

**Louisiana Coastal Summit
Comments for Col. Thomas Julich
August 15, 2001**

Final

SLIDES

TEXT

1. Seal obverse

2. Coastal Summit 2001
Reaching to the Future
August 15, 2001
Baton Rouge, LA

Greetings. It is a pleasure and an honor to be here as a guest speaker at what I consider to be one of the most important meetings relative to wetland restoration in Louisiana. We've heard from {our Governor and} key speakers, authorities in their field, who, like the Corps, are cognizant of the ultimate collapse of our coastal ecosystem...a national disaster if Louisiana continues to lose its coastal wetlands.

3. Aerial, coastal erosion

All of us present today, those of you in the audience as well as the guest speakers, were invited to this summit because we are in a unique position of leadership – and as such, should feel personally responsible for the future of this state and its position as a provider to the nation.

4. Aerial, coastal erosion

Most of us are familiar with the alarming statistics associated with Louisiana's coast. The preceding presentations covered all aspects of coastal concerns – from the dynamics of coastal systems, the port, navigation and energy issues, to the unique cultural heritage richly intertwined with the economic forces found in the state's coastal regions.

5. Graphic: maps (2)
*Curole's 1870 map
*2050 coastline

Erosion is occurring at an incredible rate. This map of the Louisiana coastline in 1870, and a current map of the projected landscape in 2050 indicates the critical position the state will find itself in if nothing is done.

6. Graphic, Breaux Act

The federal government and the state began work in earnest to restore our coast back in 1990 with passage of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, better known as the Breaux Act. This act provides \$40 to \$45 million dollars each year for coastal restoration projects. The number of wetlands preserved through Breaux Act projects is approaching 100,000 acres.

6. Photo: BBWW, coastal land loss

Unfortunately, there is still a large disparity between the acres gained under present restoration efforts and the trends of loss.

7. Photos (4): Petroleum, boats, industry, environmental (ducks)
Bullet: "One Voice"

So we must ask ourselves...what else can we do? Ultimately, we must obtain consensus and speak with one voice. It is imperative that navigation, environmental and industry representatives and all other stakeholders commit to the steps necessary to save Louisiana's coast.

8. Breaux Act meeting

We've made great strides in that direction. While working with other agencies and stakeholders for the past 10 years managing the Breaux Act process, we have built strong and lasting partnerships.

9. CWPPRA project construction

In that time we have also gained extensive technical know-how...what works and what still needs to be done. We have

gained invaluable insight into the enormity of the problems faced by Louisiana and have come to realize that what lies ahead will require a substantially greater commitment, as well as funding, than what is presently required under the Breaux Act.

10. Coastal, scenic

Bullet:

Breaux Act: smaller, site-specific, < \$50 m

2050: large, positive impact, > \$50 m

So the coastal restoration partners developed the Coast 2050 plan. The Breaux Act will continue to focus on smaller site-specific projects of less than \$50 million dollars, while Coast 2050 will focus on implementing large projects that would have a significant positive impact for advancing coastal restoration over the next 30 years. The Breaux Act and Coast 2050 activities are well coordinated and are being implemented in a manner to complement one another.

11. Graphic: 2050, nine basins

The Louisiana Coastal Area Feasibility Study, initiated in February 2000, is evaluating the various Coast 2050 strategies in nine basins. Because of the magnitude of the study area, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and the Corps will recommend authorization for construction when the study of a specific area is completed. Each study has the potential to run from 18 months to 3 years.

12. aerial, BBWW, Leevile Unit – Barataria Basin proposed recommendations

The first series of feasibility studies are addressing barrier island restoration, wetland creation and restoration, and river diversions for the Barataria Basin, which has the highest erosion rate of all of Louisiana's basins.

13. Aerial, Barataria Bay

The Corps is prepared to submit its initial

feasibility report – on marsh creation – by the end of this calendar year, forwarding the projects contained therein for authorization under the Water Resources Development Act in 2002. Inclusion of this project in the Water Resources Development Act depends largely on stakeholder support.

14. Aerial, Hwy 1 to Grand Isle

The work outlined in the report totals \$300 million dollars. The first interim report will recommend creating about 15,000 acres of wetlands in Lafourche Parish, some of which are adjacent to La. Hwy. 1.

15. Infrared
Bullet: At Stake

In late 2002, we'll have our second feasibility report completed on barrier island restoration from Port Fourchon to the Mississippi River. The work outlined in this report carries a price tag that could total \$5 to \$6 billion dollars. Construction of projects for all nine basins could take up to 30 years at a cost of \$15 billion dollars.

16. Hi aerial
New Bullet: Consensus + strategy = Authorization

A well-developed strategy will be required in order to bring a project of this magnitude to reality. As an example, the Corps and the state of Florida were successful in the Water Resource Development Act of 2000, which authorized an \$8-billion dollar project to restore the Everglades. It constitutes the largest project authorized in the Corps. How did they do it?

17. Hi aerial
Current Bullet:
Congressional
Authorization & Funding

First, Florida created a Governor's Commission to champion the process. The Commission was successful in bringing together stakeholders and federal and state agencies. The Commission identified and evaluated funding mechanisms, and

participated in developing project recommendations.

