

**LOUISIANA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WETLANDS RESEARCH CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA**

**APRIL 11, 2012**

**RECORD OF AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Tom Doyle, USGS Branch Chief, opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed the committee to the Wetlands Research Center.

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, welcomed the meeting participants. (See attendance list attached.) Each member introduced themselves to the committee.

Sarah Haymaker, NRCS Acting State Conservationist, commented on the agenda and commented on the highlights of items to be discussed.

The last committee teleconference minutes were handed out for review. The minutes were accepted. All LASTC meeting minutes are being posted on the Louisiana NRCS Technical Committee website at <http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/>.

Edwards stated today's meeting will focus on the 2012 Locally Led Process resource concern priority rankings. Each LASTC member organization present will have an opportunity to provide input regarding statewide resource concern priority ranking.

◆ **LOCALLY LED-PRIORITY RESOURCE CONCERNS**

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, reviewed the FY 2012 Locally Led Conservation Process. An essential element of locally led conservation is input from a broad range of agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals in the local area that have an interest in natural resource management and are familiar with local resource needs and conditions. These representatives should reflect the diversity of the residents, landowners, and land operators in the local area. Locally Led Conservation is based on the principle that community stakeholders are the best suited to deal with local resource problems. Local work groups submit priorities to the State Office in March. The State Technical Committee sets the state priorities.

After discussion, each LASTC member organization present voted on state-wide resource concerns for use in 2012 conservation program delivery. The LASTC ranking results were:

<b>2012 Locally Led Conservation Initiative List of Resource Concerns</b>	<b>LASTC Vote</b>
Fish and Wildlife – Plant Community Fragmentation	9
Water Quality – Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water	6
Plant Condition – Noxious and Invasive Plants	5
Domestic Animals – Inadequate Stock Water	3
Fish and Wildlife – Imbalance Among and Within Populations	3
Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Cover/Shelter	3
Soil Erosion – Classic Gully	3
Water Quality – Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water	3
Water Quantity – Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land	3
Water Quantity – Insufficient Flows in Water Courses	3
Soil Erosion – Sheet and Rill	2
Domestic Animals – Inadequate Quantities and Quality of Feed and Forage	1
Plants not adapted or suited	1

These results will be posted on the NRCS state web site at <http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/>.

◆ **MIGRATORY BIRD HABITAT INITIATIVE**

John Pitre, NRCS State Wildlife Biologist, stated the Atchafalaya Basin, Deltaic Plains, and Gulf Coast Prairies will compete within the geographical areas for EQIP funds for the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative. There are five activities: Late Season Shallow Water with Manipulation; Extended Late Season Shallow Water with Manipulation; Catch Rainfall November 1 – February 15; Manipulate, Catch Rainfall October 1 – February 15; and Managed Grassland, Seasonal Wetland. ([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site.](#))

Alicia Wiseman, commented that DU wanted to thank NRCS for developing this initiative, and for including the partners in the development of the initiative.

◆ **PARTNER UPDATES OF NEW ACTIVITIES**

Ronnie Ulmer, TNC, stated TNC has a pilot program in cooperation with NRCS and FSA on carbon sequestration using private TNC funds on a landowner's land in conjunction with USDA programs. A WREP project in the Lower Bouef Watershed in northern Louisiana is awaiting approval. TNC's particular concern is about the ranking process changes on partner contributions to conservation and how much that affects the ranking of a WRP application or EBI score of a General Signup CRP application. TNC's position is that the ranking form allocate a few hundred points for contributions designed to meet the landowner contribution. In the pilot program, it funnels private dollars to participating landowners through an NGO; TNC is going to pay the entire cost share. The ranking forms used in the current application process currently do not promote the use of TNC funding.

The T&E Species points in the ranking process have not been addressed. Ulmer suggested recreating subcommittees to address these items.

Alicia Wiseman, DU, stated DU has a program, centered in rice producing fields, that promotes quality duck habitat in the winter. Also, a new multi-partner program is in the works that should address issues concerning sustainability of rice production. The program exists with a slot agreement through NRCS. It would involve conducting MBHI certification checks, conducting resource inventories and writing conservation plans, and assisting with pump efficiency testing on landowners' farms. DU would providing staff time but does not have money to pay landowners on a per acre basis.

