet	504-261-9891
John Jorgensen	USDA NRCS	318 473 7694
Don Johnson	NRCS	318-473-7751
Brad Gill	NRCS	318-473-7756
John Lopez	Lake Bonchartrain Basin Foundation	225-294-4998
Karen Foster	Battelle	504-952-2950



## ATTENDANCE RECORD



DATE(S)  October 18, 2006 9:30 a.m.	SPONSORING ORGANIZATION  COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT	LOCATION  District Assembly Room U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District 7400 Leake Avenue New Orleans, Louisiana
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**PURPOSE**

**MEETING OF THE  
CWPPRA TASK FORCE**

**PARTICIPANT REGISTER\***

NAME	JOB TITLE AND ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Ronny Paile	USFWS	337-291-3117
Sharon Parrish	USEPA Mariner Wetlands	214-665-7275
Michael Eby	Rep. Richard Baker	225-929-7711
Beverly Stridger	EPA	214 665 2151
Tom Podany	COE	504-862-2572
JOHN PETTIBOND	COE	504-862-2732
Tim Landers	EPA	214-665-6008
HEATHER FINLEY	LDFW	225.765.2956
Mark Schleifstein	Times Picayune	504-826-3323
Chris Macaluso	Governor's Office Coastal Act	225-342-3689
Jerry Graves, Jr.	St. Bernard Parish Gov. +	(504) 278-1032
Deetra Washington	GOPA	225 342 3968
JOHN FRYINGER	EPA	504.862.1119
Gary Rauber	COE	504-862-2543
Melinda Monnier	DNR	225 342 4536
Maui Mitchell	DNR	225-342-4843
Danielle Stafford	DNR	225-342-4509
BOB SCHROEDER	CH ENVIRONMENTALIST + ASSOC.	504-582-2201
WAYNE KELLER	GRAND ISLE PORT Comm.	985-787-2229
ED SCHMELTZ	SR. VP, DMJM + HARRIS	225-293-5757
LUCIA COBB	VP, DMJM Harris	"
DALE HUNN	SR. PROJ. MGR - PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF	504-522-7143



## ATTENDANCE RECORD



DATE(S)	SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
October 18, 2006 9:30 a.m.	COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT	District Assembly Room U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District 7400 Leake Avenue New Orleans, Louisiana
PURPOSE		
MEETING OF THE CWPPRA TASK FORCE		
PARTICIPANT REGISTER*		
NAME	JOB TITLE AND ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER
JONATHAN HIRO	MCFFATT - NICHOL	225 927 7793
MARK FOM	DEP. A. M. B. T. O. C. R. C. L.	225-767-6116
BOB TANNIN	WALTON	504 218 4867
Wendell Currole	G.M. S. Lafourche Levee Dist.	985-632-7554
Charlotte Randolph	Lab. Parish govt.	985 446 8427
Brian Fortson	St. Tammany Parish LCP	985 898.2552
Amy Wold	The Advocate	225 388-0320
Johnny Shuster	USGS	337 26-8616
Wynne Frost	City of New Orleans	658-4070
Marnie Winter	Jeff. Parish	731-4612
Harold Schaeffer	Sierra Club chair <sup>Acadiana</sup> group	337 235 9497
Ray Browning	COE	504-862-2755
Leo Richardson II	Lake Catherine Civic Assn	504-835-2202
Cynthia Duet	ARCA DIS	225 292 1008
<del>Tracy</del>	COE	504-862-1071
Joan Lanier	USACE - PM-OR	504-862-1814
Julie LeBlanc	Corps - PM-OR	504-862-1597