18. Photo: aerial of Baton Rouge

Bullet: Role of Governor's Commission

*Develop consensus

*Seek resolution of issues

*Recommend funding and future work

*Present state's position to Congressionals

These are our thoughts on the role that a Commission could play—developing consensus for projects, recommending actions to resolve issues, identifying long-term funding requirements, and presenting that state's position to Congress to obtain federal support for projects.

19. Alligator

Bullet: Everglades Commissions organization chart

In addition, under WRDA '96, a Federal working group was created for the Everglades project at the national level to insure visibility of the proposed project to the entire nation. Keep in mind that addressing Louisiana's coastal problems will cost twice as much as the Everglades project. It would be prudent for Louisiana stakeholders to begin dialogue to develop similar groups for the Coast 2050 program.

20. 4 photos--

navigation, petroleum, fishing, agriculture

2 graphics -- Corps logo, state logo

We are fast approaching that critical stage where all stakeholders in the region must be in agreement. It is critically important that the state of Louisiana continue to express their willingness as sponsors. And it is critically important that agreement exists within the federal community; not just among agencies, but with the state's Congressional delegation. The Congress and administration requires strong state

support, strong sponsorship and strong stakeholder involvement to fund this endeavor. Speaking with one voice creates a sense of commitment, a sense of possibility.

21. Photo: aerial of NOD headquarters building
Bullet:
Co-location
Focus: Coastal restoration

Coastal restoration is a high priority in New Orleans District. To emphasize our commitment, to create synergy and to support the one voice philosophy, I have taken an unprecedented move to co-locate under one roof an interdisciplinary team of planners, environmentalists, engineers and biologists from EPA, USGS, DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and DOTD. Their one goal? To focus their attention on coastal restoration efforts.

22. Potential Federal Legislation

WRDA '02
*Marsh Creation Barataria Basin Interi Report
*Direct Initiation of a comprehensive Report
*Form Federal Commission

WRDA '04
*Programmatic Authorization
*\$15 B Project
*Define Non-Federal Responsibility

Other Legislation
*WRDA
*Energy

At this time, I'd like to update you on legislation that is being considered for coastal restoration. Secretary Caldwell requested a meeting with our Headquarters in Washington, D.C. that was held on September 10. I was in attendance. At that meeting, we discussed potential legislation needed for a project of such magnitude and the subsequent need for innovative cost sharing. Our Headquarters office was very supportive in finding ways to assist in moving this project forward and as a result of that and a second meeting with the congressional staff arranged by DNR, we came up with a tentative plan for authorization. This plan included not only the marsh creation previously discussed, but in WRDA '02, legislation would direct that we initiate a comprehensive report to be completed in time for authorization by

*etc...

WRDA '04.

Continued...

Also in WRDA '02, a federal commission would be developed similar to the Florida Everglades Commission with the Assistant Secretary of the Army designated as chair. The State and other federal agencies would make up the membership. WRDA '04 would be a programmatic authorization that would authorize the \$15 billion project. In addition, non-federal responsibilities would be defined taking other projects and activities that have resulted in the need for coastal restoration into consideration. On the basis of further discussions with other offices, proposed legislation under WRDA '02 and '04, the farm bill and a number of other bills may include decisions of funding and additional authorization.

23. Environmental Group Participation

- *Jul 01 – meeting w/Green Group in Washington, D.C.
- *Aug 01 – Coastal Summit comments by Mr. Tripp
- *Sep 01 – Meeting between Sec. Caldwell and Lt. Gen Flowers
- *Future discussions

In the last several months, I've talked considerably with Mark Davis, King Milling and Jim Tripp relative to developing a partnership between the environmental groups and the Corps in responding to the needs of coastal La. My staff has met with the green group—about 30 environmental organizations from Washington—to discuss how the Corps, state and environmental groups can work together in support of restoration efforts. At the coastal summit, Mr. Tripp made comments relative to how the Corps and

the environmental groups can set an example by working together on the state's coastal issues. Sec. Caldwell and I have met with Gen. Flowers. He is receptive to our pursuing involvement with environmental organizations and to have further discussions with Jim Tripp and others to move forward on this proposal.

24. Fisherman, scenic, coastal

The Corps of Engineers has a critical mission in south Louisiana. It is the largest engineering organization in the world and the nation's leading water resources agency. The New Orleans District has the largest water resources program in the Corps and a presence firmly rooted in Louisiana. We stand ready to provide the technical expertise and capabilities required to support the effort of restoring coastal Louisiana. Obtaining consensus and funding support is critical to our success. Action on the part of Congressional leaders in addressing Louisiana's water resource problems is paramount.

25. Photos (5): Petroleum, fishing, industry, environmental (ducks), Task Force meeting
Bullet: "One Voice"

Loss of coastal wetlands is the nation's most significant environmental issue. Only through an integrated, mass-scale effort from federal, state and local agencies, and a full-fledged commitment from our sponsor, the state of Louisiana, from stakeholders, academia, leaders and legislators can we achieve a legacy of ecosystem diversity, economic prosperity and a unique way of life for Louisiana.

26. Seal obverse

The New Orleans District staff and I stand ready to assist the transition team in any way we can to ensure we achieve the

state's objectives in restoring the
Louisiana's fragile coast.

Thank you. Are there any questions?