Bill Bartush, USFWS, said that the GCPLCO cooperative is a new effort to add value to traditional conservation efforts. GCPLCO is a multi-state partnership that has a steering committee made up of state agency directors and state

conservation agency administrators. The GCPLCO is constantly looking for ways to add value, consistency and efficiency in the use of conservation dollars. One of the major concerns of the organization is how the size of private land ownership is shrinking rapidly, and how fragmentation of farms and ranches is having a direct impact on conservation. GCPLCO is looking at how they can help to add value to those producers in terms of providing conservation benefits over the Southern Plain landscape.

◆ **WATER QUALITY WATERSHEDS**

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, gave a presentation on the water quality initiative. The initiative emphasizes a “systems approach” to address priority natural resource concerns. A cornerstone of this approach is to encourage producers to implement a system of practices that has been determined to address specific high-priority resource concerns in selected watersheds. The initiative incorporates a selection of practices which address the concept for Avoiding, Controlling or Trapping pollutants or ACT. ([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site.](#))

◆ **WORKING LANDS FOR WILDLIFE**

Tim Landreneau, NRCS Program Specialist, stated there was a very significant reduction in WHIP funds for this year. NRCS made the decision to focus money on Working Lands for Wildlife which is partnered by NRCS and USFWS. This project will demonstrate that productive working lands are compatible with the needs of at-risk wildlife species. Objectives are to restore populations of declining wildlife species; provide farmers, ranchers, and forest managers regulator predictability – They will not incur a regulatory burden as a result of implementing conservation; and restore and protect the productive capacity of working lands. Funding will be provided through WHIP (33 million dollars available nationwide). ([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site.](#))

Landreneau handed out information for Luke Lewis, NWTF on the Restoring and Managing Longleaf Pine on Private Land Field Day. This event is scheduled for May 24, 2012, at the Lee memorial Forest in Sheridan, Louisiana.

◆ **BOTTOMLAND HARDWOOD RESTORATION**

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, discussed the conservation newsletter that is sent out by NRCS in Louisiana. Two committee members said that they currently do not receive the publication. Edwards will send conservation newsletters to each of these committee members with links to subscribe to the newsletters.

Edwards commented on 612 – Tree and Shrub Establishment. NRCS in Louisiana is working with Arkansas and Mississippi to unify this standard. Edwards asked members to read this standard and give him comments on it by email. Edwards pointed out that: **1) bottomland hardwood restoration for wildlife habitat** - seeding planting density should be no less than 300 TPA (trees per acre), and no more than 453 TPA, the hard mast component of the tree planting plan should comprise of no less than 30% of the total stand and no more than 60% of the total stand, and only species suited to the soils in the planting site will be planted; **2) carbon sequestration/trainer tree considerations** - on appropriate sites, fast growing light seeded species such as cottonwood, sweetgum, or green ash can be planted in such a manner to train the hardwood trees to have better form for timber production; **3) Carbon sequestration/trainer tree considerations and Eastern Cottonwood as a Product** – the following specifications must be met for all plantings containing cottonwood: plantings must occur on suitable soils, plant competition must be controlled in the stand, there can be no cultivation within 35 feet of a stream bank, and only mixed hardwoods be planted within 35 feet of a stream. ([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site.](#))

- ◆ **Next Meeting Date** – No specific meeting date was set. Members will be notified when the next scheduled teleconference in July is scheduled.

12:20 p.m. – Meeting Adjourned

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**LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA**

**APRIL 11, 2012**

**LIST OF ATTENDEES**

Scott Edwards, USDA-NRCS  
Sarah Haymaker, USDA-NRCS  
Steve Cruse, USDA-NRCS  
Tim Landreneau, USDA-NRCS  
Jack Haller, USDA-NRCS  
Tania Nanna, USDA-NRCS  
Chris Coreil, USDA-NRCS  
John Pitre, USDA-NRCS  
Randolph Joseph, USDA-NRCS  
Jerry Ursery, USDA-FSA  
Tom Doyle, USGS  
Larry Allain, USGS  
John McCoy, USGS  
Andy Dolan, USFWS  
Bill Bartush, USFWS  
Steve DeMaso, USFWS-GCJV  
Eugene Thilsted, EPA  
Alicia Wiseman, DU  
Gwendolyn Berthelot, LDEQ  
Greg Waldron, LDEQ  
Steve Brock, LMVJV  
Paul Davidson, Black Bear Conservation Coalition  
Ronnie Ulmer, TNC  
Kyle Soileau, LDAF-OSWC  
Ernest Girouard, LSU AgCenter-LA Master Farmer Program  
Clifton Vining, LGLC  
Stephen Minvielle, LCFA